
ŠTÚDIE
ANALÝZY

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**Ireland's Foreign Aid
in 1998
(Incorporating
a retrospective review of
25 years of Irish aid)**

Following five years of decline, global aid flows to developing countries finally registered an increase in 1998. Throughout the period 1993 through 1997, Ireland's aid effort had been bucking the global trend,

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increasing steadily year by year, not only in pound terms but also as a percentage of gross national product (GNP). In 1998, Irish aid also increased. However, part of the budget was unspent by the end of the year. Consequently, when measured in terms of percent-of-GNP, it registered a slight decline compared with 1997.

It is now 25 years since Ireland launched its bilateral aid programme. Despite occasional slippages, the quarter century has been one during which Irish aid has increased steadily both in nominal terms and as a percentage of GNP. Of course, Ireland's total official development assistance (ODA) budget is small compared with those of most of the other twenty members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 1998, it still ranked 19th out of the 21 Member States of DAC in US dollar terms (just ahead of New Zealand and Luxembourg); when measured as a percent of GNP, it was number ten, just last in the top half of the donor 'league table'.

To mark this important anniversary, the third section of this paper is devoted to a retrospective review of the first 25 years of the Irish aid programme.

Global aid flows in 1998

Since less than 1 % of global aid flows to developing countries is provided by donors that are not members of DAC, it is sufficient to examine their record in order to provide an overview of global aid flows during 1998. According to the most up-to-date information available from the DAC at the time of writing (OECD 1999), total net ODA from DAC members rose by US\$3.2 billion in 1998 to US\$51.5 billion, an increase in real terms of nearly 9 %. Measured in terms of percentage of their combined GNPs, ODA increased marginally from 0.22 % in 1997 to 0.23 % last year. Thus, despite this slight improvement, the gap between the reality of the rich countries' aid achievement and the aspiration of the United Nations' target of 0.7 % to which most DAC members had committed themselves in 1970, remains enormous.

Does the 1998 increase in global aid, small as it is, suggest that the great contraction that began shortly after the end of the Cold War, is now on the point of being reversed? Just as one swallow does not make a summer, one upward movement in a curve does not guarantee the beginning of a long-term positive trend. When aid first fell in 1993 after a long period of sustained growth – even through years of recession and budgetary stringency in many OECD countries – the DAC suggested that it represented 'a bout of weakness, rather than an incipient collapse' (OECD 1995, 73). In the event,

it turned out to be the beginning of a five-year decline. In relation to the most recent turnaround, the DAC states that, while the 1998 recovery was due in part to the timing of contributions to multilateral agencies and to short-term measures to deal with the Asian financial crisis, a number of Members have made firm commitments to maintain or even increase their aid flows. Certainly, it is encouraging to note that fourteen of the DAC countries increased their ODA in real terms in 1998.

Of course, the main influences on the overall size of global aid flows in any year are the contributions of the largest donors – who also happen to be the countries with the largest economies. Overall declines in aid between 1993 and 1997 were largely due to falling allocations by G7 countries. Indeed, as recently as 1997, total aid from these countries (US, Japan, Canada, Germany, France, UK, Italy) as a group fell US\$34.5 billion compared with US\$41.3 billion a year earlier. The preliminary data for 1998 reveal a number of interesting features about the aid flows of this group. Both Japan and the US increased their aid by US\$1.3 billion. In the case of the former, it reflected a surge in loans to countries affected by the Asian financial crisis; in the latter case, it was because of increased deposits of promissory notes with multilateral development banks as well as increases in food and emergency aid, especially to Africa. A huge increase of US\$2.4 billion in Italian aid is explained by increased flows to multilateral agencies and higher net loan disbursements due to debt rescheduling operations. Such increases may or may not be sustainable in the long term. In the case of UK aid however, a rise of 7.8 % in real terms reflects its commitment to increase its aid by 25 % by 2001. As regards the remaining G7 countries (Canada, France and Germany), all registered declines in real terms (11.4 %, 6.2 %, and 4.1 % respectively) during 1998.

Total aid provided by DAC members outside the G7 group increased by 3.8 % in real terms last year. Together, their aid accounted for 26 % of total ODA. This compares with their 13 % of DAC Members GNP. Ireland is among those that recorded the largest percentage increases in their aid budgets compared with 1997. Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden remained the only countries to meet the UN's 0.7 % of GNP target. Luxembourg (0.6 %) and France (0.41 %) were the only other countries that exceeded the average country effort of 0.4 % of GNP. Ireland (at 0.30 %), despite a very commendable performance in recent years, still remains a long way off both marks.

There was less playing of 'musical chairs' in 1998. Measured in terms of volume of aid, the rankings among DAC donors remained rather simi-

lar to those of the previous year. Japan remains the largest donor followed in order of size – as in 1997 – by US, France, Germany, UK and Netherlands. There were a few changes within the next group of six countries. Italy moved up to seventh place overall, Denmark jumped ahead of Canada and Sweden, while Spain eased past Norway to take eleventh place. Rankings among the remaining nine were unchanged (Australia, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Finland, Portugal, Ireland, New Zealand, and Luxembourg).

Aid from all EU countries combined (apart from Greece which is not a member of DAC) amounted to US\$27.687 billion in 1998 – up from US\$26.5 in 1997. This represented 54 % of total DAC aid last year. When aid amounting to US\$5,238 billion from the European Commission (EC) is added on, the total EU aid effort last year came to US\$32.925 billion or 64 % of total DAC aid. Despite this huge presence in volume terms, however, the EU still cannot be counted as an ‘aid leader’. Despite improvements among EU donors in terms of complementarity (between the EC and the member states’ programmes) and coordination (between all their programmes inside developing countries), the EU does not speak with one voice in aid fora, nor does it yet set the agenda for global aid in any significant sense.

In addition to aid flows, developing countries also rely on private flows to help finance their investment needs. The total of these flows, which include foreign direct investment, commercial bank lending, bonds, equities, and contributions from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), fell dramatically in 1998. Indeed, the fall in total private flows to developing and transition countries was many times larger than the rise in aid, so that total net resource flows to these countries fell by over 40 %, from US\$325 billion in 1997 to a five-year low of US\$181 billion last year. According to the DAC (OECD 1999, 2), the main explanation for the collapse in private flows last year was the crisis of confidence in emerging markets, which started in Asia in 1997 and later affected Russia and Latin America. Commercial banks reduced lending, institutional investors retreated from equity markets, and bonds issued by developing countries were less successful than in previous years. Interestingly, foreign direct investment rose marginally in these emerging markets.

Of course, for the countries that are assisted by Irish aid, private flows are of little importance. The world’s 48 least-developed countries – and all of Ireland’s priority countries are in this category – received only about US\$1 billion in private flows in 1998 compared with nearly US\$14 billion in ODA.

Irish aid performance in 1998

Table 1 provides an overview of total Irish aid and its distribution between bilateral and multilateral flows for 1998 and for selected years during the past decade. Table 4, in the retrospective section of this paper, provides similar information for selected years since the launch of the bilateral aid programme in 1974. These two tables also provide information on the budgets for 1999. Table 1 allows an examination of expenditure trends in recent years which shows the extent to which the government's medium-term targets up to 1997 were met and – using additional information on allocations up to 2001 – the likelihood of the current target being met during the lifetime of the present government.

