

International Development Policy

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1 Summary & Key Points

Ireland has historically contributed beyond its small economic and geographic scale in the promotion of equitable development and poverty alleviation in developing countries – originally driven by the Christian ethos of missionaries. As Ireland grew more secular and wealthier, it built on this foundation to produce the modern development policy framework that we now follow.

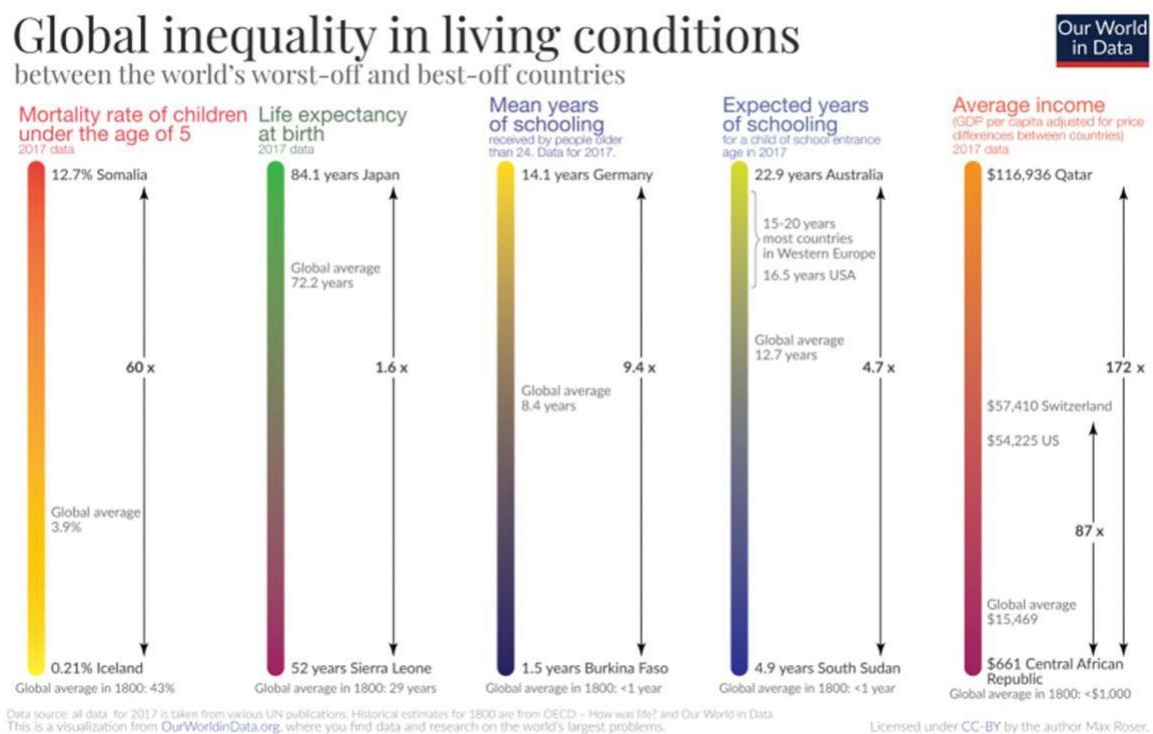
However, the Green Party's entry into a coalition Government, the rise of climate change, an increasingly complex geopolitical context, and Ireland's 2021-22 seat at the UN Security Council has prompted our working group to look afresh at the international development framework and recommend seven specific policy actions and principles, which are:

- Reaffirm our commitment to increase Ireland's spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) every year, to reach 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2025.
- Reaffirm Ireland's commitment to "co-operation" and "partnership", in international development, recognising that richer and poorer countries alike play a role in contributing to global public goods and tackling global problems. Use our position in international fora to advocate for a more democratic approach to governing international public finance.
- Strengthen our coherence across government, in line with our EU obligations on Policy Coherence for Development, to ensure other government policy is supportive of our international development efforts, and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of development policy and programming across different departments. This would include bringing greater responsibility for policy and spending under the DFA.
- Make a step-change improvement in our transparency and accountability and invest more in monitoring and learning - to improve accountability to the Irish public and to the communities and populations we are aiming to support.
- Put the climate and biodiversity crises at the core of our development co-operation. A 2020 OECD review found that "Ireland's allocations align well with its priorities, with the exception of climate change ... the share of climate-relevant actions has progressed only moderately."¹ The biodiversity crisis and other environmental damage also need greater prioritisation.
- Build on our strengths internationally on fragile and conflict-affected contexts, including by bringing our wide-ranging peacekeeping, peacebuilding and reconciliation experience and expertise into our international development work.
- Support legally binding mechanisms on Business and Human Rights in the United Nations, in the European Union, and at home to ensure human rights, biodiversity and the environment are respected across companies' value chains.

In addition to the above, Ireland's development co-operation should continue to pursue excellence in areas where it is already doing well, notably gender equality. This paper is not exhaustive, and other issues will be added in time. For now, it focuses on the most pressing challenges we have identified to help Ireland contribute to a better world for everybody on our planet, and for the planet itself.

