

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Malta

Official Development Assistance Policy and a Framework for Humanitarian Assistance

2014 - 2020

“ Post-2015 Framework needs to be rights-based, with particular emphasis on women, young people and marginalized groups. And it must protect the planet’s resources, emphasizes sustainable consumption and production and support action to address climate change.”

Address by the UN Secretary General at 68th Session of the UN General Assembly – September 2013

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1. FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On the threshold of the year 2015, when the so-called Millennium Development Goals set by the international community are supposed to be achieved, this Ministry has sought fit to reflect on Malta's Official Development Assistance Policy and to examine where this has been effective and, more importantly, what areas can be bettered.

Malta's Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy has only been around since 2007. It is not that aid to developing countries is a new phenomenon for Malta. Indeed this has been going on for years, albeit in small and perhaps informal ways. Yet following our membership of the European Union, this form of assistance to less developed countries was given a whole new dimension.

The revision of Malta's Official Development Assistance Policy seeks to be forward-looking. It underlines the country's vision for a fair and sustainable world, and reflects the values of us as a nation – the values of solidarity, compassion and goodwill.

The underlining feature of this policy is about empowering people to better the world they live in. It seeks to give tangible meaning to important concepts such as equity, accountability and partnership. Implementing this policy is about being coherent across various sectors. It sets out the thematic areas and geographic regions that are of primary concern and where Malta feels it can be a catalyst for change. It is not about covering the whole gamut of development-related issues. Neither is it about leaving those in need dependent on that need. This policy is about being targeted, cost-effective and meaningful to both the donor and the beneficiary.

The policy will give Government a new impetus and direction to achieve what it can in the best possible manner and with greater efficiency. It draws upon the strengths and experiences of the country in seeking to be of assistance to others in their efforts to build up their capacities and resilience. It demonstrates the centrality of development to government policy which at the end of the day is all about bettering lives. It also provides for a framework for humanitarian assistance that needs to be timely and efficient if it is to be effective.

Through the implementation of this policy, Government and especially the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continue to work with other partners – civil society, the private sector, international donors and foreign governments, to ensure transparency and effectiveness in the delivery of aid where it is most needed.

I am heartily encouraged by the vision that this policy seeks to set out and I am certain that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can count on the collaboration of those engaged in this field to be of service to those in fragile and unstable situations.

(Hon. Dr. George W. Vella)
Minister for Foreign Affairs

2. INTRODUCTION

Malta's Official Development Assistance policy is in line with the 2006 Strategic Objective 18 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which states that Malta will *"Elaborate and action a policy and work programme of humanitarian and development assistance, based on the value of solidarity"*. This is further defined in the 2013 Guiding Principles of Malta's Foreign Policy.

This policy is driven by the primary objective of poverty reduction with the complementary aims of promoting democracy, good governance and greater respect for human rights to ensure the stability and development of developing countries. Careful consideration has been applied to determine which regions/countries and sectors should receive priority by Malta and what assistance should be emphasized, in order to achieve Malta's strategic objectives.

Greater efforts must be made to utilize ODA funds and technical expertise strategically by promoting closer collaboration between Malta and developing countries as well as among all stakeholders involved in this process.

In accordance with commitments undertaken by EU Member States as well as by other Governments at the various international conferences and major events on the importance of the inter-linkage of poverty eradication with the wider sustainable development agenda, this Malta's Official Development Assistance policy also draws inspiration and guidance from this wider debate for a more holistic, cohesive and comprehensive approach in tackling global challenges that affect development, particularly in the developing countries and especially in the least developed countries.

Malta's ODA policy is moreover guided by the prevailing international development agreements and goals which are essentially derived from the development policy decisions and guidelines of the United Nations, the European Union, and other international institutions.¹

Last but not least, this policy will serve as a guiding framework within which the activities of the Maltese public sector (i.e. Ministries and Government agencies/entities) in issues of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance are influenced, directed and implemented.

¹ This policy will be kept up to date with international developments during the 2014-2020 period and is subject to review, especially in view of post-2015 discussions taking place at various levels.

3. OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE POLICY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Malta's Foreign Policy Guiding Principle on Development Assistance is to take a more participatory role in the field of development and humanitarian assistance in efforts by the international community to eradicate poverty and sustain development in developing countries with a view to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and beyond. In this context, Malta will continue its Official Development Assistance programme and humanitarian aid.