Targets and out-turns

In summary, the targets for the period 1995 through 1997, published in the 1993 *Strategy Plan* (DFA 1993) were: total nominal flows of ODA of around I£90 million in 1995, I£110 in 1996 and I£135 in 1997 – with ODA reaching 0.4 % of GNP by the end date. An additional sub-target of the achievement of a two-to-one ratio of bilateral to multilateral aid by 1997 was also set. The current ODA target is 0.45 % of GNP during the lifetime of the present government.

Table 1. Irish aid, selected years 1989-99 (IR£M and %)

	1989	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 ^b
Total ODA (IR£M)	34.5	75.2	96.8	112.1	124.1	139.6	179.2
Administration and tax deductability	0.7	1.4	1.8	2.1	2.3	2.8	3.4
Bilateral aid	12.7	38.1	54.0	69.5	78.6	84.0	99.7
Multilateral aid	21.1	35.7	41.0	40.5	43.2	52.8	76.1
Bilateral as % of ODA	36.8	51.0	55.7	60.0	63.0	60.0	55.0
ODA as % of GNP	0.17	0.24	0.28	0.30	0.31	0.30	0.34 ^c

b = budget, including allocation plus any carry-forward from 1998 e = estimate

Sources: Department of Foreign Affairs, *Ireland's Official Development Assistance*, various years, and data supplied in June 1999

As Table 1 shows, total ODA has been increasing very strongly and steadily since 1994 and the nominal targets for 1995 and 1996 were not only met but actually exceeded. However, the out-turn figure for 1997 fell short of its

target by over $\text{I}\text{€}10$ million or nearly 8 %. For this reason, and also because GNP grew much more strongly than had been anticipated in the early nineties, the out-turn of 0.31 % of GNP missed the second target by a significant margin in 1997. And, what of the present target of '0.45 % of GNP during the lifetime of the present government'?

On present trends, and based on current estimates, it is difficult to see how it could be achieved. In 1998, the out-turn was 0.30 % – a slight fall, rather than an increase, compared with 1997. To be sure, the estimate for this year is 0.34 % of GNP but, as well be explained below, the 1999 nominal budget includes a carry-over of unspent monies from last year of over $\text{I}\text{€}4$ million and a significantly increased allocation for emergency humanitarian assistance this year in response to the crisis in the Balkans. The Department of Finance has made commitments of $\text{I}\text{€}104$ million, $\text{I}\text{€}136$ million, and $\text{I}\text{€}159$ million for the bilateral aid budget for 1999, 2000, and 2001 respectively. Before carry-overs plus additional allocations for emergency assistance this year, total ODA for 1999, 2000, and 2001 was originally estimated at $\text{I}\text{€}171$ million, $\text{I}\text{€}184$ million and $\text{I}\text{€}207$ million respectively. Assuming that even higher – and cumulative – carry-overs of bilateral aid do not take place during the next few years (thus inflating the end of period figure rather spectacularly), then it is difficult to see how the 0.45 % of GNP target can be met, even for one year, during the lifetime of the present government. However, in the event of ODA being increased significantly above these current estimates, the most obvious headings under which budgets might be increased would be emergency humanitarian assistance on the bilateral side and debt relief on the multilateral side. Another way in which the 0.45 % of GNP target might be achieved would be if GNP growth were to fall very much below what is currently being forecasted for the next few years. Based on current information and prospects, this seems unlikely. A recent Department of Finance estimate of GNP in 2001 put it at around $\text{I}\text{€}60$ billion: 0.45 % of that amount would be $\text{I}\text{€}270$ million. This compares with the $\text{I}\text{€}207$ million estimate shown above for ODA in that year.

In 1998, the bilateral side of the ODA budget was underspent by over $\text{I}\text{€}4$ million. Because money that is allocated to the budget – and thus voted through in the Dail – can be carried forward to the following year, the total available to be spent on the bilateral side this year is over $\text{I}\text{€}4$ million more (at $\text{I}\text{€}99.7\text{m}$) than had been allocated for 1999 ($\text{I}\text{€}95.3\text{m}$). This underspending in 1998 and corresponding carry-forward to 1999 also helps to explain the fall in the percent-of-GNP figure from 0.31 % in 1997 to 0.30 % in 1998 and the unusual jump to an estimated 0.34 % this year.

The bilateral-multilateral distribution should have been 2:1 by 1997. Although it was not reached then, significant progress had been made by that date in relation to this target. However, as can be seen from Table 1, significant slippage occurred last year when bilateral aid was only 60 % of the total. The likelihood is for a further significant fall to 55 % this year, which would return the ratio to what it was in 1995.

Tax deductability

The heading 'Administration and Tax deductability' in Table 1 includes the administration costs of Irish Aid plus a figure that reflects tax allowances given for donations by individuals to charities operating in the development field. The values of the tax deductions claimed during the past three years are: I£55,000 in 1996, I£120,000 in 1997, and I£374,000 in 1998. The estimate for 1999 is I£825,000 when similar allowances are granted to corporations making deductions to development charities. These amounts are small, of course, in relation to the size of the total ODA budget. Their great value lies in their creation of a culture that encourages individuals and corporations to make contributions to development NGOs and, thus, increase their incomes and their ability to enlarge their programmes.

The bilateral aid programme

Data extracted from the DFA annual reports for 1998 and the two previous years, together with information supplied by Irish Aid in June 1999, provided the basis for compiling tables 2 and 3. These tables enable comparisons to be made between budgeted figures and provisional out-turn figures for 1998 for both the bilateral and multilateral aid programmes. They also include similar information for 1996 and 1997 as well as amounts available to be spent in 1999. An examination of Table 2 shows that, in contrast to the previous year, the 1998 out-turn was around I£4 million below the allocation for the year. What explains the under-spending? To begin with, expenditure under the heading of 'NGO co-financing etc' was significantly less than had been budgeted. This general heading includes block grants to the large Irish non-governmental organisations as well as co-financing with NGOs, both Irish and local, in the field. It was under the latter heading that expenditure was less than the budget during 1998. It should be noted, however, that overall spending through the NGOs kept well up last year. One of the main headings under which NGOs receive funding from Irish Aid is emergencies and post-emergencies (rehabilitation). Expenditure under these headings was

very high during 1998, as Table 2 shows. Altogether, IE20.7 million was spent through the NGOs last year, which amounted to nearly a quarter of the bilateral aid budget and around 15 % of total ODA.

Table 2. Comparisons between budgeted (B) expenditures and out-turns (O) under the bilateral aid programme 1996, 1997 and 1998 and allocations (A) 1999, (IRLM)

	1996		1997		1998		1999 ^b
	B	O	B	O	B	O	A
Priority countries	26.4	25.1	31.2	35.6	43.4	42.2	41.7
<i>Lesotho</i>	4.7	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.4	4.7	4.8
<i>Tanzania</i>	5.0	5.0	6.5	7.0	9.8	10.1	7.8
<i>Zambia</i>	5.7	5.5	5.5	6.1	5.8	5.9	5.3
<i>Uganda</i>	4.2	2.2	4.4	5.4	6.0	5.1	6.0
<i>Ethiopia</i>	5.8	7.0	8.5	9.2	12.4	11.3	11.6
<i>Mozambique</i>	1.0	1.2	2.5	3.9	5.0	5.1	6.3
Other countries	5.8	5.5	5.7	5.6	5.8	5.2	4.9
Co-financing etc with NGOs	5.4	6.8	8.0	7.4	8.3	6.4	7.0
Co-financing with multilaterals	1.6	1.4	1.6	2.6	2.6	2.1	2.7
Education and training	2.0	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.6
Development education	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0
APSO	10.5	10.5	10.6	10.6	10.7	10.7	10.6
Emergency Humanitarian Assistance	5.5	8.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	12.0
Rehabilitation	3.0	3.4	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	6.0
Refugees	0.8	2.7	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.1	6.0
Programme support	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.6	2.1
Democratisation/Human Rights	1.0	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.0	1.3
Information on Irish Aid	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
New programmes			4.3				
Sector-wide programmes							2.7
Total bilateral aid	65.0	69.5	78.8	78.7	88.6	84.0	99.7

b = budget, including allocation plus carry-forward from 1998

Sources: Department of Foreign Affairs, *Ireland's Official Development Assistance*, 1996, 1997 and 1998 and data supplied in June 1999

