

Response to the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid

Cover Page

2. Response

Introduction: If respondents wish to include an introduction, setting out any background information to their organisation / activities undertaken to prepare their response / other relevant information, this should be kept as brief as possible.

- A) **Personal Interest:** I've long had a concern that Development and ODA be promoted across all sections of Irish Society and that people be invited to engage with global as well as local realities – and the consequences of not/doing so.
- B) **Study:** I undertook a study of the impacts of the cutbacks in Irish ODA 2009-2011 as part of a minor dissertation for an MA in Social Justice and Public policy (awarded Oct 2011). I reviewed the impact of the 2008-'11 ODA cuts on two NGOs and also interviewed Dóchas and Irish Aid representatives for wider policy reference. The impact on the poorest people is that of increased hunger, want, and even death, due to cutbacks and withdrawal of programme by NGOs due to funding cuts.
[Copy of the dissertation in Irish Aid Info.Offices in O'Connell Street, Dublin, for ref.]
- c) **Personal experience** –through travel, work in East Africa, and contact with family and friends who've spent lifetimes in development work overseas I've seen something of the impact of the global poverty divide, and climate change. I've also seen the effectiveness of Irish Aid and NGDO sponsored work in water source protection, food security, HIV/AIDS and healthcare and hospice work; gender and human rights programmes, in a number of countries. I think it important that this be publicized and celebrated: – untied, targeted aid, well structured and monitored, IS effective and needs support. However, the need for structural systems change and policy coherence remains, as does the **need to enlarge and reframe of our understanding of development to that of global interdependence and sustainability.**

Comment on Format: I welcome the widespread consultation exercise undertaken by Irish Aid Expert Group. However, I find the questions/format below somewhat problematic in how the questions are framed - hence repetition in several sections submitted.- Apologies!

Six Summary points:-

- Irish Government / Irish Aid – needs to **make explicit the values** underpinning its work (has consequences for policy and funding choice; cuts aren't a given, but a choice).
- Need wider political, civil society and **public engagement with development issues** if to effect the structural systems change (Irish Aid to increase investment in Dev Ed.).
- Need to take account of **emergent trends:** shifts in geo-political locus of power; the prevalence of climate change, failure of current economic systems and international currency markets, and the diversion of funds from development to arms-trading and bio-technology/patenting food security risks.
- Necessary if to achieve **policy coherence** for development national and international levels.

- Reinststate and protect ODA budget, setting a clear, phased timeline to **reach** or exceed the UN target of **0.7% GNP by 2015** as promised by an Taoiseach in UN Gen. Assembly.
- Commit to **predictable, reliable, multi-annual funding with cross- accountability** (donor, NGDO, partner agencies and community groups/beneficiaries).

Thank you for the time, effort, consideration and engagement given this consultation exercise. I wish you energy, clarity of thought and perception in advancing the Development agenda and the work of Irish Aid and Irish ODA. - *Cathy Lanigan.*

2. Progress Made: Has the Government been successful in implementing the commitments contained in the White Paper on Irish Aid?

2.1 Progress made: Some excellent work has been done by Irish Aid and Irish ODA.

It is of note that, despite the cuts in ODA (2008-2011), Ireland gave €671m or 0.52% of GNP in ODA, of which 532m was managed by Irish Aid. Ireland is **one of only six OECD** member states which attained or exceeded the EU target of reaching 0.51% GNI by 2010 and is the **seventh largest donor per capita in the OECD**. The continued cuts in ODA, some €30m in 2012, however, has seen us fall back to 0.50% of GNP, rather than progress towards the 0.7% target.

Irish ODA is justifiably lauded for its targeting, effectiveness, and high quality (OECD (DAC) 2009). Irish Aid is 100% untied aid, and focuses its aid budget at poorest countries, particularly in sub-Saharan. Its choice of pro-poor policies, and concentration on hunger eradication and health and HIV-Aids programmes is commendable.

The need for increased funding for civil society human rights and governance programmes, which build capacity and potential for enhanced downward (and upward) accountability should be noted, however. The impact of the recent ODA cuts included axing of several governance and human rights programmes by NGOs whose funding was slashed (e.g., 24% or €30m cut in Trócaire's budget in 2008-2011).

