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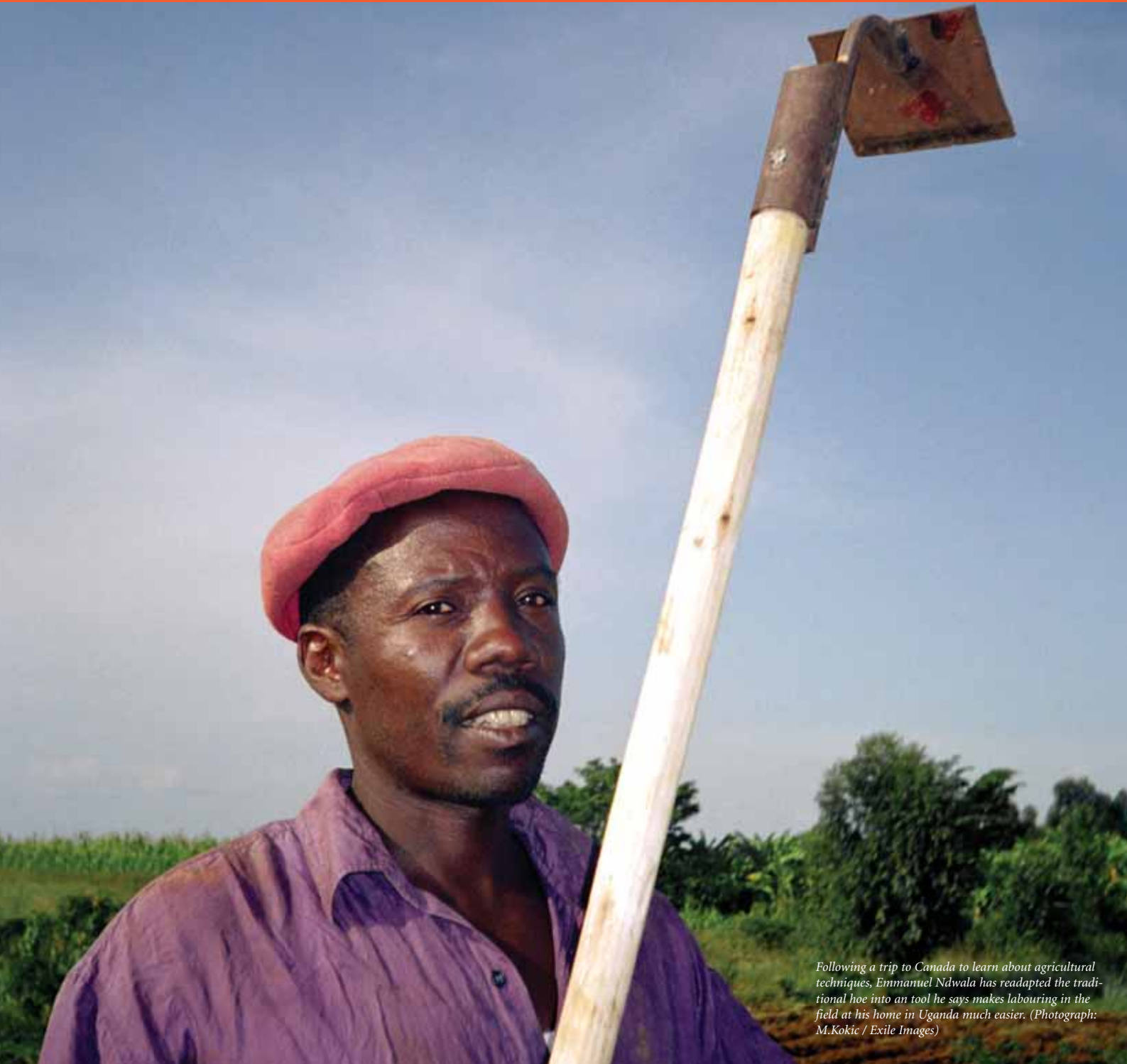
## ACTION FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE



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**INSIDE** Global Week of Action Tool Kit / The Pineapple King / Is Ireland too rich to honour its commitments to the poor? / All Plan, No Action - Ireland's anti-racism policies / Action news



*Following a trip to Canada to learn about agricultural techniques, Emmanuel Ndwala has readapted the traditional hoe into a tool he says makes labouring in the field at his home in Uganda much easier. (Photograph: M.Kokic / Exile Images)*

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## Credits & Contact details

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The views expressed in individual articles are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the collective or of Comhlámh.

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## Correspondence

Comhlámh, 10 Upper Camden Street,  
Dublin 2, Ireland.  
Ph +353-1-4783490 Fax +353-1-4783738  
E-mail: [info@comhlamh.org](mailto:info@comhlamh.org)

Comhlámh, 55 Grand Parade, Cork, Ireland  
Ph +353-21-4275881 Fax +353-21-4275241  
E-mail: [comhcork@iol.ie](mailto:comhcork@iol.ie)  
Website address: [www.comhlamh.org](http://www.comhlamh.org)

Comhlámh Northern Ireland  
The Citizenship Centre  
34 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast BT2 7DB  
Tel 90 200850  
Email: [comhlamhni@hotmail.com](mailto:comhlamhni@hotmail.com)

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We have tried, sometimes without success, to contact all relevant photographers and agencies to seek their permission to use photographs. We apologise to those we have been unable to trace.

**Editorial team:** Conall O'Caomh, Ian McDonald, Stephen Rigney, Thomas Geoghegan.

**Writing:** Michael D. Higgins, Karin Gregow, Stephen Rigney, Ian McDonald, Conall O'Caomh.

**Design:** Thomas Geoghegan, Alice Fitzgerald ([www.thepixeldivision.com](http://www.thepixeldivision.com)) and Elisabet Canestro.

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## Co-ordinator's welcome



Dear Members,

Congratulations and thanks to all the Comhlámh members who have contributed through the years leading to this our 30th Anniversary. Thirty years ago Irish society was beginning to become conscious of itself as part of Europe. Comhlámh members have raised awareness of Ireland's role in the wider world and particularly sought to highlight the root causes of poverty and build solidarity with those suffering injustice.

That role is as relevant today as it was in 1975. Our world is now ever more connected yet even more divided. The gap between rich and poor is even wider. A richer and more culturally diverse Irish society is more aware of the wider world. It could play a leading role in building bridges between the global North and South.

For this to occur, public awareness of the causes of poverty needs to be deepened. Public representatives need to feel their electorate's concern for global justice. Therefore Comhlámh needs you to play an active part in shaping our campaigns and bringing them to the Irish public in the decades to come.

When Comhlámh was founded in 1975 there was not a global consensus around a single development agenda. Thankfully, world leaders and citizens now share the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a common objective. There remains, of course, debate over how to get there. Comhlámh has joined with other Irish NGOs in the 'Make Poverty History' campaign to fulfil the MDGs. Its three pillars of 'aid, debt and trade' shall punctuate our year.

April 10th - 16th marks the Global Week of Action for Trade Justice - truly a South-North joint action. Please help make this week a significant contribution to the Make Poverty History campaign.

Yours,

Emma Lane-Spollen

# A Global Call to Action: The Global Week of Action for Trade Justice *April 10th to 16th 2005*

This week offers an opportunity for you to raise awareness in your locality about the need to change the rules which catch developing countries in the 'trade trap'. Simple ideas work best. Whether in public, at work, in a college or within an organisation, please do something simple to raise awareness of the need for Trade Justice.

The objective of the week is to build up the number of people who take action for trade justice. We need to gather e-mail addresses of interested people.

See the centre pages, which provide a Tool Kit for the week.

Activities are already being organised for Cork, Belfast, Galway, Maynooth and Dublin. Let us know what you can do during the week and how you can add your community to the list.

The Global Week of Action for Trade Justice is being organised in Ireland by Trade Justice Ireland, of which Comhlámh is a member. Visit [www.tradejustice.ie](http://www.tradejustice.ie) to learn what is happening in your area. If you organise an event, one of the Trade Justice organisations may be able to help by sending a speaker.

## Action 2: Build a network of campaigners Contact your local politician

Comhlámh is asking you to get to know your local politicians. We are seeking to have campaign members in every constituency in the Republic and in Northern Ireland.

### What we want you to do:

Twice a year we want you to contact your local TD, MLA or MP and ask him or her to ask questions in parliament related to Comhlámh's campaign issues. You don't need to be an expert on the issues - we will give you all the background briefings you will need - but you do need to be a concerned citizen.

Comhlámh's core campaign issues include: trade justice, anti-racism, and the quality of aid.

If you are interested in campaigning for us, please send an email with your full name and address, phone number and constituency in which you are registered to vote to:

[conalloc@comhlamh.org](mailto:conalloc@comhlamh.org)

By the way, it is important that you are registered to vote in your representative's constituency!

We will be there for you if you have any support or training needs.

# The Pineapple King

*Ian McDonald reflects on the Millenium Development Goals from Sao Paolo, Porto Alegre and New York.*



*President Lula of Brazil addresses a rapturous audience at the WSF, Porto Alegre, 2005 (Photograph by Irene Lôbo/ www.ciranda.net)*

Carnival in Brazil! I enter Sao Paulo's Sambadrome with only the vaguest notion of what I am about to witness, unprepared for the sheer spectacle of Carnival.

The band begins to play, and the first dancers appear. Hundreds of them! For nearly an hour, waves of dancers samba past, interrupted now and then by lavish floats, all singing and dancing to the same song until, at last hundreds of drummers appear as the band rolls into view. Not for the first time in Brazil, I watch in wonder and amazement. And this is just the start of a festival that will last well beyond sunrise.

Only later do I reflect that a single samba tune sung for a full hour could - in more recognisable surroundings - become grating.

A very lovely Brazilian woman explains the meaning of the song to me. Each year the Samba groups decide on a theme, and this year's is a militant song of social justice, a call to "Join hands" and

"Take up the struggle".

"But I don't know what the words have to do with anything" she muses as the next column of lavish floats and flamboyant dancers sambas past, singing joyfully, dancing with abandon. "They all look like pineapples."

## **A Festival of the Oppressed**

I arrived in Sao Paulo just in time for Carnival, travelling north from the city of Porto Alegre where I had witnessed a very different, though no less amazing, event - the fifth World Social Forum.

Called variously a carnival of the oppressed or a laboratory of ideas, this year's WSF saw more than 150,000 people from 132 countries come together for a week of seminars, workshops, concerts and a frenetic sharing of ideas and phone numbers.

At the forum's opening night, Brazil's President Lula, speakers from four continents, a stadium full of activists, a samba band, and Bono on the big screen

launched the Global Call to Action Against Poverty. President Lula set the context: "poverty is not just about social policy, it is about politics." Bono told us what to do: "we are the first generation that can end extreme poverty."

Which is exactly why we are here to launch a global campaign.

## **A Millennium Pageant**

Some five years earlier, in September 2000, another kind of pageant was unfolding in New York when 189 heads of state gathered to launch the Millennium Development Goals. In an era of unprecedented prosperity the world was finally to start fighting poverty in earnest.

Poor countries would pledge to deliver better social policy, fight corruption, and do their part. Rich countries promised to deliver on their role in a partnership for development - more and better aid, action on the debt crisis, and redress of the many inequities that warp trade relations between North and South.

Our Taoiseach set an earnest tone at the conference, when he committed Ireland to reaching the UN target of spending 0.7% of GNP on overseas development aid by 2007.

### He can Sing, but can he Dance?

In Porto Alegre, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals was concisely and angrily summarised by an Indian speaker: "After five years, it is another set of broken promises".

And so on the way home from Brazil I stopped in New York to meet Salil Shetty, director of the UN's Millennium Campaign. His job is to cultivate a global campaign against poverty and to generate the political will to ensure that promises are kept.

