

# Sinn Féin

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



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Sinn Féin agrees that Irish Aid may release all or part of this submission, subject to data protection requirements.

Sinn Féin does not require any part of this submission to be withheld from Freedom of Information requests.

# Introduction

## A Vision for Development Aid in the Global South

Wealth gives people freedom to choose. Poverty denies people freedom to survive. But economic growth and increased wealth must not become ends in themselves. Development must concern itself with the enhancement of the necessary freedoms that allow people to influence the world in which they live and to create sustainable lives. The removal of deprivations such as the lack of access to health care, sanitary arrangements and clean water are critical factors to be considered in the role of development, as is the removal of specific deprivations, which affect the lives of women and children. This, of necessity, leads us to consideration of the economic, social and political arrangements in the geographical areas of our concern, as well as a commitment to the principle that the people themselves must be actively involved in shaping their destinies – and not just passive recipients of our development largesse.

Any paper that focuses on the development agenda must consider a range of issues – the operation of markets, legislatures, political parties, non-governmental agencies and, most importantly, the target populations.

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# 01. PROGRESS MADE

## PROGRESS SINCE 2006

Sinn Féin endorses the strategy and goals set down by Irish Aid in the 2006 White Paper. In this context, Sinn Féin sees the eradication of poverty, one of the prominent Millennium Development Goals, as underpinning all other development priorities. Gender equality, good governance and the protection of human rights all stem from this one critical goal.

Sinn Féin believes that it would have been helpful if the outcomes of the goals set in the 2006 White Paper had been measured and assessed in a quantitative and transparent manner. Furthermore, an all governmental approach to development policy could have proved more constructive.

Irish Aid is widely recognised as one of the most effective actors in the deliverance of development aid worldwide. For this, Ireland can be proud. Sinn Féin believes this achievement is largely due to its commitment to working in partnership with recipient communities and in its drive towards developing sustainable growth. The principles set down in the 2006 White Paper remain as valid today as they were then. These core principles and values should continue to be enshrined in Irish Aid's future plan of work for all programme countries.







## 02. CHANGING CONTEXT

Sinn Féin supports the Millennium Development Goal target of government expenditure on Overseas Development Aid (ODA) reaching 0.7% of Gross National Product by 2015.

In 2008, Ireland contributed €921 million to ODA or almost 0.6% of GNP. This year that total is down to just over €600 million or around 0.5% of GNP so the overall ODA budget has now been reduced by €315 million or by one third since 2008.

**The Government needs to outline its plan for getting Ireland's commitment to the 0.7% target back on track.**

### 2.1 BUSAN

The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness convened in Busan, South Korea, on 29 November 2011. Two thousand representatives of governments, the UN, other multilateral organisations and NGOs met to discuss and devise a statement on how development aid can be delivered more effectively. Paragraph 8 of the final statement reads: *"Our partnership is founded on a common set of principles that underpin all forms of development co-operation."*

Active stakeholders in the deliverance of international aid from Ireland might agree to disagree with this statement. Irish Aid policy aims to achieve long-term strategic change, whereas much of the emphasis at the Busan Conference concentrated on short-term technical goals.

Sinn Féin would welcome the collaboration in relation to the New Deal developed by the International

Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. This is a valuable statement, drafted well before the Busan meeting that is specifically directed at the development and peacebuilding needs of fragile and conflict-affected states, made by a group of governments of such countries plus donor government and international agencies. The Busan final statement welcomes the New Deal and continues, "Those of us who have endorsed the New Deal will pursue actions to implement it" – thus distinguishing between those who give the New Deal a passive welcome and those who want to make it work.

Another significant outcome from the The Fourth High Level Forum was emphasis on the importance of 'country level implementation' (articles 13, 18, 19, 23, 25, 36) and the commitments: to "strengthen the role of parliaments in the oversight of development processes" and "encouraging the development of networks for knowledge exchange, peer learning and co-ordination among South-South actors."

### 2.2 INTERNATIONAL AID

When international aid is strategically focused and adequately monitored, international aid can make a difference.

Millions of children in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Malawi are now going to school, thanks to a combination of debt relief and aid. And roads built in Ethiopia with foreign aid are now making it easier for children to get to school, people to reach hospital, and farmers to transport and sell their crops. But international aid needs to be assessed through the eyes of local

communities and not by detached observers from the developed world. Aid needs to be allocated from the ground up, carefully planned, strategically delivered, and routinely monitored in order to have a lasting impact on any community.

