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**Finance**

For 2017, the Government has allocated some €651 million for Official Development Assistance (ODA). This represents an increase of €10 million on the 2016 budget – or almost 2% on the 2016 level. The bulk of this increase is attributed to an increased forecast in Ireland’s share of the EU Development Co-operation Budget for this year.

€486.6 million is managed through Vote 27 – International Co-operation by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. A further estimated €165 million is being managed through other Government Departments and Ireland’s share of the EU Development Co-operation Budget.

“One World, One Future” Ireland’s policy for International Development (2013) clearly articulates the Government’s commitment to achieving the UN target of providing 0.7% of Gross National Product (GNP) for Official Development Assistance (ODA), when economic circumstances permit.

The current Programme for Government restates this commitment stating “We will continue to make progress towards achieving the UN target of 0.7% of gross national product for ODA, as resources allow.”

For 2016 the total ODA outturn was €723.7 million, which represents a significant increase of €76 million or almost 12% on 2015 levels and delivers an ODA/ GNP % outturn of 0.33%. The 2016 ODA / GNP percentage of 0.33% compared with a final percentage outturn of 0.32% in 2015. 2016 is the first year, since 2008, that the trend in the decline of Ireland’s ODA / GNP percentage outturn was reversed.

Ireland is currently ranked in 12th place amongst the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors - a similar position as in 2015.

Based on Department of Finance budget figures for GNP the 2017 ODA/GNP percentage is estimated to be in the region of 0.3%. The Government is commitment to making incremental, sustainable progress towards the target of providing 0.7% of GNP in ODA by 2030, as resources permit. A summary of the total 2017 allocation across the Vote 27 is follows:

(Figures in €000’s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subhead</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Total Change</th>
<th>% Change on PY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 - Administration - pay</td>
<td>15,099</td>
<td>14,916</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 - Administration Non pay</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 - Bilateral Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance</td>
<td>368,854</td>
<td>381,588</td>
<td>-12,734</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5 - Payment to International Organisations for the benefit of Developing Countries</td>
<td>52,651</td>
<td>40,117</td>
<td>12,534</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 - Voluntary contributions to UN and other Development Agencies</td>
<td>36,810</td>
<td>36,610</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL - Vote 27</strong></td>
<td><strong>486,614</strong></td>
<td><strong>486,431</strong></td>
<td><strong>183</strong></td>
<td><strong>0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administration
The Administrative Budget allocation for 2017 is set at €28.29 million – of which just over €15 million is allocated to payroll - and represents a slight increase (of 1% approximately) on the 2016 allocation.

Administration subheads cover the costs associated with managing, auditing and evaluating the development programme at headquarters and in our Key Partner Countries. The level is set in the context of the administrative support and management oversight required for the Irish Aid programme. For 2017, the administration subheads will account for just under 6% of the total Vote – in line with previous years.

Bilateral Assistance
Official Development Assistance (ODA) comprises Bilateral Assistance which is aid provided directly by Ireland to developing countries and Multilateral Assistance, which comprises unearmarked funding channelled through multilateral and international organisations engaged in development cooperation.

Over 75% or €368.8 million of Vote 27 is managed as bilateral ODA and primarily comprises funding managed directly by Irish Aid missions at key partner country level, funding allocated to Irish and other International NGO’s and funding allocated for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance - through UN Agencies, the Red Cross System, and International NGOs.

For 2017 Ireland continues to lead in the comprehensive international response to the unprecedented levels of humanitarian crisis, maintaining our focus on delivering effective and timely Humanitarian assistance through the UN system and trusted Irish and International NGOs. Sub-Saharan Africa is the priority region for the aid programme where the focus remains on the poorest communities, particularly in our key partner countries, delivering programmes which address the root causes of poverty and injustice and build resilience within poor and marginalized communities across the sectors of basic health and education, agriculture, food and nutrition and improving accountability and governance.

Approximately €130 million is allocated for programmes in Ireland’s Key Partner Countries: Ethiopia (€27m), Malawi (€13.7m), Mozambique (€26.0m), Sierra Leone (€6.7m), Tanzania (€20.0m), Uganda (€17.0m), and Zambia (€10.0m). €10 million is allocated to the South East Asian Region programme, managed by the Embassy, Hanoi.

A further €16.4 million is allocated to other bilateral programmes including South Africa (€1.7m), Zimbabwe (€3.5m), Liberia (€5.9m) and Kenya (€0.45m). In addition, €4.2m is allocated to the Occupied Palestinian territories. €250k is allocated towards the continued implementation of the Africa Strategy and over €1.6m is allocated to Fellowships.

Ireland has strong and well established partnerships with NGOs, which play a pivotal role in responding to humanitarian emergencies, providing services where they are needed most, and supporting vulnerable people in developing countries to come together and participate in developing their communities.

The Civil Society and Development Education Unit provides direct funding to a range of NGOs for programmes and projects focused on reducing poverty in developing countries and/or
promoting the understanding of global poverty in Ireland. €63 million is allocated to predominantly Irish NGOs in support of their long-term development programmes. Approximately €15.5 million will be allocated for the development work of missionary organisations and €3.5 million for Development Education projects. The Unit will also support Volunteer Programmes (€0.9 million) and Election Observers (€0.2 million) in the current year 2016.

Providing essential and lifesaving humanitarian assistance to those in greatest need remains a key component of the bilateral aid programme. The UN currently estimate that, a record $22.2 billion is needed to help 92.8 million people in 33 countries worldwide in 2017. To respond effectively and in a timely manner, Ireland’s 2017 allocation for Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance is set at €87 million.

€20 million is allocated to Irish-based International NGOs to support those partners to deliver humanitarian assistance and respond to emergency situations throughout 2017. A further €7 million is allocated to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund and €2 million is budgeted for unforeseen sudden onset emergencies in 2017. €14 million is allocated as core funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) both key players within the International humanitarian Assistance and Emergency Response system. €36 million is allocated for crisis-specific appeals, mainly in the Middle East and Sub Saharan Africa which is delivered for the most part through UN agencies and other international humanitarian organisations.