In like vein, a broader perspective of exchange of mutual goods and services where trade justice, human rights and industrial rights are respected also warrants investment and partnership with relevant entrepreneurs, state agencies, trade unions (examples of this exist).

- **Progress made re: development education / more needed** to extend this area of work into wider public debate and engagement with Development Agenda. (critical that we do so if to effect structural systems change required as part of Development policy coherence nationally and internationally, and to attract and broaden the base of voter support for Irish Aid and ODA budget lines).
- **Progress made** re: interdepartmental working (Paris Declaration and Accra Accord; work programme set out on how to further this). - Ireland still has a distance to go in implementing these agreements regarding aid predictability, reliability and accountability.

2.2 Reversal of Progress (refer Appendix 1)

Regressive and severe budget **cuts in ODA** – each of last three years (disproportional to other departments); made with what manate?

Table 1: Successive Cuts in Irish ODA Budget, 2008-2011

Irish ODA Budget Cuts	July 2008	Oct 2008	Feb 2009	April 2009	2010	2011	2012	Total cuts (2008-2012)
Amount cut	-€45m	-€15m	-95m	-€100m	-€24m?*	-€35m	-€30m	€315-€344 (34-37%)

Source: Irish Aid Annual Report 2009, Oireachtas Dáil questions, 2009 and 2011.

Note: Different data sources yield different statistics for the cuts in Irish ODA, variously totally €285m and *€314m, as set out above, or **€315-€344m** (i.e., variously shown as **34%- 37% cut** since 2007) if one factors in the **€30m cut** in 2012.

2.3 Examine/enlarge the framework within which ODA is viewed and operates:-

Review the framework within which the ODA debate and cutbacks to date have occurred. It is not automatic that cuts in ODA budget occur – this is a policy choice, and other choices exist. The ODA cutbacks reflect value choices on the part of Government – these values should be made explicit, and informed public debate held regarding Ireland’s ODA commitments and future honouring of same.

- The cuts in Irish ODA have been multiple and severe, and have impacted very negatively on those least able to bear them: the poorest people in the world who face climatic and economic crises beyond their influence, but which wreck destitution.
- The ODA budget cuts were disproportionate to other cuts in the Irish National Budget Voted Expenditure; there is a lack of transparency as to how these decisions were reached.
- The ODA cuts seem to reflect a concern for fiscal rectitude - at the expense of those with least voice - and do not reflect the will of the majority of Irish people, evidenced by the sustained and generous support of NGDOs.
- There is a good rationale for ODA budget retention, restitution and development (moral imperative, humanitarian response, pledges made, contracts signed and mutual interest in terms of security, future markets and global interdependence).
- By what mandate** have the cuts occurred? Who decided /lobbied for this? There has been and remains all-party support to reach the UN 0.7% GNP target.
- It seems a **democratic deficit** that attainment of the UN 0.7% GNP target has twice been reneged upon and deferred, and that the Government continue to decline to set staged, timeline as to how it is going to get from 0.5% GNP in 2012 to reach the UN target of 0.7% by 2015.
- There is a **lobby** for retention of ODA and its consolidation (refer Dóchas/Trócaire campaigns and 6,700 signatories). Which Ministers, TDs and Senators are lobbying against ODA retention and for cuts? Is this openly declared, or presented as ‘the only option’ by Department of Finance and others? Whatever decision is taken, it is CHOICE – we could raise taxes (e.g., 2% on highest income tax band; or introduce claw-back on corporate tax or raise this 1%, or tax from natural resources (e.g., oil fields). It is policy choice to work for policy coherence in development in Ireland, EU and internationally, or to choose not to do so.

- The ODA cutbacks and deferral of 0.7% ODA/GNP target seem counter to the values and rationale espoused by Government policy and the rationale for ODA as set out in the White Paper on Irish Aid (2006):-

‘The case for aid is not simply a practical one, it is a moral one. First and foremost, we give aid because it is right that we help those in greatest need. We are bound together by more than globalisation. We are bound together by a shared humanity.

The fate of others is a matter of concern to us. From this shared humanity comes a responsibility to those in great need beyond the borders of our own state.

For some, political and strategic motives may influence decisions on the allocation of development assistance. That is not the case for Ireland. For Ireland the provision of assistance and our cooperation with developing countries are a reflection of our responsibility to others and our vision of a fair global society’.

