



The Irish Association of Non-Governmental
Development Organisations

Dóchas – The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

*****EMBARGO: 10AM, THURSDAY 28 FEBRUARY*****

IRELAND'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY SHOWS AMBITION, BUT MUST BE MATCHED BY ACTION

Dóchas has welcomed the Government's new Policy for International Development, 'A Better World'. [1]

Suzanne Keatinge, CEO of Dóchas, spoke at the launch event in Dublin today, alongside Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Tánaiste Simon Coveney and Minister of State Ciarán Cannon.

Keatinge said: "The new policy shows a clear statement of intent by the Government that it wants to show leadership and ambition on international development at a time when it's so desperately needed, particularly given the uncertainty in Europe and globally.

"But its success will be measured by its ability to transform the lives of people living on the very margins of society. That includes the millions of families fleeing war, or displaced for generations by conflict; the communities whose livelihoods are threatened because of climate change and grinding poverty; and women and girls whose potential can't be realised because of lack of education, violence, and inequality.

"While this policy is an important first step, it will require a whole of government approach, consistent funding and stronger partnership with civil society."

While Dóchas welcomed the Taoiseach's reaffirmed commitment, as outlined in the policy, to the United Nations target of allocating 0.7 percent of Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance by 2030, Keatinge added: "We need to see a published roadmap that will ensure the Government makes more consistent progress towards this target than it has done in the past. We have to be willing to commit predictable funding to ensure the continued quality of our aid programme."

The new white paper also acknowledges the significant contribution of Ireland's international development NGOs.

Keatinge said: "It is NGOs, missionaries, human rights activists, humanitarians, environmentalists, educators and volunteers who need to remain at the forefront in the delivery of aid. However, with 321 human rights defenders reportedly killed in 2018 alone and over 100 governments around the world introducing laws that restrict civil society operations, it will be critical that the Government is willing to speak out to defend civil society, as well as find very practical ways of supporting them." [2]

"I am delighted that this new policy has such a strong focus on reaching the furthest behind first, including women and girls, minorities and people living with disability. But commitment must now be matched by action. We will need to engage the Irish public in new ways, and refresh our narrative to match our values and ambition. That means putting people at the heart of all that we do overseas and at home. Only then will we be able to deliver on our

promises of a fairer world through achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030,” she concluded.

ENDS

For further information or to organise an interview, please contact Lía Flattery, Dóchas Communications & Events Officer, at lia@dochas.ie or 085-1198415.

Suzanne Keatinge, Dóchas CEO, is available for comment.

Notes for the editor:

[1] 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. Dóchas currently has 59 member organisations. For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie.

[2] Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2018, p. 12
(https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/global_analysis_2018.pdf).