

**Submission to the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid**

***Mobilising for Transformation:  
Ireland's role in ending extreme poverty***

***February 2011***

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*This can only be done effectively with a comprehensive, all-government approach which involves not just aid but all policies with international impact.*

**Dóchas**

The Irish Association of Non Governmental Development Organisations

Dóchas agrees to the release of all of this response subject to data protection requirements.

Dóchas does not require any part of this submission to be withheld  
from Freedom of Information requests

## Summary and Introduction

Dóchas welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid.

This paper is intended as a first presentation of Dóchas' views on how Ireland can build on its proud tradition as a champion for international development cooperation.

The paper indicates some of the broad priorities identified by Dóchas members for strengthening Ireland's role in international cooperation including, but not limited to, aid policy.

These priorities will be explored in more detail during the consultation period and in the submissions of our individual member organisations.

**The most important message of this submission is that the review should increase the accountability and transparency of Irish Aid and of Ireland's policies affecting development and provide a clearer focus on positive outcomes for people and communities living in poverty.**

Clarity, accountability and transparency are important in making the best use of resources, in building closer cooperation with civil society partners in Ireland and in developing countries, in demonstrating leadership on the world stage and in engaging the public with development and global citizenship.

Ireland's aid programme is of a very high overall quality and a source of considerable pride for people in Ireland. Internationally, it provides a model of good practice in many ways and serves as Ireland's 'calling card' to the World.

The key to implementing the goals articulated in the White Paper is to strengthen the focus on poor countries, regions and communities, to measure all policies against human rights criteria and to build community and civil society ownership of development. This can only be done effectively with a comprehensive, all-government approach which involves not just aid but all policies with international impact.

This requires:

- **A clearer sense of purpose, transparency and accountability**

Dóchas urges the Government to use the opportunity of this review to provide a clearer focus and statement of purpose for the Irish Aid programme and for Ireland's overall policies on development cooperation. This is important for transparency and accountability and is essential to maintaining public support for the programme.

- **Strengthening the poverty focus for Ireland's development efforts**

Dóchas would like to see a clearer statement of purpose and articulation of the criteria which underpin Irish Aid's poverty focus and thereby determine the geographic and thematic areas and the methods whereby Irish aid can have the greatest impact on inequality and marginalisation;

- **An explicitly rights-based approach**

These criteria should be based directly on human rights principles named in the review, in compliance with Ireland's obligations under human rights law. The review should set out the mechanisms for integrating these rights into the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of aid programmes and into all areas of Government policy impacting which impact on development and international cooperation;

- **An all-Government development effort**

Dóchas urges the Government to strengthen its commitment to an all-government approach to development policy, by specifying how the coherence of trade and other international policies with development goals will be reflected in specific goals, targets, work plans, baselines and impact indicators for each relevant Government Department.

- **Public Engagement and Development Education**

Dóchas sees the need to sustain continued public support for effective development as one of the greatest challenges facing the Irish Aid programme. However, it is equally important that Irish Aid encourages people in Ireland to take on our responsibilities and rights as global citizens, and foster a deeper engagement, not merely awareness, of people in Ireland with issues and mechanisms that create, sustain or deepen poverty and inequality.

- **Development Cooperation and the Private Sector**

Dóchas proposes that the White Paper should spell out a comprehensive approach to encouraging the contribution of business to development through partnership, support and regulation to ensure outcomes that are sustainable, equitable and positive for people living in extreme poverty.

We look forward to discussing these issues in greater depth during the consultation process.

## 1. Progress since 2006

Dóchas supports the main thrust of the White Paper strategy, with its focus on poverty eradication, human rights and partnership with civil society and recognition of the need for an all-government approach to development.

The identification of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality as priorities has given a useful focus to Ireland's development cooperation programme and should be retained.

