

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The more help, the more rights

TRENDS IN OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (% OF GNI) ^A										
Net Official Development Assistance from DAC Countries and Multilateral Organizations to Developing Countries										
	1989-1990 AVERAGE ^B	1994-1995 AVERAGE	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	0.36	0.34	0.27	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.30
Austria	0.16	0.22	0.23	0.34	0.26	0.20	0.23	0.52	0.47	0.49
Belgium	0.46	0.35	0.36	0.37	0.43	0.60	0.41	0.53	0.50	0.43
Canada	0.44	0.40	0.25	0.22	0.28	0.24	0.27	0.34	0.29	0.28
Czech Republic			0.03	0.05	0.07	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.11
Denmark	0.94	0.99	1.06	1.03	0.96	0.84	0.85	0.81	0.80	0.81
Finland	0.64	0.31	0.31	0.32	0.35	0.35	0.37	0.46	0.40	0.40
France	0.60	0.58	0.30	0.31	0.37	0.40	0.41	0.47	0.47	0.39
Germany	0.42	0.32	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.28	0.28	0.36	0.36	0.37
Greece	—	—	0.20	0.17	0.21	0.21	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.16
Hungary	—	—	—	—	—	0.03	0.07	0.11	0.13	0.07
Iceland	—	—	0.10	0.13	0.15	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.27	0.25
Ireland	0.16	0.27	0.29	0.33	0.40	0.39	0.39	0.42	0.54	0.54
Italy	0.36	0.21	0.13	0.15	0.20	0.17	0.15	0.29	0.20	0.19
Japan	0.31	0.28	0.28	0.23	0.23	0.20	0.19	0.28	0.25	0.17
Korea, Rep.	—	—	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.05	0.07
Luxembourg	0.20	0.38	0.71	0.76	0.77	0.81	0.83	0.86	0.84	0.90
Netherlands	0.93	0.79	0.84	0.82	0.81	0.80	0.73	0.82	0.81	0.81
New Zealand	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.27	0.27	0.27
Norway	1.11	0.94	0.76	0.80	0.89	0.92	0.87	0.94	0.89	0.95
Poland	—	—	0.02	0.02	—	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.09
Portugal	0.24	0.29	0.26	0.25	0.27	0.22	0.63	0.21	0.21	0.19
Slovakia	—	—	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.12	0.10	0.09
Spain	0.17	0.26	0.22	0.30	0.26	0.23	0.24	0.27	0.32	0.41
Sweden	0.93	0.86	0.80	0.77	0.84	0.79	0.78	0.94	1.02	0.93
Switzerland	0.31	0.35	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.39	0.41	0.44	0.39	0.37
Thailand	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.04	—
Turkey	—	—	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.11	0.17	0.18	—
United Kingdom	0.29	0.30	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.47	0.51	0.36
United States of America	0.18	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.15	0.17	0.23	0.18	0.16
Total DAC	0.32	0.28	0.22	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.26	0.33	0.31	0.28

NOTES: A: Net disbursements at current prices and exchange rates. B: Including debt forgiveness of non-ODA claims in 1990, except for total DAC. **SOURCE:** OECD, Website Database (www.oecd.org); June 2008.

Official Development Assistance (% of GNI): Grants or loans to countries and territories on Part I of the DAC List of Aid Recipients (developing countries) which are: (a) undertaken by the official sector; (b) with promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective; (c) at concessional financial terms (if a loan, having a Grant Element [q.v.] of at least 25%). In addition to financial flows, Technical Co-operation q.v. is included in aid. Grants, loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Transfer payments to private individuals (e.g. pensions, reparations or insurance payouts) are in general not counted. Expressed as percentage of gross national income (GNI).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the equal and inalienable rights of each person, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." The effective exercise of human rights must be guaranteed by the creation of economic, civil, political, social and cultural conditions that will foster them.

Economic and social development, however, show a very heterogeneous world, in which situations of great opulence coexist with manifestations of distressing poverty. International cooperation, one of the international instruments of human rights, is fundamental for the poorer countries in their quest for growth and development.

Since the 1970s, developed countries have committed themselves to allocating a fixed amount

to Official Development Assistance (ODA), a commitment ratified in the final declaration of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995. AOD, as a percentage, was fixed at 0.7% of the gross national income (GNI) of donor countries in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Also, the Millennium Development Goals propose to foster a global partnership for development, with the commitment of financial assistance by the more developed countries and the responsibility of the recipients to allocate it to social development and to the reduction of poverty in particular.

However by 2007 international assistance was only 0.28% of donor countries' GNI, thus highlighting the downward trend in recent years and moving

further away from the commitments undertaken. The only countries that complied with the UN goal, going over 0.7% of the GNI for ODA, were Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

At the same time, the assistance granted counts up sums allocated to public debt relief, so the flow of capital available for development programmes ends up being less than what the donor countries declare.

Recent ODA trends predict a disheartening scenario to which the ongoing financial crisis adds new concerns. While it is necessary to keep fighting to reach the sums committed for assistance and to improve the loans granted to developing countries, it is essential to understand ODA as a north-south 'horizontal' process in which it is the needs and priorities of recipient countries that channel assistance, free from the restrictive conditioning of donor countries. ■