

IRELAND AND AFRICA

Our Partnership With a Changing Continent

AN AFRICA STRATEGY FOR
THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

SEPTEMBER 2011

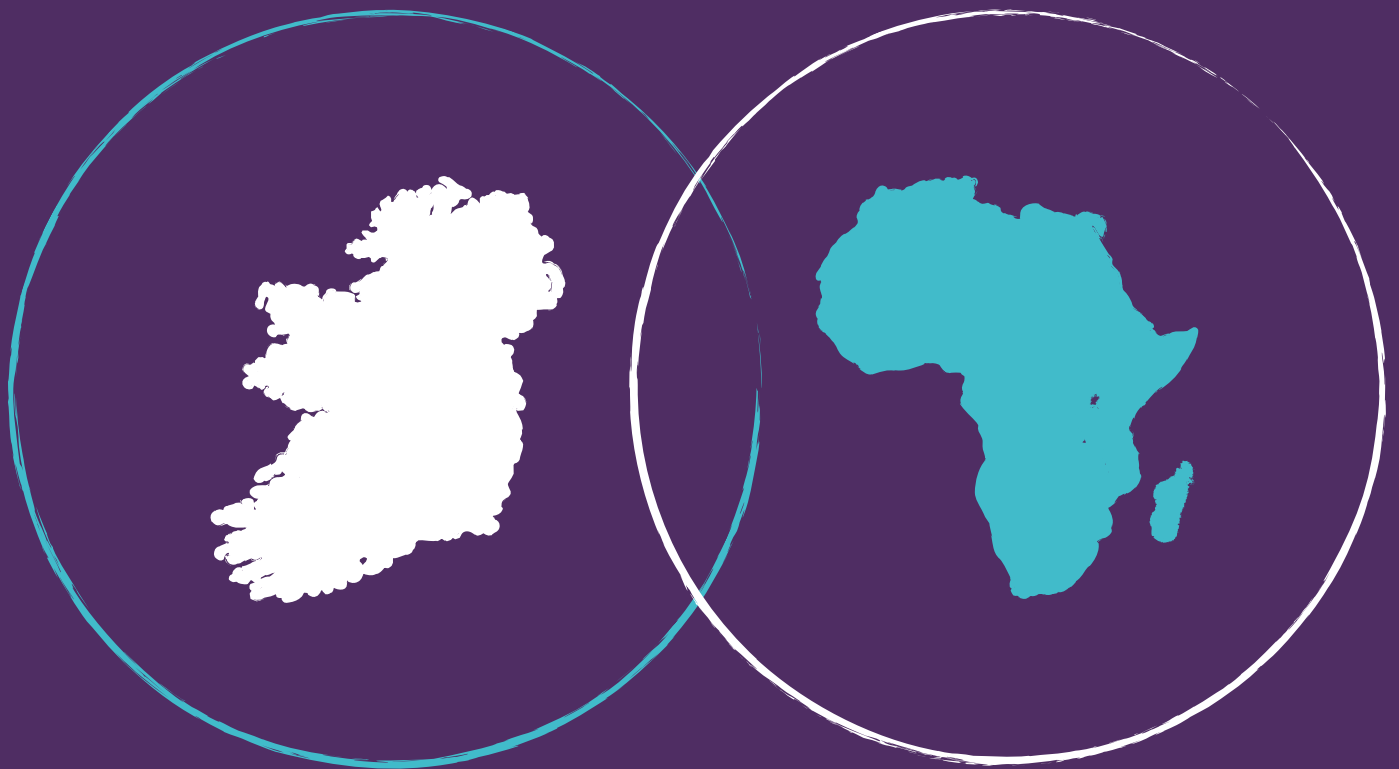


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FOREWORD FROM THE TÁNAISTE AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

EAMON GILMORE TD



It is a great pleasure for me to present a new Africa Strategy for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to clarify priorities and sharpen the focus in our relations with Africa over the coming years.

Ireland's relationship with Africa goes back a long way and has been a very positive and constructive one. We have had strong links built especially through the work of Missionaries and aid workers and the effectiveness of our development aid programme. It has been enhanced by the reputations of our peacekeepers, diplomats and businesspeople.

The time is now ripe for us to turn a new page in our relationship with Africa, and in doing so to recognise the way in which African countries have progressed and matured and how our approach to African countries must, in the same way, progress and mature.

This new Africa Strategy updates our analysis of trends and developments across Africa and in the way in which Africa relates to the wider world. It recognises Africa's diversity as a Continent of more than 50 countries. While it acknowledges that progress is being made in reducing conflict, fostering democracy and observing and implementing human rights norms, it also prioritises further work and engagement in these critical areas.

The Strategy also acknowledges the significant progress in terms of economic and social development which is taking place throughout the Continent. Africa is proving that development works.