A further €4 million is allocated to the Rapid Response Initiative which funds the rapid deployment of experts to support UN partners’ humanitarian efforts and prepositioning of emergency stocks for immediate release when disasters strike. Further smaller amounts are allocated to key thematic areas which align with Ireland’s Humanitarian Assistance Policy; Humanitarian Mine Action (€2 million) and Gender and Protection programmes in humanitarian situations (€1.5 million). €300k is allocated for Ireland’s refugee resettlement programme.

Approximately €45 million is allocated across the priority policy areas - with €22.7 million allocated to Human Development; €12.7 million to Resilience and Economic Inclusion and €2 million allocated to Gender Equality, Governance and Human Rights. A further €1.35 million is allocated to the policy area of Fragile States / Situations of Fragility while €4.4 million is allocated to the Stability Fund - which is co-managed with the political division.

Other areas provided for under bilateral assistance include Co-financing with the World Bank (€1 million), continued funding for key research initiatives of (€1.25 million), and support to Policy coherence and aid effectiveness of €0.2 million. Finally, a total of €1.2 million is budgeted in support to the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

**Multilateral Assistance**

Ireland’s membership of the European Union, the United Nations and a range of multilateral and international organisations allows it to participate in development cooperation programmes at a global level including areas in need outside of our Key Partner Countries.
A total of €89.4 million is allocated to the multilateral subheads and comprises either assessed or voluntary and un-earmarked contribution to key multilateral and international organisations engaged in development cooperation.

A large proportion of our multilateral assistance is mandatory, including the assessed contributions to the European Development Fund (EDF). Ireland’s 2017 contribution to the EDF is assessed at approximately €37.07m. A further €10.5 million is allocated towards Ireland’s 2017 contribution to the EU Turkey Refugee Facility. These two assessed budget amounts make up the bulk of the allocation under the subhead dealing with payment to international funds. €1.6 million is allocated to payments in support of trade related capacity building initiatives within development countries, and €2.0 million to the International Fund for Agriculture Development.

Multilateral assistance also covers voluntary contributions to a range of UN agencies involved in development activities, including democracy-building and electoral reform, education and training, assistance to refugees, protection of human rights, combating HIV/AIDS, developing health systems and environmental protection.

For 2017, over €36m will be allocated to Voluntary Contributions – for the most part to key UN partners. The largest allocations will go to three UN agencies: the UN Development Programme (UNDP) (€7.75m); the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (€7.2m) and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (€7.5m).

**Summary of ODA Volumes and ODA / GNP% - 2010 to 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures in € Millions</th>
<th>Other ODA</th>
<th>Vote 27</th>
<th>Total ODA</th>
<th>ODA as a % of Revised GNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>€165.00</td>
<td>€486.63</td>
<td>€651.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Outilm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>€165.82</td>
<td>€481.69</td>
<td>€647.51</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>€138.57</td>
<td>€476.29</td>
<td>€614.86</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>€140.39</td>
<td>€496.70</td>
<td>€637.09</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>€121.52</td>
<td>€507.38</td>
<td>€628.90</td>
<td>0.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>€136.86</td>
<td>€520.18</td>
<td>€657.04</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>€154.28</td>
<td>€521.55</td>
<td>€675.83</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Humanitarian Unit

Background
In 2017, the world is challenged by an unprecedented scale of humanitarian need. With more than 130 million people in 33 countries in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, over 65m people displaced, and a recognition that violence and conflict are driving over 80% of humanitarian need. A record US$22.2 billion is required globally this year to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised – five times the needs of a decade ago.

The core objective of Ireland’s humanitarian assistance is to save and protect lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. Ireland’s total humanitarian support reached €194m in 2016 (across Government and including EU and multilateral contributions), up from €140m in 2015. Ireland is committed to responding effectively to humanitarian crises with a focus on responding to sudden crises, following a natural disaster or a sudden outbreak of violence, while also responding to crises that have persisted for many years (including a particular commitment to ‘forgotten crises’). At the same time we consistently highlight internationally that our foremost responsibility as international actors is to support the peaceful resolution of the conflicts currently driving humanitarian need.

In 2016, Ireland responded to crises in the Horn of Africa (including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan), the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, the Lake Chad basin (responding to human suffering caused by the Boko Haram group), Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Haiti amongst others. Our largest single response in recent years has been to the Syria crisis, providing total funding of €100m from 2012 to end 2017. We also prioritise other crises in the MENA region such as Iraq and Yemen. Ireland is also providing substantial humanitarian assistance in the Horn of Africa - €125 million since 2012, including over €21 million to date in 2017.

Ireland’s humanitarian assistance is delivered by a relatively limited number of UN, Red Cross and NGO partners who are chosen on the basis of their presence on the ground, their capacity to respond to often very complex crisis situations, and their demonstrated effectiveness. The key international organisations we work with are the World Food Programme (D/Agriculture provides €20m in annual core funding to WFP), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). We support them through two mechanisms - core funding to support their central role and allow them to react flexibly, and funding to crisis-specific appeals. Core funding to ICRC and UN OCHA is usually decided at the beginning of the year, as are allocations to countries where levels of need are certain to be high. Each year the UN and Red Cross issue funding appeals for each crisis-affected country (updated during the year as needed). As situations evolve during the year, submissions are made to the Minister to allocate additional funds to specific crises based on these funding appeals, unexpected events and Irish priorities.
Ireland channels approximately 20% of its total humanitarian assistance through UN-managed pooled funds, including approximately €12m per year to the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which releases funds rapidly to UN agencies (WFP being the largest recipient) at the sudden onset of a crisis or an escalation of an existing crisis. In addition, in 2016 over €28m was channelled through 9 country based pooled funds to target specific crisis situations. Ireland also provides funding (€2.6 million since 2013) to the Start Fund - a humanitarian pooled fund established in 2014 for NGOs to access emergency funding in order to quickly respond to ‘under the radar’ emergencies. Through our EU budget contribution, we also support the humanitarian response by the European Commission’s Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), whose budget currently stands at €1 billion per year.

