

1. Introduction

Since the publication of the 1996 White Paper on Foreign Policy¹ the world has experienced significant change and is facing numerous interrelated global challenges. This Review is a welcome and timely initiative, providing an opportunity to take stock of what strategies have worked well in promoting Ireland's values and interests while also encouraging reflection on how Ireland can best respond to current and emerging challenges. As this review is happening, key global negotiations on future development frameworks post-2015 and climate change are reaching critical phases. This review presents a key opportunity to ensure Ireland's contribution to these and other processes is as effective and coherent as possible. This submission recommends that in order to be effective into the future, Ireland's foreign policy needs to be based on human rights and environmental sustainability. In this regard, it needs to build on the goals and priority actions set out in *One World, One Future* and examine how these can be achieved through greater policy coherence across foreign policy and beyond. As Ireland responds to increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, such an approach would ensure Ireland is able to pursue its interests externally in a coherent way and at the same time contribute to a more just and environmentally sustainable future for all.

2. The Changing Context

Shifting geopolitics, widening inequality, unsustainable usage of natural resources and climate change represent key challenges in the changing external context.² The geopolitical landscape is being redrawn as political and economic power shifts from the west to the east and south. This **evolving geopolitics** is reflected in the juxtaposition of twentieth century structures of international governance, such as the UN, World Bank and OSCE, by new groupings, such as the G20 and regional actors, cooperating to shape the global agenda. The EU, moreover, has gained in strength through coordinated external affairs. With global power and influence being increasingly multi-polar, preventing fragmented responses to critical global challenges is paramount in the coming decades. This has implications for the operations of multilateral organisations, adding to the urgency of reforming and strengthening global governance structures.³

The frameworks governing international relations have developed significantly in the past fifteen years – though serious policy gaps still remain. In the area of development cooperation, the Millennium Development Goals (2000) have made a significant contribution to increasing political will and mobilising resources for poverty eradication and sustainable development. While substantial progress has been made through this framework of goals, progress on poverty reduction has been uneven, not only between countries but also within countries. The past decade has seen rapid progress in large developing countries, such as Brazil, India and China. The pace of progress, however, has been much slower for most of the 49 least developed countries, especially those that are landlocked. A small number of fragile states, which often fail to provide public goods and services to their populations and suffer from instability, violent conflict and war represent a specific challenge to the global community and will account for a concentration in poverty by 2025. On

¹ Challenges and Opportunities Abroad, White Paper on Foreign Policy (Government of Ireland, 1996)

² Leading Edge 2020 (Trocaire, 2011)

³ See section 5, The Global Context and the UN

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present trends five sixths of the world's poor will then live in Africa compared to representing just one sixth of the world's poor in 1990.⁴

The world remains blighted by the highly uneven nature of progress in addressing poverty and the scale of **widening economic inequality**.⁵ Economic inequality compounds other inequalities such as inequalities between women and men and impacts on social stability within countries, threatening security on a national, regional and global scale. One of the key drivers of this inequality is the pattern of global investment, particularly in **natural resource extraction** which has become more pronounced over the past decade, particularly in resource-rich poorer countries. Whilst some benefits from such investment in natural resource extraction have accrued to poorer countries in terms of economic growth, the vast majority of benefits have not benefited poor communities but been captured by elites. Lack of regulation, transparency in contracts and corruption being critical issues affecting the efficient harnessing of revenues. In taxes alone, revenue loss to developing countries being estimated in hundreds of billions of dollars annually.⁶ Moreover, due to weak governance structures, both nationally and internationally, this trend has all too often been associated with political repression, militarisation, persecution and even extra-judicial killings of human rights activists who challenge vested interests.

These complex challenges are happening in a world increasingly affected by environmental degradation and **climate change**. The exact level of climate change and its future impact will depend on the success of mitigation and adaptation efforts in the next decade. But even if current UNFCCC negotiations are successful, more humanitarian crises, with more frequent and severe unexpected disasters like storms and droughts are now inevitable. The failure of political response to climate change *at all levels* points to a crisis within existing international decision-making structures. At a more fundamental level, climate change raises questions over models of economic growth which are based on fossil fuels and unsustainable natural resource use, and externalise environmental sustainability. Arguably, countries which want to be leaders in the coming decade need to put climate change responses at the heart of their external policy. Ensuring that human rights are at the heart of solutions to climate change and the transition to a more environmentally sustainable economy is critical if those most affected and least able to cope are to be protected. Those who have contributed least to climate change, the world's poor, are disproportionately impacted by it.