"A country like Ireland," he observed, "is rightly the country that should be breaking new ground. Since Ireland made the commitment [to 0.7% of GNP], we have a situation where over half the EU countries have actually committed themselves."

But in late 2004, Ireland's promise to the world's poor was formally broken.

"It's a big problem," said Salil. "It is a big problem for us, because for the last two or three years we have been using Ireland as an example and now we are in a situation where we have to swallow our words. If Ireland is the first one to go back on its commitments we are nervous that this is going to have a cascading effect. It could snowball. I think the Irish people have a big job on their hands to hold their government to account on the promise it has made."

Our Taoiseach knew the words to the song when he made his commitments at the UN Millennium summit. It is time for actions to match words. Or resign to playing the role of Bertie, the Pineapple King.

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty comes to Ireland in the form of the Make Poverty History Campaign. See:

**Trocaire's Keep our Word Campaign**  
[www.keepourworld.org](http://www.keepourworld.org)

**The Millennium Goals**  
[www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org)

**The Global Call to Action against poverty**  
[www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org)

**The Trade Justice Ireland Coalition**  
[www.tradejustice.ie](http://www.tradejustice.ie)

## Nelson Mandela's Call to Make Poverty History

*On 3 February 2005, Trafalgar Square filled with 22,000 people responding to the Global Call to Action against Poverty. Nelson Mandela made a rallying call to the gathering:*

The Global Campaign for Action Against Poverty represents such a noble cause that we could not decline the invitation. Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times - times in which the world boasts breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation - that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils.

The Global Campaign for Action Against Poverty can take its place as a public movement alongside the movement to abolish slavery and the international solidarity against apartheid.

Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.

While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.

The steps that are needed from the developed nations are clear. The first is ensuring trade justice. I have said before that trade justice is a truly meaningful way for the developed countries to show commitment to bringing about an end to global poverty.

The second is an end to the debt crisis for the poorest countries.

The third is to deliver much more aid and make sure it is of the highest quality.

In 2005, there is a unique opportunity for making an impact. Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom. Of course the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity.

Make Poverty History in 2005. Then we can all stand with our heads held high.



(Photograph: <http://www.goldfields.co.za/>)

# EU imposes its free trade agenda on Africa

*African civil society warns of the dangers of free trade agreements with the EU*



*Southern farmers will have to compete against huge farms such as these in Spain (Photograph: Conall O’Caoimh)*

Through economic partnership agreements, the EU is aggressively prising open developing African markets for their own goods and services, but unwilling to open its own farming sector to the free market. This will pose serious threats to already vulnerable local food producers and food processors in Africa, and it could destroy Africa’s infant industrialisation.

Enterprises in many African countries are not ready to respond to full and rapid liberalisation because of the fragile nature of their developing economies. European businesses can take orders over high-quality telecommunications systems, deliver goods over a dense network of roads and airports, and can call upon a sophisticated legal system if things go wrong. Many African businesses, lacking all of these advantages, simply cannot compete.

For African countries, discussion on the

EU’s unfair agricultural trade policies is crucial. There is concern that local agricultural production and agri-based industries will be wiped out by a surge of imports from the EU.

It is a pity then that the EU seems so determined to limit discussions on the implications of their Common Agriculture Policy reforms. The CAP reforms of the last few years do not eliminate support to European farmers, they merely shift the supports so that the WTO will not cry foul.

### **Regional integration undermined**

African countries are working towards closer regional integration and are worried that economic partnership agreements could derail these integration efforts. This is particularly so in Eastern and Southern Africa, where three regional trade and development communities are being split into two artifi-

cial trade blocs.

It is clear that the partnership agreements in their current guise are merely tools for the EU to impose its trade and investment agenda on African countries. This brand of free trade agreements would seriously hamper the ability of African countries to reach their national and developmental objectives.

Civil society, both in Africa and in Europe, has an important role to play. Trade negotiations must be answerable to democratic processes, so that Africans and Europeans can work towards their mutual best interests. Our mutual interest involves nothing less and nothing more than the end of poverty in Africa, so we can all profit from world trade as equals.

*Words by Karin Gregow, EcoNews Africa*

# Will Carlow's loss be developing countries' gain?



Sugar cane growing in Africa (Photograph: Melissa Ramirez / www.stockxchng.com)

As we go to print the Greencore sugar factory in Carlow is closing its gates for the last time. Over 300 workers are being made redundant. Farmers in the area lose the sole local buyer for their beet and the cost of transporting their harvest to Mallow may push them out of production.

The Carlow closure has crystallised the debate about agricultural subsidies and trade justice. Comhlámh and other NGOs have been calling for reform of agricultural supports including the elimination of export subsidies. Are we pleased to see Carlow close? Of course not! But are we seeking the elimination of all subsidies?

Greencore has made its pre-emptive decision to close so as to position itself ahead of the imminent reform of Europe's sugar supports. But why is the EU taking on that reform? It is not a cost saving exercise - the EU will spend as much in indirect subsidies. Nor is it credible that we campaigners have more political clout than the farm lobby. So why?

The reason is because the EU is pressing developing countries to open up their markets to our manufacturing and service industries. At the ongoing World Trade Organisation talks, the EU is the lead protagonist putting pressure on developing countries. So naturally those countries want something in return. And their 'ask' is agriculture. But it need not be so if we in

Europe were not pressing to get access for our goods and services to their markets.

Mozambique has already seen the closure of 12 of its 13 cashew nut processing factories as liberalisation was forced on it by the World Bank. 11,000 food processing jobs were lost as a result. Mozambique can produce sugar at little over €200 per tonne compared with the EU price of €635. So of course it wants Europe to do some of the opening up its cashew sector suffered.

But farm organisations are right to point out that if Europe liberalises its market, it will not be Mozambican producers who benefit. Middle income countries, notably Brazil, will crowd the market. Their sugar is exported by corporations with mas-

*It is only with managed markets and supports designed to benefit the weaker producers in Europe and in the wider world that Carlow's loss will be developing countries' gain.*

sive economies of scale and slick marketing machinery.