**The 2006 White Paper is of great value, as it articulated the core principles and values that underpin Ireland's development cooperation programme. These principles and values must be retained.**

The 2006 White Paper served to lay the foundations for an unprecedented strengthening of Ireland's overseas aid programme. Irish Aid is now widely recognised as one of the best donors in development aid, and Ireland's reputation as a country that delivers on its promises to the international community is to a great extent built on our overseas aid programme. The principles in the White Paper provided the compass required during an initial period of growth, and also during the rapid shrinking of the aid programme from 2009 onwards.

The strength of the programme to date stems in large part from the realisation that development cooperation is a core part of Ireland's foreign policy. The principles of partnership, public ownership and transparency, effectiveness, coherence, and long-term sustainability must continue to form the foundations of Ireland's aid programme, in addition to the overall imperative of making sure that our development efforts deliver real results for people and communities living in extreme poverty.

**Fighting extreme poverty requires clarity of purpose and a whole-of-government approach.**

Our members are concerned that many of the issues and aspirations in the White Paper have not been operationalised in a measurable way and that reporting on the outcomes of Ireland's overall contribution to development remains weak.

This is true of Ireland's contribution to development in programme countries and of our overall impact on the priority themes.

We are now six years closer to the 2015 horizon to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Consultation Paper outlines progress - and lack of progress - towards these goals in terms of particular goals and countries and regions.

Dóchas members, however, are concerned that there are few measures or reporting mechanisms in place to date to evaluate the contribution of Irish trade, aid and foreign policy to the realisation of these goals. This is particularly important since the consultation paper notes that much of the

progress towards the MDGs has been driven by areas largely outside the geographical focus of Irish Aid while the programme countries have generally lagged behind. This should be addressed as part of the Review.

In this submission, Dóchas urges the Government to strengthen its commitment to an all-government approach to development policy and to specify how the coherence of trade, tax policy, and other international policies with development goals will be reflected in specific goals, targets, work plans, baselines and impact indicators for Departments – Goals and targets that must be set in close consultation with civil society.

### **Since 2006, progress has been made on some key development issues, but lack of predictability and clarity on key criteria remain**

One of the reasons Ireland's aid is rated so highly internationally, and by programme countries, is that it is completely untied. Ireland has a long and noble tradition of not allowing commercial, business or trade interests to influence its aid and development policy. The Irish Aid White Paper should explicitly state Ireland's continued commitment to these principles, and to ensuring that development concerns are not subordinated to trade policy interests.

Ireland is also an important champion of food security and nutrition. Dóchas members have noted the contribution of Irish Aid to maternal and infant nutrition, for example. The review of the country strategic plans for priority countries will be an important opportunity to emphasise the White Paper commitment to combating hunger.

The reduction in Overseas Development Assistance by some 30% since 2008 is worrying, particularly as it is a disproportionate reduction. This cut, combined with the lack of progress towards the target of spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA by 2015, pose a threat not only to specific projects but to Ireland's reputation as a serious development partner.

The unpredictability of these cuts makes this more serious. The effectiveness of development projects and processes and the trust between partners is crucially dependent on the ability to plan resources over the medium to long term.

Furthermore, Irish Aid has not published the criteria that have guided the allocation between the various aid modalities (multilateral, bilateral, civil society), or indeed the decisions on which areas of expenditure should carry the brunt of the cuts to the ODA budget. In the interest of transparency and predictability, the Review should set explicit criteria in this regard.

### **The White Paper Review offers an opportunity to re-think Irish Aid's efforts of engaging people in Ireland with issues of global inequality**

The increased promotion of awareness of the issues facing the developing world has been a welcome feature of the period since the White Paper. This included increased political debate, the role of the Information and

Volunteering Centre, Africa Day and a rise in development courses in Higher Education.

The need to sustain continued public support for effective development cooperation in the current climate of economic hardship is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges facing the Irish Aid programme. However, public support cannot be the only aim; Irish Aid must foster a deeper engagement, not merely awareness, of people in Ireland with issues and structures that create, sustain or deepen poverty and inequality.

