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IRISH AID – PERFORMANCE AND POLICIES

Helen O’Neill

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IRISH AID - PERFORMANCE AND POLICIES

HELEN O'NEILL
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1. INTRODUCTION

In the early 1960's, just a short time before the United Nations agreed its Lists, classifying countries into groups according to stage of development, Ireland was in receipt of aid from the UN Special Fund. Less than twenty years later, a member of both the European Economic Community (EEC) and of Group B, it has a small but developing Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme, a commitment to reach the United Nations' ODA targets by 1990 and, during the 1981-82 Coalition administration, a Minister of State for Development Cooperation.

2. STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRISH AID PROGRAMME

Irish involvement in the so-called less-developed countries (LDCs) was, until relatively recently, based almost exclusively on missionary links. While these were widespread, there was, and continues to be, a geographical concentration on English-speaking Africa. It is only since the 1950's that an official aid programme has emerged; the development of this programme up to 1981 can be divided into three stages.

Stage 1: The 1950's - From Missionary to UN Member State

During this decade, the missionary element continued to predominate although small official contributions began to be made. In 1955,
thirty-three years after Ireland had gained its independence from Britain, the country was admitted to the United Nations. From tiny contributions of £5,000 p.a. in the first two years of the decade and £10,000 in each of the following four years, Ireland's payments to the UN family of organizations increased sharply (to £393,000) in 1957/58 as a consequence of its joining the World Bank (IBRD). Although contributions to the latter organization are technically counted as ODA payments and although Ireland could be technically classified as a "multilateral donor" by the end of the 1950's, its motivation for joining the IBRD was based on self-interest and not on any desire to establish a development-assistance programme.

Stage 2: The 1960's - Transition to Donor

During the few years up to the end of 1964, the year when the UN defined its A, B, C and D Lists, Ireland could be said to have been described as a newly-industrializing country or even to have been "on the margin" between the so-called "developed" and the so-called "developing" groups of countries as perceived at that time. In agreeing to give aid to Ireland from the Special Fund early in 1964 (to establish An Foras Forbartha, the National Institute for Environmental Research), the United Nations could be said to have seen Ireland as a "developing" country, at least in the European context. At around the same time, however, the country was making its first attempt to join the EEC and the Department of Foreign Affairs, at least, perceived Ireland as a "developed" country. Further, by 1963, in the Second Programme for Economic Expansion (the second national plan), a document produced by the Department of Finance and laid before both houses of the Oireachtas (Parliament), a high standard
of living "by comparison with most of the world's population" was noted and "an obligation to help less-favoured nations" was recognised.(1) The relevant paragraph which began by stating that the country could not be satisfied "with a completely self-centred programme of development" continued: "Private and public aid in various forms has been given for many years past to such countries but we must envisage increasing it and making it more systematic according as our own economic capacity grows".(2)

In 1965 Ireland became a bilateral donor on a very small scale. Having taken a consistent and prominent stance in favour of decolonization in the United Nations since joining it, Ireland received in 1963, just prior to Zambian independence, a request from its future President, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, to provide training for the new state's army and public administrators. Ireland responded by establishing an Overseas Trainee Fund whose aim was "to assist in the training in Ireland of nationals of the young African and Asian States in administration, management and technical skills".(3) Two groups from Zambia participated in the training programme in 1963 and 1965. While the Fund was allocated £30,000 in 1965/66, the Zambian government reimbursed the Irish government for the participants' living expenses. This "part grant/part loan" form of bilateral aid was a reflection of the transitional stage of development in which Ireland then found itself.

In the mid-1960's, the Irish government also initiated its Grant-in-Aid (for administration costs) to Corta, the Irish Freedom from Hunger Campaign. This was also the decade when payments began to be made to the International Development Association (from 1960), the
World Food Programme (from 1962), and Disaster Relief (from 1967).
Total ODA payments throughout the decade, and up to 1973, were
usually around 0.04% of GNP and multilateral payments were seldom
less than 90 per cent of the total. In 1971, a Department of
Foreign Affairs memorandum again acknowledged Ireland's obligation
to help "less-favoured countries" and, in an indirect reference to
its inclusion in the UN's Group B list, stated: "It is also implicit
in the classification of Ireland among the developed rather than the
developing countries which we have either accepted or chosen in the
United Nations and its most recent organ UNCTAD". (4)

Stage 3: The 1970's - The Donor Establishes a Bilateral Aid Programme

[1973 marked the turning point in the development of Ireland's
ODA programme. Together with the UK and Denmark, the country joined
the EEC in January 1973.] A National Coalition (Fine Gael/Labour)
Government assumed office in April and the new Minister for Foreign
Affairs placed development cooperation near to centre-stage in Ireland's
foreign policy. He promised to increase ODA substantially in 1973
and thereafter "in absolute terms and as a percentage of GNP, in a
planned manner over a period of years", (5) an objective which was
expressed in quantitative terms a year later as "aiming at an annual
increase in ODA of the order of 0.05 per cent of GNP, taking one year
with another, over the next five years". (6) [Expressed qualitatively,
the objective of the expanded programme launched in 1973 acknowledged
the obligations which Ireland assumed as a new member of the EEC (whose
own aid programme was currently undergoing significant development)
when it stated that the objective was "to contribute to the Third World
in a manner and to an extent which will meet our obligations, satisfy
the desire of the Irish people to play a constructive role in this sphere and add to our moral authority in seeking to influence constructively the policies of other developed countries towards the Third World". The Minister also promised to develop a "comprehensive and coherent programme" which would maximise benefits for the developing countries "particularly in fields where Ireland has a special interest or competence". While the programme was to show "balanced growth in its various sectors", the term "sector" was not defined. Finally, a greater emphasis was to be given to bilateral projects and to areas which would show "tangible results both to the recipients and to the Irish public whose goodwill is undoubted but who may not otherwise fully appreciate the extent of the Government's commitments and activities."

