

Statement

By

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At the outset, may I express our warm thanks to the Ethiopian Government for hosting us in the vibrant city of Addis Ababa for this crucial International Conference.

We are all agreed that 2015 must be a seminal year for global development. If we rise to the challenge, it can mark a transformation in our concept of global citizenship towards a new era of global responsibilities. The three agreements we are called on to adopt over the next five months - on the Sustainable Development Goals, on financing for development, and on climate – have the potential to deliver an end to extreme poverty and hunger. More, they can deliver sustainable development for our planet. And they must leave no one behind. We are developing a new vision of an integrated agenda for development. It is critical that the vision is matched by an equally integrated approach to implementation.

Last week's launch of the final assessment of progress on the Millennium Development Goals was a timely reminder as to *why* we need the new agenda. The 15 year report card on the MDGs could be summed up as '*good progress made- but can and must do better*'.

More than one billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty, and major progress has been made on hunger, access to clean water, girls' education, reducing child and maternal mortality, and combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. But massive human development challenges persist.

Ours remains a world of increasing inequalities. 850 million people still suffer from hunger. 8,000 children die every day because of undernutrition. We face the biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War. Europe is challenged to address the immediate effects and the root causes of a crisis which drives desperate people to take to unsafe craft in the Mediterranean to seek a new, bearable life. At the same time, climate change affects the poorest communities most seriously and environmental degradation undermines development gains.

We have no choice but to do better as a global community. The new development agenda explicitly recognises the interlinkages between issues such as climate change, poverty eradication, peace and security and inequalities. It is ambitious and visionary, and Ireland is proud to have been asked to take on the role of co-facilitator for the intergovernmental negotiations in New York.

Ireland has been particularly keen to ensure the agenda builds on progress made over the past 15 years in fighting poverty and hunger,

explicitly promotes gender equality and human rights and helps protect and expand civil society space.

The new agenda is broad, and universally applicable. It cannot be implemented on the basis of unsuccessful models of development. UNCTAD and the World Bank have pointed out that it can only be funded in trillions rather than billions. Without undermining the integrity of Official Development Assistance, we need to go further and unlock additional development finance from new sources. The Addis outcome document which we will adopt tomorrow must be truly ground-breaking. Critical to its success are our commitments on domestic resource mobilisation for development, taxation, illicit financial flows, world trade talks, and the role of the private sector.

The private sector must play its part as a key driver of inclusive and sustainable economic growth. It must recognise its role in inclusive development. Governments must ensure that we create a conducive business environment not just for large companies but also for small businesses, smallholder farmers, entrepreneurs – and particularly women farmers and entrepreneurs. Truly sustainable development will be impossible without fair and equitable taxation. In addition to working closely through the OECD on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting and cooperating with international partners to combat illicit financial flows, Ireland is working with our bilateral partners to build capacity in tax policy and administration.

We are also undertaking an important ‘Spillover Analysis’ on the effects of the Irish tax regime on the economies of developing countries. We hope to present the findings of this analysis shortly.

Ireland’s development programme is focused on Africa. And we are determined to build stronger economic ties with the continent. We are working to expand our strong relations in the agri-food sector. And in recent weeks we have seen the introduction of the first scheduled direct flights between Africa and Ireland – linking the Addis Ababa and Dublin. We are committed to the partnership between Governments and communities in Ireland and Africa and to the private sector as a vital and sustainable source of finance and growth across all regions.

Let me be clear, however, the work of Official Development Assistance is not over. ODA remains critical for the Least Developed Countries and for poor communities struggling to overcome inequalities. Ireland and our EU partners have solemnly reconfirmed our commitment to reaching the 0.7% target within the timeframe of the new development agenda. We will direct more aid to support the Least Developed. Ireland’s aid programme will remain strongly focused on sub-Saharan Africa. We will continue to provide at least 50% of our aid budget to Least Developed Countries. We will continue to invest 20% of the Irish Aid budget in actions to combat hunger and undernutrition. We are proud to be a key supporter and founding member of the Scaling up Nutrition Movement.

We are committed to doubling our funding for nutrition by 2020. We will continue to focus our climate finance on the needs of the Least Developed Countries.

Our generation has been described as the first with the opportunity to end extreme poverty and the last to have a chance of saving the planet. We are taking action to fight the globalisation of indifference. But we must support our vision with credible action. As the Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, wrote: *“In dreams begins responsibility”*

This, then is the challenge of Addis: the realisation of the vision of a sustainable world in which no child, no community, no country is left behind. Let us, collectively and credibly, commit here in Addis Ababa to acting on our common responsibility and to holding ourselves to account on progress.