



Self-help 'solution to crisis in Africa'

ROCKETING world food prices, climate change and the collapse of the world trade talks have put millions of Africans at risk of extreme poverty, it was warned yesterday.

International development agency Self-Help Africa said the poverty crisis will worsen unless communities are taught to be self-sufficient. The organisation, launched yesterday, was formed after Irish charity Self Help and the UK agency Harvest Help amalgamated.

Both groups have been running programmes for the past 25 years to allow rural Africans grow enough food to earn a living.

Chief executive Ray Jordan said efforts by native Africans to trade their way out of poverty were being undermined by hikes in transport costs, population growth and the use of land to produce bio-fuels.

"There is a growing acceptance that farming and rural development is the key if Africans are to break free from poverty," he said.

"Up to 80pc of Africans rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. It must be at the heart of what we do." The new agency will work in nine African countries - Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Togo and Zambia.