

Key Decisions

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Set out below are some of the key decisions taken in this White Paper. These decisions reinforce the good practice which already exists across the Irish Aid programme and set out new initiatives and areas of activity.

Key Decisions	Our Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Africa will remain the principal geographic focus for Irish Aid. (See p.88) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We have simplified the funding mechanisms for non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This will make the funding mechanisms at once more user-friendly to the wide-ranging needs of these diverse organisations and rigorous and robust enough to ensure accountability for the taxpayer. (See p.75)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will increase the number of key partner countries in which we work. In the medium-term, we will increase the number of partner countries from eight to ten. Malawi will be the first country so designated. (See p.73) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will intensify our cooperation with United Nations funds and programmes to ensure accountability and value for money, as well as consistency with our approach to development assistance and with our support for UN reform. (See p.79)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will deepen our focus on working in fragile states. Building on our existing activities, including our role in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, we will focus our efforts on Sierra Leone and Liberia, both countries with hugely challenging operating environments. (See p.73) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will work to improve the quality of European Union (EU) aid and the effectiveness of its delivery. (See p.81)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > While Africa remains our main focus, we will respond to need in other parts of the world. To this end, we will build a regional programme in South East Asia; working from our most recently designated key partner country, Vietnam. (See p.90) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Irish Aid and the Department of Finance will work closely together to integrate a strong development perspective into the positions taken by Ireland in the international financial institutions. (See p.84)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will develop regional programmes in Southern Africa and in West Africa, to address challenges which do not respect national borders, such as the spread of disease and food insecurity. (See p.89) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > In our partner countries, we will maintain a mix of aid delivery methods: we will work at local, regional and national levels, taking into account the particular circumstances of each country. (See p.72)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will provide assistance to the African Union and other regional organisations in Africa, to support efforts to tackle the challenges facing the continent. (See p.88) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Where possible, we will move towards five-year funding cycles with our key partners, including governments, non-governmental organisations and multilateral organisations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The promotion of human rights, directly and indirectly, will continue to be central to Ireland's foreign policy and all the work of Irish Aid. (See p.59) 	

Key Decisions Preventing and Responding to Humanitarian Emergencies

- > In order to respond more effectively to sudden-onset emergencies, we will develop a **Rapid Response Initiative** (See p.35), which will include:
 - The pre-positioning and transportation of humanitarian supplies to disaster areas, as appropriate
 - The availability of a roster of highly-skilled individuals, from the public and private sectors, including from the Defence Forces, for deployment at short notice to emergency situations
 - Enhancing the emergency capacities of international humanitarian response agencies and mechanisms

The Rapid Response Initiative will complement our contribution to broader UN and EU initiatives.
- > We will support **the unique coordinating role of the UN** in responding to humanitarian crises. Our support for the new UN Central Emergency Response Fund is a strong signal of this support and we will continue to support the work of the new Fund. (See p.34)
- > We will establish a **Hunger Task Force**, drawing together public and private sector expertise, to examine the particular contribution Ireland can make to tackling the root causes of food insecurity, particularly in Africa. The Hunger Task Force will be asked to report within six months of its establishment. (See p.52)
- > We will assist developing countries in preparing to deal with the impact of humanitarian disasters. (See p.34-38)

Key Decisions Building Government Capacity & Accountability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will support institutions and organisations in developing countries that promote governance, democracy and human rights in order to ensure more responsible and effective government. (See p.59-61) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will support the development of a diverse and independent civil society in our programme countries and encourage governments there to facilitate greater civil society participation and partnership in development planning. (See p.41 & 77)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will support our partners in the fight against corruption and will work with other donors, international organisations and civil society to ensure that our development assistance continues to reach the poor and those in greatest need. (See p. 39-42) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will actively support the development of free and independent media in our partner countries as an important actor in the promotion of accountability and good governance. (See p.78)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will engage with the African Union about how best to support the African Peer Review Mechanism, which provides scrutiny of the economic and political governance of African countries by other African Governments. In particular, we will look at how to support the implementation of the recommendations of these reviews at the national level. (See p.40) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will increase our support for gender equality measures, with a specific focus on preventing and responding to gender-based violence. (See p.61-62)

Key Decisions Trade and Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will continue to advocate a better trade deal for Least Developed Countries. (See p.55 & 65) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will provide increased support for private sector development in our programme countries. An independent not-for-profit business development organisation, Traidlinks, is being established with Irish Aid support, to help promote business relationships between the Irish private sector and the private sector in developing countries. (See p.106)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will support multilateral 'Aid for Trade' initiatives for Least Developed Countries to help build their capacity to trade and to take account of the impact of multilateral trade agreements. (See p.66) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will increase our financial support for initiatives which promote fair and ethical trade, including support for efforts in Ireland to raise awareness of these issues. (See p.66) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will explore the value and feasibility of creating an Irish development bank. (See p.115)