The second major reason for the under-spending in 1998 was because funds intended for support for sectoral budgets in Ethiopia and Tanzania were not disbursed last year because the required conditions (administrative capability and auditing procedures) had not yet been put in place. Under sector-wide approaches or SWAps, Irish Aid has very recently begun to provide some assistance to some priority countries in the form of general budgetary support to sectors such as health and education. However, by 1999, the administrative requirements were perceived to be in place and the SWAps funds were disbursed earlier this year. They will appear under expenditures within the individual priority countries in the 1999 out-turn figures. A related item of I£2.7 million in the 1999 budget refers to new SWAps for this year: the priority countries in which the funds are to be expended had not yet been decided at the time of writing. Table 2 shows that the expenditure out-turns for most of the other headings within the bilateral aid programme were fairly close to their budgets. Looking at the 1999 budgets, however, it can be remarked that in general, where out-turns in 1998 were less than 1998 budgets, there has been a tendency to reduce the 1999 budgets to less than those of last year. As already noted, the most striking example of a greatly increased budget in 1999 is that of emergency humanitarian assistance (from I£6 million in 1998 to I£12 million this year). The original figure in the Book of Estimates had been I£6 million but the government allocated an additional I£6 million during the first half of this year in response to the crisis in the Balkans.

Another notable instance where the budget for 1999 has been increased very significantly compared with last year is under the heading of Refugees. This figure relates to spending on people who seek refuge in Ireland, the first year's costs for whom may be counted as ODA under DAC rules (O'Neill 1997, 204). The costs are budgeted to increase from just over I£1 million in 1998 to I£6 million in 1999, principally because of the arrival of refugees from Kosovo.

All of the six priority countries (Lesotho, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Mozambique) are on DAC's list of least-developed countries (LLDCs) while most of the 'other countries' assisted by Irish Aid are classified as either LLDCs or LICs (low-income countries). As can be seen from Table 2, despite some under-spending in the priority countries in 1998, half of the total bilateral aid budget was spent in these countries last year (up from 45 % in 1997 and 36 % in 1996). Expenditure on all country programmes ('priority' and 'other') accounted for 57 % of total bilateral expenditure in 1998. The 'other' countries assisted last year included South Africa (I£2.4m), Zim-

babwe (I£0.9m), Occupied Territories (I£0.9m), Sudan (I£0.6m), Bangladesh (I£0.3m), Eritrea (I£0.2m), as well as Albania, Cambodia, Nigeria (less than I£0.1m each).

The multilateral aid programme

In contrast to the bilateral programme – over which Irish Aid has control once it has been given its budget by the Department of Finance – expenditure on the multilateral side, which is channelled through the EU, the World Bank, and the UN, is much less predictable from one year to the next. With the exception of payments to the UN agencies and replenishments to the World Bank's soft-loan affiliate, the International Development Association (IDA), the amounts payable under the multilateral programme are mandatory. The amounts are assessed and determined by the individual organisations and presented by them to their members. In the case of the EU, member states are assessed under two headings. The first is its contribution to that part of the overall EU budget which is spent on development cooperation. The second is a member state's annual contribution to the European Development Fund (EDF) which finances the Lomé Convention between the EU and the ACP countries.

The development cooperation part of the EU budget is spent on food aid, humanitarian emergencies, and aid to the Mediterranean area, Latin America and Asia (ALA) and other non-ACP states. Individual member states are not informed by the Commission what their assessments are for any one year until early in the following year. The Department of Foreign Affairs has to make a judgment about the likely size of the assessment for Ireland so far in advance of its announcement that it is always well out of line with the actual assessment. Moreover, the money is paid, not by the DFA but rather by the Department of Finance out of the Central Fund – or, more correctly, it is netted out by the Commission from the total of inflows and outflows of annual payments between Ireland and the EU. As a result, and as can be seen from Table 3, there was very little relationship between the budgeted and the out-turn figures under this part of multilateral aid expenditure for 1998 – when the budget was I£20.5 million and the contribution was actually I£26.7 million – or any of the earlier years shown in the table.

Payments by EU member states to the EDF should be more predictable than those made to the development cooperation part of the EU budget. In the case of these payments, a financial package for a five-year period is agreed by the EU member states. For the period 1996-2000 (the period covering the 8th EDF), the total financial package amounts to 15 billion ECU

Table 3. Comparisons between budgeted (B) expenditures and out-turns (O) under the multilateral aid programme for 1996, 1997, and 1998 and allocation (A) for 1999 (IR£M)

	1996		1997		1998		1999 ^b
	B	O	B	O	B	O	A
European Union	21.2	25.5	23.4	25.7	28.3	34.5	42.4
<i>EU Budget (Development Cooperation)</i>	15.0	21.4	16.0	20.8	20.5	26.7	30.0
<i>EDF (Lomé Convention)</i>	6.2	4.1	7.4	4.9	7.8	7.8	12.4
World Bank/IMF Group	5.0	4.5	4.0	4.9	4.9	5.3	20.7
<i>IDA</i>	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9
<i>IFC</i>	0.1	0.1	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Global Environmental Facility</i>	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.4	1.2
<i>World Bank/IMF ESAF</i>	0.5						14.6
United Nations	10.6	10.5	11.7	12.6	12.8	13.0	13.0
<i>UN Agencies</i>	6.5	6.5	7.5	7.5	8.4	8.4	8.4
<i>Food Aid Convention</i>	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8
<i>IFAD</i>	0.3	-	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
<i>FAO Schemes</i>	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4
<i>World Food Programme</i>	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
<i>UNIDO</i>	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.9
Total multilateral aid	36.8	40.5	39.1	43.2	46.0	52.8	76.1

b = budget

Sources: Department of Foreign Affairs, *Ireland's Official Development Assistance*, 1996, 1997 and 1998 and data supplied in June 1999

(around IR£11.5 billion). Ireland's contribution within that total is 80 million ECU (around IR£61 million) over the five-year period. The annual contribution is not necessarily divided evenly over the period. The Commission makes annual assessments and sends these assessed bills to each member state in advance. However, it still may or may not 'call' that amount at the end of the year in question. Indeed, part of the current debate on the Commission's aid programme at present is concerned with the slow disbursement of funds from the EDF. As Table 3 shows, while only IR£4.9 million of Ireland's assessed contribution for 1997 of IR£7.4 million was actually

called up that year, the assessment of IRL7.8 million for 1998 was fully called up last year. The assessed amount for 1999 is IRL12.4 million but it remains to be seen what proportion will have to be paid at the end of this year. To the extent that there is an uncalled portion, Irish Aid will get permission from the Department of Finance to spend it elsewhere on its aid programme. This is normally done on the bilateral side and, in recent years, has been spent in the main on humanitarian emergencies.

