

Irish and EU Development Cooperation Policies: Priorities for Ireland's Presidency

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In light of the Ireland's upcoming presidency of the EU (July-December 1996) this paper looks at the coherence between Irish development cooperation policy and that of the European Union. After a brief comment on the Irish Aid Strategy Plan, the article concentrates on the lack of coherence between certain aspects of development policies being followed at national and at EU levels. Specific examples of policy incoherence are highlighted under five areas: trade, food security, the arms trade, human rights and democratisation, and debt and structural adjustment. The article concludes by identifying a number of recommendations for dealing with these which are priorities for action during Ireland's EU presidency.

Introduction

Ireland's history of colonisation, famine and migration as well as its tradition of military neutrality on the international stage makes it well placed to bring its own vision to bear on foreign policy and development cooperation. Unlike the famous

definition of foreign policy of Hans Morgenthau,¹ which saw foreign policy as the pursuit of power, the Irish Minister of State with responsibility for Development Cooperation, Joan Burton, has stated that "Irish foreign policy has been and continues to be aimed at preventing conflict, promoting development, economic growth and co-operation, controlling the supply of arms and promoting disarmament".²

During the past decade much of the debate and dialogue around the Irish Aid programme centred on the quantity of such aid rather than wider foreign policy concerns. Ireland joined the OECD Development Assistance Committee in 1985. Expenditure on overseas development assistance (ODA) hit a record high of 0.28% of GNP the following year before falling to a low of 0.16% in 1992. This low point has been consistently improved on since then as two successive governments have committed themselves to increasing the level of ODA as a percentage of GNP towards the UN target of 0.7%. In 1994 ODA totalled £75.2 million³ and it is estimated to reach £89 million in 1995.⁴

This growth in ODA has coincided with a massive rise in the incidence and scope of complex emergencies, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Given its long-term focus Irish Aid has begun to take into account the urgent need to earmark funds for rehabilitation programmes in Africa (eg in Somalia, Rwanda and Mozambique) and elsewhere. At European Union (EU) level resources for emergency and rehabilitation are increasingly being seen as competitors rather than complementary to long-term development assistance. However, it is worth noting that although the numbers affected by emergencies have risen, so too have the absolute numbers of poor. On present trends the numbers living in poverty worldwide could reach 1.5 billion by 2025.⁵

With an expanded ODA budget and as the Aid programme matures, there is now space for a deeper discussion on its quality, the values which underlie it, and how these relate to broader national and EU policies. A clear articulation of the vision and value basis for Irish Aid would allow the government to take more informed and politically courageous decisions. While this paper argues the case for coherence between various aspects of the Irish Aid Strategy Plan, and between national and EU development policies, this should be done in the context of promoting the values which underlie the Irish Aid programme. It should also be carried out in a transparent way. The author does not mean to overstate the influence of Ireland's development cooperation policy at EU level, but rather to

highlight a few strategic areas where initiatives could be undertaken.

The Irish Aid Strategy Plan – 1993-97

The government's Strategy Plan – "Irish Aid: Consolidation and Growth" states that the primary aim of the Aid programme is the fulfilment of "basic needs, particularly of the more disadvantaged sections of the population, and to contribute to long-term economic and social development".⁶ More broadly, issues of need, self-reliance, partnership, and gender and the environment are stated to underpin ODA.⁷

Economic benefits to Ireland are stated to be of secondary importance. Further, the strategy aims at tackling the root causes of poverty of which famine and hunger are the best known symptoms. Many examples exist of the Irish government's commitment to building up the local capacity and self-reliance of those in receipt of Irish Aid such as supplying a team of local consultants in Ethiopia to provide technical support. The primary focus of bilateral aid on Africa reflects the fact that poverty alleviation remains a core objective of Irish Aid.