\[\text{In 1974, the Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO), was established "in order to sponsor Irish people who wished to serve on economic and social development projects in developing countries".}\]

\[\text{The bilateral aid programme got underway in 1974 (through grants to India and Upper Volta) and a new section within the Economic Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs was established towards the end of 1974 to administer the programme.}\] In 1976 a joint submission on structures was made to the Minister by, \textit{inter alia}, the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP), APSO and DEVCO (a newly-established grouping of state-sponsored agencies who were willing to provide technical assistance in development projects in LDCs). Their submission recommended that, while development cooperation policy should be formulated by the Department of Foreign Affairs, the execution of the ODA programme should be carried out by a state-sponsored agency established
for that purpose. It also recommended the creation of a national Advisory Council on Development Cooperation (ACDC) to provide advice to the government, through the Minister, on all aspects of development cooperation policy. While the latter recommendation was approved in 1978 (and the ACDC established in 1980) the former recommendation was not accepted.

Priority countries (Lesotho, Tanzania, Zambia, Sudan and India) were identified at an early stage in the operation of the bilateral programme and in 1978 a Development Cooperation Office, staffed by a First Secretary from the Department of Foreign Affairs, was opened in Lesotho. This institutional arrangement was extended to Tanzania in 1979 and to Zambia in 1980.

Although the ODA budget increased substantially between 1974 and 1980, the target set at the beginning of the period was not reached at any stage and by 1980 stood at only about 0.18 per cent of GNP (compared with 0.08 in 1974). Further, although successive Ministers had promised a White Paper on development cooperation, no such policy document emerged either during the period of the Coalition government (1973-77) or during the Fianna Fail administration (1977-81).

**Developments since June 1981**

1981 witnessed a new turning-point in the development of an Irish aid programme. A Fine Gael/Labour Coalition government was voted into office in June and, in accordance with the Joint Programme of the two parties, a Minister of State for Development Cooperation was appointed for the first time. An explicit and unambiguous commitment was made
to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNP by 1990, and also to reaching the target of 0.15 per cent of GNP for aid to the least-developed (LLDCs). An All-Party Oireachtas Committee on Development Cooperation was established in 1982.

3. AIMS OF THE IRISH ODA PROGRAMME

Why does Ireland, one of the poorest member states of the EEC, have an aid programme and what are its aims and objectives? To what extent are these motivated by self-interest and to what extent by altruism? In common with most donor countries, a mixture of motives is discernible and they fall under a variety of headings including humanitarian, political, and economic. Insofar as motivation is translated into aims, these aims tend to be expressed in general (qualitative) terms, rather than as specific (quantified) objectives. The exception is the ODA target and even this, until 1981, was not always expressed in terms which made it measurable ex post against aid flows.

3.1. Predominant policy aims with special relevance for the recipients

(a) Humanitarian motivation

It is not surprising, given the widespread realization that it was the voluntary (and most especially the missionary) sector which pioneered Ireland’s involvement in the Third World, that the humanitarian motivation is frequently cited in official explanations. In a foreword to the first report on the bilateral aid programme published by the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1979, the then Minister wrote: "There is too much to be done, and there are too many people at present suffering from the indignities of hunger, poverty and the deprivation
of the most fundamental of human rights waiting for our response."(12)

(b) **Promoting development in developing countries**

The primary objective of the Irish ODA programme is to promote the development of the developing countries.(13)

(c) **Other political and socio-economic aims**

From as early as 1963 (see p. 3) official Irish publications, even those addressed to national problems, have acknowledged aid to developing countries as an "obligation", because Ireland is perceived to be "well-off" relative to such countries. By 1973 (see p. 4) the concept of "obligation" appears to have grown to include those acquired by virtue of EEC membership. The necessity of having a bilateral programme in order to increase the country's "moral authority" and thus bring influence to bear on the large donor countries to aid the LDCs was acknowledged at the same time. Seven years later, the same tone was being struck when the then Minister for Foreign Affairs addressed the inaugural meeting of ACDC: "Let us not for a moment think that involvement in the development of the poorer countries represents a simple one-way transfer of resources. Our involvement is of benefit to the developing countries and that is the primary purpose of our involvement. It is also very much to our own benefit. There are the intangible moral benefits which come from cooperation with our fellow-men".(14) In October 1981, the Minister of State for Development Cooperation, while again reiterating "our responsibility to play our part in the process of developing the Third World"(15) emphasized that the motivation was based "not on charity or altruism but on a realization that our future is inextricably bound up with the developing world."(16)
Ireland's commitment to a new international economic order (NIEO) and to a belief in the Brandt "mutuality of interests" argument is another recurring theme in Ministerial statements.

