

Press Statement

Dóchas – the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

11 May 2016

Irish NGOs welcome Programme for Partnership Government and call for a whole of government approach to combat poverty and social injustice

Dóchas- the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations today welcomes the publication of the Programme for Partnership Government.

Welcoming its publication CEO of Dóchas Suzanne Keatinge says, 'We in the international development sector are encouraged to see that the Government has included in its Programme for Partnership Government a commitment to working towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).'

'We are living in a time where poverty and inequality is pervasive – in Ireland and around the world- and the Sustainable Development Goals give us a roadmap to achieve positive and meaningful change for people's lives – in Ireland and internationally. Ireland has already shown it can play a leadership role, so we have a duty to do everything possible to make this plan a reality,' says Keatinge.

The Programme for Partnership Government states: Ireland, along with Kenya, co-facilitated agreement of the new SDGs at the UN. We will work to implement the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and to promote their implementation around the world.

However, the Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations insists that more needs to be done in order to make this a reality.

'Ambitious Government action is needed, and urgently ' says Suzanne Keatinge, CEO of Dóchas. 'We are calling for a whole of government approach to achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, with room for civil society participation and with clear monitoring of progress.'

Dóchas also gave a cautious welcome to the inclusion of a commitment to 'make progress towards achieving the UN target of 0.7% of gross national product for ODA, as resources allow.'

'While we very much welcome this commitment, we have heard this before, and we would like now to see the government move to publish a concrete plan which shows how Ireland will reach the UN target of spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA by 2020. We need to remember that 0.7% is not just a number – it's teachers and hospitals and lives saved around the world. The focus also needs to remain of the quality of our aid, that it is transparent and continues to reach the most vulnerable,' says Keatinge.

Dóchas welcomes the appointment of Charlie Flanagan, TD as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

'We look forward to working with the Minister and our door is always open – our membership of over 60 NGOs represent a body of organisations committed to global justice

and human rights with extensive expertise and knowledge which can be drawn on to combat poverty and social injustices. We look forward to working with the government to achieve transformative change for poor and marginalised communities around the world,' says Suzanne Keatinge.

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Notes to the Editor:

- Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations, representing over 60 NGOs. The list of organisations in its membership can be found at: <http://dochas.ie/membership>
- The Sustainable Development Goals have particular significance for Ireland. The SDGs are 17 global goals which world leaders from 193 countries have signed up to. Ireland co-chaired the negotiation process to achieve these goals. For more information see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>
- References to ODA can be found in section 9 on page 145 of the Programme for Partnership Government
http://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme_for_Partnership_Government.pdf :

9. Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Humanitarian Aid

In the face of difficult economic challenges, we have remained strongly committed to our ODA programme, stabilising funding and recognising the crucial importance of Ireland's ODA and humanitarian response programmes. ODA was increased by 7% in Budget 2016.

A) NGO Partnerships : We will continue to closely partner with international and Irish NGOs to ensure that Irish aid funding effectively reaches those in need and has the flexibility to deal with emergencies whilst prioritising long-term outcomes from development programmes in line with the Government's 2013 international development policy, One World, One Future.

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B) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) : Ireland, along with Kenya, co-facilitated agreement of the new SDGs at the UN. We will work to implement the SDGs and to promote their implementation around the world.

C) Funding : We will continue to make progress towards achieving the UN target of 0.7% of gross national product for ODA, as resources allow.

D) Oversight : We will ensure robust oversight of Ireland's ODA budget