



## IRELAND

# Report to the United Nations on the National Plan for Women 2002 on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

September 2002

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH  
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN tSOLÁTHAIR  
Le ceannach díreach ón  
OIFIG DHÍOLTA FOILSEACHÁN RIALTAIS,  
TEACH SUN ALLIANCE, SRÁID THEACH LAIGHEAN, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2,  
nó tríd an bpost ó  
FOILSEACHÁN RIALTAIS, AN RANNÓG POST-TRÁCHTA,  
51 FAICHE STIABHNA, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2,  
(Teil: 01 - 6476834/35/36/37; Fax: 01 - 6476843)  
nó trí aon díoltóir leabhar.

---

DUBLIN  
PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE  
To be purchased directly from the  
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALE OFFICE,  
SUN ALLIANCE HOUSE, MOLESWORTH STREET, DUBLIN 2,  
or by mail order from  
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, POSTAL TRADE SECTION,  
51 ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN 2,  
(Tel: 01 - 6476834/35/36/37; Fax: 01 - 6476843)  
or through any bookseller.

---

€10

ISBN 0-7557-1266-8

# Table of Contents

---

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>Chapter 1</b> Women and Poverty	7
<b>Chapter 2</b> Education and Training of Women	15
<b>Chapter 3</b> Women and Health	19
<b>Chapter 4</b> Violence against Women	23
<b>Chapter 5</b> Women and Armed Conflict	25
<b>Chapter 6</b> Women and the Economy	27
<b>Chapter 7</b> Women in Power and Decision-Making	35
<b>Chapter 8</b> Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women	37
<b>Chapter 9</b> Human Rights of Women	43
<b>Chapter 10</b> Women and the Media	47
<b>Chapter 11</b> Women and the Environment	49
<b>Chapter 12</b> The Girl-Child	51
<b>Chapter 13</b> Consultation Process	55
<b>Chapter 14</b> Recommendations of the Steering Committee	59
 <b>APPENDICES</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b> Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee	63
<b>Appendix 2</b> Membership of the Steering Committee	64
<b>Appendix 3</b> List of Organisations who received Grants	65
<b>Appendix 4</b> List of Submissions received	71
<b>Appendix 5</b> List of Public Consultation Fora	80



# Introduction

---

The Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002 is Ireland's response to the invitation to governments made in the Political Declaration by the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2000 to develop and implement national action plans to work towards the advancement of women in all areas of society. The national action plans are intended to strengthen efforts to implement the Platform for Action which originated at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The Platform for Action sets out a broad and challenging agenda across twelve Critical Areas of Concern considered to represent the main obstacles to the advancement of women.

In New York in June 2000 governments made a voluntary commitment to implement the *Platform for Action* in order to promote the advancement of women in all their policies and programmes by focusing on the twelve Critical Areas of Concern which are as follows:

1. the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women;
2. inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training;
3. inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services;
4. violence against women;
5. the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation;
6. inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources;
7. inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels;
8. insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women;
9. lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women;
10. stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media;
11. gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and the safeguarding of the environment;
12. persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child.

The Irish Government participated in the United Nations General Assembly in June 2000 and supported the Political Declaration calling for National Action Plans.

The Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002 is Ireland's programme to advance the situation of women across the twelve Critical Areas of Concern

Work on the development of the Plan commenced in December 2000. Consultancy expertise was engaged to assist the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in drawing up a draft Plan under the critical areas of concern. Policy commitments were collated in the draft Plan from relevant Government Departments and Agencies, from the National Development Plan 2000 — 2006 and from the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness.

The draft Plan was published in October 2001 to inform and guide a consultation process which was launched at the same time. The task of overseeing the consultation process was led by a representative Steering Committee whose Terms of Reference are reproduced in Appendix 1. The Steering Committee met seven times during the period November 2001 to May 2002. The Steering Committee was chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the complete list of its membership is at Appendix 2.

The Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002 consists of 14 Chapters. Chapters 1 to 12 focus in turn on each of the twelve Critical Areas of Concern. Each of these 12 chapters details the Irish Government's commitments to policies, strategies, programmes and measures agreed by the Government in relation to advancing the status of women in Irish society under the relevant strategy objectives of the Platform for Action.

Chapter 13 describes the consultation process which was undertaken in preparing the plan. The consultation process had four interlinked elements; an extensive information campaign, the submission of papers, a series of public meetings, all overseen by a Steering Committee with broad terms of reference to manage the entire process and to advise the Minister on the finalisation of the plan. The consultation process was hugely successful in giving the women of Ireland the opportunity to make their voices heard and for their views to be recorded. A wide array of issues were raised by women and their representative groups. These are reproduced in a separate document entitled "*Aspirations of Women collected in the course of the Consultation Process on the National Plan for Women 2002: Towards a National Women's Strategy*" which gives a valuable and unique insight into the views and aspirations of the women of Ireland at the beginning of the new millennium. This will serve to guide and influence Government policy into the future.

Chapter 14 contains five recommendations made by the Steering Committee. In looking beyond 2002, the Steering Committee considered it necessary to begin planning for the next period to gain momentum towards greater gender equality in Ireland. The recommendation to develop a National Women's Strategy is directed towards this goal, as are the recommendations to develop gender statistics and monitoring mechanisms. The incorporation of the views and aspirations of the women of Ireland collected in the course of the Consultation Process on the National Plan for Women will be a key element in the process of developing the National Women's Strategy.

# Women and Poverty

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Review, adopt and maintain policies, strategies and measures that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty*

## Government Commitments

- 1.1** In Ireland the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) is the latest national agreement between the Government and the Social Partners. The core objectives of the agreement is to build a fair, inclusive society in Ireland. There are five operational frameworks within the PPF — living standards and workplace environment; prosperity and economic inclusion; social inclusion and equality; successful adaptation and continuing change; and renewing partnership.

There are formal monitoring arrangements in place for the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. In addition, a Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion will continue to provide a strategic focus on tackling the problems of social exclusion, alienation and disadvantage.

- 1.2** The Government is committed to furthering the implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, one of the key principles of which is the “reduction of inequalities and, particularly, addressing the gender dimensions of poverty”.
- 1.3** A review of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy has been undertaken in accordance with the commitment given in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. That agreement was to update the Strategy in consultation with the Social Partners, to review the underlying methodology, review and revise the existing targets where appropriate and consider new targets in the areas of child poverty, women’s poverty, health, older people and housing/accommodation. The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness also provided that the analysis would be updated to include emerging causes of poverty e.g. Racism.

The key objectives of the revised Strategy, “*Building An Inclusive Society*”, published in February 2002, are to reduce, and ideally eliminate, consistent poverty, to build an inclusive society and to develop social capital — particularly for disadvantaged communities. The Strategy sets out the overall objectives, overall targets within the key areas and the arrangements to mobilise actions. It recognises the fact that tackling poverty involves a multi-policy approach. The Strategy outlines new key targets in the areas of income adequacy, employment, health, education, and housing and to associated actions targeted at vulnerable groups.

Specifically in relation to women, the objective of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy is to eliminate consistent poverty for women and to improve access for women to appropriate health care, education and employment, thus reducing the risk of poverty for such women and their families. Key targets for women are:

- Over the period to 2007, the Strategy will aim at reducing the numbers of women who are 'consistently poor' below 2%, and, if possible, eliminating consistent poverty, under the current definition of consistent poverty;
- The Strategy will aim at increasing the employment participation rate of women to an average of more than 60% in 2010, as envisaged under the National Employment Action Plan 2001.

**1.4** The system of poverty proofing, which was introduced in 1998, currently operates across all Government Departments and can play a key role in addressing women's poverty. Lone parents, older people and single adult households are among the groups given particular attention in the poverty proofing process.

The National Economic and Social Council published a report of their review of the Poverty Proofing process in November, 2001. The Report, which was undertaken in keeping with a Government commitment, made a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing the process towards a system of ongoing poverty impact assessment, involving training for officials, data collection, identification of progress indicators, and institutional support for the process.

The Report concluded that the pilot programme has had an important impact in terms of sensitising policy makers to the poverty dimension of policies.

The new National Office for Social Inclusion (to be set up under the revised Strategy) will be resourced to develop a more effective poverty proofing process and to ensure that it is appropriately operationalised in all relevant Government Departments. In doing so, it will take full account of the recommendations in the report.

**1.5** The Government is committed to adopting a "families first" approach by putting families at the centre of all policies. The recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission on the Family "*Strengthening Families for Life*" will be fully considered in the context of developing coherent progressive and effective policies for families. The Government is committed to establishing a network of 100 family centres.

**1.6** The Family Mediation Service (FMS) is a free, professional confidential service which enables couples, who have decided to separate, to reach agreement on all issues related to their separation. It assists couples to address the issues on which they need to make decisions including: post-separation living arrangements; finances; and parenting arrangements to enable children to have an ongoing relationship with each parent.

The establishment of a nation-wide family mediation service was a key objective in the 'Action Programme for the Millennium'. Over the last five years the number of centres has been increased from two, Dublin and Limerick, to twelve. New services have been established in Cork, Wexford, Athlone, Dundalk, Tralee, Galway, Tallaght, Castlebar, Marino (serving Coolock and the surrounding areas) and Blanchardstown. The new services are co-located with other State and voluntary and community services where this has proved possible. The number of couples being



helped by the Family Mediation Service has increased from 484 couples in 1997 to over 1,300 in the year 2001.

In the Review of the 'Action Programme for the Millennium', the Government stated its commitment to put the Family Mediation Service on a statutory basis. Fulfilling this commitment, the Family Mediation Service will become part of the new Family Support Agency to be established in 2002 under the Family Support Agency Act, 2001. This new Agency will provide a family mediation service, support, promote and develop voluntary organisations providing marriage and relationship counselling and support, promote and develop the Family and Community Services Resource Centre programme.

The Family Support Agency will bring together the main programmes and pro-family services developed since 1997 by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs in line with commitments in the Action Programme for the Millennium and the Review of the Action Programme for the Millennium. It will provide a comprehensive and coherent response to families in need of these family support services and for families generally. It will be a dedicated Agency and a resource for all those involved in promoting family wellbeing.

**1.7** In 1998 the final report of The Commission on the Family, 'Strengthening Families for Life', recommended that the level of State funding for the support of stability in families should be in the region of €3.81 million (IR£3 million) per annum. Last year (2001) the Government made available some €6.11 million (IR£4.81 million) to support the provision of marriage counselling, marriage preparation programmes, child counselling in relation to parental separation and bereavement counselling and support services. In the current year (2002), the total amount made available by the Government for the scheme has further increased to €6.659 million. Over 460 voluntary organisations providing marriage, child and bereavement counselling and support services benefited from the scheme in 2002. This was an increase of €1.9 million (IR£1.5 million) on the 2000 allocation and a significant step in increasing support services for families as promised in the 'Action Programme for the Millennium'.

**1.8** A new EU system of co-operation between Member States in the area of social protection is being co-ordinated by the recently established Social Protection Committee (December 2000). There are two projects being undertaken in which special attention is being given to the gender dimension. The first project concerns combating poverty and social exclusion. National Strategy Reports were submitted by all Member States, including Ireland, to the European Union in June 2001. The strategies therein are to apply for two years from that date. A synthesis report has been compiled and was presented to the European Council in Laeken in December, 2001. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy and NAPincl (National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion) processes will now merge and future plans submitted to the European Union will be consistent with the revised Strategy. The next NAPincl will be produced in 2003.

The second project on "safe and sustainable pensions" has now got underway and the deadline for submitting national reports is 15 September, 2002. The Government is fully committed to the overall EU process of co-operation on social protection and is participating in the above projects.

