



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs



Sustainable Development Goals through the Lens of a Child

A Joint Report by the Department of Children and
Youth Affairs and Geary Institute for Public Policy,
University College Dublin

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MINISTER’S FOREWORD	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
PREFACE	
SPEECH BY MINISTER DR. KATHERINE ZAPPONE	7
SPEECH BY PROFESSOR JEFFREY SACHS	15
SDGS THROUGH THE LENS OF A CHILD	
1. INTRODUCTION	22
2. LINKING THE SDGS, CHILD POVERTY, AND FOOD POVERTY	24
2.1 <i>What are the SDGs?</i>	24
2.2 <i>SDGs through the Lens of a Child</i>	25
2.3 <i>Child and Food Poverty in Ireland</i>	26
WORKSHOP	
3. WORLD CAFÉ APPROACH	28
4. OUTCOMES: UNDERSTANDING CHILD AND FOOD POVERTY IN IRELAND	30
4.1 <i>Theme 1 and Theme 8: Child Poverty & Reforming Budgetary Process</i>	30
4.2 <i>Theme 2: Measuring Child Poverty and Measuring Policy Progress</i>	31
4.3 <i>Theme 3: Economic Cost of Child Poverty</i>	31
4.4 <i>Theme 4: Empowering Girls in Poverty</i>	32
4.5 <i>Theme 5: Food Poverty & Malnutrition</i>	32
4.6 <i>Theme 6: Food Poverty & Childhood Obesity</i>	33
4.7 <i>Theme 7: Combating Child Poverty - Family Context</i>	33
4.8 <i>Theme 9: Combating Child Poverty - Community Context</i>	34
4.9 <i>Theme 10: Child Poverty - Towards Policy Coherence</i>	34
5. SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP PROPOSALS	35
5.1 <i>General Proposals</i>	35
5.2 <i>Proposals on Child Poverty</i>	36
5.3 <i>Proposals on Food Poverty</i>	36
6. WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO CHILD POVERTY AND FOOD POVERTY	37
6.1 <i>Introduction</i>	37
6.2 <i>Overview of the Infrastructure</i>	37
6.3 <i>Progress on Child Poverty Target and Child Food Poverty</i>	38
6.4 <i>Ongoing work in addressing Child and Food Poverty</i>	40
7. MINISTER’S REFLECTIONS	42
8. ANNEXES	
<i>Annex 1 Keynote Speakers</i>	44
<i>Annex 2 Researchers Leading Tables at the Workshop</i>	45
<i>Annex 3 Workshop Facilitators</i>	47
<i>Annex 4 Workshop Participants</i>	48

Minister's Foreword

My life's work has been dedicated to eradicating the damaging impacts of child poverty, and to breaking the cycles of inter-generational poverty. This personal and professional commitment has guided all the work that I do as the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

I convened this workshop with Professor Jeffrey Sachs so that we could focus collectively on these issues and advance workable solutions. I would like to thank Professor Sachs for his powerful speech, outlining how the social and economic system that operates today creates inequalities and other social and environmental problems. I am in agreement with Professor Sachs' view that addressing child and food poverty is crucial to future social sustainability. This requires solid commitment to partnerships across government, civil society, academia and the private sector.

It is a great benefit to Ireland that Professor Sachs is now our ally on tackling child and food poverty here.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Chair of the workshop Professor Patrick Paul Walsh, and the UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy for co-organising this event.

Special thanks to my own Department officials involved in organising the workshop and producing this report. Patricia Ryan, Jerry O'Connor, Dónall Geoghegan, and Magdalene Hayden all contributed significant policy expertise to this workshop for which I am grateful.

Of equal importance was the contribution of participant stakeholders. They came with extraordinary levels of expertise in child and food poverty, economics and public policy. They are generous and strong representatives from our Government Departments, leading universities, and civil society organisations.

I am delighted that a youth delegation attending the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum in the United Nations from 6th to 8th April 2019 will present this report to the Forum. They will meet Professor Sachs at this time and provide him with a copy.

I believe these recommendations present a great opportunity to give an urgent focus to how the SDG agenda can be used to improve outcomes for children who suffer from child and food poverty domestically in Ireland today. The recommendations are relevant as well to the work that is currently being carried out across Government and across the NGO sector.

My hope is that that this Report can serve to strengthen and contribute to this process.

To quote Professor Sachs "Let's get this done."

***Dr. Katherine Zappone, TD,
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs***



Executive Summary

This report outlines the activities, outcomes and deliberations of a workshop entitled ‘*SDGs through the Lens of a Child*’ organised by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Geary Institute for Public Policy, University College Dublin on November 9th, 2018 at the Royal Irish Academy. The objective of the workshop was to explore how the pressing issues of child poverty and food poverty in Ireland might be addressed within the context of the ambitions of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report is unique in several ways. First, it is an account of workshop activities that adopted a multi-stakeholder partnership approach within the context of the implementation of the SDGs in an attempt to devise appropriate policy solutions in the area of child and food poverty in Ireland. It brought together the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, an international expert on the UN SDGs, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Irish researchers and members of civil society organisations in a collaborative and discursive arena. Second, the workshop represents an innovative approach from Government to better understand issues of child and food poverty in Ireland and this document serves as a permanent record of the workshop approach, discussions, and outcomes for implementation of SDG-related policies.

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Dr. Katherine Zappone opened the workshop and spoke on the complex and systemic challenges linked with child and food poverty in Ireland. Dr. Zappone outlined the Government’s policy vision for addressing the inequalities that exist in Irish social and economic life which serve to exacerbate child and food poverty. The Minister focussed on the need to implement progressive public policies including increasing funding for public services and identified three core ideas that act as a blueprint for future public policy in the area. She also noted that the time to eradicate child and food poverty in a developed nation like Ireland is already upon us and that the active participation of all stakeholders is required to achieve it.

Professor Jeffrey stressed that building a sustainable world is the foundation of the UN SDGs and addressing child and food poverty is crucial to future social sustainability. In his opinion, the system in which society and the economy operate today is rigged for creating inequalities and other complex social and environmental problems. Solving these and other global challenges requires that the current socio-economic system is changed and that a solid commitment to the UN SDGs is a very important step for such a transformation.

The workshop itself covered ten thematic areas associated with child and food poverty and followed a World Café approach where participants moved from one table to another to provide inputs under each theme. The themes were identified before the workshop by representatives of the research community and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Workshop participants represented various stakeholder groups tied to issues of child and food poverty and they provided input based on their experience.

At the end of the workshop, organisers of the event consolidated the findings of the workshop, and some key proposals have emerged for future policy deliberations. These proposals include:

1. Child and food poverty policies should be focused on longer-term outcomes rather than short-term benefits and should include plans for investment in related infrastructure;
2. Awareness of child and food poverty in Ireland is low, and efforts should be made to increase awareness to develop broader societal level support for more state finances to be allocated to the goals of eliminating child and food poverty;
3. Issues such as child and food poverty require champions within different Government Departments who will take an integrated whole of Government approach to implementing related policies;
4. Policy coherence and cohesion is required between Government and State Bodies and within political parties to unshackle policies from the limits imposed by electoral cycles and short-termism;
5. Eradicating child poverty and hunger is not only the duty of the government, and a multi-stakeholder ecosystem needs to evolve where Government leadership is supported by the experience and expertise of members of civil society groups, academia, and other Government-funded research organisations.

Based on these recommendations, a series of proposals are being made as critical next steps that can be followed towards a child and food poverty-free Ireland. The SDGs are important for these proposals because they represent a global agenda to take care of children and the planet. Even though this workshop is focussed on Goal 1 (No Poverty) and 2 (Zero Hunger), the proposals link to other goals that are important for children including Goals 3 (Good Health & Well-Being), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality).



Preface

NO POVERTY, ZERO HUNGER FOR CHILDREN IN IRELAND: CAN WE DO IT?

Speech by Dr. Katherine Zappone, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

Colleagues from different disciplines, sectors, departments, Professor Sachs, I am delighted to welcome you all to this morning's event. This is an extraordinary opportunity to imagine how the UN Sustainable Development Goals can frame policy and practice to end poverty and hunger for children living in Ireland. We have in our midst, as our esteemed guest, Professor Sachs, who will outline challenges that lie ahead for Ireland, and other countries, to co-ordinate, address and achieve the SDGs across the various stakeholders in society.

Ireland, not unlike others, has been slow to start on this. Professor Sachs wears global glasses. We are asking him what he sees both internationally, as well as nationally. The extraordinary wealth of his experience, commitment, passion, travels and intellectual acumen will be a rich resource for our conversations.

I am clothed in the experience of an educator, social activist, academic, and politician. I have been Ireland's Minister for Children since May of 2016. I met Jeff for the very first time in April, 2018 when I accompanied President Michael D. Higgins on his trip to the United Nations. President Higgins spoke to the General Assembly about Sustainable Development. The Hall was full. They all stood to their feet when he finished. Afterwards, in a corridor outside the big room, Professor Sachs stood in a queue to meet the Irish President. When I heard Jeff introduce himself, I was, quite frankly, star-struck. I had been reading his books for years.

His work had heavily influenced our approach to ending poverty in Tallaght West through An Cosán, which has become the largest community education organisation in the country over the past thirty years. Jeff offered his assistance, handed me his card and I was whisked away with the President. We went to meet Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary General. We sat across from Amina for the conversation, and hung on the wall behind her was a big plaque listing the 17 SDGs. I didn't get past reading the first two —No Poverty; Zero Hunger— without thinking, 'we haven't managed to do that in Ireland, so how can we imagine it anywhere else?' Several months later when I was in New York again, to speak to the UN Security Council, as part of our bid for a seat, I asked to meet Jeff.

In my meeting with him I said: 'Ireland is the fastest growing economy in Europe. Real GDP Growth was 7.2% in 2017, and the projection for 2018 is 7.5%. I am part of a Government in Ireland where economic prosperity is returning with might and potency.' Yet, the numbers of our children experiencing poverty and hunger are high. Child poverty rates, in particular, have plateaued over the past number of years. Furthermore, Ireland's child poverty target for 2020 is more difficult to reach now because we have more children living in consistent poverty than when the target was set in 2014. We aren't meeting the SDGs in our own

country. And, if any country can, it should be us. Can you please tell me what we should do? Jeff leaned over the table and said, ‘why don’t we do a workshop about this in Ireland?’ So, here we are.

