



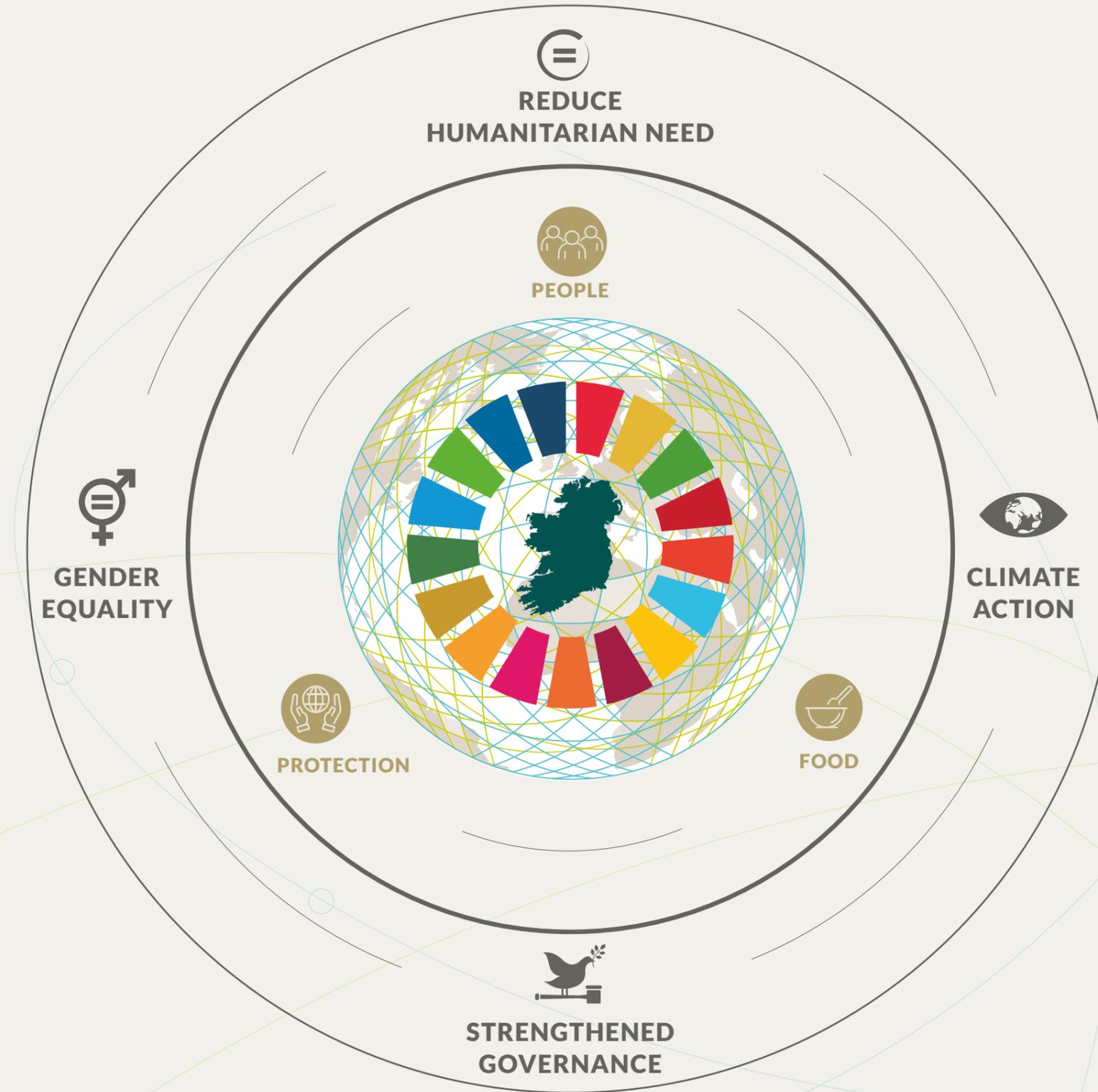
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

A Better World

Ireland's Policy for International Development



FURTHEST BEHIND FIRST



Capacity

Coordination

Policy Influence

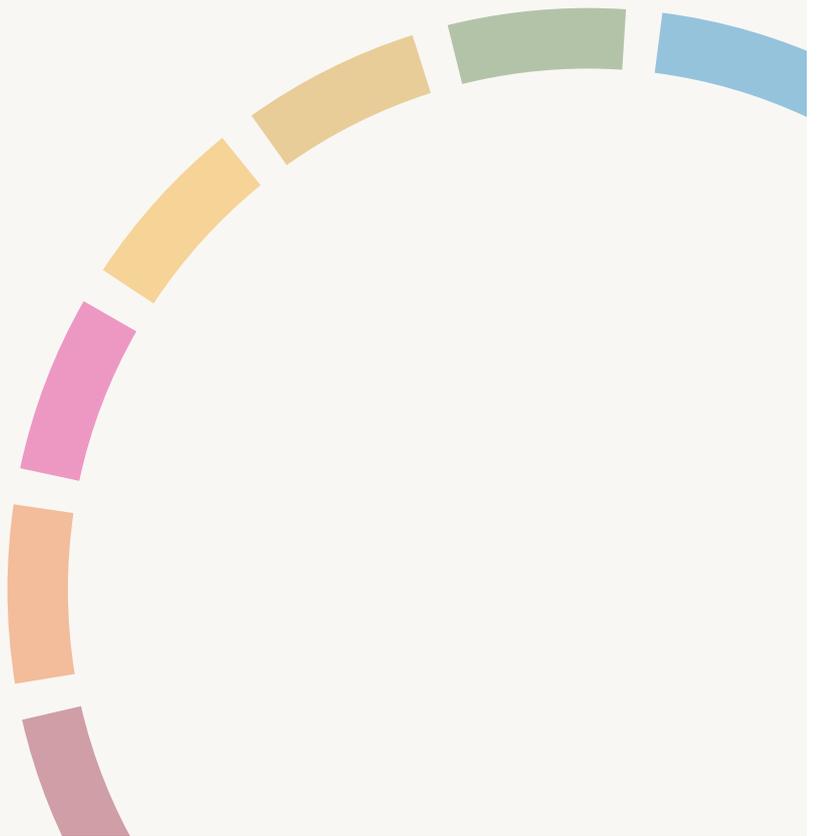
Research and Learning

Public Engagement



A Better World

Ireland's Policy for International Development



Foreword

by **An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD**

Reach the Furthest Behind First: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out an ambitious view of the world we want to live in, in 2030. Ireland, and the European Union, have placed the SDGs at the heart of our approach to international development.

This new policy, *A Better World*, grounds our international development policy in terms of what Ireland can, and must do, to achieve the SDGs. We must play our part.

The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations target of allocating 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2030. This significant investment requires focused and effective new policy choices and initiatives. *A Better World* is a real step-change in how the Government approaches international development.

Building on our history as a good citizen of the world, this new policy will intensify our work on Women, Peace and Security and on gender-based violence. It will also help better fight the epidemics of HIV, TB and malaria and develop new initiatives on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), as well as exploring innovative global solutions to climate action and climate impact. It will also enable us to better deal with humanitarian crises so we can provide rapid responses to sudden-onset crises, while at the same time developing a more comprehensive Irish response to peace and security challenges.

Ireland has built a distinguished track record of responding to global development challenges like poverty, hunger and insecurity. Today, our ODA programme is widely regarded as one of the highest quality development programmes in the world. Through their support for international development, Irish citizens have been instrumental in helping some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world to find new hope, and to build better lives for themselves and their families.

In good times and in bad, we have succeeded in maintaining and growing our Official Development Assistance. Our bilateral partnerships, and our work through the EU, the United Nations and other multilateral organisations, have allowed Ireland to direct vital aid to people living in some of the most challenging and insecure environments on the planet.



I have seen the impact of Ireland's work in Africa. While we have made great strides forward, our task is not complete. It is intensifying. We must move quickly to take decisive action on issues like climate change, poverty and hunger.

The next decade may well define the world we live in for the rest of the century. The multilateral system is under strain at a time when it is needed more than ever. The Irish Government is committed to supporting and strengthening the multilateral system, through our support for international accords such as the Paris Agreement, the Global Compact on Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals. Our ongoing contribution to peacekeeping and international development, and our determined efforts to participate on and shape the work of the UN Security Council also demonstrate our commitment to multilateralism.

Ireland's approach to international development resonates with our own history and experiences. It is both in our DNA, and in our national interest, to contribute to the building of a better world. In so doing, Ireland can help shape the international response to the defining challenges of this generation, for the benefit of generations to come.

An Taoiseach,
Leo Varadkar TD



Foreword

by **An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,**
Simon Coveney TD

Against the background of global change, the Government, in *Global Ireland 2025*, reiterated its commitment to expand Official Development Assistance and make progress on delivering the United Nations target of allocating 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) for Official Development Assistance by 2030.

This new policy provides the framework for that expansion. At current projections it could mean tripling our current contributions. In order to achieve this ambition we recognise that difficult choices will be required between competing priorities, especially if economic circumstances change.

The Government is already making progress, having increased allocations to Official Development Assistance by 32 percent since 2014. Budget 2019 saw the highest increase in funding available in over a decade. Overall Irish Official Development Assistance in 2019 is forecast to reach almost €817 million, an increase of approximately €110 million, or a 16 percent increase in comparison to the ODA allocation announced in budget 2018.

We will work more coherently across Government to deliver on this new policy and an expanding development assistance programme. It will see us build our capacity, double our influence, and expand and deepen our bilateral relations, not just in the countries where we work, but with countries with which Ireland will be working to deliver change, including other European Union Member States.

We believe that expanding our overseas development assistance is in Ireland's strategic self-interest. It is an investment in a better and safer world, in developing new markets, in influence, and in friendships. As a small island, open to the world, it is also the right thing to do. Effective international development cooperation is an essential foreign policy tool. That is also why, through the implementation of this policy, we want to redouble our efforts to advance the European Union's Global Strategy, which sets out how we can contribute to a more peaceful, equal and sustainable world.

We will look to increase our influence within the United Nations system and in other multilateral forums. We will amplify our voice, increasing and deepening our influence on global development issues. We will invest in our capacity to innovate, adapt and maximise the impact of our development interventions, including through new partnership opportunities as our global footprint expands.

During our public consultations, we heard that Irish people see development cooperation as an investment in a better future, as an important projection of our values and as a statement of solidarity with others who are less fortunate. It is also important to our safety and security, a protection against volatility in a time of change.

We believe that the focus in this new policy will help create that better world which we want for ourselves and our children, a world where Ireland shows effective leadership and good global citizenship as we move into the second century of our independence.

An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Simon Coveney TD

Foreword

by Minister of State for the
Diaspora and International
Development,
Ciarán Cannon TD



The former President, Mary McAleese, once said that ‘we are a vibrant first world country but we have a humbling third world memory.’ We know what it is to be poor. We know what it is to be hungry. We know what it is to migrate for a better life. We know the effort it has taken us, over nearly 100 years of independence, to build strong institutions. We know also that there is always more to be done. Our experiences as a people are a reminder to us of our responsibility to respond generously to others in need.

That memory has inspired so many Irish women and men to dedicate their lives to improve the lives of others, as missionaries, volunteers, educators, health workers and in international development. Their legacy is part of Ireland’s global influence and reach. This new policy for international development is in many ways a tribute to that work. In deciding to deepen Ireland’s engagement in areas such as education, health and food production, we are building on their endowment. The significant contribution of Ireland’s international development NGOs also builds on that work and demands our continued support.

Irish Aid’s Annual Report for 2017 demonstrates the fruits of our long history of engagement in Africa and in fragile and conflict-affected states, and our impact in reaching some of the poorest through interventions including nutrition, agriculture, health and education. Twenty-four percent of Ireland’s total Official Development Assistance in 2017, estimated at €181 million, was provided for humanitarian assistance. This included 356 tonnes of emergency relief stocks and the deployment of 31 experts under Ireland’s Rapid Response Initiative. Ireland answered the United Nations’ call for action to avert famines threatening more than 20 million people in South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen.

We are already moving towards fulfilling the ambition of Global Ireland and the priorities set out in this new policy. The establishment of a new Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia, is underway and will be formally opened in 2019. Additional staff will come in to build

the foundations for expansion, consolidating the excellence for which Ireland is known. Increased allocations of Official Development Assistance in 2019 will be directed towards gender equality, humanitarian assistance, climate action, and governance, priorities of this new policy. The development of a new multilateral strategy for our partnerships with United Nations agencies has already begun.

A revitalised fellowship scheme will be designed, expanding the opportunities for students to enhance their skills at Irish universities, building our community of friendships and partnerships across the world.

In Ireland, we have a strong sense of community – *meitheal* – coming together to work collectively for a better future. Through our membership of the European Union, and the United Nations we amplify our global impact just as *meitheal* amplifies our communities. It is only through coming together with others that the great challenges of our time, such as climate change, poverty and conflict, can be addressed.

*Minister of State for the Diaspora
and International Development,
Ciarán Cannon TD*

Executive Summary

We are a global people, connected with the world.

The breadth and depth of our connections give Ireland strength. Our connections give us shelter in hard times and give us the opportunity to build towards better futures. We know the benefits which flow from our interactions with others, as collective stakeholders of our planet.

Global Ireland¹, the Government's strategy for doubling the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint and influence by 2025, recognises that international development cooperation amplifies and sustains Ireland's place in an interconnected world. It is at the heart of Ireland's contribution to a more equal, peaceful and sustainable world.

A Better World is Ireland's new policy for international development.

It builds on strong foundations, including the legacy of our missionaries, our volunteers, and our NGOs.

Through our international development programme, Ireland makes a difference in around 130 countries each year, changing people's lives for the better. Our contribution to reducing global poverty is regularly found to be amongst the best in the world, something the Irish people can take pride in.

In 2018 the Government reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations target of allocating 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance by 2030. This will be a significant investment in overseas development assistance, which will require focused and effective new policy choices and initiatives. This follows an increase in funding by 32% since 2014.

Informing these decisions, Ireland is committed to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular the rallying call to reach those furthest behind. In order to reach those furthest behind, we will make a step change and focus our efforts on:

 Prioritising gender equality

 Reducing humanitarian need

 Climate action

 Strengthening governance

In addition to these priorities we will channel our energies to interventions focusing on:

 Protection

 Food

 People

Through the implementation of this new approach, our aim is to help transform many people's lives.