**1.9** Poverty proofing guidelines in relation to inequalities relating to poverty will be developed following research on the subject being carried out by the Combat Poverty Agency and the Equality Authority.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Introduce or revise legislation and administrative practices to ensure women's right to and access to economic resources***

## **Government Commitments**

- 1.10** The Government has accepted the view expressed by the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities, which recognised that women with disabilities:
- can experience double exclusion;
  - should be enabled to participate at all levels of society; and
  - should be consulted in developing policies that will affect them.
- 1.11** The Pensions Board has considered the question of adequate coverage for women under private and occupational pension policies. The Board considered that among the advantages of personal retirement savings accounts (PRSAs) was the benefit their introduction would have for women with broken employment records due to childcare and other responsibilities. The Pensions (Amendment) Act, 2002 provides the legislative framework for this.
- 1.12** The Government is committed to ensuring the broadest possible contributory pension cover to as many categories as possible, and recognises that people who leave the workforce to undertake family responsibilities in the home may lose out in maintaining their social insurance record. The Homemakers Scheme, introduced in 1994, is intended to protect the social insurance pension of those who take time out of the paid workforce for caring reasons. The scheme is being reviewed as part of the overall review of the qualifying conditions for the Old Age Contributory and Retirement Pensions. Also, the qualifying conditions for Old Age Contributory Pension have been eased considerably and this has benefited many, particularly women, with reduced/interrupted insurance records.
- 1.13** Proposals will be developed for a fully inclusive social insurance model, which would facilitate combining work and family responsibilities in the context of changing working and social patterns.
- 1.14** Proposals to progress the implementation of administrative individualisation within the Social Welfare system will be advanced. A working group was set up under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) to examine the issues. The Report of the Working Group has recently been cleared by the Social Partners and reflects their views. Its implications will now be considered by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs. The report will be published in due course. The Government has announced its intention to increase the qualified adult allowance, paid to qualified spouses/partners of social welfare recipients, who do not have a direct entitlement to a payment in their own right. It is intended that for qualified adults under 66, the Qualified Adult Allowance (QAA) will be increased to 70% of the relevant personal rate; in the case of pensioners, where the qualified adult is over 66, the Qualified Adult Allowance (QAA) will be increased to the level of Old Age (Non-Contributory) Pension as outlined in the newly agreed Programme for Government. Also, in accordance with the Programme for Government, arrangements will be put in place to facilitate direct payment of the QAA. The conclusions of the above-mentioned PPF group will be important in this regard. The increases provided in 2002 will bring all QAA rates up to at least 66% of the appropriate personal rates. The qualified adult allowance for a person over 66 has been increased from 72% of the Old Age (Contributory)

Pension in 1997 to 77% in 2002 and now represents 85% of the Old Age (Non-Contributory) Pension.

- 1.15** The Family Law Bill is currently being prepared. Its purpose is to enable married persons, who wish to separate by deed of separation, to make agreements regarding pension rights without having to incur litigation expenses. While the proposal applies equally to women and men, it is expected to be of particular benefit to women.
- 1.16** The Government will increase the aid allocation to Overseas Development Aid to reach the United Nations target of 0.7% of Ireland's Gross National Product (GNP) by 2007.
- 1.17** A review of Ireland's Aid programme was completed in 2002. A gender perspective is favoured in Ireland Aid. This mainstreaming approach will continue to ensure that women and men are equally involved in the planning, implementation and initiatives supported by Ireland Aid, and that benefits are distributed more equally between women and men. The Guidelines entitled '*Ireland Aid Policy on Gender on an Operational footing*' will continue to support the incorporation of a gender perspective throughout Ireland Aid's activities. A review of the gender guidelines will be undertaken by the end of 2002.
- 1.18** Ireland's approach to gender is in conformity with the European Union statement on development policy adopted by the Development Council of November 2000 and which highlighted the importance of mainstreaming equality between women and men in all the Development instruments of the European Community.
- 1.19** The issue of gender will continue to be mainstreamed into all areas of Ireland Aid Bilateral Programme: partnership agreements with priority countries, country strategy papers, Human Rights and Democratisation funding, Emergency Rehabilitation funding, Eastern European Aid funding and NGO co-financing. In relation to the latter, it is recognised that special measures may need to be adopted to ensure the full participation of women.
- 1.20** The indispensable role of the United Nations system in advancing the empowerment of women, especially poor women, is recognised. The 'engendered' approach recognises the pivotal role played by women and girls in achieving equitable and genuinely sustainable development. Ireland Aid's commitment to gender equity will be reflected in increased funding support to the UN agencies and programmes (2001-2003): UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA.
- 1.21** In forthcoming United Nations conferences devoted to thematic themes of particular interest to women and girls, Ireland will ensure that the gender perspective is well articulated and adequately reflected in the outcomes.
- 1.22** Although not a bilateral creditor of the developing countries, Ireland is deeply concerned by the heavy external debt of many of the world's poorest countries. In the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), it is estimated that 40% of government revenues are devoted to servicing debt. The consequent diversion of scarce resources from health, education and other essential social services impacts disproportionately on women and children. Ireland Aid has contributed €5.7m (IR£4.5m) to the World Bank's HIPC Trust Fund in 2001 and has contributed a total of €13.9m (IR£11m) in previous years. Ireland Aid will contribute €0.5m to debt relief activities in 2002.

- 1.23 Ireland will ratify the *Cotonou* Partnership Agreement between 77 African, Caribbean and Pacific states and the European Union. The Agreement aims to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty and recognises the principle of equality between women and men as an essential element of the Agreement.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Provide women with access to institutions***

### **Government Commitments**

- 1.24 Opportunities will be made available to women to enter training and educational local activities through, for example, more flexible schedules, childcare and community development.
- 1.25 An Education Equality Initiative (2000-2005) will provide support for education groups to address gaps in provision for educationally disadvantaged women, men and specific marginalised groups.
- 1.26 Socially and economically disadvantaged women, including lone parents, wishing to access training, education or employment opportunities will be directly supported through the Social Inclusion Local Development measure of the Regional Operational Programmes of the National Development Plan (2000-2006). The promotion of equality will be central to the local action plans, which will implement the measure. Gender-disaggregated data, targets and indicators to monitor the outcomes are being developed.
- 1.27 Supports for locally-based groups involved in anti-poverty and social inclusion work with and by women and lone parents in their own communities will continue to be maintained through a range of social and community oriented grant schemes and programmes.
- 1.28 A programme of measures is being developed to encourage and support lone parents to join the active labour force.

The Lone Parent activation programme was initiated by the Employment Support Services of the Department of Social and Family Affairs in 2001, and is still ongoing. It entails engagement with Lone Parents on a proactive and, where possible, personalised basis. Much valuable experience has been gained in this area in the last year and is being used to address the main issues identified in relation to employment/training for Lone Parents, which are:

- finding and developing jobs/training and educational opportunities which mesh with the childcare commitments of Lone Parents;
- identifying accessible training venues which allow for proper childcare facilities;
- developing tailor-made programmes for Lone Parents to assist with the low skills base and low self-esteem issues which can arise from long-term welfare dependency;
- helping with the transport and other costs which may be associated with the take-up of training opportunities by Lone Parents on a tight budget. In this regard, a weekly allowance to help with 'out of pocket expenses' associated with training was introduced in July 2001.

The means test associated with the One-Parent Family Payment is one of the more flexible tests associated with welfare schemes. It incorporates a significant earnings disregard which is designed to recognise the particular difficulties which lone parents face in participating in training and employment.

The Back to Education Allowance was extended to people aged between 18 and 20, getting an unemployment or lone parent payment for at least six months and who have been out of the education system for two years (with effect from September, 2001).

- 1.29** Following proposals in a Review undertaken by the Department of Social and Family Affairs of the One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) published in September 2000, the Government has enhanced arrangements to ensure that the absent parent plays a more important role in providing support to lone parent families.

Provisions were included in the Social Welfare Act, 2001 to allow OFP recipients to retain the first 50% of maintenance received through their own efforts (in addition to the existing €95 (IR£75) per week maintenance disregard in respect of vouched housing costs). The balance of maintenance received is treated as means and assessed accordingly. This has been implemented for all existing and new OFP clients.

Additional resources have been put in place to increase significantly maintenance recovery from absent spouses or parents through the “Liability to Maintain Family” provisions of the Social Welfare Acts. This will help to ensure that these liable relatives make their fair contribution to the social welfare income support being provided to their partners and children.

As also recommended in the Review, plans are being developed to transfer the administration of the scheme from central to local level to help make the scheme more accessible to lone parents and to provide them with enhanced facilitation to join the active labour force. A pilot project on a localised OFP service which commenced in May, 2001 is continuing and more such pilots are planned.

- 1.30** The development of the range of supports for carers, the vast majority of whom are women, will continue to be a priority for the Government. In this context, the means test applied to the Carer’s Allowance is one of the more flexible tests in terms of the assessment of household incomes.

In addition, a consultancy study on the future financing of longterm care is underway. The study is examining the strategic issues involved and involves an assessment of alternative financing and funding approaches and their feasibility in the Irish context. It will encompass the financing of personal long term care needs both in the community and in institutional care and the potential of the private sector or a combined public/private sector approach to develop new initiatives in this area. It is expected that this study will be completed in 2002.

The question of further improvements to the Carer’s Allowance/Benefit and for carers generally will be considered in a Budgetary context, taking account of the key priorities in the care area, as set out in the Agreed Programme for Government.



## Education and Training of Women

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Non-discriminatory education and training for women and girls will be developed*

### Government Commitments

- 2.1 In implementing education policies, the Government is committed to promoting 'equality of access to and participation in education' and to promoting 'the means whereby students may benefit from education'.
- 2.2 The implementation of School Development Planning, reviews of school plans and Whole School Evaluation will take account of gender in accordance with the equality objectives of the Education Act, 1998, the Employment Equality Act, 1998, the Equal Status Act, 2000, and the Education Welfare Act, 2000. Guideline policies and materials on gender equality in School Development Planning will continue to be introduced on a phased basis. The application of equality criteria will be promoted by School Development Planning facilitators at all stages of the process: review, design, and implementation. Draft criteria for Whole School Evaluation take gender into account. The Equality Authority intends to develop a Code of Practice on 'The Inclusive School'.
- 2.3 Training in gender equality issues will be incorporated into training programmes for School Development Planning personnel. In-service training programmes for school personnel will include a focus on gender equality. Gender mainstreaming will be addressed in a seminar programme for the Inspectorate at primary and post primary school level.
- 2.4 Ireland Aid acknowledges that further efforts to mainstream attention to gender in all education sector activities are called for in developing and transition countries, including specific initiatives in relation to the supply and demand barriers to education for women and girls. The dissemination of Educational Guidelines with a gender focus will contribute to redressing these barriers.
- 2.5 Ireland will serve on the Executive Board of UNICEF for the first time in 2002. Ireland will use this opportunity to continue to promote the education of girls as a priority within UNICEF programmes.

## **Government Commitments**

- 2.6** Specific strategies to address the training needs of women for the agriculture and tourism sectors of employment where they are underrepresented in training will be promoted.
- 2.7** Competitiveness and employment in the economy will be promoted through support for Social Partners in improving women's participation in apprenticeships.
- 2.8** The recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on Women's Access to Labour Market Opportunities, under Partnership 2000, and the review of the Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) Return to Work scheme will be progressed with a view to enhancing the employability and skills of women returning to the labour market.

Recommendations include:

- training in gender related barriers to the labour market for front line providers of labour market information;
  - the gender proofing of the National Qualifications Authority work on credit accumulation and transfer schemes and the accreditation of prior and experiential learning;
  - the development of a broader range of mainstream education and training courses to be available on a part-time basis;
  - the location of courses to take account of the availability and cost of transport to ensure ease of access;
  - ensure that there is a gender balance on Specific Skills Courses;
  - that statutory training authorities and EU and State funded training programmes should ensure that childcare facilities are available for parents availing of the courses.
- 2.9** The access to and attendance in vocational education opportunities, such as the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Programmes, of unemployed parents and early school leavers will be facilitated by childcare. This will take the form of direct provision in centres or rented premises, the purchase of places in existing community or commercial crèches and certain payments to registered childminders. The Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) will also facilitate access by women to its training courses through the provision of payments towards childcare costs.
- 2.10** Special provision for localised and family friendly training of women farmers and women who manage farms in conjunction with their spouses will be sustained. Teagasc (The Agriculture and Food Development Authority) has made special provision for the training of women farmers. This aims to give women farmers family-friendly training for their role on the farm with specific emphasis on IT training and farm accounts.



***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms***

**Government Commitments**

- 2.11** A dedicated Gender Equality Unit has been established to co-ordinate and monitor the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all areas of the education system. Priority areas of work will include the establishment of Higher Education Networks and action to ensure that disadvantaged women are encouraged to participate in all education programmes. The Operational Plan of the Unit, for the years 2002-2003, was launched in December 2001.
- 2.12** A computerised management information system for further education programmes is being developed, with data disaggregated by gender for monitoring purposes.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: The lifelong learning of women and girls will be improved***

**Government Commitments**

- 2.13** The Education Equality Initiative, as part of the National Development Plan and supported by the European Union, will promote opportunities for educationally disadvantaged women for the period 2000-2006.
- 2.14** The Lifelong Learning Task Force will consider, amongst other issues, increasing the diversity and flexibility of provision of learning opportunities and promoting the responsiveness of education and training institutions to the needs of adults. Particular attention will be given to those who are disadvantaged and to measures to support the reconciliation of learning and family life.
- 2.15** The Equality Authority has established an Equality Studies Unit, with a focus on:
- People with disabilities;
  - Minority ethnic groups, including Travellers and refugees; and
  - Older people.