3. Values and Interests

As a small nation with an open economy, Ireland's prosperity and security require us to pursue an active policy of external engagement. All of the above challenges point to global inter-dependence. Cooperating with other nations in a common effort to maintain a stable framework for international relations, within which the rights of small nations are given equal weight to the interests of the strong and disputes are settled through arbitration and by reference to international law is a central policy objective. Ireland's international reputation is built on values of solidarity, equality and participation. Ireland has ratified all the core UN human rights treaties, including the Covenants on

⁴ *Horizon 2025* (Overseas Development Institute, 2012)

⁵ Briefing Paper 178, *Working for the Few : Political Capture and Economic Inequality* (Oxfam, 2014)

⁶ *Death and Taxes: The True Toll of Tax Dodging* (Christian Aid, 2008)

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Civil and Political as well as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In 2012, Ireland signed the Optional Protocol to the latter Covenant affirming our determination to achieve full respect for human rights in practice. Ireland's strong commitment to gender equality, and particularly the Women, Peace and Security agenda is well recognised.⁷ This track record of adherence to core values has earned the country great respect within international forums and allowed it to exercise 'soft power' in such institutions as the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and OECD far beyond its size.

Quality Aid at the Heart of Foreign Policy

Much of this positive reputation rests on the investment in Ireland's overseas development aid in recent years. This has become a major feature and core element of its external action. Ireland is now widely recognised as a relatively small, but important player in this sector.⁸ The high profile commitment to meeting the UN target of 0.7% of GNI going to ODA underpinned the rapid expansion of the aid programme in the early 2000s. Whilst the volume of aid declined significantly through the financial crisis (-35% since 2008), it has remained relatively stable since 2011 and is now able to consolidate its focus on delivering a quality aid programme. The White Paper on Irish Aid in 2006 and the recently published policy *One World, One Future* set out the values, goals and priority areas for action for Ireland's overseas aid programme and represent a core body of policy which needs to be at the heart of this review of Foreign Policy.

Policy Coherence – Whole of Government Approach

Of particular interest to this review in *One World, One Future* is the emphasis on a **whole of government approach** to the achievement of this policy. As with other EU and OECD countries, over the past decade, Ireland has recognised the necessity of ensuring a coherent government approach to achieving its external action. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is a legal requirement under the Lisbon Treaty. Whilst there is a recognition that other contingent policies, particularly those governing external investment, security and energy/environment, have a significant impact on poor countries, there are some significant gaps within Irish government policy in achieving greater coherence between policy objectives of different departments and divisions. While an Inter-Departmental Committee on Development to strengthen coherence in the Government's approach to development has been established,⁹ there are no high level political mechanisms for resolving incoherencies in areas such as trade promotion and human rights, agriculture, food security and climate change or energy policies. Similarly, there is no systematic means of assessing their potentially adverse social and environmental repercussions in developing countries. One key area where there is an emerging policy gap and a need for greater coherence is in relation to the growing prioritisation of Ireland's trade interests, particularly within the developing world. 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 Strategy¹⁰ based

⁷ *Mid-Term Progress Report, Implementation of Ireland's National Action Plan for UNSCR1325, 2011-2014* p.32

⁸ *DAC Peer Review of Irish Aid* (OECD DAC, 2009)

⁹ *Achieving Policy Coherence for Development through a Whole of Government Approach* (Trócaire, 2013).

¹⁰ *Ireland and Africa Our Partnership with a Changing Continent* (DFAT, 2011)

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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.

The review of Foreign Policy represents a key opportunity to re-affirm Ireland's core values and principles as set out in *One World, One Future*, and to integrate these into the Foreign Policy and beyond. For the implementation of the commitments to PCD, clarity of terms, criteria and indicators are essential in order to provide a consistent frame of reference for evaluating how strategies and policies across government are contributing to the delivery of objectives founded on values rooted in human rights and environmental sustainability.

The Tánaiste has stated that current challenges must not deflect us from our traditional values and role in the world.¹¹As Ireland grapples with the challenges outlined in the introduction, coherent policy responses should be embedded in a human rights based values system and environmental sustainability. Such a system would be based on participatory and accountable governance, providing space for the most vulnerable to have their interests represented, and the promotion of gender equality, as means to promoting sustainable benefits, inclusiveness and reducing inequality. Implementing this approach would mean Ireland's political and economic diplomacy would be guided by human rights values which it has a legal obligation to promote.

