

# Operational Framework for Ireland's Multilateral Engagement on Development

Department of Foreign Affairs

March 2022

## *Executive Summary*

*For decades, Ireland has been a consistent supporter of multilateralism, with the knowledge that collective action and a stable rules-based international order represent the best means of upholding both our values and our interests. This system, with the UN Charter and international law at its core, ensures that small states such as our own can thrive and prosper, that universal values can be upheld, global solutions to common problems can be found, and a safer, more peaceful, more sustainable, and equal world can be achieved. This Operational Framework for Multilateral Engagement on Development illustrates how Ireland is following through on the Government's International Development Policy, 'A Better World' in the multilateral arena.*

*Multilateral development cooperation is an important component of Ireland's international engagement and programming, with over half of Irish Official Development Assistance (ODA) going to multilateral organisations working on development, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, human rights, and humanitarian response – including the UN system, multilateral development banks, and global funds.*

*This Framework outlines guiding principles for Ireland's partnership with multilateral organisations in relation to development cooperation. We will base our support on our **policy** priorities, and on the **performance** of our multilateral partners, whilst **promoting harmonisation** and reform, and ensuring **predictability** in our approach.*

*Specific criteria for engagement with and funding for multilateral organisations will include targeting support for those organisations that are:*

- ✓ Delivering results aligned to Ireland's goals and priorities*
- ✓ Contributing effectively to the global achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, in supporting the drive to reach the furthest behind first*
- ✓ Engaging in effective partnerships with other agencies and civil society organisations and at national and local levels*
- ✓ Operating efficiently, organisationally effective and providing good value for money, as well as demonstrating learning, knowledge, and best practice in development and organisational governance.*

# Operational Framework for Ireland's Multilateral Engagement on Development

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ireland's Policy for International Development, *A Better World*<sup>i</sup>, outlines four key priorities for Ireland's development cooperation programme: **Strengthening Governance, Climate Action, Gender Equality, and Reducing Humanitarian Need**. These represent some of the essential building blocks of sustainable development and are the priorities through which Ireland's development cooperation will be directed to reach the *furthest behind first*. Delivering on them will define Ireland's leadership and influence, inform our strategic choices around partnerships and interventions, and guide how we implement our international development policy in the decade ahead.
- 1.2 *A Better World* also outlines Ireland's commitment to intensifying work in three clusters of interventions where we have proven expertise: protection, food, and people. The focus on **protection** seeks to increase our engagement in conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in conflict-affected and protracted crises. It recognises that protection is lifesaving, and builds on our longstanding effective response to humanitarian crises. The second cluster on **food** sets out a sustainable food systems approach, resonating with Ireland's journey from a country of famine to becoming a major food exporter. The cluster of interventions on **people** builds on the traditional engagement of Irish development workers in health and education in developing countries.
- 1.3 *A Better World* is an integral part of Ireland's foreign policy, *The Global Island*<sup>ii</sup>, which sets out how Ireland engages with the world and speaks of our values as a State and as a people. Included in this are a number of signature foreign policies, including combating poverty and hunger, advancing human rights, promoting peace and security through the promotion of disarmament, a continued strong commitment to UN peacekeeping, and the sharing of our experience of peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland.
- 1.4 The Government of Ireland is committed to an ambitious doubling of Ireland's footprint and influence globally by 2025, as stated in *Global Ireland*<sup>iii</sup>, launched in 2018. In this, and in *A Better World*, there is a commitment to increase Ireland's engagement with, and influence in, the European Union (EU), in the United Nations (UN) and in other multilateral organisations over the coming period. Ireland is serving as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period 2021-2022.
- 1.5 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the interconnected nature of the development challenges of our time, call for a stronger and renewed role for multilateral cooperation in order for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved. A multilateralist approach is also required to realise the vision of the UN Secretary General's Sustaining Peace agenda, and enhance linkages between development, humanitarian, human rights, and peace and security efforts.