(Government of Ireland, 2006:22).

- The inference is that there is widespread public support for Irish ODA policy rooted in egalitarian or redistributive theories of justice – rather than the prevalent neo-liberal, market-led or utilitarian framework which has informed much of Ireland’s recent socio-economic policies.
- As noted by IDEA (2012), this stance also suggests a bilateral divide along a global North/South, donor/recipient, ‘them and us’ divide, rather than the more realistic global interdependence seen clearly in the light of the current world recession, the fragility and sensitivity of global currency, financial and trade markets, and in issues of climate change and eco-sustainability.

3. **Changing context: What are the implications of the changes in the global and domestic context for the Government’s aid programme in the future and how will these affect current priorities?**

3.1 Aid alone will never redress the global poverty divide; national and international policy coherence and civil society support is needed to effect systems change for social justice.

3.2 **Clarify** the Irish Government’s **value framework** which underpins Irish ODA policy. (refer appendix 3). Is it liberal/libertarian (economy-driven, versus society-focus), or located within a social justice and human rights framework? What values drive policy?

- Social Justice
- Adherence to UN Human Rights Conventions
- Deliver on Millennium Development Goals by 2015 (Ireland promotes this).
- Humanitarian assistance
- Other (concern with fiscal rectitude and bailout conditionality); focus on Ireland as a market and economy, rather than as a society with humanitarian international obligations.

3.3 **Engage** elected representatives and indeed the Irish public generally in a review of the spectrum of theories of justice prevalent in the debate on Irish ODA and its retention, cutback or enlargement, to help **inform and deepen understandings** and informed choices in Development debate, funding and policy choices re: Irish ODA.

3.4 Ireland does *not* borrow to deliver on its ODA commitments:

- By definition, if 0.5% of GNP is a half per cent of income received (not borrowed). Sure, Ireland is borrowing substantial amounts (billions) to meet its fiscal overhang and its bank debt bailout from the ECB-IMF.
- This isn't mere semantics – to suggest we borrow to give away is equivalent to suggesting that a householder with mortgage debt is borrowing to give a friend a birthday present, or to make a small donation to charity (the borrowing is for the main sum, not the tiny amount relative to salary, let alone mortgage borrowing). The amount given is partly how the householder exercises their social commitment and engagement as human beings one to another. So too with ODA.

3.5 **Proportionality** of allocation and impact is needed in the ODA/development debate. (refer Appendix 2)

- Ireland is currently spends 0.5% of GNP in ODA. This is 50 cent per €100 – hardly beyond the means of Ireland which despite its massive debts, remains one of the most privileged and wealthy nations (UNDP index of countries' wealth).
- Ireland has undertaken International commitments – ratified treaties, yet has twice (three times?) reneged on UN ODA target; apart of the money involved, sets a poor signal and example to other countries, and reduces our credibility.
- UN and EU Human Rights Conventions; MDGs – progress jeopardized [International commitments already made other than ECB-IMF bailout conditionality and SGP alliance].

4. Key Issues: How should the Government respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality? Are there other issues?

4.1 **Broaden and invigorate the policy debate on ODA** (for/against)

- Need to **inform and engage Irish public in development debate** – wider and deeper than mere aid/money; about lifestyle, how we view the world and ourselves as human beings (relationship with others one of justice, self-interest, or interdependence and co-responsibility).
- **Make ODA a vote getter!** (Part of Development Education and ODA transparency and accountability process).
- Debate contested terms and concepts: **What is development? Sustainability? What is 'Progress'? How should it be measured and evaluated?**
Engage Irish public in debate on these questions (implications for same impact on our lives and those in poorest countries). Shared planet with shrinking, finite resources (some renewable); reality of climate change and its impacts, particularly on water-stressed lands. Make linkages locally/globally – similar issues, scale is different. Concepts of **stewardship** and **co-responsibility** and interdependence and economic, social and ecological sustainability: the planet/cosmos is not ours to squander – is on loan from our grand-children's children.... Debate the value of AID or otherwise.

4.2 Increase funding for **Development Education Sector** – some excellent work done to date; needs expansion and development. (e.g., see education, information and campaign work of AfrI, Dochas, I.D.E.A., Kimmage Manor, Trócaire and Dóchas).