In addition to the aforementioned aims, namely, meeting "obligations" (moral and contractual), and benefiting the developing countries both directly and indirectly by promoting a more just international economic order, the Irish aid programme would also appear to be aimed at promoting the satisfaction of basic needs and a more equitable internal distribution of the benefits of economic development. This aim is implicit in the co-financing of development projects operated by NGOs at grassroots level which are aimed at providing basic needs for the poorest groups. It is also implicit in the selection of target groups from among "the poorer countries of the developing world and the poorer populations in them" (17) and by the concentration of projects on rural areas "where most of the poorer people live" (18) and by "offering the lowest socio-economic groups some prospect of an improvement in their standards of living."(19) Another aim which would appear to be at least strongly approved of is the promotion of recipients' self-reliance since the activities of the 5,000 Irish development workers, both missionary and lay, is praised for "going to the very heart of the development effort by passing on their knowledge and experience to the local people. In this way they give their work a foundation and a permanence that ensure it will endure long after they have left."(20) They are praised further because "The work they do is of inestimable value and will always be a central part of our national development cooperation effort".(21)
3.2. Predominant policy aims with special relevance for Ireland

In examining statements of expressed aims of relevance for Ireland, these too fall under a variety of headings, humanitarian, political and economic.

(a) Humanitarian motivation

An aim under this heading would appear to be consciousness-raising inside Ireland to the plight of the world's poorest people. Innumerable ministerial speeches point to the need for development education in Ireland to promote this awareness and a "more enlightened and more sympathetic" attitude towards developing countries.(22)

(b) Political/Foreign policy aims

As early as 1973, aid to the Third World was perceived to be one of the "basic objectives of Irish foreign policy".(23) In 1978, development cooperation was seen as "an integral and increasingly important part of our international relations". (24) This sentiment was still being repeated in 1981 when the bilateral aid policy was perceived as having produced an "expansion of horizons and freshness of vision" and as having added "a new dimension to this whole area of our external relations".(25) Support for the UNIDO in general terms and frequent quoting of those parts of the Brandt Report which claim mutuality of interests between rich and poor countries would suggest that Irish development cooperation policy in its widest interpretation (that is, including both aid flows and support for the UNIDO) would contribute to a more just and peaceful world. The interdependence of issues, as well as of countries, in the achievement of world peace
was spelled out clearly in the section headed "Foreign Policy, Overseas Aid and Neutrality" in the Coalition Government's policy statement (29 June 1981) where the relevant paragraphs read: Paragraph 3:

"Ireland will join with other small countries in Europe such as Denmark and The Netherlands in supporting increased aid to Third World countries and more positive relationships with them. Ireland will join with like-minded countries in standing firm in relation to such world problems as detente, disarmament and the problems of Southern Africa. The Government will actively support the UN position on Namibia and in opposition to apartheid. The Government will maintain a sympathetic attitude towards the process of decolonization and the problems of newly-independent States". Paragraph 6 affirmed the Government's intention to preserve Ireland's neutrality outside all military alliances.(26)

(c) Economic aims

The production of direct economic benefits for Ireland has never been an objective of the Irish ODA programme. Such benefits, if they arise are considered to be "by-products". For instance, a 1979 Ministerial speech affirmed that while Ireland did not tie its aid "in any way", nevertheless there were seen to be "certain commercial advantages and opportunities" which Ireland should "avail of.... when they present themselves."(27) These "advantages" were not to be expected from the bilateral aid programme but rather from the participation of Irish concerns in multilateral aid programmes and in the implementation of indigenously funded projects in resource-rich LDCs which, it was hoped, would follow as a result of the experience gained from their participation in the Irish bilateral programme. Trade in goods and
services with such resource-rich LDCs was expected to have a positive impact on the balance of payments and employment in Ireland.

Another employment related by-product of the ODA programme is the maintenance of expertise within certain state-sponsored agencies (such as the Electricity Supply Board) during recessionary periods when, from time to time, Government directives have instructed such agencies to halt staff recruitment and to cut back total expenditure. In general, any economic benefits which might accrue to Ireland from the bilateral aid programme tend to arise within the realm of services, rather than as export markets for goods, or the securing of imports of particular raw materials.

The Agency for Personal Services Overseas (APSO) also has a view on the issue of donor-benefits. A 1980 report by APSO on its "philosophy" states: "While APSO may sponsor only service undertaken for a fundamentally charitable purpose, it believes that reasonable returns for Ireland from the ODA programme are not incompatible with a principled development programme in an interdependent world". The possibility that trade policy and aid funds in relation to developing countries (especially the opening of Irish markets to LDC imports) might be used to promote restructuring of Irish industry and agriculture has not been an aim of Irish aid policy. However, funds from the development education sub-section of the ODA budget have been used to finance seminars held by the Congress of Trade Unions and to finance research on restructuring.

