

THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS



TheWorldsBestNews



#TWBN

SPORT

Zidane and Ronaldo fight it out for 10th annual match against poverty



COMMENT

Confusing a country for a continent: How we talk about Africa by Arit John

INSIDE



Irish Aid Programme cuts malaria death rate in Malawi by 95%

Irish Aid's annual report last month demonstrated how their hospital partner scheme was associated with an 86 per cent reduction in maternal mortality and a 50 percent drop in stillbirths and early neonatal deaths in the Omdurman Maternity Hospital in Sudan.

ENVIRONMENT

Bhutan to become world's first wholly organic country

Bhutan plans to become the first country in the world to turn its agriculture completely organic, banning the sales of pesticides and herbicides and relying on its own animals and farm waste for fertilisers.

TECHNOLOGY

Texting helps Kenyan farmers tackle hunger

Small farmers in Kenya are getting better at matching crops with shifting weather patterns – using their mobile phones.



9 out of 10 people worldwide now have access to clean water, see page 3

HALF OF THE WORLD'S POOR HAVE "DISAPPEARED"

Since 1990, over 700 million people lifted out of poverty

Economic recovery in developing countries and public investments in health, education and poverty reduction programs have lifted millions

out of poverty. Extreme poverty has halved since 1990, and the proportion of people who try to survive on less than \$1.25 a day has fallen from 47 percent

to 22 percent. This means that there are now about 700 million fewer poor people than there were in 1990. (page 3)

THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS

Adjusting the worldview of aid through positive stories from the developing world - giving people The World's Best News

In association with **Dóchas**, the network of organisations tackling poverty throughout the world

supported by:





Peter Gaynor, Executive Director Fairtrade Ireland, Martha Lunji, Kabadwa Cane Growers' Association, with Steve Myatt and Una Higgins from Irish Rail launching the new initiative earlier in the year

Irish Rail on track for Fairtrade commitment

Over the past number of months, train users will have noticed that their coffee tastes fairer. 2012 proved to be a very successful year for Fairtrade Ireland announcing a 9% increase in consumer spending on Fairtrade products last April, up from €159million to €174million. 2013 is shaping up to deliver even greater success with Irish Rail's commitment to serve only Fairtrade coffee across all its services.

Executive Director of Fairtrade Ireland Peter Gaynor congratulated Irish Rail in their commitment but warned that going Fairtrade is not just a decision to be taken by the consumer

and companies needed to take bigger steps in committing to trade ethically:

"More businesses need to follow the example of companies like Irish Rail and convert all of their products like coffee to Fairtrade. Fairtrade is not just about the person on the street making choices to support Fairtrade – it's also about the people in the Board rooms doing the same thing.

In addition to coffee, Irish Rail also serve Fairtrade hot chocolate and sugar. Martha Lunji, a sugar farmer from Malawi who visited Ireland during Fairtrade Fortnight 2013, spoke about the benefits that Fairtrade brings to farmers:

"Fairtrade protects the interest of the farmers, workers and buyers. In addition to this, Fairtrade standards also help the farmers to have sustainable business, making it possible for them to take care of the environment. Workers' rights are protected as shown by use of personal protection equipment by workers in the fields, prohibition of child labour and observance of minimum wage."

Irish Rail follow in the footsteps of many other popular Irish brands who have committed to trading ethically and sourcing produce through supply chains approved by Fairtrade, including Bewley's Coffee, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream and Cadbury's Chocolate.

What is "The World's Best News"?



by Hans Zomer,
Director of Dóchas

The World's Best News is a new initiative to highlight the remarkable progress in the fight against extreme poverty. It is a news service that – unlike other media – does not only focus on the dramatic and the sudden, but that tells the bigger stories of hope and change that normally remain hidden.

The World's Best News is about telling the story of the historic and unprecedented revolution that is slowly unfolding behind the headlines: the unreported reality of steady and unrelenting improvement in human lives right across the world.