- **Promote Dev Ed as an integral part of all education courses** (aligned to discipline being studied, e.g., housing studies: examine materials supply and specification; product sourcing, eco-miles, carbon footprint; local/global sustainability issues).
 - **Build on information sessions/update for Dáil and Seanad members;**
 - Facilitate study visits to see impact of ODA cuts, as well as of support given. (ethical issues in so doing – but even debate on this would be instructive).
- 4.3 Promote Policy Coherence in Development** (in Ireland and lobby at EU and International Fora); further funding of Irish delegations (official and Development NGOs, and Missionary bodies with Development outreach and human rights programmes).
- 4.4 Deliver /promote international adherence to delivery of MDGs.**
(total costs estimated at less than €70bn bailout - to delivery on all MDGs?).
- 4.5 Focus on Hunger Eradication Programme /food security.**
- 4.6 Support of NGOs/ local partners (and community groups) which deliver protect and maintain clean, potable water at local level for communities** (implies gender equality programmes; free women of the slavery of walking for hours to wells in water-stressed lands; health/sanitation benefits for children, and irrigation/food security benefits also).
- 4.7 Development of trade and commodity markets, and exchange of knowledge, skills and products is also an area of potential growth for mutual benefit and development**

5 Given the limited resources and the need to focus these, which issues should the Government prioritise in its future aid programming?

- 5.1 Development Education and engagement with the Irish public** – far-reaching current and future consequences for Irish people and those in majority world. (1 billion pushed into hunger and a further billion into indebtedness and survival on less than \$1,50 p.d., (UNDP, 2010) due to current world economic crises. Ireland is still a rich country, in international terms).
- 5.2 Invest time and money in critical thinking and learning**
- 5.3 Support networking:** Irish Aid to fund Dóchas and NGO sector engagement at European and international policy Development working and consortia.
- 5.4 More funding** needed for Irish government delegations at EU and UN levels (not reduction in Irish Embassies and Irish Aid offices overseas) – the effectiveness of Irish lobbying seen in its work on **Hunger Prevention** campaigns. Unique role and respect for Ireland as non-colonial power; track record of development work by Irish missionaries; current ODA/Irish Aid record of non-tied aid and humanitarian work.
- 5.5 Invite/ incentivise ‘downward accountability’** and a shared vision of partnership where key decisions are taken together (as per Accra Action Plan).
- 5.6 Seek to retain flexibility and responsiveness to feedback from NGDOs and partner agencies** (while remaining accountable and transparent).

6. Ways of Working: How can the Government further strengthen its ways of working in delivering an effective aid programme with a view to delivering real results in poverty reduction?

ODA budgets/disbursement:-

- 6.1 **Protect** current levels of ODA and increase these progressively to reach the UN 0.7% GNP target by 2015 or sooner.
- 6.2 Strengthen the capacity of Development NGOs to ‘weather’ cash-flow crises and funding changes (via guaranteed multi-annual funding).
- 6.3 Enhance the **predictability** and **reliability** of Irish Aid allocations to NGOs so that multi-annual contract amounts specified are disbursed, not cut (adopt fixed contracts).
- 6.4 **Enhance the predictability of ODA**
There is a consensus in the development sector that aid predictability and reliability are essential, if to achieve the best results, and maximize value for money and a multiplier effect for aid assistance. Where a steady flow of aid is known and agreed by partner countries in advance, domestic budgets and strategic developments can be matched to this. This enables synergies and a critical mass of investment to build momentum for change with improvement that has measurable impact and can be consolidated.
- 6.5 **Agree ODA absolute or percentage amount, whichever is the greater** (thus avoid slippage in volume and percentage of ODA in times of domestic economic contraction).
- 6.6 Move ODA to a **multi-annual funding** budget line and ring-fence ODA funding. Department of Finance/Foreign Affairs/Irish Aid to set out **year-on-year**, targeted budget to reach 0.7% ODA/GNI by 2015 or sooner.
- 6.7 **Honour Ireland’s ODA commitments** made (UN 0.7% ODA/GNI, and MDGs: 20% of Irish ODA explicitly for hunger eradication work and €100m for HIV-AIDS work), OECD (DAC), EU agreements on aid predictability, reliability and transparency (Paris Declaration, 2005 and Accra Action Agenda, 2008 and developments since).
- 6.8 Enshrine Ireland’s ODA commitment and **multi-annual budget** mechanism in **legislation** (refer EU Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) and EU/IMF bailout multiannual budgeting frame for precedence).
- 6.9 Continue to/ action the **five point plan** on aid predictability and reliability proposed by McGarry and Riordan (Oct 2010).
- 6.10 Need for **Development Policy Coherence** across all government departments and semi-state agencies.
- 6.11 **Policy coherence work internationally** (EU, OECD (DAC), UN, WTO, WB).