Under the Humanitarian Programme Plan (HPP) scheme funding is provided to 6 Irish NGO partners (Concern, Trócaire, Oxfam Ireland, World Vision Ireland, Plan Ireland, and Christian Aid Ireland). For the first time in 2017, NGO partners who have the capacity to work on both humanitarian response and long term development received funding under a joint HPP and Programme Grant arrangement. Funds are also prepositioned with our NGO partners each year under the Emergency Response Fund Scheme (ERFS) to allow them to respond very rapidly to sudden onset crises or to sudden spikes in existing crises. GOAL had been in receipt of HPP funding until the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade became aware in April 2016 of the U.S. investigation into the procurement of some humanitarian supplies for Syria.

Following significant organisational reforms over 2016 and early 2017, the agency is currently in discussions with Irish Aid to finalise a one year funding arrangement for its 2017 programme of work. A funding envelope of €9 million has been approved for allocation to GOAL, drawing from Humanitarian and longer-term development budget lines for NGOs.

A further key element of Ireland’s humanitarian response is the Rapid Response Initiative with an annual budget of €4m. Through this, Ireland deploys experts to work in humanitarian emergencies from its Rapid Response Corps (approximately 120 members) and maintains stockpiles of emergency relief items in 5 UN Humanitarian Response depots. In 2016, 37 rapid responders and 357 tonnes of supplies were deployed. To-date in 2017, 17 rapid responders and 236 tonnes of supplies have been deployed, with the stocks targeted at people displaced as a result of the conflict in South Sudan and severe drought in Somalia.

Increasingly there is less distinction between long-term development needs and humanitarian needs and the purpose of both types of responses has to be to build the resilience of individuals and communities, and to develop long-term public systems and services. As well as the joint HPP and Programme Grant scheme (above) Ireland has also responded to this by ensuring that our long-term development programmes – e.g. in Ethiopia or Malawi – have incorporated into their programmes and budgets an allocation to respond quickly to increased humanitarian needs, as a result of, e.g. a weather phenomenon such as El Nino. Also in longer term crises – e.g. South Sudan or Syria – we are increasingly supporting initiatives that build longer term resilience such as economic development of Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon.
Topical Issues

More than 20 million people across North East Nigeria, Yemen, South Sudan and Somalia face the risk of starvation and death in famine-like situations — with famine already declared in South Sudan earlier this year the crises is being referred to as the ‘four famines’. Responding to high level calls by the UN and others, the international community has stepped up its response. Ireland responded early to the worsening crises in South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen and has prepared a proposed further release of funds to NE Nigeria. The Department is liaising closely with partners to ensure that we have the most up to date information on each of these crises and respond appropriately, within our means, including through our Rapid Response Initiative.

The migration crisis in Europe has brought the challenge of linking our humanitarian, development and political responses into sharp relief. The immense level of need currently is putting a significant strain on an already-stretched humanitarian system. It has led to a clear call from the new UNSG Guterres to seek out a better way of working across the UN system. There is a strong emphasis on finding ways for development and humanitarian actors, together with those working on peacebuilding, to adopt a new way of working to more effectively target resources on countries and regions with greatest need, meeting the immediate needs of populations while also supporting the basis for longer term development where possible, in line with the Agenda 2030 collective commitments.

Upcoming issues/events

At a high level OCHA-donor meeting during the last week of June, it will be announced by the US (current chair) that Ireland will take on the chairing of the OCHA Donor Support Group in June 2018. From June 2017, Ireland will enter into a Troika-type arrangement with the US and the Swiss [we will be members of the Troika for three years; chair for one year]. OCHA is led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (current incumbent Stephen O’Brien; soon to be succeeded by current head of UK Aid (DFID) Permanent Secretary Mark Lowcock) whose role it is to brief the UN Security Council on humanitarian issues. Over the next three years, this chairing role will provide Ireland with a high profile on humanitarian issues. Given that 80% of humanitarian crises are currently conflict-driven it will also be an important role in the context of Ireland’s SECCO campaign.

From February 2018, Ireland will assume a seat at the Executive Board of the World Food Programme. This partnership, led by the D/Agriculture in Ireland, presents real opportunities for cross government collaboration to ensure that this influencing opportunity is maximised in relation to Ireland’s priorities on nutrition and hunger, and effective humanitarian response.

Upcoming decisions

There are a number of funding submissions currently under preparation:

- Then Minister of State Joe McHugh delivered Ireland’s 2017 pledge of €25 million to the Syria Conference in Brussels in April. Some funding towards this pledge has already been disbursed to UN and NGO partners working in Syria and neighbouring countries, and approval will now be sought for a further allocation to a range of partners working inside Syria.
• In the context of a Solidarity Summit on Refugees in Uganda on 22-23 June, Ireland proposes to indicate a commitment of €3 million in 2017 to support the refugee response in Uganda. This pledge will consist of funding disbursed earlier in the year to support the refugee response and also monies to be provided through the Uganda Country Strategy Programme.

• Approval will also be sought in the immediate future for funding of €5.5 million in response to the crises in the Central African Republic (CAR) and in the Lake Chad basin. This funding for the Lake Chad basin will help fulfil a pledge made at the Oslo Humanitarian Conference for Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region in February this year, at which Ireland pledged at least €5 million in response to the humanitarian crisis in the region. Funding to the CAR response will meet a pledge made at the Brussels Conference for CAR in November 2016.

• Approval to disburse €400,000 in funding to the Irish Red Cross Society towards its programme in the Niger will be requested. This programme aims to address the root causes of poverty and is delivered in partnership with the Nigerien Red Cross Society.
**Africa Unit**

The Africa Unit is responsible for all aspects of Ireland's relationship with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa: political and economic relations and development cooperation programmes. For now, it also retains responsibility for the development programmes in Vietnam and Palestine.