Recommendations:

In its Foreign Policy Review, Ireland should:

- Put international development cooperation at the heart of the new foreign policy. The goals and priorities for action already articulated within *One World, One Future* should be central to the new Foreign Policy Strategy and seek to underpin its wider application;
- Articulate the centrality of a human rights based approach in responding to current and emerging challenges. Such an approach reflects the core values Ireland has committed to in its ratification of core United Nations treaties;
- Recognise the imperative of addressing climate change and environmental sustainability as a top priority if Ireland's interests are to be protected; it should also recognise the importance of finding just solutions to climate change which protect the most vulnerable;
- Build on the recommendations in *One World, One Future* relating to PCD and make provision for strengthened PCD mechanisms to prevent or remedy incoherent and inconsistent policies across within and between different government departments; in particular, coherence between the objectives of trade promotion and human rights needs to be adequately addressed;

¹¹ Statement of Strategy 2011-2014 (DFAT) p.4

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- Retain existing human rights thematic priorities including the protection of civil society space, the right to food, the protection of human rights defenders, the promotion of freedom of religion or belief, ensuring gender equality, combating violence against women, non-discrimination and reducing child mortality;
- Consider the appointment of an Ambassador at Large for Human Rights, in keeping with the practice of an increasing number of European countries and the advancement of policy coherence.

4. The European Union

With the EU now framing responses in a range of policy areas, including common defence and security, climate change and trade, the EU is the primary arena where Ireland's values and interests can be reflected. The EU is formally committed to respecting the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Its aims include promoting a society in which justice, solidarity and equality prevail, its founding treaty explicitly stating it will apply these principles to all its foreign affairs¹². The recent financial crisis has served to highlight how Ireland's future is inextricably linked with decisions made at European level. Since 1996, enlargement has seen the EU grow to 28 member states. Achieving common responses to current and emerging issues amongst a growing number of members with distinctive national interests is a particular challenge. As the Review consultation document notes 'with 28 countries speaking as one, Europe's voice is stronger in the world and this allows the EU to speak with authority at a global level'.

Climate Change

The EU has demonstrated relative leadership in the area of climate change, both in its adoption of legally binding mitigation targets and in the role it plays to reach a global agreement at the UNFCCC. Despite its stated commitment to hold a further rise in global temperatures below 2 degrees Celsius, the EU's current targets remain well below its fair share of a global effort to achieve this. How the EU will contribute to an urgent scale up of investment in low carbon, climate resilient development in developing countries to enable them to contribute their fair share remains unclear. At the same time the EU is pursuing a range of policies including food, agriculture and energy which to differing degrees raise questions about their environmental sustainability as well as their social and human rights implications. At an EU level, Ireland needs to take greater leadership on this issue. This can only be done by setting out time-bound carbon emissions reductions as well as significant scaling up of additional resources for climate action in developing countries.

Trade

In response to the growing engagement and BRIC influence in other developing countries, EU policies such as *Global Europe* (2006) and the *Raw Materials Initiative* (2008) have resulted in a

¹² http://europa.eu/scadplus/constitution/objectives_en.htm

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prioritisation of bilateral trade and investment agreements. Lack of transparency, non-participatory development, insufficient *ex ante* and *post impact* assessments are contrary to a rights based approach and mean the EU's ecological footprint – caused by its trading system and its level of consumption – is one of the largest in the world. Ireland should work to ensure that the EU's external and internal policies and their implementation, including with regard to trade and investment are fully compliant with human rights. During its 2013 Presidency of the European Council Ireland led the debate on EU trade with illegal Israeli settlements and the consideration of EU wide labelling guidelines for settlement produce. This pro-active stance is welcome and similar initiatives could be undertaken to advance more systematic consideration and implementation of human rights clauses within trade agreements.

European External Action Service (EEAS)

The creation of the EEAS is contributing to the pursuit of common objectives, including international stability, justice and peace through foreign policy outside the EU. Ireland has fully supported the development of the EEAS and it should continue to vigorously contribute to the development and implementation of external human rights policies of the EU in full compliance with and in pursuit of the objectives of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

The EU has re-evaluated its engagement with civil society in the area of external relations. It has moved away from viewing civil society organisations function in relation to service delivery only to recognising their role in contributing to more effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth. This recognition of the wider value of CSOs and protecting the operational space for civil society is a welcome development which Ireland should support and promote further.