- Lobby** to deliver on 2000 MDGs Agreement (by 2015).

- **Irish Aid** and NGDOs to **promote** and action recommendations protecting the **interests of the countries of the global South** in international negotiations on trade, to offset the market-focus and strategic interests of global North, where possible.
- **Work at EU and WTO to open markets to global South**, (removal of tariffs, EU/US protectionist subsidies – but avoid plunging Ireland into recessionary policies). Continue hunger eradication work in EU Commission and EU negotiations.

6.12 Work for ‘big picture’ systems change and monitored incremental change towards structural social justice and ODA policy coherence, including the following areas:-

- **Climate Change and Climate Justice**
- now seen as the CONTEXT in which development takes place (not an optional issue).
- **Environmental Justice and food security and livelihood**
(This is core to future development, peaceful co-existence, interdependence and sustainability (on a planet with expanding population and finite resources).
- **Support ‘tax justice’** – prevent TNCs (Transnational Corporations) from avoiding/evading tax through tax ‘flight’, repatriation of profit.
- **Commodities markets/ futures trading** in basic foodstuffs (protect staple food prices in line with local incomes/buying power (food security) of poor countries, from market speculation, cartels and futures’ trading).
- **Intellectual property rights - protect rights of indigenous peoples**
 - **Stop bio-patenting** of grains, plants, etc. (Goods of the earth for all/all time).
 - **Block global patenting of drugs** (refer HIV ARV drugs- reproduced cheaply in South Africa- accessed by millions of people, for whom otherwise unaffordable).
- **Work to reduce and eliminate arms-trading** (especially to countries with repressive regimes and poor human rights records: (refer to Afri and ipb: international peace bureau).
- **Promote Human Rights Development Agenda** – use human rights law to expand the implementation of Rawls’ concept of ‘progressively maximizing of the minimum’.

7. Other comments: If the respondent seeks to address other issues – of direct relevance to the White Paper on Irish Aid – they should do so in this section.

7.1 Beyond ODA:

At base, no amount of aid on its own will ever redress the depth of inequalities experienced in the world today.

People create poverty and people can wipe out poverty: ultimately, it is a matter of political choice and priorities. We hope and expect that Ireland will match its good intentions with specific and deliberate action, by committing to an ambitious and explicit plan to speed up achievements of the MDGs by 2015.
(Dóchas, Aug 2010:7).

7.2 Refer **Appendices 1-5** .

Appendix 1

Table 1: Ireland's progress to date towards UN 0.7% GNP ODA Target

Year	Pledges made by Ireland re: UN target for ODA to reach 0.7% GNP	UN ODA as 0.7% GNP TARGET	By when	Actual ODA € (% GNP)	
2000	An Taoiseach Bertie Ahearn pledged in UN Assembly that Ire reach 0.7% by 2007.	0.7 % GNP	By 2007	0.28% in 2000	
2004	Conor Lenihan, M. For Foreign Affairs deferred 2007 target				
2005	Brian Lenihan, as Taoiseach, confirmed) 0.7% target deferred, but Pledged 0.5% by 2007 – met! Annual targets to 2012 set.	} interim targets 0.5%	} By 2012 By 2007	0.42% in 2005	
2005	<i>Paris Declaration</i> signed				
	EU Stability and Growth Pact				
2005-8	Annual targets set were met	} 0.6%	} By 2008	0.53 in 2007	
2008	<i>Accra Action Accord</i> signed EU/IMF €70bn bailout signed				0.6% in 2008
2009	Severe cuts in ODA budget 0.7% target deferred to 2015	0.7%	By 2015	0.55% in 2009	
2010	Further cut of €24m Renewed pledge for 2015	0.7%	By 2015	0.53% in 2010	
2011	Further cut of €35m Renewed pledge for 2015	0.7%	By 2015	0.52% In 2011	
2012	Further cut of €30m Renewed pledge for 2015			0.50% in 2012	
2013	} Steps to 0.7% GNP			?	
2014	} not programmed			?	
2015	} as a multi-annual budget Plan.			? 0.7% target	

Source: Dáil debates, various dates; McGarry and Riordan (2010); Irish Aid Annual Report (2009).