Key Decisions Investing in People – The Social and Productive Sectors

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We are committed to developing programmes that address the key causes of illness and poor health among the poorest and most vulnerable people and to strengthening health systems in the poorest countries. (See p.45) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will support activities across the programme to increase access to safe water and basic sanitation. (See p.63) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will spend at least €100 million per year combating HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases in developing countries. (See p.48) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > In line with the national development plans of our key partner countries, we will look at funding productive infrastructure projects, where appropriate and sustainable, with the aim of facilitating economic growth. (See p.29) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will maintain our focus on the provision of high-quality primary education, situated within comprehensive national education plans. (See p.43) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Irish Aid currently provides fellowships to more than 100 students a year from developing countries to enable them to study in Ireland or in institutions in their home regions. We will conduct a major review of the fellowship programme to ensure that it continues to serve as a capacity-building tool for our partner countries. (See p.44) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We will fund health research by Irish, international and developing country research institutions focussed on the specific health needs of the poorest countries. (See p.47) | |

Key Decisions Cross-Cutting Issues: Gender, Environment, HIV/AIDS and Governance

- > Four issues cut across and inform all of the work of Irish Aid: Gender, Environment, HIV/AIDS and Governance. These issues will be mainstreamed into the work of Irish Aid. This means that they will be taken into account in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all of our interventions. This integration, or mainstreaming, is complementary to specific actions we take in each of the four areas.

Key Decisions Peace, Security and Development

- > We will work to develop a distinctive role for Ireland in the areas of **conflict-prevention and resolution and peace-building**, drawing from our political, diplomatic and aid experience and resources. (See p.58)
 - A dedicated Unit for Conflict Analysis and Resolution will be established in the Department of Foreign Affairs
 - The Unit will be tasked with investigating and reporting on selected conflicts. It will analyse and draw lessons from conflict-resolution processes elsewhere, offer authoritative information on the Irish peace process to others and, where appropriate, the unit will assist the Government to play a direct role in facilitating peace processes and supporting reconstruction
 - The Unit will also work with civil society and academic institutions, with a view to ensuring that Ireland's reserves of knowledge and experience in conflict issues are drawn on and further developed
- > We have provided financial support to the newly-established UN **Peace Building Commission**. We will support the evolving work and role of the Commission in the post-conflict reconstruction of states and societies. (See p.57)
- > We will continue to play our part in UN-approved **peace-support operations** around the world, including in Africa. (See p.57)

Key Decisions Irish Aid and the Irish Public

- > We will invite the **Oireachtas to establish a new Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Irish Aid**, replacing the previous Committee on Foreign Affairs. (See p.105)
- > We will establish a **new Inter-Departmental Committee on Development**, to be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or, in his absence, by the Minister of State responsible for Irish Aid, to strengthen coherence in the Government's approach to development and to make best use of the expertise and skills available across the public service. (See p.96)
- > We will invite the Oireachtas to put in place the necessary arrangements for **regular development debates in the Dáil and in the Seanad**. Such debates will promote more political discussion about international development cooperation and the important role Ireland can play. (See p.105)
- > We will open an **Irish Aid Information and Volunteering Centre** to make more and better information available to the public about volunteering opportunities for **individuals, institutions and communities** across Ireland. (See p.105) The Volunteering Centre will also manage those volunteering opportunities for which Irish Aid has direct responsibility, including **internships** within Irish Aid and placements through the **UN Volunteers** programme.
- > We will continue to provide support for **development education** at primary, secondary and tertiary level in Ireland and through informal channels of education. (See p.107)
- > We will launch a new scheme to help **build strong links between schools** in Ireland and schools in developing countries. This will help young people in Ireland to understand more fully the nature and scale of global development challenges. Applications for funding under this new scheme will be invited towards the end of 2006. (See p.106)
- > To ensure continuing strong public support, it is essential that the public are aware of the achievements of their aid programme. We will, therefore, increase and enhance our **public information activities**, to strengthen public ownership and awareness of the programme, including through the launch of a major public information campaign. (See p.107)
- > We will develop a programme for more strategic engagement between Irish Aid and **higher education and research institutes** in Ireland. Rollout of the programme will begin in 2007. (See p.106)
- > We will provide financial support for **events to mark Africa Day, 25 May**, in order to promote a more positive and comprehensive understanding of Africa in Ireland. (See p.89)