3.3. Aims regarding the volume of Irish aid

As already noted, the earliest (1963) published statement advocating
a "systematic" increase in official aid added the qualifying phrase "according as our own economic capacity grows". (29) In 1970, at the 25th General Assembly of the United Nations, 0.7 per cent of GNP was adopted as an ODA target by UN members and while Ireland accepted this target in principle, no commitment was made to reaching it by any specific date, but rather "as our resources permit". (30) In 1971, the then Minister for Finance in the Fianna Fail Administration argued in the Dail that targets "would have to be tailored to the national circumstances of each country" and added "when the target of 1 per cent (for official and unofficial transfers) was being discussed a target of 0.2 per cent or 0.3 per cent was suggested for countries like us". (31) In 1973, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Coalition Government promised to increase ODA "in a planned manner over a number of years". (32) The following year, however, he told a meeting of the EEC Council of Ministers that Ireland could not hope to attain the UN target by 1980, but that the Irish Government was committed to "aiming at an annual increase in ODA of the order of 0.05 per cent of GNP, taking one year with another, over the next five years". (33) The Council of Ministers itself recognized special problems for the less-prosperous EEC member States such as "Italy, Ireland and Luxembourg which have domestic structural difficulties and a relatively low per capita income or whose aid programmes are of comparatively recent origin" and these States were to be permitted "more time" to reach the target. (34)

The difficulty with the 1974 Coalition target formulation was that it did not specify a percentage of GNP target for the end of the five year period although various statements made both inside and outside the Dail, by Ministers and Opposition spokesmen alike, support
the view that the Irish Government had, in 1974, committed itself
to reaching a target of 0.35 per cent of GNP by 1979. However, the
target was, equally, often disputed and "interpreted" by Government and,
in this sense, was perhaps never totally unambiguous. It was not
until June 1981 that a specific quantitative target with a specific
time schedule was stated unambiguously as a Government commitment.
The relevant paragraph from the Coalition policy document (under the
heading "Foreign Policy, Overseas Aid, Neutrality) reads: "Official
development aid will be increased so that each year it will constitute
at least an additional 0.05 per cent of GNP so that the UN target of
0.7 per cent of GNP can be reached by 1990". At the UN Conference
on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in September 1981,
the Minister of State for Development Cooperation reiterated this
commitment and added a further commitment, namely to reach the sub-
target of 0.15 per cent of GNP in aid to the least-developed.

4. **PRINCIPLES OF THE IRISH ODA PROGRAMME**

   (a) **Distribution of total ODA between bilateral and multilateral**

   While the Irish Government has established a number of principles
to guide the disbursement of flows of skills and of capital within the
bilateral aid programme, there is no principle as such, and certainly
no quantifiable principle, regulating the distribution of total ODA
between bilateral and multilateral. Nevertheless, conscious of the
fact that, prior to 1973, almost all of Ireland's ODA was directed
to the multilateral agencies of the United Nations system, since then
"the policy has very firmly been to build up the bilateral element as
a proportion of overall ODA." The rationale given was in order
to make "a direct, distinctive and identifiably Irish contribution
(b) **Principles relating to the Bilateral Programme**

(i) **Geographical distribution**

The concentration of bilateral aid on a small number of "priority countries" is one of the very few clearly-stated principles related to the Irish bilateral aid programme. The reasons given by the Government for this policy of geographical concentration include the following: the constraints imposed by an inevitably small size of programme; the need to ensure effectiveness; the need to avoid fragmentation; the greater likelihood of building up "coherent programmes" when a number of Irish agencies are working together in one place and, thus, maximizing the benefits of their separate experiences and contacts and providing mutual support for one another; and finally, the greater opportunity it creates of developing "a close and effective working relationship between the cooperating authorities".

Five priority countries have been chosen, namely, Lesotho, Tanzania, Sudan, Zambia and India. The first three are classified by the UN as least-developed. According to the 1979 Report on the Bilateral Programme, the criteria used by the Irish Government in selecting the priority countries took into account the following factors: relative poverty of the countries; their actual need of external aid; their ability to absorb and make effective use of the aid; suitability of social structures and policies to facilitate the flow of assistance to "neediest sectors;" historical and cultural links; the possibility of being able to use English as a working
language; familiar legal, administrative and other systems; and "special considerations" (such as the special dependence of Lesotho on the Republic of South Africa). The priority country principle is not expressed in quantitative terms.(40)

(ii) Sectoral distribution

There is no clear-cut principle or specific emphasis relating to choice of sectors. The 1973 policy statement on ODA referred to a programme which would show "balanced growth in its various sectors" but "particularly where Ireland has a special interest or competence".(41) In the 1979 Report, the logical consequence of the latter principle (expressed as "given the key part played by agriculture in Ireland's own development") was seen to be "the concentration or direction" of activities at rural areas.(42) In practice, given Ireland's small size and thus limited number of available personnel in some sectors and further, given the fact that, to date at least, the principal mechanism used for implementing its aid programme has been, in the main, technical assistance, the decision regarding the choice of priority countries effectively determines much of the sectoral concentration in each case. The sequence runs as follows: the priority countries were chosen; the Irish Government asks each of them what type of aid they need; Ireland responds to requests through available agencies and individuals with the appropriate skills; this determines (and limits) the choice of sector. Education and training and rural development are most frequently cited in official speeches and publications as key sectors within which Ireland can contribute aid. Disaster relief is described as "an ancillary but nevertheless important aspect" of the bilateral aid programme (43) and, since 1978, development education within Ireland.(44)
(c) **Principles guiding aid cooperation**