- 1.6 The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed vulnerabilities amongst countries, especially those that are most fragile, and in the international system as a whole – necessitating a swift, coordinated, and truly global response. Multilateral organisations are playing a key role in that, both in the immediate response and also in building better preparedness to tackle future similar crises, better governance, and more sustainable economic and social systems.
- 1.7 This *Operational Framework for Multilateral Engagement on Development* lays out Ireland’s approach to supporting and engaging with multilateral organisations in development cooperation – as flagged in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review of Ireland (2020)<sup>iv</sup>. Its solid foundation is a strong belief in the need for a stable and secure rules-based international order. The Framework is also underpinned by the long and rich history of engagement by Ireland in multilateral organisations.
- 1.8 This Framework sets out guiding principles and criteria for engagement with and funding for multilateral organisations - guided by Ireland’s priorities for international development as outlined in *A Better World*. It will illustrate the synergies between the multilateral and bilateral assistance provided by Ireland. This in turn provides a rationale for engaging with, and allocating Official Development Assistance (ODA) to, Ireland’s multilateral partners.
- 1.9 The Framework builds on the extensive consultations – with the public, partners and within Government – during the development of *A Better World*, as well as a previous internal multilateral review. These confirmed the importance of multilateral engagement and funding, whilst highlighting the need for Ireland to clarify priorities for multilateral co-operation, strengthen coherence and synergies, and increase transparency. Multilateral engagement on development can also be seen as part of a balanced approach which involves working with a range of partners, recognising the unique added value and comparative advantage of each.

## **2. Why Ireland supports Multilateral Organisations**

- 2.1 Ireland supports multilateral organisations because the range, complexity, and crosscutting nature of global challenges demands a coordinated approach at both national and international levels. A rules-based system of international governance is also the best way to promote international peace and security and protect the interests of small states such as Ireland. This requires a functioning system of global governance capable of developing and upholding a rules-based international system. Our long-standing commitment to multilateralism, international law, and a rules-based global system is central to how we further our national interest.
- 2.2 This commitment to international relations and multilateralism is a key feature of Ireland’s national identity, and is reflected in the Constitution of Ireland and Irish membership of international organisations including the UN, the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), OECD, and the EU.

- 2.3 After a difficult period following the global financial crisis and recession in Ireland, Irish development co-operation started growing again in 2015. Building back internal capacity and shoring up public support for Ireland's aid programme continues to be important. The Covid-19 pandemic has again illustrated the inter-connectedness between Ireland and the rest of the world. As the World Health Organisation (WHO) has pointed out, no one is safe until everyone is safe.
- 2.4 Ireland believes that an adequately resourced and effective multilateral system is essential for achieving the SDGs, advancing human rights, reducing humanitarian need, preventing and resolving conflict, and addressing global challenges such as climate change, gender inequality, conflict and insecurity, forced migration, the Covid-19 response, and poverty and inequality.
- 2.5 In order to address global and public challenges, a pooling of effort and resources is required. This then leverages experience, expertise, and geographic reach and can often act as a catalyst for obtaining additional funding support. The collective nature of these combined efforts bring about efficiencies through, for example, scalability and cost sharing. Through multilateral efforts, we are also able to better address challenges in fragile contexts, and focus efforts on preventing conflict and tackling its root causes, which often cut across borders.
- 2.6 Ireland's ODA contributions and related engagement with multilateral organisations complements our bilateral programmes. Our Missions provide bilateral support to UN and other agencies on the ground where they have a comparative advantage in terms of expertise, mandate, staffing, and financing (for example Ireland has provided country-level support to WHO in the Covid-19 response). Our Missions often play a leadership role, in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator, in country-level donor coordination mechanisms.
- 2.7 Engaging as a member of multilateral organisations amplifies our voice, helping us to advance key foreign policy and development priorities on a global scale. Here, Ireland has the opportunity to influence priorities and programming far beyond our financial or geographic scope. For example, Ireland bolsters the voice of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in international climate negotiations and plays a leading role within the EU on negotiations specific to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and SIDS. Ireland also supports the participation of LDCs in WTO trade negotiations and works to promote the interests of our partner countries in multilateral trade policy.
- 2.8 Multilateral organisations also have the ability to mobilise and respond in a coordinated way to emerging global challenges, particularly in humanitarian emergencies. In each country where the UN development system is active, UN country teams lead and coordinate the development of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, which guide the UN's engagement in the country and provide valuable analysis to other development actors. In humanitarian crises, the UN leads the Humanitarian Country Team and coordinates the development of Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs). HRPs identify and prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable populations and the funding required.

