



The Irish Association of Non-Governmental
Development Organisations

Dóchas – The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Tuesday, 2nd July, 2019

******FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE******

Irish NGOs make case at Oireachtas for Ireland to be World Leader on Disability in International Development

The Dóchas Disability and International Development Working Group (consisting of representatives from Irish NGOs) today (Tuesday) presented directly to TDs and Senators on the need for Ireland to be a global leader in promoting disability rights in development policy globally.

Representatives from Dóchas, the Irish Association on Non-Governmental Development Organisations, appeared in front of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence presenting the case for disability to be a central component of Ireland's newly published 'A Better World' Development Policy and for Ireland to be at the forefront of efforts globally to ensure everyone can benefit from overseas aid.

Speaking before the session, Sightsavers Ireland CEO and Dóchas Board member Charlie Lamson commented "More than one billion people live with some form of disability in the world today with 80% of them living in low- and middle-income countries. For too long disability has been an afterthought in International Development policy which the organisations in Dóchas have been working in partnership with Irish Aid to address.

Ireland's new Development Policy, *A Better World*, coupled with its ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provide vital opportunities to place disability front and centre of Irish Aid's refreshed programme of work and to act as an example on the world stage for others to follow suit.

We are delighted to have been given the opportunity to present to the Oireachtas Committee and we are hopeful of the support of TDs and Senators across the Irish political spectrum as the policy moves into its implementation phase."

Mr Lamson was joined on the panel by Sightsavers' West Africa Director, Fatoumata Diouf; Niamh Carty, Programme Director of Oxfam Ireland and Dr Mary Keogh, Director, Disability Inclusive Initiative from CBM.

Senegal-based Fatoumata Diouf also commented "When I spoke at the launch of Sightsavers Ireland's Put Us in the Picture campaign in February, I highlighted the key role Ireland played in co-chairing the negotiations that delivered the UN Sustainable Development Goals and how this proud tradition can continue by helping to ensure that disability is at the heart of International

Development. I am delighted to be back in Dublin to make that case to the Committee as to how Ireland can make a profound difference to lives of literally millions of people who in the past have been left behind.”

Dr Mary Keogh from CBM stated “The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the principle of ‘leave no one behind’ have created an imperative for mainstream international development cooperation and humanitarian actors to consider disability inclusion in all their work. There is an ever-increasing demand for support on how to be disability inclusive from development and humanitarian partners”

Niamh Carty, Programme Director of Oxfam Ireland, added “Oxfam Ireland is fully aware that failure of us all to act will result in failure to realise the commitments made in the UN Convention and ultimately failure to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals Ireland worked hard to achieve. We stand in solidarity of people with disabilities.”

The Dóchas Disability Working Group hope to work further with Committee members and Government in promoting disability rights in development policy and for Ireland to be at the forefront of efforts globally to ensure everyone can benefit from overseas aid.

- Ends –

Notes for the editor:

- **Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its members, and a platform for them to speak with a single voice on development issues. For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie.**
- **Dóchas currently has 58 member organisations, who are working in Ireland on issues related to international development. A list of Dóchas members can be found here: <http://dochas.ie/membership/our-members>.**
- **The Dóchas Disability and International Development Working Group is made up of representatives from [Sightsavers](#), [CBM Ireland](#), [Oxfam Ireland](#), [Concern](#), [Trócaire](#), [Plan International Ireland](#), [Voluntary Service International](#), [Misean Cara](#), [Self Help Africa](#).**