Payments to the World Bank/IMF group are normally rather close to budgeted figures. In 1998, Ireland contributed IRL4.9 million to the International Development Association (IDA), the part of the group that lends long-term at very low rates of interest (almost equivalent to grants) to the poorest countries. A similar amount has been budgeted for this year. No contribution has been paid recently to the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which lends for private-sector development in developing countries.

Ireland provides no official loans to developing countries. Irish Aid makes all its ODA contributions in grant form. As a result, no developing country owes any official debts to the Irish government. Nevertheless, the Ministers of Finance and Foreign Affairs decided in 1998 that it would be appropriate for Ireland to become involved in debt-relief programmes for the most heavily-indebted poor countries (HIPC) whose development programmes are very clearly being severely constrained by their debt-servicing obligations. They jointly announced a debt relief package valued at IRL31.5 million in September 1998 with a two-pronged approach – part of the contribution to be made through the World Bank/IMF Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility and part to be contributed bilaterally to some of Ireland's priority countries. The figure of IRL14.6 million under the heading of the World Bank/IMF group in Table 3 represents the amount that is budgeted on the multilateral side of this debt relief package for 1999.

Ireland's contributions to the development agencies within the United Nations (UN) have been increasing strongly in recent years in line with the general growth of its aid programme. These agencies include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UN High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), UN Volunteers (UNV), UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA), UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). Contributions to the UN agencies – which are all voluntary – rose from IRL6.5 million in 1996 to IRL8.4 million in 1998. Ireland also makes contributions to a number of

UN organisations whose work is focused on promoting agricultural development and food security in developing countries and providing food aid in times of emergency. They include the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), and the Food aid Convention. Payments under these and other UN headings in 1998 amounted to IRL4.6 million.

A retrospective look at twenty-five years of Irish aid

In 1974, a year after joining the European Economic Community (EEC now EU), Ireland established its bilateral aid programme. Total expenditure on official development assistance (ODA), both bilateral and multilateral, was IEL1.5 million. Twenty-five years later, it is estimated to reach around IEL180 million in 1999 which is well over one hundred times that original amount. Related to GNP, the 1974 aid figure represented 0.05 %. In 1999 – if the estimate for GNP of IEL51 billion turns out to be correct – it could be around 0.34 %. Admittedly, this falls far short of the UN aid target 0.7 % and is still below the 0.4 % ‘average country effort’ for EU member states today. Nevertheless, on this measure, Ireland slipped into the upper half of the ‘donor league table’ in 1997 and remained there in 1998 (the latest year for which data are available for members of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD) having already overtaken the DAC average three years earlier.

In the intervening 25 years, the world economy and polity has changed dramatically and the global context within which aid programmes operate today is very different from what it was when the Irish aid programme was launched in 1974.

The global environment for aid in 1974

The 1960s had been a period of unprecedented growth and strong commodity prices in the world economy. It was also the decade when many of today’s developing countries, including most of those in sub-Saharan Africa, had achieved their political independence. As a result, the 1970s began with great hopes on both economic and political fronts. It was designated the ‘development decade’ by the UN which established an aid target for donors of 0.7 % of their GNPs. In 1974, at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly, developing countries as a group called for restructuring of international economic institutions and a new international economic order (NIEO). Ireland, working with other ‘like-minded’ countries, supported the developing countries in their call for the NIEO. In 1975, the first Lomé Convention

was signed between the EEC and independent African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

The 'trickle-down' theory, which claimed that all boats are lifted by the rising tide ('as the rich get richer, the poor also get richer') was widely accepted by policy makers during those years of strong economic growth. Although this theory was questioned by many academics, its inverse ('when the rich get poorer, the poor get poorer still') certainly seemed to operate. When the world economy went into recession following OPEC's oil price increases of 1973 and 1979, growth shrank most dramatically in oil-importing developing countries as demand for their exports fell and commodity prices collapsed. Indeed, the seeds of the third world debt problem were sown during the 1970s as developing countries borrowed heavily in an effort to maintain their development programmes. Interestingly, despite the world recession, aid flows from the large donors remained high throughout the 1970s (and the 1980s), dominated as they were by the strategic interests of the Cold War period.

The global environment for aid in 1999

In the aftermath of the Cold War, now that the so-called Third World is no longer the theatre in which superpower rivalries are played out, the global environment for aid is not as positive as it was in 1974. Within two years of the break-up of the Soviet Union, global aid flows began to fall – reflecting the fundamental shifts that quickly occurred in the strategic and political interests of the Cold War era's two superpowers. Between 1992 and 1997, total aid from DAC member states fell from US\$60.8 billion to US\$47.6 billion or from 0.33 % to 0.22 % of their combined GNPs. Aid from the former Soviet Union dried up completely. For many of the heavily-indebted developing countries, this outcome has been particularly ironic. Having come through the 'lost development decade' of the 1980s, during which many of them experienced negative growth rates, but having finally begun to experience some of the benefits of economic and political reforms they launched under structural adjustment programmes, they perceive themselves to be penalised rather than rewarded for their efforts. They argue that what they need is more, not less, aid.

To be sure, there are some positive signs. As already noted, aid flows from DAC member states rose in 1998 – finally reversing a five-year period of decline. More intensive efforts, including the Jubilee 2000 initiative and improvements in the HIPC initiative, are being undertaken to tackle the debt problems of the poorest countries. Donor and host governments are forging

more equal partnerships within their aid relationship. Inside developing countries, greater efforts are being made to promote more participatory development strategies designed to eliminate absolute poverty inside developing countries. There is an increasing focus on promotion of human rights, democracy, gender equality, and environmental and socio-economic sustainability. The overall objective of both development strategies and aid strategies is stated in terms of the promotion of a more holistic 'human development'. Nevertheless, a recent World Bank report admitted that progress toward meeting international targets for human development is in danger of stalling after a generation of improvement as the spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa wipes out hard-won improvements in life expectancy and as the costs of servicing debts and coping with political conflicts and other man-made disasters lead to cuts in education and health budgets.

Aims and principles of Irish aid in the seventies

From its beginnings in the 1970s – and not surprisingly, given that missionaries had pioneered Ireland's involvement in developing countries – the Irish aid programme was imbued with a strong humanitarian motivation. Early ministerial speeches and departmental documents stressed a 'moral obligation' to help 'poor countries and poor people' and to 'promote the development of developing countries'. Interestingly, promotion of human rights – a huge issue at the global level today – was included in the aims of the Irish aid programme as early as 1979. Poverty reduction, satisfaction of basic needs, an equitable internal distribution of the benefits of economic development, and promotion of self-reliance were repeatedly cited as the main aims of the programme from its earliest days. The geographic focus was on a small number of low-income 'priority countries' in sub-Saharan Africa and the sectoral focus was on agricultural and rural development, health, and education. All aid was in grant form and remains so today. Thus, the Irish aid programme creates no debt – although, as already noted, it is now getting involved in debt relief programmes, not only with its priority country partners, but also with the World Bank and the IMF. Finally, it is appropriate to note that, as early as 1973, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs was describing development cooperation as one of the 'basic objectives of Irish foreign policy' (Fitzgerald, 1973).

Aims and principles of Irish aid today

At the end of the nineties, while the overall aims set out 25 years ago remain at the centre of the aid programme, the range of activities, matched

by new expenditure headings, designed to achieve these aims, has become wider and more complex in line with international developments and the new global context for aid.