(i) **Donor/recipient orientation**

As is evident from b(ii) above, while the aid programme tends to be recipient-orientated, project selection is also determined by Ireland's ability to provide specific skills. The result is a type of supply-and-demand balance. Nevertheless, where requested, Irish aid is always integrated into the development plans of the recipient countries (for example, the choice of Kilosa district as the focal point for Irish aid to Tanzania and the training of regional planners for the National Planning Commission of Zambia, both integral elements in the National Plans of the two countries). The Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO) also uses recipient-orientated criteria when selecting assignments to sponsor. These include assurances that the job cannot be filled by a national of the developing country, that the project ranks highly in the recipient country's priority development needs, that the project contains a training element, that there are good prospects of its being indigenised within a reasonable period, that there is a direct indigenous counterpart where this is relevant, that the duration of the assignment is long enough to ensure that the assignee will be effective, and that the assignee is (or that pre-training and orientation can increase his/her capacity to be) adaptable and sensitive enough to the values of co-workers so that effective work can be done.(45)

(ii) **Time horizon of aid programme**

At present, the national budgetary process in Ireland (where the PPBS system has been abandoned) does not allow a multiannual, rolling-plan system of budgeting for the bilateral programme. Each government department prepares its Estimates of Expenditure and submits them
annually to the Department of Finance. In producing its annual Estimates for ODA expenditure, the Department of Foreign Affairs takes into account the following factors: the minimum amounts necessary to support existing programmes; the cost of developing existing programmes; and the cost of proposed new initiatives. An important improvement was effected in the budgetary mechanism in 1977 with the creation of the Bilateral Aid Fund, which made it possible for funds to be carried forward from year to year. Up to then, projects had, theoretically, to be planned and executed within the same year, with any unspent monies returning to the Exchequer. In addition to providing for the retention of funds allocated to a project until it has matured, the Fund also enables monies unspent in one year in the multilateral section to be retained for ODA, through their transfer by supplementary estimate, from multi-lateral to bilateral aid. The commitment of the government to reach the two UN targets (0.7 per cent of GNP for overall ODA and 0.15 per cent of GNP for aid to the least-developed) by 1990 by annual increases "of at least 0.05 per cent of GNP" should make long-term planning easier after 1981.

(iii) Demands on recipient governments

Having made its choices regarding priority countries and assuming that no fundamental changes occur within them which are pertinent to Irish selection criteria, Ireland stands aside from interventions regarding general politics or policies, either internal or international. Similarly, having chosen those countries, at least in part because of the ability of their "social structures and policies" to facilitate the objective "of channelling assistance to rural areas"
as well as because of their "familiar legal, administrative and other systems" no further demands are made in relation to the recipients' planning capacity and follow-up ability. Joint participation is encouraged, however, and this can sometimes involve cost-sharing arrangements. The Irish Government has assigned terminal dates to many of its bilateral aid projects. This principle is usually operationalized through the mechanism of counterpart training.

(iv) **Involvement of non-official agencies in the Irish Aid programme**

The Irish ODA programme encourages the involvement of a very broad range of non-official bodies in the process of development cooperation. This principle of involving as many sectors as possible in the aid programme is reflected in the composition of the National Advisory Council on Development Cooperation (ACDC). The thirty-person Council is made up as follows: 5 members from CONGOOD, 3 from DEVCO, 1 from HEDCO, 1 from APSO, 2 from the Congress of Trade Unions, 4 from industry/employers, 6 from rural and farming organizations, 2 from youth organizations, and 6 others.

The bilateral aid programme acknowledges the important role which the voluntary agencies play in providing basic needs to the poorest groups in the developing countries, by co-financing development projects with them. These agencies have institutionally strengthened their position by grouping themselves into a Confederation of NGOs for Development (CONGOOD). As already noted, the state-sponsored agencies have formed DEVCO to promote their participation in development projects. The universities and other institutions of third-level
education have established HEDCO (Higher Education for Development Cooperation) to encourage and facilitate the involvement of their members in both consciousness-raising, development education within Ireland, and teaching, research and project work in developing countries. HEDCO receives funding from both the Department of Foreign Affairs and from APSO. In addition to APSO which works, in the main, in partnership with the NGOs, many CONGOOD member organizations, as well as DEVCO and HEDCO member organizations, are active in the developing countries.

(d) **Principles guiding the forms of aid.**

There are no explicit statements of principle regarding the forms of aid. In practice, aid is project-oriented - indeed the Irish ODA programme could best be described as a collection of projects - and most aid is given in the form of technical assistance, and a large training element is included. Only a tiny proportion of the resource transfers are in the form of flows of capital or of goods. The priority countries are, in the main, among the resource-poor and least-developed countries; thus, export promotion or investment promotion are not principles which intrude on the selection of projects. Export credit facilities are available for all Irish exporters but only about 10 per cent of Ireland's exports go to the so-called Third World and of this amount over 60 per cent go to OPEC and NIC countries. Ireland's exports to its five priority countries are severally and in total negligible.