Internationally, Ireland has a long and proud record of leadership on development issues. We have contributed to development policies and targets at the UN, and with our partner countries throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. We hold a noble record of providing untied Official Development Assistance and continue to grow that contribution. Our recent budget represents an increase of approximately 110 million euros or 16% on the revised 2018 budget allocation. The total amount of ODA which Ireland will invest during 2019 is now the highest since the financial crisis. Ireland’s contribution is also reflected in the work of colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs and in Irish Aid. In addition, our leadership on issues of hunger and poverty at a global level reflect our background as a people, and our commitment to ensure that the very poorest and marginalised on this planet are able to experience the fruits and opportunities of development, much as we have as a nation over the past century and a half.

However, today is an opportunity to look at progress domestically on the SDGs commitments we have signed up to. Overall, while we have made some progress, the work of Professor Sachs and colleagues at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, among others, suggests that we have much more to do as a nation to meet many of the goals and targets we are committed to.

The good news is that we have time, until 2030, to reach many of these goals, but we need to remember that achieving them, and realising the benefits they imply for Irish people and Irish society, is not automatic and will occur only through initiatives, coordination and actions by those of us in this room, among others, who shape public policy and choices.

As we undertake our considerations this morning, I want to acknowledge the interest and commitment of Professor Jeffrey Sachs, reflected not just in his presence here this morning, but also in the enormous and influential work he and his colleagues have done in this area for many decades. One of Jeff’s most remarkable gifts, however, is the way he carries hope, with such abundance and persistence. In ‘The End of Poverty’ (2005) he writes “a world movement to end extreme poverty is taking shape”. Later on in that same work, after expressing his judgment that existing poverty strategies are not yet designed with enough rigor or ambition to enable countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, he declares, “Still I am not despairing.” In his most recent publication, “A New Foreign Policy: Beyond American Exceptionalism” he asserts that “the United States is failing to secure the benefits of affluence and rising global prosperity.” In the current Trump era, still he insists: “This book is offered in the hope that it will make a contribution toward a wiser, more peaceful, and more prudent American role in the world.”

In his current role, as Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, he brings together, with great effectiveness, the key data on the progress and challenges facing all UN member states who signed up to the SDGs in 2015. His recent SDG Index and

Dashboards Report marks an important contribution as it offers an empirically based progress report for all states, including Ireland, and sets out the nature of the challenge that lies ahead between now and 2030. The report's overall conclusion, that no state is currently on track to achieve all of the SDGs by 2030, is a telling conclusion and one which should serve as a wakeup call for all of us.

Our focus today, on SDG #1 No Poverty and SDG #2 Zero Hunger, through the lens of a child, is important. It reflects a commitment in the current Irish Programme for a Partnership Government that:

“...Government must ensure that no child is left behind in the economic recovery, and that every young person is enabled to reach their full potential. No child should have to live in poverty and no family should have to face homelessness.” (p105)

Of equal significance, the Programme for Government commits itself to two key ingredients that hold the potential to assist us in meeting the SDG poverty and hunger goals for our children. In my reading of Professor Sach's work, I think he would agree. Those components are this:

Firstly, we are designing and implementing a progressive (new) conceptual model for Irish growth. We call it a 'Social Economy' model. We describe it this way, in the Programme for Government: Economic and social progress goes hand in hand. Only a strong economy supporting people at work can pay for the services needed to create a fair society. It is equally the case that higher levels of public investment in social and economic infrastructure, skills, childcare, and community empowerment are needed for more inclusive, fairer and sustainable patterns of economic growth (p. 32). My translation of this—and I was instrumental in helping to shape this section of the programme—can be stated this way: As a country, as a nation, as a Government, we will invest in ways to enable more and more people to participate in the creation of wealth in regulatory and social conditions within which that wealth can be fairly distributed, and their labour properly remunerated and protected.

Thus, this is distinct, though complimentary, to increasing economic and social equality through greater fairness in our redistribution of wealth. This should include progressive taxation and equitable distribution of common economic resources across persons, regions, and—through capital expenditure and early years spending—across generations. In other words: let's find ways to establish the conditions for more people to create their own wealth; wealth that can be shared with others. Both elements are essential, as limiting ourselves only to finding ways to distribute wealth more fairly means that economic and social power is still more in the hands of those who govern, than the governed.

Secondly, our Government committed itself to: Introduce budgets that will involve at least a 2:1 split between public spending and tax reductions. Again, I was instrumental in shaping that commitment, particularly the 'at least' description of the ratio. The current Government believes, and has acted on its belief, that we need to invest more in public services than tax reductions. This holds potential to level the playing field, to reduce inequalities and, thus,

poverty and hunger, by ensuring those with less get more, and, increasingly, in a more targeted way. At the same time, those with more are also treated fairly. They will also benefit, but more modestly. Public analysis of budget 2019 suggests that the ratio of public service spending to tax cuts is 10:1!—10 euros invested in public services for every 1 euro invested in reducing taxes. These two ingredients, in my view, coupled with our political commitment to children, reflect the “mixed economy” approach that Jeff writes about in many of his works. Business and Government have complementary roles in the creation of a social economy oriented towards efficiency, fairness and sustainability.

Recent developments in Ireland also provide us with an opportunity to give greater attention to the domestic SDG agenda. The 2019 Budget finally brought the State’s finances into balance and signalled a fiscal recovery from the deep economic crisis of a decade ago. I believe this signals a new opportunity for Government to address with greater vigour our commitment to ensuring that all children benefit from our economic recovery, and the related SDG commitments we will discuss across the morning.

Giving greater attention to these issues is important as, put simply, our current record on child poverty, hunger and homelessness is far from ideal and notably out of alignment with the objectives and ambitions we have set for ourselves in the SDGs. The headline figures from the Central Statistics Office and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government remain stark:

- Almost 1 in every 5 children in Ireland lives below the poverty line (19.3% in 2016); and children carry a higher risk of poverty than that faced by any other age group.
- 1 in every 4 children in Ireland experiences enforced deprivation; and children carry a higher risk of deprivation than that faced by any other age group.
- 1 in every 10 children in Ireland lives in consistent poverty, that is experiencing both income poverty and deprivation; and again the risk of consistent poverty is higher for children than it is for any other age group.
- At least 1 in every 10 children in Ireland is measured as experiencing food poverty.
- The latest figures for September recorded 3,829 children as homeless.
- These figures are hard to ignore. Indeed, to do so is to fail in our moral and ethical duty to these children and to their futures. They set an important context for many of our considerations and discussions later this morning.

INCLUDING NO HUNGER AND ZERO POVERTY IN OUR DOMESTIC AGENDA FOR SDGS

What will assist us in having a new conversation today? Are there avenues for quantum leap of thought? I know only too well how slow socio-economic change can be. But I am also aware that moments come, when circumstances are rich, and the collective will is generous and strong. I hope that this morning is one of those moments.

I invite you to join me, to be mindful of our intention in the present, and to begin again.

In his book, “The Price of Civilisation”, Professor Sachs proposes that a Mindful Society can provide the Path to Prosperity. So, let us be mindful. I wish to suggest three ideas that may help us. Actually, Jeff says, in “The End of Poverty” that “the beauty of ideas is that they can be used over and over again, without ever being depleted. Economists call ideas non rival in the sense that one person’s use of an idea does not diminish the ability to use it well. This is why we can envision a world in which everybody prospers” (p. 41).

IDEA 1 – SDG Targets for Domestic Change

Many of the targets outlined in the first two Sustainable Development Goals hold particular relevance for children and young people in Ireland, given their stated aim and the Irish data I have just mentioned. As a reminder, included within the targets of Goal #1 and Goal #2, we have committed to:

- reduce by at least half the proportion of men, women and children living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions by 2030 (target 1.2)
- implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including (income or living standards) floors (from target 1.3)
- create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions (from target 1.5b)
- by 2030 end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round (target 2.1).

While achieving these goals is of relevance for all of society, missing them, or partially achieving them, has pronounced implications for children and their development. Conversely, as we know only too well from the research literature on early childhood care and education, and indeed from much of the research of Professor Sachs and colleagues working on poverty issues, achieving these SDG targets carries significant benefits for children and for society; benefits which substantially outweigh the costs of their achievement.

IDEA 2 – A New National Programme

There is a need for us as policy makers to begin to think about these Goals and Targets in societal terms rather than in narrow Departmental or Sectoral terms. Over recent years Government, though, for example, the Action Plan for Jobs, has demonstrated that much progress can be made on major issues and national challenges in a context where there is broad cross-government and cross-stakeholder involvement in policy development and policy action. Standing back from the SDG targets, it is remarkable how cross-cutting most of them are.

Reducing poverty, among children and others, is certainly an issue for the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, but it is also an issue for the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and my own Department among others. One striking

example of this spring to mind, especially in light of the Irish People's recent decision to repeal the 8th amendment of the Constitution, and for law to be implemented to regulate the termination of pregnancy. Allied to the implementation of this law will be free access to contraception.

Furthermore, it takes place in the context of a major policy commitment to significantly increase early years spending. This not only ensures that people are empowered to choose whether to become and stay pregnant by increasing contraception availability. It also provides socio-economic support to enable and increase the choice to parent. It seems to me that these changes will build the conditions for a gender-sensitive approach to the reduction of child poverty and child hunger. We must measure and monitor this! Indeed, this shows the connection also with SDG number 5: gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Similarly, the targets on hunger and access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food are key issues for the Department of Health, and they are also key issues for the Department of Education, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Rural and Community Development, and my own Department among others. It is exceptionally challenging, however, at present to find an appropriate and effective policy home for officials and political leaders to work together to reduce children and young people's hunger. The walls of our departments and ministerial offices do not yet have enough permeable material to allow for this. For example, budget 2019 included an additional €1m for the school meals project to roll out a new "Hot School Meals Pilot Programme" where hot dinners will be provided in up to 36 DEIS schools to some 7,200 children. This investment is on top of the school meals programme that funds the provision of food to some 1,580 schools and organisations, benefitting 250,000 children at a total cost of 59.3 million in 2019. Schemes within these programmes are part-financed by the Department of Education and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Other schemes are operated by local authorities, local groups and voluntary organisations. Some schools have kitchens, others do not.