Ireland's own national story, our history and our experience of development, modernisation and globalisation, informs *A Better World*. We have known poverty and hunger. We have also seen our country transformed over the past fifty years, through our own efforts and also with the assistance of others, not least through our membership of the European Union.

Building on our national experience, we will work better to harness the collective experience of our public sector to deliver a more effective international development programme, building deeper links between policies at home and abroad.

The road to 2030 is complex. Our world is volatile. On our own we will not have sufficient impact. *A Better World* recognises that we need to work with others to address global problems. We will work in partnerships with countries. We will maximise the potential of our membership of the European Union. We will work as a member of the United Nations to address the global challenges such as climate change which can and will impact upon us at home.

To deliver on these ambitions we will have to build our capacity to evolve, innovate and adapt. The ambition of the SDGs, the changing nature of global challenges, and the complex interactions between domestic and international policies and processes all demand that we do things differently.

A Better World builds on what we have learned and done well, with public support, for more than four decades, confident that the people of our global island take seriously their responsibilities as citizens of the world we all share.

Ireland Makes a Difference

Ireland works to end hunger.

In Viet Nam, 67% of newborns in 7 provinces receive early essential care with Ireland's support.

50% of therapeutic food given to help restore undernourished children in Sierra Leone is funded by Ireland.

Ireland works to protect.

Ireland supports social protection schemes in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda to improve lives. Women in the Malawian district of Balaka say the schemes "have allowed us to reduce hunger and this is keeping us in good health...the transfers are also encouraging our children to attend school..."

Ireland works to improve health.

In Ethiopia, Ireland works to ensure that women have access to care during pregnancy. Over the course of 2015, Ireland worked to ensure a 50% increase in the number of births attended by qualified personnel.

Ireland works to ensure girls access to education.

In Sierra Leone, Ireland has supported 8,410 teenage girls to return to mainstream schooling after childbirth.

Ireland provided 800 scholarships to girls in rural Zambia to enable them to attend secondary school.

Ireland works to prepare young people for the future.

In Kenya, Ireland has introduced the Young Scientist initiative, modelled on, and linked with, the Irish BT Young Scientist. The initiative is inspiring young people to pursue science, technology, engineering and maths, and teachers to improve the quality of science in secondary schools.

Ireland works to promote democracy and governance.

In Zimbabwe, Ireland has supported civil society organisations to address 22,500 cases of human rights abuses.

In Tanzania, Ireland has supported independent media to produce 298 programmes and articles on issues of relevance to citizens.

Ireland has pledged to contribute €250 million between 2019 and 2024 to improve global education.

Irish funding to Palestine has almost doubled since 2017, enabling Ireland to help address education, energy and humanitarian needs.

Ireland has pledged to increase its contribution to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria by at least 50%. The Global Fund has saved millions of lives and provided services to hundreds of millions of people.

Ireland is the most efficient donor in targeting extreme poverty

Overseas Development Institute, 2018ⁱⁱ

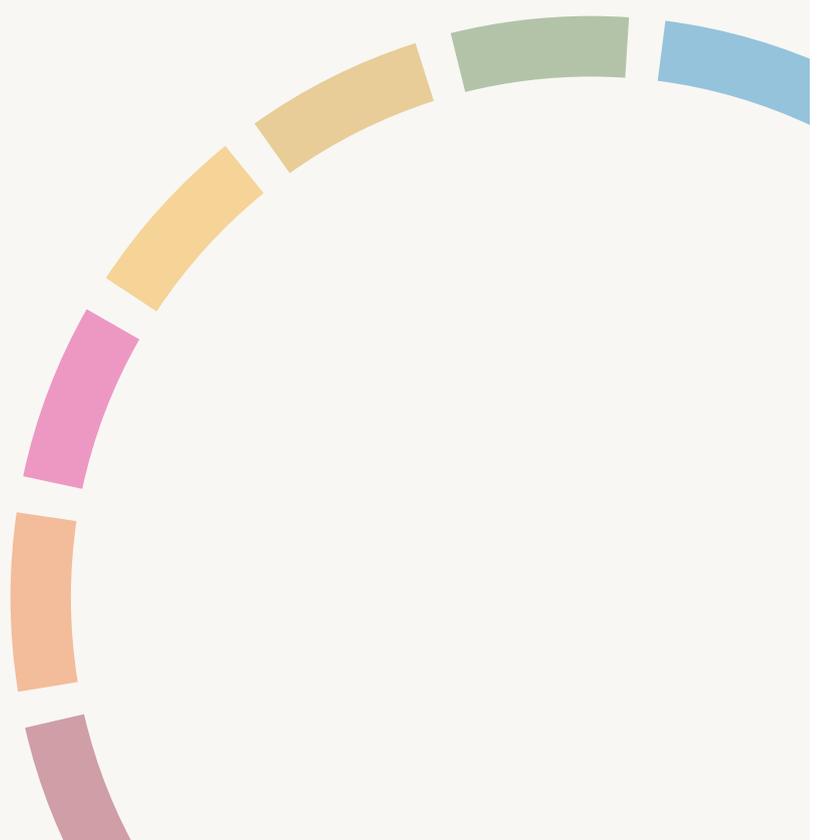
Ireland's development cooperation is the outstanding aid programme among other international donors

Brookings Institute, 2014ⁱⁱⁱ

New Initiatives

In delivering on *A Better World* the Government will undertake the following new initiatives:

- » create a new funding initiative for women's economic empowerment with an explicit focus on agriculture;
- » intensify our work on Women, Peace and Security and on gender-based violence;
- » prioritise education for girls and scale up our funding to education especially for girls in emergencies, committing to spending at least €250 million over the next five years;
- » support global ambitions towards ending the epidemics of AIDS, TB and malaria and develop a new initiative on sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- » strengthen our response to humanitarian crises and increase our funding and capacity for rapid response to sudden onset crises;
- » develop a more comprehensive Irish response to peace and security challenges;
- » scale up our funding on climate action and explore innovative approaches to climate finance, risk insurance and climate adaptation;
- » strengthen our support for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) especially those most vulnerable to climate impact;
- » develop a new oceans funding initiative to explore the potential of the blue economy for developing countries including Small Island Developing States;
- » support and protect civil society space;
- » strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and tax administrations in developing countries;
- » promote inclusive economic growth and trade and support initiatives that seek to foster trade and investment;
- » develop new partnerships with Irish research institutions and deepen our relationships with higher education institutions in Ireland on research and learning;
- » develop our capacity through a 'talent pipeline', exploring new ways to promote the assignment of Irish graduates and experts to international development positions;
- » strengthen our collaboration with Irish civil society partners on public engagement and outreach, to effectively tell the story of Ireland's global solidarity and development.



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Vision



A.1 Ireland's foreign policy and vision

Ireland's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance has been a central part of Irish foreign policy for almost 50 years. It is the basis for deep partnerships across the world, reaching 130 countries in 2017. Global Ireland, the strategy for doubling the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint and influence by 2025, recognises how development cooperation amplifies and sustains Ireland's place in an interconnected world. Under that strategy, the Government stated it would reaffirm its commitment to delivering 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance by 2030. This new policy on international development sets out our vision to incrementally increase Ireland's presence, influence and impact on people, organisations and countries.

Ireland's foreign policy^{iv} is based on the fundamental principles of justice, human rights, the rule of law, and supporting peace and friendly cooperation between nations. Ireland's international development cooperation is an integral part of our foreign policy and an important statement of our global citizenship. Our membership of the European Union and our commitment to multilateralism are essential to facilitating effective global responses to development challenges. We seek to promote the norms and principles which support key freedoms, and to ensure that these enable sustainable development. Ireland's traditional support for policies which advance human rights, and combat poverty and hunger, alongside our commitment to peacekeeping and disarmament, remain essential to building a secure, stable world where people can live in dignity and without fear.

Foreign Policy Themes



Through **Our People**, we reflect and project Ireland's solidarity with people in need and build on the longstanding connections Irish people have made working for a better world.



Our Values, rooted in our Constitution and our commitment to human rights and international law, resonate through our development cooperation, as we strive for a secure world, a just world, a fairer world and a sustainable world.



Our Prosperity informs our shared humanity and underpins our capacity to help build the societies of the future, where people can live in dignity and thrive.



Our Place in Europe is integral, as Ireland contributes to and shapes European external engagement. We are part of the *European Consensus for Development*^v which sets the agenda for European development cooperation and humanitarian action.



Our Influence and ability to shape the world is defined by our membership of the European Union, our participation in the United Nations and relations with governments, organisations and a range of actors in other countries.

Ireland's place in the world starts in the European Union. This links to our wider neighbourhood, including the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Africa. Ireland's foreign policy review recognises that our future prosperity and security is inextricably intertwined with that of our neighbours, both within the European Union and beyond. We engage and have impact far beyond these regions, above all but not only in Africa. Ireland will continue to play its full part at the heart of the European Union to influence the global agenda. Our collective power as European Union Member States shapes the agenda and delivery of international policy frameworks for peace and security, the movement of people, humanitarian assistance, development, trade and investment.

The United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations' core Human Rights Treaties set the framework for Ireland's international relations, including development cooperation. Over the more than 60 years of our membership, we have worked intensively to ensure that these principles are upheld. We have worked to build and sustain peace and security, to promote and protect human rights and the rule of law, and in particular, to give equal voice to people around the world. Ireland's peacekeepers have been continuously active with the United Nations in some of the most difficult and complex conflicts since the 1950s.

Ireland and the Sustainable Development Goals^{vi}

In the agreement of the United Nations Agenda 2030 in 2015, world leaders committed to 17 Goals, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goals aim to end poverty, reduce inequality and tackle climate change by 2030. They are backed up by 169 targets, ensuring the level of ambition in the SDGs is matched by detailed planning and the ability to monitor progress. The rallying call is to ensure that no one is left behind, and to reach the furthest behind first.

Ireland played a unique and central role in the process to agree these SDGs. In 2014, Ireland's United Nations Ambassador was appointed to co-chair, with Kenya, the final intergovernmental negotiations. Throughout 2015, Ireland and Kenya brought together all United Nations Member States, civil society, and the private sector in a series of formal negotiating sessions and informal consultations towards reaching final agreement. Never before have the world's countries come together to agree such a comprehensive agenda.

A united, transformative, integrated international response is urgently required to follow through and deliver on the ambitious global agenda set out in the SDGs. Our vision of a safer, more peaceful, equal and sustainable world is anchored in our values. It also responds to the ambition of the SDGs and guides how we respond to global challenges. The full realisation of human rights and political action are central to the 'whole of society' agenda of the SDGs. Beyond our national efforts, Ireland's foreign policy values compel us to contribute to global efforts by supporting countries with the least resources to meet the SDGs, including through development cooperation.

Preventing crises, resolving conflict, arresting climate change, helping people escape chronic poverty and saving lives in humanitarian emergencies are in Ireland's fundamental interest. Ireland is a small island country with an open economy at the centre of an ever more interconnected and uncertain world. Our long-standing commitment to internationalism, to multilateralism and a rules-based global system is central to how we further our national interest. Ireland's development cooperation contributes to a better world for us all, shaping and protecting our stability, our prosperity, our strategic interests and our common future.



A.2 Ireland's international development cooperation

Ireland's Official Development Assistance and humanitarian response began in 1974 as an integral part of our foreign policy, allowing Ireland to contribute to the reduction of global poverty. Irish support now stretches across the world, giving us a significant presence and footprint, including in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Ireland's international development cooperation includes:

- » support given by the Government towards national and international development priorities and humanitarian assistance, expressed in the SDGs;
- » our policy influence, institutional linkages and exchanges to share expertise and foster social and economic development with countries and governments around the world;
- » building peace and global security including conflict prevention, state-building and humanitarian response;
- » strengthening multilateralism, enabling cooperation and international action;
- » collective responses to emerging and protracted crises, underpinned by a strong commitment to international law, including human rights law and where applicable, international humanitarian law, and the provision of flexible and timely funding that is based on the principles of independence, neutrality, impartiality and humanity;
- » promoting disarmament and de-mining initiatives which play an important role in enabling humanitarian access, sustaining peace, and enhancing the operational effectiveness of peace operations.

Irish people have always reached out in solidarity to people affected by crises and living in poverty. Ireland's volunteering and missionary traditions have seen educators, health workers and others build deep personal connections with people and communities around the world, connections which resonate at home and abroad. Since 1974, through its Official Development Assistance, Ireland has built a global reputation through a generous response to crises and conflicts, and by contributing effectively to poverty reduction. Strong public identification with Ireland's development cooperation at home informs our global influence and partnerships.

Ireland's history, culture and post-colonial experience have shaped our development cooperation. The story of Irish transformation is global; an island which was marked by famine but which now produces multiples of what we could eat ourselves; the journey to having the highest percentage of third level graduates in Europe; and the achievement of peace on our island. Our transformation over a century of democracy is one which resonates with other countries, many of whom are interested in learning from our experience and ongoing journey, including in areas such as education, health systems and public financial management. The role of Citizens' Assemblies for deliberation of reform stands out. Our recovery from the economic crises of recent years, and the long process towards greater gender equality, and equality for minorities in our society are further elements of our story.

Emigration has also shaped Ireland's reputation and Irish identity, as Irish people have sought opportunities elsewhere when they were restricted at home. Our diaspora, numbering over 70 million, gives us a global reach beyond that of a small country of less than five million people. New arrivals to Ireland have further enriched us, reshaping our identity and broadening our experience.

Ireland is now a net contributor to the European Union budget. The European Union and its Member States currently provide over half of total global development assistance and offer major support to neighbouring countries. European companies are also important investors in the developing world. The collective contribution to development by the European Union is and will remain an important driver of change. Ireland engages with and is guided by the implementation of the European Consensus on Development. Aligned with the SDGs, this is a shared vision and framework for action for development cooperation for the European Union and its Member States, including Ireland.