The Unit is committed to contributing to the advancement of women in these groups in measures under the Employment and Human Resources Operational Programme of the National Development Plan.



## Women and Health

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.*

### Government Commitments

- 3.1** A Plan for Women's Health is the blueprint for improving and developing the health care services required by women and has as its main objectives:
- to maximise the health and social gain of Irish women;
  - to create a women-friendly health service;
  - to increase consultation with and representation of women in health services.
- 3.2** The Plan focuses on 12 key issues relevant to women's health and provides a commitment to action in relation to each of these areas. The actions proposed are consistent with other health service policy initiatives. The Women's Health Council has commissioned a review of the implementation of a Plan for Women's Health. The Council is finalising the review, the results of which will have to be carefully considered by the Minister and the Department. The review will be completed shortly.
- The Government has recently published a new Health Strategy — Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You. This Strategy is a plan to guide policy makers and service providers in achieving the vision of a future health system. It identifies overall national goals to guide activity and planning in the health system for the next 7-10 years. Existing policy approaches to women's health are fully endorsed in the document.
- 3.3** Health policy for women will continue to support the needs of particular groups of women including those involved in prostitution, in the misuse of drugs, women who are pregnant while misusing drugs and women who are stabilising their lives and recovering from drug misuse.
- 3.4** Special health services, consultative, expert, advisory, treatment and support measures, information and guidelines will be maintained in place for individuals who have been exposed to, or contracted Hepatitis C via the administration of whole blood or blood products (including Anti-D) within the State.

- 3.5 The Women's Health Council will be invited to prepare advice on the '*means by which the health services could assist the improvement of women's health in the developing world*' and will encourage it to liaise '*with international bodies which have functions similar to the functions of the Council,*' in relation to this subject.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Preventative programmes that promote women's health will be strengthened.***

### **Government Commitments**

- 3.6 Measures to support the promotion of "*women's physical and mental well being through the continued development and implementation of relevant policies*" will be undertaken in the framework of the Health Promotion Strategy (2000-2005):
- a National Breastfeeding co-ordinator was appointed in 2001 to advise on the effectiveness of current policy actions in Ireland and on measures required to increase breastfeeding rates in Ireland;
  - the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) continues to be supported through the Health Promotion Hospitals Network. Virtually all maternity hospitals/units have applied for membership of BFHI;
  - the implementation of recommendations for a National Infant Feeding Policy will be facilitated;
  - the role of folic acid supplementation and food fortification in the prevention of neural tube defects will be promoted;
  - research will be initiated in the area of women's health;
  - positive mental health especially at vulnerable times in women's lives will be promoted;
  - women friendly approaches in partnership with community and voluntary organisations designed to enable more active participation of women in their health, will be developed;
  - the recommendations that relate to women in 'Building Healthier Hearts' are being supported. The Council for Heart Disease in Women of the Irish Heart Foundation held a conference on the topic of heart disease in women in February, 2001;
  - the recommendations which relate to women in the policy document "Towards a Tobacco Free Society" are being supported. The Public Health (Tobacco) Act, 2002 (Number 6 of 2002) was signed into law by the President on 27 March, 2002. The scheduling of the implementation process, which will require the making of Commencement Orders and Regulations, is currently under consideration.
- 3.7 The recommendations of the *Report of the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme Review Group* on the delivery of combined ante natal care are being implemented by Health Boards.

**3.8** Funding has been increased for the Dental Treatment Services Scheme to provide a more effective dental service to adult medical cardholders. It is expected that this will reduce the incidence of dental disease in those women who were shown in the *National Survey on Oral Health of Irish Adults* to have a higher incidence of dental disease.

**3.9** BreastCheck, the national screening programme, was formally launched on 10th October, 2000. Phase 1 of the programme covers the Eastern Regional Health Authority, Midland Health Board and North-Eastern Health Board areas. Screening is being offered free of charge to all women in those areas in the target age group 50-64 years of age. This represents approximately 50% of the national target population.

It is expected that Phase 1 of the programme will be completed by December 2002. The need to have a phased roll-out of the national breast screening process reflects the complexities involved in the screening process and the key objective is to ensure that the programme is driven by international quality assurance and best practice. BreastCheck is in consultation with health boards concerning the roll-out of the programme nationwide.

**3.10** The Report entitled “Development of Services for Symptomatic Breast Disease” was published in March, 2000 and contains recommendations for the development of specialist breast disease units and the appropriate infrastructure, personnel and equipment which is needed for such specialist units.

The Department of Health and Children and the health boards have had extensive consultation in relation to the best way forward for the development of these services. Funding was provided to the health boards in 2001 and 2002 for the continuing development of Symptomatic Breast Disease Services, including the appointment of additional consultant surgeon posts with a special interest in breast surgery.

**3.11** Phase One of the National Cervical Screening Programme is operational in the Mid-Western Health Board since October, 2000. Under the programme, women in the 25-60 age group are screened at five yearly intervals free of charge. The new Health Strategy provides a commitment to extend the programme to the rest of the country. It is a major undertaking with significant logistical and resource implications. A recently established Task Force is currently examining the feasibility and implications of the roll-out of the programme.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Initiatives sensitive to women which address sexual and reproductive health issues will be undertaken***

### **Government Commitments**

**3.12** In March 2002, a constitutional referendum on the issue of abortion was held. It was proposed to amend the Constitution so as to give constitutional protections to envisaged legislation which would have been called the Protection of Human Life in Pregnancy Act. This legislation was intended to ensure that a pregnant woman who was suffering from a life-threatening medical condition could receive whatever treatment she might need, even where this might put the

survival of her unborn child at risk. The effect of the proposed Act would have been that a threat of suicide would no longer be a ground for legal abortion in the State.

The constitutional amendment proposed in the referendum was defeated. The legal situation therefore remains as it was before the referendum, i.e. that abortion is prohibited in Ireland except where it is established, as a matter of probability, that there is a real and substantial risk to the life, as distinct from the health, of the mother and that this real and substantial risk can be averted only by the termination of her pregnancy.

Any developments in this regard will be communicated in the Third Periodic Report of Ireland to the Human Rights Committee of the UN Covenant on Civil, Cultural and Political Rights.

In a separate development, in October 2001, a new State agency called the Crisis Pregnancy Agency was established. This agency will have the task, in consultation with Government and other statutory and non-statutory agencies, of drawing up a national strategy to address crisis pregnancy and overseeing its implementation. It will work with a wide range of organisations, not just in the health sector but also, for example, in the education, employment and housing fields.

- 3.13** HIV/AIDS and STI services are available to women and men in all clinics. There are special clinics for women in some of the larger clinics.
- 3.14** Routine ante natal HIV testing, introduced in 1999, allows for early detection of HIV and treatment in pregnancy, leading to an improved outcome for both mother and baby.
- 3.15** Ireland welcomed the outcome document of the 1999 five-year review of the United Nations Cairo *Conference on Population and Development*. The inclusion of specific benchmarks on the reduction of illiteracy among women, maternal mortality and adolescent vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as well as the safe and effective provision of family planning methods, provides an important way of guiding countries to achieve the goals of Cairo set in 1994. Ireland has agreed multi-annual funding to UNAIDS with an allocation of IR£0.5m in 2001, €2.95m in 2002. In addition, Ireland allocated €1.9m (IR£1.5m) to the International Aids Vaccine Initiative in 2001 and a further contribution will be made in 2002.

## Violence against Women

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women will be taken*

### Government Commitments

- 4.1** Raising awareness around the topic of violence against women and girls will continue to be supported by the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women, which was established by the Government in 1997. Models of best practice and research into service provision will be developed to respond to women experiencing violence, including domestic violence, rape and sexual assault. The non-governmental sectors of society will continue to inform policy in this area and will be full participants at national and regional levels.
- 4.2** A review of the structures for monitoring and implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women will be undertaken by the end of 2002.
- 4.3** The Government will strengthen the work of the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women and the Regional Planning Committees on Violence Against Women which have been established. This strengthening of these multi-agency, multi-disciplinary Committees will take the form of:
- improved funding with clear allocation criteria for the provision of services to victims;
  - improved funding with clear allocation criteria for the provision of emergency accommodation;
  - the undertaking of a Public Awareness Campaign on violence against women;
  - the establishment of a National Crisis Referral Help-line;
  - the establishment of programmes for perpetrators of violence.
- 4.4** The Sex Offenders Act, 2001 came into operation on 27 September, 2001. Its primary purpose is to protect children and other vulnerable persons against sexual abuse or attack through the introduction of a notification system for convicted sex offenders. It also introduces separate legal representation in certain circumstances for complainants in rape and other serious sexual assault trials and significantly increases the penalty for sexual assault.

- 4.5 The Equality Authority has published a code of practice on sexual harassment and harassment at work — guidance on prevention and procedures for dealing with the problem — and has presented it to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This is in accordance with its functions under Section 56 of the Employment Equality Act, 1998, as amended by paragraph (g) of the Schedule to the Equal Status Act, 2000. Further work is planned to develop a code of practice on sexual harassment and harassment in the provision of services.
- 4.6 The Garda Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit within the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation provides a nucleus of expertise and skill on a national basis in the investigation of Domestic Violence and Sexual Crimes. The Unit will continue to secure ongoing liaison with Government and non-Government Organisations and to promote best practise in the investigation of Domestic Violence and Sexual Crimes.

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: The causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of measures will be explored*

### **Government Commitments**

- 4.7 Education programmes and research in relation to violence against women will be supported. Analysis will be undertaken of the current and future needs of responses to women and girls who have experienced or are experiencing violence or the threat of violence, rape and other serious sexual assaults.
- 4.8 The Government acknowledges the need for research to inform policy decisions and will continue to provide part funding towards the cost of research into violence against women.



## Women and Armed Conflict

---

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: The participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and the protection of women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation will be increased***

### Government Commitments

- 5.1 The Permanent Defence Force has been involved in humanitarian activities overseas for a considerable number of years, in conjunction with their participation in peace support missions. Increasingly, in the case of these missions, humanitarian tasks go hand-in-hand with military tasks. An example of this type of activity was where Defence Forces personnel, while serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from 1988 until their withdrawal at the end of 2001, utilised an annual financial subvention from the Ireland Aid Programme, gave assistance in the form of medical care, engineering works, harvest escorts and the distribution of educational material and equipment, etc. in South Lebanon. A number of small scale projects have also been undertaken by Defence Forces personnel serving with the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Security Presence in Kosovo (KFOR) and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). It is envisaged that the Irish Contingent serving with the United Nations mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which was deployed in December 2001, will undertake humanitarian projects similar to those undertaken by Irish personnel serving with UNIFIL, e.g. assistance to local schools and orphanages.
- 5.2 While women are not the sole focus of humanitarian assistance actions, they are major beneficiaries. It is the policy of the Defence Forces to continue to contribute to humanitarian aid and relief.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: The specific needs and rights to protection of women fleeing armed conflict will be recognised in administrative and legal instruments***

### Government Commitments

- 5.3 Where a woman applies for a declaration to be a refugee under the Refugee Act, 1996, it is the practice where possible and appropriate to assign a female interviewer and interpreter to her regarding her application to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. This is

particularly the case where a female applicant presents a claim which contains gender specific issues such as sexual violence and female genital mutilation. If the matter reaches appeal, this practice continues in the Refugee Appeals Tribunal — where practical and possible a female Member of the Tribunal is assigned to consider and decide the case. This is to accommodate situations where the alleged fear of persecution could be gender specific or where the woman's cultural or religious background would make it impossible for her to properly relay the details of her case to a male interviewer or Member of the Tribunal.

- 5.4** All staff working in the Offices of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and Refugee Appeals Tribunal complete appropriate training and are aware of the importance of treating all applicants for asylum with respect and sensitivity and with full awareness of cultural differences. This training includes procedures to be followed when dealing with victims of trauma and violence and other sensitive matters such as gender specific issues. The training programmes have been agreed with, amongst others, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UNHCR full-time official for Ireland, asylum experts from other countries and agencies with specialist skills.