That said some inconsistencies do arise in the plan. Although any domestic economic benefits that accrue from the Irish Aid programme are broadly viewed by the government as a welcome spin-off, the programme is not tailored around their maximisation. There is one important exception to this. In the case of bilateral emergency assistance the plan states that taking account of the needs of individual situations and the cost effectiveness of emergency assistance operations, every effort will be made to ensure that as many as possible of the material, medicine, food products, blankets and equipment provided by emergency assistance are Irish made.⁸ Instead, a commitment to ensure the maximum possible usage of goods produced within the disaster affected area would be more appropriate if the goal of fostering self-reliance and local capacity building is to be consistently pursued. This inconsistency is ironic given that the Strategy Plan states elsewhere that "the reasons for giving ODA are first and foremost humanitarian".⁹ If such a policy is not amended one can expect this to become a growing contradiction as the demands for emergency assistance have been expanding over the past few years.

Part of the mandate for government foreign policy is to educate the public on its purpose, objectives and impact. The

Strategy Plan¹⁰ notes the importance of development education but devotes only two paragraphs to it. While public support for development NGOs and development cooperation in general remains very strong, it is also true that people's perceptions of the underlying causes of underdevelopment are sometimes limited to a traditional charity model, which the growth in complex emergencies and the media coverage of same is likely to reinforce. A policy document to set out the government's framework and objectives for development education and the values and philosophy which will inform its operation is essential. Human rights education should be an important aspect of this, especially given the setting up of a Human Rights Unit in the political division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the human rights work being done by Irish NGOs in this area. The National Committee for Development Education draft policy paper on development education, formulated after a process of consultations, workshops, surveys and needs assessment among a wide variety of interest groups is an important step towards a broader government policy document.

Thus the Plan represents a good first step in putting Aid policy into a single document. However, a closer examination of how various components of Irish Bilateral Aid relate to one another, such as the linkages between emergency, rehabilitation and long-term development assistance, and the links between human rights and humanitarian interventions is necessary. That said, building up the coherence between various aspects of Bilateral Aid is underway. Ensuring coherence between Irish bilateral and EU multilateral development agendas remains a much greater challenge which the next section will illustrate.

Ireland and the EU: contrasting concerns

Ireland's decision to join the EU in 1973 significantly broadened the number of developing countries with whom it had diplomatic links and expanded the number of channels for development cooperation. Since then the EU's position as a global power bloc and the single largest source of ODA (when one includes EU multilateral and member country ODA) has been steadily growing, particularly in the wake of the end of the cold war. This provides the EU with the opportunity and the responsibility to offer leadership in the global fight to tackle poverty.

However, instead of taking up this challenge the reverse is happening. It now appears that the EU is disengaging itself from many parts of the South, most notably Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Despite an increase in EU membership the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of Lomé IV brought no real increase in resources.¹¹ Differences among member states views contributed to this. For example, although Ireland increased its aid under Lomé IV the UK, Germany and the Netherlands refused any real increase. Referring to the draft 1996 budget the Development Committee rapporteur stated that "the Council's proposal constitutes a policy reversal which has no equivalent in the history of the Community's development policy".¹²

Article 130u, Title XVII of the Treaty on EU union which deals with development cooperation lists the campaign against poverty and the creation of sustainable development, particularly in the poorest developing countries as two of its three main priorities. In addition to this, the emphasis on consolidating democracy and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms was welcomed by development NGOs as necessary to secure sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

The EU has also put in place mechanisms to safeguard the fight against poverty from the negative impact of other policies. Article 130v removes the right of other sector policies to claim innocence when they produce a negative developmental impact. Thus policies on adjustment, trade, human rights and debt should at least not contradict the development cooperation aims of poverty alleviation and sustainable development, or at best work to reinforce these efforts. This is further consolidated by the Treaty's insistence on the smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy. However, the assumption being made by the Council and Commission seems to be that structural adjustment policies (see page 94) as they stand are unavoidable, and ignore their negative impact on poverty alleviation and the feminisation of poverty towards which they contribute.