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar T.D. meeting with Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde. Photo: Eyoel Kahssay

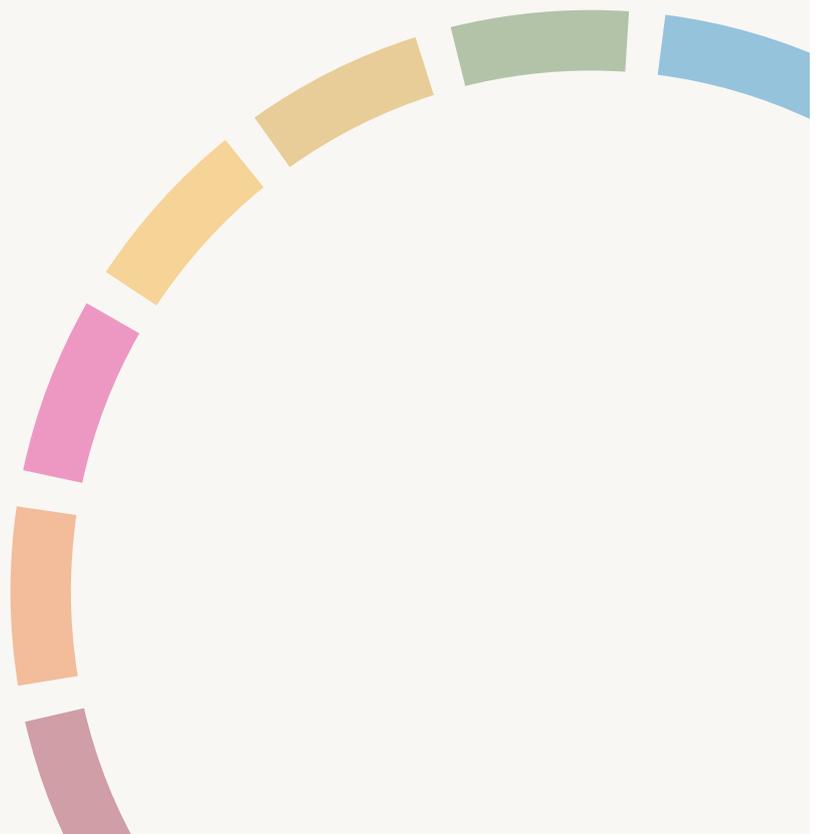
The mix, and balance, of partnerships involved in delivering Irish development cooperation over almost half a century gives it a unique, authentic character. These partnerships include our collaboration with the European Commission's development programme and are informed by our membership of the European Union. Ireland has extensive engagements with multilateral organisations including the United Nations agencies, international humanitarian organisations and multilateral and regional development finance institutions.

Our bilateral relations and partnerships with countries in Africa and beyond are a central feature of our presence across the globe, and inform our influence and standing in multilateral spaces on global development challenges. The prominent role of Irish civil society development organisations, networks, missionaries and volunteer organisations, in our development cooperation and public engagement, firmly roots our work in the spirit of Irish solidarity. Institutional exchanges and innovative partnerships with Irish state agencies and private sector organisations are also becoming an increasingly important way to maximise the impact of our development cooperation.

We are committed to consolidating the high quality for which we are known. Ireland has maintained a reputation over many years, both in good and not so

good times, for delivering high quality, untied, focused and coherent development cooperation, and sustained allocations to Irish Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) partners. Regular peer-reviews by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and a recent review^{vii} of our development cooperation by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence, provide solid evidence for this reputation.

As we look to 2030, and make progress towards delivering 0.7 percent of GNI to Official Development Assistance, maintaining our high standards and consolidating quality will continue to be at the heart of what we do. The DAC peer review will continue to be a benchmark for measuring our success. The Annual Report will evolve, taking on a thematic focus every year, while providing an overall record and review of the quality and impact of the whole of Government efforts in the implementation of this policy.





Context



B.1 The future of development

Our world is changing fast. New connections and opportunities are being created daily. Emerging technologies are transforming the way humans interact with each other and the world. In response we are repositioning our foreign policy including our development cooperation. Together these are the means for us to contribute to collective efforts, sustain the gains we have already made and adapt to the pace of global change. However, we need to ensure the needs of those that have been left furthest behind – and people who are at risk of becoming ever more marginalised – remain at the centre of our approach.

Agriculture and food systems are central to a sustainable future. Increasingly complex human and environmental health challenges posed by food systems demand systemic responses. Sustainable agri-food systems must properly nourish, provide energy, damage neither health nor environment, and support equitable access to resources. In recent decades, global agricultural policy has responded to food insecurity and growing populations with a focus on increasing yields through conventional models. Yet natural resource depletion, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are now major concerns for sustainable food systems and resilient livelihoods.

In the oceans and waterways, unsustainable and often unregulated fishing is threatening fish stocks, marine and freshwater ecosystems and related food security and livelihoods. Compounding these challenges, climate pressures will make it more difficult to ensure access to sustainable sources of nutritious food and a diverse diet, in turn threatening good nutrition outcomes. Sustainable resource management of land-based and marine natural capital, including freshwater and energy will underpin alternative paths.

The creation of a 'green economy' in many countries is paving the way for an unprecedented wave of innovation and social mobilisation, especially among young people in responding to climate change and its impacts. Smart investment in sustainable agriculture also has the potential to provide youth employment, with a focus on commercialising farms and strengthening agri-food value chains. In many poor countries, women are an untapped resource that can bring about transformative change with the right support.

Fish, the world's most traded food commodity, is another major source of food security. There are opportunities for transformative change in the 'blue economy' of fish value chains and aquaculture in salt and freshwater systems, in turn reliant on the sustainable management of oceans, coasts and water ecosystems. A focus on renewable energy can also catalyse positive outcomes for sustainable resource management and livelihoods. The multiple benefits can transform lives. Progress is needed to arrest climate change and take action at all levels for greater use of renewables, including bioenergy.

Unprecedented levels of economic growth across the world, especially in Africa, coupled with climate change, are increasing pressure on natural resources, including sustainable management of land and water ecosystems. Yet the rural poor, far from urban centres, are often left out of growth. Economic growth and growing populations are also adding to the increasing numbers of people living in towns and cities. Interventions for public service provision that are demonstrating impact in poverty reduction are struggling to keep pace with the scale of the needs of rapidly growing populations. Poor people living in



Ireland partners with UN Women to empower women and girls from ethnic minority communities across Viet Nam.
Photo: UN Women / ThaoHoang

growing cities, are at risk of being trapped in pockets of urban deprivation not detected by traditional poverty measures or interventions. Some of the most intractable levels of extreme poverty, and populations that have been systematically left behind, can be found in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions, including some middle-income countries. State capacity, effective institutions, and adequate finance are essential for fostering integrated, participatory approaches to sustainable planning, health and sanitation.

Young people are at the heart of the future. There will be more young people in Africa than anywhere else on the planet by 2030^{viii}. Providing economic opportunities to tap into this potential and prevent future crises will demand innovative responses. Education, skills training, entrepreneurship and job creation will be critical. Technological innovations can help provide alternative paths to development and contribute to delivering the promise of a safe, sustainable, and inclusive future^{ix}. There are opportunities to create better living conditions in rural as well as urban settings, where people can thrive.

Digitalisation has the potential to extend communications, transform the delivery of public services, and facilitate markets. Advances in technology are also making it easier to capture essential data to inform policy making, and to create new data which can be harnessed for sustainable development. Enabling capacity building and overcoming gender disparities in the use and focus of technological innovation are central. The challenge will be to foster technological transformation in an inclusive way, by facilitating technological transfer, by providing appropriate infrastructure, and by strengthening regulation.

Ireland's development cooperation allows us to invest in the societies of the future and to contribute to addressing global challenges. As we look to 2030, we will embrace change, invest in innovation and reorient our interventions as we work to build a more equal, peaceful and sustainable world. Effective use of new technologies will improve how we deliver, manage and communicate our work. Innovative and blended finance mechanisms and new partnerships with the private sector will be part of this. Investing in new partnerships and innovation will be central to a policy that is dynamic, flexible and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.



Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, T.D., meeting with a group of young Vietnamese students from Danang University of Economics, who were participating in a training programme at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). Photo: Darragh Kane



Photo taken in Nigeria, Plan International Ireland
Photo: Gregory Okonofua

B.2 Development challenges

Great progress has been made to lift people out of poverty over the past 50 years. However, advances have not been equally distributed around the globe. There are places where extreme poverty remains intractable, especially but not exclusively in Sub-Saharan Africa. Conflict, the impact of climate change and intensifying inequality exacerbate these fragilities. Millions are still experiencing chronic hunger, acute food crises and famine. The greatest severity is experienced in parts of Africa, but also in countries elsewhere experiencing conflict and the impact of protracted crises^x. 821 million people in the world lack sufficient food, with around 45 percent of deaths among children under 5 years of age linked to under-nutrition^{xi}.

Access to health systems remains out of reach for the poorest, even as huge strides have been made in reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and fighting disease including HIV and AIDS^{xii}. Advances have been made in extending access to education. Yet millions of children, concentrated in conflict-affected areas and in Sub-Saharan Africa, are still excluded or endure poor quality education^{xiii}. More than 75 million children and young people aged three to eighteen years are in need of educational support in countries affected by conflict alone^{xiv}. Education for all will not be realised without meeting the educational needs of populations in emergencies and protracted crises, including refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

Inequality and sustained levels of extreme poverty inhibit the flourishing of stable, secure societies with effective institutions, where economies can thrive. Eroding fundamental freedoms such as those of assembly, of association, of opinion and expression, and of thought, conscience, religion and belief - inhibits the rule of law, accountability and efforts to combat corruption. Threats to human rights and civil society space undermine the basis for peaceful sustainable development in many contexts.

Women and girls, people living with disabilities, religious and ethnic minorities, and members of the LGBTI+ community often experience systemic levels of discrimination and marginalisation. Gender inequality undermines the potential for transformative change: achieving gender equality could increase global GDP by US\$12 trillion in a ten year period^{xv}. Marginalisation, abuse of rights and exploitation foster conflict, and can spur people to move to cities and beyond borders in search of better opportunities. Increasing levels of inequality further threaten the integrity of societies, destabilising peace and sustainable development, generating even greater humanitarian need.

The effects of climate change threaten to undermine gains to date in tackling poverty, and the achievement of all development goals. Throughout this century, the impact of climate change is projected to slow down economic growth, exacerbate gender inequality, intensify fragility, further erode food security, and



Healthcare worker, Tigray Region, Ethiopia.
Photo: The Global Fund

prolong existing and create new poverty traps^{xvi}. Increasing temperatures have already made life hazardous in many parts of the world. In contrast, setting economic development on a sustainable path promises economic gains in the region of US \$26 trillion by 2030^{xvii}. Ambitious climate action requires robust and comprehensive responses from local communities, from sub-national and national politics and from global governance.

Tackling extreme poverty is complicated by the impact of protracted humanitarian crises and the mass displacement of over 68 million people across Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe^{xviii}. Conflict and fragility, compounded by climate change, are increasing the vulnerability of millions. Globally, the number of major violent conflicts has tripled since 2010 and more countries are experiencing war than at any time in nearly 30 years^{xix}. Half of the top ten refugee-hosting countries in the world are located in sub-Saharan Africa, namely: Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Chad and Sudan. Widespread displacement into neighbouring jurisdictions and regions has brought the movement of people to the fore of regional and international policy debates. The humanitarian and political ramifications created by flows of displaced people and other migrants have challenged global and European responses. In the European Union there is consensus that the response needs to be comprehensive and balanced.

The complexity of global politics, and prevailing uncertainty, leave no room for simple answers to development challenges. Global dynamics interact with the national and subnational contexts in which development takes place. For Ireland, even at our most ambitious, our ability to drive change will be constrained by foreseeable and evolving circumstances. Within this context, we are committed to build and grow our capacity to do development differently; to be flexible, responsive, adaptive and innovative. Our challenge is to build partnerships informed by shared values, in order to sustain the bedrock of multilateralism. In this way we can facilitate and sustain international cooperation and work to deliver measurable progress towards achieving the SDGs in the countries in which we work.

The changing context for development

Political dynamics shape and constrain the possibilities for change. Global cooperation and consensus on development have weakened. Reduced engagement and resources have implications for the authority and capacity of international institutions to follow through on critical global agendas, including the SDGs:

- » the focus of development policy has become fragmented and politicised;
 - » there is increased uncertainty around collective responses to development challenges including conflict, climate change and extreme poverty;
 - » uncertainty affects political action on global public policies including technology and data, communications, international financial flows, trade agreements and health;
 - » globally, Official Development Assistance has increased slightly, but funding for the United Nations agencies and other international institutions responsible for setting and guarding norms governing peace, humanitarian action and sustainable development has been cut.
- The contexts in which development takes place have also fundamentally changed:
- » the growth of China and other emerging economies has brought new investment and trading opportunities across Africa, Asia and Latin America;
 - » remittances, vertical funds, philanthropic flows, private and blended finance have also radically altered the landscape of development finance;
 - » the dependence of many countries on Official Development Assistance, especially in Africa, has lessened as a result of the availability of broader sources of finance for development and high levels of growth over the past two decades;
 - » for the poorest people, and for fragile and conflict-affected states, Official Development Assistance will continue to be a critical source of public investment;
 - » direct support to governments, along with the principals of aid effectiveness, no longer dominate, changing the dynamics and types of policy influence at country level;
 - » issues around debt sustainability, public spending and policies continue to cause concern in countries which have recently or are due to 'transition' from Least Developed Country status.



Priorities



C.1 Ireland's policy priorities

The **SDGs** provide the overarching framework for Ireland's international development policy. Ireland's development cooperation is directed at translating global commitments into tangible development impact. We will build on our track record in delivering for the poorest and most vulnerable to focus on the furthest behind first. The resounding support in the public consultations for a focus on the furthest behind first is our springboard for action and collaboration. In line with **SDG 17** partnerships to achieve the goals, we will work to maintain the integrity of the concept of Official Development Assistance, in particular its focus on poverty reduction. We recognise that there is much to do, and reaching those who have been left out of progress will be difficult. We will scale up our resources and our capacity to deliver on our ambition.