In 2005, G8 leaders promised to cancel some of the debts of forty-two countries and give an extra £50 billion in aid by 2010 – half of it to Africa. For the second year in a row now, rich countries have not delivered.

However, countries in the Global South must also play their part. **Irish Aid needs to assist NGOs such as Oxfam and local campaigners in countries like India for example, in their demand to the Indian Government that it fulfills its commitment to deliver the 9% of the country's income to health and education that it had previously pledged. For overseas aid to be truly effective and sustainable, governments of partner countries must play their part.**

## 2.3 CIVIL SOCIETY

A failure by civil society to influence the review process effectively could see some of the major progress made by Irish Aid during the past two decades slip away. Increasingly, civil society space is being restricted – sometimes at national and sometimes at local level—to contain challenges to the use of power.

Research reports that 35 African governments (62% across the continent) have either passed or are advancing legislation that restricts the activities, funding, and sometimes the very existence of civil society organisations (CSOs). The ACPPP (African Civil Society Platform on Principled Partnership) concludes

that CSOs across Africa are now facing “the greatest crisis” they have faced since the wave of independence on the continent some fifty years ago, with an emerging practice of governments using an aggressive combination of multiple pieces of legislation, policies and political tools to restrict civil society space.

**It is Sinn Féin's view that Irish Aid must take on board these concerns and safeguard the intrinsic links between the aid effectiveness agenda and the civil society space.**

## 3. KEY ISSUES AND WIDER DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS

### 3.1 INCOME AND POVERTY

The enhancement of human capabilities and basic human rights goes hand in hand with an expansion of productivity and earning power.

Extreme poverty is now heavily concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The problem that India and sub-Saharan Africa have in common is the persistence of endemic illiteracy. Although the Indian state of Kerala experienced a more moderate rate of economic growth than the more northern states of India in the past number of years, it achieved a faster rate of reduction in income poverty than any other state in India. Kerala achieved this by relying on the expansion of basic education, health care and equitable land distribution. This demonstrates the fact that the enhancement of human capabilities and basic human rights tends to go hand in hand with an expansion of productivities and earning power.

Poverty is a multi-faceted problem. Therefore, the elimination of poverty and the development of sustainable growth in the Global South will best be achieved when economic, environmental and social issues are addressed in a comprehensive way, and when international aid and private enterprise are co-ordinated and directed toward the needs of poorer communities.

**Irish Aid should support business-related initiatives of farmer's groups, women's' cooperatives, fair trade initiatives and local enterprise development. Community empowerment should be the cornerstone of any effective income-generation initiative.**

### 3.2 MARKETS, STATE, OPPORTUNITY AND TRADE

National market arrangements allow people to interact and undertake mutually advantageous activities.

In developing countries of the South, the need for public policy initiatives in creating opportunity for all in the market is widely accepted as critically important. Problems arise when people are inadequately prepared to use market transactions, when information is unavailable or concealed from them and when powerful actors in the market can use unregulated activities to flourish. At an international level, current global trade rules and structures are stacked against developing countries, and the insistence on trade liberalisation often undermines developing countries' capacities to develop their economy, reducing their policy space to make economic choices which prioritise poverty eradication and sustainable development. Powerful actors, like the EU, often demand unfair concessions, and Europe's trade policy significantly undermines its development policy. Ireland should play a positive role at European and global level, as a champion for global trade rules and policies which prioritise and support rather than undermine the needs of poor countries.

#### Economic Partnership Agreements

The Free Trade Agreements between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), known as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), are one obvious example of Europe's problematic trade policy. The negotiation process has been consistently problematic, and ACP countries have raised numerous so called 'contentious issues' in the proposed agreements. The current proposal from the EC to cut

off market access to those ACP countries that do not implement EPAs by the end of 2013 is causing alarm. Although many ACP countries have expressed their desire to sign mutually beneficial EPAs, they recently wrote to EU member states observing that “the proposal further tilts the balance in the negotiation process in favour of the EC” and expressing their concern about “the detrimental effect that the proposed amendment would have on ACP-EU trade relations”. Moreover many contentious issues raised by ACP countries, which could undermine development and poverty eradication, in the EPA agreements have still not been resolved or addressed.