There is likewise, no statement of principle regarding the tying of aid and there are no procurement mechanisms. Since Irish aid is,
in the main, in the form of technical assistance, it is Irish personnel which are usually "supplied" with the project. On the other hand, hard and fast rules are not a characteristic of the implementation process; if a project includes a training element and that training can be carried out in another developing country (rather than, say, training the personnel inside their own country or sending them to Ireland) Ireland will pay their costs and will not encounter any difficulties on matters of principle in so doing.

(e) Is there an underlying theory of development guiding the Irish ODA programme?

To answer this question, it is helpful to distinguish between the bilateral aid programme and other elements of "development cooperation", chiefly Ireland's approach to the North-South dialogue. An examination of the Irish bilateral aid programme would suggest that the theoretical leaning is towards the supply-side, with projects performing a gap-filling role through the mechanism of technical assistance and very small amounts of capital. In the choice of priority countries (especially Lesotho) however, there is a nod towards structuralist theory which sees under-development, in part, as the product of a colonial past and of agricultural bottlenecks. The nod towards dependency theory is implicit in the support of the NIEO and of decolonization. In sum, however, there could not be said to be an explicit model of development underlying the Irish ODA programme. The paucity of principles guiding its operation would suggest that no great need has been perceived to date to develop one.
5. **ANALYSIS OF IRISH ODA EXPENDITURE**

An examination of data relating to total flows of ODA (Table 1) shows that the increase between 1960 and 1980 was almost forty-fold in dollar terms. Real year-to-year increases during the second half of the 1970's were not as great as nominal increases, however, because of the high rates of inflation recorded during the period. In 1975 there was a real decrease and in 1980, although total ODA rose, the bilateral allocation fell in real terms. As a proportion of GNP, total ODA rose in the twenty year period from 0.05 per cent to 0.19 per cent. Between 1974 and 1980, the first six years' operation of the bilateral programme, the percentage of GNP devoted to total ODA rose from 0.08 to 0.19.

The small size of the bilateral programme and the mandatory nature of most of the multilateral payments results in the inevitable dominance by the latter heading in total ODA (Table 2). In 1980, multilateral expenditure exceeded 70 per cent of the total figure. Its composition, however, had undergone significant change; the EEC had replaced the UN and its associated institutions as the main expenditure heading. Indeed not only under multilateral, but even in overall ODA, the EEC is now the most important heading, having grown from 25 per cent of total ODA in 1975 to nearly 50 per cent by 1980. In contrast, the UN and other international agencies had declined in relative importance from 100 per cent of the total in 1960, to 59 per cent in 1975, and to less than 20 per cent in 1980.

Since the Irish bilateral programme really only got underway in 1974, the period 1975 to 1980 will be the focus of attention in the analysis which follows.
(a) As regards meeting the AIMS of the aid programme, there has been an increase in bilateral aid - from 12 per cent of the total in 1975 to nearly 30 per cent in 1980. However, the percentages were higher in 1978 and in 1979, reflecting the fact that the bilateral, or voluntary part of the programme, was the casualty when cuts were made in 1980. Indeed 1980 was the second occasion, since the establishment of the bilateral programme in 1974, that total ODA expenditure was hit by the effects of recession and stagflation. As early as 1975, while ODA increased in nominal terms over 1974, it fell by about 1 per cent in real terms - (explained by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Dail as being due to "the general economic difficulty through which this country and other countries have been passing".) (47)

Progress in moving towards the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for total ODA has not been significant. However, it is during the present decade that this aim will be monitored carefully as it was only in 1981 that an unambiguous commitment was made by Government to this and to the subsidiary UN target of 0.15 per cent of GNP for aid to the LLDCs. In 1979 (the latest year for which data at this level of disaggregation is available) expenditure in LLDCs from the Bilateral Aid Fund amounted to approximately 10 per cent of total ODA, or 0.018 per cent of GNP. If expenditures by APSO are included, the figures are 12 per cent and 0.02 per cent respectively.

However, in calculating the extent to which the sub-target of 0.15 per cent of GNP has been reached, aid donors may count not only direct contributions under their bilateral aid programmes, but also that proportion of their contributions to UN agencies, the IBRD, IDA,
WFP and so on, as well as the EC budget and the Lomé Convention, which corresponds with these agencies' expenditures in LLDCs. Although these calculations have yet to be made for 1981, it is probable that Ireland is already almost half-way towards meeting the 0.15 per cent sub-target and is thus proportionately nearer to reaching it than it is to reaching the overall 0.7 per cent target at this stage.

There is, as yet, no evidence available to test whether Irish aid has contributed to the development of the countries involved in the programme. However, projects undertaken by the Department of Foreign Affairs in the priority countries are chosen to fit into the development plans of those countries. They have been described as being of the "intermediate" or "gap-filling" type, combining packages of technical assistance combined with relatively small amounts of capital aid. As regards the attainment of aims relevant to the Irish economy, the only one articulated to date is the sale of services by Irish firms (through the supply of skilled personnel) involved in projects in developing countries. Many Irish firms and state-sponsored agencies, have benefited in this way, some as agent or implementers of Irish government projects in the priority countries, others through involvement in projects funded by international agencies or by their resources in resource-rich developing countries.

