

Editorial Committee

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Preface

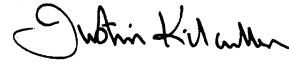
2005 was an important year for the development community in Ireland and internationally. Through the Make Poverty History Campaign, which brought together all the main development NGOs, the development community sent out a united message to the government. That message was unequivocal: promises to the poor must be kept. There could be no more backsliding on the solemn promise of the Taoiseach to meet the UN target of 0.7% of GNI going to overseas aid.

The Make Poverty History march in June drew an unprecedented crowd of 20,000 people and demonstrated that there is widespread public support for the campaign. That show of support, we believe, played a major role in shifting government policy on ODA. At the start of the year, there was talk of abandoning the 0.7% target. By June, there was talk of it being met by 2015 – the date when the Millennium Development Goals are meant to be achieved. By September, the government agreed on a compromise target of 2012, setting out interim targets to ensure that the goal is kept on track.

Now that the target has been agreed, a much greater task lies ahead: how to ensure that the additional aid is spent effectively and efficiently, in ways that will have a long-term impact in reducing poverty. The substantial amounts of aid being channelled in the aid programme demands that we raise our game in terms of technical capacity through ensuring that our programme has the human resources necessary to deliver a quality aid programme.

Moreover, the rising aid budget requires an informed public debate around sensitive issues such as governance and corruption. Achieving better governance is a central issue domestically as it is essential to ensuring that public funds are well-spent. Public support for higher aid will only be sustained if people can see the impact their money is making. Addressing governance effectively, however, is about much more than that. As the articles in this year's *Trócaire Development Review* demonstrate, the task of achieving better governance is an intrinsic part of development itself. Whilst there are no straightforward answers on how to achieve better governance, the articles in this year's *Review* provide some key insights.

Now is not a time to rest on our laurels, but to rise to new challenges. I hope that this issue of the *Trócaire Development Review* will play a part in addressing what many regard as the critical question for the development community today.



Director of Trócaire
3 April 2006

Editor's Introduction

The *Trócaire Development Review 2006* addresses a difficult, but increasingly important issue for the development community: the connection between governance and poverty reduction. The *Review* seeks to explore the link between these two themes both at a theoretical level – exploring the links between the discourses of governance and poverty. It then looks at the issues on a specific level, examining how issues of governance and poverty reduction are played out in relation to natural resource management and trade. The articles in the *Review* draw out some key lessons for development practitioners and policymakers.

Why is governance such an important theme? Over the last decade, the concept of governance has been increasingly used in the discourse and practice of development. The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has said: “Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development” (UNDP, 2002). Two other major reports into development in 2005 also illustrate this trend. *Our Common Future*, the Commission for Africa Report, and *Investing in Development*, the Millennium Project Report, both highlight the paramount importance of addressing governance issues. The former report states that “The issue of good governance... is what we believe lies at the core of all of Africa’s problems” (Commission for Africa, 2005). The latter declares: “The successful scaling up of investment strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals requires a commitment to good governance” (UN Millennium Project, 2005). The predicted increases in aid, therefore, make “good governance” a critical component of the new development consensus. The achievement of the strategies and targets which the international community has set itself for the coming decade is dependent on it.

Despite the rhetoric around achieving better governance there is still little consensus on how this can be achieved. In her article, Sue Unsworth draws on groundbreaking research from the Centre for the Future State, and emphasises the need for a different approach to governance on the part of donor agencies. Currently, the emphasis of donors is placed on putting in place formal structures to enhance the capacity of developing states to achieve greater transparency and accountability. Whilst there is a clear logic for supporting such structures from the donor perspective, such approaches have had limited success in achieving real