Ireland’s own Africa Strategy also displays a worrying emphasis on Irish as opposed to African interests. How can food security on the continent be enhanced if the sale of Irish food and drink on African markets displaces locally grown products? The document focuses on increasing efforts to ensure that Irish companies get as many contracts as possible to supply goods and services to World Bank projects in Africa, despite evidence that local procurement would be significantly more cost-effective and supportive of local economic development. Irish commercial interests are clearly favoured over development priorities, running counter to the document’s claimed emphasis on “building local systems and the capability to deliver local solutions.”

The Africa Strategy document pays tribute to several Irish commercial interests already operating in Africa but fails to mention the issue of corporate accountability, or to note that issues of accountability have arisen with some of those mentioned. For example, Kenmare Resources in Mozambique has been documented as avoiding local taxation, while

Tullow Oil in Uganda and elsewhere has signed contracts for resource exploration that are far from transparent. The document appears to ignore such issues and instead sees Irish business engagement with Africa as unambiguously good for all concerned. There is an absolute need to ensure that the emphasis on trade with Africa is not at the expense of sacrificing our historic development approach.

Moreover it is of concern that the Africa Strategy makes no mention of structural issues relating to trade and development such as EPAs, the WTO, policy coherence for development or other issues which African countries have themselves raised internationally. The strategy also mentions trade issues such as services, government procurement, investment etc., which many developing African countries have declined to negotiate trade agreements on, with the agreement of the WTO.

**It is Sinn Féin’s view that Ireland’s aid and development policy should support and respect policy space for developing countries to choose their own path to economic development, and prioritise Policy Coherence for Development as a key principle. In this context Ireland should ensure that the EPAs between Europe and ACP countries, and any other trade agreements with developing nations, fully address the genuine development needs of those nations, rather than prioritising EU economic interests. Ireland should also remember these principles of policy space and PCD when embarking on strengthening its trade links with Africa, and ensure African nation’s development needs are not subservient to Ireland’s commercial interest, undermining the decades of excellent development work which have taken place by Irish Aid.**

### **Sinn Féin endorses Trócaire's recommendations on trade with the Global South:**

- » Complete and publish a comprehensive 'pro-poor' Aid for Trade strategy.
- » Ensure any support to private sector development is demonstrably pro-poor, sustainable, and respects human rights.
- » Ensure that ODA remains 100% untied, and is not provided to trans-national corporations, or Irish profit-making private businesses for activities in Ireland or overseas.
- » Work with relevant Government departments to develop an Ethics charter for Irish businesses operating overseas.
- » Support access to justice for communities in developing countries which are negatively affected by private sector investment; to this end Ireland's OECD National Contact Point should be strengthened in order to enable the effective resolution of disputes between communities and Irish companies as they arise.
- » Sign up to the EITI and work to encourage Irish business and business networks to do the same.
- » Ensure Ireland is fully compliant in implementing the OECD anti-bribery convention, and state support services to Irish business should actively promote awareness of these.
- » Continue to work with the taxing authorities of Southern countries to expand their capacity, and strengthen Ireland's position on international tax evasion through enhanced tax transparency and improved measures to combat capital flight.

Productive use of the markets is contingent on the establishment of strong political and social arrangements. Prospective reform of political arrangements is discussed in the section on Parliamentary Reform of this submission.

## **3.3 WATER AND FOOD POVERTY**

Hunger relates not only to food production and agriculture but also to the operation of the political and social arrangements that influence people's ability to get food.

People suffer from hunger when they cannot establish their right to food.

Famines can occur even without any decline in food production or availability. Physical factors, such as flood, can throw thousands of people out of work.

Political factors such as access to land and other natural resources often mean the poorest and most excluded do not have the means vital to food production. Loss of income prevents them from having the means to acquire food. Thus, famine can occur without any decline in food output but rather from competing demand. Failure of governments to put adequate social security systems in place leaves hungry people with nothing to fall back on.

Hunger and starvation can be prevented by creating a minimum level of incomes and entitlements for those who are hit by economic changes. A large percentage of mortality associated with famine results from

diseases unleashed by debilitation, the breakdown of sanitary conditions, population movements and infectious spread of diseases endemic in the region. These can be sharply reduced through epidemic control and communal health arrangements.