My own Department is examining potential investment in capital grants for kitchens in early years and childcare centres, and three meals a day for full-time providers within the most disadvantaged areas. This would cost an estimated 8.2 million euros. There is no one place to stand, however, to invest systematically in the roll out of a healthy meals programme for children and young people who need it, from early years to second level. Achieving the 'No Hunger' goal for our children does not seem possible, without a national, cross-Government programme to do so.

Could it be possibly as simple as that? Therefore, I believe we need a comprehensive policy/programmatic approach to the challenges we face in meeting the Goals and targets of SDG #1 and #2; particularly in the context of meeting them for our children. There is significant merit in a Cross-Government National Programme to reduce the poverty and hunger of our children. And, given the SDG context, we may also wish to incorporate a wider

set of views and input from stakeholders throughout Irish society and leverage this as a means of further enhancing our focus on achieving all of the SDGs by 2030.

IDEA 3 – Comprehensive measures for poverty reduction

I think that we need more comprehensive measures of our efforts to reduce poverty/children's poverty; that our current means of measurement 'misses' important and fundamental work that is ongoing in Ireland. My conviction in this regard comes from my praxis over decades of developing an intergenerational model of community education, and from being the Irish Minister for Children. Just this week I attended an event in Dublin City Civic offices that was celebrating the growth of GoCar.ie (just like rent a cycle, but you rent a car). 500 vehicles are on the road now, representing a 500% growth in the past two years! The young man responsible for this growth is Darragh Genockey. Some thirty years ago his mother attended one of our first courses in community education, then located in our home in the Dublin mountains. She had left school before finishing her Leaving Certificate. She is now Deputy Director of An Cosán, and Darragh is her son. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin: a member of the Students' Union while he was there, and now a successful businessman. He himself says that the work of An Cosán, now located in Jobstown, helped to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty in his family.

A month ago, one of our Independent Senators, Lynn Ruane, published her memoirs, *People Like Me*. She got back on the education path as a young, lone parent with two children, by attending one of our intensive 'back to education' courses. She went on to get a job in community work, attended the access programme at Trinity College, become the first TCD Students' Union president from Tallaght, and is now a well-known Senator. Her mother is a member of the An Cosán board, and continues to reside in Killinarden in the family home. There are many more stories like these; they are all evidence of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. The Government investment in this work, and the community and voluntary investment in this work, is not included in an explicit measurement of progress on the poverty front. I think that this needs to change.

Our picture of the path to prosperity, the conditions that level the playing field, and the benefits that flow from the costs is incomplete. We are missing something integral to evidence about poverty reduction here. In my portfolio as Minister for Children, I have had the opportunity to secure significant public investment in high quality, affordable childcare and early learning. The annual investment has increased by 117% since 2015.

As most of you are aware, the Irish Government subsidises the cost of childcare and early learning through direct payments to private and not-for profit providers. Our policy is to provide the highest level of subsidization to families with the lowest incomes. With Budget 2019, we will be able to 'poverty proof' the scheme by ensuring that families at or below the relative income poverty line will benefit from the highest subsidy under the scheme. I think it is important that we have measures in place that capture not just changes in family income or welfare payments, but that also incorporate the impact of public investment in services.

Although they may not directly change the income in people's pockets, these investments impact positively on people's living standards and well-being.

Whether it is continued investment in the affordable childcare scheme and early childhood care and education from my own Department; enhanced state provided medical card provisions for children from the Department of Health, or the provision of a kitchen in all DEIS schools which provides hot meals for all children attending those schools, these are important initiatives targeted at increasing the well-being of many of the most disadvantaged children in our society. They clearly contribute towards achieving our targets under SDGS 1 and 2, but we do not yet always have ways of measuring this contribution.

Where we make sensible and strategic investments like this, I believe it is important that we have progress indicators that accurately reflect them and the improvements they are delivering. As an illustration, I recently directed my Department to request assistance from the ESRI to assess the impact on children and child poverty of non-cash benefits like those associated with the affordable childcare scheme, the ECCE scheme and medical card provision

Placing a value on these positive and targeted policy developments, and incorporating them into the calculation of child poverty, reduces the rate of child poverty among those aged 15 years or less by 5%. I think that this is hugely significant! That research also found that these initiatives are important in lifting the income of many low-income working families from below to above the poverty line. As we make real policy efforts to address the SDG goals, and improve the well-being of children most disadvantaged in our society, it is crucial that we have methods to track this progress.

CONCLUSION

I very much look forward to Professor Sachs contribution now. I am still star-struck! Further, I have no doubt the diversity of people and backgrounds in the room will add to the richness of our discussions and debates. In 'The End of Poverty' Jeff speaks about a process named 'analytical deliberation'. He defines it as: The process of finding a cooperative approach to complex problems, by building a consensus around a shared vision and understanding of the challenges (p 222).

That sounds like a good way to proceed.

IRELAND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Speech by Professor Jeffrey Sachs

It's a great pleasure and honor to be here. Professor Paul Walsh is a great leader in global development and human rights, and his work is renowned throughout the world. I'm incredibly grateful to Paul for his global leadership on education and sustainable development, and for being here today. Minister Katherine Zappone is a great global leader in human rights and a world-renowned champion for human decency.

I am honored to be with both of you today.

I'm going to start with the most beautiful words spoken in this country by an American president, John F. Kennedy. His words set the stage for our discussions here today. I hope that all of you know of President Kennedy's remarkable speech here 55 years ago. He came to Ireland in 1963, the last year of his life. He was on a global campaign for peace, which culminated in the signing of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. That treaty in turn made possible the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty a few years after. We're struggling to hold onto those world-saving gains today. They are vital for our survival.

JFK said some things in the Irish Dáil that are deeply important for our deliberations today. In the middle of his speech to the Parliament he noted:

Indeed, across the gulfs and barriers that now divide us, we must remember that there are no permanent enemies. Hostility today is a fact, but it is not a ruling law. The supreme reality of our time is our indivisibility as children of God and our common vulnerability on this planet.

Some may say that all this means little to Ireland. In an age when "history moves with the tramp of earthquake feet"--in an age when a handful of men and nations have the power literally to devastate mankind--in an age when the needs of the developing nations are so staggering that even the richest lands often groan with the burden of assistance--in such an age, it may be asked, how can a nation as small as Ireland play much of a role on the world stage?

I would remind those who ask that question, including those in other small countries, of the words of one of the great orators of the English language:

"All the world owes much to the little 'five feet high' nations. The greatest art of the world was the work of little nations. The most enduring literature of the world came from little nations. The heroic deeds that thrill humanity through generations were the deeds of little nations fighting for their freedom. And oh, yes, the salvation of mankind came through a little nation."

Ireland has already set an example and a standard for other small nations to follow. This has never been a rich or powerful country, and yet, since earliest times, its influence on the world has been rich and powerful. No larger nation did more to keep Christianity and Western culture alive in their darkest centuries. No larger nation did more to spark the cause of independence in America, indeed, around the world. And no larger nation has ever provided the world with more literary and artistic genius.

This is an extraordinary country. George Bernard Shaw, speaking as an Irishman, summed up an approach to life: Other people, he said "see things and . . . say 'Why?' . . . But I dream things that never were-- and I say: 'Why not?'"

This is the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals, when we ask, "Why not?" to a better world. We urgently need a world of peace and cooperation, yet we are in the hands of demagogic leaders preaching hate. We need to find a way forward that inspires us to escape from ancient animosities across countries, and from the dangerous illusions of "permanent enemies."

We are lost in hatred, and we're not going to get out of the hatred until we decide that our truly urgent need is to build a world guided by sustainable development. We have to ask, "Why not?" Why can't we have a world without poverty? Why not a world at peace? Why not a world in which nuclear weapons are abolished? Why not a world that is safe from human-made climate change?

The answer is, of course, that we can do all of these things. Not one of these challenges is technically impossible or even that costly. The benefits we would achieve in saved lives and avoided wars, destruction, and anguish, would much larger than the costs. There is a powerful annual report called the Global Peace Index, produced by the Australian-based Institute for Economics and Peace. This annual report estimates that the global losses due to violence, conflict, and outlays related to military and security spending total around 12% of world output, measured at purchasing power parity. That is today roughly \$US 15 trillion at international prices, lost, wasted, squandered.

The world as a whole is producing roughly \$100 trillion a year output at market prices, or \$135 billion measured at international prices. With 7.6 billion people on the planet, that's an average output per person of around 18,000 dollars. With such productivity, why should it be hundreds of millions of people are struggling on incomes of a few hundred dollars per year? The only answer is our cruelty and neglect, our loss of will to address the challenges of extreme poverty.

I've been looking at this question of climate change for years now. Ireland has been hit by powerful and rare hurricane events in the North Atlantic. We know that's due to the warming of the Atlantic waters and climate change. The climate disaster is of course also pummeling us in the United States. The hurricanes, droughts, floods, extreme heat waves, rising sea levels, spreading diseases, and other damages are pummeling us, and yet every bit of

evidence is that the incremental costs needed world-wide to put an end to this risk by the conversion to renewable energy would be well under 1% of our world output annually. That is, well under \$1 trillion per year, and perhaps only half of that amount, invested annually, could enable the conversion from coal, oil, and gas, to wind, solar, ocean power, and other zero-carbon energy sources.

The Sustainable Development Goals are extremely practical. They are low cost; they are the kind of objectives that the world urgently needs to take our minds from self-destruction and the politics of power and self-enrichment. There is nothing unrealistic about the SDGs. They're utterly practical.

The hard part, though, is that we need the attention and focus of the world's peoples to understand our challenges and support action. Our generation's challenges are first and foremost a problem of attention span, a problem of awareness. The challenges of poverty, hunger, biodiversity, and climate change are solvable, if we put our minds to the challenges.

The core reason we need SDGs is that our economies, nationally and globally, do not by themselves produce sustainable development. There is nothing in a market economic system that tends by itself to guarantee sustainable development. This is a really important and basic point.

Sustainable Development means a society that is prosperous, and with social justice and environmental sustainability. The market system produces economic growth. The world economy is productive, and world economic growth is rapid, averaging 3-4 percent per year, meaning a doubling of the world economy every generation. Yet the world economy does not produce social justice and it does not produce environmental sustainability.

