

# 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

# 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.<sup>1</sup> This effective and principled<sup>2</sup> global solidarity through overseas aid is more vital now than ever as the world navigates a series of challenges unparalleled in our lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

So far, over 4.5 million people have died from Covid-19,<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>



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.<sup>13</sup>

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”.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup>

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).<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>



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 aid<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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).<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

*"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."*<sup>23</sup>

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General, February 2021

**(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](https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Joint-Statement-on-Covid-19_with-additional-signatories-13Apr2020.pdf)
4. <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621080/bn-50-years-broken-promises-aid-231020-en.pdf>
5. [UN OCHA 35.85 billion needs for 2021 – currently 20% funded half way through the year](https://www.unocha.org/3585/billion-needs-for-2021-currently-20-funded-half-way-through-the-year)
6. <https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC%202021%20050521%20med.pdf>
7. [https://www.oxfam.de/system/files/documents/the\\_inequality\\_virus\\_-\\_english\\_full\\_report\\_-\\_embargoed\\_00\\_01\\_gmt\\_25\\_january\\_2021.pdf](https://www.oxfam.de/system/files/documents/the_inequality_virus_-_english_full_report_-_embargoed_00_01_gmt_25_january_2021.pdf)
8. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/feb/22/world-faces-pandemic-human-rights-abuses-covid-19-antonio-guterres>
9. <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-deaths>
10. <https://peoplesvaccine.ie/>
11. Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>
12. [https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID\\_WRL](https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations?country=OWID_WRL)
13. <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/covid-19-spending-helped-to-lift-foreign-aid-to-an-all-time-high-in-2020-but-more-effort-needed.htm>
14. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-ireland-2020-c20f6995-en.htm>
15. <https://www.dochas.ie/whats-new/first-worldview-research-project-results-are-presented/>
16. [https://www.trocaire.org/documents/trocaire\\_annual-report-2021/](https://www.trocaire.org/documents/trocaire_annual-report-2021/)
17. Watch Meeting on Joint Committee Foreign Affairs and Trade meeting with Dochas to discuss their pre budget submission on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/oireachtas-tv/video-archive/committees/4534> Dochas Budget Submission for 2022 available at [https://www.dochas.ie/assets/Dochas-Pre-Budget-Submission\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dochas.ie/assets/Dochas-Pre-Budget-Submission_FINAL.pdf)
18. [https://www.greenparty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ProgrammeForGovernment\\_June2020\\_Final\\_accessible.pdf](https://www.greenparty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ProgrammeForGovernment_June2020_Final_accessible.pdf)
19. [Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence debate - Thursday, 3 Jun 2021 \(oireachtas.ie\)](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/select_committee_on_foreign_affairs_and_defence/2021/06/03/thursday_3_jun_2021)
20. For one example, Ireland and Norway led the negotiations to secure the extension of the mandate for cross border humanitarian between Turkey and North Western Syria in July 2021. See <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/1e2fa-minister-coveney-welcomes-agreement-on-syrian-cross-border-humanitarian-operations/>
21. [https://www.oxfamireland.org/sites/default/files/letter\\_to\\_taoiseach\\_-\\_covid\\_vaccine\\_ip\\_waiver\\_final.pdf](https://www.oxfamireland.org/sites/default/files/letter_to_taoiseach_-_covid_vaccine_ip_waiver_final.pdf)
22. <https://peoplesvaccine.ie/>
23. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/feb/22/world-faces-pandemic-human-rights-abuses-covid-19-antonio-guterres>