

Tenth Meeting of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD)

26 November 2009, Conference Room, Iveagh House

Summary Minutes

Mr. Gerry Gervin, Director Multilateral Section Irish Aid initially chaired the meeting until the Minister of State for Overseas Development, Peter Power, T.D., arrived and assumed the chair

(1) Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the ninth IDCD meeting of the 22nd July, 2009, were corrected and agreed by the Committee.

(2) Departmental Statements on PCD

Mr. Gervin noted that at the last IDCD meeting on 22nd July 2009 it was agreed that each Department would prepare a draft statement on policy coherence for development for discussion at this meeting. He thanked those Departments that have made a start on writing their statements. However, he accepted that this had been an ambitious timetable and a new time frame for the completion of the statements with submission of drafts to the IDCD by early 2010 was agreed.

(3) IDCD Report

A draft 2009 IDCD annual report was circulated and the committee asked to provide corrections or comments by 17th December. The Department of Defence noted that the EU-led mission in Chad, mentioned in Section 4.4 had transitioned to a United Nations mission as of 15th March 2009.

(4) Report from Skills Sets Sub Group

Mr. Austin Gormley, Chairman of the Skills Sets Sub Group presented a report on the development awareness seminars. The purpose of these seminars was to provide an introduction to the concept of overseas development, to communicate how Irish Aid and, where appropriate, the participants own parent department are responding to the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment. In total 180 civil servants in 8 Departments attended the seminars. Feedback from participants was positive but many thought the seminars too short and Mr. Gormley noted the sub-group may have been overly ambitious in what they were trying to achieve in the seminars with such a short space of time.

The subgroup proposed a number of different ways for Departments to increase development awareness including: hosting development exhibitions from the Irish Aid Volunteering Centre; including references to relevant global development on their website or intranet pages and links to Irish Aid website; and/or nominating a focal point on overseas development awareness raising. Irish Aid will circulate an e-news bulletin; provide links on the Irish Aid website to Departmental website pages on their own development efforts and assist Departments to display temporary exhibitions or posters on the work of Irish Aid.

While Mr Gormley noted that Irish Aid does not have the capacity to organise formal training courses, Dtalk, a development and training programme supported by Irish Aid, runs a number of short-term/evening courses that may be of interest to departmental staff. A number of Universities run courses on international development.

It was agreed that two final seminars should be held in the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Defence in 2010.

Minister's Remarks-Minister of State Peter Power, T.D.

Minister of State Peter Power, T.D. assumed the chair and began by commending the continuing work of the Committee. Minister Power briefed on developments in the European Union with a bearing on the work of the committee, and in particular on Ireland's international role on the global hunger crisis.

The 17th November Council meeting of EU Development Ministers focused on a number of important issues including ODA levels, budget support, aid effectiveness, and climate change. The Council adopted Conclusions on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and it was evident that PCD is gaining momentum within both the EU and the OECD. The Minister noted that the Council Conclusions adopt a more focused, operational and results-oriented approach to policy coherence and a commitment to strengthening our dialogue with developing countries in order to make policy coherence more relevant to their needs. The conclusions identify five priority issues: trade and finance, climate change, food security, migration, and security and development. These priorities coincide well with Irish Aid's priority of hunger with its links to food security, trade, climate change and security.

The Minister informed the committee that the EU Development Ministers also discussed ODA levels in anticipation of the MDG Summit meeting in New York in September. The original EU 15 Member States remain committed to reaching the ODA target 0.51% GNI in 2010 and Minister Power conveyed his intention to work hard to ensure that Ireland's budgetary allocation meets that commitment.

(5) Climate Change and Development

The Minister focussed attention on the huge challenges posed by climate change; noting that the impact of climate change in anticipation of the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December. Minister Power cited former President Mary Robinson who estimated that by 2020 two hundred and fifty million people worldwide will be affected by climate change. Minister Power noted how the explosive cocktail of increasing population and decreasing areas of arable land due to climate change is leading to food shortages and highlighted the importance of the work of the committee in addressing this issue especially regarding financing for climate change.

