

1. Introduction:

Gorta's vision is a world where there is no hunger and where the poorest communities have the means to create a **prosperous future** for themselves and their children. Our approach to development is centred on enhancing the capacity and capability of local communities to move towards the achievement of prosperity – in this sense **entrepreneurship development** is key.

Gorta works with local partners and communities in ten developing countries, to assist them in the move from subsistence to entrepreneurship, the creation of secure and environmentally sustainable livelihoods and the diversification of income generation opportunities. It focuses on food and nutrition security, water and sanitation, health, education and the improvement of livelihoods.

Gorta welcomes the opportunity to engage with Irish Aid and contribute to the process of reviewing the White Paper, and commends the open and participatory way in which the consultation was carried out both in Ireland and in partner countries.

Our submission draws on Gorta's almost 50 years of experience in the area of hunger and poverty eradication and the most recent work of its Hunger Secretariat – set up in 2010 - through which Gorta has effectively engaged in policy dialogue at both national and international level.

2. Progress Made: Has the Government been successful in implementing the commitments contained in the White Paper on Irish Aid?

Significant progress has been made since 2006. In spite of changing dynamics in the national and international scenarios, Ireland was able to deliver an internationally recognised **quality aid programme**, with **strong leadership in the area of hunger eradication**.

The guiding principles set out in the White Paper - partnership, public ownership and transparency, effectiveness and quality assurance, coherence and long term sustainability - were seen to inform Ireland's work on both policy and programming with a clear focus which should be retained. On different occasions, aid effectiveness, impact, innovation and the importance of cross sectoral partnerships, were mentioned as key priorities.

The commitments identified in 2006 are still relevant. In Gorta's view, a continued focus on Africa, the leadership shown in the fight against hunger, and renewed attention to issues of governance and human rights remain key priorities. With the publication of the Hunger Task Force Report and the appointment of a Special Envoy on Hunger to oversee its implementation, a clear focus was set for the Irish development agenda. Together with it went a commitment to spend 20% of ODA towards alleviating and eradicating hunger.

Ireland has shown tremendous political leadership in the area of maternal and infant nutrition through the launching, together with the US, of the *1,000 Days: Change a life, change the future* initiative in New York in September 2010 and the support provided since then to the *Scaling up Nutrition* movement.

In the light of changing economic circumstances and a resulting decline of 30% in the aid budget since 2008, a major challenge remains: that of meeting the target of 0.7% of GNI to ODA by 2015. The revised White Paper should reaffirm the Government's commitment to this target. At the same time, Gorta wishes to acknowledge the fact that, in spite of the cuts, Ireland still remains the seventh most generous OECD donor in terms of contributions per capita, which is commendable.

Other very welcome initiatives undertaken since 2006 include the commitment to untied aid, the inauguration of the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre, and the launch of Africa Day.

Gorta has further noticed a growing positive and constructive engagement with civil society in informing Government positions, as well as simplified NGO funding mechanisms.

Gorta calls for the Irish Development agenda to maintain a **clear focus on hunger**.

3. Changing context: What are the implications of the changes in the global and domestic context for the Government's aid programme in the future and how will these affect current priorities?

Since 2006, the Irish development agenda has had to confront rising challenges, starting with having to operate within a context of global financial turmoil which made planning of aid programming very difficult.

Increasing pressure on natural resources, competition for land (for food, feed and fuel) and water, climate change and population dynamics have further aggravated the vulnerability of local food systems and put smallholder farmers' resilience at greater risk. The need to invest in a **more integrated and system-oriented approach** beyond silos is imperative, with a focus on local solutions and the conservation of natural resources for present and future generations.

Food price volatility and spikes have had an immediate impact on poor households' purchasing power and income share going to food, and with the rise in the global population to nine billion by 2050, access to adequate and affordable food for all will continue to be a challenge. Although Africa is currently experiencing positive economic development, the gap between rich and poor people is widening.

The recent crisis in the Horn of Africa made it evident that, in spite of information being available through sophisticated early warning systems, such information was not acted on in a timely manner. There is a need for greater effectiveness in responding to sudden shocks and for the further development of **preparedness and rehabilitation** measures.

Strengthening the linkages between **emergency, rehabilitation and development** becomes key, with a complementary need to align a public awareness campaign to these messages, and developing adequate and related communication strategies.

Given the growing fragility of national dynamics (economic and environmental) and the impact this has on food security and livelihoods, there is a need to strengthen **social safety nets** and invest in **food reserves** at both national and regional levels.