But the pace and extent of development is not uniform: some countries are benefiting less than others, and, within countries, some communities are being left behind. This means that we still have, and must continue to have, a role in supporting and advocating for policies and programmes to lessen inequalities and ultimately eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, through our own Irish Aid programme and through our positions and policies within the European Union, the United Nations, and elsewhere.

Finally, the Strategy recognises that as Africa's economy grows it will need solutions and goods and services that it cannot produce itself, that demand for goods and services is growing from African countries and that Irish-based companies are well-placed to play a greater role in Africa. Through my Department and our Embassies across Africa, and in close cooperation with Enterprise Ireland and other Agencies and business associations, we commit ourselves in this Strategy to helping with the research, the networking and the groundwork that can identify and facilitate two-way trade and investment.

In essence, what we are saying in our new approach to Africa is that we will engage more with African counterparts, we will engage more on African issues at the EU and UN tables, and, most importantly, we will listen more to the voices of our African partners and to the people of Africa.

FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

JAN O’SULLIVAN TD



This Strategy document will guide the development of Ireland’s relations with the countries of Africa in the period ahead. It responds to the demands of a changing Africa and charts how we can deepen relations with all the countries of that continent.

The proposals to build on our strong existing relationships include a greater role for Irish business, a role that will help create new investment and trade. This trade will be mutually beneficial to Ireland and Africa and will be based on sound business principles which will make it sustainable over time.

As Minister with responsibility for Trade and for our Irish Aid programme I have visited Africa and I have engaged in many meetings and discussions with African counterparts.

These visits and contacts have highlighted a number of things for me. Firstly, that development is working in Africa. Secondly, that many problems persist, and that African countries still need our help to tackle poverty, hunger and disadvantage. Thirdly, that development aid alone will not solve these problems and that lasting solutions will need to be underpinned by increased domestic resource mobilisation, foreign direct investment, more regional cooperation within Africa, greater integration of Africa into world markets and more two-way trade between Africa and the rest of the world, including the EU and Ireland.

Undoubtedly, Ireland’s reputation has suffered some damage in recent times. However, two areas which have been central to our reputation remain strong: the exceptional performance of our exporters and the quality and effectiveness of our development cooperation programme. I believe they will play a vital role in restoring Ireland’s reputation internationally. Africa is very much the place in which these aspects come together, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is where they come together at the policy and Governmental level.

But Governments are only one part of the process. From all of my contacts with African Ministers, officials and community representatives since my appointment, one message stands out – that Africa wants more private sector investment, more trade, more joint ventures and more business-to-business contact overall. We are responding to this message through this Strategy, which will be implemented with determination over the coming years.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION



PART ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 — Africa is a vast and diverse continent undergoing significant and rapid change. In recent years, despite the development challenges, many sub-Saharan African countries have experienced greater economic growth, more trade, more investment, fewer wars, and more democratic participation than ever before. Africa is becoming ever more integrated into the global economy, providing current and future trade and investment opportunities. The views of African countries are gaining increasing weight at international level.

1.2 — As Ireland’s relationship with Africa and individual African countries matures, the connections between the different elements in the relationship - political, development cooperation, trade and investment - become clearer. This requires a more coherent response, both bilaterally and in the context of our membership of the European Union and the United Nations.

1.3 — Africa continues to face major challenges. Poverty and hunger remain the greatest obstacles to development in many parts of Africa. Efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals shall continue to be the top priority for the Continent and its international partners, including Ireland. Issues of governance and corruption, lack of transparency, weak respect for human rights, and weak enforcement of laws which protect the citizen persist in many countries and create obstacles to economic and social advancement.

Ireland has gained a reputation as a serious and reliable partner through the legacy of Irish missionaries as educators of many of Africa’s leaders, our contribution to peacekeeping and more recently through direct Government development cooperation and the programmes implemented by Irish Non Governmental Development Agencies. This engagement has contributed to significant advances in the social sectors, governance, and public sector capacity and in national capacity to respond to emergencies. Over the last thirty years, Ireland has developed a network of representation in Africa and there are now eleven Diplomatic Missions throughout the Continent. Through this network, Ireland will continue to focus on the full range of development issues: economic, political, social, the environment, governance and human rights.

African countries have themselves identified job creation, foreign direct investment, trade and private sector development, as drivers of future growth and development. For Ireland, this presents an opportunity to build on our development cooperation experience. We are moving towards a more balanced and mature set of relationships with African countries, incorporating stronger political exchange and sustainable two-way trade and investment flows. This does not mean that Irish development cooperation, which is a central element of our foreign policy, will become tied to commercial or other economic links. It will not. However, the outcomes of this cooperation are leading, over time, to a more advanced relationship, where mutual political, economic and development interests carry a more equal weight.