(b) As regards the PRINCIPLES relating to the bilateral programme, data in Tables 3 and 4 provide evidence relating to the most important principle, namely that relating to concentration on priority countries. The most pertinent expenditure heading in this regard, is the Bilateral Aid Fund (BAF) as it constitutes over 70 per cent of total bilateral aid.
Together with APSO, the combined total is 86 per cent. An examination of Tables 3 and 4 shows that the priority country principle has been respected. The amount of the BAF expended in these countries increased from 32 per cent in 1975 to 69 per cent in 1980. Although APSO does not consider itself bound by the concentration principle to the same extent or in the same way, its "Philosophy" document states that, being part of the Irish ODA programme it must have due regard to the Programme's regard for concentration but it also feels that, as a major supporter of the Irish voluntary sector, it must also accept the latter's priority country preferences. Interestingly, however, it is evident from Table 3 that APSO's expenditure is also being increasingly concentrated on the five priority countries, having risen from 5 per cent in 1975 to 36 per cent in 1980. Approximately 50 per cent of its expenditure on assignments occurred in LLDCs in 1979. Table 4 shows the importance of the individual countries within the priority country group and clearly demonstrates that, to date at least, Lesotho has been the "priority among priorities".

Although there is no specific principle regarding sectoral distribution, agriculture and rural development is frequently cited as the sector for "emphasis" in the "overall policy orientation of the programme". However, an examination of Tables 5 and 6 shows that education and training has consistently been the largest expenditure heading from the BAF since 1975. Indeed in 1977, even infrastructure outstripped agriculture and rural development and it was not far behind it in 1980. All in all, the distribution of expenditure from the BAF conforms more to the original 1973 objective of "balanced growth in its various sectors" than to the later declared objective
of emphasis on agriculture and rural development. APSD's sectoral
distribution, which concentrates on health and education, appears
to be directed much more to the satisfaction of basic needs, which
is not surprising given its close association with the voluntary
agencies. On the other hand, it should be remembered that co-financing
of NGO projects is an important subsection of BAF expenditure. This
is relevant to assessing whether the overall aim of Irish ODA, namely
"helping the poorer groups in the poorer countries", is being pursued.
An examination of expenditure on every individual project in every
individual country between 1975 and 1980 reveals that a very high
proportion of expenditure from the BAF spent in non-priority countries
was spent on NGO projects (both Irish and indigenous). Under the
heading of agriculture and rural development, this is usually around
90 per cent; under education and training it was 70 per cent in 1979
(the same as for infrastructure); and under health it is usually
around 100 per cent.

(c) As regards the MECHANISMS used to implement the aims of the
programme, since the main vehicle of Irish bilateral aid is technical
assistance, issues such as procurement tying and export promotion do
not arise directly. The fact that so little Irish aid is in the
form of goods (especially capital goods) is probably a reflection
of Ireland's own stage of industrial development, the high proportion
of foreign ownership within its industrial sector, and also the small
size of the Irish bilateral aid programme. Of course, in terms of
exports (both goods and services), the resource-rich developing
countries rather than the countries on which the bilateral programme
is focused, are potentially important for trade. In 1981, only
10 per cent of Ireland's exports went to developing countries and, of this, only a negligible percentage would go to the same countries as the aid programme assists. Ireland adheres to the "Consensus" regarding export credits but, given the very small proportion of its total trade which is conducted with all developing countries, export credits are not used in a discriminatory way as a trade-promoting mechanism in these countries.

As regards the promotion of South-South cooperation, which Ireland favours, the mechanism is the creation of such links at the project (rather than the national) level by replicating projects in other (preferably neighbouring) countries and using exchanges of technical experts and trainers to operate the linked projects. An example of a mechanism used to promote processing capacity was the supply of machinery by an Irish rope and carpet manufacturer to a carpet factory in Tanzania. The Irish firm benefited by securing imports of uniform quality sisal, at specified times, for its own factory.

(d) The NIEO and the ODA programme

Since the Irish bilateral programme got underway only in 1974, its establishment and thus the establishment of a "distinctly Irish" ODA programme coincided with the launching of the global debate on the NIEO. In negotiations, Ireland has tended to occupy a middle ground position reflecting, in the main, her own interests. At the Sixth Special Session of the UNGA, Ireland had a number of reservations on the NIEO, principally regarding the ODA target (the timeframe being the problem) and industrial restructuring (a problem which was resolved at UNCTAD IV when the concept was refined).
Ireland is a member of the so-called "like-minded group" and, in that capacity, supported the call for a Common Fund at UNCTAD IV in 1976 and, recently, the call for increased ODA from donors in the "North". On trade issues, however, it can be protectionist. In the MFA renegotiation talks, it was aligned with the hardline EEC member states. As regards trade policy towards less-developed countries, the Department of Foreign Affairs, having different objectives from the "economic" Departments, could be said to take a somewhat "softer" line on issues such as access to the markets of industrialized countries for exports of manufactures from less-developed countries. It is clear that one major disadvantage which arises from the concentration of an aid programme on the least-developed countries is that access to the Irish market for exports of manufactured goods from less-developed countries does not arise directly within the programme. As a result, the type of issue is treated strictly as a trade and industrial development issue and the Department of Industry and Trade considers it as being their business. If Ireland were to expand its aid programme to include more middle-income countries, the aid and trade issues would be seen as interdependent elements within development cooperation policy.