### 3. Ireland's Engagement with Multilateral Development Organisations

- 3.1 Ireland's support for multilateral development organisations takes a number of forms, mainly through global institutional support for the UN, for International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and other global funds – bilaterally and through the EU, where a more collective 'Team Europe' approach is being undertaken<sup>v</sup>. We also engage at a policy level with these organisations and others such as the OECD. Ireland's multilateral engagement on development takes place through a number of Government Departments, including the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Finance, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, and others<sup>vi</sup>.
- 3.2 Multilateral development cooperation is also an important component of Ireland's bilateral ODA. In Ireland's partner countries<sup>vii</sup>, multilateral organisations have wide ranging expertise, a proven track record, and the ability to coordinate responses and avoid duplication of donor efforts. In addition, support to multilateral organisations extends Ireland's scope and reach, funding a range of programmes in many countries and contexts including where Ireland does not have a direct footprint.
- 3.3 Ireland has a solid track record of assuming leadership roles and engaging actively with its multilateral partners<sup>viii</sup>. In recent years this has included Ireland's term on the UN Security Council (2021-22), our chairing of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2018-2019), our co-facilitation of UN General Assembly negotiations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), and our membership of the UN Human Rights Council (2013-2018). This consistent engagement builds strong partnerships and affords Ireland the opportunity to influence positive change in the delivery of development cooperation.
- 3.4 Ireland will continue to seek opportunities for strategic leadership roles and engage proactively with multilateral organisations. Ireland's tenure on the UN Security Council – where our engagement will be guided by the three principles of building peace, strengthening conflict prevention, and ensuring accountability – presents an opportunity to promote a more comprehensive approach to peace and security in the work of the Council, that fully considers drivers and multipliers of conflict such as poverty, climate change and food insecurity, whilst also strengthening linkages between advocacy on issues relating to peace and security and multilateral development programming. Ireland has already been proactive in seeking out leadership roles during our Security Council tenure<sup>ix</sup>. Ireland will also continue to participate in joint efforts to make the multilateral system and its individual multilateral agencies more effective (for example supporting the roll-out of reform efforts in the UN Development System).
- 3.5 Over half of Ireland's ODA is channelled through multilateral organisations. Our multilateral aid is relatively focused: ten organisations accounted for 80% of total multilateral allocations in 2019. In line with the principles of the UN Funding Compact 2019, which aims to improve the predictability, flexibility, accountability, and efficiency of funding for UN development activities, Ireland endeavours to provide high quality and predictable funding to multilateral organisations, where possible<sup>x</sup>. Amongst the modalities used to support multilateral partners are the following:

- **Core funding**, to support the overall work of the multilateral partner, based on approved annual work plans, strategic plans and budgets.
- **Earmarked and flexible funding**, for particular priority areas and specific humanitarian crises.
- **Programmatic funding**, for particular multilateral programmes.
- **Bilateral funding**, from Headquarters/Embassies on the ground for specific programmes or activities (sometimes referred to as ‘multi-bi’ funding).
- **Pooled funds**, where Ireland along with other donors combine thematic contributions designed to grant agencies flexibility to allocate funds across regions and to individual country programmes according to priority needs.
- **Trust Funds** where Ireland commits funds to a multilateral partner, who then channels funding to a specific theme, focus area or country/countries. Trust Funds are administered by the multilateral partner and can involve one or more partners.