In light of Treaty Articles outlined above both the Commission and the Council of Ministers have a strong mandate to follow the sustainable development path in North-South relations which they often preach. NGOs are monitoring them in their progress and while they find the Maastricht Treaty's Articles on development cooperation laudable, they are also concerned that the Council and the Commission's approach is leaning heavily in favour of a market-led approach to development.

This is especially evident in recent EU policy papers on Asia.¹³ In terms of policy the Union has yet to define a development model which is people-centred rather than purely market oriented. This includes a role for a responsible state sector rather than relying exclusively on free market forces and for that matter on NGOs (the private non-profit sector).¹⁴ What is vital according to many European NGOs is sustainable growth coupled with investment in people – indeed the evidence is compelling that the provision of education, health and nutrition have huge payoffs in terms of poverty reduction.¹⁵ European NGOs have also stated that incorporating a gender dimension into all such policies is essential.

Given the policy directions set out above, it is disillusioning to discover that the EU is not matching its fine words with its financial commitments. It is more a case of the money coming – too little and after a long time lag. The 8th European Development Fund (EDF) took many extra months to negotiate which in itself would indicate a lack of interest in the situation in the countries affected.

In the following sections a number of policy areas where incoherences arise between EU practice and the objectives of Irish development cooperation are examined, and the findings are used to make some recommendations to address them.

Trade

As matters stands trade policies cost developing countries some \$600 billion in foreign exchange earnings foregone.¹⁶ The Irish Aid Strategy Plan identifies the lack of sufficient market access for developing country products onto industrial country markets as a barrier to development. The introduction notes that: “As well as an appropriate Aid Programme we recognise that support is required for policies which will allow the economies of developing countries to grow, in particular for improved access to markets and a greater say for the poorer countries in the issues of world trade”.¹⁷

Given that the EU accounts for 45% of world trade as against only 17% for the US the combined clout of its members in the global trade arena is immense.¹⁸ The Union supports export led growth as an ingredient of SAPS in developing countries so it also follows that the EU must not adopt a fortress mentality but actively encourage production and trade from the South into the

European market. Under Lomé, the EU extends certain trade privileges to 70 ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) states, many of whom are classified as least developed countries and who continue to depend on primary products, the terms of trade for which are variable. However, under the new economic dimension to Lomé the focus is shifting from trade preferences to encouraging competitiveness, (in part due to pressure from the World Trade Organisation), and ACP states are concerned that the question of access to an enlarged EU has not been dealt with.

Development NGOs argue that the EU needs to develop methods of supporting terms of trade for certain products through instruments such as international commodity agreements. In addition EU support for diversification programmes and the dismantling of escalating tariffs that militate against an increase in the value added to primary products in developing countries would further assist in this.

The EU has also failed to honour the spirit of the Uruguay Round agreement on the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA). Though agreeing to gradually reduce tariffs on imports it simultaneously reduced the volume of imports eligible for liberalisation.¹⁹ The renewal of the Lomé Convention in November 1995 saw a cut in duties on agricultural imports, though these were not extended to the more sensitive goods which compete with production in the EU, e.g. olives, lemons and wine.²⁰

In light of the trade policy outlined above Ireland could support greater access to an enlarged EU under Lomé and an expansion in the number of products covered. In addition NGOs are pushing at EU level for "Fair Trade", i.e. trade that ensures that the producers in the South can earn an adequate living, where working conditions at least do not encroach on workers' human rights, where production is ecologically and economically sustainable, etc. Fair trade is a core component in supporting sustainable development and is something which Irish customers have already shown support for through their purchase of fairly traded products such as coffee.

European NGOs have pointed out that to advance this the EU must simplify import procedures that act as non-tariff barriers (NTBs) in order that small producers would be enabled to expand their market share. Otherwise the falling share of the ACP states in EU trade is likely to continue.²¹

Food security and agricultural policy

Since its foundation the UN has identified access to adequate food as a universal human right and as a collective responsibility. However, 800 million people are chronically undernourished, among whom are more than 200 million children under the age of five. In a recent Dáil statement Minister Burton pointed out that "the Irish Government has sought to make it [food security] a growing and priority sector in terms of Irish Aid."²² Also, back in November 1994 the EU Development Council adopted a resolution stating that food security including nutrition issues should be adopted as a guiding principle underlying development programmes".