— **1.4**

— **1.5**

PART TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP



PART TWO THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

2.1 — Ireland's development cooperation policies and programmes in Africa are at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy. 80% of the Irish Aid budget is focused on sub-Saharan Africa. The enormous challenges of reducing poverty and promoting equitable and sustainable development, human rights and good governance will remain our top priority.

2.2 — **The Minister of State for Trade and Development, Jan O'Sullivan TD, has announced a Review of the 2006 White Paper on Irish Aid. Its findings will be published during 2012 and will inform the future direction of development cooperation as an integral part of Ireland's foreign policy. What is clear is that Ireland's development cooperation policies will continue to place emphasis on building local systems and the capability to deliver local solutions to the challenges of poverty, in line with international best practice, on making aid more effective and on the thematic priorities of hunger, climate change, gender equality, the fight against global pandemics such as HIV and AIDS, and the promotion of good governance.**

2.3 — Many African countries are experiencing unprecedented economic growth. However, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Review Summit in September 2010 noted that most African countries will not meet the 2015 development goals. Ireland will continue to stress the need for intensified international efforts to achieve those Goals by 2015.

Ireland is playing a leading role in encouraging action to combat global hunger, focusing in particular on Africa. In this context, the Government has been working closely with the US Administration on hunger and undernutrition. This joint effort was most recently highlighted in the meeting in June 2011 with the Tanzanian Government attended by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD, and the US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton..

Our development cooperation programme has long recognised that economic and social development in our African partner countries cannot be driven by, or based on, external aid flows alone. Foreign Direct Investment, indigenous enterprise and entrepreneurship, trade, tourism and effective domestic resource mobilisation are crucial ingredients in the economic and social development mix and should be encouraged and facilitated by the Irish Aid programme. — **2.4**

For example, efficient and fair tax systems are necessary to improve the business environment and to raise the revenue for sustainable social programmes, poverty reduction, and the provision of services. Currently, even with deficiencies in tax collection, domestic revenue raises around ten times more financing for Africa than development assistance. However, the ratio of tax to GDP in some poorer countries is only about half of what it is in the developed world, and tax avoidance remains a major problem. — **2.5**

PART TWO THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

2.6 — Ireland is supporting a number of important initiatives to encourage domestic resource mobilisation in Africa. This includes support for regional efforts such as the African Taxation Administrators Forum (ATAF), as well as support for bilateral collaboration between the Irish Revenue Commissioners and the Rwanda Revenue Authority. The situation varies from country to country and the potential gains from more efficient tax systems are not uniform, but it is clearly a significant factor in some countries.

2.7 — **Irish Aid will expand its role in cooperation with partner countries to help build domestic resource mobilisation and improve the business environment.**

2.8 — Irish Aid is also engaged in ongoing support for private sector development, helping create improved conditions for investment. Much of this work is focused in the designated Programme Countries (in Africa these are Mozambique, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi), but Irish Aid programmes also support a number of important international initiatives. ‘Aid for Trade’ is the generic concept describing development assistance provided in support of partner countries’ efforts to develop the capacity to expand their trade to foster economic growth and to use trade more effectively to reduce poverty. Irish Ports, including Dublin Port Company, are partners with Irish Aid and UNCTAD in the Train for Trade programme which includes ports in Ghana and Tanzania. Ireland is committed to supporting multilateral Aid for Trade as a tool to help developing countries integrate into the global trading system.

The Department is committed to promoting environmentally sustainable development that is consistent with the needs and priorities of people in developing countries and which contributes to the eradication of poverty. We will continue to engage with key multilateral environmental agencies and demonstrate commitment to resolving global environmental problems. The priority attached to the environment in the EU-Africa Strategy is important. This Department will continue to play an active role in contributing to Ireland’s policies on the environment and climate change, including in areas such as Fast Start Finance and meeting our carbon offsetting requirements,. We will continue to work closely with the Department of the Environment, which is the lead Department in this area, ensuring that such policies on the environment complement and enhance the Government’s development programme

— **2.9**

Membership of the European Union gives Ireland a strong platform to promote more effectively Irish policies and values in international development, and on the ground in Africa. Ireland’s contribution to the European Community’s development budget will rise in the coming years, both in overall terms and as a percentage of Ireland’s ODA. **Ireland will continue to use its position within the EU to support strong focus on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.**

— **2.10**



PART THREE

POLITICAL RELATIONS

PART THREE POLITICAL RELATIONS

3.1 — The promotion of peace and security, disarmament, respect for human rights and the rule of law are core priorities in Ireland’s foreign policy and are central to our relations with Africa. These objectives are important in themselves; they also provide the conditions for the achievement of sustainable economic and social development.

3.2 — We will work for progress in these areas bilaterally, in our relations with African partner countries, and at the multilateral level, through our relationships with the European Union, the United Nations and African institutions, particularly the African Union.

