

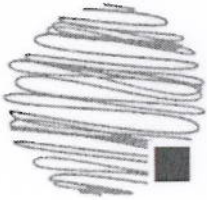


MRFCJ submission to the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid.

The Mary Robison Foundation - Climate Justice believes that the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid should put an enhanced focus on climate change and its impacts on the world's poorest, most vulnerable people. Climate change is a complex, multifaceted problem which has far reaching impacts on every part of the world and disproportionate impacts on those who contributed least to the problem. MRFCJ believes that incorporating a climate justice approach to development would help to tackle this grave problem.

The consultation paper acknowledges that greater attention to issues contributing to fragility such as climate change is required and that enhanced focus on climate change, in collaboration with other Government Departments, is needed. MRFCJ believes that the issue is of such importance that it deserves to be given greater prominence in Irish Aid's efforts to reduce poverty. It must be recognised that the impacts of climate change risk undermining the significant development gains in Ireland's partner countries, and pose a threat to all programme activities.

Since the publication of the White Paper on Irish Aid, in September 2006, the impacts of climate change have intensified around the world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have shown that global temperature increases are accelerating. The increases in extreme weather events brought about by the warming of the earth's atmosphere are evident to all. Ireland's development programmes should build on work initiated by the White Paper and the Irish Aid Environment Policy for Sustainable Development to increase understanding of the risks posed by climate change and to support vulnerable countries and communities to adapt to climate change.



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In addition to building capacity to adapt to climate change, Irish Aid has a role to play in ensuring that the benefits of a global transition to low carbon growth are shared equitably and that those living in poverty gain access to clean, affordable and sustainable energy. This will in turn contribute to poverty reduction and the creation of opportunity in the form of livelihoods and jobs.

The consultation paper asks:

How should the Government respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance and human rights and gender equality?

Climate justice provides a framework to link all of these issues, addressing climate change, human rights and development in a coherent way. We know that climate change places fundamental human rights at risk, including the right to food, the right to water and the right to development. It also exacerbates existing gender inequalities and challenges fragile governance systems.

The impacts of Climate Change on rainfall patterns and natural resources such as soil and water will undermine global food and nutrition security. Environmental assets account for 26% of wealth in least developed countries so protecting them from threats such as climate change is crucial. Addressing climate change and achieving sustainability in the global food system should be recognised as dual imperatives. The review of the White Paper should reflect this and provide recommendations which take the impacts of climate change fully into account. MRFCJ is working closely with Irish Aid on establishing the linkages between Hunger, Nutrition and Climate Justice and ensuring they are adequately reflected in the agreement of the new development goals, post 2015.

MRFCJ believes that Irish Aid could be more effective in responding to these key issues by adopting a Climate Justice approach. MRFCJ invites the government to adopt the Principles



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of Climate Justice and to use these to inform and reshape its approach and programming in light of the review of the White Paper. The principles are:

- Respect for and protection of human rights
- Support for the right to development
- Share burdens and benefits equitably
- Ensure decisions on climate change are participatory, transparent and accountable
- Highlight gender equality and equity
- Harness the power of education for climate stewardship
- Use effective partnerships to secure climate justice.

More information about the Principles and MRFCJ's approach may be found on our website www.mrfcj.org.