Ireland's contribution to food security instruments is in some cases made under an overall EU contribution, eg under the 1995 Food Aid Convention. NGOs have recognised that the proposed EU food aid regulation coming before the December 1995 EU Development Council represents a step towards strengthening food aid and security policy of the EU.²³

Despite some positive statements and initiatives the fact remains that EU agricultural sector policies and interests show up stark conflicts between development and other objectives. For example, some of the EU and member state export policies are entirely incompatible with development. Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) there are two different groups of products: dairy products and cereals for which there is a shortage in Southern countries; and sugar and beef for which the EU has changed from being a net importer to a net exporter. Structural overproduction under CAP undermines the export markets for non-subsidised third world exporters, thus reducing export earnings, household incomes and undermining smallholder producers by flooding local markets, as the example of beef dumping in the Western Sahel in 1994 showed.²⁴

Food security goes beyond food production. Support for access to food and fair distribution are equally important. At a macro level the subsidies on basic foods consumed by the poor act as a better social safety net than piecemeal development projects. Yet often these are the first to be removed under structural adjustment programmes, leading to suffering and social unrest, as food riots in Zambia and the former Soviet Union have shown. Further the distribution of land rights and putting agricultural sector support systems in place covering

credit for small scale farmers and technical assistance should be a central consideration.

The scope for closer donor coordination regarding food aid policies needs to be examined. The possibility of establishing a food security council ensuring coordination between the EU, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Bank and the World Food Programme could usefully be investigated by the European Union. Again, should the Irish government choose to focus EU minds on this issue during its presidency, this would be a worthwhile commemoration for those who perished in the Irish Famine one hundred and fifty years on. Further it could tap the considerable expertise of NGOs and others in this area. If this were done it would place Irish Aid's prioritisation of food security and the work of all four of these international bodies, to which Ireland contributes, into a better framework.

As president Ireland will head the European Union delegation to the UN/FAO World Food Summit in November 1996, the first such conference in twenty years, with its primary objective of promoting food security. If food security is made a major priority during the Irish EU presidency then the Union could have a major and positive impact on decisions taken at this conference.

The arms trade

The global trade in weapons is the most sinister obstacle to development and peace. While at EU level there is a plethora of regulations around trade in all sorts of items no single code of conduct has been agreed on the arms trade. Irish and European NGOs are calling for the harmonisation of European arms export controls at the level of the most stringent restrictions in force.²⁵

Further for this harmonisation to work effectively it must also be part of a wider international code of conduct building on existing UN and other international measures. Enhancing the effectiveness of the UN Register on Conventional Arms Transfers and broadening the range of weapons it covers would also curb the arms trade. It is worth noting that two EU members are permanent members of the UN Security Council and the EU is the single largest contributor to the UN budget, thus giving it a significant amount of influence in that body on any issue, including the arms trade. That said some EU members are still major suppliers of weapons on which jobs and domestic

economic growth are built. Thus, tackling the arms issue requires a twin-track approach including converting European arms industries to other uses.

NGOs, including Irish NGOs, are also calling on all EU members to establish a legal ban on the use, manufacture, stockpiling, sale and transfer of all anti-personnel landmines under national legislation. If the Irish government, (which has already come out strongly in favour of an international ban and is funding mines clearance programmes), were to legislate for a unilateral ban on anti-personnel mines this could provide a lead for other countries. Belgium, a former exporter of mines, has already done so. Clearly, at present the EU does not speak with one voice in this issue, with the UK being the most vociferous and consistent in its opposition to a total ban.