3.3 — The relationships developed through Irish Aid programmes provide a particularly strong basis for enhancing Ireland’s bilateral political and economic relations with those countries in which they are focused – Uganda, Ethiopia, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, Tanzania and Malawi. This engagement also increases our capacity to work with African countries more generally at all levels.

3.4 — The five countries of North Africa – Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt – are the EU’s closest African neighbours. We very clearly have common interests across a range of issues. Dramatic changes are taking place in this region, that argue for a stronger level of political engagement from the European Union, including Ireland.

In sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa and Nigeria are emerging economic and political powers while still facing internal development challenges. Both countries are highly significant regional powers, which also play increasing roles at global level, and can be expected to have assertive foreign policy positions on international issues. South Africa is a member of the G20.

Against this background, it is appropriate to pursue more regular, structured and high-level contacts between the Irish Government and officials and their counterparts in key African countries. **We will therefore propose regular political consultations between Ireland and African countries, with a view to supporting an annual visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to at least two African countries. All such visits will include a business dimension. A programme of inward visits from African Governments and Parliaments, and more frequent meetings between Irish and African representatives while attending international meetings will be pursued.**

The European Union has a vital role in efforts to promote political, economic and development objectives in Africa. The relationship between the EU and Africa is built around the EU Africa Strategy, and recent years have seen a remarkable broadening and deepening of the cooperation between the two regions. Ireland’s profile in Africa as a small country without a colonial history gives us a valuable perspective. Our knowledge and experience of African development challenges enable us to make an important contribution to the consideration of policies at EU level that affect that Continent.

— **3.5**

— **3.6**

— **3.7**

PART THREE POLITICAL RELATIONS

3.8 — At the same time, we can, through the EU, have a much greater impact on political and social outcomes in Africa than we could have acting alone. **The Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union will prepare a report on ways in which we can strengthen our capacities to engage with EU institutions on African issues, including with the newly-established European External Action Service (EEAS).**

3.9 — An effective and coherent United Nations is vitally important for African interests. In this context, Ireland will continue to support progress on UN Reform and implementation of the Delivering as One agenda and UN System-Wide Coherence, in particular as it relates to the development funds and programmes of the United Nations, and their central relevance to the effective delivery of aid to Africa.

3.10 — Ireland will work for increased engagement at UN level with African countries on issues such as migration and climate change, in order to explore what areas of common interest might be pursued. **Ireland's UN missions will undertake an exercise to prepare policy options in this area.**

3.11 — While the EU and UN have important roles to play at the global level, Africans are rightly committed to African solutions for African problems. The African Union (AU) is the continent's principal inter-governmental organisation and has become an increasingly important player in conflict resolution, mediation, peacekeeping and governance. The AU is also taking on greater prominence in promoting stronger and more coherent Pan-African positions on issues such as climate change.

Deepening our relationship with the AU, including through Ministerial participation in Summits and high-level meetings, will offer opportunities for increasing our contacts with African leaders as well as our understanding of developments in Africa. **With a view to strengthening support for African regional integration as an engine of growth and a mechanism for dispute resolution, our representation to the African Union will identify ways in which we can engage more effectively with the AU, including through further financial support for its work in areas such as governance, peace and security.** — **3.12**

In addition, Africa has a network of eight Regional Economic Communities that have the mandate of developing African integration, and we will actively explore ways of strengthening our ties with a number of these, through our Embassy network in Africa. — **3.13**



PART FOUR

TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

PART FOUR TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

4.1 — It is probably in the economic sphere where the most scope exists for increasing and shaping the interaction between Ireland and Africa in the longer term. ODA flows, while crucially important for promoting sustainable development, represent a decreasing element of overall economic activity in Africa. International Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows and domestic and intra-African trade and enterprise are increasingly important engines of economic growth in all countries on the Continent.

4.2 — As the relationship between Ireland and Africa matures, we must ourselves begin to look to and prepare for expanded ties with African countries in the medium to long-term which move beyond historical donor-recipient type relationships and towards more multi-faceted relationships incorporating strengthened trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people links.

4.3 — In considering this aspect of our approach to the African continent, it is important to be realistic in terms of our expectations and to be focused, targeted and strategic in the way we utilise our limited resources. Africa is still a developing Continent, and there are many challenges and difficulties that constrain the prospects for increased economic exchange. Furthermore, the Continent is very diverse, with more than 50 countries, and the prospects for expanded economic ties with individual countries vary greatly and require differentiated analysis and approach. In some countries and sectors, it will be appropriate to be proactive, while in other cases, our actions will be primarily based on already identified trade and investment opportunities.