Prioritising gender equality, reducing humanitarian need, climate action and strengthening governance are key strategies for directing our development cooperation to the furthest behind first. Delivering on these priorities will define Ireland's leadership and influence in multilateral spaces, inform our strategic choices around partnerships and interventions, and guide how we implement our development policy. These choices will shape the evolution of our policy influence and how we scale up our bilateral interventions. Our benchmark for doing development differently will be our approach and impact on reaching the furthest behind.

Gender equality is fundamental for transformation and reaching the furthest behind first. We will have an overarching focus on women and girls in all of our partnerships and interventions. Women and girls remain hardest hit by the effects of extreme poverty, climate change and conflict. They are blocked from economic opportunity, and disempowered by the burden of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities. They enjoy fewer legal rights and are politically underrepresented. Political participation of women is hindered by factors such as violence, poverty, lack of access to quality education and health care, and the double burden of paid and unpaid work. Women have poor maternal and reproductive health, unequal education levels, suffer from gender stereotypes, and are often excluded from digital and technological innovation. The proven social and economic return of investing in women and girls also makes a strong case for prioritising gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all facets of life.

Reducing humanitarian need means anticipating and responding to crises so as to protect the most vulnerable and those at risk. The needs of displaced people and people living in crises are complex, non-linear and evolving. It is not possible to draw a clear boundary between where humanitarian needs end and development needs begin. We will strengthen our efforts across our work to foster resilient livelihoods. Our track record on hunger, on resilience, and on conflict and fragility allows us to make effective links and develop innovative, flexible solutions to better connect our humanitarian response with interventions on sustainable development, disaster preparedness, conflict prevention, human rights, peacebuilding and political solutions.





Umodzi Women's Potato Group from Mdzamelabowa Village in Bembeke Extension Planning Area in Dedza District, Malawi. Photo: International Potato Centre

The catastrophic impact of climate change disproportionately affects those least prepared to anticipate, respond and adapt. Future-proofing all of our development cooperation will be an overarching priority. Our climate action will be explicitly tilted towards giving a global voice to those most at risk. We recognise that these are people living in extreme poverty, in drought-prone areas, in low-lying coastal areas and Small Island Developing States, and in Least Developed Countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The effects of climate change on their lives can be devastating. The voices of those at the 'frontlines' of climate change need to inform action, and resources channelled to facilitate participative solutions.

Effective and accountable institutions, underpinned by strong governance and adherence to the rule of law, are central for the realisation of human rights and for enabling inclusive economic growth. The rule of law is fundamental to upholding human rights, strengthening accountability and fighting corruption. Respect for international law, including human rights law and where applicable, international humanitarian law is vital to protect people and to enable humanitarian actors to safely access and assist populations in need. Directing our development cooperation towards reaching the furthest behind first, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states, demands that we engage with the local contexts and institutions that determine how development happens.

We recognise that civil society space is integral to the realisation of rights, through representation and participation, especially of those left behind. Robust and accountable decision-making structures for allocating and targeting resources are the building

blocks of an effective state and functioning markets. Increasing restrictions on civil society space through legal, administrative and other measures undermines these structures. Strengthening governance and respect for human rights are fundamental to the achievement of the SDGs at national and sub-national level, and for delivering economic growth and transformation over the long term.

We will follow through on our commitment to the furthest behind first with the necessary policies, resources and tools to effectively tackle extreme poverty and inequality. Repositioning our development policy in this new context will require us to scale up our support across the priorities and to innovate, adapt and do things differently. We will work to increase our capacity, to strengthen coordination, to maximise our influence, to better communicate and to learn. Locating, identifying and supporting the furthest behind will rarely be straightforward, requiring us to increase our capacity to carry out better analysis, targeting and monitoring on poverty, vulnerability and gender; to balance cost and innovation; and to manage risk.

Fostering communities of practice across themes will generate deeper learning and understanding to underpin our evolving approach to empowering the furthest behind first. We will develop dedicated strategies and strengthen existing coordination across Government to champion these issues and influence policy-making internationally; to reinforce these priorities in all our partnerships and interventions; and to inform the expansion of our public engagement.



C.2 Gender equality

Gender equality, as both an objective and driver of sustainable development, is key to achieving all the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Up to a quarter of the indicators included in the SDG framework implicitly or explicitly address gender equality, while progress on SDG 5, gender equality, underpins the achievement of all the SDGs. It is at the heart of human rights, and its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications, unlocking the potential of girls, boys, women and men. Empowering women to become, and to stay, involved in politics is central to the rights and well-being of women and girls.

We will strengthen our influence on gender equality in development, building on our reputation as a committed player in global dialogue. As co-chair of the negotiations on the SDGs, Ireland was instrumental in ensuring that gender equality became a core priority of the 2030 agenda. We will continue to support and strengthen women's voices in political decision-making, and to promote women's participation in international peacebuilding, such as in negotiations and mechanisms of international security. Through all of our partnerships and interventions we will prioritise our efforts to expand women's and girls' choices and capabilities, give women an equal voice, and end violence against women and girls. We recognise that transforming gender relations also involves a focus on boys, men and masculinities.

We will increase our allocations to interventions directly related to achieving gender equality, and to scale up our engagement to integrate gender across all of our interventions and in our wider foreign policy. We will increase our engagement with and funding for women's organisations and movements. We will support targeting of gender equality across a range of development themes to improve the reach, scale and impact of efforts, whether in humanitarian response, climate action, governance, or economic and social sectors. Underpinning and informing our mainstreaming and influence, we will support specific interventions around gender equality, which will give us a distinctive voice.

- » **We will intensify our work on Women, Peace and Security and on gender-based violence.** Ireland prioritises preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence in peacekeeping and in response to emergencies. We will continue to promote the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and subsequent resolutions in conflict and post conflict contexts. We will build coherence with the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, by working across Government, with multilateral agencies at regional level, and through international policies and instruments. We will also continue to give priority to preventing gender-based violence through collaboration with and support for Irish and international stakeholders.
- » **We will create a new funding initiative for Women's Economic Empowerment,** starting with existing initiatives and learning from our experience of promoting women's economic empowerment in Ireland. We will target women in small scale businesses, enhancing value chains especially in agriculture where a majority of women are active. Through the initiative we will also identify approaches that have catalytic potential to progress women's involvement and leadership in business in Africa; invest in research and learning; and seek to harness synergies from Irish initiatives and innovative finance. We will draw on relevant expertise across the Irish Government, private sector, research institutes and development organisations.



In Yemen, girls are often kept at home because of safety concerns. Promoting continued school enrolment and attendance is a priority.

Photo: UNICEF

- » **As we continue to scale-up our support for education, we will prioritise education for girls.** Despite some recent progress in reducing the gender gap in primary education, access to quality education is still not universal, with large gaps at secondary level. Significant efforts are required to retain girls at this level. This can yield significant benefits for girls in later life, with education helping to reduce early and child marriage and facilitate choice on the number and spacing of children. The provision of “second-chance” education for girls and young women caught up in humanitarian and protracted crises is fundamental for their future when stability is restored.

Ireland has committed to providing at least €250m over the next five years to global education with a focus on improving access to quality education especially for girls, and access to education in emergencies.

- » **We will launch a new initiative around Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, incorporating our partnerships for health and HIV and AIDS.** Improving the quality and availability of health services with a strong focus on maternal and child health has been a long-standing component of our development cooperation. Access to health services, including access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, is fundamental for realising SRHR and transforming women's health outcomes. Coherence with the evolution of SRHR in Ireland, amongst all relevant departments and agencies, will underpin our approach to human rights, gender equality, health and SRHR issues.

We will follow through on our ambitious commitments and increase our capacity across the Department to integrate gender equality in all that we do and say. Building better systems for managing data, monitoring, evaluation and learning will be critical. Deepening our understanding of the gendered impacts of poverty, inequality, climate change and conflict will be essential for including the furthest behind first, especially women and girls. We will strengthen our research agenda around gender and our coordination, public engagement and collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Across Government, we will work together to deliver on:

- » the National Strategy for Women and Girls with the Department of Justice and Equality;
- » on Gender budgeting with the Departments of Finance and of Public Expenditure and Reform;
- » the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security with Departments including the Department of Defence, Department of Justice and Equality, and the Health Service Executive;
- » Women's Economic Empowerment with the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine; on SRHR with the Department of Health; and on education for girls and inclusive education with the Department of Education and Skills.

Women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflict

The adoption by the United Nations Security Council of Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000 marked a watershed in the recognition of the unique and disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls. Importantly, it also highlighted the critical role of women and girls in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peace building, and post-conflict reconstruction and governance. Having experienced the challenges involved in moving from conflict to peace, and women's role in that process, Ireland has been a consistent and firm voice advocating for other states to commit to implementing UNSCR 1325. Ireland is making major strides in integrating the objectives of UNSCR 1325 into its international development and foreign policies, and national strategies on gender equality, including addressing gender-based violence.



C.3 Reducing humanitarian need

Crises driven by conflict are growing in number and scale and becoming increasingly protracted, complex and cross-border in nature. Other complex humanitarian crises continue to occur as a consequence of natural disasters, environmental degradation and climate-related events. The level of funding required to meet escalating costs has never been higher and the humanitarian system is stretched to capacity. Long-term development actors are becoming increasingly engaged in situations of protracted crisis, and working to address root causes. Displaced people and those in crisis require assistance that can effectively and coherently address both immediate needs and a sustainable future.

Ireland fully supports the approach of the United Nations Secretary General's 'Sustaining Peace' agenda.^{xxx} This puts conflict prevention and addressing its root causes at the core of the work and reform agenda across all three United Nations pillars: peace and security, human rights, and development. Reform of the United Nations and the **New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States** are key agendas where we will intensify our advocacy on conflict prevention and fragile states. Having co-facilitated the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants^{xxxi} Ireland will continue to be active in multilateral efforts to protect refugees and people on the move. We will follow through on the global compacts on migration and refugees to reaffirm the importance of the international refugee regime and ensure that migration is more safe, orderly and regular.

We will work with our partners to follow through on the 'Grand Bargain' to ensure that people's safety, dignity and the right to thrive is placed at the heart of global decision-making. Ireland played a prominent role at the **World Humanitarian Summit in 2016^{xxii}** committing to action closely aligned to the SDGs. We will ensure greater coherence between humanitarian and development work; support initiatives that foster resilient livelihoods and enhance support to displaced and host communities; and work to empower women, preventing and responding to gender-based violence in emergencies. Related to this, we will strengthen our approach to disaster risk reduction in line with the 2015 Sendai Framework^{xxiii} and continue to track our spending.



*During the Zimbabwe food crisis, a volunteer from a local village cooks and hands out porridge at a school.
Photo: Trócaire*

We will continue to scale up our development cooperation and humanitarian assistance to effectively deliver meaningful and sustainable change in the lives of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. We will focus on the 'nexus' of interactions with peace, humanitarian and development processes. Through our partnerships with the United Nations, European Union, the International Red Cross Movement, and international and local NGOs, we will work to contribute to the effective functioning, financing and coordination of the humanitarian system. Complementing our influence we will support specific interventions to reduce humanitarian need:

- » **We will strengthen our response to humanitarian crises.** Ireland's first priority will be to continue to respond to need according to humanitarian principles: to save and protect lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity before, during, and in the aftermath of humanitarian crises. We will increase our funding and build our capacity for rapid response to sudden onset crises. We will continue to provide high quality funding and strengthen its predictability, working with international humanitarian partners including United Nations agencies and international NGOs to allocate resources where there is greatest need as effectively as possible.

Ireland has pledged at least €10 million per year over the next three years to the United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund – the United Nations' key mechanism for rapid response to global humanitarian crises.

- » **We will develop a more comprehensive Irish response to peace and security challenges, identifying synergies with other areas of development and instruments of foreign policy.** As part of this, we will grow the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Stability Fund, which has been a key tool for developing our work in the area of conflict, for supporting a broad range of partners in non-traditional areas, allowing us to explore new partnerships. Collaboration with the Department of Defence on its feasibility study for a new Irish Peace Institute will be another focus.
- » **We will develop regional approaches to conflict and fragility.** Starting from our long-standing focus and leadership on protracted and forgotten crises, we will reinforce our work with regional partners and intensify our political efforts to address root causes in conflicts that have the potential to cause instability. Sustaining political, economic, social, cultural and environmental ecosystems will be central, as the basis for future reconstruction and effective institutions for peace and sustainable development.
- » **We will strengthen our integrated resilience approach to work on hunger and nutrition in development and humanitarian settings.** We will scale up our support to a wide range of nutrition interventions across both development and emergency responses, with a particular focus on the prevention and treatment of child under-nutrition. A resilience approach will be used to inform our interventions in contexts marked by conflict and fragility, persistent poverty, and vulnerability to disaster risk or extreme weather events. We will support communities and households to absorb exposure to shock and stresses, including environmental disasters, climate change and violent conflict.
- » **We will focus on education, health and social protection in emergency settings, as basic elements of a functioning system.** Our increased spending on education will have a focus on emergencies. Education is increasingly recognised as important in humanitarian settings and as a vehicle for helping children deal with trauma. It equips children and young people with the knowledge and skills to develop and contribute to rebuilding their communities and countries. Health provision, and a focus on SRHR in emergencies are critical for protecting public health and providing the basis for a healthy future. Cash based transfers are increasingly replacing food transfers as a means of responding to complex humanitarian needs. These systems for providing cash create the incipient architecture of social protection systems when crises pass.

As we scale up our work to reduce humanitarian need, we will bolster how we engage with fragile contexts and protracted crises. The foundations for a dedicated approach and research agenda on conflict and fragility, protracted crises and resilience are in place, and will inform the development of a new strategy. This will complement our focus on strengthening governance and effective institutions. We will feed back research outputs and learning into Ireland's engagement and interventions in humanitarian, development and peace partnerships. We will foster flexible internal structures for gathering and sharing information on risk assessment, for planning, programming and diplomatic action. External consultation with a broad range of Ireland's partners in the field and in Ireland working on conflict, fragility and protracted crises, will continue to be a part of this.

We will strengthen coordination, especially with:

- » the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence on peacekeeping and conflict prevention;
- » the Department of Justice and Equality on Women Peace and Security;
- » and with the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine on hunger and nutrition.