**This is a role that development agencies should undertake – to ensure that parliaments in developing countries put such systems in place as a quid-pro-quo for development aid.**

Government expenditure in creating employment can help to avert a threatening famine very effectively. The creation of five million temporary jobs in time of severe drought, as was done in 1973 in Maharashtra, India, averted widespread death by starvation despite a seventy percent fall in food production at that time. When the overall economy of a region experiences a slump, the purchasing power of the population is reduced and the food supply moves to regions where a better price can be gained.

This precipitates famine in places where government initiatives should have stepped in, and where development agencies can help to bridge the gap.

### 3.4 SMALL SCALE FARMING

Sinn Féin believes that supporting small- scale farming in developing regions is an essential component in tackling world hunger and poverty in a truly sustainable way.

Five- hundred- thousand small scale farms are in operation around the world, successfully producing

food for over two billion people. With more investment in developing countries' agriculture sectors, the potential for small scale farming output is huge.

An Irish Aid facilitated partnership between University College Cork and the Regional Government in Tigray, Ethiopia, offers a Master's Degree in Agricultural Development that is transforming the lives of small farmers throughout the region.

Participating in an Oireachtas Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee fact finding visit to Ethiopia in November 2011, Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, witnessed the cultivation of sweet potatoes growing on land that was recently barren. This crop is important for enhancing nutrition amongst the local populace, particularly pregnant mothers.

Honey production is also facilitated to allow a diversity of options to the local community for self-sustenance and for sale to nearby markets. Projects such as these are an excellent example of effective aid in action.

**Sinn Féin believes that governments in the Global South need to be ambitious and courageous in their agricultural policies, and donor countries need to prioritise aid to small - scale farmers, especially women, in those countries. Sinn Féin will be pressing the Irish Government to raise this issue at the UN Committee on World Food Security in Rome in October this year.**



## 3.5 WOMEN'S AGENDA AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Recent studies have shown that the relative respect and regard for women's well-being is strongly influenced by such variables as women's ability to earn an independent income, to find employment outside the home, to have ownership rights, and to be educated participants in society.

Evidence shows that women's empowerment can reduce child mortality significantly, give women a voice within the home and outside it, and influence decisions that affect not just the home but the wider community. Even in the area of food distribution, male domination in society as the breadwinner ensures inequality in food supply with an anti-woman bias. Women are the last to be fed when food is scarce.

We commend Irish Aid's 2004 *Gender Equality Policy*, which sets out a pathway for the implementation of commitments on gender equality actively support the continuation of its three objectives:

- 1) To advance equal rights for men and women,
- 2) To eliminate gender inequalities in access to, control of, and benefit from resources and services,
- 3) To support women's equal participation with men in political and economic decision-making.

### 3.5.1 Advancing Women in Business

Women in Self-Employment (WISE) in Ethiopia, which is funded by Concern and Trócaire, was established in 1997. It works with poor self-employed women from urban areas. WISE has developed a successful three-fold programme based on organisational and institutional development, enterprise development, and strategic partnership development and it offers a template that can be copied throughout countries in the South. Among other achievements, WISE has overseen:

- » The formation and legalisation of 49 women's co-operatives embracing over 12,500 members.
- » The formation of the *Union of Cooperatives (the Union of Self Employed Women's Savings and Credit Cooperative Ltd. (USEWSACC Ltd)* so that the Union can autonomously co-ordinate the activities of the cooperatives in the long-term.
- » The initiation of the concept of *Health Idir* (a micro-insurance scheme) to promote health care as well as to instill the value of mutual support among members before death. This scheme, having started in 2002, currently has a membership of over 1,400 women.
- » The organisation of urban agriculture campaigns involving over 10,000 families.
- » The promotion of innovation through new business idea competitions.
- » The securing of market places for over 400 women and the construction of seven market shelters.



**Irish Aid should continue to focus on gender equality and gender based violence in its programmes.**

**Ireland should use its current co- chair position of the DAC Gendernet to ensure that gender is appropriately addressed in all declarations and agreements - including those directed toward aid effectiveness.**

**Gender funding should continue to be directed into women's organisations in the South.**

## 3.6 HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Health care is a fundamental human right:

As a matter of priority, the governments of the South need to invest in their health care services and first world countries need to support them in their efforts. Organisations such as Oxfam need to be supported in setting up basic and affordable low-cost clinics in rural villages.