2 Introduction

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, for the first time in 20 years global poverty levels are likely to increase, with an estimated 120 million new poor people in 2020.² Inequality among and within countries is still very high, especially in terms of living conditions. Climate change is already increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, and as temperatures continue to rise the impacts will not be linear. The poorer and more vulnerable countries that will suffer the most are also those that have contributed least to historical emissions.



Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/global-economic-inequality>.

Ireland has a long history of support to tackling poverty, insecurity, and development challenges globally, driven initially by the experiences of church missionaries and a Christian ethos. With strong commitments to multilateralism, civil society, gender equality and human rights; a focus on the least developed countries; and a growing role as advocate for sustainable development internationally, there are many strengths to build on.

This foundational policy paper focuses on a few core issues that we believe are most urgent to address to improve the relevance and effectiveness of our international development approach. These issues are not exhaustive, and others will be added in due course. In addition, Ireland's development co-operation should continue to pursue excellence in areas where it is already doing well, notably prioritising gender equality.

The issues covered include improving coherence across government on sustainable development; strengthening transparency and accountability; putting climate, biodiversity

~~and environment at the core~~ of our investments and policy, in particular with regards to fragile and conflict-affected countries; and advocating internationally for a legally binding treaty on business and human rights. Each section includes a description of the problem, some discussion, and finally the policy points for that issue.

Principles and Position

The Green movement was born when we looked back on our planet for the first time and realised the threat we posed to our own natural world. It recognised the need to think globally, while acting locally. This global perspective has shaped Green Party policy and is integral to our understanding and approach to international development.

The Green Party of Ireland's seven founding principles, noted below, provide a framework and direction for a rounded approach to policy on international development. They place the importance of our planet's environmental health at the centre, an understanding that has increasingly informed development policy and practice globally in recent years and recognise that conflict and inequality are major threats to a better world.

1. The impact of society on the environment should not be ecologically disruptive.
2. All political, social, and economic decisions should be taken at the lowest effective level.
3. As caretakers of the Earth, we have the responsibility to pass it on in a fit and healthy state.
4. Society should be guided by self-reliance and co-operation at all levels.
5. Conservation of resources is vital to a sustainable society.
6. The need for world peace overrides national and commercial interests.
7. The poverty of two-thirds of the world's family demands a redistribution of the world's resources.¹³

Beyond the Green Party's own founding principles, our policy is informed and guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". They take a holistic approach that recognises that tackling poverty must go hand in hand with reducing inequality, improving health and education outcomes while at the same time tackling climate change and preserving our biodiversity. Indeed, Ireland's central involvement in the development of these goals for transformative change is testament to our substantial history and contribution to this area, as co-chair of the SDG negotiations. Ireland's 2019 Policy for International Development - A Better World- also takes a holistic

¹ World Bank latest data calculates that 9.2% of the world's population lived on less than \$1.90 a day in 2017. This is equivalent to 689 million people. Covid-19 is likely to push between 88 and 115 million additional people into poverty. At higher poverty lines, 24.1% of the world lived on less than \$3.20 a day and 43.6% on less than \$5.50 a day in 2017.

approach to achieving the SDGs, with its emphasis on gender equality, reducing humanitarian need, climate action and strengthening governance.

Policy does not exist in a vacuum, but in an ever-changing world where issues of climate, geopolitics, global health, migration, and conflict are continually in flux, both influencing and being influenced by each other and myriad other factors. For this reason, development and humanitarian policy must seek to find a balance between the farsighted and ambitious, and the practical, responsive, and immediate. Policy must evolve to meet the realities of a planet and global society that is constantly evolving and changing and this policy seeks to provide a direction and framework based on enduring principles, while ensuring relevance and responsiveness to contemporary issues, challenges and opportunities.

Covid-19 has changed the global landscape, and this is particularly true for the global south. Development gains painstakingly achieved have been rolled back. An additional 120 million people are expected to fall into extreme poverty and 72 million more children will be unable to read by the age of 10. As the world recovery begins through the rollout of vaccines, countries in the global south will be the last to achieve mass immunity, with further risks to investment in development and poverty reduction now looming due to budgetary pressures in richer and poorer countries alike.

In this context, a commitment to genuine, long-term, and sustainable change is paramount. Ireland has historically played an outsized role in development, humanitarian relief and peacebuilding and this commitment must continue. Opportunities to influence and shape the global agenda are available, not least through our 2021-22 place at the UN Security Council table.

~~Finally, and critically, we~~ are now seeing a clear and irreversible convergence of the environment and climate as a central element of development discourse. Climate change is now recognised as a primary cause of increased poverty and instability. Its effects are felt disproportionately by those in the global south, despite these communities having done the least to cause it. It affects food security, natural resources, agriculture, health, livelihoods, education, gender equality and economic development. Our overseas development policies and practices must therefore place the climate and biodiversity crises at the centre, understanding the complexities of prevention, adaptation, and mitigation and how policy effectiveness and coherence across all areas must be delivered to truly achieve a better world.

The Green Party understands the interdependent relationship between our planet and our global human family better than any other political party. Our policy in this space must be robust, coherent, ambitious, and far-sighted, while recognising that achieving the SDGs is an enormous, complex, and daunting challenge, where partnership and engagement is key.