The enhanced trade promotion role which the Government has given to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade merits an examination of priorities across the Department and across our whole Embassy network. This enhanced role could not be timelier in the case of Africa **— 4.4**

Africa is not an easy market and the business potential differs from country to country. In some cases, it will take time and patience to create and build business relationships. However, in some countries and regions there is clear potential for expanded exchange in sectors where Ireland has proven strengths and competencies, and it is important in those cases that we begin now to undertake the analysis and the groundwork to prepare for developing this kind of stronger economic relationship in the years and decades ahead. It is clear that Ireland's Embassy network will play a crucially important role in this approach, raising awareness of Ireland and its capacities and providing us with opportunities to promote Ireland's potential as a partner for Africa and to identify areas where there is a good fit between the strengths of Irish business and the needs and gaps that exist in African economies. **— 4.5**

PART FOUR TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

4.6 — In recent years a range of publications and studies acknowledging the changes which have occurred in Africa’s economic situation have been produced. A McKinsey consultancy report of June 2010 on the progress and potential of African economies notes that total foreign capital flows into Africa increased from \$15 billion in 2000 to a peak of \$87 billion in 2007. McKinsey projects that at least four groups of industries – consumer-facing industries, agriculture, resources, and infrastructure – could generate as much as \$2.6 trillion in revenue annually by 2020. The report notes that early entry into African economies provides clear opportunities to create markets, establish brands, and shape industry structure. Similar findings are also contained in the more recent African Economic Outlook Report.

4.6 — Africa can no longer be considered a marginal player in economic or political terms. Sub-Saharan Africa is the third fastest growing region in the world, after China and India. This is of course growth from a low base and there are more than 50 countries in Africa all with very different economic profiles and rates of growth. Nonetheless, these growth rates are impressive. Even in countries where the economy is still at a very early stage of development, the formulation of a strategy for economic engagement in Africa now can help us to begin to lay the groundwork for Irish economic activity in these countries in the future.

4.8 — It seems clear that the focus of the developed world will reorient in a major way to Africa within the next 10 years. There is an expectation that Africa’s current pace of growth will remain at a high level, at around six per cent a year.

We must acknowledge that as these growth figures continue, and more countries in Africa move towards prosperity, and a growing middle class, there will be a need to focus resources on this area. Setting out our commitment to developing our economic relationship with Africa will ensure that Ireland, already well positioned though our well regarded and successful aid programme, as well as our historical and missionary links, will be sufficiently agile to manage the resources available to us to participate in African development. We must try to do this in a way which will benefit Irish business and in a way which will complement the objectives of our aid programme and the stated wish of African countries; i.e. supporting independent development, while making growth as inclusive as possible.

There are strong reasons why Ireland should step up its economic engagement with major African economies such as South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Libya and other North African countries, as well as some other African countries where potentially a good fit exists for Irish business. Modest but growing Irish economic relationships also exist in some of those countries which are designated Programme Countries under Ireland’s development cooperation programme, Irish Aid.

4.9

4.10

PART FOUR TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

4.11 — Ireland’s Trading Relationship

Our current levels of trade with Africa (with the exception of South Africa and the countries of North Africa), are low. Total Irish exports to Africa in 2010 represented just over 1% of our total exports worldwide. However, for the right companies in the right sectors, which are willing to invest time and effort in building up relationships and market knowledge, there are significant opportunities in some countries and regions of Africa.

4.12 — The Government’s integrated Trade, Investment and Tourism Strategy – ‘Trading and Investing in a Smart Economy’ published in September 2010, does not specifically focus on Africa as a potential market, though South Africa is considered to be a priority country. However, the strategy does contain valuable analysis of the sectors which will provide high growth and export potential for Ireland. We can learn from this analysis when focusing on African markets. Enterprise Ireland has identified Telecommunications, financial services and E-Learning as sectors that merit attention, as well as infrastructure solutions in areas such as energy, water, civic construction, health and education.

4.13 — Food and drink exports to Africa are growing steadily, with particularly notable performances from the dairy sector. Nigeria, South Africa and the countries of North Africa are increasingly important markets for food and drink exporters, and relevant Embassies will continue to work closely with the department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Bord Bia and Irish companies active in these areas.

The challenge for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and for our network of Embassies abroad, will be to develop our practices to best support and inform Irish interest in trade and investment, both through our existing contacts and resources on the ground and through new and targeted initiatives. — **4.14**

While the number of Irish companies trading with Africa is currently low, it is likely that as it grows, companies will require more support and assistance than has been the case in some other regions. It needs to be acknowledged that, as well as opportunities, Africa still presents significant challenges. Embassies, the Department, and Government as a whole, will need to be flexible in how they deal with developing economic opportunities in this very different environment. — **4.15**

International activity in Africa

The footprint of Irish economic activity in Africa has been enhanced by the presence of a small number of multinational companies with strong Irish connections. These companies are involved in such diverse areas as mining, oil exploration and electricity generation. Their reach is normally across several countries, and they are brands that would be recognised by many African business people and Government contacts. These companies are major investors and creators of employment and are playing an increasingly important role in contributing to sustainable economic development on the continent. — **4.16**

PART FOUR TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

4.17 — The presence of these companies in various countries in Africa is of benefit in terms of building recognition for Ireland as a source of business, and is another means of raising awareness of Irish economic activity. Our Embassy network is already in contact with and supporting many of the representatives of these companies on the ground in Africa.