In the coming months, there will be a strong focus on preparation for the 5th Africa-EU summit, due to be held on 29-30 November in Côte d'Ivoire. The summit is an important opportunity for the EU and Africa to reinforce their strategic partnership and jointly address common challenges and opportunities, in particular around stronger engagement and increased bilateral cooperation, security and the fight against transnational threats, and sustainable and inclusive economic development. These priorities are reflected in Foreign Affairs Council conclusions adopted in June on a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU partnership.

A significant portion of the Unit's work relates to management of the bilateral assistance programmes, delivered in Irish Aid's Key Partner Countries. The programmes are based on multi-annual strategies for each country, which set out the framework and priorities for Ireland's engagement with each country. The Unit manages a fellowships programme which support up to 70 students to undertake post graduate courses.

Deepening political and economic engagement with Africa's regional economic communities is a key objective of the Department, primarily the Africa Union through representation in Addis Ababa. In recent months progress has been made on cooperation with the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), with Eamon Gilmore (in his capacity as EU Special Envoy to the Colombian Peace Process) addressing the ECOWAS parliament in May on the lessons of the Northern Ireland Peace Process. Continued exchanges with ECOWAS in this area, including through incoming visits, are foreseen. The Department restructuring secondary accreditations of Ambassadors on the continent though our ten resident missions with a view to maximising our African network and to deepen relationships with Africa partners.

**West Africa**

In West Africa, there are two resident missions, one in Abuja (with secondary accreditation for Ghana, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire and ECOWAS) and one in Sierra Leone (with secondary accreditation to Liberia, Guinea and Mano River Union).

**Sierra Leone/Liberia**

The current development programmes in Sierra Leone and Liberia, both managed from Embassy Freetown, are rooted in two-year transitional strategies, approved in 2016. DCD senior management agreed to extend the transitional strategies until the end of 2018, given the challenging situation in both countries (including the continued recovery from the Ebola crisis), the weak state capacity and capacity of partners, and elections in Sierra Leone and Liberia scheduled for March 2018 and October 2017 respectively. The Sierra Leone programme is focused on gender, nutrition and governance, and the development focus in Liberia remains in the sectors of health, gender and the security sector. Ireland is also supporting the electoral processes in both countries through UN-managed basket funds.
Nigeria
Trade promotion continues to be the primary focus of the work of Embassy Abuja, which is now also accredited to Senegal, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The Embassy will also deepen political links with the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), and continue to monitor the response to the humanitarian situation in the north east of Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin.

The Great Lakes region
There are two missions in the Great Lakes region, Uganda (with secondary accreditation to Rwanda) and Tanzania (with secondary accreditation to Burundi, DRC, Comoros, Seychelles and East Africa Community).

Uganda
The Uganda Country Strategy is in its second year, running from 2016 to 2020. The Strategy encompasses all aspects of the Embassy’s work, including the Irish Aid programme, consular assistance to Irish citizens, political and human rights engagement, trade relations, and the promotion of Irish culture. The Irish Aid programme is investing in four sectors - social protection (particularly through a senior citizens grant), HIV/AIDS, education and governance. Approximately 45% of the budget is spent in Karamoja, the poorest sub-region of Uganda. Given ongoing concerns about the public financial management system, funding is not channelled through government financial systems, though the Government continues to be a key partner. Uganda is also facing an unprecedented refugee crisis – there are over 1.25 million refugees (mostly from South Sudan) in Uganda, which amounts to almost 3.5% of the country’s total population of 39 million, and makes Uganda the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. Uganda has a very progressive refugee policy, which allocates land to refugees on which to live and farm. The Embassy has a Humanitarian Response Fund to respond to the crisis, and have engaged in the recent Refugee Solidarity Summit held in Kampala on 21st-23rd June.

Tanzania
The current Mission strategy for Tanzania (2017-2021) is in its first year. The Mission Strategy addresses all aspects of Ireland’s engagement in Tanzania, including the Irish Aid programme, political and human rights engagement, trade and investment support, consular assistance, culture promotion, and engagement within the EU. The Irish Aid programme has a strong focus on women’s empowerment, with relevant activities incorporated across all areas of the programme. The key sectors of investment are Social Protection, Health, Nutrition, Agriculture and Livelihoods, and Democratic Accountability. There is also a small humanitarian budget, which is primarily focused on responding to the Burundian refugee influx in Tanzania.

Horn of Africa
There are two missions in the Horn of Africa, Kenya with secondary accreditation to Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea and Ethiopia with secondary accreditation to the Africa Union, South Sudan and Djibouti.

Ethiopia
Ethiopia is one of Ireland’s key partners in the Horn of Africa, and Ireland’s largest bilateral programme in 2017. Ireland’s development programme in Ethiopia, currently in its fourth year, is outlined in a five year Country Strategy which covers the period 2014-2018. The overall goal
of the strategy is to support Ethiopia’s growth and poverty reduction plans so that the poor benefit from, and contribute to equitable economic, social and environmental development. The programme focuses on areas such as social protection, rural livelihoods, nutrition, maternal health and civil society development. Ireland also provides funding to help address the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia through the bilateral programme. In 2015-2016, Ethiopia experienced its worst drought in 50 years. A new drought has now emerged in southern and south eastern pastoral areas of the country, which is posing a huge challenge for the Government. Ethiopia is also currently hosting a large number of refugees in the area, primarily from South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea, where people are fleeing drought, crisis levels of food insecurity and inter-communal clashes in the Horn of Africa. The humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia is set against the background of an ongoing political crisis sparked by protests against the government last year, and which led to a government-declared state of emergency which remains in place to date. This humanitarian emergency, now in its second year, combined with a difficult political situation is a reminder of the overall fragility of the Horn of Africa and underlines the need to support Ethiopia’s humanitarian requirements while continuing to encourage political reform.