The Policy is governed by three main motivations:

- i. Development cooperation is a political and moral obligation of nation states. Safeguarding peace, human rights, democracy and the rule of law are prerequisites for the development of societies. The *European Consensus on Development (2007)* draws attention to security as an important requirement for development.
- ii. The Official Development Assistance Policy is a cornerstone of Malta's External Relations which are based on the values of solidarity, respect for human life and the dignity and freedom of every human being. Through Development Cooperation, Malta, as part of the EU together with other international donors, is determined to work assiduously towards the eradication of poverty and to push forward the sustainable development agenda so that all can live in a more equitable and secure world.
- iii. Development Cooperation is about shared prosperity and mutual responsibility where resources should be equally distributed among and enjoyed by all.

4. THE LEGAL BASIS AND STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

Malta's Official Development Policy rests on the following legal bases:

- *The Lisbon Treaty (Art.21 and Art.28-211 of TFEU)* which enshrines the eradication of poverty as a main objective;
- *The ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement and other agreements of which the EU/Malta is a party*

In its external relations, the EU has a series of agreements with developing countries in different regions around the world. Malta is also party to such agreements. Other international outcomes, conclusions and recommendations on Aid Effectiveness that Malta observes or agrees with include:

1. The United Nations Millennium Declaration and Goal 8 of the Millennium Goals (2000)
2. The Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development (2002)
3. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005)
4. The World Summit on Sustainable development (2005)
5. The Accra Agenda for Action (2008)
6. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011)

Malta is also committed to implement the:

- *Council Conclusions on Financing for Development (October 2012)* which state that:

'The EU will implement the European Transparency Guarantee and the commitments related to the common open standard for publication of information on development resources including publishing the respective implementation schedules by December 2012, with the aim of full implementation by December 2015, as set out in the Busan Outcome Document.'

- *Council Conclusions on "The Overarching Post 2015 Agenda" (June 2013)*

"The EU and its Member States reiterate their commitment to play a full and active role in the work to define the post-2015 framework and to work inclusively with all partners, including civil society, scientific and knowledge institutions, local authorities, the private sector and social partners, in considering priority areas for the framework. The dynamism and innovative capacity of the private sector should be utilized to realize the transformation necessary for sustainable development. The Council encourages the EU and its Member States, including EU Delegations in third countries, to continue to engage in regular dialogue and outreach on these issues".

5. THE FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Malta's ODA reporting commitments

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, through its Development Unit, coordinates an annual national exercise to collect data information and expenditures that may be eligible as Official Development Assistance according to the rules established by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). This is done by:

- following the DAC Statistical Reporting Directives;
- utilizing the DAC list of recipient countries and international organisations;

Malta is required to report its ODA figure as a percentage of its Gross National Income (GNI) on an annual basis to the European Commission and to the Development Assistance Committee.

Malta's Official Development Assistance consists of:

- a financial contribution to the EU budget's external assistance instruments
- a financial contribution to the European Development Fund (EDF)
- financial contributions to other bilateral or multilateral organisations in accordance with the rules established by the OECD-DAC. This may include, inter alia, financial commitments in relation to climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development.

Malta's financial commitments at EU level in relation to Development Cooperation

As a Member State which joined the EU in 2004, Malta has committed itself to reach a level of 0.33% of ODA/GNI by 2015. Moreover, in line with Council Conclusions of 24 May 2005, Malta strives to *increase collective ODA to Sub-Saharan Africa and to provide 50% of the collective ODA increase to Africa as a whole*. Malta remains committed to these objectives:

- Malta will continue to participate in the European Commission's annual accountability report that monitors the commitments undertaken by the EU Member States in development cooperation.
- Malta will also ensure transparency of its development aid as required by the *EU Council conclusions on Financing for Development* (October 2012) and as recommended by the 2011 *Busan Partnership Agreement*.

6. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE AND METHOD OF DELIVERY

Malta is a small donor with limited human and financial resources. Consequently, and in order to achieve maximum aid effectiveness and efficiency, Malta intends to channel its ODA through international organisations or other accountable partners, such as in trilateral cooperation (with one other donor and an aid recipient country), the private sector or through Non-Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs).

