



**Dóchas**  
position paper  
for the  
10-year review  
of the  
**Millennium  
Development Goals**

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**Dochas**

The Irish Association of Non-Governmental  
Development Organisations

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Ireland signed up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. At this landmark meeting, 189 countries stated that they would no longer tolerate extreme inequality in the world and would do all in their power to eradicate severe poverty and hunger. The MDGs would provide the framework through which world leaders would work together to wipe out extreme poverty.

In September 2010, Member States of the United Nations (UN) will come together in New York to review the progress made towards achieving the MDGs and to agree the actions that still need to be taken.

This paper highlights some of the key areas that Ireland needs to advance, both by itself and through the European Union (EU), to help achieve the MDGs.

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# What are the Millennium Development Goals?

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**Goal 1:** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger



**Goal 2:** Achieve universal primary education



**Goal 3:** Promote gender equality and empower women



**Goal 4:** Reduce child mortality



**Goal 5:** Improve maternal health



**Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases



**Goal 7:** Ensure environmental sustainability



**Goal 8:** Develop a global partnership for development

# Ireland's call

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In its own right, and as a Member State of the EU, Ireland needs to show its political will in action by delivering on its part of the global partnership for development.

Ireland can do this by:

- ★ delivering the development aid it has promised;
- ★ being more proactive in relation to policy coherence for development, so that other Government policies do not undermine poor countries; and
- ★ standing firmly for the interests of developing countries in international fora and negotiations.

Since the Millennium Summit in 2000, Ireland has repeatedly stated its support for the MDGs and has shown leadership in relation to HIV and AIDS, hunger and aid effectiveness. Ireland has also pledged to increase its official development aid to meet the UN target of spending 0.7% of national income on overseas aid. However, since its original pledge in 2000, the Government has twice shifted the date for achieving this international commitment, and now states that its aim is to reach the UN target of a minimum 0.7% by 2015 at the latest.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 2000, then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern set a date of 2007, which was later revised to 2012. In December 2009, the Government again moved the target date, stating it would be "2015 at the latest". Dóchas estimates that Ireland will spend about €750 million less in development assistance between 2010 and 2015 as a result of this postponement.

# Development resources – the single biggest issue

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UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has highlighted the failure to deliver the resources needed as the single biggest obstacle to delivering the MDGs. Ireland and other donors have a critical role to play in delivering those resources, especially through overseas aid but also through other forms of financing for development.

Ireland's Development NGOs consider it vital that Ireland takes part in the MDG review on the basis of pledges delivered and firm new aid commitments, not simply on the basis of promises made.

**Dóchas calls on the Irish Government to re-commit itself to achieving the MDGs by announcing a detailed and specific action plan to deliver the resources and other supports needed.**

Specifically, Ireland should reinforce its latest pledge of reaching the 0.7% target by 2015 with:

- ★ a clear, year by year timetable for binding interim targets;
- ★ a commitment to enabling legislation; and
- ★ an action plan to tackle Irish and EU policies that are damaging to the world's poor countries and people.

Only by matching good intentions with clear political will on resources and policy coherence for development will Ireland truly establish its sincerity in making progress on the MDGs.



# An Irish breakthrough plan for the MDGs

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## **Dóchas members urge the Government to bring forward a concrete action plan with firm deadlines.**

In effect, this would be an MDG breakthrough plan and would include specific actions by Ireland to:

- ★ live up to its national and international commitments by:
  - ◆ making sure that aid levels reach a minimum 0.7% of gross national income by 2015 at the latest;
  - ◆ enshrining Ireland's overseas aid commitment in law; and
  - ◆ continually improving the focus and effectiveness of overseas aid in reducing poverty.
- ★ support the agreement of an ambitious, concrete and progressive EU plan to speed up the achievement of the MDGs;
- ★ build on Ireland's stated strategic focus on hunger to make significant inroads in the first MDG (to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty) by promoting smallholder agriculture and focusing on the role of women in agriculture; and
- ★ advocate for a rights-based approach to ensure that MDG efforts are directed towards addressing discrimination and inequalities, and prioritise the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

The Government should also:

- ★ commit to an ambitious national work programme to tackle areas where Ireland's policies, practices or positions create obstacles for developing countries which are trying to achieve the MDGs;
- ★ support the setting up of monitoring and accountability mechanisms to achieve the MDGs, as called for by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon;
- ★ help developing countries to put in place the tools they need to mobilise domestic resources (through taxation, for example); and
- ★ support international co-operation to prevent illegal capital flight and tackle large-scale corporate tax evasion and tax avoidance which denies developing countries much of the tax revenue they need for social development.

People create poverty and people can wipe out poverty: ultimately, it is a matter of political choice and priorities. We hope and expect that Ireland will match its good intentions with specific and deliberate action, by committing to an ambitious and explicit plan to speed up achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

As a small, open economy, Ireland depends on its reputation as a minor but important player in the world: an outward-looking country and supporter of multilateralism; a human rights advocate, peacekeeper and development leader; a reliable partner; and a country that keeps its promises.

Doing the right thing by delivering the MDGs is a chance to strengthen Ireland's reputation while helping to really tackle poverty and inequality in the world.

» **For more details, log on to our resources page on the MDGs at <http://www.dochas.ie/pages/resources/default.aspx?id=34>**

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The Irish Association of Non-Governmental  
Development Organisations

Dóchas is the umbrella organisation of Irish Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in development and relief overseas and/or development education in Ireland. Dóchas aims to provide a forum for consultation and co-operation among its Members as well as to help them speak with a single voice on development issues.

Dóchas, 12 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2, Ireland  
Phone: +353 (0) 1 405 3801 [www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie)



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