Mr. Dominick O'Brien, of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, updated the committee on his department's position for the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. An EU mandate for Copenhagen was adopted in October however, DEHLG considered it unlikely a legally binding treaty would be

agreed to replace the Kyoto Protocol. In this event the EU would have to focus on a political agreement which should include adaptation financing for developing countries.

The discussion, which included input from Ms. Tara Shine a Climate Change Consultant with Irish Aid, emphasised the interlinkages between climate change and development. While it was agreed in Bali in 2007 to give new and additional funding to help developing countries to contend with Climate Change, developed countries have not lived up to their pledges and developing countries are losing their trust. A necessary focus of Copenhagen would be to convince developing countries that developed countries are serious about Climate Change.

In the current financial climate finding new and additional financing for climate change adaptation will not be easy, it will therefore be important to utilise adaptation funding effectively and to apply the lessons of 'aid effectiveness'.

(6) Report from the Multilateral Sub Group

Mr. Gervin highlighted the need for the multilateral sub-group to be re-energised and a proposal for reactivating the Multilateral Sub-group was circulated in advance of the meeting. Ms. Nicola Brennan, Multilateral Section, Irish Aid proposed that the Departments of Health and Education should join the committee whose membership currently comprises the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance, Agriculture, Defence and Social and Family Affairs. The committee should then focus on developing a more strategic whole of government approach to multilaterals with a focus on UN System Wide Coherence and a number of cross cutting issues such as Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRHR) and Climate Change.

Mr. Frank Flood, Irish Aid Volunteering & Information Centre, introduced a draft paper on Increasing Irish Representation in Multilateral & UN Agencies. The paper proposed a more strategic and proactive approach starting with a pilot scheme selecting one or two of Ireland's main UN partners and drawing up a profile of the type(s) of candidate most in demand in these agencies and then matching with Volunteering Centre's database of Irish nationals with appropriate experience and qualifications.

(7) Index of Policy Coherence Indicator

Mr. Michael King from the Institute for International Integration Studies, TCD, updated the committee on the process of developing a set of indicators to track Ireland's performance on policy coherence for development. To date the IIS met with the Departments of Environment and Justice to discuss proposed indicators and the feedback has been positive.

Mr. King noted the particular difficulty with identifying indicators for policy positions and engagement. He also noted that PCD is operating in a rapidly changing policy environment. Innovative ways of measuring policy engagement at EU and multilateral level need to be developed. The IIS hopes to have work completed by spring 2010.

During the discussion it was agreed that policy positions are difficult to measure and that in EU and other international negotiations it was necessary to conceal positions while trade-offs are made, nonetheless it is still important to be able communicate PCD indicators to the Irish public.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in the first quarter of 2010.

Inter-Departmental Committee on Development Meetings

10th Meeting 26-11-09

Department	Name
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	Sharon Murphy
Central Statistics Office	Siobhán Carey
Department of Defence	Margaret O'Leary
Defence Forces	Eamon Caulfield
Department of Education and Science	Mícheál Ó Fiannachta
Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment	Gerard Monks
	Patrick Bailey
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government	Dominick O'Brien
Department of Finance	Niamh Campbell
	Dermot Quigley
Department of Foreign Affairs	MoS Power
	Michael Gaffey
	Owen Feeney
	Gerry Gervin
	Barbara Cullinane
	Tara Shine
	Kevin Colgan
	Nicola Brennan
	Kasia Pilat
	Patrick O'Reilly
	Fiona Penollar
	Frank Flood
	Austin Gormley
	Kevin Dowling
	Carol Hannon
Ann-Marie Daly	
Department of the Taoiseach	Richard Holland
Department of Transport	John Murphy
Department of Social and Family Affairs	Philip Melville
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Gerry O'Regan