

TRÓCAIRE SUBMISSION FOR BUDGET 2022



Kaddy Mansaray, Chair of the Funkia Market Women's Association providing Covid-19 prevention information at the market with a poster and megaphone. Trócaire's local partner SEND Sierra Leone is engaging communities in York chiefdom on Covid-19 prevention measures. Photo : Jonathan Bundu / Trócaire

Trócaire

IRISH OVERSEAS AID EXPENDITURE: INVESTING IN IRELAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO A FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Trócaire Submission for Budget 2022

Summary

Irish overseas aid is having a positive impact on the lives of millions of people throughout the world.¹ This effective and principled² global solidarity through overseas aid is more vital now than ever as the world navigates a series of challenges unparalleled in our lifetime.³

The triple threat of coronavirus, climate change and conflict are creating the perfect storm, threatening progress towards a sustainable future for everyone on this planet.

Although aid is only one part of any systemic response to break the cycle of interconnected global crises, and to address the underlying social, environmental and economic drivers of vulnerability, in the current context international aid is a particularly crucial tool in the fight against poverty and inequality.

24 October 2020 marked the 50 year anniversary of rich countries committing to spend 0.7% of their gross national income (GNI) on aid to low- and middle-income countries. However, high-income countries have time and again reneged on their commitments, with Oxfam calculating that in the 50 years since the 0.7% commitment was made, donor countries have failed to deliver a total of \$5.7 trillion in promised aid.⁴

Statistics on the scale of current levels of humanitarian need are alarming and underscore the necessity for acting with urgency and ambition to increase international aid.⁵

In 2021, 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This number has risen to 1 in 33 people worldwide - a significant increase in just one year, from 1 in 45 at the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview 2020. The 2021

Global Report on Food Crises warns that 142 million people will face severe food shortages this year and forecasts famines in at least two countries.⁶

Similar to climate change, Covid-19 poses risk to us all, but the risk is not equal and it is the people in the most vulnerable situations, who are suffering the worst impacts of the pandemic. The virus has exposed, fed off and increased existing inequalities of wealth, gender, ethnicity and race across the globe.⁷ The UN Secretary General recently warned the world is also facing a "pandemic of human rights abuses" with the virus being used as a pretext in many countries to crush dissent, criminalise freedoms and silence reporting.⁸

So far, over 4.5 million people have died from Covid-19,⁹ a figure set to continue rising in the absence of equitable roll out of vaccines across the world.

The fairest and most effective way to end this pandemic is to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to Covid-19 vaccines, tests and treatments. However, pharmaceutical companies' monopolies could leave countries in the Global South waiting until 2023 for widespread vaccination. This leaves us all in danger from new variants which may make current vaccines ineffective.¹⁰

As Covid-19 continues to spread at an alarming rate around the world, the inequity in response is clear, as of September 2021 only 1.9% of people in low-income countries have received just one dose of Covid-19 vaccines.¹¹ In terms of the global share of vaccines, as of August 2021, 82% of vaccinations have been administered in high and upper middle-income countries whilst only 0.3% of doses have been administered in low-income countries.¹²

Whilst presenting global data on aid in April 2021, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría revealed that total Official Development Assistance (ODA) equated to only around one percent of the 16 trillion dollars that countries have mobilised over the past year in economic stimulus measures to help their own societies recover from the Covid crisis.¹³

Ireland has consistently demonstrated its commitment to multilateralism and overseas aid, a fact which has been recognised by the OECD review of Irish Aid as an “excellent humanitarian partner”.¹⁴ Through Irish Aid, Ireland is rightly regarded as a global leader in delivering life-saving and life-changing programmes in some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the world. This is a source of pride for many Irish citizens, with 77% of those surveyed feeling it was important for the Irish Government to provide overseas aid to help people in developing countries, and 81% of those surveyed indicating they feel Covid-19 has reinforced the need for international cooperation in addressing global problems.¹⁵

With support from Irish Aid, and through the generosity of the Irish public, Trócaire staff and local partners are working hard alongside some of the poorest communities in the world to tackle the root causes of poverty, injustice and violence. Despite all of the challenges presented by the pandemic, Trócaire supported 2.7 million people in 25 countries in the last year.¹⁶

Trócaire welcomes the strong and enduring support for Irish Aid across Irish political parties, (most recently expressed in the strong endorsements of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade in their endorsement of the need to increase ODA in Budget 2022 and subsequent Budgets).¹⁷ Pledges in the 2020 Programme for Government to reinforce ambition to continue to grow Ireland’s overseas aid budget to 0.7 per cent of national income in line with international commitments, and to set a monetary expenditure floor to ensure continued investment in Irish Aid budgets, are very welcome.¹⁸



Trócaire and Irish Aid partnered to provide emergency supplies to people displaced by fighting in eastern DR Congo. Supplies included blankets, mosquito nets and tents.

