

August Newsletter: Ireland at the UN (New York)

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Development

The negotiations at the UN on the elaboration of a post-2015 development agenda concluded successfully on 19 July with agreement on a report proposing a set of sustainable development goals and targets.

This will be an important input to a synthesis report which the UN Secretary-General will produce in autumn 2014 and will shape the further intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 framework, this time involving the full UN membership, which will get underway towards the end of the year.

Ireland has played a prominent role in the discussions and contributed actively, as part of a team with Denmark and Norway, to the intergovernmental negotiations in the Open Working Group. Ireland is pleased that the report of the OWG reflects three important national priorities. It contains goals and targets on

- (i) food and nutrition security;
- (ii) gender equality and the empowerment of women; and
- (iii) peaceful and inclusive societies.

The new post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda will be announced at a summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in New York in September 2015.

The final Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) also took place in June and July in New York. Agreement was reached on the outcome document for the global conference, to be held in Samoa next month. The conference will be a key tool in organising international community support for the sustainable development needs of this group of 38 UN member states, many of whom face huge challenges including climate change, access to markets, and debt.

Ireland is an active supporter of the SIDS and helped broker language on areas of mutual priority including food and nutrition security, gender equality and women's empowerment, and the post-2015 development agenda.

UN Women

At the annual meeting of its Executive Board in June, Ireland confirmed its pledge of €1.5m funding to UN Women, together with funding of two UN Women programmes (Trust Fund for violence against women and gender data disaggregation). Ambassador Donoghue, delivering Ireland's national [statement](#) commended UN Women for the impressive results achieved this past year noting that "an organisation only in its third year of operation should be proud of its achievements and feel empowered and motivated to do even more in the years ahead".

Ireland is giving financial support to the development of a Global Study on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (UNSCR 1325). Ireland will co-host the launch of this Global Study in September.

Humanitarian Issues

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN's main body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, held its Humanitarian Affairs Segment in late June. Ireland delivered a national [statement](#) underscoring the need to strengthen the humanitarian response system to address the causes of fragility as well as the protection of women and girls in emergencies.

Ireland also addressed the High Level Meeting on Humanitarian Action in the Central African Republic where the focus was on the need to mobilise a sufficient humanitarian response to meet the needs of refugees, both within CAR and in neighbouring countries. As one of the top ten donors to the Central African Republic since 2007 we also highlighted the importance of addressing humanitarian needs in protracted crisis situations.

In conjunction with UN Women, Ireland hosted a well-attended side-event in the margins of the Segment examining the impact of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes and moderated by Kevin Kelly, Director for Emergency & Recovery in Irish Aid. The panel was composed of ASG Kyung-Wha Kang of OCHA, Florika Fink-Hooijer; Director for Strategy, Policy and International Cooperation at ECHO and Seline Locham; representing the Turkana Women Advocacy and Development Organisation (TWADO) in Kenya. The event was an important opportunity to raise the profile of gender issues within the wider humanitarian space, particularly in light of the ongoing preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

Peace and Security

On 3 July, the Mission organised a well-attended panel discussion on command and control arrangements for UN peacekeeping missions. Speakers included, USG for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, two major troop contributors (Rwanda and Pakistan) and Lt.Gen. Joseph Owonibi, former Force Commander of UNMIL (the UN's peacekeeping operation in Liberia).

The panel event attracted broad representation from member states as well as UN officials and civil society and highlighted the importance of clear and decisive command and control arrangements in the increasingly demanding and dangerous environments into which UN missions are deploying. Specific issues included:

- (i) how to ensure decisive leadership of each mission;
- (ii) how to improve mission planning in relation to command and control;
- (iii) how to ensure accountability for under-performance on the part of a contingent; and
- (iv) how to minimise national caveats and restrictions that undermine command authority.

Also in July, the General Assembly's Fifth Committee adopted the UN peacekeeping budgets for 15 peacekeeping operations for 2014-15. The overall envelope on mission budgets agreed

comes to approximately \$8.6 billion with the UN Secretariat to find efficiencies totalling \$220 million over the fiscal year from across all budget lines. After extensive negotiations, agreement was reached on a revised troop reimbursement rate. This is the amount paid to troop contributing countries in respect of each soldier participating in a PKO. The new rate is \$1,332 per month for the coming two years, \$1,365 in 2016 and \$1,410 in 2017.

In its [statement](#) at the July Security Council Open Debate on Regional Partnerships in Peacekeeping, Ireland welcomed greater regional participation in peacekeeping operations as a concrete expression of the sharing of a collective security burden, focusing particularly on EU-UN cooperation and UN-African cooperation.

In its [statement](#) at the June Security Council Open Debate on new trends in UN Peacekeeping Ireland outlined how robust targeting of armed groups to protect vulnerable civilians can be justified and necessary, pointing to the successful experience of the UN peacekeeping operation in the eastern DRC in 2013-2014.