3 Policy Headings

3.1 A reaffirmed commitment to international development and partnership

The language of foreign or international “aid” is increasingly inappropriate for the 21st Century. Today’s world can no longer - if ever it could - be characterised by binary north-south and donor-recipient relationships. Today’s world is more interdependent, multipolar, and with huge and shared global challenges of unsustainable development, inequality, and global pandemics to address. Partnership approaches to international development should reflect Green Party principle #2, that decision-making should be taken at the lowest effective level, allowing for local voices to be heard and responding to the priorities identified by communities.

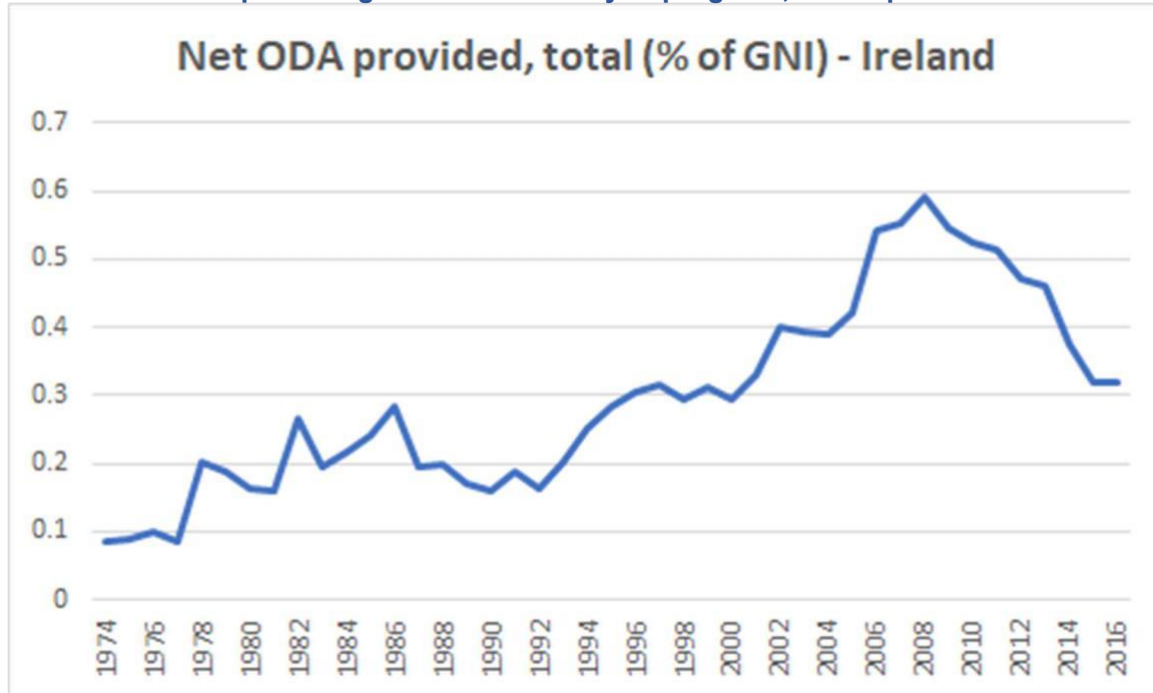
The SDGs recognise the interdependence of our world. And meeting the SDGs will require significant finance. This will ultimately be a combination of mobilising domestic spending, private finance, philanthropy, and public finance. It will also require the reorientation of finance flows and investments away from socially and environmentally harmful practices towards more sustainable practices that respect human and labour rights and the environment. DFA has said it would initiate a process to ‘tag’ the SDGs within the Irish Aid budget, starting with the budget for 2018.⁴

Newer, more future-fit models of providing global public finance for development will ultimately be required with different governance structures that recognise the more diverse contributors, and where innovation and risk-taking is enabled. What is clear is that long-term predictable commitments of public finance will be more necessary than ever to meet the global challenges we are faced with.²

As a small country with a global outlook that wants to punch above its weight, Ireland needs to rise to the challenge and meet our oft-cited commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on international development. The global challenges we collectively need to resolve, from the climate crisis to infectious diseases, mean it is not only the right thing to do; it is also in our interests.

² The concept of “global public investment” is being developed as a new paradigm of international concessional public finance for addressing current and future global challenges Global Public Investment – Expert Working Group

Ireland's ODA as a percentage of GNI: A history of progress, interrupted



Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DC.ODA.TOTL.GN.ZS?locations=IE>

Policy points on our commitment to international development

- We reaffirm our commitment to increase our spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of GNI by 2025.
- We reaffirm our commitment to continually improve the delivery and effectiveness of co-operation and support, particularly in recognition of ever-changing circumstances globally and in countries where Ireland works.
- We reaffirm our commitment to partnership and cooperation, recognising that rich and poor countries alike contribute to global public goods and in tackling global problems. We will use our position in international fora to advocate for more democratic and accountable governance structures for overseeing international development finance.³

3.2 Coherence

Problem:

Ireland can boast numerous good practices of collaboration across government and has established an inter-departmental committee to oversee coherence and learning in the implementation of “A Better World”. However, international development budgets are

³ www.globalpublicinvestment.org proposes that international public finance should be governed by representative decision-making, and questions the entrenched power relations associated with ODA.

increasingly spread across multiple government departments, which creates coordination and efficiency challenges. At the same time, lack of coherence across Government Departments persists, for example, between action on climate change at home or trade and investment policies and our international development goals. This incoherence risks undermining our credibility and our impact globally.