We live in the Information Age. But in the midst of the incessant flow of information it is sometimes difficult to know if we are in fact better informed. Are the many items of 'news' actually contributing to our increased understanding of the world around us?

Research shows that the vast majority of people in Ireland think that they are receiving enough information about developing world, yet only 19% say they feel well informed about developing countries. And despite the many reports about progress in the fight against global poverty, about half of the people in Ireland don't think that Africa is any better off now than it was 20 years ago.

And this is at least in part because the media are not telling us the good news story.

Media coverage of "aid" issues usually focuses on crises and disasters. The news gives the impression that Africa is a mess; poor and dependent on aid. In the busy mainstream news agenda, there is little scope for other stories.

In this paper, we will show you the other reality. In this paper, we can find space for the stories that other newspapers don't cover.

Stories that can help us make sense of the world and help us make better decisions.

Globalisation means that our lives are interwoven with those of everyone on this planet. Our prosperity in Ireland depends on the prosperity of the rest of the world. So if that world is changing, our media should report on it. Particularly, if those changes are too slow to make headlines.

In this paper, we find space for the important, not merely the urgent, stories. Visit www.dochas.ie

Overseas volunteering remains stronger than ever in Ireland



Students from UCD School of Physiotherapy participated in a 5 week project this summer with UCD Volunteers Overseas, seen here at the rehab department at Kisiizi hospital, Uganda, with staff and patients

A detailed analysis of overseas volunteering from Ireland shows how the sector continues to grow despite threats to funding. The report included a survey of over 2,120 returned volunteers and the work of 90 volunteer sending organisations. The report, compiled by economist

Dr Pat McCloughan, hints that public support for overseas aid programs is strong, as the level of donations for projects remains high and 60 per cent of organisations noted an increase in interest in volunteering abroad, despite the difficult economic conditions at home.

Responding to the report's findings, Minister for Trade and Development Joe Costello confirmed that he will be launching a civilian volunteer corps in late 2013, which follows on from the findings of the 2006 White Paper on Irish Aid.

LIKE THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS?

Like the Facebook page for more great stories of success, progress and innovation from the world of development at facebook.com/TheWorldsBestNews



The lives of 90 million children have been saved in the last 20 years as a result of global action to cut mortality rates

According to a recent report from UNICEF, better health treatment, improvements in mothers' nutrition and advances in education have seen major strides

being made, but the organisation warns that promises made to reduce child mortality by two thirds by 2015 will be missed by 13 years. Figures show the annual number

of under-five deaths has fallen from 12.6 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012, but 35 million more children will die by 2028 as a result of failing to meet the 2015 target.

Some of the poorest countries made the biggest strides with Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi and Nepal meeting the goal for the reduction of child deaths ahead of the 2015 deadline.

HALF OF WORLD'S POOR HAVE "DISAPPEARED"

(continued from front) In the year 2000, the Millennium Development Goals represented a promise of the world's countries together to halve the proportion of extremely poor people. This achievement was made three years before the time due to better access to education, health care, new technology and increased trade.

Although rising prices for food and energy and the economic recession have slowed progress, extreme poverty continues to decline.

Progress is highest in Asia, and

in China alone the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty fell from 60 percent in 1990 to 12 percent in 2010. In 2030, the UN expects that extreme poverty will be eradicated.

Although there has been great progress, there are still major challenges to be addressed with women making up 70 per cent of those still in extreme poverty. Hunger and access to food remain a key issue with one in eight people still going to bed hungry while one in six children globally are malnourished.



2 billion more people now have access to clean drinking water

The world has now reached the 2015 goal which concerns the right to clean water, three years before the deadline. Target 7 of the Millennium Development Goals was to halve the proportion of people without access to clean water. This means that since 1990, no fewer than two billion people gained access to clean water.

The result has seen a significant reduction in children dying of cholera, since 10 per cent of all diseases in the developing world are associated with lack of clean water and sanitation.