The EU Guideline on Human Rights Defenders remains a valuable tool to provide protection and support to human rights defenders, but it has suffered from inconsistent implementation by the EEAS at country level. Ireland, as a country that played a key role in the drafting of the guidelines, should continue to push for effective, consistent implementation of the guidelines and ensure that mechanisms are put in place to monitor implementation by individual EU missions.

Humanitarian Policy

As the EU takes on a more pro-active voice in foreign policy through the EEAS, it is important that the directorate responsible for humanitarian aid, DG ECHO, remains separate from the EEAS if the independence of humanitarian action is to be protected. This independence, as well as the other humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality are essential as a means to ensuring that the needs of people in crisis are actually the main drivers of donors' responses.

During its Presidency of the European Council in 2013, Ireland sought to progress practical implementation of the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which explicitly states that humanitarian assistance is not a crisis management tool and reiterates the commitment of both Member States

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and EU institutions to the above principles. As the European Consensus is currently being evaluated Ireland should continue to prioritise this area and work to promote the principles together with the importance of maintaining and strengthening the EU's focus on forgotten crises.

As the EU works to respond to humanitarian need, Ireland should also work to ensure that particular vulnerabilities are taken into account. In this context, DG ECHO require that special attention is paid to women, children, the elderly, sick and disabled people, and to addressing their specific needs. Moreover, protection strategies against sexual and gender based violence must be incorporated in all aspects of humanitarian assistance.

Ireland should also work within the EU to ensure that specific capacities and skills of women to contribute to recovery, build peace, foster preparedness and disaster risk reduction as well as promote resilience are fully recognised. While emergency situations can intensify disparities, humanitarian crises are also an opportunity to challenge gender-based inequality.

Recommendations:

In its Foreign Policy Review, Ireland should:

- Lead by example - champion further action on climate at EU level in terms of emissions reduction and climate finance; recognise that this requires explicit commitments being made on these issues in Ireland's domestic climate legislation;
- Work to ensure that the EU's trade and investment policies are fully compliant with the human rights obligations of the EU and its member states;
- Maintain active engagement in the development and implementation of the EU's external human rights policies ensuring their full compliance with the Union's Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy; continue to support the Comprehensive EU Approach to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and I820;
- Work with other EU members to maintain the separation of humanitarian aid from other foreign affairs and security objectives. The present division of duties must not be compromised by any weakening of DG ECHO capacity or independence. Ireland should work at EU level for the maintenance of the position of a dedicated ECHO Commissioner.
- Continue to push for consistent and effective implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, including mechanisms to monitor implementation by individual EU missions.

5. The Global Context and the UN

Active engagement in multilateral foras has been a cornerstone of Ireland's foreign affairs and external relations for many decades. As geopolitical power shifts become more pronounced, Ireland's vested interests are best pursued through ensuring an ongoing unwavering commitment to

multilateralism. The UN still represents the primary global forum for advancing Ireland's values and interests. Unlike in other institutions, within the UN, small states such as Ireland have parity of representation with large states. Support for the UN has been at the centre of Irish foreign policy since Ireland joined the organisation in 1955. Ireland's commitment to the UN has built our reputation amongst the global community as a consensus builder and honest broker. Such perceptions have undoubtedly played a part in Ireland's election to positions on the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council. Support for effective, coordinated international action in areas such as peacekeeping, human rights and gender equality have shaped Ireland's priorities within the UN system. Amidst the flux of shifting international power balances, the case for maintaining and strengthening an effective UN system in these areas is more important than ever.

Peacekeeping and Peace building

Ireland's policy of military neutrality has meant it has demonstrated a commitment to peacekeeping primarily through UN mandated missions. This should continue. However, given the complexity of missions including the multitude of actors, participation in some missions may have potential ramifications for the perceived neutrality of Irish non-governmental organisations and local partners. To reduce this threat to non state actors, Ireland should ensure ongoing commitment to humanitarian principles, whereby independence of humanitarian missions from security objectives is confirmed.

The Irish Defence Forces have proactively mainstreamed UNSCR 1325: they are one of only two Defence Forces in the world to have an Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. The commitment of the Defence Forces to the Women, Peace and Security agenda in all of Ireland's overseas deployments is noteworthy. In multilateral fora, Ireland has a strong record of prioritising Women, Peace and Security issues – as outlined in Pillar 5 of UNSCR 1325. Through its international, regional and national advocacy, Ireland should continue to promote the central role of women in peace negotiations and political transitions, and it should continue to call for the ending of impunity for gender based violence in conflict. Ireland should examine how the experience of the Defence Forces in this area can support international best practice.

