



Confédération européenne des ONG
d'urgence et de développement

President Barroso meets the heads of European Development NGOs: European NGOs put pressure on G20 to save developing countries from crises

For the first time today, Chief Executive Officers of more than a hundred of the biggest European Development NGOs met the President of the European Commission, to urge him to put pressure on Member States and make sure the upcoming G-20 Summit will deliver meaningful results for developing countries hit by the financial and environmental crises.

Just a few days ahead of the G20 summit on the financial crisis and the release of the 2008 Official Development Aid figures by the OECD, CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation, convened a meeting of key NGO leaders and Development players from the European institutions to reflect on the impact of the financial and environmental crises on developing countries.

Taking a strong stance, Justin Kilcullen, President of CONCORD explained: *"People living in developing countries have experienced a decrease in development assistance, due to the financial difficulties in the world. These trends and impacts could have tragic consequences for the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in a context of great precariousness, while the vast majority of people living in poverty bear no responsibility for this crisis"*

Over the past few months, three European governments have slashed their 2009 Official Development Assistance: Ireland by 95 million Euros (10% of its overall budget), Italy by 56% (or 400 million Euros) and Latvia by 100%.

As said M. Barroso: *"in this global crisis we need a global approach and global solutions. Development is not part of the problem, but part of the global solution to the crisis. There can be no economic recovery without the developing countries. Our growth and stability is inextricably linked to theirs and vice versa."*

Olivier Consolo, Director of CONCORD added: *"Thousands of billions of Euros were found to support the bank system that provoked the crisis. At current aid levels the actual and potential costs of bank bailouts are equivalent to official development assistance for the next 154 years! "*

Answering these claims, M. Barroso insisted that: *"The recession must not, cannot, will not be used as an excuse for going back on our promises. European support now, in the middle of the crisis, is essential, both in objective terms, and to avoid leaving developing countries the sense that they have been abandoned. We cannot undo the hard work of so many years. We cannot permit the current crisis to kill the hope that has started to spring in the developing world."*

Justin Kilcullen, CONCORD President, stressed that: *"deep questioning of the current development model is necessary, particularly of the model of economic welfare through economic growth, unequal distribution of wealth and the overshoot of natural resources. We are calling for a reform of the global economic governance where the developing countries would have more weight."*

NGOs pressed the current President of the European Commission to make use of the political and economic influence of the European Union to push for fundamental changes in terms of global economic governance, structures and policy orientations of the institutions that have an impact on development.

Olivier Consolo stressed: *"It is time for the G20, the closed "club of the rich and the newly-rich" to open its door to developing countries and to include them in the real search for solutions. The G20 must be something else other than a public relation show for the citizens."*

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Note to the editor:

- CONCORD is the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'. www.concordeurope.org
- CONCORD will react on the release to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) figures by the OECD to be launched in London at 14.00 ahead of the G20 meeting next week..
- On 14 of May, CONCORD will be releasing an "AidWatch" report analysing the reality of the delivery of aid by the European Union.
- The EU 15 old Member States committed, in 2002, to give at least 0.33% of GNI as aid by 2006 (with an average of 0.39%) and 0.7% by 2015. In 2005, they committed to give 0.51% at least by 2010 (with an average of 0.56%) The 12 New member States committed to give 0.17% of GNI as aid by 2010 and 0.33% by 2015. According to the OECD, European aid fell from 0.41% to 0.38% of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2007, getting further from, not closer to, their 2010 commitments.