Protecting people on the move

Ireland played a lead role in co-facilitating, with Jordan, the United Nations Summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants in 2016 which brought countries together behind a more humane and coordinated approach. This was the first time that a summit of Heads of State and Government focused on the large movements of refugees and migrants. Ireland's central role in bringing about this historic opportunity was informed by our own experience of migration and our links with the Irish diaspora. The declaration led to a blueprint for a better international response. Adopted by all world leaders, this Declaration paved the way for the development of a Global Compact for Refugees, and a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Both of these were adopted by the United Nations in December 2018, and will support a common approach to refugees and migration, grounded in principles of state sovereignty, responsibility-sharing, non-discrimination and human rights.



Veterinarian services for drought-affected pastoralist families in Somali region Ethiopia
Photo: Sonja Hyland

C.4 Climate action

The impact of climate change threatens to undermine all efforts towards achieving the SDGs, and to fuel humanitarian need. SDG 13 climate action underlines the urgent need to influence the growth pathways of developing countries to establish low carbon resilient futures. Change is needed to avoid irreversible investment decisions that rely on fossil fuels. Gender equality and supporting social movements and institutional transformation will be important elements for generating ambition in climate action and informing a people-centred global response. Arresting climate change is the major global challenge of this generation.

Ireland is already supporting efforts towards keeping a global temperature rise this century well below two degrees Celsius and limiting the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees. We are an active participant in the **United Nation's Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and **played a strong role in the adoption of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement^{xxiv}**. Our development cooperation is playing a specific role, supporting solutions for those most affected by climate change. Adaptation, which promises greater development dividends, is a priority. Our focus is to amplify the concerns of those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and to advocate for greater allocations of finance for grassroots adaptation.

We will 'future proof' our development cooperation by integrating climate action in all of our work. Ensuring the poorest and most vulnerable – and those furthest behind – have agency in global climate action is essential. We will continue to support the strengthening of the Least Developed Country negotiating group in international climate processes. We will also continue to champion gender, resilience, governance and other climate justice issues. In our engagements around conflict and fragile states, we will bring climate issues front and centre, as causes of instability and immediate risks that demand attention. One hundred percent of Ireland's climate finance is untied and grant-based, and aligned with the SDGs. We will continue to invest heavily in the transparency of our climate finance information.

We will continue to scale-up our allocations to climate action interventions. The Programme for Government commits Ireland to providing at least €175m in total in climate finance by 2020. Ireland is on track to meet this commitment as Official Development Assistance grows, and we will continue to report on this spend. We will at a minimum, double the overall percentage of our development assistance that counts as climate finance. We will actively explore more engagement through multilateral partners on appropriate climate innovation and finance streams. In our interventions, our explicit objectives will be to build more inclusive national and international systems, address the needs of the most vulnerable, and instil a sense of urgency:

- » **We will explore innovative approaches to finance, risk insurance and adaptation** through multilateral partners. Climate risk insurance, disaster prevention, and our focus on adaptation are explicitly geared towards reducing humanitarian need and protecting those at risk of being left furthest behind. Concentrating on specific regions and populations most vulnerable to climate threats will be part of this.
- » **We will strengthen our support for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).** Building on our existing relations we will support initiatives that offer responses to the specific challenges faced by SIDS across the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Our multi-sectoral response will focus on SIDS eligible for development cooperation and will examine a range of measures, including new forms of climate finance, further bolstering the voice of SIDS in international climate negotiations, and supporting interventions directly related to oceans and the blue economy.

Ireland will increase its funding for climate action as part of our international development cooperation. Linked to this, Ireland is developing a strategy to intensify our support to Small Island Developing States, some of which are dramatically exposed to the impacts of climate change.

- » **We will ensure climate action is prioritised in all of our interventions around food and agriculture.** A sustainable food systems approach will underpin all of our work on agriculture, value chains and private sector development. Fostering resilience to extreme climatic conditions, and ensuring people can feed themselves and their families, is an important stepping stone towards stability in fragile contexts. We will focus on climate resilient smallholder agriculture and the production of nutritious crops. Enabling access to clean and affordable energy technologies and solutions for the poorest will be another focus. We will strengthen collaboration with Irish businesses and NGOs to maximise knowledge dissemination and, transfer of technologies, to develop innovative finance, and to encourage investment in specific climate initiatives.
- » **We will develop a new Oceans Funding initiative to explore the potential of the blue economy, for developing countries including SIDS.** In collaboration with Irish and international research organisations and initiatives, this initiative has the potential to add to our climate action in a number of ways, for example through sustainable management of coasts and fish stocks; through seabed mapping; through providing untapped and alternative food sources; and through greater employment for women in fish value chains.
- » **We will 'future-proof' all of our interventions by engaging on climate issues as part of systems strengthening.** Greater evidence is emerging of the implications of climate change on access to basic services and governance. Changes in education and health systems are needed to prepare for and respond to the impact of climate change. Anticipating future disease burdens and further integrating climate awareness into school curricula are prominent examples. Social protection systems have the potential to help alleviate suffering in response to climate events. We will explore more systematic planning and preparation of this sort around climate shocks in order to strengthen planning across all interventions.

Ireland has developed a solid reputation on climate action for development. The vast majority of our international climate finance is channelled into adaptation activities for the poorest. Through a new strategy, we will concentrate on developing these activities and the lead role the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade takes for influencing issues related to adaptation, Least Developed Countries, and SIDS. We will continue to underpin our climate action with institutional learning and capacity building, including through the Climate and Development Learning Platform^{xxiv}. We will bring these lessons into our own programming and approaches and create space for innovation. Developing stronger public engagement and development education around climate action will be another aspect. Irish support for climate action will be informed on an ongoing basis by the development of best practice in the domestic context, by expertise from key Government departments in relation to multilateral and bilateral support, and by developments at European Union and global levels. This will amplify Ireland's influence within the European Union and our support for multilateral climate action in line with our policy priorities under the UNFCCC, including gender equality.

We will strengthen coordination especially with:

- » the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA), on Ireland's national SDG implementation plan; and the coordination of Irish support for global climate action and initiatives, also drawing on the expertise of other relevant Government Departments.
- » the Department of Education and Skills on the Education for Sustainable Development strategy and the Irish Green Schools initiative.

Climate action for the furthest behind

Ireland consistently works to champion the voices of the poorest and most climate-vulnerable countries in climate negotiations. We directly support the participation of experts from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations, and in the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Ireland plays a leading role within the European Union on negotiations specific to Least Developed Countries, and coordinates the United Nations process to accelerate climate action for SIDS. We work with these countries to identify critical obstacles to progress and solutions to overcome them, particularly in areas that have the greatest impact on poorest people such as nutrition, agriculture and social protection.



C.5 Strengthening governance

Strengthening governance for effective institutions underpins all of our efforts to deliver transformative change, inclusive outcomes and the realisation of human rights. Governance determines how decision-making happens for the resolution of conflict, for responding to shocks, for enabling economic activity and for allocating and targeting resources for social development. In countries without stable governance structures or functioning institutions, instability and shocks can lead to conflict and development reversals. Successful climate action will depend on strong governance: for cultivating sustainable agriculture and business practices, for effective regulation and conservation, and for ensuring priority is given to adaptation and the needs of those most vulnerable. Effective institutions in agriculture, nutrition, education, health and social protection, are a means of overcoming and preventing discrimination in the provision and access of services. Robust regulatory and enabling environments for all businesses – from micro-enterprises through to large multi-national corporations bringing important investment – are essential for managing natural resources and for realising the promise of sustainable and inclusive economic growth models.

At a global level, advocating for the rights of those left furthest behind will be key. Strengthening how we work to build effective institutions in fragile and conflict affected states will be a focus for our response to the **United Nations 'Sustaining Peace' agenda**. The furthest behind will also be a focus in global governance for development in areas including security, trade, communications and finance. In line with the **2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development**^{xxv} we will work to mobilise development and private finance for the implementation of the SDGs. We will ensure that our contributions to multilateral organisations respond to our policy priorities and are directed towards the furthest behind first. We will also explore how our development cooperation can catalyse other sources of finance for development, including innovative finance. We will support countries' transitions towards middle income status. Many of the countries where Ireland has had longstanding development cooperation programmes are moving towards a changed development status, with implications for concessional finance flows. The pace of transition varies and reversals are possible, particularly in fragile contexts.

We will work towards inclusive outcomes to reach the furthest behind through all our partnerships, recognising the long-term timeframe of institutional transformation. Our approach is in line with the ambition of SDG 16 peace, justice and strong institutions, which seeks to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels of governance. In line with our foreign policy review, we are committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. We will have a focus on how effective institutions can address gender equality, the rights of minorities, the specific needs of people living with disabilities, and the participation of marginalised groups in decision-making. Complementing our global influence and overarching focus on effective institutions, we will support specific interventions to strengthen governance:

- » **We will support and protect civil society space.** We recognise that civil society, grassroots organisations, the media and private sector actors have important complementary roles to play in developing, sustaining and strengthening systems and their governance. We will continue to work with civil society partners to inform our influence and interventions for the protection of human rights.
- » **We will seek to strengthen essential institutions, and use government systems where appropriate, to support sustainable and self-financed exits from dependence on Official Development Assistance.** We will support core system strengthening for public financial management, audit and judicial processes to enhance outcomes in service delivery, and contribute to poverty reduction, economic growth, private sector development and trade. We will work through a whole of Embassy approach encompassing political, economic and development actions.
- » **We will work to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and tax administration.** Through our bilateral partnerships, we will seek to maximise the development impact of all sources of finance in developing countries, including private sector activity and investment. We will build on our existing capacity building engagements with tax administrations. We will also maximise opportunities to collaborate with regional and international financial institutions to develop effective approaches.



Ciarán Cannon, T.D., Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development celebrating Hanoi Pride 2018.
Photo: Truong Van Vi

A whole of Government initiative to support tax mobilisation and collection in developing countries is at an advanced stage. This collaboration between the Department of Finance, the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will contribute to generating domestic sources of finance for development.

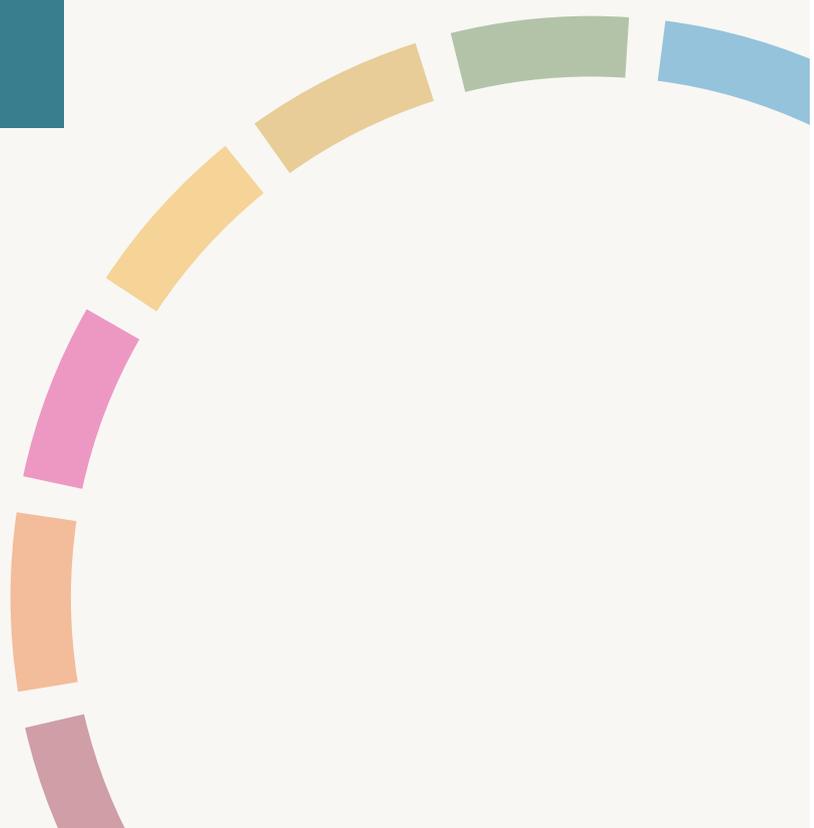
- » **We will work with partner governments to help promote inclusive economic growth and trade.** We will seek to enable a flourishing eco-system of micro, small and medium sized businesses in developing countries with a particular emphasis on technical, financial and mentoring support. We will also continue to help developing countries build their domestic and international trade capacity and infrastructure to ensure that they can access the economic benefits of expanded regional and global trade opportunities.

- » **We will support initiatives that seek to build capacity and foster trade and investment.** The Africa Ireland Economic Forum is a flagship event, providing a key networking opportunity for African and Irish businesses to discuss opportunities in Africa and identify areas for mutually beneficial trade and investment. We will seek to maximise opportunities through Ireland's partnerships with the regional and international financial institutions, and through European investment and development cooperation instruments. We will also build on recent successful experiences of twinning Irish investment authorities, agri-businesses and public institutions with counterparts, to support trade expansion.

To follow through on SDG 16, we will expand existing coordination and learning across human rights, gender, conflict resolution, peace, humanitarian and development work. We recognise that we need to engage with the local political contexts in which development takes place to design appropriate, flexible interventions. We will grow our capacity to understand political economy factors, to carry out ongoing analyses across all of our interventions, and to adapt our programming and advocacy as necessary. Flexible, responsive programming, complemented by rigorous, timely evaluation and learning will in turn strengthen our internal coordination and coherence. This will provide a more robust evidence base for communicating about development in Ireland, and for influencing development policy at international fora.

Protecting civil society

A strong, independent and inclusive civil society empowers communities, contributes to good governance and provides a voice for the furthest behind. Ireland has long been a champion of the role of civil society as a core human rights issue. While serving on the United Nations Human Rights Council, Ireland successfully led on championing the right for civil society to have safe, protected spaces to operate, so as to ensure the promotion of equality, accountability and the rule of law. During that time, Ireland facilitated the first United Nations Resolution on civil society space. Placing the importance of civil society on the agenda of international human rights is an important source of protection for those left furthest behind.





Interventions



Three clusters of interventions focusing on protection, food and people provide scope for Ireland to play a leadership role and to build on our values, experience and what we are good at. Together, these interventions are a means of directly implementing our focus on the furthest behind first and our policy priorities: gender equality, reducing humanitarian need, climate action and strengthening governance.



