

PRESS RELEASE

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Dóchas Annual Conference 2011

Aid agencies step up for greater effectiveness in the fight against global poverty and injustice

Over 150 Irish organisations work in International Development, defending human rights, saving lives in emergencies and fighting global poverty. They do so out of a genuine concern about human dignity, and out of a determination to deliver the greatest possible value for money.

At a conference taking place on 5 May, entitled ‘**Guaranteed Irish?**’, Ireland’s many Development organisations will reflect on the added value of Irish organisations, and whether Irish organisations have a special role to play in global efforts to make poverty history.

“When working on behalf of people and communities living in poverty and using taxpayers’ money, we have a duty to ensure that our efforts bring about the maximum impact in addressing poverty and injustice,” said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas, the umbrella association of Irish development NGOs, which is hosting the event.

“Achieving impact is about spending money on programmes that really matter. At the conference we are examining the question of whether NGOs are at times penny-wise-and-pound-foolish. In other words, does the value for money agenda lead organisations to focus on doing things right rather than doing the right thing?” continued Zomer.

The conference comes at a time when NGOs around the world are under severe pressure from a combination of major funding cutbacks, growing demand for their services and decreasing tolerance for independent civic actions. The global economic crisis is forcing development NGOs to ask difficult questions of themselves and to demand even higher standards of conduct from their staff and volunteers.

Jan O’Sullivan, Minister at the Department of Foreign Affairs with Special Responsibility for Trade and Development, will open the conference, while the keynote will be delivered by former prisoner of conscience Netsanet Belay, currently with Civicus – World Alliance for Citizen Participation. Chairing the event is Orla Barry, Newstalk presenter and documentary film-maker. Seeking to spark critical reflection, panelists will come from various backgrounds including large development NGOs, members of the domestic community sector, researchers and members of the private sector.

“Ireland’s overseas aid programme is of world class standard. And Irish NGOs are world leaders when it comes to adhering to professional codes of conduct. This conference gives all of us, NGOs and donors alike, an opportunity to reflect on new ways to further enhance the quality of our work together,” added Hans Zomer.

The conference is organised as part of Dóchas work on development effectiveness, directly after the network's AGM which will gather over 40 Irish development NGOs coming together and cooperating to maximise the impact and quality of their work.

The conference is taking place on 5 May from 2 - 5.30pm at the Wood Quay Venue, Dublin City Council Civic Offices, Dublin 8.

The following people will also speak at the conference

- **Anne Maguire**, Operations Director, Haven
- **Lorna Gold**, Advocacy Manager, Trócaire
- **Nicolas Marcoux**, Head of International Services at the Irish Institute of Public Administration and PhD Candidate on the development effectiveness of Irish philanthropies
- **José Antonio Gutiérrez D.**, Research and Development Officer, Latin American Solidarity Centre (LASC)
- **David Lewis**, Professor of Social Policy and Development, LSE and advisor to Reality Check Approach Bangladesh
- **Ed Rice**, Visual Media Producer and developer of Givers Atlas
- **Mike Allen**, Director of Advocacy, Focus Ireland
- **Rachel Manton**, Senior Manager, Accenture Development Partnerships
- **Siobhán O'Donoghue**, Director of Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and member of the *Claiming our Future* initiative.

[ENDS]

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NOTES FOR THE EDITOR:

- The Dóchas AGM takes place on 5 May in Dublin.
- For more information about the conference, log on to http://www.dochas.ie/guaranteed_irish
- Further information on Dóchas work on Development Effectiveness is available at: <http://www.dochas.ie/Pages/Resources/Viewer.aspx?id=313>
- Dóchas is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 43 members, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues. For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie

DÓCHAS MEMBER AGENCIES:

1. A-Z Children's Charity
2. ActionAid Ireland
3. Afri
4. Africa Centre
5. Aidlink
6. Amnesty International Ireland
7. Camara Education

8. Centre for Global Education
9. ChildFund Ireland
10. Children in Crossfire
11. Christian Aid Ireland
12. Christian Blind Mission Ireland
13. Church Missionary Society Ireland (CMSI)
14. Comhlámh
15. Concern
16. Friends of Londiani (Ireland)
17. Galway One World Centre
18. Gorta
19. Habitat for Humanity Ireland
20. Irish League of Credit Unions International Development Foundation (ILCU/IDF)
21. Irish Commission for Justice and Social Affairs (ICJSA)
22. Irish Council for International Students (ICOS)
23. Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA)
24. Irish Foundation for Co-operative Development (IFCD)
25. Irish Missionary Union (IMU)
26. Irish Red Cross (IRC)
27. Kerry Action for Development Education (KADE)
28. National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
29. Oxfam – Ireland
30. Plan Ireland
31. Progressio Ireland
32. Self Help Africa
33. Sightsavers International Ireland
34. Skillshare International Ireland
35. Suas Educational Development
36. The Hope Foundation
37. Trócaire
38. Vita
39. Voluntary Service International (VSI)
40. Voluntary Service Overseas (Ireland)
41. Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM)
42. War on Want Northern Ireland
43. World Vision Ireland