Adam Smith's great book was called *The Wealth of Nations*, not the Wealth, Fairness and Sustainability of Nations, and it could not have been so called. Although Adam Smith even wrote, in book five of *The Wealth of Nations* about the responsibilities of governments, especially regarding education and basic infrastructure, almost no one who refers to Adam Smith among the free-market crowd has ever read a word of Smith, much less up to book five! They don't even realize that Adam Smith is not the progenitor of free market that they've dreamed of, but rather promoted a mixed economy in which markets and government are co-responsible.

The basic problem with the market economy is that it is based on unleashing greed and the desire for more and more wealth. The pursuit of wealth is rather addictive. It has to be tempered by the demands of morality, ethics, and the responsibility not to self-destruct in the process of pursuing wealth. The market system does not do that by itself. Market economies produce wealth, but they also produce a lot of greed, cruelty, and inequality. The United States indeed has a very cruel economy, one that has been based on slavery, discrimination, exclusion, and vast inequalities of wealth and power.

Global capitalism, led first by Great Britain and now by the United States, has long been, by construction, a system of imperialism, of the suppression of people around the world to extract primary resources for the powerful countries. Global capitalism has created vast wealth and also vast inequalities. It left Africa, after roughly one century of European imperial rule, with almost no higher education. The principle of imperial rule is that you don't educate people, since that's a danger to imperial power.

Global capitalism has created a system of unprincipled global extraction. It is indeed quite profitable to dig for coal, oil, and gas. It's quite profitable to chop down tropical rainforests. It's quite profitable to over-fish the high seas, to the point of exhaustion. We've known for at least 40 years that global capitalism as currently practiced has put us on a path of environmental disaster.

When I started studying economics 46 years ago, one of the first books I was assigned was a remarkable new book at the time, *Limits to Growth*, which argued that the untrammelled economic growth would overshoot the Earth's finite resources. I was very impressed by the book, but was told by my professor to not worry. The professor explained that if resources such as freshwater or minerals would become scarce, their market prices would rise, inducing society to find alternatives. It was all so simple, or so I was told. It took me a long time to get an adult education beyond my university education. But, it's clear that the market economy does not automatically find a solution before it's too late.

Throughout human history, humanity has been as much a destroyer of nature as well as a steward of the environment. On many occasions, humanity appeared on the scene in a new locale - whether in Australia or the Americas or a previously uninhabited island – and within a short period of time, the big land mammals and many bird species were be pushed to extinction. Around 10,000 years ago, the Native Americans made the terrible mistake of slaughtering North America's horses for food. The penalty: walking for the next 10,000 years, until the Europeans showed up on horseback and cruelly conquered the native American peoples.

The recent IPCC report on 1.5-degrees makes clear that climate safety urgently requires our attention. We're already in the midst of rapid and dangerous global warming. The planet has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius relative to the pre-industrial level. There's built-in momentum for another 0.3 - 0.5 degrees Celsius given the emissions of greenhouse gas that have already occurred, but to which the Earth's temperature has not yet caught up. In other words, we're very close to exceeding the 1.5 degree limit in the Paris agreement, if not already on a trajectory that will overshoot it.

What my colleagues, the climate scientists, tell me, is that even a rise of temperature held to 1.5 degrees, if we can still achieve it, will be extraordinarily dangerous. The Earth's average temperature during the past 10,000 years, the entire period of civilization, was apparently never higher than 1 degree above the pre-industrial (on a decadal average). We are therefore now living outside of the temperature range of the entire period of human civilization.

Moreover, the evidence shows the last time Earth was this warm, or perhaps a small amount higher (some tenths of 1-degree C), roughly 115,000 years ago, the sea level was around 8 meters higher than now. In other words, global warming has put us at risk of creating a massive sea level rise – several meters – through the disintegration of parts of the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets. If that happens, the displacements globally will be incalculably high. Most of the world’s great cities and trading centers have long grown up at the coasts. They are now profoundly endangered.

So there are compelling reasons for the entire world to join together to adopt the idea of sustainable development as our globally guiding principle. In adopting Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the world’s governments took a pause from shortsightedness and narrow-minded interests. They did so because of their shared sense of “our common vulnerability on this planet,” as President Kennedy eloquently stated a half-century ago.

The UN member states negotiated for three years and settled on 17 SDGs. Pope Francis spoke to the world leaders on the morning of September 25, 2015, urging them to adopt a common plan for our common home. When the Pope finished his stirring address, the world leaders adopted the SDGs by acclamation.

A few weeks later on December 12, 2015, the world adopted the Paris Climate Agreement. These agreements are our great hope, yet we are not yet on track to achieve the SDGs or the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement. As a world, we are still wandering in a haze, lost in a confusion.

I am extraordinarily grateful to the Irish government for taking on the Sustainable Development Goals, and I call on Ireland to help lead the SDGs globally. These goals cannot be merely nice things to say as we continue along on the path of rampant injustice and environmental destruction. We need to take the goals seriously, and work round the clock and across the world to achieve them.

The SDGs will require considerable thought, strategizing, and planning. Wonderfully, Ireland has great technical expertise as well as great heart. I’ve met a lot of civil society leaders already this morning. I know many outstanding leaders of the academic community. I’ve even been fortunate to help train a few of them! Ireland has great capacity to achieve the SDGs at home and to help lead them globally. It does, however, require a new kind of politics to look ahead 10, 20, or 30 years, not just to the next election. That’s hard for politicians in any country. It is not the norm. It requires deep values, forward planning, and the long-term mobilization of public resources.

An agenda of social justice, as called for by the SDGs, requires two things. One is an ethical imperative towards the common good. This is perhaps the most basic point, the idea that society is not a competition but a common interest. We can’t live and thrive with an “us versus them” politics. Some politicians live on hate. The first rule of politics should therefore

be the common good, the respect for human rights, and the commitment to leave no one behind.

Second, we need to face the facts. The market economy by itself does not insure social inclusion. Instead, it creates winners and losers, vast numbers of people who are left behind to suffer without access to the resources that they need. This fact of the market economy has been understood for at least 150 years, and in fact for longer. There has to be social protection and universal access to public services alongside the market economy. This means that every nation must mobilize fiscal resources to direct them towards high-quality public health care, education, infrastructure, family support, gender equality, child care, early childhood development institutions, and the like.

We have success stories of universal social provision, notably the countries in Northern Europe, which are truly exemplars. Sweden, Norway, and Denmark mobilize roughly half of national income in government revenues in order to provide high-quality public services and social protection. These countries have also made great strides in gender equality.

The English-speaking countries, heavily influenced by the British free-market tradition, are quite different. The UK, Ireland, Canada, United States, and Australia, all raise less than 40 percent of GDP in government revenues. As a result, these countries offer less social protection and a much less comprehensive array of public services.

The US is the worst performer of the lot. Government revenues in the US are around 31% of GDP. The social safety net is threadbare. We're addicted to tax cuts, for people who have more than we could ever do with. We recently gave another \$2 trillion in tax cuts to America's richest people. Yet 20% of our kids are growing up below the national poverty line. In minority households, the figure is closer to 40%. This is a wholly unnecessary societal disaster, all to cater to the superrich.

When it comes to our children, the science is absolutely clear. If we fail to invest in our children, if we fail to provide a safe, low-stress, cognitively stimulating environment, we risk damaging their lifelong future. A high-stress environment during infancy and early childhood rewires the child's brain and harms their body for life. This is the most minimum principle for any sane society: Take care of the children. They are fragile. Let their brains and bodies develop, promote their sociality, their cognitive skills, their curiosity, and their emotional wellbeing.

When we look internationally, we have similar obligations, also unmet. Only around 1 out of every 4 African children has the opportunity now to complete secondary school. The problem is the meager budgets of impoverished countries. SDG 4 calls for universal secondary-school completion. Without more global development aid, universal secondary completion will remain a pious objective, not a reality. Let's ensure that all of the world's children have the chance for a decent education in a world economy that will require high skills in the 21st century.

Europe is Africa's largest donor, but could be a far more effective and consequent donor. I call on Ireland and Europe as a whole to step up and help Africa meet the SDGs, especially to ensure universal access to basic health services, secondary education, and the infrastructure needed to end extreme poverty. Ireland's development aid is currently around 0.3 of 1% of GDP, less than half of the long-standing international commitment of 0.7 of 1% of GDP. It's time for Ireland to do more.

And there is an easy way. Do we really have to protect the income of Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and all the rest of the under-taxed mega-corporations? Does Jeff Bezos really have to be worth 140 billion dollars? No. We need more tax revenues from the Tech giants to invest into African clinics and schools. Ireland should take the \$14 billion collected from Apple and devote it to Ireland's children and Africa's children. I bet that even Apple would applaud heartily such a choice. And in any event, it should.

So, now it's time for your deliberations today. Deliberate for your children, your grandchildren then deliberate for the world's children and grandchildren. And, as President Kennedy said, "Dream things that never were."

Let's get this done.

1. Introduction

Sustainable development is a concept that emerged from the World Commission on Environment and Development. It is defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ To achieve it, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have established a framework for sustainable development on a global scale. Since its adoption in 2015, the 2030 Agenda has established a vision and framework for progressing sustainable development efforts globally. Together with the principle of ‘leaving no one behind,’ the 2030 Agenda forms an inclusive and ambitious vision for our common future.

The SDGs build upon and extend the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) not only by adopting a broader set of objectives beyond core development issues but also by making developed and developing nations jointly and equally responsible for achieving the goals and targets therein. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits 193 nations around the world to work towards achieving the 17 Goals at home and through each nation’s international activities. Ultimately, the vision behind the SDGs is to build a better future for current and future generations. To achieve the 17 goals, 169 targets have been fixed with the idea that attaining the targets would help achieve the goals. While the vision for the SDGs was negotiated at a global level, implementing the SDGs and their targets needs to happen at the national level. In fact, the 2030 Agenda encourages nation states to develop national responses to the SDGs and incorporate them into existing and future planning and public policy. Consequently, different government ministries in a nation-state in charge of domains that align with one or several SDGs are expected to devise and implement policies that assist in achieving the SDGs targets.