But worldwide there are still important

differences with the remaining 10 per cent of the world's population still lack access to a safe source of drinking water. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 6 out of 10 have secured access to safe drinking water, while 9 out of 10 enjoy access in Latin America, North Africa and much of Asia. However the progress in improved access to drinking water and sanitation in the last fifteen years indicates that universal access to water remains an achievable target. It is important to build upon this progress to set more ambitious targets for post 2015 by continuing to improve sanitation and drinking water worldwide.

FACT

The UN suggests that each person needs 20-50 litres of water a day to ensure their basic needs for drinking, cooking and cleaning. In Ireland we consume on average 150 litres per person per day.



Never in history have there been more children in school around the world, with increased access for girls becoming a key turning point in the fight for universal education

UN TARGET REACHED AS GIRLS MATCH BOYS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parity in enrolment rates among boys and girls important step in promotion of gender equality

A milestone has been reached in the field of international education for the first time in history there are now as many girls at school as boys.

Published in advance of a major UN summit on global poverty in two weeks, the report showed that 90 per cent of the world's primary school-aged children are now starting school.

'Worldwide, we now have as many girls in primary school as boys—one of the goals set by world leaders in the fight against poverty,' said Hans Zomer, director of Dóchas, the umbrella group of Ireland's aid agencies.

In 2000, world leaders agreed eight goals to rid the world of extreme poverty to be achieved by 2015, and on September 25 the UN is taking stock of progress to date.

UN head Ban Ki-Moon has reported that some of the goals had already been achieved, and the education goal in particular contains good news.

Enrolment rates in primary schools increased in Africa from 58 per cent in 1999 to 76 per cent in 2010, and the world has now achieved parity in enrolment rates among boys and girls, which is an important step in the promotion of gender equality.

HIV INFECTION RATES DOWN 20%

New HIV infections declined by 24% between 2001 and 2011

The global HIV infection rate has decreased by 20% in the last 15 years, while the number of people accessing effective drug treatment in the developing world has risen from half a million to 8 million people in the last decade.

HIV infections are falling and people with HIV are living longer with better treatment. Eleven developing countries have achieved universal access to antiretroviral drugs.

Huge progress has also been made in halting the transfer of HIV from pregnant mothers to their children.

Ethiopian mother Tigist Mekonen was married with three children when she discovered she had HIV. When she became pregnant again, she worried that her child would be HIV-positive. With treatment, though, the risk of transmitting HIV from mother to child can be reduced by over 95%.

"The pregnancy came as a shock," she says. "It was not planned and all I could do was pray not to make the child HIV positive like me. I followed all the advice from the clinic and breast-fed my baby up to six months only. I went through all the check-ups

and was overjoyed that Tariku, now aged two years and eight months is HIV negative."

Tigist is also receiving treatment that enables her to live a full life. "I thank those who helped me stay alive," she says. "I am grateful that I am able to look after my children."

The huge international focus on tackling HIV has yielded results. After 30 years and over 30 million deaths the goal of a world free from HIV is edging closer.

1/3

one third of all Africans now lead middle class lives according to a report from the African Development Bank

TRAINING SAVES THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Improvements in maternal healthcare highlight progress made with plenty work left to do

Improvements in maternal care are saving the lives of over 250,000 pregnant women in the developing world each year compared to a generation ago.

Maternal mortality has nearly halved since 1990. While an estimated 287,000 women still die in childbirth each year, that figure represents a decline of 47% from 1990.

Vicenta Cac Jimenez has volunteered as a midwife for 27 years in a remote village in the Guatemalan highlands, delivering over 900 children. Until recently, Vicenta and other volunteer midwives had received no training on how to deliver babies – their role was out of necessity rather than expertise. Without an training, up to 25 women in

the area died every year in childbirth. However, thanks to support from Ireland, Vicenta and other midwives received formal training and better equipment. Last year, not a single woman died during childbirth in their region.

"Before I received help, I worked with my bare hands," says Vicenta. "I could have never bought this equipment. I want to say thanks to the people that help."