The €30m increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) announced in Budget 2021, an allocated €868m in Irish overseas aid¹⁹ was vital in the context of extremely high humanitarian needs globally and gaps in financing, which have intensified dramatically due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, despite the government’s pledge to spend 0.7% of GNI on overseas development aid by 2030, spending as a proportion of GNI remains well below the international target, with Ireland averaging just 0.31% of GNI over the past six years. ODA steadily increased during the 2000’s reaching 0.59% in 2008 but was cut after the financial crash and has not been fully restored. Now is the time to restore this spend in order to meet Ireland’s international aid commitments, particularly as humanitarian need has dramatically increased. NGOs, especially local organisations such as Trócaire’s partners, are often first to reach the most vulnerable communities at the onset of humanitarian crises, and to remain working with them in the longer term to ensure people living in poverty have equitable access to and use of resources and that their human rights are respected. We would also urge that there be continued investment in funding allocated to international and local NGOs under Vote 27 International Cooperation in the forthcoming budget.

Ireland successfully campaigned on a platform of promoting human rights, climate action, gender equality and humanitarian support to secure an elected United Nations Security Council seat for the term 2021-2022, and Ireland's vital work in this role to date has been exemplary.²⁰ Upholding Ireland's strong reputation and credibility as a leader on international development also continues to pivot on its continued investment in overseas aid. The government should increase its spend and provide a clear targeted pathway to achieving what it has promised.

- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to honour its commitments to the most vulnerable in our world and to increase investment in overseas aid in Budget 2022 and continue to uphold Irish Aid's longstanding reputation for excellence as a humanitarian partner, with high quality, gender responsive, poverty reduction focused, untied aid, including civil society as a key partner.
- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to outline a pathway to reach the historic UN target of spending 0.7% of GNI on overseas aid. Ireland's spend on ODA stands at 0.31% of GNI (2020). Ireland must increase ODA in real terms and as a percentage of GNI in Budget 2022 as part of a clear pathway to meet 0.5% by 2025, and 0.7% by 2030.
- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to significantly increase ODA investment in agriculture and food systems between now and 2030; progressively aligning allocations with sustainable approaches based on agroecological principles.
- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to ensure climate finance allocations will also increase, alongside increases in overall ODA in the lifetime of the government.
- Trócaire joins the call of the People's Vaccine Alliance Ireland in urging the Irish Government to work to ensure that the EU reverses its blockage of the "Waiver from Certain Provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and

Treatment of Covid-19 " supported by more than 100 nations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).²¹ Ireland must also endorse the World Health Organisation (WHO) COVID Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) to facilitate the sharing of know-how by pharmaceutical companies to increase vaccine production.²²

"Covid-19 has deepened pre-existing divides, vulnerabilities and inequalities, and opened up new fractures, including faultlines in human rights. The pandemic has revealed the interconnectedness of our human family – and of the full spectrum of human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social. When any one of these rights is under attack, others are at risk.

*The virus has thrived because poverty, discrimination, the destruction of our natural environment and other human rights failures have created enormous fragilities in our societies. The lives of hundreds of millions of families have been turned upside down – with lost jobs, crushing debt and steep falls in income."*²³

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General, February 2021

Introduction: Why an increase in overseas aid is urgently needed

Irish overseas aid is having a positive impact on the lives of millions of people throughout the world.²⁴ This effective and principled²⁵ global solidarity through overseas aid is more vital now than ever. Statistics on the scale of current levels of humanitarian need are alarming and underscore the necessity for acting with urgency and ambition to increase international aid.²⁶

In 2021, 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This number has risen to 1 in 33 people worldwide - a significant increase from 1 in 45 at the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview 2020. The 2021 Global Report on Food Crises warns that 142 million people will face severe food shortages this year and forecasts famines in at least two countries.²⁷