So instead of simply liberalising, Europe needs to manage its market. It should give quotas to the poorest countries for them to sell to Europe at a reliable and remunerative price. Mauritius is a good example of a country which has benefited well from such sugar quotas.

Such a 'managed' approach is consistent with the EU supporting its smaller farmers. Farming provides many benefits besides its crops. For that we need small farmers to stay in business. In common with farmers in developing countries, Irish farmers receive a diminishing share of the shop price of farm goods. But subsidies to larger farms and agribusiness cannot sit with fairness.

So far Ireland has chosen not to target subsidies towards smaller farmers. But it has the policy space to do so. A model already exists in Scotland where farmers receive £70 per head of cattle up to ten animals, and £35 per animal after that. But the Irish government continues to allow the largest farms receive most subsidies.

It is only with managed markets, with supports designed to benefit the weaker producers in Europe and in the wider world that Carlow's loss will be developing countries' gain.

Words by Conall O'Caomh

# Is Ireland now too rich to honour its commitments to the world's poor?

*Michael D. Higgins T.D. criticises the Government's failure to keep its promise on aid.*

The worst aspects of the Government's failure to meet the commitments solemnly given to the UN General Assembly in September 2000, are the betrayal of trust involved and the bad example it gives to fellow EU members and to the entire international community.

Ireland was held up as an example to others when the Taoiseach promised that we would reach the UN Overseas Development Aid target of 0.7% of GNP by 2007. Our commitment was particularly appreciated in Africa, which desperately needs genuine assistance in their task of development. Now, instead, we will be remembered as the country that became too rich to keep its promise to the world's poorest.

The world that we have helped make is one which is increasing its military expenditure while reducing its expenditure on aid. In 1995 global military expenditure was \$864 billion, whereas expenditure on the treatment of AIDS, TB and malaria worldwide was \$15 billion. Between 1945 and 1995, 23 million soldiers and civilians died in wars. 150 million died from AIDS, TB and malaria.

Every day malaria kills 3,000 people. Three out of four are children. TB kills 1½ million people every year, and infects 8 million more. These are just some of the tragedies that our aid commitment was to address. The effect of our broken promise will be of particular significance in the light of the

Millennium Declaration to reduce poverty and hunger throughout the world, endorsed by all 189 members of the United Nations in September 2000.

Before the end of 2005, governments will be asked to assess how close they are to achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals. Already there is a shortfall on commitments. As one instance, I believe that the AIDS/HIV Action Programme has a funding shortfall of over 50%. Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas has pointed out that, when over 8000 people are dying of AIDS every day, our own government's decision is "a shameful breach of faith with the world's poorest people."

When the Government announced its commitment, and repeated it as recently as last year's 58th General Assembly of the United Nations, it was assumed that aid would have reached 0.45% by now. The Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen now says that we will merely reach the much reduced target of 0.43% by 2007.

Does the Government realise the support that exists in this country for honouring our commitments? Our public has been to the forefront in campaigning for a more just world.

Illustrative of this is the recent response in the aftermath of the tsunami that brought disaster to the Indian Ocean. The response from civil society was incredibly generous, far exceeding the sums promised by the



*Michael D. Higgins taking part in a Dáil lobby for Trade Justice 2003.*

Government.

All of Ireland's aid NGOs, the Government's own Advisory Committee, and a unanimous Oireachtas Joint Foreign Affairs Committee have called on the Government to honour the pledge, made not only on its own behalf but on behalf of all Irish people, to help those who are in desperate need.

We do not want to be remembered as the country that became too rich to meet its solemn commitment to the poorest of the poor in the world.

*See page 18 our progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals*

# Global Week of Action

10-16 April 2005 Setting the peoples' agenda

# Tool Kit

“Trade Justice Ireland has an unstoppable idea”  
- *Bono*

## How unfair are the trade rules?

Trade is not an economic issue, it is a human issue.

**Rice in Haiti:** Auracin Claircin is one of thousands of rice farmers who have lost their livelihoods in the flood of cheap American imports. In return for World Bank and IMF money the Haitian government had to eliminate almost all import restrictions. In 1995 the import tariff on rice was slashed to just 3%. Leaving small Haitian farmers with no chance of competing with subsidised US farmers.

**Cotton in Kenya:** Susi Ibutu works with poor farmers in Kenya. The economic reforms imposed by the IMF led to the spectacular collapse of the Kenyan cotton industry. Tariffs on imported clothing were removed and government support was drastically cut. By 2000 cotton production was worth less than 5% of its value in the 1980s.

**Seeds in Malawi:** After the Malawi famine of 2001 the government started to provide free seed and a bag of fertiliser to poor farmers. The IMF considered this a subsidy and told the government to stop the Starter Kit scheme.

## Some bare facts:

- Between 1990 and 2002 the Least Developed countries (LDCs) share of world trade actually fell - from about 3% to 2%.
- The price least developed country producers receive for their food exports continue to fall - In 2002 prices were at just 67% of their 1997 level. Coffee was at just 33% of its 1997 level.

- The UN has shown that while all 51 LDCs increased their exports in line with what rich countries tell them, income per person was rising in only 22 of those countries, and was actually falling in 18 countries. In the remaining 11 countries the effect was indefinite.

## The devil 'tis in the detail:

- Europe says it is open to all products from Zambia tax-free. Zambia grows pineapples, but if it processes them, and sends them to Europe canned, a tax is imposed because the syrup contains sugar.
- A fish processing company in the Lake Volta district of Ghana decided to build a new factory to satisfy EU health standards. During the period of construction the EU changed its health standards, and so the new factory was already obsolete.

## Some alternatives:

**South Korea** reduced poverty through the 1960s and '70s by using a combination of protection for core industries and free markets.