4.18 — **Through existing contacts with multinational companies, the Department will explore ways in which it may be possible to provide mentoring/advice to smaller companies seeking to enter the African market in other sectors. It may be possible to use the success and influence of these companies as a springboard for other Irish companies seeking to enter the region.**

4.19 — There are several multinationals that have chosen Ireland as their service centre for the European, Middle East and Africa region. There may be opportunities to make connections through people based in Ireland who travel regularly to company subsidiaries in Africa. Some Embassies are already utilising Irish contacts working in African offices of North American and other companies.

4.20 — **The Department will explore how existing relationships could be developed further and examine the prospect of inviting these people to participate in business networks or share their expertise with Irish companies.**

Sub-Saharan Africa’s economic ties with other developing and emerging market countries now total about a third of African external trade, which is a threefold increase in a decade. Trade with China alone is growing at an even faster rate. South-South partnerships, as these growing relationships are now described, have received support from many quarters, who argue in favour of them, not only in terms of the value for donors and investors but also for an exchange of information and lessons learned. — **4.21**

Given the increased engagement in Africa of new economic actors such as Brazil, Korea, India and China, Irish Embassies in these countries, as well as our missions in Africa, will establish a fuller profile of the involvement of these countries in Africa, to allow for the possibility of an intersection of interests. We should also examine, again with limitations of scale in mind, but also in view of their shared interest in strengthening democratic values and free market economies, our cooperation with the US and Japan in economically oriented development programmes in Africa. — **4.22**

There is an increased global focus on certain African States as players in the international economic arena in such fields as agriculture and energy. African countries and the region as a whole are exercising more influence in global trade negotiations, for instance through South Africa in the G20. This argues for a more intensive engagement with South Africa in particular. — **4.23**

PART FOUR TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

- 4.24** — We should aim to scale up economic dialogue with the South African Government and, through the Embassy in Pretoria, strengthen our engagement on issues such as South Africa's own economic and political priorities including its role within the G20, the G77 and other fora, and its growing economic alliance with China, Russia, India and Brazil and their common interests, as well as opportunities which South Africa offers as an entry and distribution point for wider trade in Africa.
- 4.25** — There is a case also for devoting more attention to our economic relations with a number of other African countries including Egypt and Nigeria, where we have resident diplomatic presences, and countries where our relations are on a non-residential basis, but where their economic development demonstrates potential in the short to medium terms for Irish business.

PART FIVE

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE



PART FIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

5.1 — In looking at our economic links with Africa, this Strategy will set out a path for the Department and our offices abroad to provide the most appropriate and effective support for Irish State Agencies and individual Irish businesses. In some cases, this will focus on how best to offer a response to the existing interest and needs of companies. In other cases it will look at how we can be more proactive and more strategic in expanding the economic linkages. In all cases, our approach will be focused, and targeted at specific sectors and regions in order to ensure the most efficient use of our resources.

Profiling economic interests and strengths

5.2 — To support the development of economic opportunities in Africa, a strengthened mandate on trade and investment issues will be given to Ireland’s Embassies in Africa. The Department will develop, in consultation with Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and other relevant organisations, an information sharing programme which will ensure that Embassies are equipped to identify and follow up on suitable opportunities which may exist in their areas of accreditation.

5.3 — This programme will also ensure that Embassies are familiar with the range of Irish products and sectors in which Irish companies are successful, to ensure that opportunities can be matched and pursued in a targeted way. In conjunction with this, Embassies will prepare profiles for specific priority sectors in their countries of accreditation. The aim is to ensure that Ireland makes the best use of its resources on the ground to facilitate the interests of companies here.

Africa-Ireland Economic Forum

As part of the process of exploring the potential for increased economic exchange with African partners, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is collaborating with African Ambassadors accredited to Ireland on practical initiatives to expand two-way trade and investment. These issues will be highlighted and discussed in an Africa-Ireland Economic Forum. This event will include representatives of Irish companies interested in opportunities for business in Africa and representatives from a number of African countries. The UCD Smurfit Business School will co-host the event and the follow-up focus will be on expanded business-to-business links. — **5.4**

There is no doubt that there is potential for Ireland and Irish companies to improve their performance in terms of winning business and contracts from International Financial Institutions. From a business perspective, many markets in Africa are characterised by a dominant Government procurement dimension and also often by the involvement of International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank or other external donor financing bodies. The Department of Finance plays a leading role in representing Ireland’s interests with the World Bank and other IFIs and liaises closely with this Department and with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation as well as with Enterprise Ireland, in relation to procurement opportunities. — **5.5**