The spectacle of EU humanitarian aid being used to clear landmines while a number of member states have been exporting mines to the developing world has been highlighted as a scandal. Behaviour such as this smacks of double standards rather than policy incoherence. In the case of Nigeria, which has been the subject of a voluntary EU ban on arms sales, claims have been made that the UK Ministry of Defence has issued thirty licences for arms exports to Nigeria since December 1993. Other EU member countries who have sold arms to Nigeria are Austria, France, Italy, Germany and Sweden according to the London based World Development Movement.²⁶

If a binding international code of conduct was in place parliamentarians, NGOs, the media and the public would be in a position to monitor governments' export practices on the basis of objective standards.²⁷ The Irish government has a vested interest in promoting this code given its commitment to peace-building and disarmament at home.

Human rights and democracy

The Irish Aid Strategy Plan states that "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to enable popular participation in development has become one of the core elements underlying the cooperation policies of the (European) Community.... Ireland fully supports the policy of the European Community on human rights and democracy.... Ireland favours positive measures which would favour those countries which respect human rights and the basic principles of democracy."

Further the European Commission has stated that "Democratization is ... an essential component of any anti-poverty strategy in developing countries".²⁸ The Irish government has put forward a similar view: "there is general acceptance of the connection between human rights, democracy and development".²⁹

Backing up these statements the Irish government's creation of a human rights and democratisation budget line and support for electoral processes in a number of African countries, coupled with the EU's emphasis on democracy, human rights and good governance in the Lomé Mid Term Review are to be welcomed. There is also a fear that the human rights debate has focused too much on sanctions and the suspension clause around the Lomé agreement, and too little on allocating resources to support democratisation and human rights advancement. Moreover, at EU level applying a consistent approach to human rights protection and promotion equally among Lomé members and at the broader international level has proved problematic in the case of decisions to withhold aid from governments renegeing on principles of good governance and respect for human rights. In the case of Indonesia, while the Netherlands withdrew support France increased her levels of support.

In the wake of the Cold War it is quite feasible to deal with Zaire or Sudan with swift measures. In the case of Nigeria vested economic interests in relation to oil revenues have thus far meant that the EU has resisted calls to impose an oil embargo. At the same time, given the huge potential market China offers, there appears to be a marked reluctance to deal with similar issues there. As the EU is making great overtures to build up its relationship with Asian states these anomalies are being more readily voiced. Helmut Kohl has already gone as far as referring to a "special model of society where economic performance has a higher value than the promotion of individual rights" when speaking about Asia.³⁰

The EU's role in the field of human rights is still in its infancy. Given this it is possible for the Irish government to contribute to the fundamental principles which should underpin this area of concern. At national level the new human rights unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs is an ideal vehicle for devising ways of tackling policy incoherences and inconsistent practices at national and EU levels.

The Unit can also work to strengthen common and positive policy approaches in this area. It also offers scope for more effective dialogue with Southern governments, which coupled

with similar dialogue and greater information exchange with NGOs working in the South will strengthen Ireland's input into European debates around human rights issues.

If the EU is truly serious in wanting to promote human rights and democratisation, it needs to allocate additional funds for this, and to take a broader approach covering socio-economic rights as the next section outlines. A challenge facing the Irish presidency is to push for much more progress in this regard.

Debt and structural adjustment: Ireland's role in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank

At the present the core policies of these two international financial institutions (IFIs) centre on structural adjustment. However, structural adjustment is often at odds with the long term policies required to satisfy people's basic human needs and rights such as health, education, food security and employment. The World Bank itself has stated that "we need to focus on priority and policy actions to reduce hunger now even if all other aspects of poverty are not resolved".³¹ In terms of spending on basic needs the World Bank is a huge player and is now moving into first place as the global agency most influencing health policy, even ahead of the World Health Organisation.³² Yet the economic policies which these IFIs are promoting under structural adjustment conditionalities are undermining basic social services including health care.