The number of people fleeing wars, violence, persecution, and human rights violations, rose last year to nearly 82.4 million people, a further four percent increase on top of the already record-high of 79.5 million recorded at the end of 2019.²⁸ Despite Covid-19 related movement restrictions and pleas from the international community for a concerted global ceasefire, displacement continued to occur – and to grow. As a result, more than one percent of the world's population – or 1 in 95 people – is now forcibly displaced.²⁹

In Syria, humanitarian needs are peaking to the highest levels seen in the course of Syria's 10-year war—increasing by a staggering 20% over the last 12 months alone. The ongoing conflict and economic crisis in the region coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic has led to record levels of food insecurity and economic hardship. Covid-19 continues to spread while the healthcare infrastructure, decimated by years of conflict, remains woefully inadequate to respond.

Similar to climate change, Covid-19 poses risk to us all, but the risk is not equal and it is the people in the most vulnerable situations who are suffering the worst impacts of the pandemic. Covid-19 has exacerbated gender inequality in all its forms as women and girls are particularly exposed to the pandemic's immediate and long-term effects and repercussions. The disparities

in the impact of Covid-19 on racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous groups and women are signifiers of deeply rooted inequality that has been exposed by the crisis in its starkest terms, within and between countries, with the most vulnerable people hardest hit.³⁰ Those living in poverty bear a disproportionate burden of the economic consequences of quarantines, lockdowns and the adverse national and international economic situation.³¹

Covid-19 impacts pushed an additional 120 million people into extreme poverty globally.

In the two decades to 2020, the number of people living in poverty globally fell by 1 billion, to 613 million. However, the World Bank estimates that Covid-19 has driven an additional 120 million people into extreme poverty.³² What the virus has laid bare is the brutal precarity of the livelihoods of most of humanity. In pre-Covid times, 56% of the global population live on between \$2 and \$10 a day. In low- and middle-income countries, over half of workers are in working poverty.³³ Globally, we are seeing potential reversal of hard won development gains and further challenges on the path to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030. The 2020 Social Progress Index warns *"The 17 SDGs, which include the eradication of poverty, improving access to education and action on climate change, will only be fulfilled by 2092 once the effects of the pandemic are taken into account."*

The pandemic has exposed our collective frailty and the inability of our deeply unequal global economy to work for all. Yet it has also shown us the vital importance of government action to protect our health, environment, and livelihoods. Transformative policies that seemed unthinkable before the crisis have suddenly been shown to be possible. There can be no return to where we were before and the urgency that has been applied to tackling the pandemic must be applied to creating a more equal world. Along with an increase in ODA, the root causes of the key drivers of humanitarian need such as conflict, climate change, environmental degradation, unsustainable food systems, human rights violations, and inequality – including gender inequality and discrimination, need to be tackled.



7 year old Joy-Faith from Kenya washes her hands to prevent the spread of Covid. The home-made tap was made out of recycled household items. Photo : Denis Kioko / Trócaire

Dr Mike Ryan, Executive Director of the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme acceptance speech when awarded the Trócaire Oscar Romero Award 17th February 2020 outlined clearly the interlinkages between the **climate and biodiversity emergency and the conditions in which epidemics flourish**.

"We are pushing nature to its limit. We are pushing population to its limit. We're pushing communities to their limits. We're stressing the environment. We are creating the conditions in which epidemics flourish. We're forcing and pushing people to migrate away from their homes because of climate stress. We're doing so much and we're doing it in the name of globalisation and some sense of chasing that wonderful thing that people call economic growth. In my view, that's becoming a malignancy, not growth, because what it's doing is driving unsustainable practices in terms of how we manage communities, how we manage development, how we manage prosperity.

We are writing cheques that we cannot cash as a civilisation and they're going to bounce. My fear is that our children are going to pay that price. That someday when we're not here, our children will wake up in a world where there is a pandemic that has a much higher case fatality rate, and that could bring our civilisation to its very knees. We need a world that is more sustainable, where profit is not put before communities. Where the slavery to economic growth is taken out of the equation. We need sustainable growth in our communities. We need sustainable livelihoods for our people. And we're taking huge risks – massive risks – with our future if we don't manage the planet in which we live. And we're being extremely irresponsible right now."