Kenya
The Irish Embassy in Nairobi was re-opened in October 2014 in recognition of Kenya’s importance to the development and stability of the East African region, and of the significant political, economic and social links with Ireland and the prospects for deepened economic cooperation. The Embassy has a small development budget, which is targeted at a number of specific areas including strengthening the business and investment environment in Kenya, supporting the development of partnerships with Irish institutions and supporting business in agriculture, and supporting specific initiatives such as the piloting of a Young Scientist Kenya initiative. The Embassy also has a large trade focus. Ireland’s trade promotion agenda in Kenya is being supported through the building of institutional partnerships between entities in Kenya and Ireland, including on issues such as diaspora engagement, fisheries and public financial management. This involves a programme of incoming visits from Kenya to Ireland, mostly at official level. Then Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development Joe McHugh also visited Kenya in December 2016, where the focus of the visit was on the development of political, trade and economic relations with Kenya. It is hoped that an Africa Ireland Economic Forum event will be held in Kenya in December 2017, the first time it will be held in Africa.

Southern Africa Region
Ireland’s diplomatic presence in southern Africa is strong, with resident embassies in South Africa (with secondary accreditations in Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and SADC), Zambia (with secondary accreditations in Namibia and COMESA), Mozambique (with secondary accreditations in Swaziland and Madagascar) and Malawi. The Secretary General and other members of the Management Board attended a regional Heads of Mission meeting in Pretoria, South Africa in May, which offered an opportunity to examine Ireland’s strategic engagement with the region. The Africa Director has also visited all of Ireland’s Embassies in southern Africa this year.

Given the political prominence of the issue of migration, particularly within the EU, there has been a heightened focus on Africa in recent years and on the Sahel region in particular.
However this focus carries with it a risk of preoccupation with one geographic area at the expense of broader engagement across the continent. The relative stability of southern Africa compared with other parts of the continent can sometimes mask the importance of strong and continued engagement in the region. Despite some progress in the overall reduction of poverty, the region remains vulnerable to a fragile political economy with significant challenges in relation to governance, the role of women, environmental factors and demographic considerations. Notwithstanding these constraints, there is considerable potential for economic development in the region, with South Africa as an important hub, and attendant consequences for the African continent.

South Africa
Embassy Pretoria is unique among our African missions in the breadth of its engagement across all five themes of our foreign policy as set out in the Global Island. With over 30,000 Irish passport holders in South Africa as well as a vibrant and growing diaspora and Irish business community, the country is also an important hub for trade and investment in the region. Ireland’s diplomatic relations with South Africa are strong, and the mid-term review of the South Africa-Ireland Partnership Forum took place at senior-official level in Pretoria on 27 March 2017. The next meeting of the Partnership Forum is scheduled to take place in Pretoria in October 2017 at the level of Minister of State and the South African side has proposed that a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed at the Forum to elevate the status of the bilateral relationship. As there has not been a meeting between Irish and South African Foreign Ministers for some time, it is proposed that such a meeting might take place in the margins of the UN General Assembly this September.

A new Mission Strategy for Embassy Pretoria has been submitted for final approval and sets out Ireland’s role in South Africa and other countries of accreditation (Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana and Mauritius) over the next five years. The draft Strategy sets out an integrated, whole-of-Embassy approach with an emphasis on strategic and systematic political and public diplomacy. Proposed new directions will include strengthened political, trade and development cooperation in the region, a realigned accreditation to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and scaled-up engagement and investment in Zimbabwe (Ireland’s programme of development cooperation with Zimbabwe is managed by Embassy Pretoria).

Strategic Planning in Mozambique and Zambia
In guiding the strategic planning of Ireland’s African embassies, the Development Cooperation Division is moving beyond the more traditional focus on development towards a broader foreign policy perspective. Embassies Maputo and Lusaka are both engaged in strategic planning this year with a view to developing new Mission Strategies for each Embassy in line with this approach.

Mozambique
Mozambique is currently facing a debt crisis at a time when there are also difficult climatic, economic and political considerations in play. Military conflict in the country escalated following disputed elections in 2014 but an “unlimited” ceasefire was announced in May of this year following a period when the President and leader of the main opposition party took direct control of peace negotiations. A visit by Mozambican officials from the Ministry of
Finance to Ireland to facilitate engagement on aspects of public financial management, which is an important governance component of our bilateral development cooperation, is currently being planned for early July. It is expected that the Minister of Health of Mozambique will visit Ireland later in November to attend the Fourth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health.

Zambia
Strategic planning in Zambia is taking place against a backdrop of some political instability in the wake of the August 2016 Presidential Election, despite Zambia’s reputation as a relatively peaceful and stable country in the region. The failure of the Zambian judicial system to properly accommodate the opposition challenge of the results, combined with the President’s apparent unwillingness to reach out to the opposition to normalise politics following the election, has led to heightened tensions. These tensions have been significantly exacerbated by the arrest of opposition leader Hakande Hichilema at his home on 11 April. Mr Hichilema was subsequently charged with treason and has now been detained for over two months. His recent transfer to a maximum security prison 150km outside Lusaka appears to be an attempt to further isolate him from his supporters.

Malawi
The Secretary General, members of the Management Board and the Africa Director visited Malawi in May. A study visit to Ireland by Government of Malawi representatives and officials responsible for public sector reforms is currently being planned for later this year in the context of the focus in Embassy Lilongwe’s Mission Strategy on improved governance in Malawi.

Palestine
Ireland’s programme of assistance to the Palestinian people supports our political objectives and reflects a longstanding commitment to the peaceful development of a viable, sovereign Palestinian State. The Palestine Strategy 2015-2018 comprises a combined focus on political action and humanitarian/development support and we currently provide some €10 million annually in assistance. This involves support to the Palestinian Authority with a specific focus on education, to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees, to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), and to civil society organisations working to promote human rights. A number of Irish Aid’s key NGO partners also allocate some of their overall Irish Aid funding for work with Palestinian and Israeli civil society organisations involved in a range of humanitarian, development and peace building programmes.