## Women and the Economy

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Women's economic rights and independence will be promoted*

### Government Commitments

- 6.1** The Government will continue to promote a comprehensive legal framework to provide for equality of opportunity and treatment between women and men in employment and in relation to the provision of goods and services and to redress discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, race, age, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation and membership of the Traveller Community.
- 6.2** The Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act, 2000 which transposed the provisions of the European Part-Time Work Directive came into operation on 20 December 2001. The Act provides, inter alia, that a part-time employee, as defined in the Act, cannot be treated in a less favourable manner than a comparable full-time employee in relation to conditions of employment. The purpose of the Act is also to facilitate the development of part-time work on a voluntary basis and to contribute to the flexible organisation of working time in a manner which takes into account the needs of employers and employees.
- 6.3** Ireland will advance a strategy aimed at increasing the proportion of women in employment, promoting family-friendly policies in employment, increasing childcare places and taking action with the aim of reducing the gender pay gap.
- 6.4** A *Framework for the Development of Equal Opportunities Policies at the Level of the Enterprise* has been established under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness and includes representatives from the Irish Business & Employers Confederation, Public Service Employers and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Framework is chaired by the Equality Authority. The aim of the Framework is to eliminate discrimination and to promote equal opportunities in the workplace on the nine grounds covered by the Employment Equality Act, 1998, including gender, marital status and family status. The Framework will monitor and review progress annually. To date the Framework is supporting twelve different projects, is considering further projects, has published "Guidelines for Employment Equality Policies in Enterprises" and is preparing a publication on equality training.
- 6.5** The recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on Women's Access to Labour Market Opportunities will be progressed with a view to enhancing the employability and skills of women returning to the labour market.

- 6.6 The Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) will support women who wish to enter or return to the workforce through the provision of a range of employment-related training programmes, including Specific Skills Training, Traineeships, Apprenticeship and Return to Work courses.
- 6.7 A planned and comprehensive programme of measures will form the strategy to motivate, encourage and support lone parents to join the active labour force and thereby achieve greater financial independence and move out of poverty. This initiative commenced in early 2001.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Actions to progressively eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of sex discrimination will be undertaken***

### **Government Commitments**

- 6.8 The newly adopted European Directive to amend Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions will be transposed into national law.
- 6.9 In accordance with the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, a Consultative Group including representation from relevant Government Departments and the Social Partners has been convened to:
- consider the recommendations of the Economic and Social Research Institute research on male/female wage differentials, including the case for sectoral analysis in both the public and private sectors;
  - develop proposals for action(s) to address issues identified for consideration by Government.
- 6.10 Measures to tackle gender segregation, both vertical and horizontal, in the labour force will be pursued.
- 6.11 The *Equality for Women* measure in the National Development Plan will provide funding, for the period 2000–2006, to projects, including proposals aimed at addressing the glass ceiling and horizontal segregation in the labour force. The Equality for Women measure will support proposals designed to promote:
- access to employment, education and training, retraining and up-skilling;
  - encouraging entrepreneurship and career development among women;
  - innovative actions for disadvantaged women and older women;
  - gender proofing of personnel policies and practices, by means of the Equality Reviews and Action Plans Scheme, which is being implemented by the Equality Authority;
  - family friendly policies in employment and sharing family responsibilities;
  - research and information campaign for women returning to paid employment.

**6.12** The Government has approved a programme of measures to address gender imbalance in the Civil Service, as follows:

- the development of a new Gender Equality Policy for the Civil Service;
- the adoption of strategic objectives and equality goals at Departmental level for the increased representation of women at senior management levels; and
- a programme of positive action in the main human resources management areas.

**6.13** The new Gender Equality Policy for the Civil Service was agreed with the staff unions and was approved by the Government in June, 2001.

**6.14** A new Diversity Policy for the Civil Service is currently being developed. The policy will set out policy on implementing equality of opportunity in employment in the Civil Service and will cover the grounds: gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

**6.15** The achievement of the strategic objectives and targets set out in Departmental Strategy Statements will be monitored as part of the annual cycle of reporting of progress on the Strategy Statements. In addition, in June 2000, the Government set a specific goal of one-third posts at Assistant Principal level to be filled by women within five years.

**6.16** The Equality Authority has published a code of practice on sexual harassment and harassment at work — guidance on prevention and procedures for dealing with the problem — and has presented it to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This is in accordance with its functions under Section 56 of the Employment Equality Act, 1998, as amended by paragraph (g) of the Schedule to the Equal Status Act, 2000. Further work is planned to develop a code of practice on sexual harassment and harassment in the provision of services.

**6.17** An Garda Síochána is committed to and supports equality of opportunity in employment regardless of gender. In line with Government policy, the Garda Commissioner will ensure that the principles and practices of equality of opportunity shall apply to the recruitment, placement, selection, career, development and all other conditions of service of members of An Garda Síochána.

The Equality Officer for An Garda Síochána is responsible for registering and monitoring grievances concerned with equal opportunities. A designated female member is available in each Garda Division throughout the country to provide support, information, assistance and counselling to any female member subjected to sexual harassment and who seeks advice.

**6.18** With regard to the Permanent Defence Force, the Government is committed to a policy which will afford full equality of opportunity for women, and to the full participation of women in all aspects of Defence Force activity, including operational duties, ceremonial duties, assignments, access to the military educational system and promotion. Monitoring of statistics on the numbers of women relative to men serving in the Permanent Defence Force, the Reserve Defence Force (FCÁ) The Naval Reserve and the First Line Reserve (former members of the PDF) will continue.

**6.19** To strengthen their commitment to equal opportunity policies for women, local authorities will:

- implement Workplace Reviews and Equality Audits with the aim of developing Equality Action Plans which include equality issues;

- implement Action Plans by Equality Officers and Equality Action Teams, in the 34 major local authorities;
- designate persons to provide advice, guidance and assistance on harassment/anti-bullying policies;
- publish data disaggregated by gender in Annual Reports;
- from 2001, apply new shortlisting guidelines in clerical officer recruitment which, inter alia, will facilitate the recruitment of women who retired from local authority work on marriage and now wish to return to the workforce;
- co-operate with the network of Equality Officers under the auspices of the Local Government Management Services Board which will continue to facilitate best practice and uniform development of an equality programme throughout the local authority system.

**6.20** Issues arising from the study '*Gender Balance in the Fire Service*' which examines barriers to women entering and remaining within the fire service, will be examined with a view to developing a strategy to redress employment imbalances. The study referred to is feeding into the Strategic Review of the Fire Service which has now been completed. The Strategic Review considered recruitment and retention difficulties generally in the Fire Service. The Review Report was received in the Department on 24 January, 2002 and is currently being examined.

**6.21** The recommendations in The Report of the Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture will continue to be progressed in consultation with the relevant Government Departments and Agencies as appropriate.

A Steering Group has been set up by the National Development Plan (2000 – 2006) Gender Equality Unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, to oversee the production of statistical research on the role of women in agriculture, in line with Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Women's equal access to employment, trade and markets will be facilitated***

### **Government Commitments**

**6.22** Consistent with the National Employment Action Plans and the National Development Plan (2000-2006), State Agencies, County Enterprise Boards and Social Partners will promote the systematic establishment and sustaining of small enterprises, micro-enterprises and self-employed trading and start-your-own business supports among women. Specially tailored packages will be designed to support the participation of women in business in the regions.

**6.23** The imbalance between women and men in running business, in senior management positions together with the under-representation of women in careers in science and technology suggest opportunities exist for specific positive action initiatives for women. To this end, initiatives, under the National Development Plan Productive sector Operational Programme 2000-2006, to support indigenous industry will have elements for women and/or tailored to the needs of women in

industry, for example through the development of workshops, networks and mentoring and participation in the European Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship (WES).

- 6.24** Start-your-own business supports for women, the long-term unemployed and marginalised groups through collaboration will be developed between State agencies, local development bodies and Social Partners.
- 6.25** The increased participation of women in the labour force will be promoted among those women whose economic activity rates are below the Irish average and in those areas of training where women are under-represented.
- 6.26** The recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on Women's Access to Labour Market Opportunities will be advanced with a view to enhancing the employability and skills of women returning to the labour market.
- 6.27** There will be a continuation of funding to organisations to promote and provide encouragement, and information and training to enhance and promote the role of women in agriculture.

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Promote the harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men*

### **Government Commitments**

- 6.28** Reconciliation of work and family life will be promoted through supporting the provision of childcare facilities, through improving statutory entitlements to leave and through non-statutory measures at the level of the enterprise.
- 6.29** The childcare infrastructure will be developed under Regional Operational Programmes of the National Development Plan, 2000-2006, and will address:
- providing a diverse range of childcare supports;
  - increasing trained personnel in childcare;
  - improving the co-ordination and delivery of childcare;
  - initiating play and development opportunities for disadvantaged children;
  - providing women with a choice of working outside the home.
- 6.30** A scheme of capital grants of £10m (€12.7m) to provide for childcare facilities for civil servants, to be spent over 2001 and 2002, was announced in the Budget 2001.
- 6.31** In accordance with the National Development Plan, childcare facilities will be developed and expanded, in both private and community sectors, with a total budget of some €436m, inclusive of the funding of over €317 million allocated under the National Development Plan.

**6.32** Childcare services will be expanded, taking account of quantity and quality, in the following areas:

- the availability of funding under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, through the County/City Childcare Committees to support local childcare training models;
- the availability of funding through the County/City Childcare Committees to support the work of local childcare networks;
- the development of a National Childcare Training and Qualifications Framework;
- the availability of funding through the County/City Childcare Committees to support the work of local childcare networks;
- the development of childcare services for children of school going age in both school based and community settings to cater for the needs of children and their parents;
- the development of supports for childminders;
- assistance with childcare costs of participants in certain training schemes;
- an advisory service by Health Boards.

**6.33** The development and expansion of childcare facilities will take account of the regulatory framework.

The Minister for the Environment and Local Government published Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities on 17 July 2001. The Guidelines explicitly acknowledge that planning permission for childcare facilities had been identified as an area of concern in relation to childcare service development. The Guidelines address this concern by ensuring a consistency of approach throughout the country to the treatment of planning applications for childcare facilities and outlining the planning issues appropriate to childcare facilities. The Guidelines have been issued as Ministerial guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. Section 28 requires that planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála shall have regard to any such Ministerial guidelines in the performance of their functions.

**6.34** The substantial investment in Child Benefit will increase the choices available to women in terms of funding childcare.

**6.35** Workplace Leave Arrangements will continue to be promoted and improved.

**6.36** Arising from the recommendations of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness Working Group on the Review and Improvement of Maternity Protection Legislation, the Government has made the following improvements:

- maternity leave which attracts a payment has been increased from 14 weeks to 18 weeks as from 8 March, 2001;
- unpaid maternity leave has been doubled to 8 weeks as from 8 March, 2001.

**6.37** The remaining recommendations of the Working Group on Maternity Leave have been approved by the Government. These will require new legislation and include:

- paid time off for mothers to attend ante-natal classes and for fathers to attend two ante-natal classes immediately prior to the birth;



- the reckonability of additional unpaid leave for the purpose of calculating annual leave; and
- some provision for breast feeding.

Work is under way on a Maternity Leave (Amendment) Bill.

- 6.38** The Government decided that any relevant recommendations of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness Working Group on Maternity Leave should also apply to Adoptive Leave. Consequently, the period of adoptive leave, which attracts a payment, has been increased by four weeks and the period of unpaid adoptive leave has also been increased by four weeks, both with effect from 8 March, 2001.
- 6.39** An Adoptive Leave (Amendment) Bill will be required to give effect to the other recommendations of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness Working Group on Maternity Leave, which are relevant to Adoptive Leave.
- 6.40** The Carer's Leave Bill 2001 was enacted in July 2001. This Act will allow employees to leave their employment for up to 65 weeks to provide full-time care.
- 6.41** In tandem with the Carer's Leave Act, the Social Welfare Act, 2000 provides for a new Carer's Benefit scheme which is a weekly income support payment to people who leave the workforce temporarily to care for someone who needs full time care and attention.
- 6.42** A review of the Parental Leave Act, 1998, which was carried out in consultation with the Social Partners, was concluded in November, 2001. A report on the review was published in April, 2002. The Working Group recommendations will be submitted to Government for decision, and implemented by primary legislation, if approved.
- 6.43** Through the work of the National Framework Committee established under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, the Government and the Social Partners are committed to promoting flexible working arrangements, in conjunction with the Equality Authority, in order to assist undertakings to maintain and improve productivity and competitiveness, to ensure equality of opportunity between men and women, and to achieve the required balance between flexibility and security and to increase the quality of jobs.
- 6.44** The activities of the National Framework Committee include:
- Identifying relevant options for enterprise-level family-friendly policies and practices;
  - Developing practical guidelines at national level to assist in the implementation of family-friendly policies and practices at enterprise level;
  - Identifying potential barriers and impediments to the provision of family-friendly policies that meet the needs of working parents and identifying possible solutions to such difficulties;
  - Identifying best practice and disseminating it to employers and trade unions;
  - Providing training to management, union, employer and workplace representatives on identified relevant family-friendly options and on best practice methods of implementation.