The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Rio +20, the EU Agenda for Change, the post 2015 discussion and Ireland's recently adopted Africa Strategy, all reflect a new way of looking at development and aid effectiveness with **public sector reform** and **private sector engagement** featuring strongly in development cooperation strategies.

The emergence of the BRIC economies will determine new international dynamics, thus influencing development models in the countries where Irish Aid works, including Africa.

Corruption is rampant, and **respect for the rule of law** remains an enormous challenge. The fight against corruption, in view of a more effective governance of food systems, should remain a priority.

In light of the scarcity of financial resources, the need for programmes to better incorporate elements of **efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact** and **value for money** is vital.

At a time of continuously changing development variables, there is a need to identify innovative solutions that can be scalable both upwards and outwards – the role of research in determining new avenues for a changing context needs to be strengthened.

The importance of **knowledge-transfer** and of **farmer-to-farmer exchanges** needs to be emphasised.

Innovation should be a key determinant in development investments.

4. **Key Issues: How should the Government respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality? Are there other issues? Given the limited resources and the need to focus these, which issues should the Government prioritise in its future aid programming?**

HUNGER

Ireland, because of its history, its experience of famine, and its known, longstanding commitment to overseas development, is in a perfect position to lead international efforts in the fight against hunger. **This internationally recognised leadership should be maintained** and strengthened in shaping the post-2015 path. The prioritization of hunger on the Irish development agenda was emphasised by the setting up of a Hunger Task Force in 2007, the subsequent issuing of the Hunger Task Force Report¹ in 2008 and the parallel appointment of a Special Envoy for Hunger to advance its recommendations.

The Hunger Task Force Report presented the Irish Government's response to the hunger crisis by setting out a very focused programme of action to address primarily the areas of: **smallholder productivity; maternal and child under-nutrition; and the prioritisation of hunger in national and international development agendas**. It pays particular attention to elements such as good governance, political commitment, the creation of an enabling environment, the importance of partnerships, and the need to invest in capacity building at all levels and in institutional strengthening. Significantly, the Hunger Task Force Report obtained strong cross-party support at the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs in late 2008. The progress report presented by the Special Envoy in November 2011 highlighted the achievements to date.

Over the recent years, nutrition has regained centrality in the entire food security dialogue, with emphasis placed on maternal and child undernutrition and the need to develop adequate diets that are both diversified and sustainable. The recently-launched SUN Movement has seen growing political commitment to **scaling up nutrition efforts at national level**. New initiatives aimed at **leveraging agriculture for nutrition and health outcomes** have been explored, aimed at developing **nutrition-sensitive** and **nutrition-specific** agricultural programmes. Gorta feels that the centrality of nutrition in the food security and livelihoods discourse should be maintained and related programmes tailored to incorporate nutrition outcomes. With regard to the latter, **protecting local biodiversity** should be emphasised.

¹ Hunger Task Force, Report to the Government of Ireland, September 2008.

In this area, stronger collaboration with CGIAR centers and the promotion of applied research will be most welcome. In particular, Gorta strongly recommends that Irish Aid actively build on initiatives currently being pursued by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI):

“Although the agriculture, health, and nutrition sectors all seek to improve human well-being, agriculture has rarely been explicitly deployed as a tool to address nutrition and health challenges. With agriculture moving higher on the global agenda, in part because of volatile food prices, there is growing recognition that it is an opportune time to bring together the agriculture, nutrition, and health sectors and unleash the potential of agriculture—as a supplier of food, a source of income, and an engine for growth—to sustainably reduce malnutrition and ill-health for the world’s most vulnerable people”
(IFPRI. 2011 Global Food Policy Report. 2012, p.55)

Particularly in relation to the centrality of smallholder farmers (with emphasis on women farmers), efforts should be made to change the way in which farmers organise themselves, in order to strengthen their bargaining power and tackle market imperfections, especially at local/district levels. There is scope for the national governments to play a more active role in markets encouraging all actors to engage with one another more effectively in order to strengthen local and regional food value chains. Supporting the development of **farmers’ autonomous agricultural cooperatives** at national and regional level would be recommended. In this area the need to strengthen farmers’ ability to meet safety and quality standards, to adequately understand market dynamics, and to support access to inputs, technology, infrastructure, extension and capital is key to enhance the **competitiveness of the agri-food sector**. Supporting the adoption of stronger competition laws could also assist. Strengthening the governance of food chains and ensuring their optimal management for the benefit of smallholder farmers is key.