3.6 Ireland is a signatory to the Grand Bargain (2016), a unique agreement between donors and humanitarian organisations, seeking to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. Key commitments include improving the quality of humanitarian funding and strengthening engagement between humanitarian and development actors. Ireland has reported strong progress – through increased levels of core and flexible funding, an increase in multi-annual funding, and a strong focus on funding modalities that support our partners to work at the interface of humanitarian and development. The signatories to the Grand Bargain include many UN agencies, and this provides a platform for policy dialogue based on common goals.

3.7 The United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations’ core Human Rights instruments and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set the framework for Ireland’s international relations, including development cooperation. Ireland is an active member of the UN as a fulcrum for global collective action that enjoys legitimacy, a reputation for impartiality and a global presence. The UN plays a crucial role in supporting and monitoring progress on the SDGs. A significant global effort has been made in recent years to reform and improve the functioning and effectiveness of the UN, which is delivering results, and Ireland has played a key role in this.

3.8 The UN system has a particular role in international humanitarian engagement that spans resource mobilisation of humanitarian financing, leadership, the coordination of responses and the provision of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian crises are increasingly complex and protracted in nature, and acute needs endure long after the spotlight has faded. In recognition of this, Ireland supports a range of UN agencies in both sudden onset emergencies and protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises. In tandem, recognising that conflict is one of the main drivers of humanitarian crises, Ireland provides support to UN entities focused on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mediation.

3.9 International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, provide significant financial and technical support for developing countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the SDGs. IFIs, in particular the World Bank and African Development Bank, are also increasingly

engaged in fragile and conflict affected contexts. Our membership and contribution to these institutions enable Ireland to have a wider global and regional reach and influence policies that benefit people and communities in developing countries, in fragile contexts and those impacted by humanitarian crises. IFIs also constitute fora to bring together diverse partners and are an important source of information on global and country-level issues for Ireland.

3.10 Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) are international institutions that provide financial assistance, typically in the form of loans and grants, to developing countries in order to promote economic and social development. Ireland recently joined the African Development Bank and is a member of the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, among others. Given their mandates, sector and country coverage and knowledge, MDBs can also play a role as a catalyst for other financing – private sector, domestic revenues – encapsulated in the idea of scaling up resources from ‘billions to trillions’ to turn the SDGs into a reality.

3.11 The Minister for Finance serves as Ireland’s Governor in the IFIs of which Ireland is a member.<sup>xi</sup> The Department of Finance leads on relations with all IFIs and MDBs<sup>xii</sup> and is the budget holder for our shareholding and contribution to these institutions.<sup>xiii</sup> There is strong collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs on policy and programming issues relating to development and both Departments work closely to continually deepen this collaboration to increase Ireland’s influence.

3.12 Ireland also supports specific global multilateral initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), and Education Cannot Wait. Pooled, flexible funding mechanisms help Ireland to support larger scale projects with global reach to achieve the SDGs.

3.13 In Europe, Ireland provides support to and actively engages in the work of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. The European Investment Bank plays an important role in facilitating cooperation between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific regions. In addition, it increasingly works on joint projects in these regions with other MDBs such as the World Bank, EBRD, and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The closer working relationship between the EIB and EBRD with the EU Commission as envisaged under the outcomes from EFAD (European Financial Architecture for Development) are also important and they will be critical for the coming decade.

### *The European Union*

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has played an enhanced role at the UN and other multilateral bodies, and EU Member States coordinate closely and share information on multilateral issues. The EU is collectively the world’s leading provider of development assistance, with the European Commission and Member States providing over €50 billion a year to help overcome poverty and advance global development. Importantly, the EU’s engagement in supporting international development is firmly

interlinked with the EU external engagement – and the political, economic and peace and security aspects of that (EU Global Strategy).

Efforts are being made to maximise the EU collective influence in multilateral organisations, requiring the EU to further strengthen its coordination and coherence in line with the June 2019 Council Conclusions on Multilateralism, and as flagged in the February 2021 Joint Communication on strengthening the EU’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism<sup>xiv</sup>.

