

Irish Aid is Ireland's official programme of assistance to the poorest countries in the world.

Each year, natural disasters and emergencies affect the lives of 300 million people across the world. This number is growing every year. Globally, 60,000 people die each year on average as a result of hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters.

#### **What is humanitarian aid?**

Humanitarian aid aims to save lives. It is about responding to the immediate needs of people following a crisis by providing food, water, sanitation, shelter and healthcare to those affected.

#### **Poverty and emergencies and natural disasters**

Humanitarian crises and poverty are related. Low levels of development and the effects of poverty leave people vulnerable to disasters. The vast majority of natural disasters occur in poor countries. A humanitarian crisis means that lives are at risk because communities cannot cope with the impact of hazardous events, such as floods, drought, earthquakes or conflicts.

*"It is in the least developed countries that humanitarian emergencies have the greatest impact and these are the countries that are least able to respond and recover."*

– White Paper on Irish Aid, 2006

#### **How is Ireland providing emergency assistance to people affected by humanitarian disasters?**

One of Irish Aid's key priorities is the provision of support to countries suffering from natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. Irish Aid provides a substantial amount of humanitarian aid and is a key partner to international organisations and Irish and local humanitarian NGOs. In 2007, the Government allocated over €130 million in humanitarian assistance to people in need worldwide, making us the third highest donor globally, per capita, as a percentage of national income.

#### **Irish Aid's Rapid Response Initiative**

In recent years, the Government has scaled up its response to humanitarian emergencies overseas. In 2007, Irish Aid put in place a Rapid Response Initiative. As part of this initiative, a Rapid Response Corps of highly skilled and experienced professionals was established to assist in humanitarian operations throughout the world. Irish Aid has pre-positioned humanitarian relief supplies at the UN's Humanitarian Supplies Depot in Brindisi, Italy, and at the Curragh, Co. Kildare, for use in an emergency. Increased funding was provided to key NGO and UN partners to strengthen their capacities to respond to disasters.

Each year, natural disasters and emergencies affect the lives of **300 million** people across the world.



[www.irishaid.gov.ie](http://www.irishaid.gov.ie)

#### **Contact:**

Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre  
27-31 Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin 1  
t Lo Call Number: 1890 252 676  
e [irishaidcentre@dfa.ie](mailto:irishaidcentre@dfa.ie)  
[www.irishaid.gov.ie/centre](http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/centre)





 **Irish Aid**  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha

How Ireland is  
responding to  
emergencies and  
natural disasters

## Responding to emergencies