Supporting an equitable and sustainable food system

9.9 percent of the world going hungry in an inequitable and unsustainable global food system – the need to invest in agroecology

Around the world, more than enough food is produced to feed the global population—but as many as 811 million people still go hungry. Since 2015 world hunger has been on the rise, with Covid-19 aggravating this trend. The State of Food Insecurity 2021 reports a 1.5 percent rise in the prevalence of undernourishment in just one year, affecting an estimated 9.9 percent of the global population. From 2019 to 2020, the number of undernourished people grew by as many as 161 million.³⁴

There is intensive competition over the control and use of natural resources that are the basis of agriculture and food systems, especially land and water. This competition is driven by demand not only for food but for animal feeds, minerals and energy. It is a competition which privileges capital rich business interests over those of indigenous peoples, small scale farmers and relatively poor communities. Corporations are putting profits before the health of humans and our environment with large scale industrial agriculture disproportionately - but not exclusively - failing poor communities.³⁵

The Irish Government has set out the commendable ambition to become a global leader in sustainable food systems over the next decade. Ireland has committed to international and regional agreements, including those related to the right to food, the European Green Deal, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. A recently published Trócaire and Oxfam report “Sustainable Food Systems: Steps Ireland can take to become a Global Leader” assesses where Ireland is at and what Ireland needs to do, in both the domestic and international spheres, to achieve this ambition. The report recognises the considerable challenges a sustainable transformation of the global food system implies. However, the sustainable transformation of food systems is not just an option, it is essential to the delivery of all the Sustainable Development

Goals. The global food system is at the centre of complex, interconnected challenges that cannot be ignored: including climate change, biodiversity loss, ecological degradation, land use competition and conflict. The world faces the unprecedented challenge of pursuing human development and ensuring the right to adequate food for all on a planet where the population is estimated to increase to over 9 billion people by 2050, in ways that do not breach essential ecological and planetary boundaries, while tackling poverty and extreme inequality.³⁶

Ireland can renew and strengthen its global leadership on Zero Hunger by ensuring our ODA is responding to rapidly rising needs, e.g. climate change adaptation, and is focussed on small scale farmers, women farmers and indigenous peoples who have been left behind by current industrial agricultural and food systems policies. An enabling environment that supports these farmers’ transitions towards sustainable livelihoods includes agricultural development finance being concentrated on bottom-up, context specific solutions. While Ireland should commit to increasing ODA funding for food and nutrition security in general, this funding should be progressively directed towards the sustainable approaches that an increasing scientific and practitioner evidence base is pointing decision-makers towards. Indeed the recently adopted Committee on World Food Security policy recommendations on *Agroecological and other Innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*, endorsed by Ireland, recommend governments to re-direct their policies, budgets and investments towards agroecological approaches specifically and other innovative approaches. This is the context in which Trócaire urges the Irish government to both assign more ODA in support of realising the ambition of Zero Hunger and to progressively align spending on agriculture and food systems towards the scaling up and out of agroecological initiatives.³⁷

Climate and biodiversity emergency – “code red for humanity”³⁸

Climate change and environmental degradation are at existential threat levels.³⁹ The climate and biodiversity emergency has not only contributed to the emergence of pandemics, but without an urgent step change in the global response will dwarf the current pandemic.⁴⁰ The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published in August 2021 is the latest in a long line of dire warnings that human activity is changing our climate in unprecedented and sometimes irreversible ways. The landmark study warns of increasingly extreme heatwaves, droughts and flooding and a key temperature limit being broken in just over a decade, with the UN Secretary General deeming the report a “code red for humanity”.⁴¹

It has been estimated that lower income countries will face 75% of the cost of the climate crisis and data analysis has shown that since 2000 their citizens have died at a rate 7 times higher than in richer nations. The poorest half of the world’s population are responsible for only 10% of carbon emissions, the richest 10 countries are responsible for 50% of all carbon emissions.⁴² In his testimony to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Action in November 2020 Professor Kevin Anderson from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research told Members that “*many people are already dying from climate change and with the 1.5°C to 2°C target, many more people will die. They will be poor. Typically, they will be people of colour, initially the burden will fall disproportionately on women and children, they will live in climate-vulnerable parts of the world and they will be low emitters. Let me be clear. We have, knowingly, in the wealthy parts of the world imposed that upon them by our choice to fail, thus far, to address climate change.*”⁴³