Ireland funds the EU’s development and humanitarian programmes (over €200m in 2019, equating to over 25% of Ireland’s Official Development Assistance) – mostly through assessed payments and also through various Trust Funds. Ireland uses its membership of the EU to influence the direction of overall EU development co-operation policies to ensure that, in line with the SDGs, they deliver results and make a real difference to the lives of people, in particular in Least Developed Countries and in the response to emergencies and crises.

The EU’s global engagement finds effect through, for example, the agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries (covering over 100 countries and a combined population of 1.5 billion people), the partnership between the EU and Africa, the Neighbourhood, and other regions, and the support by the EU via the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27 - including for the ‘Team Europe’ response to Covid-19.

Ireland’s funding for the EU is termed as ‘multilateral’ in the OECD Development Assistance Committee terminology for accounting. However, the EU is not defined in this Framework as a ‘multilateral partner’ as such – Ireland is part of the EU and participates in the policies, frameworks and processes that govern EU engagement externally. However, this operational framework for Ireland’s engagement with multilateral organisations on development can also assist in our engagement with and through the EU. In addition, EU institutions are in turn increasingly becoming an important funder to other multilateral institutions. Financing from EU instruments accounted for 7% of all funding to the UN Development System in 2018 (approximately €3 billion), for example.

#### 4. Ireland’s Guiding Principles for working with Multilateral Organisations

4.1 Ireland’s work with multilateral organisations on international development and humanitarian action is based on the following guiding principles<sup>xv</sup>:

- **Policy First:** Pursuing our international development policy priorities, as set out in Ireland’s foreign policy and international development policy, in our engagement with and funding for multilateral organisations; and addressing gaps in underfunded areas where possible. Ireland will do so by also, importantly, bringing country-level experience to global level discussions, policy- and decision-making.
- **Performance:** Using *evidence of the achievement of results* and *effectiveness* to make decisions on multilateral organisation support. Seeking results on the ground,



which in turn requires host country ownership and inclusive participation, the reduction of fragmentation, and greater effectiveness and efficiency. Strengthening initiatives to assess multilateral performance<sup>xvi</sup>.

- **Promoting Harmonisation:** Seeking harmonised working practices, consistency, and coherence within and between multilateral organisations, at headquarters, regional, and country level, to increase efficacy and encourage discussion on gaps and challenges. Multilateral organisations need to work together, and this also requires donors to be coherent in their approaches.
- **Predictability:** Providing predictable, high quality funding to multilateral organisations, and providing core support on a multiannual basis where feasible and appropriate.

## 5. Criteria for Ireland’s support for Multilateral Organisations

5.1 Using these guiding principles, Ireland aims to focus support on those multilateral development and humanitarian organisations that are:

- Delivering results** aligned to Ireland’s goals and priorities, as outlined in *The Global Island*, including Ireland’s support for a fairer, more just, more secure and more sustainable world, and *A Better World: Strengthening Governance, Climate Action, Gender Equality and Reducing Humanitarian Need*.
- Contributing effectively** to the global achievement of the SDGs, including by articulating and advocating for normative standards – in particular, in supporting the drive to reach the furthest behind first. This means working effectively in protracted crises, where humanitarian, development and peace needs co-exist.
- Engaging in effective partnerships** and strong collaboration with other actors, including civil society organisations, at global, national and local level.
- Operating efficiently, organisationally effective** and providing good value for money, as well as demonstrating learning, knowledge and best practice in development and organisational governance.

## 6. How we will implement this Operational Framework

### *A strategic approach*

6.1 As outlined in *A Better World*, Ireland will strive for a continued coherent, predictable, and strategic approach to our multilateral engagement on development, including through engagement at headquarters, regional and country levels. In this way, we will strive to reinforce and build on existing good practice and accountability as we continue the journey to reaching the UN target of allocating 0.7% of our Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA by 2030.