The 1997 strategy statement of the Department of Foreign Affairs, *Pursuing Ireland's External Interests* (DFA 1997), spells out the aims of Ireland's development cooperation policy as follows: 'To contribute to the development needs of poor countries in partnership with the governments and people of those countries and in line with their priorities; support a process of self-reliant, sustainable, poverty-reducing and equitable growth and development, in particular in the least-developed countries; advance the concept of sustainable development in all its aspects including material well-being, human rights, fundamental freedoms, gender equality, protection of the environment, support for civil society and processes, as well as mechanisms to prevent, resolve and recover from conflict; ensure rapid and effective response to humanitarian emergencies; maintain coherence in all aspects of Ireland's relations with developing countries; and promote active participation by Ireland in multilateral institutions concerned with development.' The strategy document also stresses that development cooperation policy as 'an integral part of Irish foreign policy' which works toward the overall goals of 'international peace, security, and a just and stable global economic system.'

Thus, the 'guiding principles' that inform Irish Aid's bilateral aid programme today can be summed up as: participation and local ownership; a focus on poverty reduction; gender sensitivity; and sustainability. The restating of the guiding principles has been accompanied over the years by some reinterpretation of associated concepts, the most important of which I would call the three Ps.

The first is *poverty*. Back in the 1970s, the term was identified with low incomes. But when I asked members of a local development committee in Ethiopia recently to define poverty, their response that it is 'powerlessness, lack of information, and lack of basic material needs' reflects a newer interpretation of the concept – and one that seems to inform Irish Aid's development aid strategy throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

The second P is *participation* and its associated concept of local ownership. Together, these ensure that the people to whom development programmes and projects are supposed to deliver benefits are fully involved in the process from the stage of problem analysis through project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The third P is *partnership*. In the 1970s this concept was preached by donors but practised only to a very limited extent: they kept a tight grip on

the purse strings and used only expatriate technical experts to plan and manage projects. Today, Irish Aid, in common with many other donors, is trying to ensure that the partnership principle works at two mutually-reinforcing levels: internationally, by giving more 'ownership' of aid programmes to developing country governments (for example, though budgetary support for sector-wide programmes); and nationally, by working within local structures and using local experts, while encouraging more democratic political processes that bring poor people more effectively into the development process. A senior official in the Ethiopian administration told me during my recent visit that he was very positive about Irish aid 'because it works within Ethiopian structures and uses 90 % Ethiopian staff'.

The quantity of Irish aid

Since the bilateral aid programme was launched in 1974, one of the most debated issues in development fora in Ireland has been the size of the aid budget – and related concerns such as the precise increases that successive governments were committing themselves to, and the progress (or at times retrogression) that was being made in relation to reaching the UN target of 0.7 % of GNP. Without rehearsing the often tortuous analyses that have been produced over the years (and especially in the late 1980s when ODA fell sharply in line with overall cuts in public expenditure), it can be stated that no end-of-period target, either in money terms or in percent-of-GNP terms, set by any Irish government has ever been met. It remains to be seen what will happen to the current target of '0.45 % of GNP during the lifetime of this government'.

Table 4 shows the growth of Irish aid flows between 1974 and 1998 in terms of both nominal amounts and percent-of-GNP. It also shows the way in which the division of the overall budget between bilateral and multilateral aid has evolved over the years. (It should be noted, in this regard, that the figures for bilateral aid, both in nominal and percentage terms, given in Table 4 are higher than those in Tables 1 and 2 – arising from the inclusion in them of administration costs and tax deductibility). A recent and very helpful development has been the confirmation by the Department of Finance that Irish Aid will in future receive assurances on a three-year rolling basis regarding annual allocations for the bilateral side of the aid budget. The commitments for 1999, 2000, and 2001 have been set at around £104m, £136m, and £159m respectively; while allocations for total ODA for the three years are estimated at £171m, £184m, and £207m. Taking into account the underspending in 1998, which is being carried over into 1999, the total amount available in 1999 is actually around £179 million.

Table 4. Ireland's ODA, selected years 1974-99 (IE£m and %)

	1974	1978	1984	1988	1994	1998	1999 ^a
Total ODA (IE£m)	1.5	8.4	33.2	32.4	75.2	139.6	179.2
Bilateral aid ^b	0.2	2.7	13.3	14.3	39.5	86.8	103.1
Multilateral aid	1.3	5.7	19.9	18.1	35.7	52.8	76.1
Bilateral as % ODA	13.0	33.0	40.0	42.0	51.0	60.0 ^c	55.0
ODA as % GNP	0.05	0.13	0.22	0.18	0.24	0.30	0.34 ^e

a = budget b = administration costs and tax deductability have been included under bilateral aid

c = bilateral aid excluding administration costs as a percentage of total ODA e = estimate

Sources: Department of Foreign Affairs, *Ireland's Official Development Assistance*, various years and data supplied in June 1999

Geographic distribution of Irish aid

From its beginnings, Ireland's bilateral aid programme has been focused on a small number of so-called priority countries. Five were selected in 1974: Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania, Sudan, and India. India was soon dropped for practical reasons – mainly because its size was considered inappropriate for the small Irish programme and Sudan was dropped in more recent times. In 1994, two new countries, Ethiopia and Uganda were added and in 1996 Mozambique brought the total to six. All are now located in sub-Saharan Africa. They are very poor and classified as 'least-developed' by the United Nations and the World Bank. All rank low in terms of human development indicators (including percentage living in absolute poverty; life expectancy; adult literacy; infant mortality; access to safe water, sanitation, and health services). In 1975, 17 % of total bilateral aid was spent in the priority countries; in 1998 the figure was 50 %. Other countries in receipt in assistance in recent years from the bilateral programme include: Albania; Bangladesh, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Occupied Territories, South Africa, Sudan, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

Sectoral distribution of Irish aid

A cursory examination of expenditure over the years might suggest that there has been little change in the distribution of Irish aid by sector. The 1973 policy statement referred to a programme that would show 'balanced growth in all its sectors' but 'particularly where Ireland has a special interest or competence'. However, because the programme in the 1970s could best

be described as a collection of projects, and because most of the aid was delivered through Irish technical assistance, it tended to focus on rural development as well as education and health since these were the sectors within Ireland that could provide technical expertise at that time. Ireland also responded to specific requests from its partner countries. The result was a type of supply and demand balance.

Today, the focus is still on rural development, education, and health. However, it is a very different programme. Both its drivers and its delivery mechanisms are very different from what they were 25 years ago. First, there have been very significant shifts *within* the sectors. The amount of aid being provided to hospitals and universities has been severely cut back. Within the health sector, the focus is on primary healthcare; within education, on primary and informal schools, teacher training, and adult literacy. Within rural development, the focus is on food security, rural roads, provision of clean water and sanitary services, and micro-credit (especially for women). Sensitivity to the gender implications of all aspects of the aid programme is very noticeable. Assistance is also provided to promote human rights and democracy. Indeed, in recognition of the importance of politics within the development process, the rural development programme includes training of local officials and members of local development committees. This training is designed to help them to conceptualise about poverty and development and to be sensitive to the rights of individuals especially the poorest ones.