The aim is to deliver high quality and effective bilateral development assistance. Progress has to be made on ensuring that bilateral aid supports clearly defined development objectives agreed with NGDOs and other stakeholders. Funding has to support priority areas and sectors identified in this policy. Actions will be taken to closely monitor trends in the management of projects and carry out an evaluation of successful practices to ensure that aid remains objective and consistent. Rigorous assessments will be carried out in order that resources will be directed to where they can have greater impact and which would make a critical difference to the lives of vulnerable communities.

7. AREAS OF FOCUS

As in the setting out of the 2006 Strategic Objectives of Malta's Foreign Policy, this document, in elaborating Strategic Objective 18 and as complemented by the 2013 Guiding Principles, also provides the areas of focus of Malta's Development Policy. These areas of focus must however not be seen as definitive and need to remain dynamic and flexible in accordance with changing circumstances and challenges in the new political, economic and social realities.²

The underlying objective is the achievement of the Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger. At present, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has been halved at the global level. However, progress in other MDGs is far from sufficient. Redoubled efforts are urgently needed, particularly in regions lagging most behind such as sub-Saharan Africa.

The ten areas of focus in this Official Development Assistance Policy document for Malta are:

- i. Democratisation and Good Governance
- ii. Migration and Asylum
- iii. Education, Training and Human Capacity Development
- iv. Health
- v. Gender Equality
- vi. Vulnerable Groups
- vii. Climate Change
- viii. Water
- ix. Information and Communication Technologies and Research
- x. Trade and Investment

² These areas of focus are subject to review as noted in the previous footnote.

i. DEMOCRATISATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Democratisation and good governance are intrinsically linked to development. The rule of law, including the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, provide the basic parameters for the peace and stability so vital and necessary for development. It is an acknowledged fact that democratisation is the best means through which individuals can contribute, influence and actively participate in shaping their future and that of their societies.

Governments carry a responsibility to ensure that these basic parameters exist and are strongly promoted. Weak governance and corruption have devastating effects on economies and societies particularly in relation to extreme poverty and hunger. Respect for democratic principles and good governance are pre-requisites for attracting investment and for sustainable economic growth.

Malta will continue to support actions which consolidate the respect for democracy and good governance. The country has been actively involved in Commonwealth, European Union, Council of Europe, and the OSCE Election Observation Missions by providing election experts and observers. Malta will focus its actions on assistance in the preparatory process of elections and in election-monitoring within a multilateral context as well as participate bilaterally in joint election monitoring missions. Malta will also continue to provide to its citizens appropriate training courses and programmes in this sector besides sharing with those interested the experiences gained so far.

ii. MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

Migration presents challenges and opportunities to both developed and developing countries. Well-managed legal migration can be a positive phenomenon when it satisfies the aspirations of the migrants and their families, contributing to counteract the negative population growth and/or economic expansion needs in host societies. On the other hand, whilst highly skilled, well-educated and professional migration provides an input to developed economies, it often consists of a brain drain situation for developing countries and therefore undermines their development.

Remittances generated by migrant populations in host countries are seen as an important element in development, providing, an essential injection of capital into the developing economies to complement the flow of aid and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In this regard, it is important to exploit the potential benefits of the link between well-managed legal migration and development.

Malta remains committed to a humanitarian approach to the issues of migration and asylum and, continues to honour its international obligations in search and rescue and in providing assistance to all asylum seekers and legal protection to refugees and persons holding humanitarian status. Equally it continues to call for control of this phenomenon by closer collaboration between the countries of origin, transit and destination. It also calls for solidarity by the EU and its Member States, and by the international community in responsibility-sharing in addressing this phenomenon, including by the acceptance of resettlement of refugees and persons holding humanitarian status in accordance with international law.

Malta continues to make its contribution, including financial contributions, within the context of the EU and the European Development Fund while developing its own new programmes bilaterally. In this context, Malta continues to pursue a policy urging the EU to provide development incentives for countries which adhere to good democratic governance and respect for the rule of international law, respecting their international obligations including those undertaken, with regard to illegal immigration, under the Cotonou Agreement. This conforms with established practice of the EU to condition development assistance to good governance and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

iii. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Education is a driver of inclusive growth and poverty reduction, and vital to the achievement of broader development goals. It is a prerequisite for democratic development and active citizenship. Education is linked with multiple forms of public, political and social engagements which are crucial for the foundations and the stability of states.