Humanitarian Assistance

While recognising the central role of the UN as a key humanitarian actor, *One World, One Future* policy commits the Irish government to provide flexible and timely funding to NGOs providing humanitarian assistance. This is a very welcome commitment and should be reaffirmed in this Review. The delivery of humanitarian aid based on needs requires a commitment to the development of local capacity in humanitarian response and to the importance of supporting a diversity of actors.

Human Rights Council

Ireland has a long history of promoting human rights within the UN system. Ireland's current seat on the Human Rights Council presents a particular opportunity to strengthen its overall commitment to a human rights based approach to foreign policy. It also offers an opportunity to raise the profile of

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specific thematic and country issues, support the independent operation of Special Procedures and engage vigorously in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This work should be complemented by raising awareness domestically of the Council, highlighting the relevance of the UPR nationally and facilitating ease of public and civil society participation in the process. The Human Rights Unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade needs to be adequately resourced so as to ensure this work is carried out to the highest standard.

Funding to UN Agencies

Over the past decade the UN has undergone a number of internal reforms to increase efficiencies and promote the management of results. Many UN agencies and treaty bodies, however, continue to suffer from lack of investment which is at times politically motivated. There is a serious risk that due to chronic underfunding of core areas, funding or sponsorship in the form of partnerships with corporations could become a prominent feature of the UN. Whilst this may achieve a short-term aim, there is a serious risk of undue corporate influence over critical processes such as the Post-2015 framework. Such influence could undermine the credibility of the UN.

Ireland should continue to fund UN agencies, with a particular focus on those which align with its values and interests. In particular, Ireland should continue to support the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, defending its operational independence from States, provide funding and work to secure adequate UN regular budget funds for its activities. Ireland should also continue its core support to UN Women, while monitoring its development carefully. In all its funding of multilateral bodies, including the UN, Ireland should work to ensure that this funding is subject to the same rigorous monitoring as other development partners such as NGOs.

Reform of Multilateral System

It is increasingly evident that the existing global governance architecture is struggling to deal with the scale and complexity of inter-connected global crises such as food, energy and climate change. The resulting incoherence and inaction is perhaps the single biggest threat to global security. Strengthening the multilateral system, and in particular the UN system, means having institutions which reflect shifting geopolitical realities. Ireland, in its efforts to build a strong and resilient multilateral system, should be proactive in calling for a rebalancing of power between traditional and emerging powers within the multilateral architecture. Rebalancing of power relations within multilateral institutions must not compromise their mandate to advance universal human rights. Rather in our promotion of greater participation by the South, including the representation of smaller nations in decision making processes, we must also promote increased accountability of all multilateral institutions, especially international financial and trading institutions to integrate fully a human rights framework into their work.

Recommendations:

In its Foreign Policy Review, Ireland should:

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- Reaffirm that Ireland's values and interests are best promoted through an effective multilateral system centred on the UN, where reform should be pursued through a human rights based approach;
- Maintain its policy of military neutrality, participating in peacekeeping missions mandated by the UN, with UNSCR 1325 mainstreamed across the actions of the Defence Forces; examine opportunities for sharing best practice in this area;
- Utilise all mechanisms at national, regional and international levels to promote the central role of women in peace negotiations and political transitions, and to call for the ending of impunity for gender based violence in conflict;
- Ensure ongoing commitment to humanitarian principles, whereby independence of humanitarian missions from security objectives is confirmed.
- Continue to fund UN agencies ensuring that this funding is subject to the same results, accountability and transparency standards applied to other recipients of development and humanitarian funding;
- Utilise its seat at the Human Rights Council to champion thematic and country issues, support the independent operation of Special Procedures and engage vigorously in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This work should be complemented by raising awareness domestically of the Council, highlighting the relevance of the UPR nationally and facilitating ease of public and civil society participation in the process.

6. Economic Diplomacy and Building Bilateral Relationships

The area of trade and investment promotion has been given particular prominence in Ireland's economic recovery. The Review public consultation document specifically emphasises the promotion and development of our trade, tourism and investment in our foreign policy and external relations. Underlining this emphasis has been the widening of the Department of Foreign Affairs remit which now includes trade promotion. This emphasis is reflected in the Department's new title.