Discussion:

Of the total €870 million spent on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2019, less than two-thirds (63%) was spent through the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) with the remainder split across the Departments of Finance, Agriculture (DAFM), Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), and Ireland’s contribution to the EU Development Cooperation Budget. For spending via multilateral institutions, the share of DFA is only 51%. This could decrease further as funding for climate change increases.

Government Department	DAFM	DECC	DoF	DFA	EU	Other
% of multilateral spend 2019	6%	1%	8%	51%	33%	1%

Source: Overseas Development Assistance report 2019.

Fragmentation creates coordination challenges across Departments. It does not make the best of Ireland’s international development expertise, which sits in DFA. And despite good collaboration practices across government departments, it makes both effective delivery and learning more difficult.

Theoretical but highly plausible example of fragmentation:

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is responsible for the cash transfers that the World Food Programme gives to a community in Mozambique when their land is flooded. DECC holds the budget for the Green Climate Fund but the Department of Finance currently sits on its board in a shared seat with two other countries. The Green Climate Fund is funding a project to prevent soil erosion in the same community. And DFA development specialists are overseeing a project, which is helping smallholder farmers in Mozambique diversify and irrigate their farms. Effectiveness, efficiency, and learning are undermined by the coordination challenges created by this arrangement.

With an increase in budget, and an increase in spend on climate and environment, a clear policy is required to guide future allocation by country and by delivery channel (multilateral, bilateral, civil society), and the extent to which Ireland should focus or spread its bilateral investments.

There is also a need for greater policy coherence and consistency across government. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is a legal obligation for all EU member states

under Article 208 of the Lisbon Treaty.⁵ PCD is an objective and a process which seeks to ensure that investments in official aid are supported, or at the very least not undermined, by non-aid policies implemented by national governments and by the EU. Greening ODA and supporting poorer countries to adapt to climate change would amount to little more than greenwashing if we do not meet the commitments we have made to reduce our own emissions. For example, supporting poorer countries to develop more climate-resilient agricultural practices does not exempt us from tackling agriculture emissions at home. Furthermore, agricultural adaptation support provided by ODA should not be undermined by international policies, trade agreements and systems that aggravate food insecurity and social inequality in these same countries.

World leaders have committed in the Paris Agreement to foster adaptation and to make all financial flows consistent with climate resilient, low greenhouse gas development. We need to consider the impact of our trade and investment policies, and not just of our ODA on conflict-affected countries, on the rights of communities and individuals and on the environment.

Climate change is also a major driver of conflict and instability. The credibility of our leadership internationally on development and conflict reduction is undermined if we are not meeting out climate and environment targets at home.

Policy points for improving coherence:

- Undertake a policy and practice audit to identify and recommend future shifts required to bring consistency and coherence to all Irish government policy that affects poorer countries, with a particular focus on areas with significant climate, environment or carbon impacts (e.g. agriculture, trade, transport, climate financing).
- To improve the overall coherence of how Ireland engages internationally on international development and manages ODA funds, the Green Party proposes to
- Reverse the current trend of fragmentation and bring more responsibility for ODA spend and policy brought under the VOTE 27 (International Development Cooperation) of DFA, including all contributions to UN humanitarian and development agencies.
- Ensure all representation on international boards that is not led by DFA is fully informed by DFA development specialist expertise, particularly in areas of development policy priorities climate action, gender equality, good governance and reducing humanitarian need.
- Ensure all development spending in fragile contexts reflects wider green policies and priorities and, at a minimum, does not negatively impact the local, national or global environment or climate (Green Party founding principles 1, 3).

3.3 Transparency and Accountability

Problem:

Out of 47 donors assessed by the Publish what you Fund Index, Ireland has consistently ranked in the bottom 20%, scoring only marginally better than Saudi Arabia in 2020. The annual index⁶ scores Ireland 0/20 for transparency of “performance” indicators, meaning no information is published on whether results are being achieved. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer review has repeatedly recommended that Ireland needs to improve its results-based management and publish results data.

Transparency of our investments and monitoring of what those investments achieves are needed to: i) provide citizens access to information about our development investment; ii) improve our accountability to the public, including performance, purpose and effectiveness of current and past projects and iii) promote learning within and across government departments on the quality of Irish development investments and policy.

Discussion:

Accountability and transparency are necessary to maintain public trust in, and to demonstrate the value add of, Irish funding for international development. Greater transparency and accountability would mean the public could see which of our development projects are succeeding and why. For this we need greater availability of project budgets, project commitments, how many people have benefited from projects, or what projects have achieved. We need to be able to say how much value we are creating per euro spent and have showcase projects to bring to the world stage to lead global discourse on ODA.

We cannot learn and improve if we are in the dark about where we stand. Irish Aid has a standard approach to grant management and there is some uniformity in development partners are identified and assessed. However, there are gaps and inconsistencies in collecting monitoring and reporting information towards the stated objectives of Ireland’s international development policy, particularly across other government departments, or across our priority countries. Whilst we have solid internal audit, independent evaluation and value for money assessment mechanisms, these accountability mechanisms do not sufficiently monitor, learn from and report on the results we are achieving and who we are reaching with our investments. There is scope to improve management information systems to support learning and improve availability of information.