Vietnam and SE Asia
The current development programme in Vietnam and the sub-region (Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR), and Myanmar) covers the period 2017-2020 and has an annual budget of €10m annually. The new Strategy includes an Irish Aid programme which is complementary to and fosters synergies with the Embassy’s work on consular services, political and trade relations, and cultural promotion.

The development cooperation programme is focused on addressing vulnerability and reducing poverty and inequality. Programme includes support to address hunger and under-nutrition, promotes livelihoods for very vulnerable groups; facilitates humanitarian demining to reduce loss of life and injury and enable reconstruction; and provides humanitarian assistance for immediate needs in Rakhine and Kachin states in Myanmar. The Irish Development Experience
and Sharing (IDEAS) programme provides targeted technical scholarships and establishes institutional links between Ireland and Vietnam supporting knowledge transfer and capacity development in Vietnam. A Civil Society programme provides funds to partners and projects which aim to strengthen the voice of poor communities in local governance and accountability; to promote gender empowerment; to promote acceptance and empowerment of people with disabilities, the LGBT community, people affected by HIV/AIDS, migrants, etc., and to promote the development of the civil society sector. The Embassy will continue to support ethnic minority communities to promote local level economic development. President Higgins undertook a state visit to Vietnam in November, 2016 to mark the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ireland and Vietnam. In April 2017 the Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, Trinh Ding Dung visited Ireland on an official visit. During the visit the delegation visited agricultural facilities and held meetings with Minister Creed and Minister Flanagan. The Deputy Prime Minister indicated that the Prime Minister may make an official visit to Ireland in the near future.

Trade Promotion
Work on the preparation of the 2017 Africa-Ireland Economic Forum (AIEF) is currently ongoing. Following an internal review of lessons learned from the organisation of previous annual flagship events held in Ireland, consideration is being given to holding the Forum in an African country, most likely in Kenya in December, to coincide with a proposed Enterprise Ireland trade mission. The Forum would be complemented by a smaller scale trade promotion event in Ireland earlier in the year, focussed on a particular sector, such as agriculture/agri-food. The proposal has received support from the African Embassies based in Ireland, and a more detailed review of the logistical feasibility of organising such an event is now underway. Other Africa-related trade promotion activities will continue over the coming period, including cooperation with the State Agencies; outreach to business representative organisations in Ireland; management of the Africa Strategy Implementation Fund; support to Missions on trade activities and opportunities; cooperating with other stakeholders to support Irish businesses in winning IFI contracts. Membership of the African Development Bank, currently at an advanced stage of consideration by D/Finance, would potentially open significant new business opportunities for Irish companies.

Fellowship Training Programme
The budget for the Fellowship Training Programme (FTP) is €1.9 million in 2017. One World One Future committed to the substantial expansion of the FTP. Consequently, this year applications are being accepted not just from key partner countries, but also Palestine, Burundi (Courtney Fellowship), Nigeria (Casement Fellowship), Myanmar, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Kenya and Liberia. Separately, scholarships are to be awarded to successful post graduate applicants from Vietnam under the Irish Development Experience Sharing Programme (IDEAS), from South Africa under the Kadar Asmal Fellowship Programme and to a business woman from Kenya under the Mwangi scholarship. Every year the Minister of State also meets with current fellows in Limerick.
Civil Society and Development Education Unit

Irish Aid allocates more than €80 million each year to approximately 150 development organisations, working in 75 countries to achieve long-term development and poverty reduction, and almost 40 organisations promoting development education in Ireland.

The Programme Grant, Irish Aid’s largest civil society fund, is used to support long-term development programmes. Programmes are distinguished from projects - which are also funded by Irish Aid through the Civil Society Fund - by their comparatively large-scale and sustainable nature and their impact at local, regional and national level. Examples of such programmes are strengthening health and education systems, water and hygiene management, education for marginalised children, including those challenged by disability, and the promotion of resilient food production systems.

These programmes take place in over forty countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Asia and Latin America. Thirteen Irish organisations will be funded through the recently launched new five-year phase of the Programme Grant to run from 2017 to 2021. The total value of the grant for 2017 is c. €53 million. The allocations to organisations range from €20 million (Concern) and €16 million (Trócaire) to €500,000 (Vita) per year.

In 2016, in the light of issues raised in a US Government investigation, the decision was taken to withhold funding which would have been allocated to GOAL. However, GOAL has, following intensive engagement with Irish Aid, carried out a substantial reform of its operations, governance and structures. As a consequence of this progress, withheld funding was released in phases for work confirmed to have been carried out, and an allocation of €9 million has been approved for 2017 to support GOAL’s continuing humanitarian and development work in eight countries. Such funding, subject to Ministerial approval, would be provided on an annual basis.

The Civil Society Project Fund provides annual grants up to a maximum of €200,000, to deliver projects focused on similar poverty reduction objectives. In 2017, a total of 38 organisations will receive funding under this grant scheme and a total of €5.1 million will be disbursed.

The Development Education annual grants round and Strategic Partnerships provide funding to organisations in the youth, community and education sectors in Ireland to promote understanding and awareness of global development and justice issues. In 2017, 31 organisations successfully applied for funding under the annual grant scheme. The total allocation for Development Education initiatives for 2017 will be c. €3.5 million. Irish Aid launched a new Development Education strategy last year to shape the collaborative work with the sector in the next seven years.

A new Strategic Partnership arrangement is currently being finalised with the missionary support body, Misean Cara, which provides grant funding to 90 member organisations across 50 countries. The funding application for 2017 has been reviewed and Ministerial approval will be sought for an annual grant of €15.5 million in 2017 (in line with recent annual funding) to deliver programmes to improve access to health, education and income and promote human rights.
Strategic Partnerships have also been established with Comhláth and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) under the Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative. Also, as part of this initiative, the annual Irish Aid Volunteer Fair will take place in October 2017.