Ireland is a small country in an increasingly globalised world. Our international development cooperation programme is one expression of how Ireland intends to shape the forces of globalisation, and it must play a pivotal role in building and incentivising the skills that people in Ireland will need to be active and responsible global citizens.

The crucial element in this regard is not to increase awareness and name recognition of Irish Aid itself, but the promotion of initiatives aimed at making explicit linkages between local and global issues, and at empowering people in Ireland to play a full part as informed, active and responsible global citizens. Importantly, this also involves encouraging Irish Aid's partners – including the Dóchas members - to strengthen their activities in this regard.

## **2. Changing context**

### **Ireland has changed since 2006, as has the international context of Ireland's development cooperation programme.**

The 2006 White Paper was written at a time of abundant optimism about Ireland's economic future, and as a consequence it set out a programme of growth for the Irish Aid programme. It is clear that the 2012 White Paper will be based on a different outlook, at least in the short-to-medium term.

The global economic crisis has hit Ireland hard and public expenditure far exceeds exchequer income. As a result, any area of Government spending must be scrutinised and examined in terms of the results it achieves. Overseas aid cannot be an exception, and the White Paper Review must ensure that Ireland's aid programme is designed in such a way that it continues to be able to withstand any amount of scrutiny in terms of effectiveness, relevance, impact and value for money.

Pertinent to this is that while aid continues to provide a crucial flow of resources into developing countries there is a far greater outflow of resources through illicit capital flight. Ireland could increase the economic impact and improve the effectiveness of aid is by combining aid spending with actions to combat losses of capital from elsewhere in the economy resulting from capital flight, tax evasion and avoidance.

Dóchas is convinced that the Irish Aid programme in general, and the work of its member organisations in particular, delivers excellent value for money. It

brings real and lasting benefits to people experiencing extreme poverty, addresses the root causes of poverty, and leverages the influence of those actors that can bring about the type of systemic change required to build a safer, more equitable world.

**The nature of poverty is changing, as is our understanding of the structures that create, sustain and deepen poverty, marginalisation and exclusion.**

Dóchas defines poverty as a lack of economic, social, political and personal power. Statistics about the number of people living in income poverty, while shocking, cannot capture the full scale of the challenges that face humanity when viewed through a human rights lens.

Ireland and the EU must also take account of the changing role of emerging economies and the new economic and political power of the BRIC countries as major players in global trade, investment and aid.

The consultation paper also correctly points out that economic growth in East and South Asia and in Latin America have made a significant contribution to progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, although significant inequalities and social problems persist.

However, progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has generally been slower in the poorest countries, including much of Sub-Saharan Africa. This makes the focus on countries and regions with the greatest poverty, including the programme countries identified in the White Paper, even more important. And it prompts further reflection on the importance of structural issues such as debt, trade and taxation.

The criterion for Irish Aid must therefore be that it should work in those areas, on those themes and issues, and through those mechanisms, that have the greatest possible impact on poverty, inequality and injustice.

**Poverty is about exclusion; development should therefore be focused on inclusion and empowerment.**

The economic downturn in Ireland and the EU is also a potential threat not only to aid levels but to the Government's and EU's focus on development policy. However, it is gratifying to note that public support for overseas development remains extremely strong, as it did at similar points in the past.

There is greater public awareness of the threat to the poorest and to the planet generally of climate change, water, energy and resource shortages and soil damage. There is increased understanding of the need for global cooperation on policy and on developing new technologies, agricultural innovation and environmental sustainability.

Above all, there is increased international recognition that aid (and other policies) must be inclusive and that meaningful participation of marginalised communities is key to any Development endeavour.

In this context, it is important to note that Dóchas members are concerned that the emphasis on gender mainstreaming has lost much of its momentum since the Beijing Platform and is almost absent from the Busan programme. Ireland needs to take a leadership role in counteracting this trend. The identification of gender-based violence as a priority for Foreign Affairs is welcome in this context.