- 6.45** Research will be undertaken in relation to the sharing of family responsibilities, taking into account the experience of a number of other countries.
- 6.46** The Civil Service is in the process of developing new family friendly working schemes: Worksharing which will permit a range of part-time working patterns and Teleworking. These schemes are in addition to existing schemes for flexible working hours, job-sharing, term time working, career breaks and special leave for domestic reasons.
- 6.47** The possibility of introducing a Term Time Working Scheme in the local authorities from 2002, which would enable women with school-age children, amongst others, to avail of paid employment opportunities, will be considered.

The introduction in the local authorities of a worksharing scheme, which is an extension of the jobsharing scheme and will permit a range of flexible working arrangements, will also be considered during 2002.

- 6.48** The implementation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme through the provision of childcare training and through direct childcare provision will be systematically developed, together with a Quality Assurance programme with childcare providers in State training.

# Women in Power and Decision-Making

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structure and decision-making*

## Government Commitments

- 7.1** The low representation of women at decision-making levels will be examined by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, in consultation with the Social Partners during the course of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness.
- 7.2** The work being done under the Strategic Management Initiative process will be used to increase the representation of women in management posts to further enhance the position of women in management and to ensure they attain their full potential in the Civil Service and the wider Public Service.
- 7.3** Increased participation of women in decision-making will be supported through positive actions funded under the Equality for Women measure in the National Development Plan (2000 – 2006).
- 7.4** The NDP Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee will monitor and assist in the promotion of gender balance on the National Development Plan (2000 – 2006) Monitoring Committees.
- 7.5** Gender balance on State Boards will be reviewed with a view to establishing how best to secure a minimum of 40% female representation on State Boards.
- 7.6** The European Commission proposal for a Programme relating to the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005) was adopted by the Labour and Social Affairs Council in November, 2000. The Programme has the following objectives:
- To promote and disseminate the values and practices underlying gender equality;
  - To improve the understanding of issues related to direct and indirect gender discrimination; and
  - To develop the capacity of key players (independent bodies responsible for the promotion of gender equality, Social Partners and non-governmental organisations especially at national, regional and local levels) to promote gender equality effectively,

in particular through the support for the exchange of information and good practice and networking at Community level.

The Programme has a budget of €53.45 million to fund a range of activities in EU and applicant countries in support of the achievement of equal opportunities between women and men over the period 2001–2005. An annual open call for project proposals is planned under the programme.

**7.7** An Equal Treatment Directive for Gender Equality in areas other than employment and occupation, which the European Commission has flagged it will propose in 2002, will, upon adoption, be transposed into national law.

**7.8** Womens' awareness of their rights will be further strengthened by the activities of the Equality Authority in:

- pursuing its communications strategy;
- its support for trade union advocacy and community advocacy; and
- its assistance in casework of strategic importance.

Enforcement of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and Equal Status Act, 2000, will also develop women's awareness.

**7.9** The recommendation by the *Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture* to establish a forum, in the form of a Network of Women Farmers, to enable women to participate in the wide issues of farming and agricultural decision-making, will be explored.

**7.10** The recognition and support of the LEADER programme, in offering opportunities to rural women to participate in the decision-making processes affecting them at local level, will continue.

**7.11** The Local Government Act, 2001, provides that a local authority shall seek to promote the objective of an appropriate gender balance in the making of appointments by it to certain committees and bodies. The Act allows for the issuing of guidelines to local authorities as regards the making of such appointments.

Regulations have now been made under the Act bringing into effect salary type payments for local councillors in recognition of their service to the community — this initiative may facilitate a wider range of persons, including women, in seeking local office.

**7.12** Part III of the Electoral Act, 1997 which came into force on 1 January, 1998, provides for public funding of political parties, including, inter alia, expenditure for the promotion of participation by women in political activity. Annual Returns must be furnished to the Public Offices Commission indicating the matters to which funding applied, including the amounts applied, to the participation by women in political activity.

**7.13** The Government fully endorses the affirmation of the political parties in Northern Ireland to

— *the right of women to full and equal participation*

as outlined in the Good Friday Agreement which was signed in Belfast on 10 April 1998.

# Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Create or strengthen national machineries and other government bodies*

## Government Commitments

- 8.1 The Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights is charged, inter alia, with considering and reporting on such matters relating to women's rights generally as it may decide and, in this regard, the Joint Committee is free to consider areas relating to any Government Department. The Joint Committee established a Sub-Committee on Women's Rights in July, 1998 to facilitate such considerations.
- 8.2 All Government Departments and agencies have a role to play in supporting equality between women and men.
- 8.3 Since 1993 all Government Memoranda are required to indicate the impact of policy proposals on women.
- 8.4 Each Government Minister has responsibility for gender equality issues coming within his/her Department. The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform has particular responsibility for the promotion of gender equality and the coordination of gender equality issues.
- 8.5 The Employment Equality Act, 1998, came into operation on 18 October, 1999. The Act outlaws discrimination in relation to employment on nine grounds, namely gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. The scope of the Act is comprehensive and covers discrimination in relation to access to employment, conditions of employment, equal pay for work of equal value, promotion, training and work experience. These kinds of discrimination are outlawed whether by an employer, an employment agency, a trade union, a professional body, a vocational training body or a newspaper advertising jobs in its careers and appointments pages.
- 8.6 The Equal Status Act, 2000, came into operation on 25 October, 2000. This Act gives protection against discrimination in non-workplace areas and thus complements the Employment Equality Act, 1998. The Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the same nine grounds as the Employment Equality Act, 1998.

The Act covers all goods and services which are available to the public, whether on payment or not and irrespective of whether provided by the public sector or private sector. “Services” are defined broadly to include access to public places, banking and insurance services, entertainment, travel, transport, professional services, education, disposal of premises and provision of accommodation and registered clubs. The provisions of the Act are subject to some exemptions.

- 8.7** The Equality Authority is the statutory body set up to work towards the elimination of discrimination and prohibited conduct under equality legislation and to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the matters to which the equality legislation applies. The Authority’s remit is defined in the Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts. It has a duty to provide information to the public in relation to equality legislation, to develop codes of practice and to keep equality legislation under review. The Authority may also request employers to carry out equality reviews and action plans.

In its strategic Plan 2000 — 2002, the Equality Authority has set three key objectives—

- To promote and defend the rights established under the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000;
- To support the development of a capacity to realise equality outcomes in the workplace and in the provision of goods, facilities, services, education and accommodation;
- To contribute to a focus on equality considerations within the private and public sectors and across society.

With its specific focus on equality the actions and activities of the Equality Authority help to enhance the position of women within employment and in availing of services, accommodation and education.

- 8.8** The Equality Authority is:

- pursuing a scheme of equality reviews and action plans;
- supporting the development of equality proofing mechanisms at local and national level;
- supporting the emergence of an equality data strategy at national level; and
- contributing to a review of the equality legislation as part of the transposition of EU directives into our equality legislation.

- 8.9** The Office of Director of Equality Investigations (ODEI), a *de facto* equality tribunal, is an independent statutory body whose core function is to adjudicate on and/or mediate complaints of unlawful discrimination under both employment equality and equal status legislation.

Complaints may be referred for mediation if the parties agree. Mediation settlements are binding and enforceable through the Circuit Court.

Complaints which are not resolved at mediation are investigated by an ODEI Equality Officer. Where unlawful discrimination is found to have occurred, redress will be awarded, including compensation and, where appropriate, the direction of a specific course of action. Decisions of Equality Officers are legally binding, unless appealed, and are enforceable through the Circuit Court.

- 8.10** Partnership agreements including the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness contain several commitments which support Gender Equality.
- 8.11** The Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee set up under the National Development Plan includes representatives from Government Departments and State Agencies who are responsible for measures under the National Development Plan and the Social Partners. This Committee will work to ensure that women and other groups who have experienced discrimination and exclusion are catered for across a range of State Services.
- 8.12** Core funding is provided to the National Women’s Council of Ireland, an umbrella organisation representing over 150 women’s organisations.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects***

### **Government Commitments**

- 8.13** Gender equality is being incorporated in all Operational Programmes of the National Development Plan (NDP). This will include gender impact assessments and the development of indicators to assess progress on equal opportunities between women and men in respect of all Operational Programmes, where relevant, and the mandatory inclusion of equal opportunities among the project selection criteria for all measures. The measures exempt from completing gender impact assessments are water, waste water and waste management, energy, coastal protection and roads.
- 8.14** The functions of the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee which has been set up under the NDP include:
- reviewing equal opportunities and social inclusion impacts across the NDP;
  - monitoring and assisting in the promotion of gender balance on Monitoring Committees;
  - promoting and advising on the co-ordination of policy on equal opportunities;
  - identifying best practice for the promotion of equal opportunities and social inclusion;
  - offering general advice on the evaluation of equal opportunities and social inclusion outcomes; and
  - contributing to the mid-term review of the NDP by providing advice to the Managing Authorities and Monitoring Committees in relation to equal opportunities and social inclusion and on the realisation of equality and social inclusion.
- 8.15** Over the next five years the Gender Equality Unit, established under the National Development Plan, will continue to:
- Advise on and develop appropriate indicators in support of equal opportunities between men and women;

- Advise policy makers in Government Departments and agencies on the impacts of NDP policies on equal opportunities between women and men;
- Advise on, and support the development of, gender disaggregated statistics in relation to NDP measures;
- Provide an advisory, training and information service on issues relating to gender mainstreaming the NDP including encouragement for positive action targeted at women;
- Engage in a research programme to assess and support progress in realising equality of opportunity between women and men;
- Support and advise on incorporating equal opportunities between men and women into evaluations of NDP measures;
- Monitor equal opportunities between women and men in NDP measures;
- Provide expert inputs to the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee of the NDP, to the six Monitoring Committees and to the mid-term review of the NDP/Structural Funds as part of the Unit's monitoring function;
- Contribute to "knowledge development" in gender equality within the context of the NDP by engaging in benchmarking and highlighting barriers to women's participation in economic and social life.

**8.16** Action on Equality Proofing has commenced. As recommended in the Partnership 2000 Report of Equality Proofing, a Working Group was convened on 18 October, 2000 to provide an ongoing focus on equality proofing actions including pilot projects and selected measures of the National Employment Action Plan, e.g. a legislative proposal, County Development Strategies and a public private partnership initiative. The Working Group will oversee implementation of the equality proofing action. Two pilot projects, in the employment and education areas have been identified. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Equality Authority will shortly put in place arrangements for implementing these pilot projects. A research project to prepare a Discussion Paper on the legal and ethnical issues surrounding data collection and ethnic identity was completed in March, 2002. The Equality Authority, in partnership with Combat Poverty Agency, is finalising a publication on the equality dimension within poverty proofing and in partnership with the Director of Community and Enterprise and PLANET (Network of Partnership Managers or Directors), it is also finalising a template for equality proofing County Development Board strategy plans.

The Equality Authority's Advisory Committees on Equality for Lesbian, Gays and Bisexuals and for Older People reported in 2002. Their recommendations include specific recommendations on the equality agenda for lesbian and older women. Activities to support their implementation will be pursued under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness.

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation***

### **Government Commitments**

**8.17** The Equality Authority, NESI and the Department of the Taoiseach are developing a strategic approach to stimulate the design and implementation of an equality data strategy.



- 8.18** Over the next five years the Gender Equality Unit, established under the National Development Plan, will advise on, and support the development of, gender-disaggregated statistics in relation to NDP measures.
- 8.19** The promotion of equality will be central to the local action plans to implement the Social Inclusion Local Development Measure of the Regional Operational Programmes of the NDP. Gender-disaggregated data, targets and indicators to monitor the outcomes are being developed.
- 8.20** To strengthen their commitment to equal opportunity policies for women, local authorities will publish data disaggregated by gender in annual reports.
- 8.21** A computerised management information system for further education programmes will be developed, with data disaggregated by gender for monitoring purposes.



## Human Rights of Women

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Promote and protect human rights of women, through full implementation of human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*

### Government Commitments

- 9.1 Ireland acceded to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in December 1985 with reservations on certain articles. Since then several of these reservations have been withdrawn and only four now remain. Ireland will keep under review these remaining reservations.
- 9.2 The Government will submit a fourth Report on Ireland under the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* by January 2003 as required by the UN.
- 9.3 The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 6 October 1999. Ireland ratified the Optional Protocol on 7 September, 2000. The Optional Protocol establishes an individual complaints procedure that gives women the right to complain to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, a committee established under CEDAW to consider progress made in the implementation of the Convention. It also establishes a general enquiry procedure that allows the Committee to conduct enquiries into serious and systematic abuses of women's rights.
- 9.4 Legislation will be prepared to give effect to the *Protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime*, the purpose of which is to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, in particular women and children. An EU Framework Decision covering similar issues will shortly be adopted and the proposed legislation will also take account of the final text of the decision.