While huge progress has been made, nearly 50 million babies worldwide are delivered each year without skilled care. The maternal mortality ratio in the developing world remains 15 times higher than in the developed world.



Vicenta Cac Jimenez's midwife training has been paid for by people in Ireland, ensuring that she can deliver babies in rural Guatemala safely

Sudan-Ireland hospital partnership cuts childbirth deaths in half

Irish Aid and University partnerships help develop clinical training in Eastern Africa

In a hospital where waiting lines of patients arrive before 8 am, a small computer room is an oasis for surgical interns. Funded by Irish Aid and developed as part of a programme with the Royal College of Surgeons, the room is a small step towards having more surgeons in Uganda.

Interns in Ugandan hospitals typically do far more practical work than study. This room is part of a programme linking the interns online with classes and lecturers to right that balance.

Thick blue curtains on the door block out the noise, and give the interns a chance to get together in peace. And in a city where steady internet coverage is still far off, the coverage in here allows them to read and interact online with their peers.

Mulago Hospital, a key referral hospital for the country of over 30 million, works with Ireland through a partnership with the College of Surgeons Eastern Central and Southern Africa.

Another partnership, between Cork

University Hospital and the Omdurman Maternity Hospital in Sudan “is associated with an 86 per cent reduction in maternal mortality and a 50 percent drop in stillbirths and early neonatal deaths,” according to the Irish Minister for Trade and Development, Joe Costello.

These projects are set to receive a boost through Ireland’s new membership of an international health alliance, ESTHER. According to Irish Aid, both projects are now under its umbrella and other projects are expected to apply to the programme this year.

ESTHER Ireland, launched at the end of June, is a cooperation between the Health Service Executive and Irish Aid. Health institutions involved with partnerships in the developing world are encouraged to contact ESTHER. Typical partnerships could involve public and private hospitals, primary care and community level institutions, health service units and departments, universities and other higher level training and research institutions.



Minister Joe Costello launches ESTHER Ireland programme for health partnerships between Ireland and Africa in June of this year

Irish Aid programme cuts Malaria death rate in Malawi by 95%

263,000 bed nets see dramatic fall in malaria suspected deaths since 2010

IrishAid’s annual report last month demonstrated how their hospital partner scheme was associated with an 86 per cent reduction in maternal mortality and a 50 percent drop in stillbirths and early neonatal deaths in the Omdurman Maternity Hospital in Sudan. The Government’s programme for overseas development, Irish Aid, published its annual report with some even more striking evidence for its effectiveness and progress:

Ethiopia: Almost 7 million people protected from hunger in 2012 through an Irish Aid supported programme, which provides cash or food in exchange for work to improve agriculture and protect the environment.

Malawi: In Malawi, following the distribution of 263,000 bed nets, suspected deaths from malaria among children under 5 have reduced by 95% since 2010.

Mozambique: 71% of girls aged 6 in Mozambique are now enrolled in school. This is up from 58% in 2005.

Tanzania: Since 2001, the area of agricultural land under irrigation has almost doubled (up from 200,000 hectares to 399,000 hectares),

contributing to reduced hunger and increased economic opportunity for families.

Vietnam: Two-thirds reduction in rates of mothers dying in childbirth between 1990 and 2009.

Zambia: 400,000 people have access to clean and safe drinking water and sanitation facilities thanks to Irish Aid’s programme in Northern Province.

Ethiopia: The proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day decreased from 56% in 2000 to 39% in 2012.

Launching the report in Dublin, Trade and Development, Joe Costello TD said “Our aid programme can and does save lives.”

Minister Costello said, “Irish Aid works to strengthen the ability of vulnerable communities to cope with shocks such as natural disasters or illness. And today’s report shows these programmes are working.”

“I firmly believe that if we can mobilise the political commitment and the will, in cooperation with our partners in the developing world, we now have a real opportunity to end extreme poverty and hunger in just one more generation.”