**Mauritius** has had spectacular growth averaging 4.2% from 1975 to 1999. Income inequality fell, life expectancy increased by 10 years. Through this period the IMF ranked Mauritius as a most protected market. Crucial to its success was targeted trade policy - giving incentives to exporters and protecting domestic producers from external competition.

Trade Justice also means ensuring trade rules do not undermine core labour standards.

## What is the Global Week of Action?

A Week of Action from **10-16 April 2005**, where as many people as possible across the world take action to promote trade justice. Taking part in the Global Week of Action is a way of contributing to the campaign to Make Poverty History.

The aim is to challenge the free trade myth and put forward alternatives by delivering the biggest world-wide mobilisation we have seen.

## Where did the idea come from?

In November 2003, over 100 trade activists from 50 countries took part in a historic gathering - the International Trade Campaign Conference, in Delhi, India (at which Trade Justice Ireland was represented). Campaigners issued the global call to a Week of Action. This call was endorsed at the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India, in 2004.

The week is a great example of groups in the South and North of the world working together for a single purpose.

## Who is involved?

Anyone and everyone! In Ireland Trade Justice Ireland (which is an umbrella of eight organisations campaigning on trade) is acting as a focal point for actions. See [www.tradejustice.ie](http://www.tradejustice.ie)

# Cast your vote for global trade justice



## Getting Involved is Easy!

There are many ways to be involved:

- **Organise an event:** Every event, no matter what size, has a part to play in the Week of Action. Contact other individuals and organisations to discuss what events you could organise within your community. See the section on ideas for organising an event.
- **Find an event:** Organisations, movements and campaigns have already started organising events at local, national and international level. To see if others are already organising something in your area see [www.tradejustice.ie](http://www.tradejustice.ie).
- **Get your members involved:** If you are part of an organisation, tell your organisation and members about the Week of Action, and encourage them to get involved. In order to mobilise millions of people the call to action needs to go out far and wide.
- **Join the e-mail list:** Trade Justice Ireland will circulate information on further actions for trade justice. By sending your email to [info@tradejustice.ie](mailto:info@tradejustice.ie) you will be informed of upcoming events.
- **Endorse the call to action:** During the Week of Action movements and campaigns from across the world will join together in united action. If you plan to be involved in the Global Week of Action then please endorse the call to action on [www.april2005.org](http://www.april2005.org) and encourage other organisation to do the same.
- **Find out more:** Visit [www.tradejustice.ie](http://www.tradejustice.ie) and [www.april2005.org](http://www.april2005.org) to find out more about the aims of the Global Week of Action, what we are calling for and what is wrong with trade.

## Ideas for Organising an Event

The main idea is to raise public awareness, and build up campaigners' involvement. There are many ways you can do this:

Most simply:

- Trade Justice Ireland is asking that you just raise a banner in public for a few hours - calling for trade justice, and distribute the stickers available from Trade Justice Ireland.
- If you can we ask you to have a ballot box and



ask the public to 'Vote for Trade Justice'. Then present the ballots to local politicians.

## You might want to go further:

- **Hold a stall in public:** have some information available that shows how unfair current trade rules are, and gather email addresses of people who want information on further actions from Trade Justice Ireland. And distribute those stickers.
- **Use a prop to catch the eye** and get coverage in local newspapers. You could build a scales, use a globe, a paper-maché cargo ship - whatever grabs energy in your area.
- **Hold some 'Unfair Games'** where the rules are obviously unfair. For an example of these see [www.comhlahm.org/campaigns/446](http://www.comhlahm.org/campaigns/446)
- **Issue a press release and send it to the media.** For a sample press release see [www.april2005.org](http://www.april2005.org)
- **Write a letter, telephone or meet your local politicians.** Send a copy of the letter to the news papers.
- **Organise a public meeting on trade.** Invite a speaker from one of the Trade Justice Ireland organisations.
- **Hold a Trade Justice Table Quiz:** it will also help fund the campaign.

You could do any of these things on a public street, or in a place where many people gather, such as a college. Even if you just do something within your organisation, make it part of the Global Week of Action for Trade Justice and let us know.

## Let us know:

Whatever you organise, please let us know. Send an email to [info@tradejustice.ie](mailto:info@tradejustice.ie) or tell any of the organisations in Trade Justice Ireland. We will let the rest of the world know what you are doing - through our website and through the international campaign [www.april2005.org](http://www.april2005.org). Please take some photos of your actions so others can know you are in solidarity with them. We will put them on [www.tradejustice.ie](http://www.tradejustice.ie).

## What are the aims of the week of action?

- **Challenging the free trade myth.** The myth, perpetuated by the rich and powerful, states that free trade and privatisation is the only answer to global poverty. Governments and key decision-makers across the world have swallowed this myth without qualification. Poor countries everywhere are being forced to open their markets to foreign companies and cheap, often subsidised imports; to stop helping vulnerable producers and to privatise essential services. The results are devastating. The myth needs to be exploded once and for all.
- **Proposing alternatives to current trade rules.** Poor countries must be able to choose their own economic policies, including trade policies, which work to reduce poverty.
- **Telling the Stories:** Tell the other side of the story. Current trade rules are inflicting misery on millions of poor people. This is a chance to show the urgent need for change.
- **Show the 'scale' of the global movement.** To demonstrate our solidarity and internationalism and to show that peoples' rejection of enforced free trade is truly global.
- **Build the movement through co-ordinated campaigning.** Support, strengthen and build national trade campaigns and movements. The Week of Action is truly global - a great example of groups in the global South and North collaborating together.

3. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, calling on them to stop forcing free trade and privatisation on the poor through 'advice' and conditions attached to new loans and debt repayments.
4. Regional and bilateral trade agreements - such as the Free trade area of the Americas and the Cotonou Agreement's 'Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). For an end to agreements that put profits before people.
5. Transnational corporations and their role in pushing free trade and privatisation on the poor.