The reverse in the spread of HIV and AIDS internationally, including in the Irish Programme Countries, shows how concerted international action can be effective in combating disease, stigma and exclusion. The fact that 34 Million people are still living with HIV and 1.8 million people died of AIDS in 2010 constitutes one of the main barriers to development - one that Ireland must continue to prioritise.

### **Changing contexts and new paradigms call for new thinking and support for innovation.**

As we collectively work through an era of substantive global change there is a need to support new and innovative approaches. The role of international (including Irish based) NGOs are changing, they will need to reinvent themselves and explore ways to 'move up the value chain' – one way is by supporting innovation and becoming more innovative.

Yet, to date, innovation is effectively penalised within the sector. Traditional attitudes towards “charities” on the part of the general public and media and political focus on a potentially very narrow interpretation of “value for money” (emphasising tangible outputs over long-term outcomes), mean that there are limited incentives for NGOs to prioritise experimentation.

Supporting innovation inherently requires acceptance of the potential for 'failure', and it requires donors that are willing to invest in organisations, not just activities. Neither of these conditions will be met without an explicit strategy to encourage experimentation, learning and innovation.

## **3. Key Issues**

Dóchas supports the continued focus on the issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality in the Review of the White Paper.

**The main emphasis of this submission is on accountability, transparency and achieving positive outcomes for people and communities living in poverty.**

The White Paper Review process is an opportunity to strengthen the overall framework and clarity of purpose of Ireland's development cooperation programme. The challenge lies in how these issues can be translated into actual operational plans and activities on the ground, and into effective and accountable partnerships between national and international NGOs, public authorities at international, national and local level and communities affected by poverty and underdevelopment.

The key to implementing the goals articulated in the White Paper is to strengthen the focus on poor countries, regions and communities, to measure all policies against human rights criteria and to build community and civil society ownership of development. This can only be done effectively with a comprehensive, all-government approach which involves not just aid but all policies with international impact.

The current review should indicate specific targets and deadlines for aid and for the broader development goals and put in place mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on delivery. Indicators should be developed in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and Ireland's commitment to international human rights agreements.

### **3.1 A focus on poverty: prioritising aid modalities that work for poor people**

One of the greatest strengths of Ireland's ODA programme is its focus on poverty and hunger, as spelled out in the 2006 White Paper. Ireland has a strong international reputation for leadership in development work, because its aid programme is not tied to trade, economic or military interests.

At a minimum, Ireland's commitment to the principle of untied aid should be retained and strengthened.

In view of increasing inequalities within countries, Irish Aid's focus on effective aid should be elaborated to ensure that Ireland's aid and development policies are not just focused on poor countries but also the on the regions and communities with the highest poverty levels, greatest vulnerability and inequality.

A second important consideration must be that Ireland focus on those areas and themes where it can have the greatest impact. To date, however, such assessment has not been made, resulting in a lack of strategic focus and a lack of clarity behind the choice of geographic and thematic focus areas and behind the current balance between the various aid modalities employed by Irish Aid.

There is an urgent need for more effective and transparent mechanisms to identify the actual impact of policies, programmes and aid modalities on countries, regions and communities experiencing poverty.

Equally, the White Paper's commitment to addressing hunger as a key priority and to food security and nutrition are also welcome, but need to be translated into specific prioritisation of resources towards sustainable food production, guaranteeing food rights for the poorest, and engaging at policy level on, for example, policy coherence issues around food and agriculture.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** re-assert the focus on the poorest countries and on the poorest, most marginalised areas and communities within countries, and put in place transparent systems for

monitoring this prioritisation and the actual impact of the resultant policies.

### **3.2 Human Rights: Promoting an inclusive model of Development**

Rather than defining poverty solely as the absence of food, health or resources, a rights-based approach to development focuses on the well-being of an entire society, on the basis of the active and meaningful participation of its citizens and the obligation of duty holders (principally the State) to respect, protect and fulfil people's fundamental human rights.

Ireland's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and to international agreements requires just such a rights-based approach, as does our endorsement of international human rights instruments.

