

## **Inter-Departmental Committee on Development**

**12<sup>th</sup> September 2011, Iveagh House**

### **Summary Report**

#### **Opening Remarks by Jan O’Sullivan, T.D., Minister of State for Trade and Development**

Following introductions, the Minister of State welcomed the attendees and thanked them for their participation. She noted the importance of Government Departments working together in a coordinated way to achieve national objectives, particularly in the context of the current economic difficulties. Setting the tone for future meetings she described her view of the IDCD as a practical opportunity to exchange views and ensure effective collaboration. She noted the significant cooperation between Irish Aid and other Departments, in particular the Departments of Agriculture, Finance and Health. The Minister also referred to her recent meeting with the Defence Forces in relation to the crisis in the Horn of Africa and the links with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in relation to trade policy and the WTO.

The Minister informed the Committee about the first Africa-Ireland Economic Forum and the launch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Africa Strategy, initiatives that should lead to further cooperation across Departments and thanked Departments for their contributions to the strategy. She noted the worthwhile work that Revenue has been engaged in with the Rwandan tax authorities.

The Minister informed the Committee that she would be co-hosting a side meeting on Women Leaders and Climate Change with Mary Robinson at the UN General Assembly. Acknowledging the work of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Climate Change led by the Minister for the Environment, the Minister noted the importance of using climate change financing and carbon offset funding effectively and the potential opportunities for Ireland in the areas of green growth and green energy and that this will require significant interaction between Irish Aid and the Departments of Agriculture and the Environment to ensure that Government speaks with one voice. She proposed that the IDCD can identify opportunities for effective use of carbon credits and inform the Sub Committee.

The Minister outlined the purpose of the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid and emphasised the role the IDCD could play in the review process, as the primary mechanism for consultation with Departments. She specifically called for views on the IDCD itself, how effective it has been and how it should operate in the future.

#### **Responses to the Minister’s Remarks**

All Departments welcomed the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid and looked forward to inputting into the process. Most worked closely with the Development Cooperation Division (DCD) on specific issues and expressed a positive opinion of that cooperation specifically on

trade policy (DJEI); food security and increasing agricultural productivity in Africa (DAFM); climate change and sustainable development (DECLG); and ensuring Ireland's policies on hunger and gender equality are reflected in dealings with International Finance Institutions (DF). The Department of Justice and Equality noted that it is currently developing ideas on migration and a voluntary return programme

Gerard Monks (DJEI) thanked the Minister for the opportunity to comment on the Africa Strategy. He cautioned on devoting resources to Africa when other trading partners have already been prioritised but recognised opportunities for coordination, for example the upcoming trade mission to South Africa. With regard to climate change he stressed the need for a whole-of-government approach as it would be important that the climate change agenda not disrupt exports.

In relation to the Africa Strategy, Michael Gaffey, DCD, noted the changes that African countries are experiencing with significant sustained economic growth rates 4 to 5%. Irish Embassies in Africa are now not just Irish Aid offices but have resources to deliver a full spectrum of services.

### **Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid**

The Minister gave a background to the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid, noting that it was included in the Programme for Government to take account of the dramatic changes that have taken place since 2006 including policy changes, the shift in the climate change agenda, budgetary pressures, economic growth in developing countries and changes in development models.

Michael Gaffey outlined the process, which will be lead by the Irish Aid Advisory Group and the process, as follows:

1. An examination of progress made in relation to the commitments articulated in the White Paper and a stock-take of experience to date. It will be important that the contribution of all Departments to the progress to date is captured.
2. A process of focused consultations in November/December based on thematic papers. There will be an IDCD meeting at the end of November to discuss generally.
3. Formal consultations with the IDCD after Christmas to discuss the strategic areas. It was noted that the paper are to be circulated well in advance of the meeting.
4. A period of broader consultation between January and March next year with the public, other development actors and partner countries.
5. It is intended to have the review published by July 2012

Dermot Quigley (DPER) noted the need to consider the results of the comprehensive review of expenditure (CRE) and was assured that the main process of consultation would take place in 2012 and so will take account of the CRE.

