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## African poverty warning from merged aid agency

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A NEWLY formed Anglo-Irish non-governmental organisation (NGO) has warned that up to 100 million more African people are at risk of extreme poverty due to the collapse of the world trade talks and spiralling food prices.

At the launch of Self Help Africa, the merger of Irish charity Self Help Development International and UK-based agency Harvest Help, the organisation's chief executive Ray Jordan said farming and rural development were key to freedom from hunger and poverty.

"Up to 80 per cent of Africans rely on agriculture for their livelihoods," said Mr Jordan. Unless rural communities and grassroots

food production is central to international development, the poverty crisis would get worse, he warned.

Costs of transport and fertiliser, growth of biofuels, and population expansion are undermining rural Africans' efforts to trade their way out of poverty, Mr Jordan said.

The new organisation is "committed to providing communities . . . with the skills and basic resources to adapt to these challenges". Both organisations have worked for some 25 years to help people in rural Africa.

"Their work in assisting farming and rural development is central to improving the lives of Africa's rural poor," Minister for Overseas Development Peter Power said at yesterday's launch.