

PRESS RELEASE

Irish cuts among worst in OECD aid list

**2009 figures show some countries increased overseas aid,
while Ireland slashed its aid budget by 19%**

14 April 2010

OECD figures released today show a mixed picture for rich countries' performance on their aid promises, in a crucial year for the fight against global poverty.

Just five years before the deadline for meeting the Millennium Development Goals, the world's targets for eradicating the worst forms of poverty, the figures presented by the [OECD's Development Assistance Committee](#) (DAC - the club of rich donor countries) show that more than half of its member countries have cut their aid budgets.

Some developed countries, particularly some G8 countries (Germany, Italy, Japan and Canada) but also Austria and Ireland, slashed their aid spending, although the US and UK managed to increase their spending, despite the economic crisis.

Ireland cut its overseas aid budget by 18.9% in 2009, when measured in US dollars, as the OECD does. Only Austria and Italy performed worse in terms of delivering on their aid promises.

"What today's figures show is that some developed countries, such as Ireland, are blaming the financial crisis for their decision to cut overseas aid – but the crisis can't be an excuse," said Hans Zomer of Dóchas, the umbrella group of Ireland's development NGOs.

"What the Government seems to want us to forget is that the world's poorest people are particularly affected by the global downturn: This year, more people go hungry than ever before. It is the one billion people that are living in absolute poverty that need our support, much more urgently than our mismanaged banks need a bail-out."

Ten years ago, world leaders agreed a set of actions that would make the worst forms of poverty history. Those "[Millennium Development Goals](#)" (MDGs) established yardsticks for measuring results, for developing countries and rich countries alike. The

rich countries of the OECD made specific commitments to increase their aid to the world's poorest countries, to help achieve the Goals.

"The year 2010 is a key year for OECD and EU member states, who promised to help eradicate the worst forms of poverty by 2015, by providing the financial resources needed. If rich countries fail to deliver, it will be impossible to achieve the MDGs," said Hans Zomer.

Earlier this year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon published his assessment of the world's progress towards the MDGs. His report, *Keeping the Promise*, which will serve as a basis for key deliberations on achieving the MDGs at a UN Summit in September, shows a mixed picture.

"A number of countries have achieved major successes in combating extreme poverty and hunger, improving school enrolment and expanding access to clean water. These successes have taken place in some of the poorest countries, demonstrating that the MDGs are achievable, given the right policies and adequate levels of investment," said Zomer.

"But the report also highlights that inadequate resourcing, as a result of unfulfilled promises by donor countries, is the biggest obstacle to this global drive to make poverty history..

"It is high time that our leaders deliver on their promises to the world's poorest people."

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Notes:

- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent a global partnership that has grown from the commitments and targets established at the world summits of the 1990s. Responding to the world's main development challenges and to the calls of civil society, the MDGs promote poverty reduction, education, maternal health, gender equality, and aim at combating child mortality, AIDS and other diseases. More at <http://www.dochas.ie/pages/resources/default.aspx?id=34> and <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/>
- In February 2010, the UN's Secretary General published a detailed overview of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The full report is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/665

- With only five years left until the 2015 deadline to achieve the MDGs, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on world leaders to attend a Summit in New York on 20-22 September 2010 to boost progress towards the MDGs.
- **Ireland** had promised to achieve the UN's target of spending 0.7% of GNI on overseas aid by 2007. This target was then revised to 2012, and in December 2009, the Government announced that it would not achieve that target either. Current Government policy is to achieve the 0.7% ODA/GNI target by 2015 but no strategy for the achievement of this latest target has been formulated to date.
- 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 cooperation among its 44 members as well as to help them speak with a single voice on development issues. More information at www.dochas.ie

Dóchas Member Agencies

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| 1. ActionAid Ireland | 23. Irish Family Planning Association |
| 2. Action from Ireland | 24. Irish Foundation for Cooperative Development |
| 3. Africa Centre | 25. Irish Missionary Union |
| 4. Aidlink | 26. Irish Red Cross |
| 5. Amnesty International-Irish Section | 27. Kerry Action for Development Education |
| 6. Bóthar | 28. National Youth Council of Ireland |
| 7. Camara | 29. Oxfam Ireland |
| 8. Centre for Global Education | 30. Plan Ireland |
| 9. ChildFund Ireland | 31. Progressio Ireland |
| 10. Children in Crossfire | 32. Self Help Africa |
| 11. Christian Aid Ireland | 33. SightSavers International |
| 12. Christian Blind Mission Ireland | 34. Skillshare International Ireland |
| 13. Church Mission Society Ireland | 35. Suas Educational Development |
| 14. Comhlámh | 36. The Hope Foundation |
| 15. Concern Worldwide | 37. Trócaire |
| 16. Friends of Londiani (Ireland) | 38. Vita |
| 17. Galway One World Centre | 39. Voluntary Service International |
| 18. Gorta | 40. Voluntary Service Overseas |
| 19. International Service Ireland | 41. Volunteer Missionary Movement |
| 20. Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation | 42. War on Want Northern Ireland |
| 21. Irish Commission for Justice and Social Affairs | 43. World Vision Ireland |
| 22. Irish Council for International Students | |