Second, the programme is now demand-driven. It responds to stated needs in the partner countries and has to fit in with local structures. The number of Irish technical experts has been reduced significantly (although the need to build up capacities within national administrative structures calls for training in a wide range of skills; this type of expertise is still provided through Irish Aid, often in Ireland). Third, the Irish bilateral aid programme is no longer a collection of 'project islands'. Most aid to the priority countries is delivered in the form of integrated programmes at sub-national level (area-based programmes) selected in consultation with governments in the priority countries. More recently, Irish Aid has got involved in what are called sector-wide approaches (SWAs) where aid is provided to some priority countries in the form of general budgetary support to sectors such as health and education.. Of course, the priority governments would prefer if most aid were provided in the form of general or sectoral budgetary support. However, until administrative capacities and auditing procedures and coordination among donors are much stronger, SWAs will remain a relatively small part of the programme.

Links between Irish Aid and NGOs

One feature of the aid programme that has remained a constant since it was first launched is its strong relationship with the Irish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that work in development. The NGOs receive funding from Irish Aid under four main headings. Five of the major Irish NGOs receive block grants. Second, they receive funding for projects under the NGO co-financing scheme. Together, these rose from less than I£0.5m (around 16 % of the bilateral budget) in the 1970s and early 1980s to over I£2.5m (14 %) in 1986 and in 1998 stood at I£6.4m (7.5 %). Third, Irish Aid expends part of its emergency humanitarian and rehabilitation budget through the NGOs. If we add in the amounts spent through NGOs under these last two headings in 1998, the total comes to I£20.7 million (25 % of the bilateral budget and 15 % of total ODA). The fourth link with the NGOs operates through the Agency for Personal Service Overseas. Part of Irish Aid, it sponsors assignments by Irish people in developing countries. Since around half the assignees APSO helps to train and support are recruited by NGOs, it provides another significant link between the official aid programme and the NGOs.

The multilateral side of the Irish aid programme

Ireland joined the UN in 1955 and the World Bank in 1957. Apart from tiny amounts spent through the Overseas Trainee Fund (used mainly to train Zambian army officers and public administrators in the mid-sixties), all of what could be classified as official development assistance up to 1974 was spent through those two international channels. After joining the EEC (now EU) in 1973, however, the Commission rapidly replaced the World Bank as the main conduit of Ireland's multilateral ODA payments. And, of course, as the bilateral programme was built up, the multilateral side itself began to fall as a proportion of total ODA expenditure (Table 4). With the exception of discretionary payments to UN agencies such as UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO, as well as replenishments to the World Bank's soft-loan affiliate IDA, the amounts payable on the multilateral side are mandatory and assessed by the individual organisations to which Ireland belongs. In the case of the EU, Ireland contributes to the European Development Fund (EDF) which finances the Lomé Convention between the EU and African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and to the development cooperation part of the EU budget which is spent by the Commission on food aid, humanitarian emergency assistance, and aid to non-ACP developing countries. Contributions to the EDF are paid through Irish Aid while the budget contribution, as well as

payments to the World Bank group, are channelled through the Department of Finance. The latter department also provides Ireland's advisor to the World Bank and its alternate executive director to the IMF.

Up until recently, debate on the multilateral side of Ireland's aid programme has been rather muted. To be sure, Irish NGOs and academics, just like those in other countries, have often criticised the lending activities of the World Bank and IMF, especially in relation to structural adjustment loans and facilities whose conditionalities in the 1980s and early 1990s were seen to have negative implications for social spending and for the poor. But there was little comment on Ireland's contributions to these organisations because payments to them, apart from IDA, were mandatory.

However, when the government announced its decision to contribute to the IMF's Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) in 1994, criticisms were voiced by the NGOs and payments were deferred. Now, however, a major contribution is to be made to ESAF in 1999 – as part of a wide-ranging debt relief package valued at I£31.5m jointly announced by the Ministers for Finance and Foreign Affairs in September 1998. It was a joint announcement because it contains both multilateral and bilateral elements and because they stated that debt relief would henceforth become an integral part of overall development cooperation strategy. The elements of the package are: I£15m to the World Bank and IMF under the Heavily-indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (most of which is funded by reflows from the European Investment Bank); I£7m to ESAF (from the Central Fund); and I£9.5m bilaterally to two of the priority countries, Mozambique and Tanzania (from the Irish Aid budget). When announcing the package, the ministers stressed their appreciation of the work of Irish NGOs in highlighting the debt issue nationally and internationally and said they would remain open to receiving further inputs from them on debt and development policy.

Issues on the agenda today

In an article published ten years after the launch of the bilateral aid programme (O'Neill in Stokke 1984, 259), I set out the issues for the 1980s as follows: publication of a White Paper on Development Cooperation; joining DAC; improving budgetary mechanisms including the possibility of a multi-annual rolling plan; improving administrative structures, including the possibility of establishing a state-sponsored executive agency for the aid programme (with policy-making remaining within the Department of Foreign Affairs); and amending the list of priority countries. Action has been taken on most of these issues. The White Paper on Foreign Policy (Ireland 1996) which inclu-

ded a chapter on development cooperation, was published in 1996; a Strategy Plan (Ireland 1993) was published in 1993 and Strategy Statements in 1997 and 1998 (DFA 1997, 1998). Ireland joined DAC in 1986. The Department of Finance has recently approved a three-year budget for Irish Aid in line with revision of overall budgetary procedures. The list of priority countries has been amended a number of times.

What issues should be on the agenda now? The list of priority countries is again under review. If it is expanded – and there are strong arguments for widening and deepening the programmes within the current priority countries rather than expanding the list of countries – presumably any potential addition would tend to be chosen from the current list of ‘other’ countries that have been assisted in recent years. The question of appropriate administrative arrangements for the bilateral programme is being examined in 1999. It might also be appropriate to consider the pros and cons of bringing all multilateral spending under Irish Aid. Another issue already on the agenda is a possibly larger role for the private business sector which, to date, has been involved only marginally in the aid programme. Another issue is debt relief. Should more priority countries be brought into the debt-relief scheme? And, what are the trade-offs between debt relief and other forms of aid? Finally, 25 years ago, APSO could send most of its enthusiastic young applicants on assignments overseas. Today, most need experience as well as relevant qualifications in order to be acceptable in developing countries. We need to re-examine how best to involve young people – trained but with no work experience in developing countries – in the aid programme.

Some concluding comments

Looking back over 25 years of Irish Aid, one sees a programme that has evolved from a rather *ad hoc* collection of projects largely managed by expatriates into one that has a coherence in terms of objectives and approach and is much more strongly linked into the structures of partner countries. While poverty alleviation has always been a declared objective of Irish Aid, all projects, as long as they were located in the poorest countries were assumed to be making a contribution, however indirect, toward this goal. This is no longer considered sufficient. Activities being supported by Irish Aid in the priority countries today are focusing directly on poverty alleviation. And the concept of poverty that underlies this more direct approach, has itself undergone a fundamental reinterpretation – as has the concept of partnership. These ideas are not unique to Irish Aid: they are part of the current orthodoxy in development thinking. What is remarkable is that they

are now finding practical expression within the Irish aid programme in line with best practice among other donors.

Irish Aid is concerned about aid dependence. Although some of its area-based programmes in the priority countries have been in operation for only five years or less, it is already planning 'exit strategies' in some areas. Irish Aid is also concerned about sustainability, a concept it interprets in a multi-dimensional way (economic, social, environmental, institutional, organisational, and human). It confesses that the search for sustainability has so far produced very modest results in the very poorest countries (where two-thirds of Ireland's bilateral aid is spent). Both donors and governments in developing countries are having to grapple with the issue of trade-offs between sustainability and aid dependence today.