Ireland played a critical co-facilitation role during the inter-governmental negotiations that lead to the adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Given this leadership history, Ireland must take its SDGs commitments seriously and is currently at the beginning of a process to work towards achieving the SDGs. Ireland’s first SDGs National Implementation Plan was published in early 2018. The Plan sets out arrangements for interdepartmental coordination, stakeholder engagement, and periodic progress reporting at national and global levels to 2020. Following on from that, the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) was formally presented to the High-level Political Forum at UN Headquarters in New York in July 2018. Though the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment is mainly in charge of the SDGs, other government ministries are also participating in sharing responsibilities to achieve the targets. In this vein, this report outlines a Department of Children and Youth Affairs initiative that fits within the broad context of identifying and understanding ways and means of implementing the SDGs nationally both within and across Government Departments in Ireland.

On November 9th, 2018, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs together with the Geary Institute for Public Policy, University College Dublin organised a workshop adopting the theme ‘UN Sustainable Development Goals through the Lens of the Child’. The focus

was on SDG 1 - No Poverty and SDG 2 - Zero Hunger specifically focussing on children. In Ireland, child poverty and food poverty are persistent social problems that are complex and pose a difficult problem for the formation of effective public policy. Addressing the issues would represent a very significant step in achieving targets under SDGs 1 and 2 by 2030. As a result, the current Irish Programme for a Partnership Government implicitly reflects Ireland's UN commitments to achieving Goals 1 and 2 stating that "...Government must ensure that no child is left behind in the economic recovery, and that every young person is enabled to reach their full potential. No child should have to live in poverty and no family should have to face homelessness". *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020* created a framework to utilise a whole of Government approach to coordinate policy across Government to achieve better outcomes for children, especially in the area of child poverty. The *First 5 Strategy* published in 2018 identified new measures that aim to address poverty among Ireland's youngest children. These include:

- expanded access to free and subsidised Early Learning and Care,
- an extension to the Warmth and Well-Being and Warmer Homes Schemes,
- Community Cooking Programmes and
- introduction of a meals programme to some pre-schools.

In addition, the strategy envisions an introduction of a DEIS-type model for the early years sector that will create further opportunities to narrow the gap for disadvantaged children.

Addressing issues that are at the core of child poverty and child hunger have long-term benefits for the economy. Today's children and young people are the future of the nation and the feasibility of sustainable development in years to come is intrinsically tied to how all children in Ireland can become healthy, happy, educated, and skilled citizens with the capability of contributing positively to society.

2. Linking the SDGs, Child Poverty and Food Poverty

2.1 What are the SDGs?

As mentioned earlier, the 17 SDGs were adopted by all 193 UN member countries in September 2015 through a multilateral process in which Ireland was actively involved as a co-facilitator. Between 2012 and 2015, the post-2015 Agenda was envisioned, formulated and negotiated under the lead of Member States in consultation with the UN system and Major Groups and other civil society stakeholders. What emerged was 17 Goals (SDGs), and each of them is linked to at least five targets. In total there are 169 targets across the four pillars of sustainable development;

- environmental sustainability,
- social development;
- economic development;
- governance;

Measuring progress towards achieving the SDGs is of utmost importance; it enables nations to evaluate the success of sustainable development efforts internally and externally in comparison to peers. To facilitate the evaluation and measurement process, the UN has created a set of 232 data indicators to enable tracking of tangible progress on the SDGs. It also proposes a suite of other means of implementation (MoIs) and follow-up and review processes. The latter includes Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to be reported by each member countries to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) especially formed for overseeing SDG-implementation related work worldwide.

Figure 1: 17 Sustainable Development Goals



2.2 SDGs through the Lens of a Child

Looking at the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs ‘through the lens of a child’ it becomes apparent that only 11 targets directly include children in their language. Nonetheless, children and youth are at the very heart of the Agenda.

Paragraph 53 of the 2030 Agenda states the need for all of us to support the youth in their endeavours: *“The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today’s younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations. We have mapped the road to sustainable development; it will be for all of us to ensure that the journey is successful and its gains irreversible.”*

Table 1: SDGs 1 & 2 ‘Through the lens of a child’



Goal 1 No Poverty

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions



Goal 2 Zero Hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

In SDG 1 and SDG 2, the goals that are the main focus of this report, children are represented in targets 1.2. and 2.2. (see Table 1). Ending poverty is one of the very ambitious and yet most urgent goals of Agenda 2030. Children are often more affected by poverty than other age groups and the economic constraints of being poor create a massive barrier for children to reach their potential and gain access to equal opportunities. Likewise, a healthy and nutritious alimentation is critical for the development of every child. Malnutrition and hunger, and in the Irish context, the rise in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in children are constraining their overall health and personal development.

While SDG 1 and 2 is the focus of this report, there are other SDGs that reference children. SDG 3 is concerned with reducing child mortality while the targets associated with SDG 4

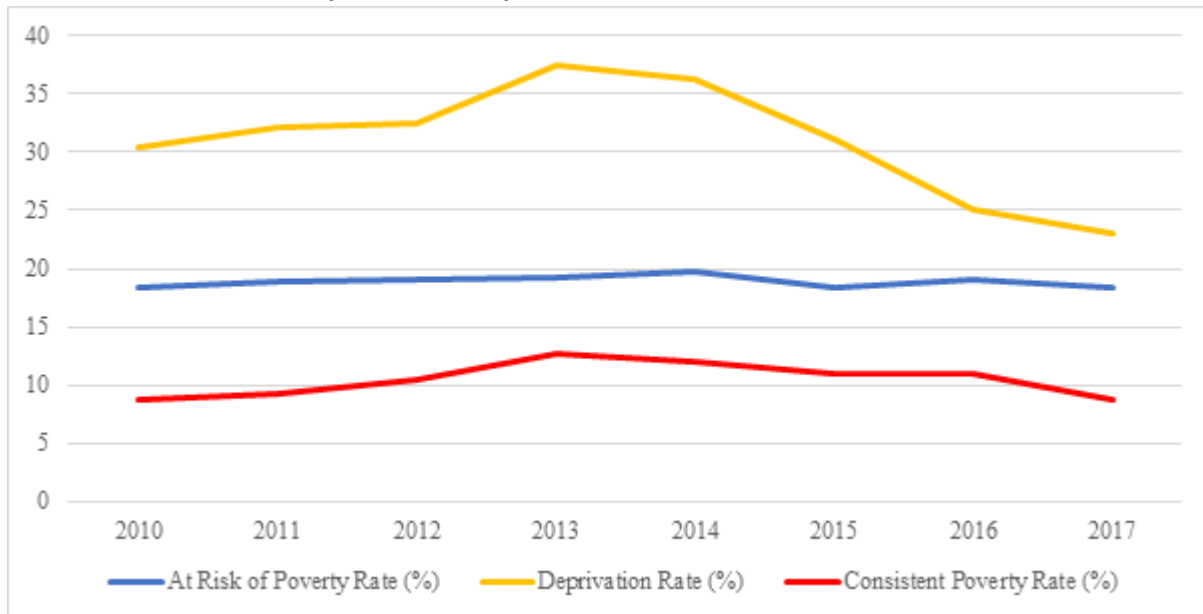
address access to education for girls and boys, as well as eliminating disparities in education and access to education based on individual factors. SDG 5 aims to eliminate practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; SDG 8 outlines a commitment to fighting child labour. In SDG 11, special attention is given to children (among others in vulnerable situations) regarding mobility and secure and sustainable transport systems, as well as access and use of public spaces. SDG 16 includes a target to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

In addition to the targets, the SDG indicators allow for an interpretation of the urgency with which children are treated within the SDG framework. Of the 232 indicators, UNICEF has identified 44 that most directly concern children. These 44 indicators are used to measure progress on all 17 goals, and as some indicators are used for more than one goal, there are 35 unique indicators, separated and disaggregated to highlight children's issues.

Beside the goals, the 'call for action' outlined above in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, emphasises the needs of children and further highlights the role of children and youth: By tackling child and food poverty in Ireland it is possible to lay a foundation to empower the next generation to follow a more sustainable path where no child is left behind across all of the SDGs and related targets in their adult lives.

2.3 Child and Food Poverty in Ireland

Child poverty and food poverty among children are persistent issues in Ireland. According to the most recent data available from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) attained from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) in 2016, almost 1 in every 5 children live below the poverty line (19.3 per cent in 2016). Children also carry a higher risk of falling into poverty than any other age group (18.4 per cent in 2017). As outlined in Table 2, children 'at risk of poverty' and those in 'consistent poverty' has not seen significant improvements in recent years with 2017 rates of 18.4 and 8.8 per cent respectively. On the other hand there has been considerable progress in reducing the deprivation rate from 37.5 per cent in 2013 to 23 per cent at the end of 2017.

Table 2: Income Poverty Rates 0-17 years old (Central Statistics Office)

Food poverty refers to the inability to afford or to have access to food to make up a healthy diet; SILC data estimates that one in 11 people in Ireland experience it. Indeed St. Vincent de Paul estimates that in 2018 one in three of calls to their offices related to food poverty issues. In 2016, Safe Food estimated the cost of feeding a household healthily in Ireland ranged from €55 for a single adult to €145 per week for a family of two adults and two children (living in an urban area), making a healthy food basket difficult to afford, especially for families on social welfare. With 3,829 children recorded homeless in September 2018 and 1 in 10 children experiencing food poverty, there is strong evidence that action is needed immediately to improve the conditions in which a large number of children are growing up in Ireland. There is a strong need also to identify and mitigate the underlying reasons affecting the precarious situation of many children.

Childhood obesity and overweight prevalence are increasing among Irish children, with about 1 in 5 children affected as outlined by the *Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative*. Such figures provide proof that both poverty and food poverty are real issues affecting children in today's Ireland. Therefore, eliminating constraints for the development of every child as set out in the SDGs is an essential and urgent task for Ireland.

The available evidence highlights that Irish children's outcomes are significantly influenced by poverty and economic vulnerability. Furthermore, children are at the forefront of public policy challenges around food poverty and homelessness. The SDGs framework provides an opportunity for Ireland to implement policies that will address issues relating to child poverty and differences in child outcomes. This is why it is important to bring an SDG lens to examine Ireland's progress in achieving its public policy objectives with respect to children.