Areas needing further attention also include:

- improving basic services and social protection
- promoting the **right to food** as a means to eradicate hunger
- promoting the Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure and the principles for responsible investment
- further investing in “aid for trade” with a clear pro-poor focus

At policy level, **continued and stronger engagement with the UN High Level Task Force on the updated Comprehensive Framework for Action**, the **Committee on World Food Security** and the **Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)** is recommended. Ireland’s leadership would be most welcome in the **“post-2015 dialogue”** with these international bodies and also within the **EU**, especially in relation to what has been learned from 20 years of LEADER.

FRAGILITY

In increasingly fragile contexts with constantly changing economic, social and environmental dynamics, a new spectrum of communities’ vulnerability emerges. Conflict, climate change, environmental hazards, and global financial volatility render people’s lives and livelihoods extremely insecure. In this light, investing in the enhancement of **resilience to shocks** and in **recovery ability** is key. The prevalence of **“protracted crises”** calls for the need to link relief and development work, so as to enhance a move from emergency to rehabilitation. **Assurance of multi-year funding for livelihood restoration programmes for vulnerable, crisis-affected and at-risk populations would be essential.**

Gorta recommends that the revised White Paper emphasise the need to devote greater attention to:

- Early warning systems and rapid response strategies

- More comprehensive vulnerability assessments
- Disaster risk management and risk reduction
- Social security and safety net schemes (including food banks)
- Natural ecosystems and their biodiversity
- Interventions in areas of natural resource management and watershed management in particular
- Protection of local markets and enhancing access to flexible credit
- Strengthening of regional structures and coordination mechanism in Africa
- Population dynamics (growth rates, age structures, fertility and mortality rates, migration, and rural-urban links)
- Peace building and conflict resolution
- Strengthening of legitimate institutions and governance

CLIMATE CHANGE

The frequency, variability and impact of extreme weather events on people's lives and livelihoods call for more efficient models of **sustainable economic development**, where social, economic and environmental dynamics are interlinked and mutually supportive.

Gorta recommends that the revised White Paper address the need to:

- Promote climate-smart agriculture (making use of research based innovation) and innovative natural resource management approaches, including watershed management
- Stress the importance of in-depth environmental impact assessment as a pre-condition to investments
- Promote agro-ecology
- Promote the reduction of GHG emissions in Ireland and Europe in consideration of the negative impact these have on the countries Ireland is trying to support in the first place
- Promote low carbon development initiatives
- Promote mitigation (including conservation agriculture, organic agriculture and greater reliance on renewable energy for domestic use in rural households) and adaptation (with a need to better address changes in food insecurity, identifying vulnerabilities, reassessing agricultural research priorities, and strengthening agriculture extension and communication systems)
- Prioritise 'finance for climate' with particular emphasis on small-scale women farmers who are disproportionately affected
- Promote the role of agriculture in climate change policy positions at both EU and UN level, including Rio +20, ensuring it is fully integrated into national strategies and a consensus-based multilateral framework to address the challenges of climate change
- Promote investments in energy that is accessible, cleaner and more efficient

BASIC NEEDS (HIV/AIDS, HEALTH, EDUCATION)

Gorta believes that **investing in people** and in their ability to lead in their own development path is at the centre of our work. The White Paper's focus on issues of HIV/AIDS, health and education is particularly relevant in this sense, and such priorities should remain and be further mainstreamed at both policy and programme level.

Gorta recommends that the revised White Paper should:

With regard to education:

- Promote the strengthening of the education system (with emphasis on quality) at all levels and the fostering of partnerships with Irish institutes in this sense
- Advocate for continued support to accessing education for girls

- Advocate for the public good aspect of nutrition education including the skills of food preparation and cooking
- Advocate for universal primary education by 2015

With regard to health:

- Emphasise the importance of training for community health workers
- Advocate for better coordination among health care agencies at national level to ensure that no significant gap remains unaddressed
- Promote the integration of HIV/AIDS responses into food security and livelihoods programming
- Emphasise the importance of clean water for health, sanitation and food preparation

GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

"Hunger is a failure of governance", thus states the Hunger Task Force Report. The concept of governance suggests a particular emphasis on processes rather than outcomes, on the way in which power is exercised, institutions operate and decision-making takes place. Strengthening governance requires a new emphasis on all **process-oriented elements of governing** - the frameworks within which development initiatives take place.

Investing in strengthening the capacity of local institutions, respect for the rule of law, fighting corruption, ensuring justice, inclusion and equality and supporting the advancement of democratisation, are of paramount importance.

The promotion of a **human rights based approach** is key in enhancing governance and the rule of law.