D.1 Protection

Protection defines the first cluster of interventions. Our focus is on those most at risk of being left behind – those most vulnerable to conflict, to the effects of climate change and those living in extreme poverty. Over 60 years of peacekeeping has kept Ireland tangibly connected with the impact of conflicts happening all over the globe. The experience of conflict and the ongoing process of peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland has led to an investment in education and research around conflict prevention and the root causes of conflict. The historic legacy of Ireland's famine - the Great Hunger - and the mass emigration that followed are another aspect. Rooted in our own experiences of peace, conflict and disaster, a focus on protection resonates with our own story and Irish solidarity.

Through our interventions, we will build on the intersections between Ireland's peacekeeping and conflict resolution work, political engagement, development cooperation and humanitarian action. Ireland has a strong and committed tradition of principled humanitarian action through development cooperation. This is in line with the SDGs, especially SDG 2 zero hunger and SDG 16 peace, justice and strong institutions. Ireland's response to crises is underpinned by a strong commitment to international law, including human rights law and where applicable international humanitarian law and the provision of flexible and timely funding that is based on the principles of independence, neutrality, impartiality and humanity. Our humanitarian engagement will continue to be based on need and will prioritise forgotten crises. Ireland's approach to disaster prevention, and to the movement of people, are also areas for coordination that intersect with development cooperation. We will strengthen our interventions in three ways:

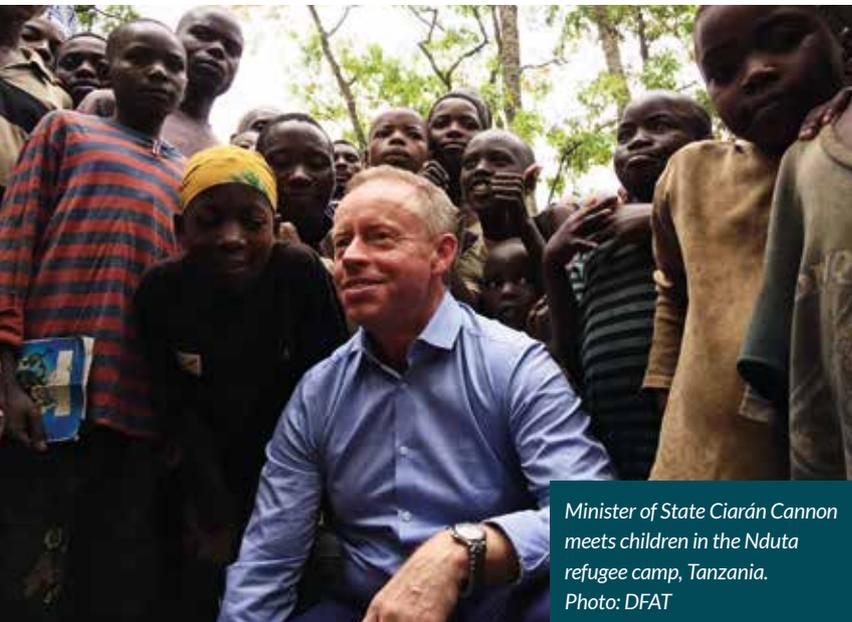
- » **By ensuring better coordination across Government, in our work on fragility, conflict and protracted crises.** Ireland's own experience in building and sustaining peace and promoting reconciliation has been recognised internationally, and will continue to inform our interventions where relevant and appropriate. We will consolidate and enhance existing collaboration through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Stability Fund, and we will strengthen our capacity for coordinated rapid response to sudden onset crises. We will use the processes for developing Ireland's next National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security, and for implementing the European Union's civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to enhance interaction.

More effective collaboration between departments on the international dimensions of human rights, mediation, disarmament, non-proliferation, peacekeeping, disaster prevention,



Qoloji internally displaced people site, Somali region, Ethiopia.
Photo: Johan Borgstam





Minister of State Ciarán Cannon meets children in the Nduta refugee camp, Tanzania. Photo: DFAT

and on gender-based violence, are all opportunities for deepening coherence and learning. We will also engage with external stakeholders.

We will collaborate with the 2015 White Paper on Defence proposal to develop a new Institute for Peace Support and Leadership Training. This initiative will contribute to the overall development of knowledge and experience in the areas of peace and conflict resolution, and involve a broad group of Irish stakeholders including Government, armed forces, Garda Síochána, civil society, researchers and activists.

- » **By developing regional approaches to deal with instability, conflict and emergencies with cross-border implications.** Regional analysis, cooperation and shared outcomes can facilitate more effective responses to conflict, to issues around the movement of people, to climate threats and to routine political, economic and social interactions. We will coordinate all of our resources – from across Government in Ireland, and our Embassy networks and relevant partners, including the African Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) where appropriate – to develop regional approaches in areas of existing engagement, including crises in the Horn of Africa.

The Middle East is another major focus of efforts to maintain and influence relations with existing regimes and regional interlocutors, in order to promote stability in the region, to provide effective humanitarian assistance, and to strengthen governance and effective institutions in anticipation of major reconstruction efforts.

- » **By consolidating our focus on providing food and basic services during emergencies.** Our humanitarian responses centre on getting food and cash to people to allow them to eat, along with basic shelter, sanitary and health services. We recognise the particular vulnerabilities faced by women, girls and boys in emergency settings, and are committed to advancing work on sexual and reproductive health systems in these settings. Education in emergencies will be another priority. Our focus will be on establishing and maintaining systems as the future basis for reconstruction and building effective institutions for peace and development. We will support and engage with ongoing innovation in meeting humanitarian need.

Crisis-affected people at the centre of humanitarian response

The first ever World Humanitarian Summit was held in Istanbul in May 2016, with the participation of over 9000 people from 173 Member States. It represented a key milestone in shaping global humanitarian responses. In preparation, Ireland held the only national summit with 230 participants. The core message arising from consultations was that crisis-affected people should be at the centre of all humanitarian responses. With a delegation led by President Higgins, Ireland represented this point strongly at the Summit in Istanbul, and ensured that this principle was embedded in the core commitments that were adopted including improving the links between humanitarian and development work; enhancing support to displaced and host communities; increasing the flexibility of humanitarian financing; and responding to gender-based violence in emergencies.



D.2 Food



Food and agriculture systems define the second cluster of interventions. The Irish experience of hunger continues to resonate and to spur us to act to address the immediate impact and structural drivers of hunger and undernutrition. The transformation of Irish agriculture, and the associated wealth of technological and market innovation and research, is a basis for Irish engagement with global food systems and markets. Ireland has also developed a unique partnership approach to extension, value addition and to food safety standards. We will explore the potential of harnessing this expertise and experience and identify synergies to add to our development cooperation. This will involve sharing lessons of change with developing countries where relevant and appropriate. Shared challenges in adapting to sustainable paths are another aspect. This approach will connect our work around nutrition, food and inclusive economic growth with past and ongoing Irish activities in these areas.

Combatting poverty and hunger is one of Ireland's flagship foreign policies, reflecting the historic focus of Ireland's development cooperation. Enshrined in SDG 1 no poverty and SDG 2 zero hunger, this focus remains at the heart of the international development agenda, while SDG 13 climate action demands a global response to combat climate change and its impacts. Sustainability is a connecting theme across the SDGs, especially SDG 1 no poverty, SDG 2 zero hunger, SDG 5 gender equality, SDG 8 decent work and economic growth, SDG 14 life below water, SDG 15 life on land and SDG 16 peace, justice and strong institutions.

We will take an evolving approach to food systems that builds on our strong track record in reaching the poorest, tackling hunger and fostering sustainable livelihoods. The SDG framework encompasses emerging climate-resilient and agro-ecological approaches to agriculture and food production. This expands the remit of agriculture to not only supply the required calories but also ensure local food and nutrition security, safeguard natural resources and ecosystem services, and adapt to and mitigate climate change. Our approach to food interventions will change in three ways:

- » **By refreshing our approach to hunger and undernutrition within sustainable food systems.** A systemic approach will consider the interactions between the biological, economic and social systems around food production, distribution and consumption. We will continue to champion attention on how to scale-up nutrition at country level to tackle under-nutrition, improving linkages to the management of acute malnutrition. Linkages to the emerging need to tackle food systems, to the role of nutrition in the humanitarian development nexus, to climate adaptation, to gender inequality and our engagement with the private sector will all receive additional attention and effort. In this integrated response, we will strengthen how we work with and through the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and other bodies including Teagasc and Irish universities. Identifying the replicable aspects of our own experience will continue to be a part of this.

In 2022 Ireland will commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Great Hunger. Through our participation in the National Famine Commemoration Committee, we will seek to foster research into, and awareness of, the Irish experience as a basis for Irish advocacy for the elimination of famine and hunger worldwide. Research could draw on the Irish research and development sectors, in collaboration with Irish and multinational agri-food companies.



Kennedy Masamba, Agriculture Research Scientist, at the Bvumbwe Research Station in Thyolo, Malawi. Photo: International Potato Centre

» **By deepening our focus on agricultural markets and investment in development, including links to the Irish private sector.** Knowledge transfer, linking farmers to markets and access to credit and investment are important to progress agriculture in development. We will build on good practice in knowledge transfer between Irish organisations and counterparts in developing countries. The Africa Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP) will be a key vehicle for developing partnerships between the Irish Agri-Food Sector and African companies to support sustainable, pro-poor growth of the local food industry, create markets for local produce and support links between Ireland and Africa. We will expand the AADP by increasing the number of eligible countries, by allowing re-entry for previous Irish participants and by exploring the possibility of investment in female entrepreneurship and climate innovation windows.

There is potential for collaboration with Enterprise Ireland and the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC). Through our multilateral partners, we will continue to invest in the production of relevant research on agriculture nutrition and climate. We will explore new partnerships with multilateral and regional Development Banks, and through the European Union instruments, to deepen our learning and engagement with innovative and blended finance for agriculture and job-creation.

» **By supporting inclusive economic growth around agriculture, especially for women and young people.** Working globally and nationally our priority will be to help create inclusive enabling environments in which businesses can thrive, and in which all of society can share in the benefits of economic growth in a sustainable way. Across all our interventions, promoting sustainable economic growth which generates the maximum number of decent jobs for everyone will be a priority. We will identify potential private sector partners and strive to make business and markets work better for the poor.

The new funding initiative for Women's Economic Empowerment will give an explicit priority to agriculture. We will explore the potential to learn from and collaborate with Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine's initiative for Accelerating the Creation of Rural Nascent Start-ups (ACORNS) to promote female entrepreneurship, and other initiatives through multilateral partners. The funding initiative for Oceans has the potential to catalyse activity and employment – especially for women – around fisheries, aquaculture and sustainable coastal management. Another aspect will be investing in skills and people, so that business and employment opportunities can benefit those at risk of being left furthest behind, especially women and young people.

Ireland's response to global hunger

Driven by our 2008 hunger task force report, Ireland has played a lead role in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement from its inception in 2010. Ireland co-facilitates the global donor network and has helped shape the monitoring and evaluation framework. Ireland continues to contribute to international political action on nutrition, including supporting the United Nations Resolution for a Decade of Action on Malnutrition 2016-2025. Irish representatives have played critical roles on the SUN Lead Group, with Mary Robinson and Tom Arnold appointed by the United Nations' Secretary General. Nutrition is now increasingly embedded in country plans with coordinated actions across health, agriculture, education, social protection, and women's empowerment. Ireland is supporting such plans in countries including Malawi and Ethiopia, contributing to sustained decreases in the prevalence of stunting among children under the age of five.



D.3 People

People are at the heart of the third cluster of interventions. People are what Irish development cooperation is all about. Tangible, first-hand connections with people in faraway places have long been a feature of Irish interest, generosity and solidarity. The long tradition of Irish involvement in social sector development, especially education and health, will continue to be central to our development cooperation. Identifying and building on opportunities for institutional exchange and learning around health systems, education and civil service reform will help to create partnerships for the future. Bringing these stories home and refreshing connections between people is central to this.

Ireland's own economic transformation is linked to access to quality education, while much of Ireland's reputation in Africa comes from the work of Irish educators. Ireland has much to share in developing and improving health systems. Irish doctors and nurses have worked across Africa for many years. These foundations, enhanced by Ireland's effective response to the HIV pandemic and the Ebola crisis, have contributed to our good reputation.

We will strengthen our interventions in health, education and social protection to reach the furthest behind first. Aligning our work with SDGs 1 no poverty, SDG 3 good health and well-being, SDG 4 quality education and SDG 5 gender equality demonstrates continuity with Ireland's strong focus on poverty reduction, health and education, especially for women and girls. SDG 10 reduced inequalities is another focus. We will build effective institutions for inclusive outcomes, towards universal access to health, education and social protection. We will be guided by the need to address the gaps in education, health and nutrition, and overcoming social exclusion and discrimination. We will focus on the delivery of social services to the most vulnerable, with particular focus on improved outcomes for women and girls, minorities and the inclusion of people living with disabilities.

We will strengthen our interventions in these areas in three main ways:

- » **By increasing our support for education, especially for girls and in emergencies.** Ireland supports quality education as a human right for all children. We recognise that girls more often than boys are denied education and that including girls brings positive social and economic benefits to the girls themselves and to wider society. We will work to expand access to quality education for girls through strengthening education systems in remote and poorly served areas, supporting community school initiatives, targeted scholarships and social protection measures. Continuity of education for children and young people affected by conflict and other crises will be another focus.

Education is also critical for developing skills and laying the foundation for future climate action. We will invest in skills development and employment programmes for disadvantaged young people. This will be achieved in part through the new funding initiatives on Women's Economic Empowerment and Oceans, along with complementary interventions in food and nutrition. We will also grow the cohort of skilled post-graduates in developing countries through a revitalised Fellowship Scheme.



*Tánaiste Simon Coveney T.D. meeting with a school parliament at UNRWA Palestine Refugee camp in Jalazone, West Bank.
Photo: C. Donoghue*



Tánaiste Simon Coveney T.D. visiting a Concern Worldwide funded project for malnourished children in a slum area of Nairobi, Kenya.
Photo: Brian Inganga

- » **By supporting global ambitions towards universal health coverage and ending the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030.** Our work on global health and on ending HIV and AIDS is embedded in a deep understanding of the relationship between poverty and poor health. We will continue to work closely with global partners in support of the Universal Health Coverage movement. The escalating burden of non-communicable diseases, including mental illness, is a challenge to Universal Health Coverage. We recognise the decisive role of nutrition in achieving health goals and we will develop our integrated approach to health and nutrition.