## What you can do

### Use a 'prop' to catch the eye



### Get local politicians involved



### Attract a Crowd



### Sing for Trade Justice



## What are we calling for?

The international message is

- **NO** to the rich and powerful imposing unjust trade agreements, indiscriminate liberalisation and privatisation on the poor.
- **YES** to everyone's right to food, a livelihood, water, health and education.

## Who are we trying to persuade?

1. Governments of the North and South. They are pushing free trade and privatisation on the poor in the following arenas.
2. The World Trade Organisation, calling for an alternative system, one that has the needs of the poorest, rather than having free trade at its heart.

## Follow-Up Actions:

The Trade Justice Campaign will need to continue beyond the Global Week of Action, and it will need you to take an active part. The next big milestone will be the World Trade Organisation: Ministers meeting in Hong Kong, December 2005. This will decide key elements of the supposed 'Doha Development Round' of trade talks.

Europe's Free Trade Areas with developing countries are being negotiated from now till 2007.

Be ready for further actions in the campaign for Trade Justice. Register at [www.tradejustice.ie](http://www.tradejustice.ie) to be kept informed of upcoming actions.

Produced by Comhlámh for Trade Justice Ireland

## Pointing the Green Finger

*Environmental destruction did not cause the Asian Tsunami, but a healthy environment might have reduced the devastation it caused.*

No amount of preparation could have prevented a Tsunami from breaking upon the shores of the South-East Asia. Global warming and environmental destruction for once could not be blamed for what was an elemental, implacable force of nature.

But thanks to environmental degradation, the Tsunami destroyed far more than it should have. Where they still existed, natural barriers such as coral reefs and mangrove forests soaked up much of the Tsunami's force. In too many places unsustainable development, such as industrial shrimp farming, tourism and urban expansion, had ripped out many of these critical defences, exposing vulnerable communities to the full force of the sea.

The millions of tonnes of salt-water hurled by the Tsunami over South-East Asia's coast damaged even more of the ailing countryside. In Aceh alone, alongside the economic and human devastation, some 15,000 hectares of forests and a 300km stretch of coastal farmland has been ruined.

The damaged environment of South-East Asia also raises a more everyday worry. A recent United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report fingers environmental degradation as an aggravating factor behind the infectious diseases that account for two-thirds of all South-East Asian deaths.

"What is good for the environment is good for health, and what is good for health is good for development," says UNEP health and environment expert Hiremagalur Gopalan. The challenge now lies in restoring South-East Asia's wounded coastline so that it can once again become the bedrock for rebuilding healthy, vibrant communities.

*Words by Stephen Rigney*



*Aerial photo of the December Tsunami striking the coast of Kaltura, Sri Lanka (Photograph: www.digitalglobe.com)*

## Local Media: Responding to a Calamity

As the global news media struggled to report on the Asian Tsunami, local news organisations were already responding to the needs of their communities.

On the Andaman islands, with boat links and phone lines destroyed, community radio stations relayed over 13,000 messages from relatives in India to their loved ones on the archipelago.

In Aceh, the Serambi Indonesia newspaper found its offices reduced to rubble by the Tsunami. Within days the newspaper, which had survived years of intimidation to report on the regions' rebellion, once again hit the press, providing locals with news on the disaster and information about relief efforts.

A message on the front page of the post-Tsunami editions of Serambi Indonesia urged missing employees to make contact with the newspaper, a grim reminder that few in the region were immune to tragedy.

## Not a drop to drink

Every year 1.7 million people, the equivalent of 10 Tsunamis, die because of inadequate sanitation or lack of access to safe drinking water. One billion people - or about one-sixth of the Earth's population - do not have access to safe water.

In Ireland, meanwhile, people spend some 6 billion every year on alcohol: used differently, that amount of money could slash the number of people without safe water by almost a third.

Diseases caused by impure water represent an economic loss of \$16 billion a year.

The WHO reckons that every US\$1 invested in water supply and sanitation would lead to an economic return of between US\$3 and US\$4.

Ending poverty is simply a good investment.

# All Plan and No Action

*The Government's new National Action Plan on Racism makes all the right noises, but takes few concrete steps to end racism in Ireland.*

The introduction to the National Action Plan on Racism (NPAR) assures us in eight different languages that racism is not a major problem in Ireland, and advises us to trust the Government to make sure it never becomes one.

Launching the plan on 27th January, the Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell, boasted that Ireland lacks the racist politics seen elsewhere in the EU, and enthused about encouraging and defending diversity here.

Behind the self-congratulatory rhetoric, however, there are concerns that the Government is doing too little to tackle racism in Ireland. "Minister McDowell has warned civil society groups against 'talking up racism,'" says Alice-Mary Higgins of Comhlámh, "but if all was well here, why would we feel the need to talk it up?"

Comhlámh member Rosemary Werner was involved in drafting the NGO Alliance Shadow Report, which made a number of specific recommendations for the government's fight against racism in Ireland. Rosemary, while welcoming the NPAR, points out that that the government's plans contain very few specifics. "It's like an election promise: a wonderful plan, but how will it ever be followed through?"

The NPAR is part of the Irish government's obligations under the UN

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the government now claims that it is in compliance with the convention and with the EU Race Directive.

However, there are many loopholes built into our compliance. CERD recommends states ensure that non-citizens as well as citizens are protected from discrimination, yet Ireland's asylum policies, not to mention last year's citizenship ref-

*"By taking the view that racism is not a major problem here, the Government has pushed racism towards the bottom of its agenda."*

erendum, deliberately discriminate between citizen and non-citizen. "The ban on those who have sought asylum, from accessing employment and the enforced segregation that follows from the 'direct provision' system actively limit participation and inclusion of asylum seekers in Irish society", says Peter O'Mahony, CEO of the Irish Refugee Council.

Travellers fall through yet another loophole, being denied status as an ethnic minority. This flies in the face of a CERD recommendation that objective evidence and self-identification rather than government policy should determine ethnic status. The Government's refusal to recognise Traveller ethnicity allows it to evade CERD's requirement that it should act positively towards members of marginalized ethnic groups.