Education has the capacity to turn the course of human development from poverty to higher living standards. It must be relevant not only to today's challenges but also to equip people with the necessary skills to cope with the changing circumstances of development beyond 2015.

Greater emphasis needs to be made to facilitate the equitable access to quality learning in order to respond to the needs of the learners. This requires strong national education systems especially those that are far from reaching the current international education goals.

Malta will support education and capacity building in partner countries based on countries' needs, capacities, and commitments. Importance is given to education as a tool for social inclusion and human development in an evolving society.

Malta will continue to give its contribution to educational formation and training with its programmes of assistance in various fields, including scholarships for tertiary-level education, such as those provided to students following courses on democratisation and human rights, and various Commonwealth Third Country programmes as well as those offered by Malta-based institutions, including the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC), DiploFoundation, International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) and International Institute on Ageing (INIA), among others.

It will additionally seek to develop other aspects of development action with regard to schools particularly at the primary and secondary level, if not also at the tertiary level, building on Malta's capacities in this field and its long-established educational tradition.

iv. HEALTH

Health is an important aspect of long term development. Preventable diseases and premature deaths may be caused by inadequate, non-existent or fee-based public health services inaccessible to the poor, lack of immunization, malnutrition as well as vulnerability to infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Malta will support action that is geared towards improving access to basic health care in developing countries as well as action in favour of controlling HIV/AIDS and immunization against diseases such as polio, malaria and tuberculosis. Malta's development assistance in the field of health also includes Sexual and Reproductive Health care and services, in accordance with the ICPD, which is an important factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Malta also perceives the need to address the direct link between sexual and reproductive health and rights and the fight against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

In line with the EU's role in global health, actions should be supported to improve the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health and reduce inequalities in developing countries. Financial assistance and appropriate expertise should be provided with a view to promoting a holistic approach and recognition of reproductive and sexual health and rights as set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). This includes safe motherhood and universal access to a range of safe and reliable reproductive and sexual health care services. When cooperation measures are implemented, the decisions adopted at the ICPD must be observed.

Universal access to education and information on the relevant aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights is considered to be an essential pre-requisite for development. Education and a decrease in gender inequalities are indispensable tools for combating the spread of HIV/AIDS in all age groups affected by the pandemic disease.

v. GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality implies a society in which both women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; and enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions.

There is the need to ensure that aid and public expenditures are targeted appropriately to match gender equality commitments that benefit both women and men, including tracking aid and public expenditures for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The roles that men and women play in society are not biologically but socially determined in an ever changing world. Women cannot achieve gender equality without the cooperation and participation of men in order to foster a culture that allows both men and women to equally fulfill their economic and social potential. Women's involvement and contribution is central to the development of society as a whole and for sustainable development.

Malta's development policy attaches great importance to efforts and programmes that combat gender-based violence which include sexual violence, sex trafficking, female genital mutilation and forced prostitution.

Gender-based violence is driven by inequalities which in turn undermine development. It is a major factor that constitutes an abuse of human rights. Addressing gender inequality and gender-based violence into all other aspects of development are an integral part for global development.

vi. VULNERABLE GROUPS

This policy will seek to actively target vulnerable groups of society such as women, children, the disabled and the elderly that are exposed to exploitation and degradation.

The fact that vulnerable populations suffer disproportionately in situations of extreme poverty is widely acknowledged. Addressing social protection towards vulnerable groups would ensure that all people have access to essential goods and services. Removing social and economic barriers would foster equality and social solidarity in society.

Addressing social protection is a fundamental role in creating more inclusive and sustainable development progress by liberating people from the fear of uncertainty. Social protection is an essential investment that contributes to economic growth and makes it more advantageous towards the most vulnerable sections of society.

As more assistance is needed for people to cope with daily hardships due to unevenly distribution of growth and prosperity, vulnerable groups are more at risk of falling into poverty. Adopting social protection schemes could effectively provide basic needs and would encourage target groups to pursue self-advancement, while facilitating empowerment, and fostering greater inclusivity.

vii. CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing humankind. Climate change hinders poverty reduction, especially since many developing countries are still dependent on agriculture and climate-sensitive natural resources, and lack the capacities to manage climate risks.

Developing countries are already affected by climate change. Responding to climate change requires actions on adaptation and mitigation: adaptation to the consequences of current and future climate change and mitigation by drastically reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, avoiding future emissions in developing countries and ensuring the preservation of forests. It is important that adaptation and mitigation to climate change are increasingly linked.

Climate change has adverse effects particularly for poorer countries, including small islands States, whose economies are based on natural resources and on sectors such as agriculture and fisheries. The capacity to adapt to climate change is determined by factors such as economic resources, technology and information, infrastructure and stable and effective institutions. Strengthening these capacities reduces a country's vulnerability to climate change and promotes sustainable development.

Action needs to be taken to achieve the challenge of limiting global warming to 2 degrees. This can only be achieved through political will and financial adaptation and adjustment. Addressing climate change requires a sustainable and integrated approach based on clear co-ordination, political will, coherence between the various sectors, as well as good governance. In addition, the concept of common but differentiated responsibility, must be one which recognizes the priority to be given to the level and the capacity to absorb the development assistance directed towards the more vulnerable.

viii. WATER

Water is a key determinant in all aspects of social, economic and environmental development. Addressing sustainable water development and promoting the needed investments with good management can empower people to ensure water and food security.

Clean water and sanitation have a profound bearing on health and human dignity. The management of water resources is crucial since it is a pre-requisite of development. The provision of sustainable access to safe water and sanitation is one of the most critical development interventions that can be applied to help poor countries lift themselves out of poverty.

The lack of an adequate supply of safe drinking water and sanitation is also a serious health issue. Waterborne diseases remain one of the most significant threats to human health worldwide. This situation is compounded by another major problem of inadequate infrastructure to satisfy the demand for safe drinking water.

Water management experience and expertise is greatly needed in countries where water catchment and water harvesting programmes are fundamental to improving the lives of people. Malta will seek to put its acquired expertise in this field to the service of developing countries which face similar problems. Malta will also seek to support sustainable water related projects and initiatives particularly for those countries that are lagging behind in this sector.

ix. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND RESEARCH

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) act as a catalyst for economic and social change serving as a platform for the launching of economic development, (including the attraction of foreign direct investment), for educational and social progress and for networking.

Technological progress is a considerable driving force behind economic growth. Information and Communication Technologies infrastructure in particular has attracted much investment, and generated significant fiscal revenues and employment opportunities in developing countries.

ICT use can become a powerful force in attacking poverty and helping societies shift to sustainable production and consumption patterns. ICT can have a transformative impact on the lives of the poor, as information and knowledge can improve agricultural practices and small businesses and services. The innovative use of ICTs can help in promoting job creation and boosting the export potential of domestic companies.

ICTs can be used as a tool to increase accountability and can transform and extend the reach of service delivery in an innovative, fast, and cost effective manner. Developing ICTs' service and training would foster innovation across the economy targeting job creation, especially for women and youth.

Malta is a source of special ICT skills and provides ICT training as part of its contribution to the Commonwealth Third Country Programmes. It has been active in this field within the framework of the Commonwealth including by calling for the diminishing of the so-called digital divide. Moreover, DiploFoundation, a joint Maltese-Swiss initiative continues to provide capacity building programmes for nationals from small and developing countries with in situ and on-line courses in areas such as internet governance, climate change diplomacy, and global governance, among others.

Malta is also a source of special ICT skills such as the formulation of ICT strategies and their implementation which can be applied for the betterment of societies in developing countries.

x. TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Trade is an important tool which can be used towards generating the necessary resources that will support economic growth, social development, and environmental protection. Coherence and mutual supportiveness among these three elements are the basis for achieving sustainable development.

Respect for fundamental workers' rights and for environmental protection requirements should be ensured in a context of trade and economic expansion. Job creation by open trade shall reflect international core labour standards, and increased trade flows shall assist the rapid spread of green goods, services and technologies around the world.

Priority must be given to countries that would have limited prospects of long-term growth and sustainable development without external assistance, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and other countries most in need. This is in line with what has been proposed in the development policy field in the European Commission Communication titled '*The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility*' (2011).

Support participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the economies of many developing countries. Training and information on administrative procedures are important for SMEs to access markets. Extending practical information on trade policies and market information would be useful for South-South and regional trade.

Training and information should be provided to facilitate access to finance for small exporters/traders from developing countries and the use of intellectual property tools by small producers. This would help them to capitalise on the economic value of their goods, through developing and protecting product identity and quality, using trademarks, geographical indications and designs.

Private Sector

Mobilizing the private sector for development is important in achieving widespread benefits and in lifting populations out of poverty. The combination of effective poverty reduction policies coupled with greater economic dynamism have been a potent force in economic development. Vigorous and sustained economic growth, fuelled by investment and entrepreneurship, is needed for the private sector to create more jobs and increase incomes of the poor. This will in turn generate the revenues that governments need to expand access to health, education and infrastructure services and so help improve productivity.

Developing countries and their donor partners need to do more to address the market failures and structural impediments that are holding back productive investment (both domestic and foreign), and to do it better for longer periods and in a more strategic way. Developing countries can help foster an investment climate that enables the private sector to flourish and fulfill its role as the main engine of growth. To do so, they can pursue macro-economic stability, improve the functioning of market-regulating institutions and strengthen procedures for contract enforcement and dispute settlement. Developing country governments can also improve the coherence of

their policies in a range of areas – such as trade, tax, competition and investment promotion – that affect the volume of investment and its development impact.

To help developing countries improve their investment climate, development partners should support interventions that contribute towards achieving the following objectives:

- Lower the costs of investment, reduce risks, improve competition and develop human and institutional capacities in developing countries.
- Give high priority to economic infrastructure investment and financial market.
- Enhance the contribution of investment to increase the impact of growth on poverty reduction by making labour, land and markets work better for the poor.
- Encourage entrepreneurship and innovation by supporting education and vocational training, R&D activities and technology transfers.
- Promote responsible business practices in such areas as labour relations, the environment and anti-corruption.
- More of the goods and services that development agencies procure can be sourced on competitive terms in developing countries, to support local private sector development. Finally, public sector partners in developing countries can be encouraged to engage more with the private sector.

Sectors where Malta has experience and can provide added value such as tourism, financial services and SMEs should be targeted to provide consultancy and support to developing countries in these sectors. The expertise of Malta's institutions on these areas of specialization form an important foreign policy tool in providing development assistance. Providing technical expertise in these areas can do much to unleash the economic growth of developing countries, especially those with significant similarities of the Maltese context. Malta could also consider developing seminars, bursaries, or other educational opportunities for public officials of developing countries to share the knowledge that Malta has acquired through the years on economic development in these sectors of excellence.

The Financial Services Sector

A diversified and competitive financial services sector is also important for promoting growth in developing countries as it helps maintain economic stability, makes financial transactions secure, mobilises external and domestic savings, and facilitates the efficient allocation of capital to productive investments.

Remittances are financial services that have an intimate link with development. In collaboration with all relevant stakeholders efforts will be undertaken to look more into the potential of attracting more remittances to developing countries through Malta. Recently and globally many R&D efforts are being put into creating ICT tools, especially using mobile technology, to be able to transfer money globally. These tools might provide a more efficient service at a lower cost of transferring remittances.

8. GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

The focus of Malta's Official Development Policy will be on a sectoral approach, rather than a purely geographical one. This is also consonant with the guiding principles and strategic objectives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Nonetheless, the following countries or regions will be given priority for development assistance:

- North Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Palestine

9. IMPLEMENTATION OR OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Globalisation has brought about a plethora of international organisations in the field of development many of which offer specialised development assistance and play an important role in the field by providing channels, frameworks and structure that help put into action development assistance. Malta recognises the value of such organisations and will seek to make use of their expertise and knowledge to achieve its policy objectives.

Civil Society and Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Non-state actors have become a major and essential stakeholder in international development cooperation. Non-state actors include the private sector, social and economic partners, including trade unions, and civil society in all its diversity.

An informed civil society has an irreplaceable role in the shaping and implementation of Malta's Official Development Policy. The Maltese Government does indeed appreciate the important role played by civil society and will therefore establish a framework for a structured dialogue with civil society and Non-Governmental Development Organisations. Dialogue, consultation and participation would present NGDOs with an opportunity to bring to the fore valuable knowledge, experience and expertise. Their contribution to poverty reduction, social justice, human rights, environmental protection and the problems related to marginalisation within society, particularly with regard to women, cannot be underestimated.

Malta will strive to allocate a specific yearly budget for NGDO activities dealing with their own capacity-building as well as local development education, awareness raising and international project implementation.

The Private Sector

The involvement of the private sector should not only be promoted, but also encouraged to involve and engage themselves in the evolution and consolidation of the Maltese development policy. Malta Enterprise, the Maltese Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Industry and business representatives can all contribute to development cooperation in developing countries.

Cooperation between the private sector and the Maltese Government will be based on the principles upheld in this policy, particularly that of corporate social responsibility, and sustainable development. In this context, cooperation will also be extended to Foundations and Trusts which share development objectives.

Co-financing

Co-financing is an important tool through which Malta will seek, as it deems necessary, to attain the objectives of this Official Development Assistance Policy through joint development projects, partnerships, provision of expertise, and cost-sharing with other donors.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can help organisations extract relevant information from past and ongoing activities that can be used as the basis for programmatic fine-tuning, reorientation and future planning. Without effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, it would be impossible to judge if work is proceeding in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved.

Achieving development results, as most realize, is often much more difficult than imagined. Good intentions, large programmes and projects, and lots of financial resources are not enough to ensure that development results will be achieved. The quality of those plans, programmes and projects, and how well resources are used, are also critical factors for success.

Good planning combined with effective monitoring and evaluation can play a major role in enhancing the effectiveness of development programmes and projects. Good planning helps us focus on the results that matter, while monitoring and evaluation help us learn from past successes and challenges and to form decision-making so that current and future initiatives are better able to improve people's lives and expand their choices.

The importance of having monitoring and evaluation in place is that these are management functions through which the Ministry for Foreign Affairs ascertains whether or not its technical cooperation programmes meet their objectives as well as support the Ministry's mandate.

The Ministry intends to explore avenues of collaboration and capacity building from external partners such as the local Development Academia, the European Commission, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other international organisations in devising and performing its monitoring and evaluation.

10. A FRAMEWORK FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

There is a direct link between Humanitarian Assistance and Development. Development cannot come about unless aid to alleviate suffering in emergency situations is given. Humanitarian Assistance should be given unconditionally, under all circumstances and at all times.

Humanitarian crises can be caused by man-made and/or natural disasters. Every year, events – protracted conflicts, droughts, natural disasters – trigger humanitarian crises in different parts of the world. Such crises can wipe out the achievements of years of development in days, even hours. Malta recognises the continuum between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development. Post-emergency rehabilitation assistance, including reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, forms an intrinsic part of Malta's Humanitarian Response. This is defined as the reaction by the general public living in Malta that gives donations of a financial nature or in-kind to assist the nationals of other countries affected by natural or man-made disasters through humanitarian or development assistance.

As humanitarian relief is increasingly challenging in a world where the severity and recurring incidence of humanitarian crises is on the increase, it is vital that a strategy for humanitarian policy should be in place. A strategy policy should have the aim to save and protect lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity during and in the immediate aftermath of humanitarian crises. It would ensure that relief assistance builds upon and reinforces existing local capacities of the affected communities. The main objective of this policy is to channel the priorities of Malta's humanitarian assistance with the aim of making relief efforts increasingly effective. This should be done through cooperation with the relevant stakeholders and local NGOs, with a strong coordinating role in organising humanitarian assistance to distress areas as the need arises. It will seek to develop fast deployment capacities in this regard. NGOs and other organisations active in this field often have a high degree of specialization, considerable know-how and are operationally flexible. These organisations are therefore an important partner in humanitarian aid.

Malta will continue to provide coordinated consular assistance in times of emergencies. It favours a policy of consular coordination particularly in times of crises. In this regard, through its Ministry for Foreign Affairs, an emergency task force will address such emergencies.

11. CONCLUSION

Development cooperation is a central pillar of Malta's Foreign Policy in an increasingly interdependent world. It is in Malta's national interest and a moral obligation to help create conditions that will enable poor people to improve their lives with the overall objective to contribute to equitable and sustainable development.

The Government of Malta will continue to consider increasing its Official Development Assistance to help achieve internationally agreed development goals within the post-2015 framework. In this context, Malta recognizes the importance of a comprehensive approach which takes into account the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development if not also the political realities of our times.

The Policy embraces a spirit of cooperation and tolerance in pursuit of international peace and security, to further promote the three dimensions of sustainable development and the promotion of human rights. It further aspires to allow people to live without fear of conflict or violence and enjoy good governance, the rule of law and more responsive, transparent and accountable Governments.