Ireland has a hard-earned reputation as a champion for international development and human rights, but this has been undermined by our poor record on climate. Trócaire commend the commitment by all parties across the

Oireachtas and in Government in attaching urgency to the recent enactment of the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021* as had been pledged in the Programme for Government. This Bill, whilst not perfect, is a welcome step forward in Irish climate policy and must mark the point where rhetoric turns into action. Meeting our obligations under the Paris Agreement means getting our emissions down rapidly in line with Ireland’s fair share of the global effort required to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees. Ireland must deliver upon its wider international responsibilities providing greater financial support to poorer countries already on the frontlines of climate breakdown.

While much climate finance, in particular adaptation finance, will be channelled via ODA structures, climate finance obligations differ from ODA in that they stem from Article 4.3 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This commits donor countries to providing “new and additional financial resources” for the “full incremental costs” of addressing climate change, as a result of their proportionately greater contribution to the causes of climate change, and the greater resources at their disposal to respond to it.⁴⁴



María Teresa Osorio from Trócaire partner ADIVIMA provides food and hygiene supplies to Natividad Xitumul, survivor of the Chixoy massacre in Guatemala.

Ireland has done relatively well in ensuring that we provide quality, transparent climate finance. The focus has been on untied, grant-based support, aimed at building capacity and resilience in poorer countries, allocated with a commendable gender lens. Ireland has also avoided the worrying international trend of providing climate finance through loans, which only adds to already unsustainable levels of debt and fails to address the historical and financial inequalities that make climate finance necessary in the first place. In 2019 Ireland contributed 93 million to international climate finance, a welcome increase of 17% as compared to 2018 expenditure.⁴⁵ However, research by Trócaire and Christian Aid indicates that Ireland's annual climate finance contributions would need to increase to nearly €475 million to meet our fair share of the €91 billion a year agreed by donors at the Paris Agreement.⁴⁶

Rather than committing new or additional funding envisioned under the Paris Agreement, the Programme for Government instead commits to increasing the percentage of ODA counted as climate finance. This is disappointing as it risks simply re-labelling existing aid as climate finance, rather than allocating additional funds. Meeting Ireland's Climate Finance obligations takes on even greater significance in light of the dismay recently expressed at the lack of progress on climate finance so far, and with the publication of 5 demands from more than 100 of world's poorer countries setting out their key negotiating demands ahead of the COP26 Climate Summit scheduled for Glasgow in November 2021.⁴⁷

The need for a "People's Vaccine"

Only 1.9% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose of the vaccine.⁴⁸

So far, over 4.5 million people have died from Covid-19 across 200 countries,⁴⁹ a figure which is set to rise.

The fairest and most effective way to end this pandemic is to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to Covid-19 vaccines,

tests and treatments. However, pharmaceutical companies' monopolies could leave countries in the global south waiting until 2023 for widespread vaccination. This leaves us all in danger from new variants, which may make current vaccines ineffective.⁵⁰ In terms of the global share of vaccines, the figures are stark and shaming. While high-income countries have administered around 100 doses per 100 citizens, the equivalent figure for low-income countries is around 1.5 doses per 100 citizens.⁵¹

Governments and not-for-profit organisations have contributed tens of billions of Euro to the development of Covid-19 vaccines. In 2021 alone, sales of Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson vaccines are expected to yield €50 billion. To produce sufficient vaccines for everyone globally, manufacturing capacity must be greatly increased. Over 140 sites have been identified as having unused manufacturing potential including large reputable pharmaceutical companies such as Biolyse in Canada, Incepta in Bangladesh, Teva in Israel and Bavarian Nordic in Denmark – all of whom have asked to assist in the manufacture of vaccines. For this to happen, pharmaceutical companies must agree to share their know-how and all suitable qualified vaccine manufacturers must be permitted to produce vaccines free from patents.