3. World Cafe Approach:

Multi-Stakeholder Perspectives on Child and Food Poverty in Ireland

The UN has long identified that partnerships are critical to the work needed to build a sustainable world. It recognises that partnerships between private enterprises, public agencies, academics, and civil society groups are crucial for ensuring whole-of-society engagement, adoption and implementation of sustainable development solutions. Definitions of multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) tend to emphasise a multiplicity of diverse actors involved, the collaborative nature of partnerships, a focus on a specific issue or objective, and the need for principles to guide interactions.

Similar to previous UN initiatives, the 2030 Agenda also recognises that MSPs are key vehicles for mobilising and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of SDGs in all countries; achieving the SDGs will require different sectors and actors working together in an integrated manner by pooling financial resources, knowledge and expertise. Indeed, MSPs are seen as crucial means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, several developments in infrastructure for post-2015 partnerships have already been implemented. These include a revamped United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) SDG online platform while the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Partnership Framework has been utilised as a test bed for advancing global partnerships.

Taking direction from the UN focus on MSPs as an approach to understanding problems, deliberate on solutions, and implement policies and projects to achieve the SDGs, the workshop that followed the speeches of the Minister and Professor Sachs followed the method of engaging different stakeholder groups. Organisers of the workshop both at the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Geary Institute of Public Policy, University College Dublin together identified ten themes for deliberation by workshop participants who are experts in different domains associated with child and food poverty. The themes are as follows:

- 1. Child Poverty and Reforming Budgetary Process**
- 2. Measuring Child Poverty and Measuring Policy Progress**
- 3. Economic Cost of Child Poverty**
- 4. Empowering Girls in Poverty**
- 5. Food Poverty and Malnutrition**
- 6. Food Poverty and Childhood Obesity**
- 7. Combating Child Poverty - Family Context**
- 8. Combating Child Poverty - Government Context**
- 9. Combating Child Poverty - Community Context**
- 10. Child Poverty - Towards Policy Coherence**

During the workshop, themes 1 and 8 were merged due to the overlapping nature of issues and their inter-linkages. While all the themes selected covered aspects of child and food poverty, they also went deeper in distinguishing the different contexts in which policies can be implemented to eradicate the dual issues.

Workshop participants, listed in Annexes 2 and 4, were invited based on their expertise in the area of child and food poverty or a related aspect. Each participant in the workshop was assigned to a table to discuss and deliberate on a theme aligning with their expertise. The participants included representatives from a range of Government Departments (including Departments of the Taoiseach; Children and Youth Affairs; Communications, Climate Action and Environment; Employment Affairs and Social Protection; Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Foreign Affairs and Trade), Government Agencies such as Tusla and the Central Statistics Office, research and academic institutions (including University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, NUI Galway-UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, Carlow IT, ESRI), and civil society organisations (such as Early Childhood Ireland, Children's Right Alliance, One Family, Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Youth Council of Ireland, The Wheel, Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, ECO-UNESCO, Focus Ireland, Tomar Trust, Philanthropy Ireland, Social Innovation Fund, IDEA, Coalition 2030, Katherine Howard Foundation, St. Vincent de Paul, National Youth Council for Ireland, and Respond among others). This ensured that a broad cross-section of stakeholders was represented. A facilitator was assigned to each table, and they were responsible for organising the discussions, keeping participants focussed on the topic, making space for all participants to express their opinions and experiences, and keeping notes for reporting back to the workshop organisers. As the 17 SDGs and associated targets are interlinked and indivisible, participants who were interested in SDGs other than SDG 1 and SDG 2 also participated in the workshop deliberations and contributed to understanding how the mitigation of child and food poverty can affect achieving other SDG targets.

Based on pre-registration information, the organisers mixed the participants under each theme and at each table to enable different sectoral representatives to discuss issues amongst each other and to bring their unique background and experience to understand specific inputs. Participants were asked to provide solutions to problems as policy recommendations; each table was asked to outline the top two policy recommendations that emerged from their deliberations under their assigned theme. The organisers took these recommendations as feedback from each table, and the workshop rapporteur later presented this data back to all the workshop participants in the presence of the Minister and Professor Sachs. At the end of the workshop, speakers were also asked to comment on the various workshop findings, policy recommendations or any other questions that came up from the audience belonging to different domains. Additionally, it was decided that this outcome document would be published to officially document the result of the deliberative workshop that would feed into future recommendations for actions and policies that would address child and food poverty in Ireland.

4. Outcomes: Understanding Child and Food Poverty in Ireland

As mentioned previously, participants of each table assigned with a thematic area came up with the top two recommendations that were later presented to the audience as key findings of the workshop. In this part of the document, key problems and ideas for solutions that emerged under the ten thematic areas are documented along with an explanation of each provided by the facilitators of each table.

4.1 Theme 1 and Theme 8: Child Poverty & Reforming Budgetary Process

Among the various problems discussed to reform the budgetary process to address child poverty, the participants identified a lack of inter-departmental collaboration and co-ordination within the government when dealing with child poverty issues. Multiple solutions were proposed to increase the overall coherence between government departments, including allocating responsibility to a single official in a particular department to pursue specific problems related to child poverty and/or homelessness and ensure that these are dealt with collaboratively in the policy-making process. Participants also pointed out that due to the complex nature of the issues at the root of child poverty, leadership from the Taoiseach's office may be required to advance budgetary reform in addressing the problems. Additionally, participants also recognised the need for an all-party approach to tackling problems to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of policies in the longer-term.

Another theme that emerged in the discussions was that child poverty could not be solved without increasing the economic opportunities of parents, and especially mothers. From their work with communities and research in child poverty, researchers in the group suggested that working mothers often find it difficult to avail of affordable childcare which would the group considered essential for the pursuit of good careers outside the home and alleviating income poverty. Therefore, budgetary reform to allocate funds for programmes that would enable mothers to rejoin active work life emerged as a solution for the longer-term.

Participants within this theme also felt the need for increasing public awareness around child poverty issues in Ireland. This would have the effect of improving the general public's understanding of the various supports that are required (financial and otherwise) if child poverty is to be eradicated. Greater public awareness of child poverty would also help eliminate misconceptions surrounding child poverty, particularly where parents are sometimes seen as the root cause rather than broader structural issues in society, which makes upward social mobility difficult. Indeed, awareness raising may also make child poverty mitigation policies more transparent and more visible which may lead to elements of the electorate voting on the basis of a political party's policies on child poverty.

4.2 Theme 2: Measuring Child Poverty and Measuring Policy Progress

The two main issues raised during the discussions included the need for purposeful measurement of progress on child poverty reduction as well as a need to measure and evaluate the success or otherwise of policy interventions. Both of these issues are inter-linked: meaningful progress on measuring child poverty involves measurement metrics that move beyond national statistics on child poverty. As things stand currently, if national statistics fall or rise, there is no clear way to link this to changes in national policy. For example, evidence suggests that the School Meals Programme is likely to be a significant contributor to child and food poverty reduction, but there is no systematic way at present for measuring the contribution of that programme to child and food poverty reduction. Therefore, implementing a measurement approach that tracks the impact of policy interventions/changes is essential for understanding their effectiveness or otherwise at achieving child poverty reduction objectives.

Participants also raised the need to identify policies and interventions capable of addressing the inter-generational nature of poverty and child poverty; they were of the view that identifying appropriate approaches to break the cycles of inter-generational poverty is also crucial to tackling child poverty in the longer-term. In addition, participants also highlighted that getting to know the personal stories behind the numbers including the nature of the hardship being felt and the human side of child poverty beyond statistics should also be prioritised. In this sense, participants felt that a layered understanding, where numbers and the individual circumstances behind the numbers should be considered for an improved understanding of the realities of child poverty.

4.3 Theme 3: Economic Cost of Child Poverty

As with participants in Theme 1 and 8, participants of Theme 3 felt that it is crucial that the awareness of child poverty in Irish society improves. Their view was that awareness is low even among researchers and other stakeholders, and thus, there is very little possibility of wider society being aware of the scale of the problem.

The group also discussed party politics and the political lifecycle. There was broad consent that problems of child poverty cannot be tackled exclusively in the short-term; hence, the importance of longer-term political agendas became apparent. Participants particularly noted that childhood poverty is an issue where outcomes from policy inputs are not seen until the very long-term; perhaps even several decades after political decisions have been made. Based on this, the participants were of the view that children should be treated as an asset not only to their families but also to broader society. From the perspectives of a production function, children who are invested in now can be expected to provide a higher return in income taxes and reduced demands on social protection in the future in comparison to those who are neglected at crucial periods for intervention. This suggests a more significant societal gain for all if investments are made in children. The issues of housing and ghettoisation in the current societal landscape and the necessity of investment in public goods and infrastructure,

particularly in the context of good education and safe conditions for children to grow up, was also emphasised in the deliberations.

4.4 Theme 4: Empowering Girls in Poverty

Participants discussed the importance of the education system for empowering girls in poverty, given that girls have the potential to break inter-generational cycles of poverty. Today's girls and young women will be mothers of the future; focusing on education will therefore not only directly impact them but will also affect the next generation of children. Therefore, policy needs to target young girls at risk of dropping out of the education system as well as targeting young mothers for upskilling and training through existing back to education programmes. The group also urged more significant public policy disruption; at present, change is rather incremental and the group felt the need for a more radical public policy agenda in this area. In addition, the discussion further highlighted the importance of inter-departmental co-operation and the integration of the Government Departments to create greater coherence and synergies between the work done across different state bodies and Departments.

4.5 Theme 5: Food Poverty & Malnutrition

A range of solutions was advanced by participants to tackle food poverty and malnutrition, including education and advocacy for food poverty, as well as advocating for administrative reform particularly for linking and co-operating on policies that cut across government departments. Participants felt that public awareness related to malnutrition in Ireland was low. Specifically, they felt that the general public need to be made more aware that malnutrition comes in various forms and can include both underweight and overweight children.

Participants outlined the need for reform of current government administration arrangements to encourage a more holistic approach towards addressing malnourishment across the whole of government. Indeed, they felt that that policy must be well-rounded and should address malnutrition in any setting that children are in, such as schools, day-care, in the home, and youth organisations and centres, among others. In this regard, they felt that more research was required investigating the barriers to proper child nutrition and the results disseminated to relevant professionals so that they are made more aware of the issues.