Irish Aid's programme has grown significantly in terms of size since 1974. Despite occasional blips (including last year), it has grown fairly steadily over the years both in nominal terms and as a percent of GNP. On the latter measure, it now occupies a respectable position in the donor 'league table' although it will remain a small player in absolute money terms. As regards substance and approach, it now compares favourably with the other small EU donors: compared with New Zealand, a country identical in size and income per head, it stands up very well under both measures.

Ireland's aid programme now forms a significant as well as an integral part of its overall foreign policy. It reflects well on the country. Looking back over 25 years of Irish aid, Irish people can take justifiable pride in it. ■

Notes:

1. *The members of the DAC are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and the Commission of the European Communities.*

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Resumé:

Helen O'Neill: *Írská pomoc zabráničiu v roku 1998 (vrátane prehľadu írskej pomoci za posledných 25 rokov)*

Autorka sa vo svojom príspevku venuje problematike pomoci Írska rozvojovým krajinám tzv. tretieho sveta. Vo svojom výklade zohľadňuje na jednej strane globálnu pomoc rozvinutých krajín (napr. G7), na druhej strane popisuje aj genézu írskej pomoci od sedemdesiatych rokov po súčasnosť. Prehľadné tabuľky umožňujú čitateľovi získať konkrétne číselné údaje v jednotlivých vytypovaných oblastiach, na ktoré sa zamerala írská pomoc, a v jednotlivých rokoch.

V roku 1974, rok po tom, ako sa Írsko stalo členom Európskeho hospodárskeho spoločenstva (EHS) (dnešnej Európskej únie), začalo realizovať svoj program dvojstrannej pomoci hospodársky najmenej rozvinutým krajinám.

Celkové výdavky na rozvojovú pomoc činili vtedy 1,5 milióna írskych libier šterlingov. O dvadsať päť rokov neskôr to bolo okolo 180 miliónov, čo znamená vyše stonásobný nárast pôvodnej sumy. Vo vyjadrení v pomere k hrubému domácomu produktu (HDP) to predstavovalo 0,05 % v roku 1974 a 0,34 % v roku 1999. Je pravda, že to zďaleka nespĺňa cieľ OSN – dosiahnuť hodnotu 0,7 % HDP a Írsko ani dnes nedosahuje priemer rozsahu pomoci členských štátov EÚ, ktorý činí 0,4 % HDP. Írsko ale aj tak patrí do prvej polovice v zozname darcov v roku 1998.

V priebehu dvadsiatich piatich rokov sa svetová ekonomika výrazne zmenila a celkový kontext, v rámci ktorého prebieha program pomoci, sa výrazne líši od situácie z roka 1974, keď program začínal.

Rozsah írskej pomoci v nominálnom i percentuálnom vyjadrení neustále vzrastal. Dosť ťažko možno porovnávať rozpočet oficiálnej rozvojovej pomoci (ODA) Írska s ďalšími dvadsiatimi členmi Výboru rozvojovej pomoci (DAC), Organizácie pre hospodársku spoluprácu a rozvoj (OECD), pretože Írsko je rozlohou a počtom obyvateľstva malou krajinou. V roku 1998 bolo Írsko v nominálnom vyjadrení USD na devätnástom mieste z dvadsaťjeden člen-

ských štátov DAC (pred Novým Zélandom a Luxemburskom), ale v percentuálnom vyjadrení v pomere k DPH zaujímalo desiate miesto.

Tabuľka č. 1 anglického textu poskytuje prehľad celkovej írskej pomoci a jej členenie na dvojstranné a mnohostranné toky za rok 1998 a za vybrané roky posledného desaťročia. Tabuľka č. 4 poskytuje podobné informácie za vybrané roky od obdobia, keď sa začal program dvojstrannej pomoci v roku 1974. Obe tabuľky informujú aj o rozpočte na rok 1999. Cieľom súčasnej vlády je dosiahnuť úroveň pomoci v hodnote 0,45 % HDP.

Tabuľka č. 2 anglického textu ukazuje prehľad *programu dvojstrannej pomoci* v rokoch 1996 až 1999 s ohľadom na tzv. prioritné krajiny, ktorými sú Lesotho, Tanzánia, Zambia, Uganda, Etiópia a Mozambik vrátane ďalších krajín. Tabuľka dokumentuje aj štruktúru poskytovanej pomoci (napr. vzdelávanie a výcvik, zdravotníctvo, humanitárna pomoc, demokratizácia a oblasť ľudských práv, pomoc utečencom).

Tabuľka č. 3 informuje o *programe mnohostrannej pomoci* v tom istom období. Finančné zdroje prostredníctvom Európskej únie, Svetovej banky a jednotlivých osobitných súčastí (agentúr) Organizácie Spojených národov, ako sú napr. UNDP (Program OSN pre rozvoj), UNHCR (Úrad vysokého komisára OSN pre utečencov), UNHCHR (Úrad vysokého komisára OSN pre ľudské práva), UNICEF (Detský fond OSN), WHO (Svetová zdravotnícka organizácia), UNDHA (Sekcia OSN pre humanitárne záležitosti), UNITAR (Inštitút OSN pre výcvik a výskum) FAO (Organizácia OSN pre výživu a poľnohospodárstvo), IFAD (Medzinárodný fond pre poľnohospodársky rozvoj), WFP (Svetový program pre výživu) atď.

Autorka vo svojom príspevku konštatuje, že koniec studenej vojny má za následok aj skutočnosť, že tzv. tretí svet už nie je oblasťou rivality supervelmocí, čo má však, paradoxne, aj negatívne dôsledky. Po rozpade Sovietskeho zväzu sa znížil objem pomoci zo 60,8 miliárd USD v roku 1992 na 47,6 miliárd v roku 1997. Deväťdesiate roky však majú aj pozitívnu stránku. Posilňuje sa partnerský vzťah medzi darcami a vládami, ktorým je určená pomoc, silnejší dôraz sa kladie na podporu ľudských práv, demokracie, na rovnoprávnosť pohlaví, environmentálnu a sociálno-hospodársku udržateľnosť vývoja.

Na konci deväťdesiatych rokov môže Írsko konštatovať, že rozsah jeho aktivít zameraných na pomoc rozvojovým krajinám sa v súlade s medzinárodným trendom vývoja rozširuje, stáva sa komplexnejší, čím reaguje na nové globálne súvislosti poskytovanej pomoci.

Írske ministerstvo zahraničných vecí formulovalo v dokumente pod názvom *Írske vonkajšie záujmy (Pursuing Ireland's External Interests)* z roku 1997 ciele politiky rozvojovej spolupráce nasledovne: „Prispievať k rozvoju

potrieb chudobných krajín prostredníctvom partnerského vzťahu s vládami a obyvateľstvom týchto krajín a v súlade s ich prioritami; podporovať proces rozvoja sebestačnosti, dostatočnosti, odstraňovania biedy najmä v najmenej rozvinutých krajinách; podporovať koncepciu udržateľného rozvoja vo všetkých jej aspektoch vrátane materiálneho zabezpečenia, ľudských práv, základných slobôd, rovnosti pohlaví, ochrany životného prostredia, podpory občianskej spoločnosti, ako aj mechanizmu predchádzania konfliktom...“ Tento strategický dokument podčiarkuje aj politiku spolupráce ako integrálnu súčasť írskej zahraničnej politiky, ktorá prispieva k medzinárodnému mieru, bezpečnosti a stabilnému globálnemu hospodárskemu systému. Zvyšuje sa miera začlenenia domáceho obyvateľstva do rozvojových programov, miera jeho aktívnej účasti na celom procese od etapy vymedzenia problému cez vypracovanie projektu, jeho uplatnenie až po fázu monitorovania a vyhodnotenia. Do programu sa výraznejšie zapájajú domáce štruktúry, orgány štátnej správy, domáci odborníci a pod.