While emphasising that the review would not result in a new White Paper and that a major shift in aid policy was not envisaged, Michael Gaffey noted that development is broader than aid. In 2008 of the resources available for development only 10% was aid it is therefore important to understand the place of aid and to position it to be a catalyst to empower countries to develop.

The Minister explained that Embassies are reporting that partner countries are keen to move beyond aid and are looking for mutually beneficial relations. These views have informed the Africa Strategy and it reflects the ways partner countries want to move in relation to development, aid and trade.

Gerry Monks (DJEI) raised the issue of technical assistance for example in the area of customs facilitation which could have benefits for Irish and African exporters. It was noted that while there is a role for technical assistance Ireland was still committed to fully untied aid.

The Minister suggested that the discussions on the White Paper review should be initiated at the next meeting. The discussion process with the IDCD should take place in the most effective and time efficient way and it is crucial for Departments to make inputs.

### **OECD DAC mid-term review of Ireland's development cooperation**

Michael Gaffey informed the committee that the OECD Development Assistance Committee would carry out a mid-term review of Ireland's development cooperation in October. The review would involve a one-day visit by the DAC Chair and an official from the Peer Review Secretariat to Irish Aid headquarters in Limerick and would examine progress in implementing the recommendations from the last peer review. DCD has prepared two documents in preparation for the review - a matrix of the recommendations and progress on them and a brief paper outlining changes in context and policy direction since the last peer review as well as forward looking perspectives.

### **IIS Report on Policy Coherence for Development Indicators**

The final draft of the IIS report on PCD Indicators was distributed and Carol Hannon (DCD) informed the committee that the IIS had apologised for the delay. The comments from the last meeting had been submitted to the IIS and this resulted in the number of indicators being reduced to 52 and the rationale for each indicator being more clearly explained. The indicators cover eight policy areas - trade, agriculture, fisheries, migration, environment, finance and enterprises, security and defence, and development aid. All of the indicators are based on existing data and some of the indicators come from regular monitoring processes (e.g. Commitment to Development Index). It was emphasised that this is an independent

report and should be seen as a resource for Departments to draw on, the committee would decide on indicators to track. Members were requested to submit any last comments/ corrections on the IIS report and also to suggest 2-3 indicators for their policy areas that could be included in the IDCD's progress reports on PCD. It was suggested that reports could be prepared every two years. It is to be further discussed at the next IDCD meeting.

### **Minutes of the 12th meeting of the IDCD**

The minutes of the 12th IDCD meeting were agreed with some amendments.

### **AOB**

Niamh Campbell (DF) noted that Minister Noonan would attend the upcoming World Bank meeting; the main issue to be discussed is the 2012 World Development Report which focuses on gender equality. She also noted that the Department made an intervention at the Asian Development Bank meeting, which was supported by others, to ensure that food security was included in the ADB's future agenda.

Dominick O'Brien (DECLG) reported that June 2012 will be the 20th anniversary of the Rio Summit on Sustainable Development. The Department was organising a public consultation in October with support from Irish Aid. The first draft of the negotiating document will be completed in January 2012 and work will continue up to the conference itself.

**Inter-Departmental Committee on Development Meeting**

**13<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

Department:	Name:
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Ann Derwin
Department of Defence	Margaret O'Leary
Defence Forces	Lt. Col. Eamon Caulfield
Department of Education and Skills	Apologies
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation	Gerard Monks
Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government	Dominick O'Brien
Department of Finance	Niamh Campbell
Department of Health	Apologies
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Gerald O'Regan
Department of Social Protection	Apologies
Department of the Taoiseach	Helen Blake
Department of Transport	Apologies
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Dermot Quigley
Department of Foreign Affairs	MoS Jan O'Sullivan Michael Gaffey Finbar O'Brien Carol Hannon Catherine Brennan