COVAX is the programme established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and supported by a number of other organisations to purchase and distribute Covid-19 vaccines equitably on a global basis. COVAX is a vital process which needs to be supported more – but COVAX alone is struggling to meet the scale of need. The WHO target of reaching 10% of the population of every country with a first shot by the end of September is unlikely to be met according to WHO Director General Dr Tedros who recently expressed his disappointment with the level of vaccine donations from richer countries, pointing out that of the 4.8 billion Covid vaccine doses delivered around the world to date, around 75% have gone to just 10 countries.⁵² In Africa, in the grips of a third wave of the virus, just 2.4% of the continent's population has received a first dose.⁵³

Vaccine donations alone are neither a sufficient nor sustainable solution, especially as not enough vaccines are being produced and rich countries are reluctant to let go of supplies they may need for booster shots or tackling variants. Charity is simply not going to fix the huge supply problem nor should people's lives in so many countries around the world be dependent on unpredictable and uncertain charitable giving from rich nations. Donations should never be a substitute for sharing the rights to produce these vaccines and ensuring distributed manufacturing around the world so that countries have their own supplies they can rely on.

Ireland must use its voice within the EU to support the TRIPS waiver. The People's Vaccine Alliance Ireland calls on governments to temporarily suspend intellectual property rights at the World Trade Organisation for Covid-19 vaccines, treatments and diagnostics. This will help break big pharmaceutical monopolies and increase supplies so there are enough doses for everyone, everywhere. Ireland should also endorse the World Health Organisation (WHO) COVID Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) to facilitate the sharing of know-how by pharmaceutical companies to increase vaccine production.⁵⁴

The importance of gender focused aid

It is estimated that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the time it will take for the gender gap to close grew by 36 years in the span of just 12 months.

The global effects of the pandemic have exacerbated existing inequalities between women and men in almost all areas of life, rolling back on the hard-won achievements for gender inequality of past years. On its current trajectory, it is now projected that it will take 135.6 years to close the gender gap worldwide. This is a steep increase from the previous Global Gender Gap Report, which predicted 99.5 years.⁵⁵ Globally, women represent 70 per cent of the health and social sector workforce, and on average, women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men. This has long-term consequences for their economic security and overall well-being. Because of pre-existing gender inequalities, deep-rooted discrimination and feminised poverty, the multifaceted consequences of the current crisis have impacted women more than men, with women experiencing multiple and compounded forms of discrimination while on the front lines



Health workers at Mambasa hospital who administer the ebola vaccine. Photo: Garry Walsh / Trócaire



RESPONDING TO COVID

With Irish Aid funding, **426,383 individuals** were reached with support to mitigate the risks of Covid-19, including secondary impacts such as food insecurity and violence against women.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted every community and all of our programmes.

Our response built on what we had learned from responding to Ebola in DR Congo and Sierra Leone. Working with our partners around the world, our response focused on:

- Information and public health campaigns
- Providing protective equipment
- Installing handwashing stations and repairing water points
- Providing cash assistance, vouchers, food and other emergency aid
- Psychosocial support
- Support to Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) who were attacked under cover of emergency legislation/Covid-19 regulations and support for defence of HRDs

of responses, at home, in the health workforce and in various sectors of production.⁵⁶ There has been a significant increase in reports of gender-based violence, giving rise to the GBV 'shadow pandemic'.⁵⁷

In 2019, Irish Aid reports that **more than 76% per cent of its bilateral aid contributed to gender equality**.⁵⁸ The commitment to high quality Irish aid focused on contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment is all the more vital given the impacts of the pandemic, and will be even more impactful if volumes of Irish Aid increase further between now and 2030.

Delivering on our Aid promises – a roadmap to 0.7% of GNI in ODA

Ireland has consistently demonstrated its commitment to multilateralism and overseas aid, a fact which has been recognised by the OECD review of Irish Aid as an "excellent humanitarian partner."⁵⁹ Through Irish Aid, Ireland is rightly regarded as a global leader in delivering life-saving and life-changing programmes in some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the world. This is a source of pride for many Irish citizens, with 77% of those surveyed by Dóchas in

January – February 2021 feeling it was important for the Irish Government to provide overseas aid to help people in developing countries, and 81% of those surveyed indicating they feel Covid-19 has reinforced the need for international cooperation in addressing global problems.⁶⁰

With support from Irish Aid, and through the generosity of the Irish public, Trócaire staff and local partners are working hard alongside some of the poorest communities in the world to tackle the root causes of poverty, injustice and violence. Despite all of the challenges presented by the pandemic, Trócaire supported 2.7 million people in 25 countries in the last year.⁶¹