Matshetsheni Processing Centre: Communities from Bhejela Garden can bring any surplus crops here to sell for a fair price, thanks to support from an Irish NGO partnership. The Centre staff then process and package the produce (for example groundnuts into peanut butter or kale into dried kale). They also source produce from other irrigation schemes, using the monthly subscription fees as a capital injection. The farmers hope to receive dividends from their investment in the years to come. Skha (right) brings her surplus kale to be dried at the centre, where it is received, checked and measured by staff member Zibusiso. Once it is dried it can be sold for consumption during the year, when there are no green vegetables to harvest.

0.47

Last year, Ireland provided €629 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA), representing 0.47% of GNP



BANGLADESHI VILLAGES TO BE RAISED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CYCLONES

UN World Food Programme launches project to protect homes and farms from flooding by raising the foundations of entire villages on the flooding prone south coastline.

THE BEE'S KNEES FOR ZIMBABWEAN FARMERS

Beekeeping becomes ever more important as crop yields effected by climate change

People in Ireland may be viewing them as a nuisance at picnics, but bees are playing a big role in improving the lives of targeted farmers in Zimbabwe.

People rely on small-scale farming in communities like Wedza and Chimanimani, but climate change has reduced crop yields and increased risk of poverty.

Environment Africa and others are working hard to boost honey production and sales. With Irish support, it promotes beekeeping as a way to manage forests while benefiting communities.

"The honey helps me supply nutritious food for my family. There is also a high demand for it in the market, so I can sell the surplus," says Munyaradzi Mupfupi, chairman of the honey-processing centre in Wezda.

Some farmers have kept bees, but traditional ways have yielded little honey while risking deforestation and fire damage. With new methods, there is a better buzz about beekeeping among farmers and environmentalists.

Using improved Kenyan hives and smokers, farmers who once dabbled are producing more than 10 tonnes of honey a year.

"Bees do not only improve the lives of our people but...help towards the protection of our woodlands and forests," says Barnabas Mawire of Environment Africa.

Bhutan to become world's first wholly organic country

By shunning all but organic farming techniques, the Himalayan state will cement its status as a paradigm of sustainability

Bhutan plans to become the first country in the world to turn its agriculture completely organic, banning the sales of pesticides and herbicides and relying on its own animals and farm waste for fertilisers.

But rather than accept that this will mean farmers of the small Himalayan kingdom of around 1.2m people (according to Pema Gyamtsho, Bhutan's minister of agriculture and forests; the World Bank estimates it at around 740,000) will be able to grow less food, the government expects them to be able to grow more – and to export increasing amounts of high quality niche foods to neighbouring India, China and other countries.

The decision to go organic was both practical and philosophical, said

Gyamtsho, in Delhi for the annual sustainable development conference last week. "Ours is a mountainous terrain. When we use chemicals they don't stay where we use them, they impact the water and plants. We say that we need to consider all the environment. Most of our farm practices are traditional farming, so we are largely organic anyway.

"But we are Buddhists, too, and we believe in living in harmony with nature. Animals have the right to live, we like to see plants happy and insects happy," he said.

"Going organic will take time," he said. "We have set no deadline. We cannot do it tomorrow. Instead we will achieve it region by region and crop by crop."

World Food Programme and MasterCard team up to deliver 'digital food'



Collaborations, such as the one between MasterCard & the WFP, demonstrate a new role for technology and private partners in the fight against poverty

WHAT is digital food? Digital food programmes harness widespread mobile technology and bank cards to provide food vouchers in countries

where even the poorest families have access to these services. The project has been rolled out in Kenya, Philippines and Pakistan so far.

Where markets are stable, WFP often distributes vouchers that are redeemable in local shops for food and other staple items. These vouchers help boost local economies while allowing poor communities to receive food assistance with dignity.

Through the "Digital Food Project," MasterCard's payment and technology expertise will help WFP to refine and improve its systems that deliver food vouchers via mobile phones or banking cards to people without regular access to banks or financial services.