## **Government Commitments**

- 9.5** The implementation of the Human Rights Commission Act, 2000, signed by the President on 31 May, 2000, will benefit all sectors of Irish society, including women. The Act establishes an independent Human Rights Commission responsible for the promotion, protection and development of human rights in the State. The establishment of the Human Rights Commission gives effect to a commitment in the Good Friday Agreement.
- 9.6** The Human Rights Commission Act, 2001, increased the number of Human Rights Commissioners from 9 to 15 and amended the statutory provision for equal gender representation in the Human Rights Commission Act 2000, so that at least seven Commissioners must be women and seven must be men. The establishment of the Commission assumes even greater significance in the context of the Government's decision to bring forward legislation to give effect to the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights into Irish law.
- 9.7** The Equality Authority will defend the rights of groups named in the equality legislation through enforcement of the legislation.
- 9.8** The Garda Síochána Human Rights Working Group, launched in 1997, will continue its work of developing human rights initiatives through training, revising the Garda Síochána Code of Professional and Ethical Standards, the inclusion of human rights in Annual Policing Plans and conducting a human rights audit of Garda policies. Among the objectives of the Garda Síochána Human Rights Initiative are highlighting and promoting the fundamental nature of human rights in the policing of a developed society and raising awareness of the national, regional and global standards for the protection of human rights.
- 9.9** Plans to replace the existing twelve-place women's unit in Limerick Prison with a new 20 place purpose-built Women's Unit are well advanced. The new facility should be in place by end 2003. It will be fully equipped with full educational, training and recreational facilities.
- 9.10** The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), formerly the Directorate for Asylum Support Services, is responsible for co-ordinating the provision of services, such as accommodation, health, social welfare and education services for asylum seekers, and co-ordinating the implementation of integration policy for refugees and persons granted humanitarian leave to remain in the State. The RIA is particularly concerned to ensure that a high standard of accommodation continues to be made available to families in direct provision.

Asylum seekers and refugee children are entitled to access primary and post primary education in the State in the same manner and to the same extent as Irish citizens. In addition, refugees are entitled to access further education and training in the same manner and to the same extent as Irish citizens. It is recognised that attendance at English classes can present difficulties for some female asylum seekers with very young children and the RIA and English language providers, particularly the Vocational Education Committees, continue to explore ways of dealing with this difficulty. The asylum seeker support group network offers considerable potential in this respect and already support groups have been involved in organising crèche facilities so that single parents

can attend English language classes and in organising morning/evening informal conversation classes.

- 9.11** A National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme was launched by the Taoiseach in October, 2001. It is a comprehensive public awareness programme to address racism and to promote an inclusive intercultural society. A core budget of €5.7m was provided over a three year period. The overall aim of the programme is to contribute to creating the conditions for building an inclusive society in Ireland where racism is effectively addressed and cultural diversity is valued.

The key messages of the Programme are:

- Racism is a denial of basic human rights;
- Racism is against the law;
- Ireland is increasingly a multicultural society and that this is a strength;
- Inward migration is not the cause of racism and we all have a responsibility to tackle racism.

Since the launch of the programme the main actions and initiatives which have been undertaken include: a total of €635,000 was provided to local and community anti-racism awareness initiatives through grant schemes. An advertising campaign was launched in March 2002 on radio, press and billboards to raise the visibility of the programme and to spread its messages. As part of its advertising campaign, the awareness programme delivered 1.3 million leaflets to households providing information on racism and how to deal with it as an individual. To mark March 21, International Day against Racism, the programme launched an anti-racist emblem designed by John Rocha to be worn as a pin. The programme also participated in a number of partnership ventures including a series of multicultural programmes on national TV, the Anti-Racist Workplace Week, and a grant scheme was made available for political parties to raise awareness among their members and candidates of the need to use appropriate language in the approach towards the general election held in May, 2002.

- 9.12** The Equality Authority, in conjunction with trade union and employer organisations, has organised an Anti-Racist Workplace Week in 2000 and 2001. A range of publicity, promotional and resource material was produced. The event in 2001 was aided by the National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme.

- 9.13** In assessing project proposals, it will be the policy of Ireland Aid in developing countries, to attach particular importance to the project's likely impact on awareness of human rights and democratisation issues at grass roots community level and on the capacity of communities to assert their rights and gain understanding of and access to processes and institutions of government. The anticipated impact on equality between women and men is now, and will in the future, be addressed.



## Women and the Media

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Promote a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media*

### Government Commitments

- 10.1** Under the Broadcasting Authority Act, 1993, there is a statutory requirement for gender balance in relation to membership of the RTE Authority.
- 10.2** The Broadcasting Act, 2001, similarly provides for gender balance in relation to the membership of the board of TG4 when that board is established on a statutory basis.
- 10.3** The Broadcasting Act, 2001, provides for gender balance on the Broadcasting Complaints Commission.
- 10.4** Ireland will participate in the Programme relating to the Community Framework Strategy on gender equality 2000 — 2005. This Programme will fund projects aimed at promoting a greater understanding and awareness of gender equality issues.
- 10.5** The Equality Authority is developing a working partnership with local community organisations to support community advocacy. The Equality Authority will train identified members of local organisations in the equality legislation and in accompanying and assisting cases under the legislation. A community advocacy programme will enable a network to be established of those identified members to generate mutual support, to maintain a flow of relevant information and to build a knowledge base to develop the equality agenda.

The Equality Authority is developing a regional outreach programme through:

- targeted advertising;
- local press and radio on Equality Authority initiatives;
- partnership with Comhairle and Citizen Information Centres regarding training and clinics; and
- meeting with local interests on the Equality Authority work programme.





## Women and the Environment

---

*UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development*

### Government Commitments

- 11.1** Under the Transport and Housing priorities of the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme, it is expected that improvements in public transport will be of significant benefit to women who account for a high proportion of public transport users. Local authorities and voluntary housing bodies have been asked to be aware of the need to design housing schemes having regard to security and safety of particular concern to women and children. The provision of additional social housing and investment in social and communal infrastructure, including crèche and childcare facilities, is intended to provide an improved living environment for parents and children.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000, provides that in future local authority development plans must include an objective for, inter alia, “the provision, or facilitation of the provision of services for the community including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities”.

- 11.2** Under the National Roads and Public Transport Priorities of the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme there will be many improvements in services that although benefiting all public transport users may have a particularly positive impact on women who account for a high proportion of public transport users. These include—
- New low floor buses which, while primarily aimed at those who are accessibility impaired, will be of benefit to women caring for children and the elderly;
  - Improved lighting & safety/security;
  - Better timetabling, including off peak travel;
  - Enhancement of rural routes;
  - The existence of a new Quality Customer Service committee looking in particular at equality issues including Gender Equality and the impact of Public Transport issues on women.



## The Girl-Child

---

***UN Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective: Eliminate all forms of discrimination against girl children***

### Government Commitments

- 12.1** Ireland's first ever National Childrens Strategy was launched by the Taoiseach and Tanaiste in November, 2000. The Strategy is a ten year plan to improve the quality of all children's lives and it includes a large number of proposed actions across a wide range of policy areas. The Strategy is a very clear statement of support to parents, to local communities and to everybody who works with children and it is a major initiative in progressing Ireland's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 12.2** The National Children's Strategy sets out a clear and unifying vision for all children up to the age of eighteen — *“an Ireland where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential”*. It is grounded in six operational principles which reflect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child — *“All our future actions will be child centred, family oriented, equitable, inclusive, action orientated and integrated”*.

A modern understanding of children's lives called the “whole child” perspective is used in the Strategy to ground the vision. The “whole child” perspective provides a more complete picture of children's lives and the relationships they enjoy.

- 12.3** The Strategy identifies three National Goals for children to be achieved by 2010 as follows:
- Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity;
  - Children's lives will be better understood; their lives will benefit from evaluation, research and information on their needs, rights and the effectiveness of services;
  - Children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development. The Strategy recognises that all children have a basic range of needs and that some children have additional needs.

In essence, the three National Goals involve listening to children, understanding their needs better and then acting more effectively based on what has been heard and learnt.

- 12.4** The Government will ratify the Optional Protocol to the United Nation's *Convention on the Rights of the Child* on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography as soon as any necessary legislation has been put in place.
- 12.5** In accordance with the National Development Plan, childcare facilities will be developed and expanded, in particular, supports and frameworks to ensure that the standard and quality of provision is compatible with the needs and rights of the child.
- 12.6** Children will be protected against sexual abuse by the enforcement of recent legislation. The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998, makes it an offence, punishable by up to life imprisonment, to traffic children into, through or out of Ireland for the purposes of their sexual exploitation. It also criminalises the possession, production, publication, importation, exportation and showing of child pornography.
- 12.7** The Sexual Offences Jurisdiction Act, 1996, allows the Irish courts to deal with persons who are resident in Ireland but are alleged to have committed sexual offences against children in other countries. It also targets organisers of child sex tourism by making it an offence to arrange transport for, or to actually transport persons outside the State for the purpose of child sex tourism or to publish information on child sex tourism.
- 12.8** The recommendations of the White Paper on Early Childhood Education: *Ready to Learn* will be implemented on a phased basis. This will include the establishment of the Early Childhood Education Agency and the development of a quality framework for early education.
- 12.9** It will be the policy of Government to promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers that impede the schooling of married and/or pregnant girls and young mothers, including as appropriate, parental education to encourage those who have responsibilities for the care of their children and siblings during their school years to return to, or continue with, and complete schooling.

The Back to Education Allowance was extended to people aged between 18 and 20, getting an unemployment or lone parent payment for at least six months and who have been out of the education system for two years (with effect from September, 2001).

- 12.10** The Government has pursued a policy in recent years of heavily investing in Child Benefit in order to increase supports to families with children.

In the Budget for 2001, the Government committed €1.27 billion to a three year programme of increases designed to substantially enhance the value of the Child Benefit payment. As a first step, the rate for the first and second child was increased by €31.80 (IR£25) per month to €85.70 (IR£67.50) and by €38.10 (IR£30) per month to €109.20 (IR£86) per month for each of the third and subsequent children, with effect from June 2001.

In Budget 2002, Child Benefit was increased by €31.80 (IR£25.04) per month for the first and second child and by €38.10 (IR£30.01) per month for the third and subsequent children bringing the monthly rate to €117.60 (IR£92.62) for the first two children and to €147.30 (IR£116.01) for the third and subsequent children, with effect from April, 2002. This fulfils the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness commitment to move towards €126.97 (IR£100) per month for third and subsequent children.

Moreover, the new Programme for Government contains a commitment to complete the multi-annual programme of increases commenced in Budget 2001. In addition, the Government has pledged to ensure that the combined value of child support is increased in line with the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, that is, towards a level equivalent to 33%-35% of the minimum adult social welfare payment.



## Consultation Process

---

From the outset, the Government was determined to encourage the active involvement of the women of Ireland in the preparation of the National Plan for Women. The consultation process consisted of four elements:

- The first was the appointment of a representative Steering Committee with broad terms of reference to oversee the consultation process and to advise the Minister on the finalisation of the Plan. The terms of reference of the Steering Committee and a list of its members are included in Appendices 1 and 2.
- The second, an information campaign, involved the publication of a draft plan on 16 October 2001 and the dissemination of other useful and relevant documentation. A webpage was also designated for this purpose on the website of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- This was followed by an invitation to all stakeholders to make written submissions and a small financial grant scheme was put in place to assist women's groups around the country to consult and compile submissions.
- The consultation process culminated in 10 Regional Public Fora held at various locations around the country in March 2002.

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform engaged Genesis Consultants to assist with the design and implementation of the Consultation Process.

### Steering Committee

It was important for the consultation process to achieve the maximum level of participation not only of Government Departments and statutory agencies with a stake in the process but also with the non-statutory sector, including the various NGOs. For this purpose a Steering Committee, representative of the main stakeholders in the National Plan, was established. The Steering Committee advised the Minister in relation to the development of the consultation process and guided the development of the final Plan.

### Dissemination of information

Advertisements were placed in the Press and on radio immediately following the launch of the Draft National Plan for Women inviting views from women and their representative groups and announcing a small grant scheme to facilitate women's representative groups in making submissions. The deadline for receipt of submissions was 15 February 2002. "Information packs" containing the Draft Plan and other background documents were available from the Department.

The webpage devoted to the consultation process went live on 16 October 2001. Background documents included the following:

- Draft National Plan for Women and summary leaflet
- The Beijing Platform for Action and Political Declaration
- Summary of the Beijing Platform for Action and Political Declaration
- The Political Declaration and Outcome Document (Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly) agreed by governments at the UN Special Session in New York in June 2000
- Summary of the Political Declaration and Outcome Document
- The Development of Mechanisms to Monitor Progress in Achieving Gender Equality in Ireland (Dr. Yvonne Galligan)
- A discussion document entitled “Reflecting at the Crossroads” (Dr. Pauline Conroy, Ralaheen Ltd.)