**Irish Aid should give priority to funding specific projects that feed into this work, because this is the type of straight-forward development which has immediate impact and saves lives.**

Access to medicine is also an absolute right. **Irish Aid should petition the World Trade Organization to source affordable medicines and pressure international drug companies to give developing countries ready access to them.**

### 3.6.1 Education

Oxfam's education policy rightly states, *"We believe every single child – that means girls as well as boys – has the right to a free, good-quality primary education. Why? Because school helps children develop the skills they need to make themselves heard in the world, to make positive changes in their lives, and finally break free from poverty."*

However, access to basic education in the world's poorest countries is in crisis.

72 million children are out of school (over two-thirds are girls)

771 million adults worldwide are illiterate (64 per cent are women)

2 million new teachers are needed today to provide children with a decent education and 15 million will be needed by 2015 to achieve education for all.

**Irish Aid needs to become active within the community of nations called Global Campaign for Education, which calls for increased funding for basic education in the developing world, and more specifically, for greater access to education for girls.**

**Sinn Féin also calls on Irish Aid to support the call for delivering two million teachers urgently needed for poor countries – a move that could lead a whole generation of young people out of the poverty trap and into sustainable living.**

Oxfam, Trócaire, and several other international NGOs are working effectively in the field of basic education and need the support of Irish Aid.

**Irish Aid has a successful history of working with local communities in the training of teachers, and in the development of inexpensive texts and teaching aids for primary schools. Irish Aid should build upon their successes in countries like Tanzania, Lesotho and Zambia.**

They should now support neighbouring countries in their demands for the right to free basic education, thereby giving the people in these countries the tools they need to influence decision-makers and achieve long-term change.

### 3.6.2 Literacy and Numeracy:

In 1990 the first annual Human Development Report highlighted life expectancy and adult literacy as the two critical social indicators of human development. Literacy and numeracy are also important elements of the right to education and critical factors in civic participation in the process of economic expansion. Evidence indicates that higher levels of adult literacy leads to greater civic demand for improved health care. Improved health care within the general population leads to greater productivity in the workforce and better remuneration for the workers.

## 3.7 PARLIAMENTS AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

### 3.7.1 Parliamentary Reform:

Sinn Féin argues that economic development in Africa is largely dependent on an integrated level of constitutional reform throughout the continent.

While the high degree of violence that accompanies many African elections is blamed on ethnic divisions, Professor Calestous Juma of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University believes that these tensions are enflamed due to the lack of inclusive economic development in the related countries.

*“This is largely because Africa’s governance systems are a continuation of the colonial constitutional orders which defined the region as a source of raw materials... What was being negotiated at independence was really an exercise in constitutional continuity from the colonial period through independence. And so you find a clear pattern, all across Africa, of continuing colonial practices. While there is enormous pressure on African countries to focus on economic programs, they are unable to because the governmental framework left behind did not integrate the economic role of the coloniser into the new role of an independent president.”*

This fundamental problem has led to a growing gap between the constitutional structure and objectives, and constitutional structures require fundamental change in order to facilitate the development in the critical areas of infrastructure, regional integration, technical and vocational training, and entrepreneurship.

Notwithstanding the current events unfolding there, which will yet vindicate the path to democracy and validate these ideas, an expert committee on constitutional reform was established in Mali in 2009. The committee submitted its report on 19th April 2011. The report restricts the president’s tenure to two five-year terms. It also extended the systems of checks and balances of the country’s polity, making the Malian

process a possible model for constitutional reform on the continent.

Among the proposed recommendations is the creation of a second chamber of Parliament: The Senate. But more than an institutional change, this is likely to improve existing mechanisms of parliamentary oversight. Press freedom is to be significantly strengthened. Media professionals are no longer to be jailed for press offences, including defamation. The new constitution provides for heavy fines for those found guilty of such offences.

Perhaps the biggest innovation of the new text is the institutionalisation of the status of the opposition. As access to and control of political power is the surest way to self-enrichment, the opposition is generally excluded. By suggesting the creation of a position for the leader of the opposition, the committee attempts to further democratise Malian politics. If adopted, this clause will go a long way into de-mystifying the presidential function and in preparing opposition leaders for state management – an experience that most African opposition leaders lack when they come to power.