Note: Ireland's pledge to reach the UN target of 0.7% GNP in ODA has twice been broken (deferred from 2007, to 2012, and again to 2015). While there is stated commitment to the 2015 deadline, no multiannual budget projections are yet in situ to reflect this, despite the multi-annual budget forecasts).

Recent Irish ODA Budget Cuts

Ireland was making good progress towards reaching its rescheduled pledge to reach the UN target of 0.7% GNP by 2015 until a series of harsh cuts were announced in 2008, 2009 and 2010. The total ODA allocation has been cut in each successive National Budget since 2008. The cuts in the Jan and April 2009 Budgets were the harshest, at a total €224m or 24%. Yet further cuts were applied: -€24m in 2010, -€35m, in 2011 and -€30m in 2012. This amounts to a total -€315m, or **34% cut** from the ODA peak 2008 allocation (€922m).

Appendix 2

Proportionality: absolute v. relative poverty

The arguments postulated by some in Ireland and other majority world countries that they cannot afford to contribute the UN target of 0.7% of their Gross National Income to majority world poorer countries is countered by the gross disparity in wealth and life opportunities captured in Table 2 below.

Table 2: United Nations Development Indicators by Region, and Worldwide.

Region	GDP per Capita (US\$ PPP) (a)	Life Expectancy at Birth (yrs)	Adult Literacy % (b)	% Net Primary Enrolment Rate	Infant Mortality rate (c)	Under-5yrs mortality rate (c)
Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	1,393	57.7	59.9	75.5	82	126
Arab States	7,861	69.1	72.1	80.9	38	50
East Asia + Pacific	6,403	72.6	n/k	93.3	23	28
Europe + Central Asia	11,462	69.5	97.5	92.3	20	22
L. America + Caribbean	10,643	74	91.1	94.4	19	23
South Asia	3,417	56.1	62.4	86.9	56	73
Sub-Saharan Africa	2,050	52.7	62.4	73.6	86	144
OECD	37,077	80.3	n/k	95.6	5	6
Worldwide total	10,631	69.3	n/k	86.1	44	63

Note (a): data adjusted for differences in purchasing power.

Note (b): Adult defined as those aged 15 years or over

Note (c): number of deaths per 1,000 live births (infant < 1 yr old)

Source: UNDP (2010: 146, 196, 201)

Context for ODA internationally

Official Development Assistance is, at base, about the **global poverty divide** and the lack of access to resources by the majority world. Recent UN and MDG Reviews suggest that almost two billion people on the planet (of a 6-7 billion population) are struggling to survive on less than \$1.25 per day. The recent worldwide recession is estimated to have pushed one billion people into extreme poverty and a further one billion people into hunger - below the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day, eroding earlier gains (UN, Sept 2010:1). That translates to more than one in every seven persons on the planet in hunger – in a world of unparalleled affluence and opportunity for the powerful élite globally and the global North.

Table 2 above illustrates the huge disparities globally, in terms of wealth (GDP per capita), life-expectancy, infant and child mortality rates, and basic education attainment levels. While there may be considerable variation in the level of resource distribution *within* countries and regions, as well as between them – the global poverty/resource divide remains stark.

Appendix 5

Impacts of the Cuts in ODA – Extracts from NGO Case study

Irish Aid cut its Multi-Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS) allocation to one NGDO by €30m or 26% of its MAPS II Contract (2007-2011), as set out in the table below.

Table 6: Irish Aid MAPS II grant allocation to case-study NGO: 2008-2011 (contracted/actual).

