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## Ireland ranks 6th in donor-country ratings

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Ireland is ranked sixth out of 23 in a new league table of donor countries' responses to humanitarian disasters.

The Humanitarian Response Index, published today, is topped by Sweden, followed by Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands, with the European Commission in fifth place.

Ireland comes sixth, ahead of the United Kingdom in ninth, the United States in 16th and France in 19th, while Greece trails in last.

The index is the first to rank the humanitarian aid performance of individual countries in the hope of encouraging improved action worldwide.

It ranks the 22 donor countries which, along with the EU, signed up to the 2003 declaration of Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship on how well they live up to its goals.

The rankings cover not only swift and flexible financial responses to natural and man-made disasters in the developing world, but also respect for laws covering refugees and human rights and efforts to help prevent crises and assist affected countries in rebuilding.

Top-ranking Sweden scored 5.37 on a scale of one to seven, against Ireland's 4.86, Britain's 4.76 and 4.39 for the United States.

The report warned that humanitarian aid to deal with emergencies ranging from the conflict in Darfur to natural disasters is insufficient, and it urges donor countries to ensure money is used for those most in need and more efficiently.

Announcing the report in London, former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said: "The Humanitarian Response Index will serve as a crucial tool to ensure that no disaster is ignored, and that every dollar spent helps those most in need."

Silvia Hidalgo, director general of Development Assistance Research Associates, which compiled the index, said: "It is not meant as a name-and-shame exercise but rather as a tool to improve the quality of humanitarian aid. We are confident that over time the Index will provide an important contribution to this debate."

Last year natural hazards affected over 130 million people and caused the deaths of more than 20,000, while the number of internally displaced persons amounted to 24.5 million, said Dara.

**Additional reporting by PA**