



**The following is the submission by the Irish Missionary Union (IMU), to the 2014 Review of Irish Foreign Policy being conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.**

## **Introduction**

**The Irish Missionary Union (IMU)** is the representative body of Irish missionaries. We have 85 member organisations comprised of sisters, priests, brothers, and three of our organisations are lay run, engaged in sending lay volunteers overseas and in supporting the work of missionaries.

Currently, there are 1,700 Irish missionaries working overseas. In addition to this, there are about 3,000 local or indigenous missionaries who are members of Irish-led congregations. This makes for over 4,700 'field workers' with a vast array of skills and experiences.

Irish missionaries have been engaged in international development for several decades, preceding Ireland's current official development assistance programme. They were instrumental in establishing a strong ethical framework around Irish overseas policies which continues to be evident in Foreign Affairs today. They are a significant and important channel for the distribution of Irish development funding and a vehicle for representing Ireland at several official and non-official diplomatic levels throughout the world. Irish Missionaries remain available as a channel that can deliver good development practice and value for money for the Ireland and for its taxpayers.

***We welcome the consultation exercise as an affirmation that the interests, policies and instruments pursued in this consultation should flow from our values as a nation and as a people.***

## Promoting Irelands Values and Interests

Ireland's reputation as a small sovereign state is impressive. However it has limited resources and its effectiveness must depend upon its ability to form alliances which progress its national values and interests at several levels. With the emergence of new global powers, many of them potential trading partners, such political dynamics require clear and solid ethical values based policies. Ireland should not trade its ethical values for short term, albeit economic benefits.

Our strategic view of global issues such as climate change, trade and migration, as well as shifting international relations in an increasingly multi-polar world require urgent coherent policy from the Irish government. As a small nation trading on the edge of Europe, Ireland's self-interests are interlinked with the global common good. However it is still perceived as a strong non-aligned nation, albeit within the European Union (EU). The EU was founded on Christian democratic principles and such principles continue to inform the thinking behind Irish mission development activities. Missionaries work towards a world of justice and peace where the rights of individuals are respected, and their dignity is ensured. These Christian values underpin all our development interventions amongst the poor and the marginalised. We believe that Ireland's programmes must continue to facilitate people being helped to have control over their own lives, and enable civil society groups to grow and to prosper.

- *Ireland should sign up to the national implementation plan on UN guiding principles for business and human rights which is currently in process of being implemented;*
- *Sign and ratify the core human rights Conventions to which the state is not a party, and expedite the ratification of conventions to which it is a signatory.*
- *Promote adherence to Ireland's international human rights standards and obligations across all Government Departments' strategies and programmes;*
- *Systematically applying the core human rights principles of accountability, empowerment, participation and non-discrimination in all policy activities;*

*"A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being."*

*(Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013)*

## The European Union - Internal and External policy

Ireland's membership of the European Union significantly influences our national identity and since our entry in 1973 it has been the key driver of our international policy, both in foreign and domestic terms. Since the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union is itself a significant global player in its own right. Within that framework Ireland needs to assert its own values and traditions of equality, participation and accountability. A large part of Ireland's reputation to date was based on a non aggression military policy, which was itself a product of our traditional neutrality. There is now a public perception that the values of our traditional neutrality are slowly being eroded within Ireland's current Foreign policy and that proactive neutrality has been effectively neutralised within the NATO driven agendas of many of our partners within the EU. In 2012 the global military budget was €1,700 billion. Since militarisation is a major obstacle to development in developing countries and is a significant factor to creating and maintaining poverty in our world, Ireland needs to be proactive in combating and assisting this industry. Clearer and more ethical policy coherence is needed to prevent Irish foreign policy drift in that regard.

One of the strengths of Irish foreign policy is in, what has been described as thematic, or niche policy sectors. Traditionally these are ***overseas development, human rights, peace building*** and ***dis-armament***. This legacy continues to make a valuable contribution to global peace, and with 28 countries speaking as one, Europe's voice is stronger in the world and Ireland's traditional non aligned status within Europe gives it opportunities to articulate a more distinct and human rights based approach with authority at global levels.

