

PRESS RELEASE

3 April 2013

**OECD finds global aid has fallen by 4% in 2012
and warns of its impact on poor countries.**

**NGOs say Ireland must strengthen its promise on
aid commitments**

Irish Development NGOs today warned of how successive aid shortfalls threaten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and called on the government to strengthen its promise to spend 0.7% of our GNI on overseas aid by 2015.

The latest statistics from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), published today, show that Ireland reduced its spending on official development assistance (ODA) by 5.8% in 2012. This is another cut to Ireland's spending on ODA, as the government made a cut of 3.1% in 2011. The Irish aid budget has been reduced five times and by 32.5% since 2008.

"Aid is crucial to the world achieving the MDGs, helping people in poor countries to realise their basic rights to food, education and healthcare. But the continuing financial crisis and the successive aid cuts mean that the MDGs hang in the balance," said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, the umbrella group of Ireland's overseas aid agencies.

In releasing the aid statistics, the OECD highlighted that *"the continuing financial crisis and euro zone turmoil has led several governments to tighten their budgets"*. Yet, they noted that *"Maintaining aid is not impossible even in today's fiscal climate. The UK's 2013-14 budget increases its aid to 0.7% of national income, which gives hope that we can reverse the falling trend,"* and urged other countries to increase their aid as soon as their budget circumstances allow.

"The OECD revealed that despite the financial crisis, nine countries still managed to increase their aid. We hope that Ireland will follow this path in 2013. We encourage the government to use the forthcoming publication of its new White Paper on overseas aid to detail a plan for achieving the UN goal," added Zomer.

"Ireland's overseas aid is effective. It makes real and positive differences to the lives of millions of people across the developing world. Thanks to aid, nine out of ten of the world's children are now in school and poor countries are developing into richer and better societies. We must keep our promises to the developing world".

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Notes for the Editor

- In 2000, Ireland committed to reaching the UN target for spending 0.7% of our GNI on ODA – or overseas aid – by 2007. This target was later moved to 2012. Current Government policy is to reach the UN target by 2015 at the latest.
- The Government has, to date, not formulated a strategy, or set any interim targets for its achievement of the 0.7% level by 2015.
- The total 2013 budget for Ireland's overseas aid programme stood at €622m.
- A summary of the OECD projections is available at <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/aidtopoorcountriesslipsfurtherasgovernmentstightenbudgets.htm>

Contact

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Dóchas is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 49 member organisations, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues.

For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie

DÓCHAS MEMBERS

ActionAid Ireland – Afri – Africa Centre – Aidlink – AIDS Partnership with Africa – Alan Kerins Projects – Amnesty International Ireland – Camara Education – Centre for Global Education – Child Aid Ireland–India – ChildFund Ireland – Children in Crossfire – Christian Aid Ireland – CBM Ireland – Comhlámh – Concern Worldwide – Development Perspectives – Foundation Nepal – Friends of Londiani (Ireland) – Galway One World Centre – Gorta – Habitat for Humanity Ireland – Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) – Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) – Irish League of Credit Unions International Development Foundation (ILCU/IDF) – Irish Missionary Union (IMU) – Irish Red Cross (IRC) – Kerry Action for Development Education (KADE) – National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) – Nurture Africa – Oxfam Ireland – Plan Ireland – Progressio Ireland – Self Help Africa – SERVE in Solidarity Ireland – Sightsavers – Skillshare International Ireland – Suas Educational Development – Tearfund Ireland – The Haven Community Foundation – The Hope Foundation – The National Council of Ireland YMCA Trust – Trócaire – Vita – Voluntary Service International (VSI) – Voluntary Service Overseas (Ireland) – Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM) – War on Want Northern Ireland – World Vision Ireland.