We will maintain our focus on health system development. Drawing on our own expertise and international experience, in collaboration with the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive and Irish research partners, we will work to address the barriers to access and quality of health services, and support people-centred and community-based responses. Future proofing health systems to anticipate the impact of climate change will also be a focus.

A new initiative on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) will be an important means of revitalising and reorganising our approach and priorities. Ireland also has a story to tell.

The legal and political process, the role of grassroots campaigns and civil society, the history of societal change and the ongoing issues around the operation of the health system towards the realisation of rights and women's health will inform our foreign and development policy on these issues.

- » **By continuing our work on strengthening social protection systems, especially in fragile contexts,** and on promoting supportive policies and programmes and links to inclusive economic growth. For SDG 1 no poverty, social protection is recognised as an important policy instrument to reach the furthest behind, to reduce extreme poverty and to respond to shocks and emergencies.

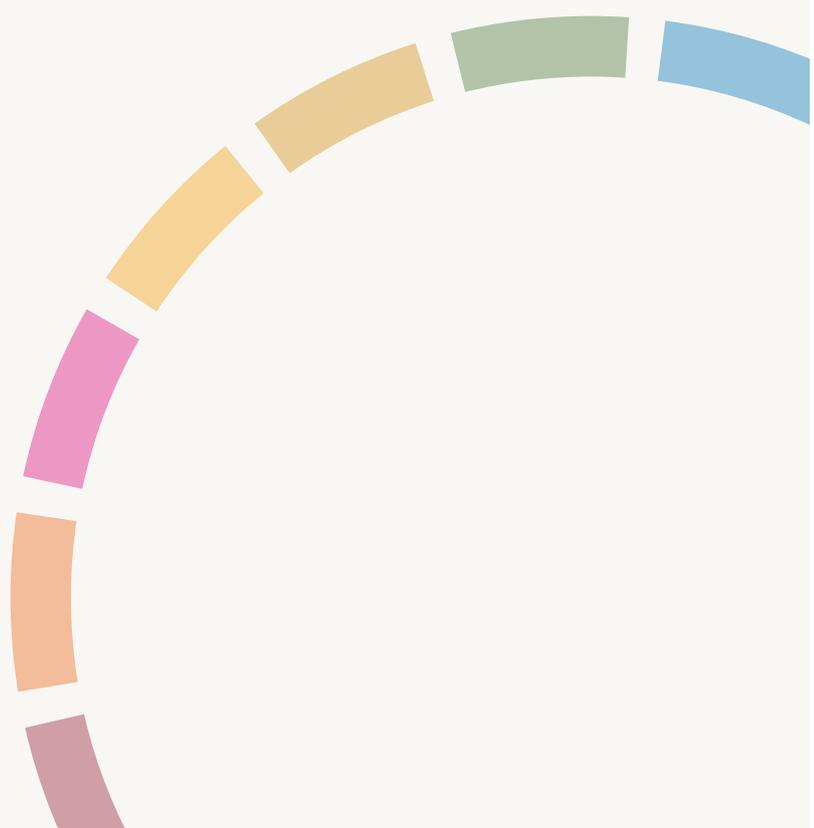
Social protection is a key tool in enhancing the social status and rights of the marginalised, promoting accountability and strengthening the citizen-government bond. Ireland's contribution to providing decent work and implementing national social protection systems in developing countries is informed by our national experience in providing social protection measures for over two million citizens.

Our social protection strategy for developing countries^{xxvi}, launched in 2017, has guided our work and our international advocacy at the

European Union and United Nations, serving as a template and model for principled, practical action towards effective institutions and inclusive outcomes. We will follow through and learn from the evidence generated by our research partners on the links between social protection and improved outcomes in nutrition, gender, education and health.

Ireland's response to the Ebola crisis

Ireland showed critical leadership in West Africa in response to the deadly outbreak of Ebola in 2014, which claimed over 11,000 lives and left 17,000 survivors. Ireland was one of only three European Union Member States then present in Sierra Leone. Ireland worked alongside the Ministry of Health, the United Kingdom, World Health Organisation and others to improve coordination efforts of the response, mobilise increased resources, and support critical engagement with local communities to limit the spread of the virus. In neighbouring Liberia, Ireland mobilised additional funding and resources to strengthen infection prevention and control in health facilities to improve the health and safety of health workers who risked their lives dealing with infected patients. In the aftermath, Ireland disseminated learning from the outbreaks both nationally and internationally to promote increased investment in health system strengthening and to bolster preparedness in the event of any further outbreak.





Doing things differently



A changing context and responding to the SDGs demand that we reposition our development cooperation. We are committed to doing things differently. We will scale up our capacity as we increase resources, acquiring new skills and establishing new partnerships. We will strengthen coordination across all our partnerships and amplify our global influence. We will shift how we research, learn and engage with the public. Within this refreshed approach, we will proudly maintain our defining features: quality, untied, focused and coherent development cooperation.

E.1 Capacity

We will consolidate Ireland's reputation for quality and professionalism in development and foreign policy. As our development assistance grows, our first priority is to invest in our capacity. We will adopt a phased approach to increasing development cooperation, taking into consideration the capacity required across Government to manage and deliver a quality aid programme. Around seventy percent of Irish development assistance is managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with the balance managed by other Government Departments. Maintaining the standards for which we are known will be a priority. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer review will remain a critical measure of our quality over time. Our Annual Reports will provide a review of whole of Government contributions to international development cooperation.

We will reinforce our good practice and accountability in the allocation of resources through different channels of delivery and aim to ensure predictability where possible. Strengthening our capacity to engage within the European Union will be a priority as our allocations to the European development cooperation instruments grow. Strengthening our engagement through the United Nations and other multilateral partnerships will be another priority, which will be reflected in a new multilateral strategy. We will consolidate our capacity to manage bilateral partnerships including at country level, and with Irish NGOs, and update our approach to safeguarding in line with international best practice.

We will develop a comprehensive approach to facilitating institutional exchange, across agencies and institutions in Ireland. In all of these partnerships and channels of delivery, value for money and illustrating the effective use of public funds will be central. We will consolidate our focus on delivering results, demonstrating impact and reinforcing oversight and accountability. For this we will deepen our relationships with Oireachtas members within and beyond formal oversight mechanisms.

We will reorient and strengthen our capacity to reach the furthest behind first, investing in new skills and expertise to better target our resources and foster effective institutions. We will explore new and innovative partnerships and financial approaches through bilateral and multilateral channels. We recognise the need for more innovative partnerships to diversify our engagement. We propose to develop an approach to harness the potential contribution of business to low carbon sustainable development, such as through capital transfer, employment generation, knowledge transfer and support for rules-based systems. We will strengthen how we learn from existing initiatives and private sector partnerships, and facilitate new ways for business to engage in development to leverage investment opportunities and to foster technological innovation for development. This will enrich our knowledge and develop our capacity for innovation in the context of achieving the SDGs.



Deputy Secretary General of the UN Amina Mohamed meets students from Deansrath Community College in Dublin who are studying development education Photo: Phil Behan

E.2 Coordination

We will strengthen coordination to facilitate a more integrated and coherent approach to evolving global issues, the SDGs and humanitarian crises.

Development cooperation is a whole of Government policy, and also interacts with other national policy processes. Deeper coordination and coherence across Government is consistent with the principles of whole of Government action set out in the civil service renewal plan, *Our Public Service 2020*^{xxvii}.

Coordination will inform how best to maximise our influence and ensure policy coherence at the European Union, particularly in the policy and budget debates related to development cooperation.

We will deepen existing linkages and foster new relationships across Government in our engagement with multilateral agencies and in the delivery of development cooperation. Robust coordination will allow the distillation of policy messaging, which will inform Ireland's influence at high level political meetings, including at the United Nations, OECD, international financial institutions and with other partners.

We will develop strategies for deepening coordination across Government to deliver on our policy priorities: gender equality, reducing humanitarian need, climate action and strengthening governance. The strategies will identify ways to increase our expertise and technical capacity for reaching the furthest behind, for designing appropriate research agendas and interventions, and for maximising our influence and public engagement. A comprehensive approach to harnessing expertise across Government and identifying the potential for policy and institutional exchange will be part of this.

Refreshing our learning culture and fostering communities of practice will provide the basis for the continued development of skills, innovation and risk management. It will also inform how we communicate our work. Going beyond this, we will use our research to maximise our influence and better engage the public, to tell the story of Irish development cooperation, and to encourage involvement and build global citizenship in Ireland.

We will increase our engagement with Irish people and organisations involved in all aspects of our development cooperation. There are a wealth of networks that we will nurture and draw from to develop economic, educational and cultural exchange. Irish Embassies in developing countries work closely with all partners, including with Irish businesses, supporting them to increase investment and trade, create jobs and contribute to development and innovation. Graduates of the Fellowship Scheme are an important network for engaging with businesses and governments, while the African and other diasporas in Ireland provide more potential links. In developing countries, there are networks of Irish development workers and migrants, including Irish investors and business owners. Irish volunteers in developing countries, and those who have returned to Ireland, are another important group.

We will bolster our engagement with the cohort of Irish people working across international development. With a view to developing this 'talent pipeline' we will explore the potential of a new initiative to promote the assignment of Irish graduates and experts to international development positions. Our aim will be to bolster the cadre of Irish development expertise and develop strong Irish networks across the development sector globally.



Kenyan World 800 metre record holder, David Rudisha, with Brother Colm O'Connell, giving Tánaiste Simon Coveney running advice.
Photo: Brian Inganga

E.3 Policy influence

We will scale up our presence, influence and impact through all of our foreign policy and development cooperation engagement. In the European Union we will work with Member States to facilitate more effective political dialogue between Europe and Africa, recognising our shared neighbourhood interests. We will build on existing structures and the opportunities provided by the new agreement being negotiated between the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific states. The development policy agenda will also be affected by the changing relationship of the United Kingdom with the European Union. We will continuously reappraise how best to engage, and enhance our influence. As the largest remaining English-speaking Member State there will also be opportunities for Ireland to assume a stronger voice representing the needs of English-speaking countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific. In addition, new opportunities will open up to further our engagement in the near neighbourhood and the Middle East.

We will intensify our engagement at global and country level on development cooperation within the European Union. The new multi-annual financing framework will see an evolution in the European Union's development cooperation instruments. Within the new framework we will champion a focus on poverty reduction, fragile states and the furthest behind. At country level, we will strengthen coordination with the European Commission, the European External Action Service and Member States, on analysis, policy engagement and interventions, including joint programming where relevant.

We will also work closely with the European Union on peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security, to support wider development efforts. This will include the implementation of the new civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), part of the European Union's Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises^{xviii}. We will continue to support the European Union crisis management and response missions and operations.

We will strengthen our engagement across United Nations agencies globally and in developing countries. Acknowledging Ireland's relative size, our investment and engagement will be guided by the publication of a new multilateral strategy. We will continue to support the ongoing efforts for reform of the United Nations across three components: the peace and security architecture, management and administration, and the development system. Building on Ireland's solid reputation as an honest broker at the United Nations, we will consolidate our good relationship with the Least Developed Countries and SIDS.

We will continue to work to strengthen and enhance peacekeeping and peace support. Ireland is seeking election to the United Nations Security Council, for the period 2021-2022. If successful, this will place Ireland at the heart of United Nations decision-making on matters of vital importance, including international peace and security, supporting wider development efforts. As the United Kingdom prepares to depart the European Union, we will refresh and reposition our alliances in the Western European and Others Group and with developing countries to reflect the new reality.



An Taoiseach speaking to journalists announcing a new partnership with Ethiopia on cultural heritage tourism and rural job creation.
Photo: Abate Damte



Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe T.D. meets Kristalina Georgieva, CEO of the World Bank in Washington, D.C. Photo: DFAT

We will maximise our influence across our multilateral partnerships, within and beyond the United Nations. We will work to ensure that our partnerships with multilateral financial institutions are consistent with our policy priorities. Through core funding and additional contributions to specific instruments and funds, we will explore opportunities to channel further resources towards fragile states and those furthest behind, and collaborate on regional approaches. We will explore how best to harness learning from the research and evaluation knowledge of these institutions.

We will explore opportunities for Irish business and investment in projects across developing countries when appropriate. Key partners will include the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (also an agency of the United Nations), the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and, from 2019, the African Development Bank. With the Department of Finance, we will explore a new partnership with the Caribbean Development Bank, recognising it as a critical actor for reconstruction and disaster prevention in SIDS in that region.

Ireland will continue to be an active member of the OECD DAC. The DAC remains an important space for policy engagement, facilitating key debates around the definitions of development assistance; in engaging new donors and promoting high standards through peer review; and in researching financial flows relevant for development, including blended and innovative finance.

Ireland's development cooperation will be central to a new Africa strategy, encompassing our political, economic, cultural and development relations.

Our relationships with countries in Africa are not defined solely by development cooperation, but reflect a mature ambition for enhanced political, economic and cultural relations. Successful African economic development and growth present new opportunities for Ireland in the future, while development challenges threaten stability in both Africa and Europe.

We will consolidate our relations in East and Southern Africa, and increase our engagement in West Africa. Building on our membership of the African Development Bank, we will look to enhance Ireland's engagement with Francophone and North-West Africa. We will also intensify our efforts to strengthen regional organisations and integration on the African continent, through deeper engagement within the European Union and through strengthened bilateral relations. Through our development cooperation we will balance and reflect the pressing urgency of current needs with the importance of investing for the long term.

We will engage bilaterally to influence the priorities, direction, and approach of development policies.

We will use flexible, tailored approaches with governments and other partners to foster effective institutions. The way we implement our development cooperation, with a focus on partnership, capacity building and building effective institutions, is itself a source of influence. We will use institutional exchanges with Irish agencies and organisations to open dialogue, learning and to create new partnerships.