However, these rights are not spelled out explicitly in the White Paper or linked to policies and programmes, leaving Ireland's development policy without a coherent overarching framework. This review is an opportunity to name explicitly the human rights principles which will direct Irish Aid and the Government's overseas policy. These should include the principles underpinning a rights based approach (participation, accountability, non discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and the rule of law) and the legal instruments and voluntary documents from which they derive.

This would provide a clearer framework for developing and measuring all aspects of Ireland's international development policies, encompassing economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

A rights-based approach to Development asks for a 'triple-track' approach of targeted programmes and funding to respond to the needs of people vulnerable groups, mechanisms to ensure that 'non-targeted' programmes respond to their needs and explicit advocacy to ensure greater visibility and inclusion of those groups.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** name the human rights principles which will inform its work and set out the mechanisms for integrating these rights into the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of aid programmes and into other areas of Government policy impacting on development

### **3.3 Accountability and transparency**

In the current economic climate, all areas of government policy and spending are required to apply the best practice in accountability and transparency.

This is particularly important in the case of aid and international cooperation, which depends so much on partnerships with civil society at home and abroad, on promoting democracy and good governance in developing countries and in international institutions and on public support at home.

The current review should indicate specific targets and deadlines for aid and for the broader development goals and put in place mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on delivery. Indicators should be developed in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and, beyond 2015, Ireland's commitment to international human rights agreements.

It is important that the link between the objectives and priorities in the White Paper and outcomes and impacts on people and communities in developing countries is explicit and clearly visible.

This requires open and participative planning, developing strategies and prioritising resources. It further requires carefully selected and measurable indicators which reflect the achievement or non-achievement of desired outcomes and the ability to monitor, report, learn and make evidence-based decisions. This is already the good practice which Dóchas promotes and Irish Aid requires from NGO partners.

Greater effort should also go into tracking the results of policies and actions, in the Government to Government and multilateral programmes.

Of key concern in the context of the White Paper Review is that outside scrutiny of the aid programme is insufficient, focusing heavily on accountability for inputs and expenditure, and under-prioritising the gathering of evidence of Ireland's overall impact on, and contribution to, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Ireland's commitment to the IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative) standards for aid transparency is welcome, committing the Government to publish information about Irish Aid programmes according to a common standard. To make the best use of this will require increased capacity within Irish Aid. Capacity also needs to be developed in the areas of analysis, data collection, knowledge management and evaluation.

Results should be communicated publicly and form the basis of public debate in the Oireachtas on outcomes and the impact of Ireland's aid programme and of Ireland's overall impact on global poverty. Furthermore, a cross-Departmental, public, annual assessment needs to take place, documenting Ireland's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals and Ireland's commitment to international human rights agreements.

In the context of Development Effectiveness, citizens in Ireland should also be encouraged and supported to engage critically with Ireland's development programme.

### **3.4 Civil society: Enabling people to take control over their lives**

Development is not just about distributing resources. It is as much about supporting people's and communities' control over their lives and releasing their creativity.

Governments in the global North and South have become more aware of the importance of civil society in translating people's concerns into actions which

shape development, in defending human rights and in ensuring a democratic ownership of the development process

Both Dóchas members and Southern NGOs have expressed concern at increasing violence towards civil society organisations, shrinking political and legal spaces and lack of financing. As Hilary Clinton pointed out in 2010, “*over the last 6 years, 50 Governments have issued new restrictions against NGOs and the list of countries where civil society faces resistance is growing longer*”.

It is essential that governments continue to partner and empower civil society organisations. This is particularly important in the case of women’s organisations and organisations which include a strong representation of women because of the relative disadvantage of women and their central role in development.

***We propose that the White Paper should, state that*** as a matter of standard practice, Irish Aid will involve civil society organisations, in Ireland and internationally, including women’s organisations, in the preparation, design, delivery and monitoring of policies and programmes as well as in the overall impact analysis of Ireland’s relations with programme countries.

### **3.5 An all-Government commitment to development**

Dóchas is convinced that Ireland can make an even more significant contribution to international efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. This requires, however, that our contribution goes well beyond aid.