Grant from Irish Aid	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
MAPS II anticipated/contracts	18	20	24	28	29	116
Actual amount allocated:	18	20	16	16	16	86
Shortfall	-	-	7	9	13	- 30

Source: Personal Communication, interview with NGO representative, 25 May 2011. Data also available in NGO's Annual Accounts (though specific entries vary due to accounting years/timing of grant allocation received).

In addition to the MAPS funding, the NGO did received some ODA funds under Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Fund (EHAF) category. This EHAF funding, of its nature, is uncertain, as it depends on the number and severity of humanitarian crises which occur, and also on the time of year (if towards year end, likely that the budget will be largely exhausted).

Economic impacts on the NGO

Budget reductions of €30m or a scale of €1 in €4 clearly had enormous impact on the current and planned work. 'We had to redefine what we were doing in our programmes. Despite every effort to offset or mitigate the ODA cuts, severe impacts occurred, including:

- Ceased operation** in 5 countries: Zambia, Nigeria, Peru, Indonesia and Afghanistan.
- Early withdrawal** from countries: Brazil, Tanzania, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Haiti. (we returned to work in Haiti following the massive earthquake there in Jan 2010, though this latter work was mainly funded by donations for the Irish public, not Irish Aid).
In 2006, we had decided to withdraw from Tanzania in a planned manner, but had to do so precipitously due to the ODA cuts.
- Cuts** to existing programmes: **Angola**, reduced to 1 programme, and closure of office.
 - **Ceased:** a food and livelihood support programme the effect of which was that people were getting two meals a day rather than one (growing crops, irrigation). Now ceased.
- Cancelled programmes** in Bolivia, Uganda, Malawi, India, Afghanistan.
- Deferral**, or abolishing new programmes: Burundi and Sierra Leone
- Merged regions:** Merged from two to one region in Asia; significant impact.
- Link with other NGDOs:** Work in Uganda – maintained by mobilising other NGOs.
- Relationship with partner agencies under strain.** Where withdrew from countries, almost cleaner. In other countries, relationships of perhaps 20 years' standing were stretched.

These statistics mask the enormous negative impact on the lives of literally hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom are the poorest and most disadvantaged in the world.

Cultural impacts -

Efforts were made to ease the NGO's exit transitions from programmes and countries, where possible. The interviewee pointed out that it is easier to measure service delivery, where talking about purchase of seeds and tools and less easy to quantify lost momentum and lost opportunities resulting from the cuts. A significant part of the NGO's work (in line with Paris and Accra commitments) concerns civil society capacity building, governance training and accountability and human rights initiatives. In Angola, Burundi and Peru, the withdrawal of funding dissipates the momentum for change and accountability to local people, being built up over years. This has serious consequences in terms of human rights work, including the capacity of local groups (often women) to achieve land rights, access to water, security, and a say in decision-making and local democracy. The cuts cut deep!

Parallel examples from Trócaire on how its work is jeopardised by the ODA cuts are set out below (drawn from Trócaire's website, www.trocaire.org, various dates in 2010 and 2011):-

- In a clinic **outside Nairobi** we support a very successful programme **to prevent the transmission of HIV from mothers to their babies**. Last year only one child was born HIV positive in this clinic. 50 per cent of infants infected with HIV from their mothers die before their second birthday. This transmission is entirely preventable, but aid cuts could threaten this programme.
- **In Rwanda, we are helping 24,000 people who survived the genocide 15 years ago**. Families who were literally left with nothing after the war now have seeds and tools to grow enough food to feed their families and try to earn an income.
- **In India, we work with 190,000 people who need support with shelter and sanitation**, and to avoid malnutrition and send their children to school. Children will become malnourished and possibly miss out on an education if our money dries up.
- **In Zimbabwe, over 100,000 children have enough food** to eat because of our work funded through the Irish government. We may have no choice but to withdraw from this programme.
- We provide **food and shelter** to over **30,000 Burmese children** in refugee camps in Thailand, partly with government funds."

It is an unfortunate fact that in times of recession, many NGOs facing cuts in staffing and other resources find that they additionally have to divert energies into lobbying and advocacy work, precisely when there is least capacity to do so.