We need to continue to publish detailed reports to IATI on at least a quarterly basis and improve the reporting of what we have achieved with our investments, not just what we have spent. Greater transparency would mean that citizens of Ireland know the value of the ODA they are funding, and we can be accountable to communities we are supporting.

Policy points on improved transparency and accountability:

- Rapidly increase monitoring, evaluation and learning capacity across all government departments, led by a new monitoring and learning unit within Irish Aid. Promote a culture of learning and systematically feed results and monitoring information into policymaking and programme design.

- Publish budgets, disbursements and expenditures, broken down by country and project on a quarterly basis to the IATI, the global standard on aid transparency.
- Modernise outdated information systems at DFA and capture budget, disbursement and results information on all ODA investments, including those managed by other government departments.
- Publish results of ODA investments in annual reports, including numbers of people reached and outcomes achieved and establish a public portal to allow citizens and external agencies to access financial and results information on current and past projects.
- Evaluate the impact of ODA investments across government departments, not just those managed by DFA.
- Uphold integrity of our development and climate spend by a) improving the quality of reporting of climate and environment finance and b) building knowledge and skills on climate and environmental protection across DFA.

3.4 Greening International Development

Problem:

While progress has been made in recent years to strengthen Ireland's approach to climate change and environmental protection in its international development programming, further work is still needed. The climate crisis and Ireland's commitment to increase its aid budget make these particularly urgent.

To date, Ireland has done relatively well in ensuring that we provide quality, transparent climate finance, with a focus on untied, grant-based support. However, Ireland's annual finance contributions must increase substantially to reach the levels agreed by donors as part of the Paris Agreement.

Discussion:

Ireland currently focuses its bilateral development investment in nine programme countries, of which all except Vietnam are in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Sierra Leone). Ireland has long-standing relationships with most of these countries and most of them are among the least developed countries in the world. However, it is important to note that Ireland is a relatively small player amongst other donors - Ireland's ODA accounts for only about 1% of total ODA in most of its programme countries.

There is a commitment in the current Programme for Government (PfG) to support those countries that are poorest and most vulnerable to climate shocks. In a context of finite resources and growing pressures on poverty and conflict from climate change, the poorest and most climate-vulnerable countries should be prioritised for Ireland's bilateral

programming. This could mean moving out of some programme countries and developing new partnerships, for example in francophone West Africa where we do not currently have much historical bilateral engagement. This principle should also be applied in Ireland's civil society, EU, and multilateral funding streams.

In 2019, a quarter of Ireland's ODA went through EU institutions and this is set to increase with the latest EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Ireland also seeks to increase its presence and financial support with UN agencies. Ireland should use its influence in these fora to ensure that climate, environment and biodiversity are prioritised in funding instruments and programmes and that fossil fuel financing is ended as soon as possible.

The urgency of the climate crisis and the growing impact of climate change on poverty, food insecurity, gender inequality and land degradation in poorer countries requires greater ambition. Otherwise, climate and the environment risk being treated as just more issues to be considered in development policy and programming, rather than being at the core.

The links among development challenges are increasingly clear, as embodied in the SDG approach. Greater ambition on climate change would have co-benefits for gender equality (e.g. through access to modern energy and improved indoor air quality), biodiversity (with the caveat that certain mitigation options, notably in the area of bioenergy, that pose risks to nature need to be excluded), public health (nature protection can reduce the threat of viruses for example), peace (more and more conflicts have climate-related causes and climate mitigation increases resilience), and other key development challenges.

Policy commitments to "green" international development increased under the PfG. A new climate unit has been established in Irish Aid; plans are underway to increase the proportion of spend on climate and environment; and a system is being developed to assess the climate and environmental impact of all development spending. But an ambitious implementation plan is needed to catch up. A 2020 OECD review found that "Ireland's allocations align well with its priorities, with the exception of climate change" and that "the share of climate-relevant actions has progressed only moderately, from 17% in 2013-14 to 22% in 2017-18."

Ireland has done well on mainstreaming gender equality, less well on climate

	2013-14		2015-16		2017-18	
	Constant 2017 USD million	% Bilateral allocable	Constant 2017 USD million	% Bilateral allocable	Constant 2017 USD million	% Bilateral allocable
Gender equality	198	46	307	78	331	80
Environment	71	16	84	22	95	23
Rio markers						
Biodiversity	35	8	35	9	50	12
Desertification	31	7	31	8	48	12
Climate change, mitigation only	3	1	0	0	1	0
Climate change, adaptation only	27	6	37	9	33	8
Both climate adaptation and mitigation	42	10	41	10	59	14

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934121354>

Source: OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Ireland 2020, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris.

Climate finance must be recognised as new and additional to ODA commitments. While much climate finance, in particular adaptation finance, will be channelled via ODA structures, climate finance obligations differ from ODA in that they stem from Article 4.3 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This commits donor countries to providing 'new and additional financial resources' for the 'full incremental costs' of addressing climate change, as a result of their proportionately greater contribution to the causes of climate change, and the greater resources at their disposal to respond to it.