Aid is necessary and important, and can play a vital role as a catalyst for developmental processes. Aid can save lives, protect and develop livelihoods and create the environment for people to participate meaningfully in economic and political processes that shape their society. But aid alone cannot bring about the type of transformation that is required to end poverty.

Inversely, Irish development policy has always recognised that economic growth and increased trade will not, in themselves, necessarily promote social development either. While economic growth can, and does, provide opportunities for social change, some forms of economic growth actually increase inequality, and perpetuate poverty. Governments need to set the type of frameworks that ensure that economic activity translates into better opportunities, lives and livelihoods for all.

The principle of “policy coherence for development” is articulated in the 2006 White Paper, but there are few mechanisms for ensuring a whole government approach to policy affecting development, including input to multi-lateral institutions and to EU policy-making.

Ireland has a role to play internationally as a credible advocate for pro-poor economic development.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** institute a report every two years on policies across Government, in line with EC reporting, to identify examples of any policies which undermine the Government's development goals so that such policies can be amended to avoid or reduce negative effects on the poor and look for synergies and value-added between different policies. The report should set measurable targets and indicators, and identify explicit strategies to address areas of incoherence.

### **3.6 Leadership at EU level**

The EU is a major influence on global development, not just as the world's largest aid donor but also as a leading trade, economic and political force. Within the EU, Ireland has provided leadership in articulating a principled approach to development.

Ireland can help to ensure that the development principles set down in the Lisbon Treaty are protected and promoted consistently in an increasingly uncertain environment.

This means, in particular, advocating for a Union which doesn't confuse or conflate its commitments to the very poorest with its own economic, political or security objectives. The corollary of this is that the White Paper needs to introduce greater transparency to Ireland's input to multilateral policies, including in areas which fall within the EU's community competence

***We propose that the White Paper should*** evaluate Ireland's contribution to the EU and to multilateral fora where common EU positions are applied and consider how greater transparency and public ownership of inputs to these fora can be achieved. It should also recommit Ireland to continuing to be an active pro-development voice at EU level on any issues that impact on developing countries.

### **3.7 Gender: Aiming for transformation**

Since Development is fundamentally about inclusion and empowerment, few areas are as central to developmental processes as that of gender equality.

The commitment in the White Paper to the twin-track approach of mainstreaming gender equality considerations into all policies and programmes combined with targeted actions to improve the position and status of women has shown significant results.

The specific focus on Gender Based Violence has been significant and has led to increased understanding of the issues at play and greater technical capacity in Government as well as NGO programmes. There is still a need, however, for more training for staff, more sex-disaggregated data and more dialogue with Irish civil society on gender policies and practice.

The White Paper should also ensure that gender funding continues to be channeled into women's organisations, addresses the need to engage men and change gender norms.

The Annual Gender Monitoring Report should be strengthened through the inclusion of more disaggregated data in relation to both multi-lateral and bilateral funding.

We welcome the continued efforts by the Government to integrate Gender Equality into international policy discussions and encourage the continuation of this effort. Ireland should make gender equality considerations key to its development programming, resulting in strategies addressing the underlying factors of gender inequality – including challenging unequal power relations between women and men. Such development programming can then be truly transformative, as opposed to merely addressing practical gender needs.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** continue the focus on gender equality, gender based violence and the mainstreaming of gender across all its programmes and lead to a gender policy covering all areas of international policy.

### **3.8 Disability**

In line with its overall vision of Development as a process of inclusion and empowerment, Dóchas recommends that the White Paper should commit the Government to a twin-track approach of mainstreaming disability issues along the lines of the current approach to gender.

This means that there would be specific programmes and funding lines to address the issues of people with disabilities and the mechanisms for ensuring that a disability perspective is integrated into the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and policies. This in turn requires a consistent oversight of both ‘tracks’.

As a particular exercise, the twin-track approach should be applied in Irish Aid’s Programme countries.