- *Ireland should consolidate, deepen and articulate its advocacy roles in the areas of ethical development, peace-building and its UN based neutrality strategies.*
- *Ireland should retain its strong voice in the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), consistent with its foreign policy traditions and interests.*
- *Ireland should strengthen its HR resources in the European External Action Service (EEAS) towards improving the effectiveness of our representation at EU fora.*

*"To love God and neighbour is not something abstract, but profoundly concrete: it means seeing in every person and face of the Lord to be served, to serve him concretely. And you are, dear brothers and sisters, in the face of Jesus." (Pope Francis, Address during Visit at the Homeless Shelter "Dona Di Maria," 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013)*

## Ireland, the UN and Building Bilateral Relationships

The primacy of the United Nations (UN) as the framework for Ireland's expression of its diplomatic values as a sovereign nation should be grounded in building and expanding its diplomatic representation abroad. There is a need for a re-visioning of the roles of our embassies and diplomatic missions which could utilise our global influence through our diasporas. In particular the Irish Missionary Union, through its worldwide network of personnel at missionary and international development levels, has been in the past, and remains available in the future, to act as a conduit for supporting Ireland's important ethical advocacy role on behalf of the poor, the marginalised and the hungry.

Ireland, through its missionaries and its diplomatic corp, has a long tradition of support for practical multilateralism, based on the UN; the promotion of human rights, advocacy for disarmament and arms control; the fight against hunger and poverty and our support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); our contribution to UN-mandated peace support operations and commitment to global conflict resolution efforts.

- *The IMU supports the proposal for a virtual network of Irish foreign and security policy experts. Irish scholars and professional experts in a variety of fields working overseas in universities, think tanks, research institutes, multilateral agencies and through its Missionaries and NGOs. Such a resource needs effective management and formalised support structures.*

*"The times talk to us of so much poverty in the world and this is a scandal. Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry."  
(Pope Francis, Meeting with Students of Jesuit Schools—Q&A, July 6<sup>th</sup> 2013)*

## International Development

The fight against poverty and hunger is a central priority of Ireland's foreign policy. The current Policy for International Development – *One World, One Future* – adopted in May 2013 renews that commitment and sets out the vision, goals and priorities for our engagement on international development. As Ireland puts more emphasis on trade with Africa – we question the balance in the Africa Strategy document – it is essential that aid does not become tied to trade in any significant form. It will also be important in trading arrangements that ethical standards will be used for sustainable trade that helps to uplift local enterprises and communities in developing countries.

Based on evidence in areas such as inequality, social exclusion, and human rights we believe that Ireland should put greater focus in these areas, and should mainstream gender inequality to offer increased support to women and girls. In his introduction to the DFAT Statement of Strategy 2011-2014, An Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore recently stated that “the global economic crisis must not deflect us from our traditional values and role in the world”. Following the Busan consensus, the emphasis on aid effectiveness must now move to development effectiveness.

The consequences of global warming will inevitably affect many more people in the developing world in the years ahead and will dictate where a sizable quantity of Irish Aid will be spent in future years. The major share of Irish development aid continues to go to its priority programme countries, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, and to supporting the work of Irish development NGOs and Missionaries engaged in development work through Mísean Cara. Agencies of the UN like UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR also receive a significant portion of our development that is larger than our contribution to the EU development programme.

<sup>1</sup> An Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore TD's Address to the UN Special Event on the MDGs: <https://www.dfa.ie/news-and-media/speeches/speeches-archive/2013/september/millennium-development-goals/>

*“A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being.”*

*(Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013)*

## Policy Coherence for Development

In an increasingly globalised world, events and decisions in Ireland and the EU can have a powerful and immediate impact — for the better or worse — on citizens in developing countries, including on their livelihoods, peace and security, health, economic and life prospects. Similarly, circumstances overseas can have hitherto unforeseen impact on Irish citizens, the economy and other interests, at home and abroad.

Ireland needs to have balanced and coherent positions within different negotiations and fora, and also to have consistent and coherent positions and practices *across* different sectors and policy areas.

The European Union and Ireland bilaterally have accepted that their policies, across a range of areas, can have significant detrimental effects on developing countries. Ireland should implement its commitment to holistic Government policy coherence through a vigorous, systematic process of analysing, monitoring and correcting for incoherencies.

In practice, this means sustaining and deepening DFAT efforts, established in its 2011-2013 Statement of Strategy, to have all Departments (but especially Finance, Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Jobs, Environment, Enterprise and Innovation)<sup>1</sup> ensure that Ireland's overseas development priorities are integrated within their own thinking and positions, as well as in their negotiations on EU positions regarding trade, climate change and food security.

This should involve working more closely on the European Union's five identified Policy Coherence Development (PCD) priorities for a continuing work programme across the EU include: trade and finance, climate change, food security, migration, and security.

The EU recognises that its economic interests and the legitimate interests of developing country partners sometimes collide. Systematically increasing its focus on policy coherence for development would bring focus to Ireland's policies and positions within and across policy areas, and therefore to its foreign policy and external relations, minimising the impact of such economic "collisions".

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<sup>1</sup> Irish Government Department of Foreign Affairs Statement of Strategy 2011-2013

In the area of trade, for instance, this should mean Irish and state supported companies and individuals adhere to international law and human rights conventions and best practice international standards for business.