Another important change will ban frequent floor-crossing in the National Assembly. The proposed constitution thus prohibits the tendency to cross the floor from government to opposition in the course of the Parliament's term, and penalises those found guilty by banning them from sitting in parliament for two successive terms. This is likely to strengthen discipline in the ranks of political parties and force them to make alliances on the basis of political programmes, not only on personal power and ambition. The new constitution is expected to be adopted following a

popular referendum by the end of the year and be promulgated well before ATT completes his last term on 8 June 2012.

**This is a positive example of good governance that Irish Aid needs to actively support.**

### 3.7.2 Parliamentary Oversight:

**Sinn Féin endorses the endeavours of AWEPA (The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa) in highlighting the urgent need for effective oversight of aid flows by partner country parliaments as a necessary condition for aid effectiveness.**

In AWEPA's publication, *'Safeguarding the Interests of the People: Parliaments and Aid Effectiveness'*, they state that the best place to conduct effective oversight is from within the budget cycle of the recipient country, i.e., with documentation in the government budget and in ex post reports.

Examples of good parliamentary oversight are already in place in countries such as Kenya and Uganda. In 2001 the Ugandan Parliament passed legislation requiring the executive to provide the parliament with enough time to view budget allocations for the upcoming term. In 2007, Kenya created a Parliamentary Budget Office.

But while parliamentarians need to oversee the degree to which their executives fulfil the commitments they have internationally agreed, above all, it means that parliamentarians demand to oversee all forms of aid, particularly by having all aid flows reported on budget. The Irish section of AWEPA is currently concentrating efforts on Joint Monitoring Teams for parliamentary

oversight of development processes. This will entail teams of Irish TDs and African MPs working together to track aid flows from donor country to recipient country. It is an initiative which should increase transparency and therefore further improve the oversight of aid flows.

### 3.8 DEBT

**Sinn Féin believes that the Irish Aid should prioritise global financial injustice in its work by addressing core development policy concerns by Southern campaigners and INGOs about the approach of International Financial Institutions (IFIs).**

Fifty million Bangladeshis survive on under a dollar a day, yet their government is locked into a debt repayment scheme that deprives them of their ability to invest in health and education.

There is a solution; Debt cancellation. Zambia's debt was cancelled in 2005, and as a result, the government introduced free health care for rural dwellers and trained more than five thousand new teachers.

Adequate, accessible health care and basic education for all increases national productivity, wealth grows, and the cost of poverty in human and economic terms diminishes.

In turn, the need for ever-rising loans from the developed world decreases. Everyone wins. But this does not mean that the need for international aid disappears. Poverty, hunger and death are not eliminated overnight. Making sure that developing countries of the Global South get the aid money they

need is just as important as cancelling their debts that cannot be paid.

Irish Aid should not only support developing countries in sustainable economic growth, they should also support a global structure that prevents capital out-flows.

**Sinn Féin supports Trócaire's call for Ireland to:**

*Support developing countries in generating their own resources through a mix of initiatives, such as capacity building with developing country taxing authorities, and supporting the introduction of country-by-country financial reporting and strengthening Ireland's position on international tax evasion through enhanced tax transparency and measures to combat capital flight.*

*Address debt in developing countries through publishing an updated international debt policy that is based on the principles of justice and sustainable development for people of the Global South.*

### 3.9 HUMAN RIGHTS

*"The ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedoms and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, social and cultural rights."* International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966.

Human rights are inherent to all human beings because of our shared humanity. Human rights touch



every aspect of human life. States do not confer human rights. Law does not confer human rights. Humanity alone confers the right to freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear – and all the ensuing rights that thereby flow. They are universal. But for the universality of human rights to work, individuals must first recognise the humanity of others. Secondly, governments are obligated to respect, protect and promote the human rights of all their citizens, as delineated in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

But the indivisible relationship between political and civil rights and economic, social and cultural rights cannot be ignored and must be at the forefront of all work conducted by agencies in development aid. Poor people often express a feeling of hopelessness in making their voices heard.

“Lack of voice and power is experienced not only in interactions with the state, but also ... with the market, landlords, bankers, moneylenders and employers.” (*Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* World Bank, Oxford University Press, New York 2000).