The group also identified the potential to enrich communities through investing in children, addressing a current perceived societal undervaluing of childhood. Initiatives that promote child well-being are often underemphasised and therefore not given priority in decision-making. This is reflected in government policy in a range of areas, particularly in low-income communities where malnourishment is a serious public health issue.

4.6 Theme 6: Food Poverty & Childhood Obesity

At an individual level, participants were of the view that a two-pronged approach should be adopted in home and school to solve food poverty and childhood obesity. As these problems are often associated with the home environment in which a child is born and raised, interventions should be designed for pre-pregnancy and early childhood levels. Parents should be made aware of convivial food cultures and better nutrition so that they are armed with the skills and resources needed to navigate the obesogenic environment and make better food choices as a result. Simultaneously, there was a view that schools should also put in place a national level healthy and nutritious hot meal programme for younger children.

Access to affordable, nutritious food is essential to target childhood obesity. Navigating the obesogenic environment also requires a long-term focus for which changes are necessary, particularly with respect to how communities and cities are planned. Participants felt that the key to eradicating food poverty and childhood obesity lies in increasing the accessibility, availability, and affordability of nutritious food. This approach should be top-down (through national level policy) and bottom-up (by promoting and empowering local communities to make healthy food choices). In addition, participants felt that food labelling systems should be reformulated to promote evidence-based healthy food choices.

4.7 Theme 7: Combating Child Poverty - Family Context

Participants in the discussion on this theme pointed to the need for the voluntary sector to work together with the government for long-term solutions. Due to the nature of government funding and other types of aid, projects are mostly framed for short-term solutions when it is longer-term solutions that need higher priority. Participants pointed out that voluntary organisations are currently under pressure managing short-term projects that focus on immediate needs which take up a large portion of their time and resources. Given that such a model is not conducive to developing longer-term solutions, the participants pointed out that there is a need for government to move to a medium-term or long-term funding model (of at least five years) for policy interventions.

The second set of issues and solutions the participants identified was the critical need for skilled resources to work in eradicating child poverty. The economic, social, political, and environmental issues that result in child poverty are manifold and thus often require both complex and simple solutions. Very often financial pressures within voluntary organisations prevent them from employing people who have the skills needed to lead and manage complex projects, as well as to ensure retention of skilled staff. Also, children may also require the support of more than one intervention to deal with different challenges associated with poverty. The provision of universal services can make this easier. Participants pointed out that the approach undertaken by Tusla in their Meitheal approach could be used as a best practice example. Meitheal is a case co-ordination process for families with additional needs who require multi-agency intervention but who do not meet the threshold for referral to the Social Work Department under Children First. Practitioners in different agencies can use and lean on Meitheal so that they can communicate and work together more effectively to bring

together a range of expertise, knowledge, and skills to meet the needs of the child and family within their community.

4.8 Theme 9: Combating Child Poverty - Community Context

Participants examining this theme emphasised the concept of ‘interconnectedness’ and its centrality to understanding the community context. This concept encompasses the core idea of an understanding of relationships between the micro and macro levels. At a macro (national) level, policy coherence was identified as being of crucial importance. Participants noted that at least five government departments were involved in dealing with child poverty in the community context. They pointed out that this suggests the need not only for greater centralisation, but for the identification of conflicts where they exist and, better inter-departmental co-operation and communication.

Infrastructure was identified as being critical for the community context. Participants felt that poor infrastructure creates the conditions for child poverty to exist and flourish. They viewed infrastructure as a bridge between policy at a macro level and the experience of those in communities at a more micro level. In this regard, childcare, schools, social services, transport, and food were identified as important infrastructures. In addition, the value of local amenities was also identified, encompassing ‘green spaces’ and ‘play spaces’ for children.

Additionally, the group felt that the need for greater emphasis on empowering communities - both ‘community of interest’ and ‘community of place’. The former encompasses participation, including children and young people. The notion of structured participation, ‘whose voice’ and how ‘representative’ it is, was highlighted as important to consider during dialogue with communities. ‘Community of Place’ involved both physical infrastructure and ‘pride, responsibility and connectedness’ within the community. Additionally, it was recommended that current policy models that are proven to work should be scaled up and used to create more sustainable communities.

4.9 Theme 10: Child Poverty - Towards Policy Coherence

Participants in this group felt that the issues of childhood poverty tend to have a low political dividend for policymakers. It is children from poor and marginalised communities that are often most affected by childhood poverty, and these are the very communities whose voices do not carry the required political weight and representation in policy-making forums and the overall decision-making process. If child poverty is to be addressed more coherently, participants felt that full stakeholder co-operation is necessary. Therefore, co-operation and policy coherence from politicians, government administrators, local authorities, local development agencies, and civil society are necessary to increase awareness of child poverty in Ireland and work towards addressing it. The participants also identified that it is essential to map existing policy in order to understand how specifically child poverty-linked SDGs can be infused into existing and future policy.

5. Summary of Workshop Proposals

Analysing the discussions of the various themes, some key points have emerged that can be considered as inputs for future policy deliberations of government agencies as well as other funders and donors working in the child and food poverty domains. The summary is split into general recommendations that are relevant to addressing *both* child poverty and food poverty. Thereafter, the proposals and recommendations are focussed on each specific issue, child poverty or food poverty, even though it is important to note that there continues to be fluidity in terms of the inter-linkages and impacts of policy-making measures across both themes.

5.1 General Proposals

- 1) Participants in different thematic areas pointed to the need for long-term rather than short-term policy-making if the twin problems of child poverty and food poverty are to be eradicated. Long-term planning is also required to build infrastructure that would help in alleviating conditions that contribute to the inter-generational cycles of poverty and hunger that affects children as well as adults. These infrastructures would also help people with limited means with more affordable and accessible solutions to their problems. As much of the effect of the work done to alleviate child and food poverty conditions takes time, funding for long-term public policy goals is required.
- 2) Participants felt that there is a serious lack of awareness of child and food poverty in Ireland. Therefore, it is proposed that awareness-raising becomes a core feature of any future policy. In this regard, any such awareness campaign must attempt to outline not only the scale of the problem but also its depth and complexity.
- 3) Participants outlined the need for much greater inter-departmental co-operation on child and food poverty issues than exists at present. (One suggested solution is to establish a committee with multi-party and multi-stakeholder representation to create enabling conditions for long-term policy planning that would support projects not limited by election cycles.)
- 4) Participants pointed to the need for greater policy coherence across government and state bodies. Implementing proposals one and three would certainly greatly assist with providing such policy coherence across government departments and related state bodies. So also would raising support for an all-party agreement on policy.
- 5) Participants also felt greater co-operations with partners in the civil society and academia has the potential to scale up the effectiveness of policy interventions and government investments in the area. The role of data for monitoring by the CSO and research by the ESRI and universities cannot be underestimated. Investment in research, data, and capacity of partners is key to driving a comprehensive whole of society approach.

5.2 Proposals on Child Poverty

- Develop a comprehensive approach to measure and track the success or otherwise of policy interventions in reducing child poverty. Evidence-based policymaking and evaluation of policies are crucial to identifying policies that are capable of addressing what may be successful for breaking the inter-generational cycle;
- Focus on early intervention as an excellent economic investment in our future society;
- There is a need for a greater focus on girls in the education system; for breaking the inter-generational cycle of child poverty.

5.3 Proposals on Food Poverty

- Food poverty for children should be given greater policy priority especially concerning overall child well-being. Policies on food poverty need to focus on the home and schools if food poverty is to be addressed comprehensively.
- Investigate how healthy food can be made more affordable than at present;
- Establish a national school meals programme where healthy food is promoted, and food lacking in nutrition is restricted;
- Focus on education for parents and children about the importance of healthy food and healthy food choices – particularly important to raise awareness regarding malnutrition as it can result in both under and overweight;

6. Whole of Government Approach to Child Poverty and Food Poverty

6.1 Introduction

The recommendations from the workshops are valuable inputs to our joint efforts to eradicate child poverty and food poverty. As such, it should be noted that some of the general and specific proposals are already being advanced. Issues such as long-term planning; awareness raising; greater inter-departmental cooperation and policy coherence; as well as greater cooperation with civil society and academia are being proactively progressed – although greater integration, positioning and profile is needed. In order to set the recommendations of this workshop in the current policy context, below you will find an account of the existing whole-of-Government approach in these areas.

6.2 Overview of the Infrastructure

The *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* National Policy Framework offers a unique infrastructure to identify and address key issues such as child poverty, which requires a strategic and multi-lateral whole of Government approach in ensuring optimum outcomes for children and young people.

In recognition of the higher risks and life-long consequences of child poverty, the Government set a child-specific poverty target in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2014-2020)*, to reduce consistent child poverty by at least two-thirds on 2011 levels by 2020. In order for the Government to meet its target, approximately 102,000 children must be lifted out of consistent poverty by 2020 and to ensure that the number of children in consistent poverty is reduced to no more than 37,000.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection has the lead role in coordinating government strategies on child poverty. It also has lead responsibility for the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion and has identified child poverty as a key cross-sectoral priority to be addressed.

In order to achieve the child poverty target the Government undertook to adopt this approach and build on the lifecycle approach employed in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion and also informed by the European's Commission's recommendation on 'Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage' as part of the Social Investment package.

Under the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* framework, child poverty was identified as a priority, and in conjunction with the Advisory Council, the Department of Employment Affairs of Social Protection (DEASP) formed an ad hoc group with the objective of working with key officials from other relevant Government Departments and NGOs towards the adoption of this whole-of-Government approach.

The Group was co-chaired by DEASP and the Children's Rights Alliance. This working mechanism has resulted in a great deal of shared learning and a common understanding of the complexities involved in addressing the issue.

Working collaboratively, this group developed two documents in 2017, namely:

- A paper from the NGOs on what they consider to be their priorities for achieving the child poverty target in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*.
- A whole of Government paper from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection paper, which outlines the activity across government to combat child poverty.

In June, 2017 DCYA hosted a roundtable event on child poverty. This closed event brought together all the relevant stakeholders, both statutory and non-statutory, to discuss the way forward in reaching the child poverty target as set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and other relevant Government Departments continue to progress this important issue. Recently the issue of food poverty has come to the fore as something that can be addressed through a whole-of-Government approach, and Government Departments in conjunction with the National Advisory Council are working on ways to address this important issue.