The Foreign Policy review should result in Ireland establishing a timeline for the development of the National Action Plan to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This plan should include requirements for human rights due diligence by business entities in circumstances where it is deemed appropriate, including many developing country contexts.

As a matter of policy coherence for development, the foreign policy review process should clarify the nature, duration and standing of important international development commitments by Ireland, including those to:

- *Achieve the UN target of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on Official Development Assistance*
- *Channel 30% of development resources through multilateral organisations, with funding decisions guided by published performance assessments*
- *Spend €100m each year related to HIV, AIDS and communicable diseases*
- *Devote “more resources” to gender equality, disability and development education.*

## **Northern Ireland**

Religious and lay Christians have played a unique role in building and sustaining peace on this island. Ireland’s missionaries represent a unique all island resource towards deepening the processes of peace and reconciliation at home and abroad. Missionaries in particular have significant understanding on inter-faith dialogue and such experience should be utilised when engaging in, for example, Muslim – Christian dialogues.

## **Diaspora Engagement**

The global framework within which Irish missionaries and its lay associates work represent a extraordinary network which is in daily contact with the Irish diasporas. Indeed a significant proportion of Irish missionaries have been in the past, and currently today form part of that diaspora. Such resources need to be availed of through direct and virtual contact in a

practical and cohesive manner. Irelands church and missionary personnel minister to the Irish diaspora throughout the world on a daily basis and are a valid channel for dialogue and assistance. This valuable resource needs to be explored more fully to address the many social issues facing our people abroad.

*“When we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them—some food, a place in our homes, our time—not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched. (Pope Francis, Address during Visit to the Community at Varginha, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013)*

## **Promoting a Positive Image of Ireland**

The IMU holds strongly that Ireland’s external relations should be founded on values and principles, on which the country should strengthen its voice, and these in turn should guide its principled policies, negotiating positions and practical actions.

IMU support the proposal for a human rights-based approach and the vigorous adoption of policy coherence development (PCD) analysis to guide Irish foreign policy in a way that cements Ireland’s international profile, builds on those areas for which it is known.

We would welcome some regular and structured civil society engagement with the Minister and DFAT, within and outside the Oireachtas Committees regarding the impact of the Ireland’s foreign policy and external relations. This will be especially important in relation to the new emphasis on promoting Ireland’s trade, investment and commercial interests through DFAT. While the economy is a vital dynamic within Irish society it is also an integral part of our national image to insure that our cultural values are promoted and ethical behaviour maintained. As Ireland puts more emphasis on trade with Africa, it is essential that aid does not become tied to trade. It is also important in trading arrangements that ethical standards will be used for sustainable trade that helps to uplift local enterprises and communities in developing countries.

## Other key Issues that need consideration:

- **Education and Empowerment** of people is the key. Without education it is difficult to ensure improvement in the quality of lives of many people which in turn excludes them from being able to compete for their rights in our fast- changing world. Formal education programmes especially at secondary level need to have a strong advocacy bias. Education is a right for all.
- **Combating HIV-AIDS & Malaria:** These two diseases are crippling as days are lost at work and are a massive drain on medical resources. They are the biggest causes of Infant Mortality and death among the work force in Sub-Sahara Africa.
- **Family Income-Generating (IGA) Projects:** This type of project needs a greater investment into the future if the poor are to be encouraged to raise their standard of living. Vocational and Agricultural Training programmes need support so as to be more effective in the IGA tasks undertaken
- **Advocacy Training** is very necessary so that people know their rights and are equipped to address and confront corruption. Any responsible aid programme has to find local culturally appropriate ways to communicate the important human values which underline our commitment to human rights.
- **Invest in Leadership Training and Conflict Resolution:** Irish Development Aid should invest more in conflict resolution programmes in order to ensure the political stability necessary for real economic and social stability.
- **Drugs, alcohol abuse and the trafficking of peoples:** These issues must be addressed as ongoing concerns within any true development programme.

## Ways of Working

- Have stricter regulation and monitoring of money for projects especially for large amounts given to governments.
- Have a ceiling on salaries for people who are sponsored by Irish Aid.
- Have good monitoring to ensure that the intended work is being fulfilled.
- Give increased support to development interventions on the ground rather than large government projects.
- In responding to agriculture, rural development and food security issues, Ireland with an abundance of skills in food production, processing, marketing, and exporting should be able to provide skill transfers to help medium to long term economic development in rural communities in the developing world. Irish Aid could facilitate such skills transfers.

## Other Comments

- In the light of our unfortunate experience in Ireland re the safeguarding of children, all Irish Aid projects into the future should seek to promote the safeguarding of children and guard against all types of abuse especially sexual exploitation.

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