There is a shortage of data and evidence for decision-making around disability in developing countries which needs to be addressed by countries, multilateral organisations and NGOs. There is also a need for systematic training on disability issues.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** detail specific programmes and funding lines to address the issues of people with disabilities and the mechanisms for ensuring that a disability perspective is integrated into the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and policies

### **3.9 HIV and AIDS**

The reverse in the spread of HIV and AIDS internationally, including in the Irish Programme Countries, shows how concerted international action can be effective. However, 34 Million people are still living with HIV and 1.8 million people died on

AIDS in 2010, constituting one of the main barriers to development as well as a shocking human tragedy.

Challenges still remain with more people becoming newly infected than people going on treatment. The number of people on treatment still only represents half of those in need now, and care and support of people living with and affected by HIV still does not get the attention it requires.

HIV, unlike many other illnesses affects the young and productive members of society, and so has a disproportionate affect on the economies of developing countries. It is imperative that Ireland, as a respected leader in the response to HIV internationally, does not shy away from this leadership position as global commitment waivers.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** commit Ireland to contribute to achieving the UNAIDS vision of zero discrimination, zero new HIV infections and zero AIDS-related deaths by developing and implementing a HIV strategy; fulfilling Ireland's commitments to release funds for the Global Fund for AIDS, TB, and Malaria and engaging with the ongoing reform process within the Global Fund and promote consultation with civil society, particularly networks of people living with HIV in the reform process.

### **3.10 Trade and development: Levelling the playing field**

The terms of trade between developing countries and economic blocs such as the EU are crucial to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Pro poor trade policies can be strengthened by understanding the benefit of value addition in trade of manufactured and processed goods, where such trade brings new employment, creates a multiplier effect that stimulates local economies and strengthens the balance of payments of developing countries.

Support for fair trade and ethical trade must be accompanied by coherent multilateral, bilateral and national trade rules that are coherent with development objectives.

Ireland has a strong role to play in advocating against unjust international trade rules and structures, to ensure developing nations can move out of poverty. Developed Nations, the EU, and multilateral bodies such as WTO, IMF and World Bank must respect developing nations' right to define their own path to economic development, must not insist on premature trade liberalisation, and must ensure that developing nations enjoy the same policy space that developed nations themselves gained from when developing their own economies.

Ireland can develop and strengthen a genuine political and economic partnership with African and other developing nations through addressing their trade policy concerns in the EU and global policy fora.

Many developing nations have expressed concerns about the policy stance adopted by the EU both in multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations. Ireland can play a positive role here by amplifying the concerns on Southern governments and civil society at an EU and global level when inputting on trade discussions.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** articulate an explicitly 'pro poor' trade strategy which is aligned with and reinforces Irish Aid's focus on addressing hunger and strengthening livelihoods and commit to greater transparency in articulating these positions within the EU and multilateral bodies.

### **3.11 Business and development: Ensuring accountability and transparency**

By enabling poor people to access ethical employment, incomes and markets, as well as affordable goods, services, savings and credit, businesses can contribute to poverty reduction.

However, it is important to recognise that increasing economic activity alone will not eradicate poverty. This will only happen when businesses fully meet their responsibilities to the communities and countries in which they operate in a transparent way, when they champion the structural and systemic change needed to end poverty and integrate social and environmental responsibilities into their core business practices.

The White Paper should spell out a coherent approach to business and development. In Dóchas' view, the principles of accountability and transparency that underpin Ireland's aid programme should also inform, explicitly, the Government's approach to strengthening the role of the private sector in developmental processes.

The White Paper should consider how best to support small business and farming in developing countries, including the Programme countries, by building capacity and entrepreneurial skills and facilitating the process of getting products to the domestic and international market, especially in programme countries.

Strong and binding regulation is important to ensure that companies are held accountable, and do not damage the people and societies in the area where they work but contribute to the development of the country or region.