- 6.2 Ireland will consolidate our focus on effective multilateral solutions, strengthened multilateral coordination, an integrated and coherent approach to evolving global challenges, the achievement of the SDGs, and enhanced linkages and synergies across humanitarian, development, and peace efforts
- 6.3 Informed by the priorities and clusters embedded in *A Better World*, and guided also by regional and other strategies (Africa Strategy, Small Island Developing States Strategy, and others), Ireland will continue to focus action on areas in which we have a proven track record and where we know our expertise is best utilised, such as hunger and food systems, gender equality, climate action, humanitarian action, and strengthening governance.

*Pursuing our policy and influencing where we can*

- 6.4 At its core, Ireland will use the international development policy, *A Better World*, to further position Ireland's multilateral ODA as a key instrument to deliver on our overarching foreign policy objectives, utilising our political and diplomatic engagement alongside our development cooperation investments for optimal impact.
- 6.5 This Framework will form one part of a wider whole-of-government approach to multilateral organisations, ensuring that Ireland's engagement with and funding to multilateral organisations is relevant, effective and responsive in promoting Ireland's values and influence.
- 6.6 Stronger engagement with our Missions that provide funding to multilateral organisations will improve coherence and interlinkages while continuing to strengthen Ireland's influence through implementation of our development policy. Stronger engagement in the work of multilateral organisations by Missions in relevant countries, and stronger coordination of this engagement between Missions and Headquarters, will improve our monitoring of the effectiveness of the work carried out by our multilateral partners at field level.
- 6.7 Ireland will strengthen our partnership management and tailor our approaches to the specific focus, including weaknesses and strengths, of each organisation. We will do so by engaging on programming and policy processes with multilateral development organisations and developing an evidence base to inform the direction of Ireland's engagement on development, peace, human rights, humanitarian, security, and other relevant matters.
- 6.8 Ireland's membership of the EU enhances our influence in multilateral negotiations on development cooperation priorities and allocation of funds. Ireland will foster the EU's important engagement with multilateral organisations in respect of development priorities.

- 6.9 As with the EU, we continue to advocate for LDCs, SIDS, fragile contexts, and reaching the furthest behind first across all our relationships with our multilateral partners in the UN, IFIs and others.
- 6.10 In line with our commitments in *A Better World*, we will ensure gender equality and women’s empowerment are prioritised and mainstreamed across our multilateral partnerships. We will hold our multilateral partners to account for their implementation of their gender commitments at global and country level. We will leverage our multilateral partnerships to advance key gender equality initiatives and deliver on our commitment to increase support to women’s rights organisations and other organisations advancing women’s rights and gender equality.
- 6.11 Ireland will further enhance our ways of working to maintain a strong presence, influence, and impact through multilateral organisations. As part of this Ireland will continue to strive for a coherent approach to planning its position within UN agency Executive Boards and other leadership structures, including through the UN’s country-level coordination mechanisms. We understand that maximising our influence will require increased capacity, building also on the expertise of and deep connections with our multilateral partners.
- 6.12 Ireland will work to encourage multilateral organisations to work with regional organisations and sub-regional organisations, including the African Union and the EU, to deepen engagement and support their work to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.
- 6.13 Ireland will use its influence in multilateral fora to ensure that there is operational clarity within supported organisations regarding Agenda 2030 and reaching the furthest behind first, reflecting Ireland’s priorities.
- 6.14 Ireland will advocate to ensure that multilateral organisations support the vital role of civil society organisations – including women-led and grassroots organisations – in sustainable development, including as development actors in their own right.
- 6.15 Consistent with the commitment in *A Better World*, Ireland will strengthen the research components of our multilateral partnerships.

#### *Improving our capacity and ways of working*

- 6.16 Ireland will continue engagement across Government, including via the enhanced Inter-Departmental Committee on Development Cooperation. This aims to ensure policy coherence and a coordinated approach to delivering on Ireland’s ODA commitments while reviewing performance and identifying best practice across Government.<sup>xvii</sup>
- 6.17 Ireland will scale up internal capacity, with a view to strengthening our coordination across multilateral development partners, to amplify our global influence.

