



The Irish Association of
Non-Governmental Development
Organisations

Submission to the
Universal Periodic Review Ireland
for the 25th Session of the UPR Working Group 2016

September 2015

Contributed by Dóchas,
The Association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations
1-2 Baggot Court, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2
Tel: +3531 405 3801
www.dochas.ie

Working for a world where poverty and inequality are unacceptable, And where every person has
the right to live free from fear, Free from want, and able to fulfil his or her potential.

1. Introduction:

- The following is the submission by Dóchas, the Association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations, for the 25th Session of the UPR Working Group 2016
- Dóchas membership is comprised of 66 overseas development and global justice organisations. A list of Dóchas members can be found at <http://www.dochas.ie/membership/our-members/>
- The members of Dóchas are working together to bring about a world where poverty and inequality are unacceptable, and where every person has the right to live free from fear, from want and able to fulfil their potential. Dóchas provides a forum for consultation and cooperation ,helping members speak with a single voice on development issues
- Human rights obligations have traditionally been understood through national jurisdiction and territory, but there is increasing international recognition of extra-territorial obligations towards progressively achieving the full realisation of human rights. In this regard, Dóchas welcomed the recommendation that Ireland received in the 2011 Universal Periodic Review which stated:
 - Ireland must continue to allocate financial assistance for developing countries in the framework of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and meet the commitment made in this regard at the international level (Algeria);
- While the scope of states’ human rights obligations in international assistance and cooperation is broad, we have identified two areas which we feel merit particular scrutiny under the UPR
 - Ireland’s Official Development Assistance commitments
 - Policy Coherence for Development and human rights

2. Ireland’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments

2011 recommendation:

Recommendation 106.62. Continue to allocate financial assistance for developing countries in the framework of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and meet the commitment made in this regard at the international level (Algeria);

Update

- Ireland has committed to reaching the UN target of spending 0.7% of national income by 2015. In the period 2000-2008, Ireland made good progress towards achieving the 0.7% ODA/GNI target, committed to at a UN summit in 2000. However, spending peaked in 2008 at 0.59% of GNP and has been falling since, as the aid budget has been cut six consecutive times. In Budget 2015 despite the economic recovery, the Government failed to make progress towards the 0.7% target.

- Towards Recovery – Programme for a National Government 2011-2016, states we are “committed to the 0.7% of GNP target for Overseas Development Aid. We will seek to achieve this by 2015.”¹
- In March 2014 in the National Interim Report for the Universal Periodic Review Ireland the government reiterated its commitments and stated its intention to maintain aid expenditure at current levels, while moving towards the 0.7% target when the economy improves.²
- However, in 2014, the Government indicated that the deadline would not be achieved, despite the target and the deadline being outlined in the Programme for Government.

Recommendations:

- The Government should make an explicit commitment to a steady and continuous increase in Ireland’s budget for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to reach the UN target of 0.7% ODA/GNI by 2020. This includes the publication of a timetable with interim targets, in euro and percentage terms, for the years 2016-2020;

3. Policy Coherence for Development and human rights

2011 recommendation:

no recommendation made

Update

- Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is defined by the OECD as “working to ensure that the objectives and results of a government’s development policies are not undermined by other policies of that same government which impact on developing countries, and that these other policies support development objectives where feasible.” Human rights are integral to development, and any process which looks at protecting people from threats to their well-being and empowering people to achieve the goods of development.
- Since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, Policy Coherence for Development has become a legal obligation of all EU member states. Article 208 states that all EU policies must take into consideration development objectives: at best, this means that all EU policies must be in support of developing countries’ development needs, or at least not contradict the aim of poverty reduction and eradication. It is also outlined in Ireland’s policy for international development.³
- The 2015 OECD DAC peer review of Ireland’s Overseas Development programme identified a number of weaknesses in Ireland’s current approach to PCD and recommends the development of a clear cross-government plan of action on a few policy issues of strategic priority which it can influence.⁴

¹ Refer to

www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_2011/Programme_for_Government_2011

² http://www.rightsnow.ie/assets/55/65D55291-1129-4527-B72ADF0F438B2BEA_document/UPR-National_Interim_Report-Ireland.pdf

³ <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/20newsandpublications/publicationpdfsenglish/one-world-one-future-irelands-new-policy.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Ireland%202014%20full%20report.pdf>

- Ireland’s trade relations, particularly within the developing world, highlight a specific policy gap and a need for greater policy coherence. Since 2011, the Department of Foreign Affairs has taken on responsibility for trade promotion and coordination, setting up a Trade and Promotion Division, liaising across Government. The Africa Strategy⁵ based on business principles is the core policy governing the roll out of this trade promotion strategy in Africa. It is very unclear, however, how this strategy links with the human rights and poverty reduction principles governing Ireland’s development cooperation and broader foreign policy objectives. There are no adequate mechanisms in place to address any gaps or conflicts of interest.

Dóchas recommendations:

- Ireland should proactively analyse how the State’s foreign policy and external relations, including formal policies, negotiating positions and practical actions (in areas from trade, finance and taxation to energy and defence) fit within human rights obligations, norms and standards, as well as complementing overseas development goals, and take corrective or mitigating action as required. This includes developing a clear cross-government plan of action.
- Put in place mechanisms to ensure Irish companies and individuals (and the State supporting them) are adhering to international law and human rights conventions, norms and standards, and best practice international standards for business.

⁵ Ireland and Africa Our Partnership with a Changing Continent (DFAT, 2011)