TEXTING HELPS KENYAN FARMERS TACKLE HUNGER

Mobile phone technology and agriculture combine to improve crop yields in Kenya

Small farmers in Kenya are getting better at matching crops with shifting weather patterns – using their mobile phones.

Kenya farmers Justin and Truphena Ileri used to struggle to feed their family because of unpredictable weather and crop failures.

"When there was erratic rain, we didn't get enough for our family to eat, let alone to sell," says Truphena. But things are changing in Mbeere district of Kenya's Eastern Province, with local weather forecasts sent by text increasing farmers' choices and yields.

Christian Community Services Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE),

working with Kenya Meteorological Society and supported from Ireland, takes weather forecasts for targeted rural and translates them into simple language.

It then sends this to farmers by text, along with advice on crop varieties and farming methods for different conditions.

More than 80 per cent of farmers in the area have a basic mobile phone, and they can follow up with CCSMKE staff for more advice.

This innovation gives the Ileri family hope for the future. "It brings us joy. We can watch our children grow and also see ourselves go grey... Grey is wise!" says Truphena.



Already an overwhelmingly agrarian state, Bhutan is aiming to become the world's first completely organic country

Confusing a country for a continent: How we talk about Africa

by Arit John

Africa has an image problem. Or, put another way, the West has a perception problem. Because when we talk about Africa, more often than not, it's to talk about catastrophes and epidemics, and to conflate a single country with a 1 billion-strong continent. Take this recent Time magazine article, "Africa's Drinking Problem," which took a few scattered facts and anecdotes about alcoholism in Kenya and decided to create a story about an entire population's issues with alcohol. "While governments in the West are considering minimum pricing standards for alcohol, in nearly a dozen countries across Africa... governments are applying tax breaks to booze," writes Jessica Hatcher. (Nearly a dozen...out of the 54 nations that are part of the African Union. Let's just say the article's argument deteriorates from there.)

Africacheck.org, based in South Africa, responded to the Times piece, addressing a key issue: The tendency to make sweeping generalisations about entire continents. According to the World Health Organisation's 2011 Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health, the same report that served the basis for the Time article, Kenya ranks 118th out of 189 countries for heavy drinking. Also worth noting:

The WHO Africa region "excludes seven African countries with large Muslim populations – Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Djibouti, Morocco, Somalia and Sudan"

"The WHO Africa region's per capita alcohol consumption is only 0.02 litres higher at 6.15 litres a year. This is lower than Europe and the Americas, which consume 12.18 litres and 8.67 litres respectively."

The WHO report doesn't have statistics on the number of heavy drinkers in 20 African countries (so, nearly half of the region)

So no, Africa does not have a drinking problem, though Time's piece fits into the larger, convenient Western narrative of Africa as a barren continent plagued by problems. Even people who know that Africa isn't a country, and that's not everyone, can't get past the images of poverty stricken villages, violence-plagued townships, AIDS, malaria and misery. The Time article, though purportedly about a continent-wide binge drinking epidemic, sprinkles in familiar



imagery, namely, corrupt politicians and poor people rummaging through trash heaps next to pigs.

In a 2009 Ted Talk, Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie spoke on the dangers of a "single story," the idea that an entire culture can be summed up in one narrative. Adichie described meeting her American roommate after moving to the United States to attend Drexel University. The roommate expressed an interest in listening to Adichie's "tribal" music, wondered where she'd learned English (it's Nigeria's official language) and assumed she didn't know how to use a stove. Adichie continued:

"What struck me was this: She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronising, well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals."

Adichie offers a solution to the single story problem that is both simple and complex: We should try to move beyond it. "Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes," she said. "But there are other stories that are not about catastrophe, and it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them."

This story was first published in 'The Atlantic Wire' on the 29th of August, 2013.

“Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronising, well-meaning pity.”



Members of the Office of the President of Rwanda being sworn in

Do you know which country has the most women in its parliament?