Our priority will be to invest in capacity to allow for increased engagement with the UN, IFIs, the African Union, the OECD and other partnerships, as well as with the EU.

- 6.18 This will be matched by building capacity within Ireland's Missions, including Permanent Missions to the UN, to deepen in-country engagement with multilateral actors (such as in the global health space in Geneva).
- 6.19 Ireland's multilateral missions in New York, Geneva and elsewhere will work with the Headquarters units leading the Department's engagement with multilateral organisations to strengthen the interface between their work – including in relation to Ireland's work with UN agencies, funds and programmes, UN General Assembly Committees, forums such as the Human Rights Council, Commission for the Status of Women (CSW), High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and others. These are important platforms for supporting the work of Ireland's multilateral partners and fostering their effectiveness.
- 6.20 Ireland will actively encourage the assignment of Irish graduates and experts to international positions within the multilateral system and explore new ways to develop a strong Irish network across the development sector globally.
- 6.21 This engagement will require continued structured interaction between all of the relevant Department of Foreign Affairs units and Embassies and other relevant Departments, in order to be able to promote Irish positions effectively in different bodies. In this way, we will achieve greater consistency and strategic focus in our total multilateral funding.
- 6.22 Ireland will build internal and external communications in an effort to illustrate how and why multilateralism is foundational to Ireland's foreign policy agenda.
- 6.23 We will communicate the value of multilateral development cooperation by raising awareness of sustainable development issues and strengthen public engagement to foster global citizenship.

*Striving for accountability and results at all times*

- 6.24 Multilateral organisations have internal and external oversight functions. Reports and recommendations are presented at Executive Board level or to instrument-based committees in the EU context. Ireland will continue to seek continued improvements in risk mitigation, coherence, transparency and accountability, including safeguarding.
- 6.25 Ireland's involvement in and support of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) ensures additional oversight and independent assessments of multilateral organisations. Ireland will continue to encourage organisations to utilise the findings of MOPAN assessments as a means for improvement, with a view to increasing effectiveness.

- 6.26 Ireland's engagement with and support to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is a key facet of our multilateral activity, given the DAC's leading role in setting global principles and standards, data collection, monitoring and research<sup>xviii</sup>.
- 6.27 At Headquarters, the units leading the Department's engagement with multilateral organisations will collaborate across the Department, to ensure that Ireland's multilateral partnerships and engagement are reflected in results-based frameworks and operational/business plans, increasing oversight of our programmes both bilaterally and multilaterally. Mitigation of risk and assurance of the highest standards of safeguarding will also inform all oversight operations.
- 6.28 With the recognition that global challenges require global solutions, Ireland will intensify engagement and hold multilateral organisations accountable for contributing to *A Better World* and *Agenda 2030*.

*Building strong partnerships and remaining focused*

- 6.29 Ireland supports collective actions, as it is through partnerships that we can achieve the most tangible and transformative outcomes. Ireland supports wider engagement and agency collaboration to ensure complementarity, reduce duplication of efforts, and to focus on the needs of those furthest behind.
- 6.30 We will continue to support and influence the ongoing efforts for reform of the UN across the reform agenda's three areas: the peace and security architecture, management and administration, and the development system. This will include supporting efforts for UN reform to give a stronger voice for Africa and to ensure African countries have improved access to international development funds, including climate finance. We also remain committed to the Grand Bargain, and to the implementation of its new phase that aims to streamline, refocus and generate high-level political buy-in and support.
- 6.31 Where possible and appropriate, Ireland is committed to supporting core and flexible funding, and we will endeavour to agree multi-annual arrangements supporting agencies' overall budgets. We will continue to channel flexible funding to other instruments, where possible opting for pooled and flexible funding to encourage joint activities.
- 6.32 We will encourage multilateral organisations to support the important role of civil society organisations in development and to ensure that their programmes include consultation with civil society and promote civil society space, and promote civil society participation at UN and other multilateral bodies.
- 6.33 Ireland will maintain its strong focus on key multilateral partners, avoiding spreading available resources too thinly and strengthening our ability to leverage our partnerships in the most effective manner. This will be constantly kept under review and is dependent on both our own internal resources and the partners' performance.

