

PAC-R-215

Correspondence 3.19
Meeting – 15/12/2011



Anne Ferris TD

Mr. John McGuinness TD
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

09/12/11
Ref: A.F./j.m

Dear John,

I am concerned at recent reports into how aid agency Goal has spent €14 million in State funding. I understand that the Government's overseas aid division Irish Aid is finalising an audit on this matter.

Given that the funding provided is from the State I believe that the Public Accounts Committee should look into this when the results are made available early next year.

I enclose a copy of a recent report that appeared in today's Irish Times.

Yours sincerely

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Wicklow/East Carlow Constituency.

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Irish Aid finalising audit into how Goal spent €14m

CARL O'BRIEN, Chief Reporter

Fri, Dec 09, 2011

THE GOVERNMENT'S overseas aid division Irish Aid is finalising an audit into how aid agency Goal has spent €14 million in State funding.

Under the guidelines of Irish Aid's multiannual funding programme for development groups, all recipient organisations are audited at least once every five years.

Goal is one of five aid agencies which has received State funds for long-term development work in areas such as healthcare, education, nutrition and sanitation. The others are Christian Aid, Concern, Self Help Africa and Trócaire.

The audit examined Goal's governance, management and internal control systems.

An Irish Aid spokeswoman declined to comment except to say the results were due to be made available early next year.

The audit comes when Goal has been dealing with the resignation of several directors linked to corporate management issues.

One of its directors, Fran Rooney, former chief executive of the Football Association of Ireland, resigned last week after just over three months. This brings to seven the number of people who have resigned from the Goal board in the past year.

Senior counsel Ken Fogarty, appointed chairman of the Goal board in August, left the charity two weeks ago, citing "corporate governance issues that were not resolved".

The chief executive of Goal, John O'Shea, had said Mr Fogarty's departure was as a result of pressure of work at his successful legal practice. Mr Fogarty has since rejected this.

In his letter of resignation, Mr Rooney said it was unacceptable that Mr Fogarty was the second chairman to resign in a matter of months and this could not be tolerated.

"Neither could it be tolerated that the reason for the resignation could be masked as pressure of work in relation to the chairman as this was clearly not the case," Mr Rooney said.

"In light of all of the above and ongoing situation I have been left with no alternative but to resign my position as a director of Goal with immediate effect."

Mr Fogarty's predecessor, Jerry Sheehan, also stepped down, along with directors Andy Butler, Conor Sparks and David Almain. A former director, John Wilson, resigned in January.

In a statement this week Goal said its board had expressed "full confidence and support" of Mr O'Shea. It also announced the appointment of a new chairman, three-time Irish Medicines Board chairman Pat O'Mahony.

Goal said it was audited annually by Deloitte Touche and regularly underwent "rigorous financial

scrutiny” from donors such as the Irish and British governments and the EU.

The statement said the organisation operated to the “highest international standards” and had its own audit committee which was comprised of “eminently qualified independent professionals”.

The board said it was “satisfied that under the direction of John O’Shea, Goal will continue to be regarded as one of the world’s leading humanitarian agencies”.

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