Quota seats in Rwanda ensure women, disabled and youth have their voice heard in parliament

It is not North America nor is it in Europe or in Asia that has the highest percentage of women in parliament. It's the Central African nation of Rwanda

Famous for its troubled past, Rwanda is now leading the world in its quest for a fully representative parliament with 27 quota seats (women 24, youth 2, disabled 1) and is the only government in the world dominated by women.

The 2013 UNDP Human Development Report titled 'The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World' makes direct reference to the low female representation in Ireland when compared to Rwanda: "In

Ireland, female parliamentary representation is still below 20% while in Rwanda, women outnumber men in parliamentary representation (52% compared with 48%)."

While the report recognises the progress of Rwanda, it highlights the remaining gender disparities in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab states and in Asia. The three driving factors for gender disparity are low female representation in parliament, gender imbalances in educational achievement and low labour force participation. The fight for gender equality will need to focus on each of these areas when devising a strategy for beyond 2015 and the Millennium Development Goals.

THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS



Zidane and Ronaldo lead out two teams of current and former stars in Porto Alegre as part of the annual Match Against Poverty with the United Nations Development Programme

The Real Ronaldo and Zidane team up against poverty

Match Against Poverty enjoys its 10 year anniversary with a host of top footballers in Brazil

The Match against poverty is organised every year since 2003, at the initiative of football legends and UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors Zinedine Zidane and Ronaldo, to raise awareness and mobilise public opinion for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Adopted in 2000 and re-affirmed by the leaders of 191 countries at the UN Summit in 2005, the Goals seek to halve world poverty by 2015 by setting targets for rolling back hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. "The fight against poverty is not a

game," says Ronaldo. "We use this match as a way to raise funds and to make people aware of the fact that the solution to this problem is in our hands. It is by working together that we will all win the Match against Poverty. Ronaldo and Zidane are respectively at the helm of two international

teams competing during a friendly match. Former stars that turned out on the night include Brazilian legends Romario and Roberto Carlos, with Europe represented by Freddie Ljungberg and former Spanish captain Fernando Hierro among others.

April 6 to be new international day of sport for development and peace

United Nations announces day to be celebrated as commitment to using sport as a tool for social change

In a historic decision, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly approved by consensus a proclamation establishing an International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. The Day will be celebrated each year on 6 April, the date of the opening of the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, by UN member states and other stakeholders. The General Assembly recalled the IOC's role in promoting healthy lifestyles and creating access to sport for as

many people as possible.

The top Serbian tennis player, Novak Djokovic, joined in celebrating the announcement of the new initiative: "Sport has unique convening power" and added "when an athlete speaks out, she or he reaches a large audience and this is a large responsibility". Djokovic is a UNICEF ambassador and has his own foundation, which aims to create a lasting change in the lives of children in need in Serbia.

SURFING THE STRIP



Amer Al Dous, 16, and Asam Abo A'ase, 33, enter the sea in the Gaza Strip. Asam uses an old windsurfing board to surf with. Nearly all of the surfboards in Gaza have been donated from outside, mainly the United States and Europe.

The sea now offers many Palestinians a means of escape from a war torn world. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip started surfing in the mid-1980s. Mohammed Abu Jayab, a fisherman and carpenter, is one of the pioneers of the scene. He built his own board out of wood, after seeing people on TV riding waves. It was a really heavy, rock-solid thing, but he stuck with it for a long time and now rides a board donated from the United States. In a region where life is marked

by conflict and struggle, surfing is one of the only means of escape, and so it has become something very important. Today there are around 30 surfers, a number which is dictated by the number of boards available. The surfers are forced to rely on outside donations of equipment but the scene continues to grow as interest from younger people has seen numbers in the water swell.

Photo taken by Irish photographer Andrew McConnell

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all Dóchas members, Bewleys, Comhlámh, EIL, UCDVO, Wave Change, Suas and to all the volunteers who helped us on the day

Design by Cassie@createmedia.ie