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## Footnotes

- <sup>i</sup> <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/aboutus/abetterworldirelandspolicyforinternationaldevelopment/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/ourwork/global-island/the-global-island-irelands-foreign-policy.pdf>
- <sup>iii</sup> <https://www.ireland.ie/media/ireland/stories/globaldiaspora/Global-Ireland-in-English.pdf>
- <sup>iv</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-ireland-2020-c20f6995-en.htm>
- <sup>v</sup> See Council conclusions on EU action to strengthen rules-based multilateralism at <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10341-2019-INIT/en/pdf> and the February 2021 Joint Communication on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism at [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/en\\_strategy\\_on\\_strengthening\\_the\\_eus\\_contribution\\_to\\_rules-based\\_multilateralism.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/en_strategy_on_strengthening_the_eus_contribution_to_rules-based_multilateralism.pdf)
- <sup>vi</sup> Whilst the majority of UN development partnerships are led by DFA, for example, a number are led by other Government Departments (e.g. the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine leads on Ireland's relationships with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment leads relationships with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Environment Programme). The Department of Finance leads on Ireland's engagement with, for example, the World Bank.
- <sup>vii</sup> As of 2020, Ireland's partner countries are Ethiopia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and region, Vietnam and region, Palestine.
- <sup>viii</sup> Other examples include Ireland's role as Vice President of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board in 2019. Alongside Belize, Ireland also co-chaired the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS in 2018 and 2019. From 2019 to 2020, Ireland was a member of the UN's Peacebuilding Commission.
- <sup>ix</sup> Ireland assumed the following leadership roles in 2021 as part of our tenure on the Security Council: Facilitator for UN Security Council Resolution 2231 which aims to uphold the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ('JCPOA'), Chair of the Somalia Sanctions Committee, Co-Chair of the Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security Agenda, together with Mexico, Co-Chair of the new Security Council Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security, together with Niger, Co-penholder with Norway on the Syria Humanitarian File, Penholder on the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel ('UNOWAS') file and Informal Focal Point on Hunger and Conflict with Niger.
- <sup>x</sup> Ireland has signed up to the Grand Bargain and in recent years has reported increased levels of un-earmarked and multi-annual funding for humanitarian efforts: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>
- <sup>xi</sup> With the exception of the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) where DFA (Ambassador to the COE) sits on the Governing Board and the Department of Finance sits on the Administrative Council.
- <sup>xii</sup> With the exception of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) which is led by Department of Foreign Affairs.
- <sup>xiii</sup> The Department of Foreign Affairs leads on a small number of Trust Funds, most notably with the SIDS Trust Fund for climate change and disaster resilience at the Asian Development Bank.
- <sup>xiv</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/en\\_strategy\\_on\\_strengthening\\_the\\_eus\\_contribution\\_to\\_rules-based\\_multilateralism.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/en_strategy_on_strengthening_the_eus_contribution_to_rules-based_multilateralism.pdf)
- <sup>xv</sup> Based on OECD Development Assistance Committee principles, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/multilateral-development-finance-9789264308831-en.htm>
- <sup>xvi</sup> Such as multilateral organisations' evaluation units and the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). MOPAN is a network of like-minded donor countries for monitoring the performance of multilateral development organisations at the country level. All members have a common interest in knowing more about the effectiveness of multilateral organisations. MOPAN conducts joint assessments of multilateral organisations that identify strengths and areas for improvements in these organisations.
- <sup>xvii</sup> For example, our ongoing work with the Department of Agriculture and the Marine on agreeing a common approach and agenda for our partnerships with FAO, WFP and IFAD.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Ireland, for example, is part of an OECD/UN working group to operationalise the triple nexus (development, peace, humanitarian).