(f) Issues for the 1980s

The 1981-82 Coalition Government committed Ireland unambiguously to reaching the UN aid targets by 1990 and the establishment of an Oireachtas Joint Committee on Development Cooperation should help to preserve such commitments. The publication of a (first) White Paper on Development Cooperation is an urgent priority and, when published, should clarify a number of issues and establish a number
of principles to guide the direction and operation of the programme in the 1980s.\footnote{A decision may be taken to join DAC.} The issue of appropriate budgetary mechanisms, including the possibility of having a multiannual rolling plan, will have to be considered, as will the issue of appropriate structures to implement a growing ODA programme. The priority country list will probably be reconsidered. One country may be dropped from the list; another may be added. In any case, intra-group concentration will probably change. The final decision on the choice of priority countries, as well as on the proportion of total aid which is allocated to co-financing with NGOs, will be determined by the constraints imposed by the commitment to spend 0.15 per cent of GNP on the least-developed countries. Finally, the need to articulate a theory of development and a definition of development cooperation may be recognized as a precondition for the assessment of the "benefits" or "cost-effectiveness" of a development cooperation programme.
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1 1960/61
2 1965/66
3 1970/71
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\(^1\)1960/61; \(^2\)1965/66; \(^3\)1970/71; \(^4\)All bilateral expenditure except APSO, Disaster Relief, Gorta and ACDC. (M) Mandatory; (NM) Non-Mandatory
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<td>572</td>
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<td>57%</td>
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1 Total Bilateral Aid consists of expenditure from the Bilateral Aid Fund (BAF), APSO, Disaster Relief, Gorta, and ACCC. Only BAF and APSO are relevant in relation to geographical distribution. As seen under (a) above, together they account for the bulk of Bilateral expenditure.

2 LLDCs include three of the Priority Countries (Lesotho, Sudan, Tanzania).
### Table 4.

**Expenditure from Bilateral Aid Fund in Five Priority Countries 1975–80**

(US $000 and percentages)

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<td>7432</td>
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<td>666</td>
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<td>69%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<td><strong>% of BAF</strong></td>
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<td>41%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td><strong>% of BAF</strong></td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tanzania</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of BAF</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zambia</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of BAF</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>India</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>% of BAF</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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### TABLE 5

**SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF BILATERAL AID FUND 1975-80**

(US $000 and percentages)

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral Aid Fund (BAF)</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>3780</td>
<td>6592</td>
<td>7432</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education and Training</strong></td>
<td>190</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>2346</td>
<td>2492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as % of BAF</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agri. and Rural Development</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>1559</td>
<td>1440</td>
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<tr>
<td>as % of BAF</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>1004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as % of BAF</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>1174</td>
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<tr>
<td>as % of BAF</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as % of BAF</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultancy/Other</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as % of BAF</td>
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<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6

**SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF APSO ASSIGNMENTS 1975-80**

(percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agri. and Rural Development</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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REFERENCES


(2) ibid., p. 16


(4) Department of Foreign Affairs, internal memorandum, 1971.


(8) ibid., p. 767.

(9) ibid., p. 767.

(10) ibid., p. 767.

(11) ibid., p. 768.

(12) Mr. Michael O'Kennedy, T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreword to Development Cooperation: Ireland's Bilateral Aid Programme (Dublin, Department of Foreign Affairs, 1979).

(14) *ibid*, p. 7.

(15) Mr. Jim O'Keefe, T.D., Minister of State for Development Cooperation, address to Comhlamh, the Returned Development Workers Association, Cork, 8 October 1981, p. 7.

(16) *ibid*, p. 7.


(18) *ibid*, p. 8.


(20) Mr. Jim O'Keefe, T.D., Minister of State for Development Cooperation, address to Comhlamh, 8 October 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

(21) *ibid*, p. 2.


(24) Mr. Michael O'Kennedy, T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs, address to the Annual General Meeting of DEVCO, the State Agencies Development Cooperation Organization, 12 February 1979, p. 2.


(27) Mr. Michael O'Kennedy, T.D., Minister of Foreign Affairs, address to the Annual General Meeting of DEVCO, 12 February 1979, op. cit., p. 4


(29) See reference (2)


(33) Dr. Garret FitzGerald, T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs, address to the Council of Ministers of the EEC, 30 April 1974, p. 1, text published by the Government Information Service.


(37) Department of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation: Ireland's Bilateral Aid Programme, op. cit., p. 7

(38) ibid, p. 7.

(39) ibid, p. 7.

(40) ibid, p. 8.


(42) Department of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation: Ireland's Bilateral Aid Programme, op. cit., p. 8

(43) ibid, 18.

(44) ibid, p. 17.

(45) Agency for Personal Service Overseas, "APSO Philosophy," op. cit., p. 27.