More worrying are accusations that the government, by not taking sufficient leadership in fighting discrimination, is allowing racism in Ireland to grow. By taking the view that racism is not a major problem here, the Government has pushed racism towards the bottom of its agenda. Unfortunately, the belief that all is well is belied by evidence of cultural insensitivity, and even institutional racism, within the public and legal sector, alongside a growing number of reports of migrants and minorities facing racist incidents in their day-to-day lives.

The Government's opposition to racism in Ireland is certainly to be welcomed. However, it will take strong leadership, not fine-sounding aspirations, to ensure that the changes brought by immigration into Ireland are managed for the better, and to avoid descending to the level of racist politics practised elsewhere in the EU.

# On Dundalk's Campaign Trail

*Benedicta Attoh stood as a candidate in last year's local elections. Here is her story of breaking into a "family business"*

*Not every door we knocked on opened to a friendly face, but there were enough to keep me going through the bad days.*

I am proud to be a Dundalk woman. I am proud of the unique Dundalk accent that I am developing. Ever since the day, five years ago, when I arrived here with my family after moving from Nigeria, I felt an emotional bond with the town of Dundalk, because I knew we had come here to stay for a long time. From the start I knew that my family were going to be part of this country, so we might as well get used to life in our adopted home.

I also love being a politician. I have always been a politician, from the days when I became Student Association leader as a university student in Nigeria. If I was to get used to living here as a local, it followed logically that I should throw myself into Irish political life. For me, politics is an essential element in the integration of immigrants into Irish life.

However, loving politics and putting myself forward as a local election candidate for the Louth County Council and Dundalk Town Council are two different stories. My Irish friends thought I was mad to venture into politics here, an industry that largely remains a family business! But whatever their doubts, I was determined to put a bit of hard work and honesty into turning Dundalk politics into something better.

It certainly wasn't the easiest challenge I have ever faced. Standing as an independent candidate did not help matters, but I didn't worry too much about failure, and approached every day as a learning curve. A steep learning curve! The electioneering tasks were made much easier thanks to my

campaign manager, Christine Coburn, and a tireless group of supporters who shared my hopes for the future.

Through the campaign we knocked on door after Dundalk door to explain my political plans. Campaigning was a long toil that took a lot out of my shoe leather, but every smile and every encouraging word shot a dose of glucose into my blood, and sent me skipping to the next door. Not every door we knocked on opened to a friendly face, but there were enough to keep me going through the bad days.

Before my campaign, I had worries about my place in a town like Dundalk. I was never completely sure if I was truly welcome, or whether my experiences of racism reflected widespread opinion in the town. The local elections were an eye-opener, though, and a welcome confirmation that I was an accepted (and acceptable) member of the community. I didn't win a ticket to the council chamber, but I performed well enough that I am tempted to give it another try next time around.

My involvement in the local elections was also a learning experience for the people of Dundalk. I have helped them to realise that you don't have to be Irish and the son of a councillor to be capable of representing their interests. The interests of immigrants are not so different from the citizens of Ireland, and we are well able to speak up for all our needs. Whether we are Irish or immigrant, what we need to do is to open our minds to the experience of living in a democracy where we all can have a voice.

## One Step Forward, One Step Back

*Progress made on asylum procedures but much still to be done*

Since our last issue exposed the plight of the thousands of Irish children who faced deportation alongside their parents, there has been good news for these children, but not such good news for Ireland's longer term immigration and integration prospects.

Last December, new procedures were unveiled relieving immigrant parents and their Irish-born children until the end of March, when the deadline arrives to reapply for residency rights here. Welcoming the changes, Aisling Reidy of the ICCL says "The proposals could offer a real opportunity to bring to an end what has been an unnecessary and unjust policy."

Then, March saw the announcement of the new Irish Nationalisation and Immigration Service (INIS). INIS, under the control of the Department of Justice, is intended to streamline the immigration process, and to provide a "one-stop shop" for new and intending

immigrants.

While noting that it makes sense to have one agency deal with all aspects of immigration, immigrant support groups are not sanguine about the department in charge of the new service. Pointing to its concentration on the legal and security aspects of immigration policy, Sarah Toner of Integrating Ireland comments "it is worrying that the agency will be under the Department of Justice."

Other commentators are damning in their reactions to the new agency. Peter O'Mahony, Chief Executive of the Irish Refugee Council, believes the structure of INIS will be security focused at the expense of encouraging integration. "The Department of Justice's record in recent years is dismal in regard to integration," he says. He holds out little hope in the agency's intentions to help immigrants become part of Irish society: "any pretence at integration as a priority is now dead."

## World Bank finally gets the idea

After 25 years of encouraging developing countries to produce commodities for export, the World Bank has now reached the conclusion that such an approach is "impoverishing". The Global Agricultural Trade and Developing Countries report published by the World Bank in January says that a "development strategy based on agricultural commodity exports is likely to be impoverishing in the current policy environment".

Now they tell us! Maybe the World Bank has at last noticed that coffee farmers in developing countries now receive only 25% of the price they were got in 1960.



*D'oh!: President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn (Photograph: www.worldbank.org).*

## Make Poverty History Irish Campaign launched



*At the launch of the Make Poverty History Irish campaign (left to right): Olive Towey (Concern), Astrid Peres Pinan (Comhlámh), Anne Cleary (Aid Link) and Jean Somers (Debt and Development Coalition)*

## Ireland and 0.7%

Minister Conor Lenihan has said in a recent interview his objective is to get an agreed timetable to which all sides can agree for Ireland to fulfill its commitment to reach the UN target of 0.7% of GNP. Keep an eye out for follow-up.

## Coca Cola update

The last issue of Focus reported how farmers in Andhra Pradesh in India have found Coca Cola useful as a pesticide.

Following an enquiry from a reader regarding what concentration to use, we cannot confirm that Coca Cola is an organic pesticide.

But if anyone has tried it, we would like to know.