PART FIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

In view of the central importance of the EU, the World Bank and the African Development Bank to broader economic and social development in Africa **the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will focus on developing further our involvement with these international financial institutions. We will strengthen our relationship with the World Bank Headquarters in Washington, with a view to optimising opportunities for Irish involvement in such projects.**

5.6 — Our Embassies in Africa can also play an enhanced role by strengthening local ties, including with relevant private sector actors who are potential partners for Irish enterprises in securing and implementing contracts. Missions will also develop relationships to enable them to develop better understanding of sectors where contract tenders are likely to arise and identifying potential opportunities for Irish companies

5.7 — Missions in Africa and other relevant countries will examine and assess initiatives which are used by other like-minded and similar sized countries to support trade in Africa, either through their Development programme or by other means.

5.8 — The Department will examine, in consultation with Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Finance, the operation of the World Bank, the types of projects which it funds, and sectors in which there might be scope for Irish companies. The Department will also examine (with Embassy Washington) our current relationship with the World Bank, our contacts with Irish staff working there, and any change of focus which would lead to better results for Irish companies.

More broadly, it is recognised that the World Bank and the African Development Bank are enormously valuable repositories of knowledge and expertise in relation to macroeconomic and sector-specific developments within Africa. An enhanced relationship with these institutions will help to strengthen our analytical capacity, assist in the way we design and implement development cooperation and economic actions in the region, and act as reassurance for Irish companies who wish to invest in national and regional ventures in Africa.

— **5.9**

Supporting State Agencies

With this Department’s enhanced responsibilities in relation to Trade Promotion, will come a new dimension to our relationship with Enterprise Ireland. Enterprise Ireland takes a strong interest in the South African market and is actively assisting Irish firms in developing and expanding business links there. Enterprise Ireland views telecommunications, e-learning and financial services as priority sectors. It is likely that, in the future, that agency will determine that there is sufficient potential for bilateral business exchange to warrant the establishment of a presence on the ground in South Africa to work to develop business relations with that country.

— **5.10**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Embassy in Pretoria and, where appropriate, Embassies in other countries of Southern Africa, will assist Enterprise Ireland in every way possible to achieve its business objectives in this region. The Department will also discuss the scope for collaboration in the region with Bord Bia and other State Agencies.

— **5.11**

PART FIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

5.12 — Enterprise Ireland has also indicated focused interest in countries such as Nigeria and Egypt and has done some work on examining opportunities there for Irish companies. They intend to provide some support for client companies who are interested in investing in these countries through the use of local ‘pathfinder’ resources. Enterprise Ireland sees the telecommunications sector in particular as having potential for Irish companies, and this Department and our Embassies will work closely with Enterprise Ireland in the period ahead to explore how best to research this sector and pursue linkages. **Embassies will work closely with Enterprise Ireland to ensure that all possible assistance and support is being given to develop their profile and the profile of Irish business in these countries.**

Exploring synergies between Irish Aid programmes and two-way trade and investment

5.13 — Ireland’s official development cooperation programme, Irish Aid, is untied in nature and will remain so. At the same time, the programme provides Ireland with outreach and contacts which can be valuable in relation to the promotion of our economic interests and our support for Irish business and we will strive to make more of these linkages in the future.

5.14 — Irish Aid programmes also support initiatives that help to improve business environments in African partner countries and this can potentially be of indirect but significant benefit to Irish businesses.

5.15 — Other Irish Aid programmes seek to foster private sector development across Africa.

Existing private sector initiatives will be reviewed to see how experiences gained and lessons learned can benefit our activities in Africa.

Special training and capacity-building for staff in our Embassies in Africa will also be undertaken to better equip these missions to respond to the needs of the State Agencies and businesses. **Consideration will also be given to funding for a number of pilot initiatives in Irish Aid programme countries to support two-way trade and investment.** — **5.16**

Ireland’s Embassy and Honorary Consulate network in Africa

Our Embassy network in Africa represents our main platform for engagement at an official level in Africa and is an enormously valuable resource for supporting Irish economic interests there. We maintain a permanent presence in 11 African capitals and Irish diplomats are accredited in a further 27 countries. We have Honorary Consuls or Honorary Consuls General in a number of these countries. **The Department will explore how best we can strengthen the roles of our Honorary Consuls in Africa on trade and business, including through specific training.** — **5.17**

The Department will seek to use fully any incoming African visits at Ministerial level by including trade and business meetings with the Irish private sector, where relevant. This would be arranged in cooperation with the State Agencies. Ministerial visits to African programme countries or other countries will also incorporate a trade/business focus. — **5.18**

PART FIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

5.19 — The combined aim of these upskilling initiatives is to enable our Embassies to monitor economic developments in Africa, especially in identified priority sectors such as telecommunications, and respond effectively to specific approaches from State Agencies and Irish companies seeking to advance business links in their areas of accreditation.