One NGO representative when discussing the impacts of the ODA cuts illuminated key issues in the development aid debate and its future. I quote these concluding remarks:-

...You can't change someone's life across two quarterly reports – you have to take account of the dynamics of change and particularly when its long-term fundamental structural change, and how that comes about not only as the activity of one donor agency, or two agencies, **but as the confluence of the activity** of donor governments, partner governments, bilaterals: the whole thing has to come together in a confluence of intent so that something happens and remains happening, so

I think it important that there are some underlying levels of consistency, whatever the trends may be. ... Fundamentally, the thrust must be on aiming for rights and justice and equity and equality outcomes - these have to be the longer term goal.

(NGO interviewee, May 2011).

Appendix 4

Awareness and Advocacy Campaigning

Development NGOs emphasize the need to bring centre stage in public and policy discourse a broader and deeper understanding of the structural dimensions of social justice. This includes the need for policy coherence across trade, agriculture, money and commodity markets – and adherence to Ireland’s commitments under the UN, EU conventions and the MDG Agreement to ensure “more and better aid” in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Incremental steps to achieve this and pointers for the future of Irish ODA and its impacts are outlined in sections 4 and 5. A shift in perspective and action which sees development as being about global solidarity and mutual inter-dependence is needed.

Figure 1: Different Development NGO Roles

Protection	Prevention	Promotion	Transformation
Providing relief to victims of disaster and assisting the poor	Reducing people’s vulnerability, through income diversification and savings	Increasing people’s chances and opportunities	Redressing social, political and economic exclusion or oppression
<i>‘Give a person a fish’</i>	<i>Teach her/him to fish</i>	<i>‘Organise a fishery Co-op’</i>	<i>‘Protect fishing and fishing rights’</i>




Figure 1 above gives an overview of different roles played by Irish NGOs. For example, Trócaire’s work encompasses all of these (working mainly through partner NGOs overseas), while Afri’s work is focussed on awareness-raising, lobbying, and policy and systems ‘transformation’.

Political Impacts : Advocacy campaign to stop cuts in Irish ODA

A sector-wide public awareness and public protest campaigns to try to reverse the ODA cuts, or at least to retain existing budgets and resist any further cuts planned was organised.

Figures 1 and 2: Campaign Postcards emailed to Ministers



Despite Dáil presentations, lobbying, a petition signed by 6,700 people, not alone were the initial ODA Budget cuts retained, but additional cuts followed (an initial -€224m cut, followed by a further cut of -€22m in 2009, and -€24m in 2010 and -€35m 2011).

It is the duty of government to weigh up and balance competing lobby groups and to protect the needs of minority groups and those most vulnerable and disadvantaged against those groups with loudest protest and clout. The fact that the Budget was passed in the Dáil is undeniable (Vote 29), however, it is of interest to know where the lobby for these particular cuts came from – and what backing and mandate it receives.

Appendix 5

Human Rights Development Framework

Many in the Development aid sector locate their work in the ‘common ground’ of a commitment to human rights, structural justice, and equality.

The **right to development** is strongly advocated in Catholic Social Teaching tradition and is also at the heart of the human rights framework and is rooted in international law. Indeed, the formal international commitments to ODA are intended precisely to give effect to the UN framework of international human rights and to the Millennium Development Goals targeted for full realisation by 2015.

Since the first Human Development Report (HDR) in 1990, there has been considerable consensus at UN and OECD levels that poverty refers not only to material deprivation, but also to aspects of social, economic and political exclusion. Dóchas quotes the HDR below:- **opportunities available to the poor, and protecting their human rights’ (HDR, 1990).**

At base, ODA is about the global poverty divide and governments’ official response to same. The understandings of development and justice prevalent in a particular society shape the nature of that response – whether perceived as benevolent ‘aid’, an acknowledgement of universal human rights to be upheld, or a commitment to policy coherence domestically and internationally delivered through bilateral and multilateral partnerships.

Final Comments

Full implementation of Ireland’s ODA commitments as proposed above, would give impetus to attainment of the MDGs. It would also enhance the moral voice and credibility of Ireland in its proud tradition as a leader in the development arena, domestically and internationally.

The deepening mutual accountability and policy coherence by Irish Aid and its NGDOs, civil society, and programme partners at home and abroad (as per recommendations above) could create the necessary political will to deliver on Irish ODA commitments, and create engaged citizens who can help lead the Development agenda internationally.