As external trade promotion becomes more visible, it is critical that this interest does not undermine the wider foreign policy objectives around the promotion of human rights. Indeed, the foreign policy review needs to recognise the intrinsic links between these two areas through developing a human rights approach to our trade promotion work. This approach would help advance coherence between our commercial and wider policy objectives. The approach is not without precedent: the EU has identified the need to strongly embed human rights in trade promotion work and trade agreements.¹³ The Human Rights Council has already endorsed the 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' framework for business and human rights which has been well received by both civil society and business.

¹³ Lisbon Treaty Art.21 (1), COM(2011)886 and the general human rights clause included as standard in all framework agreements since 1995

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In 2009, the EU adopted the framework as its guiding principles on corporate social responsibility and pledged to take a leading role in promoting it. The application of this framework presents a practical mechanism for advancing good governance and responsible business practices. Ireland has yet to develop a National Action Plan to implement this framework. The concept of a State-Business nexus outlined in the framework, whereby the more the State is involved in supporting or promoting business, the greater its duty to ensure respect for human rights by the enterprises enjoying this support is particularly relevant. Government must be unambiguous in ensuring our trade promotion is conducted in a manner which makes clear that Ireland expects the highest possible standards of human rights from enterprises enjoying support, including requiring where appropriate human rights due diligence.

Recommendations

In its Foreign Policy Review, Ireland should:

- Adopt a human rights approach to guide its trade promotion work based on its commitments under international human rights law and in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
- Set out a timeline for the development of the National Action Plan to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The plan should include requirements for human rights due diligence by business entities in circumstances where it is deemed appropriate;
- Recognise that trade missions and other bilateral trade engagements do not exist in a vacuum and seek to promote, respect and protect human rights while seeking to advance economic interests;
- Ensure liaison with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in relation to trade reviews;
- Prioritise business and human rights in its reporting on PCD, addressing areas such as social and environmental responsibility.

7. International Development

In 2012, an extensive public consultation was held into Ireland's international development which resulted in the publication of *One World, One Future*. This government policy sets out three goals and six priority areas for action for the coming years. These priorities broadly address the challenges set out in this submission. This policy already gives a practical expression of Ireland's foreign policy commitment to peace and justice in the world and should form the cornerstone of broader foreign policy interventions. It is critical that Irish Aid is given the resources to build a world class development programme and to deepen its engagement in priority countries and with key partners.

Getting back on track to 0.7%

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The high profile commitment to meeting the UN target of 0.7% of GNI going to ODA underpinned the rapid expansion of the aid programme in the early 2000s. Whilst the volume of aid declined significantly through the financial crisis (-35% since 2008), it has remained relatively stable since 2011 and is now able to consolidate its focus on delivering a quality aid programme. As Ireland emerges from the financial crisis, the Government should use the context of the foreign policy review to set out a clear roadmap for meeting our 0.7% commitment, while also identifying and using more innovative mechanisms to generate development resources, such as through supporting the implementation of a financial transaction tax. Recognising the role of the private sector in development, Trócaire emphasised in its submission to the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid, the imperative of ODA remaining completely untied.¹⁴ Government must also ensure that private sector partners are subject to the same accountability and transparency standards applied to civil society actors.

Use this Review to Strengthen Policy Coherence for Development

One World, One Future affirms the need for a whole of Government approach to international development. In response, the policy commits to identifying specific policy areas where coherence can be enhanced and indicators to track performance developed. This is welcome, however, it does necessitate the strengthening of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development as well as a commitment to consult all partners and stakeholders in the development and implementation of PCD indicators and monitoring plan. A Government-wide assessment process for estimating the impact of relevant policies on developing countries in particular in relation to the priority areas identified in the *One World, One Future* policy including hunger, climate change and trade, should be mandated as part of the approval process for any new Government policy.

Recommendations:

In its Foreign Policy Review, Ireland should:

- Re-affirm its commitment to ODA and set out a time bound roadmap for reaching the target of 0.7% of GNI going to ODA;
- Re-commit to ensuring that all ODA remains grant based and 100% untied;
- Build on the goals and priorities for action set out in *One World, One Future* and make these the cornerstone of foreign policy as a whole, as well as for Ireland's bilateral aid programme;
- Strengthen the capacity of Irish Aid in the areas of human rights and policy coherence, in order to ensure effective delivery of its commitment to governance and human rights;
- Ensure that private sector actors wishing to participate in the aid programme are subject to the same accountability and transparency requirements applied to other development partners.

¹⁴Trócaire Submission to the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid, 2012