Education cooperation

5.20 — We have recently seen the launch of a new strategy aimed at maximising the benefits of international educational links, including through the attraction of overseas students to Ireland and the enhancement of educational partnerships and exchanges. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and its network of diplomatic missions, will seek to identify ways to implement in Africa the objectives which flow from this strategy.

5.21 — Ireland is already engaged in these areas through programmes such as the Irish Aid Fellowships Training Programme (FTP) and the Programme of Strategic Cooperation with Higher Education Institutes (PSC). Over the past number of years hundreds of students supported by the FTP programme have graduated from Irish universities and are now working in key positions across Africa, particularly in our partner countries. These are important networks potentially in pursuing Ireland’s broader engagement with Africa and steps are being taken to reinforce the fellowships alumni association.

We shall examine options for further initiatives and activities in the areas of academic and research collaboration between Irish and African counterparts, including with private sector involvement. The issue of fee levels for Irish Aid Fellowship Training students and other students from Irish Aid partner countries will be examined in the context of the implementation of the International Education Strategy. — **5.22**

Strengthening coherence in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade at home and in Africa

In order to ensure coherence in our approach to Africa, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will establish a single Africa Unit bringing together the existing Africa Section from Political Division and Programme Desks from Development Cooperation Division, which will also manage aspects related to foreign trade and investment promotion activities. — **5.23**

Coherence at Embassy level is also important. There will be regular meetings of Heads of Mission based in Africa. Another important mechanism for coordination will be the network of Economic Focal Points which has now been established comprising representatives of all of Ireland’s African missions. This network will maintain ongoing contact through electronic communication including the Department’s Intranet and Video-Conferencing facilities. It will also be vital that Heads of Mission make full and flexible use of business planning and performance management tools in order to achieve added value in programmes and activities on the ground, and ensure a coherent approach across the three areas covered in this document – political, economic and development cooperation aspects. — **5.24**



PART SIX

SUMMARY OF THE ACTION POINTS
IDENTIFIED TO GUIDE THE FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS
WITH AFRICA

PART SIX SUMMARY OF THE ACTION POINTS IDENTIFIED TO GUIDE THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

- I. — Step up our dialogue on political, economic and social issues with African partners. Arrange for more regular political consultations at official level between Ireland and Africa, to support an annual visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to at least two African countries. All such visits will include a business dimension.
 - II. — More inward visits from African Governments and Parliaments, as well as meetings between Irish Ministers and African counterparts in international fora, will be pursued.
 - III. — Maintain the emphasis of Ireland’s development cooperation policies on building local systems and the capability to deliver local solutions to the challenges of poverty and hunger, in line with international best practice, on aid effectiveness, and on the thematic priorities of hunger, climate change, gender equality, the fight against HIV and AIDS, and the promotion of good governance.
 - IV. — Irish Aid will expand its role in cooperation with partner countries aimed at enhancing domestic resource mobilisation, and improved business environments, including private sector development activities.
- V. — Ireland will continue to use its position within the EU to support a focus on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. We are committed to playing a more active role in regard to EU policy on Africa in the future and the Permanent Representation to the European Union will prepare a report on ways in which we can strengthen our capacities to engage with EU institutions on African issues, including with the European External Action Service (EEAS).
 - VI. — Ireland will support progress on the UN Reform agenda, in particular as it relates to the development funds and programmes of the United Nations, and the effective delivery of aid to Africa.
 - VII. — Ireland will give strong support for African regional integration as an engine of political stability and economic growth. The Department will examine ways in which we can engage more effectively with the African Union and Africa’s Regional Economic Communities.
 - VIII. — A strengthened mandate on trade and investment issues will be given to Irish Embassies in Africa and staff at Embassies will receive training and capacity-building to better enable them to support the State Agencies and companies pursuing business opportunities in their areas of operation.

PART SIX SUMMARY OF THE ACTION POINTS IDENTIFIED TO GUIDE THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

- IX.** — Existing Irish Aid funded trade-focused initiatives will be reviewed to consolidate experiences gained and lessons learned to date and outline activities in the future. Consideration will also be given to funding for a number of new initiatives in Irish Aid programme countries to support two-way trade and investment.
- X.** — The Department will strengthen collaboration with African diplomatic missions on practical initiatives to expand two-way trade and investment. These initiatives will be highlighted in the Africa-Ireland Economic Forum in 2011. The potential to promote these linkages through celebrations to mark Africa Day in future will also be explored.
- XI.** — The Department will examine options for further initiatives and activities in the areas of academic and research collaboration between Irish and African counterparts, including with private sector involvement. The issue of fee levels for Irish Aid Fellowship Training students and other students from Irish Aid partner countries will be examined in the context of the implementation of the International Education Strategy.