



The Irish Association of Non-Governmental
Development Organisations

Dóchas – The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

******EMBARGO: THURSDAY 3RD MAY 6AM******

Thursday 3rd May 2018

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS AND IRISH NGOS GATHER IN DUBLIN TO ‘CHANGE THE NARRATIVE’ ON GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

****Photos to follow from Mark Stedman****

Dóchas calls on civil society, activists and campaigners to work together to ‘change the narrative’ on international development, at a conference in Dublin today.

During the annual gathering of the Irish development sector, in the Croke Park Conference Centre, experts and delegates explore how international NGOs can communicate on global justice in ways that engage and resonate with the Irish public.

The conference brings together leading figures in global development and humanitarian action – including Heba Aly (Director, IRIN); Ruairí De Búrca (Director General, Irish Aid); Rafeef Ziadah (Palestinian spoken word artist, human rights activist and academic); Dr Danny Sriskandarajah (Secretary General and CEO, CIVICUS); and Judith Greenwood (Executive Director, CHS Alliance).

Suzanne Keatinge, CEO of Dóchas, said: “Today’s conference comes at a crucial moment for those working for international development, social justice and equality in Ireland. The Government has just launched its National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals and is poised to develop a new roadmap this year that will set Ireland on the path to reaching 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on overseas aid by 2030. These developments offer a precious opportunity for Ireland to take a leading role in eradicating world poverty and delivering on the transformative goals laid out in Agenda 2030.

“But, if we are to achieve this, we must have the support and momentum of the Irish public behind us. That is why we have gathered here today – to ask ourselves how we can engage the public and mobilise their ideas, energy and activism.

“There is a need for critical debate about how NGOs engage the public in the work that we do. We need to communicate the complexity and urgency of development and humanitarian crises, while at the same time remaining relevant and real to communities in Ireland who may be struggling to cope with their own experiences of conflict, poverty and injustice.”

Dr Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, Secretary General and CEO of CIVICUS, a global civil society alliance, and keynote speaker, said: “The world needs civil society more than ever; but the pressures on civil society organisations are greater than ever. Citizens are organising and mobilising in amazing ways. Those of us in the organised bits of civil society need to work out how best we can build people’s power, and help deliver a more just, inclusive and sustainable world.”

ENDS

For further information or to organise an interview, please contact Lía Flattery, Dóchas Communications & Events Officer, at lia@dochas.ie or 085-1198415.

Notes for the editor:

- Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its members, and a platform for them to speak with a single voice on development issues. For more information, visit: <http://dochas.ie/>.
- 'Changing the Narrative' is the Dóchas Annual Conference 2018. Over 200 delegates from across the Irish international development and wider non-profit sector will be in attendance. It is taking place in the Hogan Mezzanine in the Croke Park Conference Centre. For more information, visit: <http://dochas.ie/events/conference>.
- Speakers at 'Changing the Narrative' include: Heba Aly (Director, IRIN); Ruairí De Búrca (Director General, Irish Aid); Rafeef Ziadah (Palestinian spoken word artist, human rights activist and academic); Dr Danny Sriskandarajah (Secretary General and CEO, CIVICUS); and Judith Greenwood (Executive Director, CHS Alliance). Dil Wickremasinghe (journalist and broadcaster) is the MC.
- Primary sponsors of the conference include Western Union Business Solutions and IHI Group. Associate sponsors include Crowe Horwath, ABF Security, O'Kennedy Consulting and Charity Careers Ireland.
- Photographs will be issued to the press by Stedman Photography.