The IFIs are dominated by the finance ministers of the G7, four of whom are also EU members. For this reason it is difficult to develop a united European position promotive of a radically different stance to that of the World Bank and IMF. However, by the same token should the EU challenge the stance being adopted it would have enormous leverage. It is therefore disappointing that the European Commission insists that there shall be no duplication of programmes and hence seems to implicitly accept SAPs as the blueprints for which EU aid programmes compensate.

Instead of this approach the EU could utilise its position to coordinate the views of member states in international fora such as the World Bank, IMF and Paris Club (bilateral creditor

country) negotiations. The NGO Liaison Committee of the European Communities has noted that Article 130x of the Maastricht Treaty obliges members to coordinate such policy positions. Further Ireland's Minister for Development Cooperation, Joan Burton, has stated that the government's aim is "to make progress on the debt to the Multilateral Financial Institutions such as the IMF".³³ However, the political will at EU level seems to be sadly lacking in this regard.

The EU's 8th EDF will amount to only 65% of the scheduled debt repayments by ACP states to EU members between 1995 and the year 2000.³⁴ For ACP states (all Ireland's priority aid countries come from this grouping), the share of export earnings going to debt service between 1991 and 1992 rose from 21% to 23% while total debt stocks to GNP increased from 111% to 124%. It can be argued that debt owed to the EU is a relatively low proportion of the total debt of ACP states, especially since 1990 most Lomé aid has been in grant form. However, there has been no initiative to cancel loans incurred under previous Lomé Conventions. Twenty eight ACP states owe the EU a total of ECU1,485 million (IR£1,188 million). Only four of these countries are considered not to have a debt problem.³⁵

The cancellation of such debt is not a revolutionary idea. Back in 1990 Manuel Marin, EU Commissioner for Development proposed the cancellation of all outstanding ACP debt to the EU. While the parliament and EU-ACP Joint Assembly agreed with this proposal, the member states (particularly Germany and the UK) strongly opposed it and were able to veto this.

In 1994 during the Mid-Term Review of Lomé IV the Commission insisted that it was not an appropriate player in global debt management and that this should be left to the World Bank and the IMF. Two main reasons given for the negative response by member states towards dealing with proposals on debt were that this is more appropriately the role of the World Bank, IMF and Paris Club and that such an approach would not link debt relief to SAPs which is a common conditionality. However, a country's commitment to poverty reduction and social development objectives (such as the voluntary 20:20 compact agreed and promoted by many EU member states at the UN Social Summit)³⁶ could be used as the core criteria for receiving such relief, rather than adherence to SAPs which fail to promote such objectives. Another aspect could be putting in place structures for NGOs and communities to input into adjustment policies to give more attention to meeting basic needs.

European and Irish NGOs have come together in networks such as EURODAD to support the ACP position on the need for urgent action on their debt. If ending EU intransigence on overall ACP debt proves impossible then initially the focus could be on a sub-group of severely indebted low income countries, and the present conditionality of orthodox structural adjustment linked to debt relief replaced by sustainable adjustment with a human face.³⁷ It is alarming to note that November 1995 saw changes to the EU list of "least advanced countries" within the ACP to include, amongst others, Zambia, a priority Irish Aid country and one which has been undergoing structural adjustment for some time. In line with its statements on the urgent need for innovative solutions to the debt crisis and various statements critiquing aspects of structural adjustment, the Irish government at EU level can press for action on the ACP debt owed to the EU, which would of course benefit a number of our priority aid countries. Having done this the EU would be in a stronger position (in terms of its own policy credibility) to instigate similar moves at the level of the IFIs.

The Irish Debt and Development Coalition (comprising more than 70 NGOs, solidarity and religious groups) has urged the government to push for the cancellation of the debt of severely indebted low income countries and to use any leverage it has in this regard through the EU. Linking such debt cancellation to EU policy on human rights and democratisation would also imply positive conditionality such as using the money saved on social rather than military expenditure. While the Coalition has reservations about the proposed (unofficial though it was leaked) Multilateral Debt Facility of the World Bank, it views it as something which can be built on as it at least recognises the unsustainability of the debt.