The Green Party supports a focus on adaptation from a climate justice perspective, which recognises that most poorer countries are also those most at risk from the impacts of climate change, which they have done the least to cause. However, it should be recognised that climate mitigation also has important co-benefits, including cleaner air, improved access to affordable energy, and reduced imports of fossil fuels. Development need not follow the same fossil-fuelled path that rich countries followed, and all countries aspire to a cleaner, safer future.

Furthermore, limited focus has been given to biodiversity protection, even though greater biodiversity protection (e.g. avoided rainforest deforestation, or mangrove and wetland restoration) often contributes to climate mitigation and enhanced climate resilience.

More broadly, the way that climate finance is accounted for and reported on is problematic and undermines trust in climate negotiations. Lack of trust is engendered firstly by the fact that global aid statistics are housed in the OECD, a club of richer nations, where most poorer countries have no voice. And secondly by the fact that the OECD is often incomplete and more often reports pledges (commitments) than disbursements, overstating reality due to the presence of significant lags on both the donor and recipient sides.⁷ Moreover, the Rio markers used by the OECD DAC have often been criticised as being open to various interpretations of what is considered to have climate as a principal or significant objective, leading to different countries applying the markers in different ways. Significant, for example, could be a single solar panel on the roof of a large school.

Policy points on Greening International Development:

We propose to:

- Allocate resources to countries to support those that are poorest and most vulnerable to climate and environment shocks. This will require changes to existing priority programme countries, budget shares and projects funded.
- Make climate, biodiversity and environmental sustainability core objectives of all country strategies and incorporate a specific work-strand on biodiversity within the DFA climate unit.
- Enact legislation to require that all international development investment (bilateral, multilateral and civil society) is assessed for its impact on climate and environment prior to approval. This will provide teeth to ensuring implementation of green policy commitments.

- Prioritise climate adaptation over mitigation where this is in line with developing country demands and increase the amount and proportion of money spent on dedicated climate projects, both adaptation and mitigation. Also increase ODA spend on biodiversity and other environmental issues beyond climate change, where these are shown to have co-benefits, in particular for climate mitigation or adaptation.
- Use our representation in all decision-making bodies, in particular the United Nations and European Union, to ensure that approval of policies and programmes is conditional on evaluation of impacts on climate and the environment.
- Use our contribution to multilateral development banks and agencies to push for the abolition of all financing of fossil fuel projects by multilaterals (both energy production and consumption), and for greater shares of funding to go towards dedicated climate projects, using rigorous investment standards such as the EU Taxonomy.
- Properly resource the Irish Aid climate unit and build knowledge and awareness of all staff on climate and environment, in order to implement the rest of the proposals in this document. This should include dedicated statistical expertise.
- Use our membership of the OECD to push for reform in the accounting standards of climate finance, and advocate for aid data to be managed by a globally representative independent or United Nations body instead, with a focus on disbursements rather than commitments.
- Scale up climate financing to reach a level consistent with our national obligations, with estimates of an accurate value relative to our contribution to carbon emissions being between 3-5 times our current actual contribution level.⁸ Make available detailed information about the source of funding, and in particular 'new' funding for climate finance, as simply repurposing already committed funds from ODA budgets is not satisfactory and will lead to shortfalls elsewhere.
- Continue to advocate for strong standards and practices, transparent reporting requirements and appropriate due diligence for private sector actors involved in development and climate projects, recognising the role that private finance will play in delivering climate and development objectives, including innovating for and facilitating the imminent climate transition.

3.5 Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts

Problem:

It is estimated that more than 80% of the world's poorest people will be living in fragile contexts by 2030. It is increasingly understood that fragility and conflict pose a fundamental

threat to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both overseas development and national foreign policies must work in tandem to address this issue.

Climate change is a contributory driver of conflict and fragility. As global carbon emissions continue to grow globally despite efforts at national and multilateral level, climate impacts will continue to be felt disproportionately by the most vulnerable communities, in the global south.

Ireland is recognised as being a significant global contributor in the areas of development, humanitarian response, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and reconciliation. However, there is scope to improve the leadership and coherence of Ireland's approach to fragility.

Discussion:

Fragility and conflict are primary causes and consequences of poverty globally. Therefore, any ODA programme concerned with poverty alleviation must have a significant focus on addressing the causes and symptoms of fragility and conflict.

While there is no internationally agreed definition of fragility, in general, states are considered fragile when their government cannot or will not deliver core functions to its people for reasons, typically linked to weak political institutions, economic decline, poverty, and violent conflict. According to the Fragile States index a state that is fragile has several attributes which may include:

- The loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.
- The erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions.
- An inability to provide reasonable public services.
- The inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community.

Ten principles for engaging in fragile states have been agreed internationally, with a focus on rooting responses in local contexts, addressing causes, and building systems for the long term.⁹

The Green Party's specific understanding and concern with issues related to the environment and climate change not only compels the party to view issues through an environmental lens; it places the party in the vanguard of progressive, long-term thinking on this issue.