## Grant scheme

The grant scheme was designed to encourage and facilitate women’s representative groups to make submissions on the Draft Plan. The National Steering Committee decided that four levels of grant payment would be made — €952, €1,269, €1,904 and €2,539 (£750, £1,000, £1,500 and £2,000).

### Criteria Used in the Allocation of Grants

The criteria used in deciding on the level of grant for individual applications were as follows:

- (i) Area covered by the applicant group — parish or local area, wider area such as town, county, multi-county (e.g. coastal counties or regions), or national;
- (ii) Number of people involved in the consultative process;
- (iii) Particular difficulties (if any) in the area e.g. dispersed rural area or deprived rural or urban area;
- (iv) Characteristics of the group being consulted — difficult to reach populations (e.g. homeless people, women who use drugs, ethnic minority women) or populations which incur additional expenses in coming together (e.g. interpreters for ethnic minority women, sign language interpreters, Braille, and transport for people with disability) or populations which are exceptionally disadvantaged (e.g. Traveller women and ethnic minority women);
- (v) Evidence of a significant research effort or input or extensive consultation;
- (vi) Focus on those critical areas that will not be the subject of much comment (e.g. media or girl child); and
- (vii) The level of grant sought. The amount of funding allocated was not greater than the amount of funding sought.



## Allocation of Grants

1. Groups covering a local village area were allocated the minimum amount of €952 (IR₺750), except where less funding was sought.
2. Groups operating in a wider context than a village, but less than county level were allocated €1,269 (IR₺1,000).
3. A small number of groups (6) were allocated the maximum grant of €2,539 (IR₺2,000) as they were the biggest groups with the largest consultation or their type of consultation warranted this level of funding.
4. The remaining applicants were allocated €1,904 (IR₺1,500). All national, regional and county organisations, which sought €1,904 (IR₺1,500) or more and were undertaking substantial consultations, were allocated €1,904 (IR₺1,500) e.g. national trade unions, ICA county federations etc.
5. Organisations operating in disadvantaged urban areas, targeting difficult to reach groups and undertaking substantial consultation, were also allocated €1,904 (IR₺1,500).

Grants totalling €277,729 (IR₺218,729) were provided to over 200 organisations to facilitate them in making submissions on the draft Plan.

## Submissions on Draft National Plan for Women and regional fora

The response of women to the invitations to participate in the Consultation Process greatly exceeded expectations. In all, 335 submissions were received on a wide and diverse range of issues. The organisations and individuals who made submissions are listed at Appendix 4.

The Steering Committee decided that the consultation process would be further enhanced through holding a series of regional fora around the country where women and their representative groups would be afforded a further opportunity to contribute to the development of the Plan and to meet with members of the Steering Committee. Ten regional fora were held at various locations around the country in March 2002 (see list of venues at Appendix 5). At the fora women were afforded an opportunity in workshops and in plenary sessions to articulate their views on the twelve critical areas of concern as well as on cross cutting themes such as equality, diversity among women, women as unpaid carers and institutional mechanisms/supports for the advancement of women. About 1,000 people attended the 10 regional fora.

Two interim reports and a final report were prepared by Genesis Consultants on the consultation process and presented by them to the Steering Committee. Their final report sets out the aspirations and concerns of women and their representative groups as articulated in the submissions and at the regional fora.

The Report on the Aspirations of Women — *Aspirations of Women collected in the course of the Consultation Process on the National Plan for Women 2002: Towards a National Women's Strategy* — is published as a stand alone document to give a full account of the consultation process.



## Recommendations of the Steering Committee

---

The Steering Committee makes the following global recommendations.

- 1 A National Women's Strategy (2003 — 2010) should be developed building on the Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002 and this should be led by
  - A High level Interdepartmental Group
  - Supported by a Cross Departmental Team and
  - Advised by a Social Partnership Grouping
- 2 All relevant Government Departments should take account of the Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002 and the document entitled *Aspirations of Women collected in the course of the Consultation Process on the National Plan for Women 2002: Towards a National Women's Strategy* when formulating/reviewing policy and legislation and in the implementation of their work programmes
- 3 The Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002 should be published and disseminated widely.
- 4 A gender equality database should be developed for the purposes of developing advanced indicators for monitoring progress of women under the 12 critical areas of concern in the Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002.
- 5 Appropriate monitoring mechanisms should be developed for the purpose of monitoring the progress of women under the 12 areas of concern in the Report to the UN on the National Plan for Women 2002.



# APPENDICES



## Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee

---

To advise the Minister

- (a) With respect to the Consultation Process on the National Plan for Women bearing in mind the objectives:
  - (i) To inform women of Government commitments under the twelve critical areas of concern of the UN Platform for Action and Beijing Declaration 1995
  - (ii) To assemble proposals on the ways and means of measuring progress on the advancement of women
  - (iii) To articulate a vision of how the principles in the Beijing Platform for Action might be addressed in the future
- (b) On a range of issues that will arise such as the allocation of grants for the consultation process
- (c) On midterm and final reports to be prepared by Genesis Europe, Consultants
- (d) On the development and finalisation of the Draft National Plan for Women to be presented to Government
- (e) In relation to a communication strategy for the launch of the National Plan for Women at an appropriate time.

## Membership of the Steering Committee

---

Ms Sylva Langford (Chair)	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Mr John Kenny	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Mr Dermot Kilgallon (Secretariat)	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Ms Paula Forde (Secretariat)	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Dr Anne Marie McGauran	NDP Gender Equality Unit
Ms Barbara Cashen	The Equality Authority
Ms Maureen Bohan	Department of Education and Science
Ms Julia O' Malley	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment
Mr Donncha Ó Muíneacháin	Department of the Environment and Local Government
Ms Deirdre MacRory	Department of Finance
Ms Siobhan McCabe	Department Foreign Affairs
Ms Geraldine Kelly	Department of Health and Children
Mr Eoin O' Seaghdha	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Ms Brenda Boylan	Department of the Taoiseach
Mrs Rita Mc Nulty	City/County Development Boards
Ms Sarah Craig	The National Economic and Social Forum
Mrs Betty Murphy	The Irish Farmers Association
Ms Esther Lynch	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Ms Jackie Harrison	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
Ms Gráinne Healy	National Women's Council of Ireland
Ms Helen Landers	Community and Voluntary Pillar
Ms Aileen Price	Women In The Home
Ms Rachel Doyle	National Traveller Women's Forum
Mrs Lelia O' Flaherty	NEART
Sr Noreen O' Shea	Conference of Religious in Ireland



## List of Organisations who received Grants

---

Women Who Work  
Clare Women's Network  
Higher Education Equality Unit  
Step Enterprises  
Liscarroll Women's Group  
Warrenmount C.E.D. Centre  
Ballinakill Active Retirement Group  
Irish Nurses Organisation  
Home Birth Association Of Ireland  
Longford Women's Centre  
Community Women's Education Initiatives  
Tralee Women's Resource Centre  
Newtown Shandrum I.C.A  
County Monaghan Women's Network  
Age & Opportunity/Older Women's Network  
Women Of The North West  
Drogheda Area Women's Network  
Women's International League For Peace And Freedom  
Grange I.C.A. Guild  
Limerick East Fianna Fáil Women's Group  
Westmeath Community Development Ltd.  
Elah Voluntary Counselling Service  
Watergrasshill I.C.A.  
Wicklow I.C.A.  
Grenagh I.C.A.  
Irish Wheelchair Association  
Donegal Domestic Violence Service  
Snippets Historical, Cultural Drama Group  
Comhlacht Forbartha Aitiúil Acla  
Ashbourne Senior Citizens

Cavan Federation I.C.A.  
National Parents Council Primary  
Greater Blanchardstown Development Project  
Tallaght Homeless Advice Unit  
Nth West Inner City Women's Network  
Catherine Mc Auley Women's Group  
Bodywhys  
Castletownbere I.C.A.  
Rathpeacon I.C.A.  
Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patricks College  
Finglas Cabra Partnership  
Knockraha I.C.A.  
Dept Of Community And Enterprise, Dublin City Council  
Ballymote Family Resource Centre  
Carrigaline I.C.A.  
Aughnasheelin I.C.A.  
North West Rural Project (Forum)  
M.A.N.D.A.T.E  
Doneraile I.C.A.  
Irish Congress Of Trade Unions  
Abbey Women's Group  
Ashbourne Women's Group  
Hilltop Women's Club  
W.I.S.E  
Tubbercurry Traveller Women's Project  
Longford I.C.A.  
Donegal Women's Network  
Allihies I.C.A.  
Sevenhouses I.C.A.  
South Parish Community Association  
Ballyclough I.C.A.  
Waterford Women's Centre  
Beara Peninsula I.C.A.  
Drinagh I.C.A.  
An Fáinne Corca Baiscinn Women's Group  
Inisowen Women's Outreach  
Wexford Women's Studies Group  
St Munchins Family Resource Centre

Presentation Justice Network  
Rural Action Project  
Women In Media And Entertainment  
Women's Sector  
Newpark Close Women's Group  
South West Kerry Women's Association  
I.C.A Head Office  
Aisling Group  
Bray & North Wicklow Womens' Network  
Holywell Trust Support Agency  
Focus Group  
The Family Centre, Castlerea  
Naomh Bríd Ladies Club  
Ballymun Women's Resource Centre  
Vincentian Refugee Centre  
Womens Community Projects (Mullingar) Association Ltd  
Alliance Centre For Sexual Health  
Life Pregnancy Care Services  
Mid-West Community Development Support Agency Ltd  
Lough Erne I.C.A.  
Mohill Women's Group  
Minane Bridge I.C.A.  
Inishowen Women's Information Network  
Earthwatch Leitrim  
Kiltoghert Women's Group  
Women In The Home  
North Wall Women's Centre  
University Of Limerick  
Ballycommon Telework And Training Centre  
Kerry Network Of People With Disabilities  
Baltimore Area Womens' Group  
Clondalkin Women's Network  
Tullamore Wider Option Group Ltd  
Ashbourne Christian Feminists Group  
Tipperary Women's Network  
Ballinspittle I.C.A.  
Dunderrow I.C.A.  
Leitrim Women's Development Committee

Annaduff Women's Group  
Kerry Federation I.C.A.  
Maam Women's Group  
Goleen I.C.A.  
Ballymun Young Women's Resource Centre  
The South East Men's Network  
St Annes Youth And Community Centre  
Bray Community Network  
Mná Na Mara  
Ballymote Women's Group  
Vita House Widows Craft Group  
Drimoleague I.C.A.  
Summerhill Active Retirement Group  
African Refugee Network  
Cáirde  
Millenium Family Resource Centre  
Women Educating For Transformation  
Ballyhoura Development Ltd  
Cork Federation Of Women's Organisations  
Rape Crisis Network Ireland  
Country Markets, Leitrim  
New Beginnings Parents Support Group  
West Cork & Beara Women's Network  
Coalition Of Grassroots Women's Community Education Projects  
W.E.R.R.C  
Saol Project Ltd  
The Green Party (Comhaontas Glas)  
N.C.C.R.I.  
Wicklow & District Chamber Of Commerce  
Tallaght Lone Parents Centre Ltd  
Sligo I.C.A.  
Leitrim I.C.A.  
Offaly I.C.A.  
Louth I.C.A.  
Clare I.C.A.  
Dublin I.C.A.  
North Tipperary I.C.A.  
Kilkenny I.C.A.