Ireland's Governor on the IFIs, Minister for Finance Ruairi Quinn stated after attending their October 1995 AGM his hope that "concrete proposals would be put forward on an agreed basis by both the institutions to deal effectively with the debt problem" at the next meeting in Spring 1996. Whether this happens or not the Irish government has an opportunity to push these issues, especially as it will be an Irish Minister for Finance who will present the statement on behalf of the EU at the 1996 AGM of the Bank and Fund.

Conclusion

As the arguments put forward highlight, the impact of the debt crisis, CAP reform, trade and other policies on development cooperation is both significant and increasing. Policy decisions have become more complex and inter-related at national and EU level.

Conflicts (potential or actual) between EU and bilateral cooperation policies, some of which have been outlined above also need to be addressed. The forthcoming Irish Presidency and the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) of the EU are an opportunity to further this process. The EU should aim to introduce a new style of development cooperation with all developing countries (including newer development partners in Asia and Latin America) building on the positive aspects and lessons from the Lomé Convention, thus encouraging partner consultation and participation by civil society. The movement away from Africa as a central area of development cooperation policy at EU level has been highlighted. This needs to be halted and the Irish presidency offers an opportunity to bring the situation in Africa back centre stage and in so doing ensure compatibility between Ireland's bilateral aid programme which is concentrated on Africa and multilateral aid through the EU. Within this a special focus on supporting democratisation, strengthening civil society and rehabilitation in the wake of complex emergencies could be adopted.

The EU should also recognise the role of decentralised actors like NGOs in capacity building, policy dialogue and not just as sub-contractors who implement policies. Given Ireland's and the EU's adoption of stronger policies on human rights and democratisation, which coincide with the rapid growth in complex emergencies, their joint efforts to strengthen civil society, and to promote democratic structures can provide the most effective solution to such emergencies.

EU coordination with the IFIs should be put on the agenda of finance ministers who represent their respective nations on these bodies. As a block the EU accounts for 25% of voting power at the IFIs (more than either the USA or Japan). The EU should enter a dialogue with Southern governments and NGOs on its potential role in and approach to these institutions. Given the strong NGO sector in Ireland, the Irish government could make a critical input in this.

Barriers to trade imposed on developing countries by the EU impose huge costs. Reference has been made to the CAP and other policies. In line with the Irish government's strategy plan

which sees trade as an engine for development, better access for processed goods, those produced by indigenous firms and measures to encourage fairly traded products should be to the fore in the government's trade policy in relation to the South.

The Irish Government should press for a solution to the debt crisis, by advocating debt cancellation for severely indebted low income countries and using such funds on social expenditure. Further, the government has a role in ensuring that orthodox structural adjustment policies introduced in the name of fiscal rectitude do not lead to the further erosion of minimal services currently in place for impoverished groups, particularly in the areas of nutrition, health and education.

The number and complexity of issues and structures, institutions and agreements which affect development co-operation have grown significantly in the context of Irish membership of the EU. The OECD in its review of Development Cooperation in Ireland³⁸ pointed out that while the Irish government has an Inter-Departmental Committee on Development Cooperation it does not play the role of ensuring policy coherence between the sectoral policies which impact on development cooperation.

The authors suggest that the rapid expansion of the Irish aid programme increases the likelihood of conflicts between various aspects of policy towards the target countries. Thus an enlarged role is recommended for the IDC. At EU level the array of directorates and bodies which impact on development co-operation adds to the urgent need for greater coherence between national and EU policies. Without this, much of the benefit of an increased Irish Aid programme could be dissipated or even lost.