We recognise the important voices of our civil society partners in Ireland and developing countries. Working close to the ground, civil society organisations are well placed to facilitate and amplify the voices of those furthest behind, and empower direct engagement with policy debates. In Ireland, and on the global stage, we will continue to work with civil society partners to raise awareness and mobilise action to respond to the needs of the furthest behind and to promote global citizenship. We will foster new partnerships with the private sector, including for innovative finance and technology. This is essential for mobilising greater engagement by non-traditional actors in development, and to inform our influence in strategic innovation for the future.



Children at the harvest of orange fleshed sweet potatoes, Lichinga, Niassa Province, northern Mozambique. Photo: Benjamin Rakotoarisoa

E.4 Research and learning

We will improve how we research and learn about development. This encompasses internal strengthening of our evaluation, learning and communication systems, and working with Irish and international research partners to create knowledge for development. Creating more dedicated spaces for learning across our priorities and interventions is central to this. A clear research agenda will allow us to learn better from our experiences to date and to facilitate innovation. Strong research outputs will enable learning, in order to strengthen our internal capacity and coherence and inform our public engagement and advocacy at a global level. Situating research and evidence centrally within our planning and reporting will create clearer links between knowledge generation and our programming.

We will seek to collaborate with public and private organisations in Ireland, where appropriate, in the development and roll out of our research agenda and in the communication of findings and learning, including as part of the development education strategy. We will explore links with ongoing technological innovation and with research and learning on adaptive and sustainable approaches to natural resource management and institutional reform.

We will organise our research agenda around our policy priorities: gender equality; reducing humanitarian need; climate action; and strengthening governance. The overarching aim will be to strengthen capacity for analysis and evaluation to inform our approach to the furthest behind first, and to innovative finance and partnerships, adaptive programming and integrated approaches. We will strengthen the research components of all our partnerships. We will review our existing research partnerships to ensure alignment and coherence with the evolving agenda.

Within our interventions, research will be central to new funding initiatives on women's economic empowerment and on oceans. Research and learning is also part of our coordination across Government. We will explore potential collaboration with the Department of Defence on the feasibility study for an Irish Peace Institute and with the National Famine Commemoration Committee on research focused on ending hunger and famine globally.

We are committed to enhancing the contribution of research to the SDGs. We will deepen our relationships with higher education institutions in Ireland on research and learning. We will develop new partnerships with Irish research institutions, including the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland, to produce high quality, policy-relevant and internationally influential research. We will promote research consortia, led by Irish institutions with international partners, including in developing countries, to develop strong research portfolios and profiles.

We will also encourage a challenge-based approach to research, with a focus on outcomes for those furthest behind. A primary objective is to strengthen transnational and collaborative research capacity, and strengthen the capacity of research institutions and networks in developing countries. In turn, we aim to facilitate better opportunities to access research funding from other sources internationally, including the European Union's research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 and its successor, Horizon Europe 2021-28.



84 Irish fellowship students attending an induction day organised by the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS). Photo: Brian Hearne / ICOS

E.5 Public engagement and global citizenship

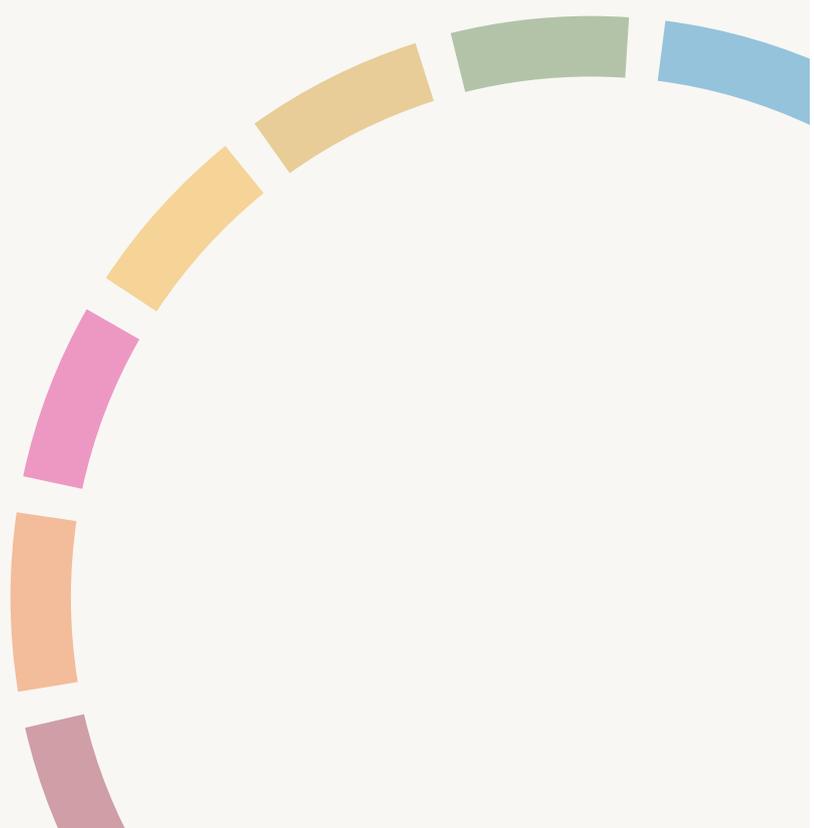
We will communicate our development cooperation more effectively. We will build on existing partnerships, and Irish research, to strengthen public engagement and foster global citizenship. The level of support among Irish people for our development cooperation gives us a strong foundation. The SDGs, and the whole of Government action to respond to them, are the overarching framework for all of our public engagement work. The focus will be to refresh our narrative and our reach in line with the changing context and our policy priorities. Our aims are to mobilise support for Ireland's development cooperation; to raise awareness of sustainable development issues; and to support development education.

We will dedicate more resources for achieving the objectives set out in our development education strategy. Development education is action-focused engagement that empowers people to understand the root causes of poverty and global inequalities. Development education and global citizenship will be an important element in our evolving approach to reaching the furthest behind first and will underpin our broader public engagement. We will intensify collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills and build on the transformation of curricula, including the new Leaving Certificate Politics and Society subject. We will also reach out to promote development education partnerships beyond the formal education sector to young people and the wider community.

We are determined to reach new audiences and will explore innovative approaches to broadening our public engagement. We will work to draw attention to development challenges and to our policy priorities. We will explore how to expand our current initiatives in sponsoring awards and media coverage, and to develop more regional activities. Recognising the contribution of Irish volunteers to development cooperation, we will review and refresh our approach to the Volunteering Initiative. Stronger engagement with the Oireachtas will be another element.

Irish society is changing also, with diverse new communities living in Ireland and changing social and cultural values based on equality and human rights, as seen in recent progressive legislation and referendums. We will foster stronger links with the Irish diaspora and the growing number of new Irish with heritage and experience of developing countries for mobilising public awareness, support and engagement with development issues and the SDGs.

We will promote Irish development cooperation policies and interventions through public engagement activities. We will also support civil society partners working in this space. Ireland has a vibrant NGO, missionary and development education sector, which will continue to play a critical role in creating public awareness and ownership of the Irish development programme. We will strengthen our collaboration with Irish civil society partners on public engagement, to support our social media communications, our schools awareness programmes and our approach to public outreach. As part of this, we will identify a new location for our centre for public engagement and global citizenship, building on our strong track record of outreach to date. Our approach to communications and public outreach will respond to our evolving focus on reaching the furthest behind first. A commitment to fostering global citizenship will be central to this work.

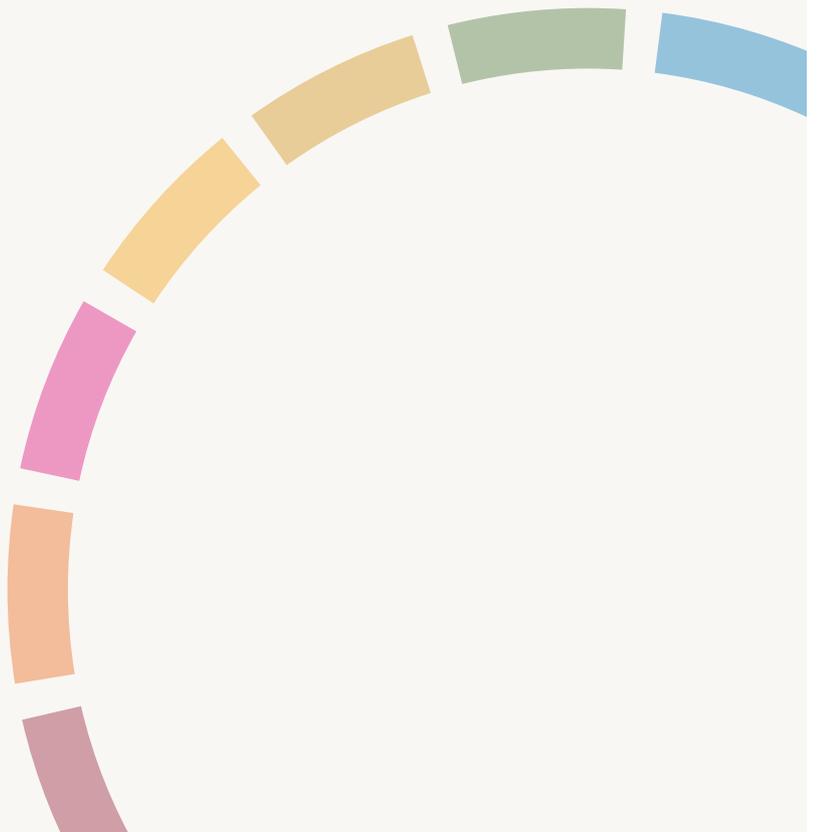


Glossary

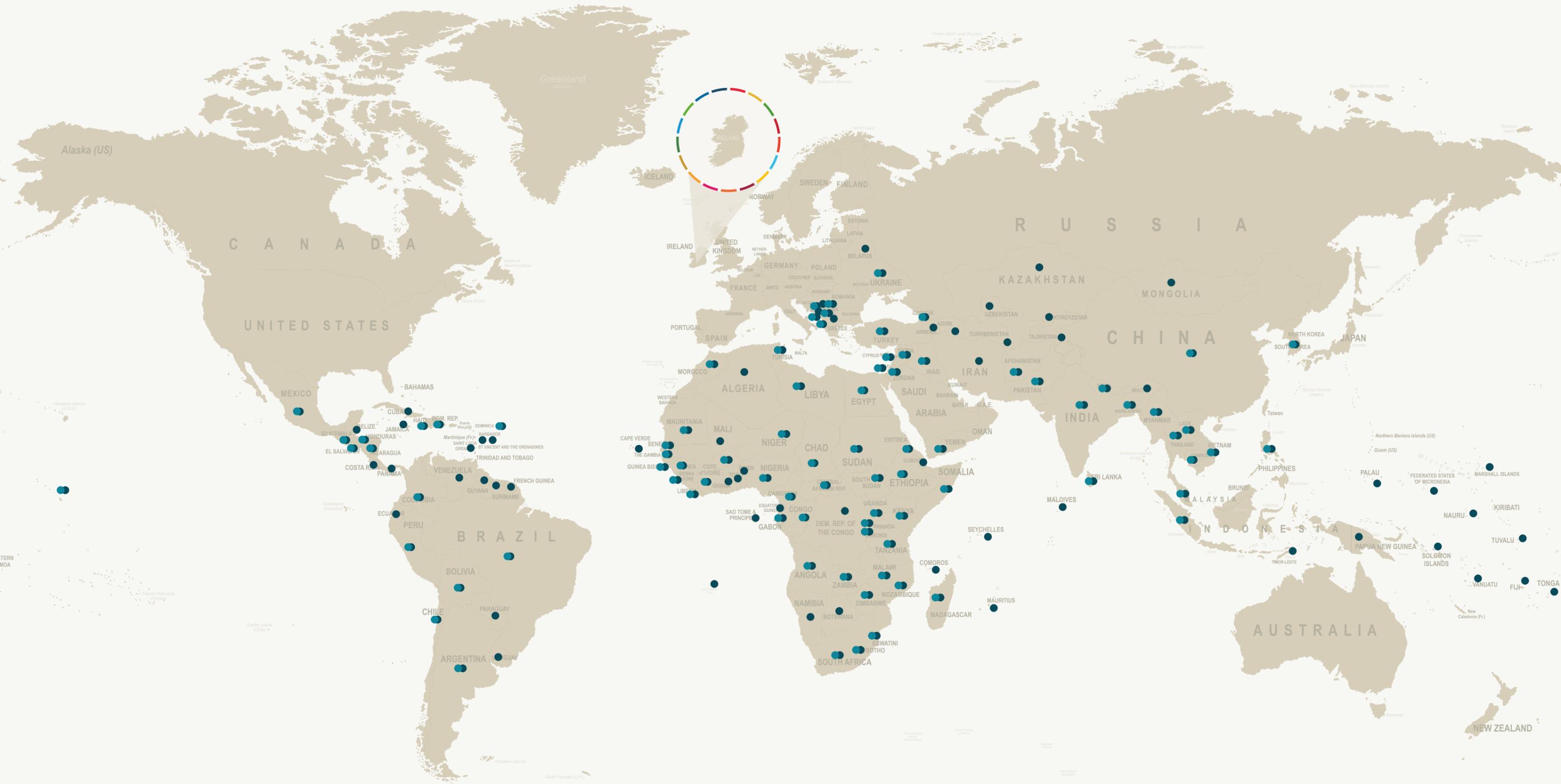
ACORNs	<i>Accelerating the Creation of Rural Nascent Start-ups</i>
CSDP	<i>Common Security and Defence Policy</i>
DAC	<i>Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)</i>
GNI	<i>Gross National Income</i>
HIV/AIDS	<i>Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection /Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</i>
HSE	<i>Health Service Executive</i>
IBEC	<i>Irish Business and Employers Confederation</i>
LGBTI+	<i>Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex</i>
NGO	<i>Non Governmental Organisation</i>
ODA	<i>Official Development Assistance</i>
OECD	<i>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</i>
OSCE	<i>Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe</i>
SDGs	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
SIDS	<i>Small Island Developing States</i>
SRHR	<i>Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</i>
UNFCCC	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
UNSCR	<i>United Nations Security Council Resolution</i>

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Ireland's Official Development Assistance



- Ireland Bilateral
- Multilateral



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