Gorta suggests that the revised White Paper:

- Use rights based language in promoting the eradication of hunger, not only as a policy commitment but as a **legal obligation**
- Promote the understanding of a rights based approach as entailing:
 1. *Legal entitlement rather than needs*
 2. *Individuals as right holders (rather than beneficiaries)*
 3. *States as duty bearers*
 4. *Accountability and recourse mechanisms*
 5. *Focus on the individual (not on population percentages)*
 6. *Principles of participation, accountability, non discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and the rule of law*
 7. *Enabling environment: attention to legal, policy and institutional frameworks*
 8. *Universal, interdependent, indivisible and interrelated nature of all human rights*
 9. *Focus on process not only on results*
- Promote human rights impact assessments of development interventions
- Make the conceptual distinction between *food security* (a policy achievement), **food sovereignty** (a political statement) and the *right to food* (a legal entitlement, the only one, out of the three, recognised in international law as a human right)
- Distinguish between human rights principles (transparency, participation, respect for the rule of law..) and **individual human rights** (right to life, work, health, food...)
- Promote the advancement of economic, social and cultural rights – together with civil and political rights
- Promote rights based monitoring: with emphasis on *process*, and not on outcomes alone

- Promote the use of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realisation of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security
- Make explicit reference to the two international conventions stipulating the two main categories of human rights (ratified by Ireland): the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Advocate for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Advocate for required action to be taken at legal, policy and institutional levels in order for human rights to be adequately protected
- Encourage policy development in the area of human rights to be better informed by country case studies (valuable examples exist in Latin America - in the area of legislation; in Africa - in the area of policy development; and in South East Asia - in the area of justiciability and access to courts)
- Advocate for Ireland's commitment to submit regular reports to the relevant UN Committees so as to lead by example
- Emphasise the need for Governments to more effectively regulate the activities of multinational and other private companies operating in its territory. The latter have *responsibilities*, but the *legal obligation* under international law rests with the State.
- Promote the strengthening of legitimate institutions and the rule of law in partner countries
- Make a case for the right to food as a meaningful tool to advance the MDGs beyond a reduction in 'proportions' of hungry people to the *full realisation of individual rights*
- Advocate for a **three-pronged approach to development**: (i) immediate relief; (ii) long-term sustainable development; and (iii) governance and human rights
- Promote work in partner countries in the formulation of appropriate policies, strategies and legislation with a view to strengthening the governance of food systems
- Advocate internationally for **stronger accountability mechanisms**
- Advocate for the integration of a rights-based approach into development curricula

GENDER EQUALITY

According to FAO's State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011, closing the gender gap in agricultural inputs alone could lift 100–150 million people out of hunger. Tackling vulnerability requires addressing the main causes of gender inequality and the way in which women are disproportionately affected by poverty and insecurity. It is also widely recognised that women play a key role in sustainable economic growth and that investing in their empowerment is key to progress.

Gorta wishes to recommend that the revised White Paper:

- Maintain a clear focus on women and youth in development programming
- Address women's needs beyond a focus on mothers alone
- Highlight the importance of involving men in women's empowerment initiatives so as to ensure that men fully understand the process from the beginning and avoid conflict back in the home, and domestic violence
- Address the issue of gender-based violence as key
- Support women's access to credit and financial services
- Advocate for more effective gender equality mainstreaming in programmes and policies

DISABILITY

According to the 2011 World Report on Disability (WRD), more than a billion people worldwide suffer from some form of impairment, representing approximately 15% of the global population. Persons with disability rate among the most vulnerable groups in society with exclusion from the socio economic process and are frequently denied meaningful participation and access to education, health care, market and credit.

Gorta calls for a more inclusive development approach where persons with disability are empowered to actively contribute to progress and growth for themselves and for society. Gorta suggests that the revised White Paper:

- Emphasise the need to ensure disability is included in current gender mainstreaming approaches
- Advocate for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
- Ensures that persons with disability are not invisible in targeting (with emphasis on children)
- Ensure that persons with disability are considered when designing specific tools that can be used for them
- Fight stigma and cultural practices affecting the differently abled

PRIVATE SECTOR

Gorta believes that private sector engagement is key in identifying and developing innovative responses to new and rising development cooperation challenges. It is essential to further promote the contribution of business and trade to development and growth through transparent and accountable processes. There is a key role for the private sector in knowledge and technology transfer, which needs to be harnessed.

