

Sixth meeting of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD)

19th June 2008, Room 1, Irish Aid

Summary Minutes

Introductory Points from Mr. Peter Power T.D. Minister of State for Overseas Development

Minister Power, who was chairing the Committee for the first time since his recent appointment, complimented Committee members on their work to date. He said this was reflected in the draft Report to the Minister for Foreign Affairs which the meeting would consider. He drew attention to the commitment to 'Adopt an integrated approach to development' contained in the Programme for Government. He stressed the importance of a whole of government approach, with all Government Departments working together to ensure continued effective use of Ireland's development aid budget in the provision of overseas assistance

(1) Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the fifth IDCD meeting were agreed by the Committee.

(2) Report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Minister Power presented the draft Report which had been circulated to Members and outlined its main Recommendation. The report was approved for submission to the Minister for Foreign Affairs subject to amendments to be made on foot of suggestions from the Departments of Agriculture and Education.

(3) Reports from Sub-Groups

Mr McLaughlin, Irish Aid, updated the Committee on the work of the Multilateral Organisations Sub Group, which had examined a preliminary study regarding a strategy for placing Irish personnel in such organisations, concentrating on the five main UN bodies. He reported encouraging results with a view to the elaboration of a strategy in the Autumn.

Mr Gormley, Irish Aid, reported on the Skills Sets Sub Group meeting held on 12th June. The Sub Group had considered the preliminary audit of the consultant it had engaged to conduct an audit of existing technical co-operation with a view to developing criteria/guidelines for technical cooperation, drawing from international best practice. A final report was due by the end of September. It was planned that the Director General of Irish Aid would write to Assistant Secretaries with responsibility for Personnel/Training functions in eight pilot Departments with a view to organising the overseas development awareness raising lunchtime seminars which the IDCD agreed at its April meeting.

Mr Gormley also noted that the presentation which the meeting received from Traidlinks had been very helpful in clarifying issues involved in technical assistance. Traidlinks is the not for profit organisation, funded by Irish Aid, which facilitates the development of the Ugandan private sector with the pro bono support of the Irish Private Sector.

(4) Submission from Dóchas

The IDCD considered the correspondence which had been received from Dóchas, the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations, as a follow up to their presentation to the February meeting of the Committee. It contained recommendations on how Dóchas felt the IDCD could ensure greatest impact. The IDCD noted that the Dóchas presentation and submission had provided valuable input to the IDCD's draft Report to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. As well as being taken up in the Report it was felt that the recommendations were also being reflected in the ongoing work of the IDCD. It was agreed that Dóchas should be provided with a copy of the IDCD's Report and that the Secretariat could meet them in order to apprise them of the IDCD's consideration of their recommendations.

(5) 2008 Commitment to Development Index (CDI) for Africa

Mr Gormley, Irish Aid, reported that Ireland had scored well, being ranked 2nd overall in this first regional variant of the CDI which focused on Africa and a press release had issued on same. The CDI is produced by the Washington based Centre for Global Development (CGD). Ireland's large programme of aid for Africa was noted as was our strong contribution to peacekeeping. Ireland also scored well in the migration and environmental domains. Ms Webster, Dept. of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, felt that it was slightly unfair that Ireland was marked down under the Investment heading for not providing political risk insurance as there were good grounds for Ireland's position not to do so. Mr Gormley suggested that consideration be given to inviting a representative of the CGD to address either the IDCD or one of its Sub Groups. Mr Murphy, Irish Aid, was positively disposed to this suggestion.

(6) Update on recent developments on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)

Ms Barrett provided some information on the OECD's April Synthesis Report and June Ministerial Declaration on Policy Coherence. She also informed the Committee regarding the Council Conclusions on Speeding up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals adopted at the EU Development General Affairs and External Relations Council on 26th-27th May 2008 which had included Conclusions on Policy Coherence for Development focusing on three areas (1) Climate Change/Energy/Biofuels, (2) Migration and (3) Research. She also provided information on the Institute for International Integration Studies' Seminar on Ireland and PCD which had been held in Trinity College on 8th May 2008 for Government Departments and Non Governmental Organisations. The Seminar sought to elicit feedback on the research team's findings in advance of finalising their scoping report (planned for September) identifying and ranking in importance areas of policy coherence and incoherence across Government Departments.

(7) The OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Officials, 1997

Ms Webster circulated a booklet on this Convention, published by her Department - Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The Convention is aimed at reducing corruption by encouraging sanctions against bribery in international business transactions, carried out by companies based in the Convention Member countries. Ireland's implementation of the Convention is the subject of a current OECD review. Ms Webster stressed the importance of awareness raising with regard to this Convention as Irish companies and Irish civil and public servants were legally obliged to follow its requirements. Ms Webster suggested that the IDCD could have an awareness raising role with regard to this Convention and suggested that the Department of

Justice be invited to provide an information session on the Convention at a future meeting.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in September. The Committee would receive a presentation on Defence issues in the context of development policy and the IDCD Secretariat would liaise with the Department of Defence on this in advance of the meeting.

Mary Barrett,
IDCD Secretariat,
Irish Aid,
19th June 2008.

List of Attendees

Mr. Peter Power T.D., Minister of State for Overseas Development

Director General Irish Aid, Ronan Murphy

John Murphy	Dept. Transport
Philip Doran	Dept. Defence
Lt. Col. William Dwyer	Defence Forces
Tom O'Mahony	Dept. Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Anne Webster	Dept. Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Seamus McLoughlin	Dept. of Education
Roger O'Connor	Dept. Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Marianne Nolan Dermot Quigley Alice Smith	Dept. Finance
Kevin Smyth	Dept. Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Ray O'Leary	Dept. Arts, Sport and Tourism
Philip Melville	Dept. Social and Family Affairs
Richard Holland	Dept. Taoiseach
Pat Kelly	Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Austin Gormley	Irish Aid
Mary Barrett	Irish Aid
Tom Sneyd	Irish Aid
Feilim McLaughlin	Irish Aid
Blaise Amani	Irish Aid
Amal Kaoua	Irish Aid

Apologies

Brendan Ingoldsby, Dept. of Health and Children

Brian Millane, Dept. of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs