

Just Forests submission to the consultation process on the Draft Strategy Statement 2014-2016 of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI).

Since 1989, Just Forests¹ has endeavoured to create awareness and engagement amongst Irish people of Ireland's reliance on developing countries for raw materials that assist this country's economic growth and social well-being. This awareness raising and engagement with Irish society has been made all the more difficult and challenging because of the lack of programming on environmental matters in the Irish media that reflect our global dependency.

We live in an increasingly globalised world where Climate change, natural resource depletion, biological decline and associated poverty-related issues are of concern to Irish people. Ireland's overseas development constituency has a particular interest in seeing, hearing and interacting with balanced, nuanced and sufficient broadcast coverage of global affairs in Ireland – including *but not limited to* the interconnections between these global affairs and Ireland.

A detailed public attitudes survey for Dóchas by Amárach Research found a high level of concern expressed for overseas development combined with low levels of knowledge. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicate that they are 'fairly' or 'very' concerned, but only 19% consider they have 'above average' knowledge of global development issues.

The survey also reveals a high level of public powerlessness. A full 53% of respondents say they "feel helpless in bringing about positive change" and only 32% feel confident in their ability "to influence decisions affecting my local area." Not surprisingly, this number is even lower when it comes to societal and global issues.

The hundreds of thousands of supporters of Ireland's overseas development sector embody a broad, sustained interest in Irish society in global justice and the developing world. With vigorous and diverse coverage of international affairs, and especially developing countries, seeming to be on a long-term trend of decline, this is an audience group which does not see its needs and interests – with the breadth of views and perspectives – adequately reflected in the volume, scope and quality of broadcast coverage in Ireland.

Because of Ireland's missionary tradition in developing countries and enormous global diaspora, the BAI could play a valuable role in promoting and stimulating

¹ See more on Just Forests: <http://www.justforests.org>

² See <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2013-Press-Releases/PR13-08-06.html>

more quality content and programming that addresses global or world affairs while retaining distinctively Irish perspectives, content and/or production elements.

We are all global citizens now, and our awareness of international affairs has never been more relevant to examining and understanding our position in the world. We consider it vital that Irish broadcasters view it as part of their remit (to a greater or lesser extent across media and platforms) to bring audience members increased awareness, understanding, knowledge and tools to make sense of their position, and that of their country, in the world.

The global population passed 7 Billion in 2011 and is set to rise to over 8 Billion by 2024. Natural resources and environmental goods and services are the backbone of all economic development. We strongly feel that the BAI has an obligation and a responsibility to ensure programming accommodates and reflects this reality without any delay.

As we approach our 25th anniversary in 2014, Just Forests welcomes the ambition of BAI to reach out to Irish audiences so that they are presented with, and critically engage with, a range of content that meets their needs and interests, and contemporary reality – but as with the **Dochas submission**, Just Forests contends that this should not be restricted to broadcasting that reflects “the life of this society”.

The Department of Education and Skills’ call for submissions on - ***A National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)***² closed on 27th September 2013. Our Sustainable Future, building on the outcomes of the 2007 consultation process, proposes the following objectives for the National Strategy for ESD:

- Embedding education for sustainable development at every level of the education system
- ***Promoting public awareness of education for sustainable development***
- Promoting capacity building in support of education for sustainable development
- Promoting high standards of environmental management in education institutions.

We are all citizens in a globalised world. Within this world we, as Irish people, have rights and responsibilities, so our need for information and understanding is greater than ever, to allow us participate meaningfully within Irish life and within the global information society. The promotion of education for

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sustainable development both in the national and global context must be taken seriously by the BAI and programmed for.

Coverage of global affairs, in order to reflect both a core audience interest and a vital component of Ireland's position and reputation in the world is urgently needed.

"The multiple global crises have brought into question our current volatile economic model which has neglected natural resources impacts and social justice. Food and fuel crises have particularly highlighted the risks arising from resource constraints such as energy. A new development model is now needed centered on the planet, its people, and on fairness, with full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms." Ban Ki-moon- UN Secretary-General.

We salute BAI in taking up this challenge.

Just Forests fully supports and endorses the submissions by:

- the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) of which we are a member
- the Irish Environmental Network (IEN) of which we are a member and
- Dochas, the association of Irish nongovernmental development organisations.

ENDS

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