Gorta would like to recommend that the revised White Paper:

- Encourage the identification and piloting of innovative business development models
- Support engaging Irish companies, cooperatives and credit unions, especially with Sub-Saharan Africa
- Encourage North-South as well as South-South cooperation
- Promote corporate social responsibility
- Promote public-private partnerships
- Uphold continued support to the “aid for trade” development model

PRIORITIES FOR THE GOVERNMENT FUTURE AID PROGRAMMING

Given limited resources, Gorta suggests that Government maintain a focus on the three pillars introduced by the Hunger Task Force Report and further prioritise interventions in the areas of:

- Hunger
- Nutrition and Agriculture
- Climate Change
- Business and Trade, engaging the private sector
- Applied Research
- Governance and Human Rights

5. Ways of Working: How can the Government further strengthen its ways of working in delivering an effective aid programme, with a view to delivering real results in poverty reduction?

Ireland should strive to maintain its well-deserved and internationally-recognised championship in aid quality and development effectiveness.

Gorta recommends that the revised White Paper emphasise the importance of:

- Further strengthening public engagement and understanding of development
- Public-private partnership
- Political leadership
- Policy coherence for development

- Impact, scalability and replication potential of development initiatives
- Adequate recording of information and disaggregated data collection and analysis
- Strengthening the capacity of the Inter Departmental Committee on Development
- Strengthening the capacity and resources of the Hunger Unit
- Partnering with: CGIAR, UN, World Bank, OECD, EU, private sector, and civil society
- More effective public engagement and innovative communication strategies
- Encouraging NGOs to better synergise their efforts and coordinate action at country level (including through the possibility of joint funding)
- Assisting countries Irish Aid works with to comply with international standards and obligations in the area of human rights
- Investing more in development education
- Supporting the reform of the international architecture to tackle world hunger, promoting coherence across sectors and an approach which focuses on clearly targeted interventions, innovation and impact.

6. Other comments: If the respondent seeks to address other issues – of direct relevance to the White Paper on Irish Aid – they should do so in this section.

Gorta wishes to acknowledge the following points, also relevant in the review process. There is a need to take into account the importance of:

- The recommendations of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition: in particular those referring to the need to: 1. Make better use of local food sources for healthier, cheaper and more sustainable diets through increased production and consumption of micronutrient rich foods; 2. Complement commodity based value chain models promoted by most food and agriculture policies by an integrated local development approach that combines availability of a variety of locally produced foods at different times of the year, supply of local markets, appropriate consumer information and sustainable management of natural resources; 3. Promote research, education and training on production and consumption of traditional and indigenous foods as essential to diversify diets, protect biodiversity and strengthen culture and social cohesion.
- Promoting an ecosystem approach to food and nutrition security (Bioversity International have undertaken significant work in this area) looking in particular at how to best link urban and rural areas and shorten food chains between consumer and producers
- Promoting sustainable and diversified diets that are healthy diets but also diets compatible with sustainable environment management and also with socially sound development
- Promoting nutrition-sensitive value chains
- Emphasising the importance of consumer education, beyond conventional models and towards the advancement of local diets
- Promoting a district approach and local solutions, influencing policy development at district level
- Rural-urban links with stronger attention to “food for city” dynamics
- Promoting microfinance particularly targeted at the development of small business ventures
- Lobbying internationally for maintaining hunger at the top of the development agenda, highlighting its entitlement-deprivation nature
- Targeting overseas development work towards strengthening legal, policy and institutional frameworks in developing countries

In conclusion, Gorta wishes to emphasise the need to promote greater understanding that the link between poverty reduction and hunger reduction in developing countries is, indeed, two way. Agricultural and food-led local growth especially leading to local value-added market

mechanisms can directly reduce both hunger and poverty. The effect in the medium term can be twofold – income and food directly for smallholders, value added jobs locally for other rural residents and further local multiplier effects from the initially generated local incomes leading to a variety of rural development successes.

It is now more clearly being realised that growth from agriculture and food in developing countries reduces hunger and poverty by a much more significant margin than does general national economic growth. Many recent studies tend to show that GDP growth originating from agriculture and food in developing countries can be three to five or even six times more effective in raising the incomes of the poor than growth from other manufacturing or service sectors.

Gorta strongly recommends that Ireland capitalises on the well respected Irish leadership role in relation to world hunger by maintaining the strong engagement in policy and advocacy between now and 2015 in all appropriate institutional *fora*, including the EU. Such engagement should emphasise the role of agricultural and food-led growth in reducing both hunger and poverty in developing countries as part of the post 2015 discourse.

In this dialogue, the international discourse should be widened:

- From farming to value added food chains
- From agri-food to rural development
- From nutrition sensitive to 'nutrition responsive' agricultural and food systems
- From traditional to innovative partnerships to provide "food for cities"