The protection of human rights coincides with protection of the natural environment. This will be evidenced in the following section (3.11) on *Land Acquisition and Grabbing*, the two issues are interdependent. All species benefit from a clean and sustainable environment and human rights violations can lead to damage or destruction of the environment.

**In the White Paper, Irish Aid must ensure that effective mainstreaming and the prioritisation of human rights is the thread running through all work and Irish Foreign Policy.**

## 3.10 LAND ACQUISITION AND LAND-GRABBING

Research carried out by The International Institute for Environmental Development (IIED) shows that 2.5 million hectares of farmland in five African countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali and Sudan) have been taken over by foreign entities since 2004.

Today, China is negotiating for the leasehold to 2.8 million hectares of farmland in the Democratic Republic of Congo to grow palm oil and 2 million hectares in Zambia to grow a biofuel called jathopha. South Korea has already negotiated the lease of 690,000 hectares of land in Sudan to grow wheat for their home market.

Into this mix we can add the fact that only 12% of all arable land in the countries of Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia is currently under homeland cultivation. Most of these foreign acquisitions are driven by a need to ensure a secure food supply for the home market, or alternatively, by the need to grow biofuel crops and thereby guarantee the home country's fuel supply.

Land ownership is at the core of this rapidly growing controversy. Only a relatively small portion of land in Africa is subject to individual titling. Much land is community-owned, and in some countries state-owned. Even land that is officially categorised as un- or underutilised may in fact be subject to complex patterns of “customary” usage. The World Bank points to the importance of international bodies helping African governments to develop land registry systems rights. The IIED study stresses that such schemes must allow for collective registration of community

lands that protect “customary” land rights. Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food argues that internationally agreed-upon human rights instruments can be used to protect such rights, including those of livestock herders and indigenous forest dwellers. According to Akinwumi Adesina, spokesperson for the advocacy group Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, “foreign land acquisitions have little oversight, transparency, or regulation, no environmental safeguards, and they fail to protect smallholder farmers from losing customary rights to land use.”

Africa so far has been able to mobilise only limited financing to develop its arable land. Despite persistent calls for increased domestic investment, agriculture has lagged well behind other sectors. The African Union (AU) has urged governments to devote ten per cent of their spending to agriculture, but only four or five countries have actually met that target. Donor countries and institutions have also failed to play their part, with agriculture’s share of aid tending to fall. It currently stands at less than five per cent of total aid. With land apparently in abundance, but with money in scarce supply, the offer by foreign investors to develop agricultural land appears very attractive. However, The *Economic Report on Africa 2009*, published jointly by the AU and the UN’s Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), cautions that this rapid expansion of large-scale cultivated land should not be a priority, given the environmental degradation that Africa already faces. Thousands of people continue to be forcibly displaced in Colombia. Colombia’s government, led since 2010 by President Juan Manuel Santos, has changed its discourse in favour of those who have suffered human rights violations due the conflict and violence within the country. However, it is yet to translate this into

effective action to protect the rights of Colombia’s internally displaced people (IDPs) and other victims of conflict. Displacement has continued in 2011 at the same rate as in previous years, as have attacks on IDPs and human rights activists. IDPs continue to have only limited access to the basic necessities of life.

According to the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, over 200,000 people were forcibly moved from their land in 2010, the majority by paramilitaries who continue to have links with the security forces. Even before the massive displacement crisis of the last 40 years, land ownership was highly concentrated and Colombia was in need of an agrarian reform. Land expropriation by illegal armed groups has in fact led to a ‘counter-agrarian’ reform.

The expelling of indigenous persons from their land and the granting of land titles to foreign national companies is made possible by the absence of an accurate national land registry. Colombia must establish a land registry and proper protocol for judicial processes that fairly represent peasants, farmers and communities.

**It is Sinn Féin’s view that any promotion of a Free Trade Agreement with Colombia without addressing human rights concerns over internally displaced people will legitimise and further facilitate displacement and dispossession of land.**

## 3.11 DEVELOPMENT IN POST CONFLICT REGIONS

**Development in Post Conflict Regions does not feature adequately in the Busan Statement.**

The conflict-affected countries, in which 1.5 billion people live, are mentioned on page 1 of the document and considered only briefly thereafter. This cannot be viewed as adequate given the scale of the complexities in this area.

The World Bank's World Development Report 2011 outlines a new approach to development assistance in conflict settings. It places an emphasis on the need for concrete results from international aid in helping citizens in recipient countries to hold their governments to account.