Footnotes

1. Bill McSweeney, "Towards an understanding of the role of morality in dealings between nations", in *The Irish Times*, 4 October 1995
2. Dáil Proceedings, Motion on Food Aid Convention 1995, 4 October 1995, p.939
3. Tanaisre and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dick Spring, Written Answers, Dáil Éireann, 20 September 1995
4. ODA motion, Seánad Éireann, 14 June 1995, p.1946
5. Oxfam Poverty Report 1995, p.4
6. "Irish Aid: Consolidation and Growth - A Strategy Plan", Dublin, Department of Foreign Affairs, July 1993. p.12
7. *Ibid.* pp.12-13
8. *Ibid.* pp.29-30
9. *Ibid.* p.14
10. *Ibid.* p.46
11. The EDF is the funding mechanism for the 70 developing countries of ACP under successive Lomé Conventions. Lomé covers all aspects of EU-ACP relations including trade and aid, and also provides for intensified cooperation at a regional level. The EDF finances a range of development activities such as technical and emergency aid plus support to ACP states undergoing structural

- adjustment. Other EU aid is financed through the general Community budget, e.g. food aid, aid for South Africa (*Irish Aid Annual Report 1994*). During the Lomé Mid Term Review the EU and the ACP agreed that the essential role of human rights and democratisation in the developing process should be given further recognition without unduly affecting national sovereignty.
12. Euro-Cidse Bulletin July/August 1995 p.2. In October 1995 the European Parliament, which shares budgetary authority with the Council of Ministers proposed increases in the draft budget and objected to the insufficient consultation with the Parliament on the proposed cuts; *European Report*, no.2079, V, p.5, 28 October 1995
 13. When referring to Irish and European NGOs the author generally means the NGO Liaison Committee (NGO-LC) of the European Union which comprises 800 NGOs, including a number of Irish NGOs. Many of the policy suggestions in this document are taken from the NGO-LC document, "Horizon 2000", June 1995.
 14. Implementing "Horizon 2000" p.53
 15. Ibid.
 16. Ibid., p.11
 17. "Irish Aid: Consolidation and Growth", op.cit., p.2
 18. *Financial Times* 1 November 1995 p.6
 19. "Implementing Horizon 2000" p.51
 20. *The Irish Times* 3 November 1995
 21. "Implementing Horizon 2000" p.15
 22. Dail Motion on Food Aid Convention, October 1995, p.937
 23. NGO Liaison Committee Briefing, October 1995
 24. "Implementing Horizon 2000" p.17
 25. "A European Code of Conduct on the Arms Trade", March 1995
 26. European Report no. 2082, V, p.6, 7 November 1995
 27. "Implementing Horizon 2000"
 28. Ibid.
 29. Irish Aid Strategy Plan, p.9
 30. "Implementing Horizon 2000", pp.19-20
 31. World Bank Document quoted by Clive Robinson in "Food security as a case study of coherence", in GKKE/EECOD Towards Coherence in North/South Policy: the Role of the European Union, Bonn, August 1994
 32. *The Lancet*, vol.340, 1992, quoted in David Lerner "Who killed primary health care" in *New Internationalist*, October 1995, p.30
 33. Dáil written answers 27 June 1995, p.46
 34. EU/ACP Joint Assembly Resolution Brussels, 29 September 1995
 35. EURODAD Briefing Paper p.2, "Midterm review of Lomé IV: What to do with ACP debt?", November 1994, EURODAD is a network of NGOs in 16 European countries. It aims to coordinate the activities of NGOs working on the issues of debt and structural adjustment in developing countries in order to ensure that their views are brought to bear on decision-makers in Europe.
 36. The EU statement on bilateral debt in the preparatory process for the UN Social Summit proposes "to ensure urgent implementation of existing debt relief agreements and negotiate further initiatives, including existing ones, to alleviate debts of severely indebted countries at an early date".
 37. This proposed facility does not imply full cancellation, reduction, or write off/down of multilateral debt. It will decrease the stock of such debt for, in principle, 24 countries, by financing with grants from bilateral and multilateral sources over a period of 15 years their debt service or debt falling due to the IFIs. The immediate candidates for the facility are Bolivia, Guinea Bissau, Nicaragua and Uganda. Others eligible over time include Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia.
 38. OECD Development Assistance Committee, Report no.6 Ireland, 1995