Climate change is increasingly being recognised as a driver of fragility and other factors that can lead to conflict. It can act as a 'risk multiplier'¹⁰ and a stressor on state capacities, on communities and on existing conflict dynamics. While the intersectionality of these areas is complex, seven key factors can be identified:

1. Local resource competition

2. Livelihood insecurity and migration
3. Extreme weather events and disasters
4. Volatile food prices and provision
5. Transboundary water management
6. Sea-level rise and coastal degradation
7. Unintended effects of climate policies

Ireland is well-positioned to strengthen our approach to fragile and conflict affected areas. Ireland has been recognised as a global standard bearer for better policy on crises and fragility.

There is a satisfactory policy framework upon which to build. Irish Aid's strategy, A Better World, references and recognises the scale and urgency of the problem of fragile and conflict affected contexts, and includes some commitments to prioritise this area as part of our ODA policy approach.

Ireland's overarching foreign policy document, The Global Island places conflict prevention, peacebuilding and security within its central strategic tenets. The policy briefly acknowledges the link between climate change and conflict and fragility.

Ireland's International Security Policy notes our contribution to areas of security and peace, with reference to participation in bodies and initiatives including the UN, EU (Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)) and NATO.

Finally, worth noting is Ireland's stakeholder role as signatory to the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States in 2011. Over 20 other countries experiencing fragility are also members of the G7+ group linked to this initiative, but it has struggled to address many of the crises that continue to be a feature of the global landscape, such as Yemen, Venezuela, Chad, Somalia, DRC and South Sudan.

In addition, Ireland can draw on:

1. An experienced and respected diplomatic service that is ready to engage.
2. An overseas development aid programme
3. A central role in the European Union's External Aid Policy
4. A seat in the UN Security Council.
5. An extended network through our diaspora that can support foreign policy
6. A third sector that can contribute to research into peacebuilding.

7. Ireland's role as co-chair, along with Niger, of the Informal Expert Group on Climate Security at the security council.

In short, Ireland has the experience, capacity, competency, and opportunity to make a meaningful contribution in the medium- and long-term global response to this issue.

Policy points on conflict and fragility:

Ireland's approach to fragile and conflict affected contexts must draw the many strands of our foreign and development policies closer together with climate and environmental concerns at the centre of our approach.

Ireland has the unparalleled opportunity of a seat at the UN Security Council for 2021 - 2022, and as co-chair of the Informal Expert Groups on both Climate and Security, and Women, Peace and Security to continue to build our influence on issues of conflict, instability, and fragile contexts.

In this context the Green Party proposes to:

- Ensure our voice is heard: Advocate for appropriate and timely action (UN Security Council, EU Council, multilateral funding, sanctions) and a renewed focus on the de-escalation of conflict driven fragile contexts to allow for constructive peace building initiatives, with a strong climate lens (cause, mitigation, adaptation).
- Focus on fragility: Prioritise fragile states/contexts in wider ODA and foreign policy engagements at bilateral and multilateral levels, recognising that fragility is a key driver of poverty, displacement, and humanitarian crises.
- Prioritise climate: Include a strong environmental and climate sensitive approach to engagement in fragile contexts discourse, negotiation, policy and decision-making, ensuring that climate change is recognised as a contributory factor of fragility in many instances and must be addressed as part of any response to fragility, conflict and instability. This should consider both upstream causes (e.g. carbon emissions) and mid-stream causes (resource competition, impact of drought, floods etc on communities).
- Listen to partners: Use our role as an "honest broker" at the UN Security Council to advocate for greater international involvement of countries in the Global South. Ireland should consider strengthening its diplomatic network in crisis affected areas and play a bridging role between the international community and these states.
- Improve coherence: Develop a framework that draws together the many strands of work that relate to Ireland's approach to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, climate adaptation & mitigation, development, humanitarian response, and fragile contexts
- Mobilise peace actors: Draw on our diplomatic, peacekeeping, and academic experience, including from peacebuilding in Northern Ireland to become an active sponsor of peace within the UN or other international fora. As a small nation,

prioritise certain countries/ regions in the way e.g. Norway does (Troika member in South Sudan).

- Listen to communities: Ensure that communities and community feedback mechanisms are central to the resolution of conflict, instability and fragility in any setting or state. In line with Green Party founding principle 2, decision-making should be taken at the lowest effective level, and should focus on the priorities identified by those who will be most impacted by such decisions.

3.6 Business and Human Rights

Problem:

The abuse of human rights by powerful transnational corporations in the pursuit of profit is one of the critical global injustices of our time. While companies can have positive impacts through job creation and investments, the actions of irresponsible corporations have devastating impacts around the world, including the violent evictions of people from their lands, environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods and deepening poverty.

The corporate scramble for diminishing natural resources violates the human rights of some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities, with a disproportionate impact on women and indigenous people. Communities seeking to protect their rights face increasing levels of violence and intimidation, particularly from corporations involved in extractive industries.

Discussion:

The current international legal framework has not kept pace with the proliferation of corporations in a globalised economy. Given the vast power of transnational corporations and the complex ways in which they can operate to avoid accountability, existing international instruments relating to Business and Human Rights are not adequate to hold corporations to account.

In 2011, the UN developed Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights¹¹,^[1] setting out guidelines and a conceptual framework for the ways in which states and businesses should operate to enhance standards and practices in relation to Business and Human Rights. However, it is largely left up to states and corporations to decide which guidance to adhere to, resulting in marginal and ineffective implementation.