The roster of volunteers for international election observation missions is also managed within Irish Aid. Preparatory work for the establishment of an updated roster of election volunteers for 2018 is underway.
**Multilateral Unit**

Ireland’s membership of the European Union, the United Nations and a range of multilateral and international organisations allows us to participate in development cooperation programmes at a global level including areas in need outside of our Key Partner Countries. Approximately €90 million is allocated to these areas for 2017.

A large proportion of Ireland’s multilateral assistance is mandatory such as the assessed contributions to the European Development Fund (EDF) and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. For 2017, our anticipated contribution to the EDF is assessed at approximately €37m and our contribution to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey is €10.5 million. Payment to Trust funds for Africa (Migration) and Colombia are also covered from this subhead (€600,000 each).

This makes up the bulk of the allocation under the subhead dealing with payment to international funds. €1.6 million is allocated to payments in support of trade related capacity building initiatives within development countries, and €2.0 million to the International Fund for Agriculture Development.

Multilateral assistance also covers voluntary contributions to a range of UN agencies involved in development activities, including democracy-building and electoral reform, education and training, assistance to refugees, protection of human rights, combating HIV/AIDS, developing health systems and environmental protection.

For 2017, over €36m will be allocated to Voluntary Contributions. The largest allocations will go to three UN bodies: the UN Development Programme (UNDP) (€7.75m); the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (€7.2m) and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (€7.5m) – an increase of €0.5 million on the 2016 allocation to this UN agency.

**Multilateral Trade and Development**

Multilateral Unit manages an Aid for Trade budget of €1.6m which seeks to boost the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in world markets via contributions to Geneva-based trade capacity building bodies i.e. the World Trade Organisation (WTO); the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; the Advisory Centre on WTO Law; and the International Trade Centre. Multilateral Unit has traditionally represented Ireland at the global reviews of aid for trade and will do so at the upcoming 6th Global Review to be held at the WTO from 11th – 13th July next. At the Review, EU Development Commissioner Neven Mimica plans to outline the proposed orientations for a revision of the 2007 EU Aid for Trade Strategy.

The 11th WTO Ministerial Conference will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 10-13th December. The Minister for Enterprise and Innovation leads on this but we support a positive outcome on issues of interest to LDCs which are under discussion including domestic support in agriculture; fisheries subsidies; and public stockholding of food. We will provide €50,000 to support participation by LDCs at the Conference.
Ireland signed two EU-African Caribbean Pacific Economic Partnership Agreements last year with the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community. These will need to be approved by the Dáil; however we are awaiting developments on signature by the East African Community before deciding on the timing for bringing a Dáil Motion.

**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)**

Ireland played a major role in brokering agreement on the universal 2030 Agenda which was adopted at UN Summit level in September 2015. Following intensive consultations between this Departments, the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Government has now agreed on Ireland’s national implementation plan for the SDGs. The Government has decided that in Ireland overall policy guidance will be provided through the Cabinet Committee System and a Senior Officials Group chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach. The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment Denis Naughten will be responsible for promoting national implementation.

In addition to our role representing Ireland’s strong support for this agenda at the relevant international fora, this Department will continue to support the efforts of our developing country partners to implement the Goals. Having reversed the trend last year, of a declining ODA / GNP percentage, the challenge now is to continue to make sustained, manageable progress in meeting our commitment towards moving towards the UN target and, in line with the SDGs, to keep our aid programme focussed on the core objectives of eradicating global hunger, reducing extreme poverty and providing humanitarian assistance to some of the world’s most vulnerable people.

At the global level, follow up and review of implementation will be through a UN body called the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development will meet every year at Ministerial level and once every four years at Head of State and Government level. This year the Ministerial segment of the HLPF will take from 17 - 19 July. It is expected that Minister Naughten will lead Ireland’s delegation to the HLPF in 2017. Ireland has volunteered for a national review in 2018.

**Follow-up to September 2016 Summit on refugees and migrants**

Following on our success co-facilitating agreement on the SDGs, Ireland also successfully co-facilitated last September’s UN Summit in New York on large movements of refugees and migrants. One of the main outcomes of the Summit was the commitment by the international community to adopt a Global Compact on Refugees and a Global Compact on Migration in 2018. The processes leading up to agreement on these Compacts are already underway and formal intergovernmental negotiations on both will begin in earnest in early 2018. Multilateral Unit, DCD, is coordinating across Government Departments to ensure a comprehensive Irish position during these processes.

It can also be noted that International Migrants Day is 18 December. While we do not as yet have any indications of specific events to which the Minister may be invited, it is quite likely that the day will be marked in Ireland and elsewhere.
EU
The new European Development Consensus was agreed in May this year and represents a decisive shift in the EU’s development cooperation policy to respond to current global challenges - demographic, economic, social and environmental - eradicate poverty and address growing inequalities within countries. It proposes a three pronged approach on EU action to do more, to do it better and to do it differently to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. As part of its response to the migration crisis and to the long term challenge of demography and job creation in Africa, last June the European Council adopted a new Migration Partnership Framework that represents an ambitious comprehensive approach that fully embeds migration in the EU’s overall foreign policy.

The Cotonou agreement which frames the EU’s relations with the countries in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP) will expire in 2020: discussions on the post Cotonou framework got underway in 2016 and will continue over the coming months. Ireland continues to engage actively with the European Development Fund (EDF), which is the EU’s main instrument for providing development assistance to ACP countries, including all of Ireland’s Key Partner Countries with the exception of Vietnam. The EDF funds cooperation activities in the fields of economic, social and human development as well as regional cooperation and integration and is financed outside the EU budget by direct assessed contributions from EU Member States. Ireland’s contributions to the EDF in 2017 amounts to €37.025 million.

The next meeting of the Informal Foreign Affairs Council on Development meeting takes place in Tallinn on 11th September 2017.

World Bank
The 18th Replenishment of IDA, the World Bank’s fund for the poorest countries was agreed in December 2016. Ireland maintained its level contribution at €90 million, in line with the majority of donor countries. The focus of IDA18 is closely aligned with Ireland’s development priorities, including our focus on Africa and supporting LDCs.