Írske ministerstvo financií poskytlo na budúce tri roky záruky v prípade vyčlenenia finančných zdrojov pre bilaterálnu pomoc v štátnom rozpočte: na rok 1999 vyčlenilo 104 miliónov, na rok 2000 uvoľnilo 136 miliónov a na rok 2001 okolo 159 miliónov írskych libier šterlingov. Celkový objem rozvojovej pomoci sa pohybuje na úrovni 171 miliónov v roku 1999, 184 miliónov v roku 2000 a 207 miliónov v roku 2001.

Írsky program dvojstrannej pomoci sa od samého začiatku zamerl na úzky počet tzv. prioritných krajín. Päť – Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzánia, Sudán a India – bolo vybraných v roku 1974. Čoskoro z tohto zoznamu vypadla India, a to z praktických dôvodov – išlo o príliš veľkú krajinu v pomere k obmedzeným možnostiam Írska. Sudán vypadol nedávno. V roku 1994 pristúpili do programu Etiópia a Uganda a v roku 1996 Mozambik, čiže v súčasnosti sa bilaterálna pomoc týka šiestich krajín. OSN a Svetová banka ich označujú za najmenej rozvinuté. Ak pomer celkovej bilaterálnej pomoci vo vzťahu k prioritným krajinám tvoril v roku 1974 17 %, v roku 1998 išlo už o 50 %. Ďalšími krajinami, kde plynie írská rozvojová pomoc, sú Albánsko, Bangladéš, Eritrea, Ghana, Kambodža, Malawi, Namíbia, Nigéria, Južná Afrika, Sudán, Vietnam a Zimbabwe.

Z hľadiska odvetví sa na začiatku sedemdesiatych rokov írška pomoc zameriavala na „rovnovážny vzrast vo všetkých odvetviach“, ale „najmä tam, kde Írsko malo osobitný záujem“. Program pomoci v tomto období by sa dal najlepšie vyjadriť ako súbor projektov. Väčšia časť pomoci sa rozdelila medzi technologickú pomoc, rozvoj vidieka, vzdelávanie a zdravotníctvo, pretože to boli oblasti, v ktorých mohlo vtedajšie Írsko poskytnúť odborné znalosti.

Aj dnes sa pomoc zameriava predovšetkým na rozvoj vidieka, vzdelávanie a zdravotníctvo. Ide však o celkom odlišný program, s odlišným mechanizmom. Predovšetkým sledujeme výrazný posun v rámci odvetví. Objem pomoci poskytovaný nemocniciam a univerzitám sa výrazne znížil a dôraz sa kladie najmä na starostlivosť o zdravie. V oblasti vzdelávania a výchovy sa uprednostňujú základné a neformálne školy, vzdelávanie učiteľov a gramotnosť dospelého obyvateľstva. V oblasti rozvoja vidieka sa pozornosť venuje bezpečnosti potravín, vidieckym komunikáciám, čistote vôd, sanitárnemu servisu a pod. Pomoc zasahuje aj do oblasti ľudských práv a demokracie. Na programe sa aktívne zúčastňuje domáca štátna správa a množstvo miestnych výborov, ktoré sa venujú problematike rozvoja. Väčšie kvantum pomoci prioritným krajinám sa realizuje vo forme integrovaných programov na subnárodnej, oblastnej úrovni, pričom jednotlivé oblasti sa vyberajú po konzultácii s miestnou vládou.

Významnou a stálou charakteristikou programu pomoci je dôraz na spoluprácu s nevládnymi organizáciami, ktoré sa podieľajú na rozvoji spoločnosti. Mnohé granty spolufinancujú írské nevládne organizácie. V tejto oblasti vzrástla pomoc z pôvodných necelých 0,5 miliónov írskych libier šterlingov v sedemdesiatych rokoch na 6,4 milióna v roku 1998. Celkove, s príspevom írskych nevládných organizácií, ide o sumu približne 20,7 miliónov libier.

V roku 1984 autorka publikovala stať o programe bilaterálnej pomoci, v ktorom zhodnotila desaťročné obdobie a vytýčila zámery na osemdesiate roky. Cieľom bolo publikovať *Bielu knihu rozvojovej spolupráce*, vstúpiť do DAC, zdokonaľiť rozpočtový mechanizmus vrátane možnosti plánovať na viac rokov dopredu, skvalitniť administratívne štruktúry a ustanoviť štátnu agentúru pre program pomoci. Mal sa tiež posúdiť zoznam prioritných krajín. A výsledky, ktoré Írsko v tomto smere dosiahlo? *Biela kniha o zabraniteľnej politike*, publikovaná v roku 1996, obsahovala kapitolu o spolupráci v oblasti rozvoja, v roku 1993 bol publikovaný dokument *Strategický plán*, v rokoch 1997 a 1998 tzv. vyhlásenia o stratégii. V roku 1986 sa Írsko stalo členom DAC. Prehodnotilo zoznam prioritných krajín a v súčasnosti opätovne posudzuje možnosti rozšíriť ho. Prebiehajú diskusie o začlenení súkromného sektora do programu pomoci, ktorý sa doteraz na aktivitách podieľal len okrajovo. Ako veľmi dôležité sa ukazuje začleniť do programu pomoci mladých ľudí, ktorí sú síce dobre odborne pripravení, ale chýbajú im praktické skúsenosti v tejto oblasti.

V závere svojho príspevku autorka potvrdzuje cieľ írskoho programu pomoci, ktorým je zmiernenie biedy v krajinách tretieho sveta. Tento koncept zmiernenia chudoby však prešiel výraznou zmenou, a to v smere zvý-

šenia aktívnej spoluúčasti krajiny na zlepšovaní vlastného postavenia. V tomto zmysle ide o projekt budovania partnerského vzťahu, a nie pasívneho prijímania pomoci. Cieľom spoločného úsilia je znížiť závislosť chudobných krajín, zabezpečiť tzv. udržateľnosť vývoja, čo je multidimenzionálny proces týkajúci sa oblasti ekonomickej, sociálnej, environmentálnej, inštitucionálnej, organizačnej atď. Aj keď sa doteraz v najchudobnejších krajinách dosiahli len skromné výsledky, je evidentné, že podiel Írska na pomoci (v porovnaní so začiatkami v sedemdesiatych rokoch) výrazne vzrástol. Dnes patrí Írsku dôstojné postavenie v rodine darcov, aj keď v absolútnom finančnom vyjadrení zostáva naďalej malým prispievateľom. Pokiaľ ide o podstatu a spôsob prístupu, môže smelo konkurovať ostatným malým krajinám Európskej únie.

Írsky program pomoci tvorí v súčasnosti významnú a neoddeliteľnú súčasť írskej zahraničnej politiky. Írske obyvateľstvo má k aktivitám rozvojovej pomoci pozitívny postoj a je hrdé na svoj podiel v tejto oblasti.