In 2014, the UN Human Rights Commission resolved to elaborate an internationally binding instrument to regulate, in International Human Rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises. An open-ended intergovernmental working group (OEIGWG) was established, and the drafting process began and continues to develop, with a second revised draft published in August 2020.¹² The European Parliament has expressed support for a binding UN instrument, but the European Union has not yet formally engaged in the UN treaty negotiations, despite the fact that in 2021 the seventh annual session of the OEIGWG will take place

Ireland's National Plan on Business and Human Rights 2017-2020 affirms Ireland's commitment to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and asserts that Ireland will put "respect for human rights at the heart of all of our business practices as we work towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals set out in Agenda 2030 at national, regional and global levels".¹³ In July 2020, Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney stated that "Ireland is open to looking at options for progress on a legally binding treaty...rooted in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights".¹⁴ However, to date, Ireland has not actively supported the OEIGWG.

The Green Party believes that devastating human rights violations and large-scale environmental degradation will continue to occur with impunity until we move beyond voluntary approaches and a Binding Treaty is put in place.

The proposed UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights aligns with the seven founding principles of the Green Party, with particular relevance to:

- Principle five: Conservation of resources is vital to a sustainable society.
- Principle six: The need for world peace overrides national and commercial interests.
- Principle seven: The poverty of two-thirds of the world's family demands a redistribution of the world's resources.

At the EU level, the European Commission has made a commitment to undertake a legislative initiative on sustainable corporate governance for EU companies in 2021. There has been a groundswell of public support for this; in their recent consultation, the EC received submissions from over half a million people and 700 organisations worldwide. The legislation is expected to include liability, enforcement mechanisms and access to remedy provisions for victims of corporate abuse. The need to promote sustainable corporate governance and to establish mandatory due diligence also features in the EU's 8th Environmental Action Plan (2021-2030).¹⁵ The Green Party believes that now is the time to also develop mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence Legislation at national level, in line with the above.

Trade agreements should reflect the principles outlined above, giving preference to countries that meet human rights standards and prohibiting the import of goods that are produced in violation of these standards.

Policy points on business and human rights:

The Green Party proposes the following:

- Ireland takes a proactive role in developing an ambitious and legally binding UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights and acts within the EU to ensure a clear, constructive negotiation mandate for the EU in the OEIGWG sessions in 2021 and beyond. The Binding UN Treaty must have the experience of affected communities and rights-holders at its core, based on the key principles set out by the Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights, including:

- a broad human rights base.
 - protection for people and planet.
 - applicability to businesses of all sizes and structures.
 - mandatory, not voluntary, measures.
 - liability and effective penalties.
 - real access to justice.
 - protection of human rights defenders and their communities.
 - gender sensitivity.¹⁶
- Support the implementation of EU human rights and environmental due diligence legislation, to ensure that human rights and the environment are being respected across the value chains of companies. Following on from the European Parliament's vote in March 2021 which strongly endorsed the development and presentation of such legislation by the end of 2021, Ireland should play an active role in progressing robust legislation in this area.
 - All trade agreements to which Ireland is a signatory should reflect the principles outlined above, giving preference to countries that comply with human rights and environmental standards and prohibiting the import of goods that are known to be produced in violation of these standards. Ireland should support efforts to implement traceability mechanisms¹⁷ that could steer towards an effective ban on such products.
 - At national level, develop mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation, in line with the commitment in The Programme for Government – Our Shared Future (2020) to “ensure that the Action Plan [National Plan on Business and Human Rights 2017-2020] is further developed to review whether there is a need for greater emphasis on mandatory due diligence.”¹⁸

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1 One Pager for Party Website:

International Development Policy- What we want to achieve:

- Increase Ireland's spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) every year, to reach 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2025.
- Build on our track record of "co-operation" and "partnership", in international development and use our position in international fora to advocate for a more democratic approach to governing international public finance.
- Strengthen our coherence across government, in line with our EU obligations on Policy Coherence for Development, to ensure other government policy is supportive of our international development efforts, and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of development policy and programming across different departments. This would include bringing greater responsibility for policy and spending under the DFA.
- Make a step-change improvement in our transparency and accountability and invest more in monitoring and learning - to improve accountability to the Irish public and to the communities and populations we are aiming to support.
- Put the climate and biodiversity crises at the core of our development co-operation. A 2020 OECD review found that "Ireland's allocations align well with its priorities, with the exception of climate change ... the share of climate-relevant actions has progressed only moderately." The biodiversity crisis and other environmental damage also need greater prioritisation.
- Build on our strengths internationally on fragile and conflict-affected contexts, including by bringing our wide-ranging peacekeeping, peacebuilding and reconciliation experience and expertise into our international development work.
- Support legally binding mechanisms on Business and Human Rights in the United Nations, in the European Union, and at home to ensure human rights, biodiversity and the environment are respected across companies' value chains.
- Continue to pursue excellence in areas where it is already doing well, notably gender equality.

This policy is not exhaustive, and other issues will be added in time. It focuses on the most pressing challenges we have identified to help Ireland contribute to a better world for everybody on our planet, and for the planet itself.

Key words: Sustainable Development Goals, international development, climate, conflict, human rights, gender equality.

SDGs: 1, 2, 5, 13, 16, 17