# You can Better the World

## Invest in an Ethical Fund

The Ethical Fund is an equity fund which invests your money only in companies which:

- Do Not damage the Environment
- Do Not fund armaments
- Do Not support corrupt regimes
- Are in good favour with international rights bodies
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Tel: 01- 2780535 Fax: 2780698 e-mail: ray@ethicalfinancial.ie

# The Organic Centre

## Rossinver, Co. Leitrim

The Organic Centre is a non profit taking company with Charitable status dedicated to providing training, information and advice on organic methods of growing, farming and gardening and of living in a more sustainable way.

### Training Options

The Organic Centre now offers the widest range of courses on organic, environmental and gardening themes anywhere in Ireland. These range from short one and two day courses for the hobby gardener to more intensive courses for the professional grower. We are very willing to tailor training to suit the needs of particular groups. Training can be delivered at The Organic Centre or at a location to suit your needs. Below is a selection of what we offer at present.

- ✿ 100 one and two day weekend courses on a range of organic gardening , craft and environmental themes.
- ✿ Tailored workshops for community groups, women's groups etc
- ✿ Meeting facilities for brainstorming, planning, team building and other meetings with a tour of the gardens and organic food as an option.

- ✿ A pilot Community Food programme on Growing and Cooking Healthy food organically with the North Western Health Board.
- ✿ Mentoring and advice on organic growing, gardening and farming.

### A selection of courses

April 16th Organic gardening for beginners  
April 23rd Cooking for children  
May 14th New eyes for plants  
May 28th Natural building - housing

To book or for further information or a programme of events call 071 9854338 or e mail [organiccentre@eircom.net](mailto:organiccentre@eircom.net) or visit our web site [www.theorganiccentre.ie](http://www.theorganiccentre.ie)

## The EPAs campaign continues

Members throughout the country gathered signatures for the Stop-EPA postcard. Many more are needed, so keep sending them in.

The first questions on EPAs have been asked in the Dáil, and Barry Andrews TD met with ISODEC, a Ghanaian campaign against the free trade agreements while part of a Dáil delegation to Ghana.

The UK Parliament Committee on Development is exercising considerable scrutiny of EU Trade Commissioner, Mr. Peter Mandelson. In April, Comhlámh will ask the Oireachtas Sub-Committee on Development Co-operation to invite Mr. Mandelson to answer for EPAs in Dublin.

A number of countries are beginning to query the way the Commission is negotiating EPAs. Luxembourg has from the start queried the reciprocal aspect of EPAs. Britain is considering the formation of a 'Like-minded Group' to seek changes in EPAs. Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands are other possible members. With your help we can make the Irish government become involved too.



Members of the Trade Justice Group phone Comhlámh members asking them to sign and send the EPA postcard action (Right, Photograph: Conall O'Caomh) and Barry Andrews meeting members of ISODEC in Ghana (Left).

## Courses in Development Studies



The Development Studies Centre, Kimmage Manor, Dublin, invites applications for the following postgraduate and undergraduate programmes commencing September 2005:

- MA in Development Studies
- Post Graduate Diploma in Development Studies
- BA Degree in Development Studies

*Study areas include: Political Economy of Development; Sociology of Development; Planning for Development; Gender; Environment and Development; Cultural Anthropology; Adult Education; Group Dynamics; Leadership; Sustainable Livelihoods; Human Rights; Emergency Relief; Ethics of Development; Research Methods*

All courses are accredited by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council of Ireland (HETAC) and lead to an internationally recognised qualification.

For a Course Prospectus and further information contact:

The Development Studies Centre, Kimmage Manor, Whitehall Road, Dublin 12, Republic of Ireland.

Telephone: +353 1 4064386 / 4064380

Fax: +353 1 4560089

E-mail: [info@dsckim.ie](mailto:info@dsckim.ie) Website: [www.dsckim.ie](http://www.dsckim.ie)

## - by 2015, the Reality

The UN recognises that 800 million people go hungry every day. Goal One will not be reached in Africa until 2147, on current trends.

As many as 113 million chil-

dren do not attend school.

Two-thirds of those who are illiterate are women.

In developing countries, one child in 11 dies before its fifth birthday, compared

with 1 in 143 in developed countries.

In the developing world, the risk of dying in childbirth is one in 48, compared to one in 1,800 in the developed world.

An additional 45 million people will become infected with HIV in developing countries between 2002 and 2010, unless the world mounts a more effective campaign to halt the disease's spread.

At current rates of progress,

1 billion people will still have no access to clean water and 83 countries will miss the goal altogether.

Global aid needs to double from 50 billion US Dollars to 100 billion US Dollars per annum, if the Goals are to be achieved.

Source: [www.keepourword.org](http://www.keepourword.org)

# 8 LIFE-CHANGING GOALS, 2 BILLION PEOPLE

The eight UN Millennium Development Goals pledge to tackle world hunger, poverty, diseases and inequality and to improve the environment by 2015. Join with Trócaire in urging our government to honour the commitment it made to these Goals.

LOG ON & SIGN UP: [www.KeepOurWord.org](http://www.KeepOurWord.org)



**TROCAIRE**  
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Trócaire **Keep  
our  
word**  
8 life-changing goals.  
2 billion people.

# Sem-Terrinhas, the “Little Landless”



Children of the “Landless Workers Movement” (the MST) in a shanty town encampment of a land occupation in Southern Brazil sing a song about fighting for justice and agrarian reform.

For the past 20 years, the MST has successfully fought successfully to secure land for more than 350 000 landless families, creating one of the most powerful grass-roots social movements in the world.

The MST is also a leading member of the international Campaign for Agrarian Reform, recognising the role finance and trade structures play the struggle for dignity and livelihoods of the rural poor. More of their story in the next issue of Focus.

Comhlámh has been active in challenging EU policy that threatens to contribute to this dispossession. Read Focus Magazine for the full story, coming soon.



Join Comhlámh, Action for global justice / [www.comhlamh.org](http://www.comhlamh.org)