Synergies between companies and development organisations, state and NGO, should be encouraged where a clear social return is identified.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** spell out a comprehensive approach to encouraging the contribution of business to development through partnership, support and regulation to ensure that that core business activities are pro-poor; working with NGOs and governments to develop enterprise based solutions to poverty; funding development projects; providing information, expertise and access; supporting and

developing the capacity and right of developing country governments to regulate the activities of corporations on environmental, labour, social, taxation, profit-sharing and developmental grounds; supporting campaigns and initiatives to eradicate poverty and supporting good governance.

## 4. Ways of Working

Development and aid policy should be delivered by an all-Government approach in the framework of a strong focus on poverty, human rights and accountability, as outlined in the previous section.

Delivering this requires institutional change and a strengthening of capacity in Irish Aid and across Government, as well as improved mechanisms to assess and account for Ireland's efforts in this area.

While there have been advances since the adoption of the White Paper, the current organisational structure, culture and systems in Irish Aid still need attention, as outlined in Dóchas submissions on the issue of Irish Aid's management requirements.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** commit to sufficient resourcing for Irish Aid and in particular to prioritise capacity-building in the areas of analysis, data collection, knowledge management and evaluation and should spell out how policy will be developed across government in a more transparent way.

### Resourcing Ireland's aid commitments

The Government commitment to increase ODA to the UN target of 0.7% of GNI is a cornerstone of Ireland's aid policy.

It also represents a strong and popular statement of Ireland's seriousness about the Millennium Development Goals and playing our part in the international community. In practice, however, the reductions of ODA in recent budgets have put this aim in jeopardy, despite the fall in GNI.

Development and aid effectiveness require consistent policies from year to year and a predictable flow of resources to back this up. Aid loses between 10% and 20 % of its value globally when it is not predictable, according to the OECD, which cites unpredictability as one of the three systemic factors that cause huge transmission losses in the value of global aid and which requires corrective action. Volatility and unpredictability in aid reduces its effectiveness and there is evidence to suggest that the losses are felt down to the household level in poor countries.

The fact that the funding of Irish Aid programmes cannot be predicted from year to year, and sometimes even over shorter period, makes it impossible to plan work with any certainty and complicates and undermines relations with Southern partners.

***We propose that the White Paper should*** establish a multi-year framework for ODA and outline the annual targets for ODA that would enable Ireland to reach the 0.7% target by 2015.

The White Paper should equally contain a commitment to progress meaningfully towards obligatory reporting on the payment schedules of Ireland's multi-year ODA commitments and Ireland's performance in meeting its commitment to spend up to 20% of the total ODA allocation on Hunger, and at least €100 million of ODA each year on HIV & AIDS and other communicable diseases.

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**Dóchas** is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. Dóchas provides a forum for consultation and co-operation between its members and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues.

Our vision is of a world where poverty and inequality are unacceptable, and where every person has the right to live free from fear, free from want and able to fulfil their potential.

### **Members**

Action from Ireland (Afri)	Irish Missionary Union (IMU)
ActionAid Ireland	Irish Red Cross
Africa Centre	Kerry Action for Development Education
Aidlink	National Youth Council of Ireland
Alan Kerins Projects	Nurture Africa
Amnesty International Ireland	Oxfam Ireland
Camara Education	Plan International (Ireland)
CBM Ireland	Progressio Ireland
Centre for Global Education	Self Help Africa
ChildFund Ireland	Sightsavers International Ireland
Children in Crossfire	Skillshare International Ireland
Christian Aid - Ireland	Suas Educational Development
Comhlámh	Tearfund Ireland
Concern Worldwide	The Hope Foundation
Friends of Londiani (Ireland)	Trócaire
Galway One World Centre	Vita
Gorta	Voluntary Service International (VSI)
Habitat for Humanity Ireland	Voluntary Service Overseas (Ireland)
Irish Council for International Students (ICOS)	Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM)
Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA)	War on Want NI
Irish League of Credit Unions International	World Vision Ireland
Development Foundation	YMCA Ireland

### **The Irish Association of Non Governmental Development Organisations**

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