**Sinn Féin agrees that development is not just about the economy, health and education but also about governance, justice, and freedom from danger and fear. Sinn Féin urges Irish Aid to address these issues in the forthcoming White Paper and not side step this area of work as per the Busan Agreement.**



## 4. WAYS OF WORKING

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Irish Government has committed to the Millennium Development Goal target of government expenditure on Overseas Development Aid (ODA) reaching 0.7% of Gross National Product by 2015. The Government needs to outline their plan for getting Ireland's commitment to the 0.7% target back on track.

The development and implementation of Irish Aid policy should be delivered through an all- Government, all-party approach. This will require institutional change. The following priorities which have been highlighted throughout this paper, and which refer back to each numbered section, should be considered as critical in delivering effective aid in the future.

#### 2.2 INTERNATIONAL AID

Irish Aid needs to assist NGOs such as Oxfam and local campaigners in countries like India for example, in their demand to the Indian Government that it fulfills its commitment to deliver the 9% of the country's income to health and education that it had previously pledged. For overseas aid to be truly effective and sustainable, governments of partner countries must play their part.

#### 2.3 CIVIL SOCIETY

Irish Aid must safeguard the intrinsic links between the aid effectiveness agenda and the civil society space.

#### 3.1 INCOME AND POVERTY

Irish Aid should support business-related initiatives of farmer's groups, women's' cooperatives, fair trade initiatives and local enterprise development. Community empowerment should be the cornerstone of any effective income-generation initiative.

#### 3.2 MARKETS, STATE, OPPORTUNITY AND TRADE

EPAs between Europe and ACP countries should favour and support the developing nations. Ireland should prioritise Policy Coherence for Development as a key principle and should be remembered when embarking on strengthening its trade links with Africa. Ireland should take a principled approach in these negotiations

#### 3.3 WATER AND FOOD POVERTY

Ensure that partner countries put in place systems of epidemic control and communal health arrangements as a quid-pro-quo for development aid.

#### 3.4 SMALL SCALE FARMING

Ireland should prioritise aid to small scale farmers in the South and increase the percentage of Irish Aid's budget for agricultural development sectors in target partner countries

#### 3.5 WOMEN'S AGENDA AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Irish Aid should continue to focus on gender equality and gender based violence in its programmes.



### 3.6 HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Irish Aid should petition the World Trade Organization to source affordable medicines and pressure international drug companies to give developing countries ready access to them.

Build upon Irish Aid's successes in countries like Tanzania, Lesotho and Zambia in the field of education and support neighbouring countries in their demands for the right to free basic education for girls as well as boys.

Irish Aid needs to become active within the community of nations called Global Campaign for Education, which calls for increased funding for basic education in the developing world, and more specifically, for greater access to education for girls.

Irish Aid should support the call for delivering two million teachers urgently needed for poor countries – a move that could lead a whole generation of young people out of the poverty trap and into sustainable living.

### 3.7 PARLIAMENTS AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

Support good governance and freedom of the press as evidenced in the recent parliamentary reform movement of Mali.

Irish Aid should ensure the effective oversight of aid flows by partner country parliaments as a necessary condition for aid effectiveness as requested by AWEPA (The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa).

### 3.8 DEBT

Sinn Féin believes that the Irish Aid should prioritise global financial injustice in its work by addressing core development policy concerns by Southern campaigners and INGOs about the approach of International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

### 3.9 HUMAN RIGHTS

In the White Paper, Irish Aid must ensure that effective mainstreaming and the prioritisation of human rights is the thread running through all work and Irish Foreign policy.

### 3.10 LAND ACQUISITION AND LAND-GRABBING

Work with international aid organisations in helping African governments to develop land registry systems rights. These schemes must allow for the collective registration of community lands that protect "customary" land rights.

### 3.11 DEVELOPMENT IN POST CONFLICT REGIONS

Sinn Féin agrees that development is not just about the economy, health and education but also about governance, justice, and freedom from danger and fear. Sinn Féin urges Irish Aid to address these issues in the forthcoming White Paper and not side step this area of work as per the Busan Agreement.





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All images in this submission are taken from various projects across Ethiopia supported by Irish Aid and Irish NGOs and visited by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade delegation in 2011