Trócaire welcomes the strong and enduring support for Irish Aid across Irish political parties, (most recently expressed in the strong support by members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade in their endorsement of the need to increase ODA in Budget 2022 and subsequent Budgets).⁶² Pledges in the 2020 Programme for Government to reinforce ambition to continue to grow Ireland's overseas aid budget to 0.7% of national income in line with international commitments, and to set a monetary expenditure floor to ensure continued investment in Irish Aid budgets, are very welcome.⁶³

The €30m increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) announced in Budget 2021, an allocated €868m in Irish overseas aid⁶⁴ was vital in the context of extremely high humanitarian needs globally and gaps in financing, which have intensified dramatically due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, despite the government's pledge to spend 0.7% of GNI on overseas development aid by 2030, at present Ireland is not reaching even half of that target. Whilst the Irish ODA allocation has increased in real terms for the last seven consecutive years, in percentage terms it has remained relatively constant at around 0.3% of GNI during this period. The Government should fulfil its pledges by continuing to increase ODA in Budget 2022 in order to achieve what it has promised. In March 2021, Minister Brophy provided an indicative pathway to 0.7% target in response to a parliamentary question as outlined below. It is welcome that the Government have provided some clarity on a possible pathway to 0.7% of GNI in ODA by 2030 as below,⁶⁵ but given the scale of humanitarian needs, we would urge that this be revised to ensure we reach the interim 0.5% target by 2025.

Year	ODA Level € Million	Expected ODA / GNI % Target
2021	868	0.32%
2022	960	0.35%
2023	1050	0.37%
2024	1180	0.40%
2025	1360	0.45%
2026	1560	0.50%
2027	1820	0.57%
2028	2050	0.62%
2029	2250	0.66%
2030	2500	0.70%

See <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2021-03-24/744/>

Ireland successfully campaigned on a platform of promoting human rights, climate action, gender equality and humanitarian support to secure an elected United Nations Security Council seat for the term 2021-2022, and Ireland's vital work in this role

to date has been exemplary.⁶⁶ Upholding Ireland's strong reputation and credibility as a leader on international development also continues to pivot on its continued investment in overseas aid.

Summary of Trócaire Key Proposals related to Budget 2022

- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to honour its commitments to the most vulnerable in our world and to increase investment in overseas aid in Budget 2022 and continue to uphold Irish Aid's longstanding reputation for excellence as a humanitarian partner, with high quality, gender responsive, poverty reduction focused, untied aid, including civil society as a key partner.
- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to outline a pathway to reach the historic UN target of spending 0.7% of GNI on overseas aid. Ireland's spend on ODA stands at 0.31% of GNI (2020). Ireland must increase ODA in real terms and as a percentage of GNI in Budget 2022 as part of a clear pathway to meet 0.5% by 2025, and 0.7% by 2030.
- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to commit to increasing the proportion of ODA spending on agriculture and food systems directed towards the scaling up and out of agroecological initiatives.
- Trócaire urges the Irish Government to ensure climate finance allocations will also increase, alongside increases in overall ODA in the lifetime of the government.
- Trócaire joins the call of the People's Vaccine Alliance Ireland in urging the Irish Government to work to ensure that the EU reverses its blockage of the "Waiver from Certain Provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the Prevention, Containment and Treatment of Covid-19" supported by more than 100 nations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).⁶⁷ Ireland must also endorse the World Health Organisation (WHO) COVID Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) to facilitate the sharing of know-how by pharmaceutical companies to increase vaccine production.⁶⁸



Lethukuhle Mhlanga washes her hands to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. Photo: Ben Mahaka / Trócaire

(Endnotes)

1. <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/publications/Annual-Report-2019.pdf>
2. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a leading global development think tank, has ranked Ireland as the number one donor in delivering principled aid in their 'Principled Aid Index 2020'. ODI has found Ireland to be the most principled aid donor since its ranking began in 2013.
3. In an immediate reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic, 40 civil society organisations including Trócaire published an open letter calling upon the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries to urgently protect, fulfill and surpass exiting aid commitments through increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets, to ensure direct aid and debt relief reaches people most in need, and to keep aid focused on critical areas, distinct and additional to humanitarian responses. See https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Joint-Statement-on-Covid-19_with-additional-signatories-13Apr2020.pdf
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Dochas Budget Submission for 2022 available at https://www.dochas.ie/assets/Dochas-Pre-Budget-Submission_FINAL.pdf
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