Galway I.C.A.  
Limerick I.C.A.  
Monaghan I.C.A.  
Tipperary I.C.A.  
Westmeath I.C.A.  
Donegal I.C.A.  
Waterford I.C.A.  
Wexford (Bunclody) I.C.A.  
Ashbourne I.C.A.  
Wexford (Enniscorthy) I.C.A.  
Mountwood/Fitzgerald C.D.P./“Wimmins Space”  
St John Of God, Kildare, Services  
National Association Ovulation Method Ireland  
Dublin Sports & Recreation Council  
Whitefriar Community Education Project  
Community Workers Co-Operative  
Rehabcare Bray  
Futurelink Project  
Sinn Féin National Women’s Forum  
Women’s Studies Centre, NUI  
Institute For Feminism And Religion  
European Institute Of Women’s Health  
An Cosán  
Inishowen Women’s Network  
An Croí Centre, Ashbourne  
The National Women’s Council Of Ireland  
Access Ireland Refugee Social Integration Project  
South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd.  
Ballymun I.C.A.  
Sligo Leader Partnership Co Ltd  
European Institute Of Midwifery  
National Traveller Women’s Forum  
Ashbourne Apostolic Society  
Fianna Fáil Dublin South East Women And Equality Forum  
Pro-Beijing Platform N.G.O. Coalition/Women’s Human Rights Project  
Raheen Community Development Group Ltd  
Women’s Inter-Island Network  
Ballyroan Women’s Group

Farm Family Group  
Laragh Women's Group  
Kildare I.C.A.  
Rooskey Women's Group  
Venturepoint  
Optimum Limited  
Asociation Solidaritè Angola Congo (A.S.A.C)  
Roscommon I.C.A.  
Carrick-On-Suir Community Resource Centre  
Meitheal Forbartha Na Gaeltachta  
Dublin North West Women's Group  
Citizens Information Centre, Ashbourne  
Banúlacht

## List of Submissions Received

---

Women Who Work  
Clare Women's Network  
Higher Education Equality Unit  
Step Enterprises  
Liscarroll Women's Group  
Warrenmount C.E.D. Centre  
Ballinakill Active Retirement Group  
Irish Nurses Organisation  
Home Birth Association Of Ireland  
Longford Women's Centre  
Community Women's Education Initiatives  
Tralee Women's Resource Centre  
Newtown Shandrum I.C.A  
County Monaghan Women's Network  
Age & Opportunity/Older Women's Network  
Women Of The North West  
Drogheda Area Women's Network  
Women's International League For Peace And Freedom  
Grange I.C.A. Guild  
Limerick East Fianna Fáil Women's Group  
Westmeath Community Development Ltd.  
Elah Voluntary Counselling Service  
Watergrasshill I.C.A.  
Wicklow I.C.A.  
Grenagh I.C.A.  
Irish Wheelchair Association  
Donegal Domestic Violence Service  
Snippets Historical, Cultural Drama Group  
Comhlacht Forbartha Aitiúil Acla  
Ashbourne Senior Citizens

Cavan Federation I.C.A.  
National Parents Council Primary  
Greater Blanchardstown Development Project  
Tallaght Homeless Advice Unit  
Nth West Inner City Women's Network  
Catherine Mc Auley Women's Group  
Bodywhys  
Castletownbere I.C.A.  
Rathpeacon I.C.A.  
Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patricks College  
Finglas Cabra Partnership  
Knockraha I.C.A.  
Dept Of Community And Enterprise, Dublin City Council  
Ballymote Family Resource Centre  
Carrigaline I.C.A.  
Aughnasheelin I.C.A.  
North West Rural Project (Forum)  
M.A.N.D.A.T.E  
Doneraile I.C.A.  
Irish Congress Of Trade Unions  
Abbey Women's Group  
Ashbourne Women's Group  
Hilltop Women's Club  
W.I.S.E  
Tubbercurry Traveller Women's Project  
Longford I.C.A.  
Donegal Women's Network  
Allihies I.C.A.  
Sevenhouses I.C.A.  
South Parish Community Association  
Ballyclough I.C.A.  
Waterford Women's Centre  
Beara Peninsula I.C.A.  
Drinagh I.C.A.  
An Fáinne Corca Baiscinn Women's Group  
Inisowen Women's Outreach  
Wexford Women's Studies Group  
St Munchins Family Resource Centre



Presentation Justice Network  
Rural Action Project  
Women In Media And Entertainment  
Women's Sector  
Newpark Close Women's Group  
South West Kerry Women's Association  
I.C.A Head Office  
Aisling Group  
Bray & North Wicklow Women's Network  
Holywell Trust Support Agency  
Focus Group  
The Family Centre, Castlerea  
Naomh Bríd Ladies Club  
Ballymun Women's Resource Centre  
Vincentian Refugee Centre  
Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) Association Ltd  
Alliance Centre For Sexual Health  
Life Pregnancy Care Services  
Mid-West Community Development Support Agency Ltd  
Lough Erne I.C.A.  
Mohill Women's Group  
Minane Bridge I.C.A.  
Inishowen Women's Information Network  
Earthwatch Leitrim  
Kiltoghert Women's Group  
Women In The Home  
North Wall Women's Centre  
University Of Limerick  
Ballycommon Telework And Training Centre  
Kerry Network Of People With Disabilities  
Baltimore Area Women's Group  
Clondalkin Women's Network  
Tullamore Wider Option Group Ltd  
Ashbourne Christian Feminists Group  
Tipperary Women's Network  
Ballinspittle I.C.A.  
Dunderrow I.C.A.  
Leitrim Women's Development Committee

Annaduff Women's Group  
Kerry Federation I.C.A.  
Maam Women's Group  
Goleen I.C.A.  
Ballymun Young Women's Resource Centre  
St Annes Youth And Community Centre  
Bray Community Network  
Mná Na Mara  
Ballymote Women's Group  
Vita House Widows Craft Group  
Drimoleague I.C.A.  
Summerhill Active Retirement Group  
African Refugee Network  
Cáirde  
Millennium Family Resource Centre  
Women Educating For Transformation  
Ballyhoura Development Ltd  
Cork Federation Of Women's Organisations  
Rape Crisis Network Ireland  
Country Markets, Leitrim  
New Beginnings Parents Support Group  
West Cork & Beara Women's Network  
Coalition Of Grassroots Women's Community Education Projects  
W.E.R.R.C  
Saol Project Ltd  
The Green Party (Comhaontas Glas)  
N.C.C.R.I.  
Wicklow & District Chamber Of Commerce  
Tallaght Lone Parents Centre Ltd  
Sligo I.C.A.  
Leitrim I.C.A.  
Offaly I.C.A.  
Louth I.C.A.  
Clare I.C.A.  
Dublin I.C.A.  
North Tipperary I.C.A.  
Kilkenny I.C.A.  
Galway I.C.A.

Limerick I.C.A.  
Monaghan I.C.A.  
Tipperary I.C.A.  
Westmeath I.C.A.  
Donegal I.C.A.  
Waterford I.C.A.  
Wexford (Bunclody) I.C.A.  
Ashbourne I.C.A.  
Wexford (Enniscorthy) I.C.A.  
Mountwood/Fitzgerald C.D.P./“Wimmins Space”  
St John Of God, Kildare, Services  
National Association Ovulation Method Ireland  
Dublin Sports & Recreation Council  
Whitefriar Community Education Project  
Community Workers Co-Operative  
Rehabcare Bray  
Futurelink Project  
Sinn Féin National Women’s Forum  
Women’s Studies Centre, NUI  
Institute For Feminism And Religion  
European Institute Of Women’s Health  
An Cosán  
Inishowen Women’s Network  
An Croí Centre, Ashbourne  
The National Women’s Council Of Ireland  
Access Ireland Refugee Social Integration Project  
South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd.  
Ballymun I.C.A.  
Sligo Leader Partnership Co Ltd  
European Institute Of Midwifery  
National Traveller Women’s Forum  
Ashbourne Apostolic Society  
Fianna Fáil Dublin South East Women And Equality Forum  
Pro-Beijing Platform N.G.O. Coalition/Women’s Human Rights Project  
Raheen Community Development Group Ltd  
Women’s Inter-Island Network  
Ballyroan Women’s Group  
Farm Family Group  
Laragh Women’s Group

Kildare I.C.A.  
Rooskey Women's Group  
Venturepoint  
Optimum Limited  
Asociation Solidaritè Angola Congo (A.S.A.C)  
Roscommon I.C.A.  
Carrick-On-Suir Community Resource Centre  
Meitheal Forbartha Na Gaeltachta  
Dublin North West Women's Group  
Citizens Information Centre, Ashbourne  
Banúlacht  
Niamh O'Connor  
Mary Doherty  
David Grey  
Dr Barry Vaughan  
Mrs Mary Doherty  
E Mc Phillips  
Patricia Whitney  
Mrs Margaret Whyte  
Ms Noreen Fahey  
Women's Aid Dundalk  
Una Hearne  
Micheal S. Ó Cléirigh  
Association of Bahà' ì Women  
Shane O'Connor  
Dr Michael Purser  
Ms Joan Lahiff  
Catherine Whelan  
Coiste Na N-Iarchimí Teo  
Women's History Project  
Irish Refugee Council  
Parlaimint na mBan  
Dr Bridin Cannon  
The Well Woman Centre  
Irish Osteoporosis Society  
Mrs Ann Kavanagh  
Corofin ICA Guild  
Josie Ryall  
Western Health Board Regional Planning Committee on Violence Against Women

Naas, Newbridge & District Soroptimists  
Waterford IFA Farm Family Committee  
Bandon Region IFA  
Holy Trinity Ladies' Guild, Killiney  
Clár Forbartha Aitiúil Iorrais  
Máire Ní Bhaoill  
Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul  
Gerard Murphy  
Irish Wheelchair Association  
Mrs Kathleen Lavin  
Laois IFA Farm Family Committee  
Edgeworthstown Women's Group  
Peggy Cronin/Eileen Foley  
The Women of County Monaghan  
Women's Regional Policy Forum, Women Educating For Transformation  
PACE  
Team Training Ireland  
Ann O'Sullivan  
Banchara Mid-Kerry/Sliabh Mish Women's Group  
Women in Farming Group  
Cosainí na Beatha agus an Teaghlaigh  
Maura Blake  
Brothers and Sisters in Christ  
June Stapleton  
Network Kildare  
Lettermore Womens Group  
Ballymahon Women's Group  
Good Shepherd Sisters Provincialate  
Cork Women's Political Association  
Second Chance Education Project for Women  
Comhlámh  
Mercy Justice Office  
Timahoe ICA Guild  
Irish Family Planning Association  
National Framework Committee on Family Friendly Policies  
Maria King Shiro  
Labour Women, The Labour Party  
Women's Health Advisory Committee, Western Health Board  
Women's Health Unit, Northern Area Health Board

Women's Aid  
Leitrim Association of People with Disabilities  
ESB Officer's Association  
AIM Family Services  
Isobel Butler  
Rebecca Sheba  
Ruhama Women's Project  
Youthreach Ballincollig  
Bishoptown Social Satellite Centre  
West Training and Development Ltd  
Language  
IBM Ireland Limited  
Equality for Women Measure  
Disabled Women's Working Group  
Draíocht  
Conference of Religious of Ireland  
The Women's Health Council  
National Disability Authority  
Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
NEART  
Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre  
Waterford Student Mother's Group  
Waterford Social Justice Group  
Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Focus Group  
National Youth Council of Ireland  
Frenchpark ICA Guild  
Cherish  
Dr Evelyn Mahon  
Cork Central Farm Family Committee  
National Infertility Support and Information Group  
Parentline  
Women in Technology and Science  
Caring for Carers Ireland  
Fianna Fáil National Women's and Equality Forum  
Women's Aid Community Development Support Agency  
The Sligo, Leitrim, West Cavan Coalition Against Violence against Women/Women's Aid  
Community Development Support Agency  
Midland Health Board  
Women's Island Network

Ann C. Byrne  
LInC (Lesbians In Cork)  
Health Promotion Department, Western Health Board  
The Cork Association of Parents & Friends of the Mentally Handicapped  
Women and Gender Workshops, Longford  
Ennybegs ICA Guild  
Women's Studies Diploma Class, UCD Outreach Programme  
Tar Isteach  
Killinarden Family Resource Centre Ltd  
La Leche League of Ireland  
Union of Students in Ireland  
Department of Applied Social Studies, UCC  
Tallaght Travellers' CDP  
Gabrielle Brocklesby  
Children's Rights Alliance  
Bray Women's Refuge  
Laois County Development Board  
National Network of Women's Refuges  
One Parent Exchange & Network  
Cuidiu — Irish Childbirth Trust  
AONTAS  
Outhouse  
ASTI  
The Irish College of General Practitioners  
Irish Business and Employers Confederation  
Teachers Union of Ireland  
Charles O'Loughlin  
The Equality Authority  
Combat Poverty Agency  
Letterkenny Women's Centre  
Brigid McLoughlin  
Bracknagh Women's Group  
The Galway Lesbian Line  
Violet Carroll  
Submitted by Kathleen Maher (Author: Maria Hegarty)  
Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights

## List of Public Consultation Fora

---

The Citywest Hotel, Dublin	Tuesday, 19 March 2002
The Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan	Wednesday, 20 March 2002
The Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar	Thursday, 21 March 2002
The Mill Park Hotel, Donegal	Thursday, 21 March 2002
The Radisson SAS Hotel, Galway	Friday, 22 March 2002
The Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny	Monday, 25 March 2002
The Gresham Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire	Tuesday, 26 March 2002
Jurys Hotel, Cork	Tuesday, 26 March 2002
Jurys Hotel, Limerick	Wednesday, 27 March 2002
The Gresham Hotel, Dublin	Wednesday, 27 March 2002