In addition to our IDA contribution which is managed by the Department of Finance, Irish Aid contributes to a number of trust funds administered by the World Bank for development activities, including the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Global Partnership for Education and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. Ireland also provides funding to the World Bank Group Facility for Investment Advisory Services, which advises developing countries on how to improve their business environments, as well as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Conflict-Affected States in Africa (CASA) Initiative, which supports the development of private enterprise in these countries. In May 2016, the World Bank held its second Development Finance Forum in Dublin. The Dublin conference, which brought together selected investors, policy-makers, and thought leaders, addressed the need to scale-up opportunities in the most fragile markets and focused on energy, urban development and agriculture.

Each spring and autumn, the Board of Governors of the World Bank Group hold meetings to discuss a range of issues related to poverty reduction, international economic development and finance. These meetings provide a forum for international cooperation and enable the Bank to serve its member countries. This year’s Annual Meeting will be held in Washington from 13-14 October. The Minister for Finance and/or the Governor of the Central Bank lead
Ireland's delegations at the Spring and Annual Meetings; it might also be useful for the Minister for Development to attend.
**Policy Unit**

**Background**
The Policy Unit of the Development Cooperation Division provides overall policy direction and technical support in line with Irish policies and interests as set out in ‘One World One Future – Ireland’s Policy for International Development’ and in the Global Island: Ireland’s Foreign Policy for a Changing World’. The Unit works to build and deepen understanding of Ireland’s international development policy across the organisation and externally and provides technical support and quality assurance, engaging and interacting across the Department and its Missions.

*One World One Future* sets out our vision for a sustainable and just world, where people are empowered to overcome poverty and hunger and fully realise their rights and potential. Our policy engagement is guided by the three goals of reduced hunger, stronger resilience; inclusive and sustainable economic growth; and, better governance, human rights and accountability.

The Policy work of the Division is driven by the changing global development landscape, the challenges and opportunities presented by the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 and the evolving context of our key partner countries.

The recent Mid-Term Review of Ireland’s Development Cooperation Programme undertaken by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) commended Ireland’s continuing strong focus on poverty reduction as central to the development programme. The Review team noted that within “The Global Island”, “One World, One Future” and the “Africa Strategy”, Ireland has found a balance between traditional development co-operation, economic growth, trade, and political engagement. This strategic framework supports a comprehensive approach to development cooperation as a key foreign policy objective.

**Key Areas of Work**
The priorities of the Policy Unit mirror the core objectives of Ireland’s international development policy. Policy engagement and funding for key partners is focused on a range of areas including: Essential services (Education, health, HIV and AIDS, and water and sanitation); Governance, human rights and gender equality; Inclusive economic growth (inequality, economic development, agriculture, markets and trade, financing for development, social protection); and Resilience (nutrition, climate change, disaster risk reduction and fragile states).

We also engage with Global Policy processes including dialogue on redefining Official Development Assistance in the context of Agenda 2030, Policy Coherence for Development and Development Effectiveness.

The Unit manages a significant number of global and research partnerships relevant to achieving our policy goals and priorities ranging from large public-private partnerships such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria to international research organisations such as the Consortium of International Agriculture Research Centres (CGIAR). The Units budget for 2017 is €45 million.
2017 Priorities

- In 2017 the Policy unit is continuing to deliver on our commitment to international development and to promoting global public goods such as peace and security, human rights, sustainable development, food security and climate change. Ireland’s strong focus on Least Developed Countries and on development priorities which impact on the lives of the poor are grounded in the particular needs of partner countries.

- The parameters of International development have changed. The pressure to respond to global humanitarian crises while maintaining a strong focus on longer term development that protects the significant gains already made presents new challenges. Ensuring greater coherence and linkages between humanitarian assistance, development and conflict resolution, responding to the needs of our partner countries, supporting the poorest and most marginalised, building an evidence base through research and good practice, remaining effective, focused and achieving results, whilst at the same time ensuring transparency and accountability are central to our work in the short to medium term.

- The 2030 Agenda adopted at the UN Summit in September 2015 signals a new global context which moves beyond the donor recipient model and recognises that Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) is only one, albeit important, component necessary to achieve the goals. The changing context in which aid is delivered presents opportunities and new challenges for donors, including Ireland. A key priority is to ensure that Ireland is well positioned to respond to this changing context and to support the achievement of the Goals in developing countries. We recognise that that our key partner countries are at different stages of development and are responding in a differentiated way to address their varying needs, levels of poverty and fragility.

- Building policy coherence and a Whole of Government approach to key policy issues through participation in inter-departmental coordination mechanisms, regular contact and effective communication with other Divisions/Units in the Department and other relevant Government Departments is a priority for the Division and the Policy Unit.

- More specific priorities this year include building on Ireland’s international reputation on addressing hunger to strategically position Irish Aid on hunger and nutrition; repositioning our focus on education, and particularly education for girls; responding to the effects and impact of climate change on vulnerable populations; and advancing our work gender equality, and on inclusive economic growth.

- This year has seen the appointment of a new chair of, former Deputy Olivia Mitchell. The appointment of new members to the Group is imminent as is agreement of their work plan for the next 2-3 years.

- A key forthcoming event to note is the 4th Global Forum on Human Resources for Health which Ireland is co-hosting with the World Health Organisation in Dublin from 13-17th November. This will attract up to 1000 participants including at Ministerial level.
Performance and Planning Unit

The Performance and Planning Unit supports the development of business processes across the Division. A major priority this year is to revise our guidance for strategic planning and to roll-out a standardised system for managing all grants made to partners.

The Unit is also responsible for the implementation of the Irish Aid Research Strategy and we will continue to engage with strategic partnerships to help deliver this strategy. In the coming months we will develop a proposal to strengthen our engagement with Irish Research Institutions.

The 2016 Irish Aid Annual Report is currently under preparation and will be launched in July/August.

Development Cooperation Division
20 June 2017