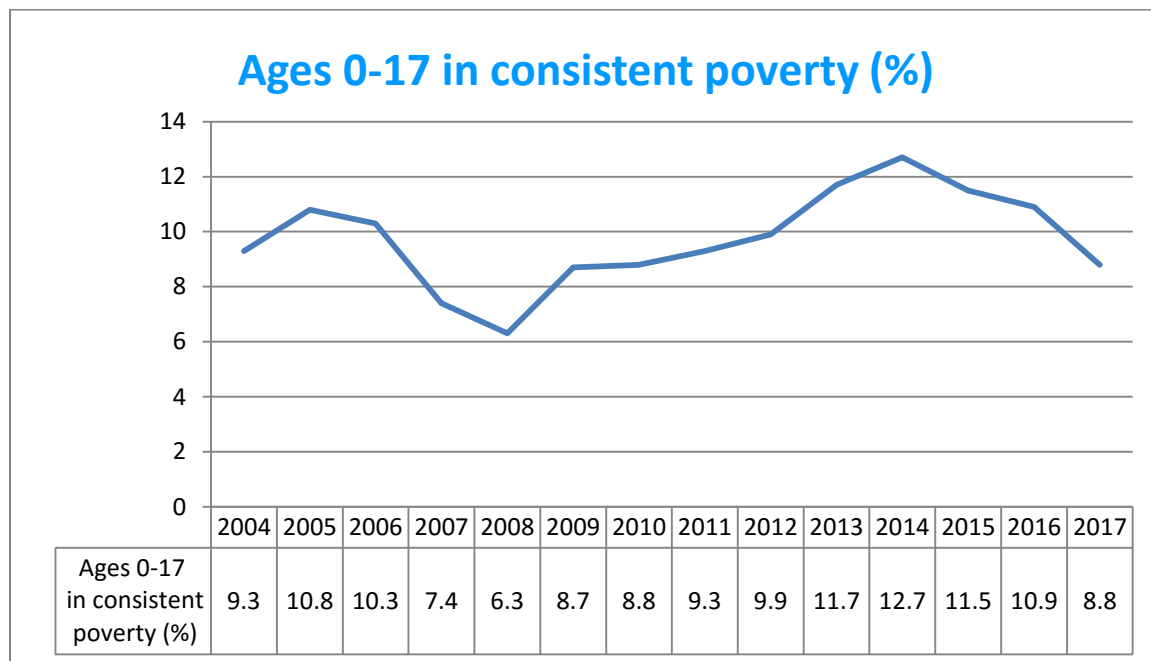
6.3 Progress on Child Poverty Target and Child Food Poverty

The Child Poverty target as set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* means that by 2020 the number of children in consistent poverty should be reduced to at most 37,000. To put this into context, in 2008, after years of unprecedented economic growth, Ireland achieved its lowest ever level of children in consistent poverty of 68,000 (almost twice as many as the 2020 target).

Since 2008 the percentage of children in consistent poverty peaked in 2014 at 152,000 children. However, 2015 saw the first reduction in the number of children in consistent poverty since 2008. In order to achieve the 2011 baseline target a new figure of 102,000 children will have to be lifted out of consistent poverty to meet the child poverty target by 2020.

The latest data from the 2017 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) shows a significant reduction in the consistent poverty rate for children over 2016, which decreased from 10.9% to 8.8%, a reduction of just over 2 percentage points (25,000 children), the second highest reduction in the rate since the collection of SILC data began in 2004. The SILC rates since 2004 are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Consistent Poverty rates 0-17 years old (SILC)



There is nothing inevitable about child poverty, and there is clear evidence about what works in terms of reducing child poverty rates. Ireland’s historical approach to tackling child poverty has focused on cash transfers, and this approach has resulted in Ireland consistently ranking as one of the top performing EU countries in the poverty reduction effect of social transfers.

However, despite Ireland’s record in terms of the poverty reduction effects of social transfers it is clear that the target to reduce child poverty by two thirds of the 2011 rate by 2020 is a challenging one. And while social transfers play a crucial role in alleviating poverty, tackling child poverty is not just about income supports and welfare. Rather it is also about supporting parents to make the transition into employment and assisting families through the provision of quality affordable services in areas such as education, health, housing and childcare. The diverse nature of these challenges demonstrates why the adoption of a whole-of-Government approach is critical in effectively tackling child and food poverty.

The full benefit of the growing economy and the increases introduced in more recent Budgets has yet to be seen. Budgets 2018 and 2019 included measures specifically aimed at supporting families on low incomes through raising income thresholds for the Working Family Payment, increasing qualified child rates, increasing earnings disregards for One Parent Family and Jobseeker Transition payments, and increasing the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance. These increased supports along with increasing employment rates suggest that we can expect further decreases in the poverty rates once the 2018 figures become available.

6.4 On-going work in addressing Child and Food Poverty

There are ongoing developments in these areas which are being progressed in a collaborative and cross-Government approach, and there are up and coming initiatives and proposals that can be considered in this context. Both food poverty and child poverty are now being given a greater policy priority and there have been positive developments in recent times.

In an attempt to build on work which is ongoing and planned across a number of Government Departments, current policy approach has been outlined in the whole-of-Government paper on tackling Child Poverty, and there is great potential to generate positive outcomes in terms of reducing child poverty through these activities. This paper identifies specific actions in the following areas: providing universal access to general practitioner care for those aged 18 years; reducing the cost of education; housing; affordable childcare; labour activation; and provision of in-work benefits.

DCYA, in conjunction with the other Government Departments involved, is advancing these actions. Collaboration between Departments, involving sectoral leaders, to achieve desirable outcomes is vital and unifies agendas and actions across all sectors this ensuring a concerted and co-ordinated approach. It is recognised that this approach has been positive to date, but the continuation and further development of collaborative approaches in addressing these issues is required. Policy coherence across Government, State Bodies and Agencies is essential and this cross cutting work should be child centred and recognised and replicated where necessary. There are already mechanisms in place but these structures can still be strengthened through the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* implementation infrastructure.

First 5, The Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019 – 2028 will have an important role to play in supporting children with the necessary material and practical resources to encourage positive development in their early years. The impacts of poverty in childhood are both immediate and long-lasting and there are many welcome initiatives under *First 5* which will help support the efforts to reduce child and food poverty. The *First 5* implementation plan, due to be published in 2019, will contain initiatives and actions that will support or efforts in reducing child and food poverty. The recently launched National Childcare Scheme will support children and families in providing accessible, affordable, quality childcare. The scheme aims to improve children's outcomes, support lifelong learning and reduce child poverty.

A whole-of-Government approach to the issue of Food Poverty is currently being developed. The *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* National Advisory Council, in conjunction with DCYA and the Department of Health, are involved in this approach and this is evidenced by the inclusion of Food Poverty as a priority on the Council's workplan for 2019. The Department of Health is convening a working group to examine food poverty in Ireland and are proposing a roundtable replicating the child poverty work undertaken to date. Arising from this work a paper on Food Poverty will be produced which will look at the existing evidence and the outcomes from the roundtable discussions. Food Poverty will be looked at in the context of schools, families and communities, educating parents on cooking skills and

providing healthy and nutritious meals, etc. Once these initial steps are taken, it is envisaged that this issue can be progressed through the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium through the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* implementation infrastructure.

The Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme which supports services for children and families living in areas of disadvantage aims to embed effective practices in mainstream services and ensure that services that are being delivered have the most impact, are timely and accessible, and have the potential to become mainstreamed and sustainable. The ABC programme will have a more sharply delineated anti-poverty focus, with associated impact measures where feasible. Aligned within the Prevention Partnership and Family Support programme, the intent is that the development of a robust prevention and early intervention infrastructure will support enhanced and effective service provision and inform cross-Government actions in addressing child poverty.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is committed to developing a new Integrated Framework for Social Inclusion, to tackle inequality and poverty. That Department are in the final stages of drafting the new National Action Plan on Poverty and Social Inclusion 2019 – 2025 (NAPSI) which will assemble in one place the range of policy measures across government departments that are designed to address the different aspects of poverty and social exclusion. The new strategy will include a programme of work to identify the actions and services that have the most significant impact on reducing poverty and deprivation for different groups, including children. This Framework will be published in 2019.

The new European Child Guarantee planned for 2021 -2027, and inspired by the existing Youth Guarantee, will help Member States in implementing the European Commission's Recommendations on *Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage*. This will offer countries guidance on integrated strategies to tackle child poverty and promote children's wellbeing. As Ireland already has a national policy framework in place, Ireland will be well placed to apply for funding under this initiative. This will help to improve and support children and families in vulnerable situations, increase the visibility of Government's attention to combatting child and food poverty, and ensure a greater focus on the prioritisation of policy and legislation in these areas.

7. Minister's Reflections

In reading this report, I am struck by how the enthusiasm and palpable sense of purpose that was evident on the day of the workshop can serve to further motivate us to address child poverty and food poverty. I passionately believe that the multi-stakeholder approach of the SDGs will help us frame our work in this area, leading to better and more focused actions that will help us achieve our common goals.

The Outcome Report reflects the views expressed in the Workshop of how the issue of child and food poverty might be addressed in Ireland within the context of the ambitions of the UN Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). The recommendations present an opportunity to give a greater focus to how the SDG agenda domestically can be used to improve outcomes for children who suffer from child and food poverty in Ireland today.

The recommendations outlined in this report are also very relevant to the work that is currently being carried out across Government and across the NGO sector through the current whole-of-Government approach. I hope that that the workshop and this Outcome Report can serve to strengthen and contribute to this process.

I am encouraged that the stakeholders participating at the workshop also recognise the need for greater inter-departmental cooperation, greater policy coherence across Government, and greater cooperation with partners in civil society and academia. As I outlined on the day, I believe that we need a National Programme to ensure that this multi-stakeholder approach finds form so that there is concerted, consistent and coordinated effort to reduce poverty and hunger among our children. As set out in the previous chapter, this should include the work of my own Department in areas such as early learning and care, but critically also involve other Departments involved in areas such as income support, education, health and community development.

One of the key issues arising from the event and the workshop deliberations relates to 'awareness raising' of child poverty. Underlying this is the need for a shared understanding of the concept and impact of child poverty, as well as consensus on the optimum approach to address it. This is something we need to continue to work on collaboratively, across sectors and policy domains, to ensure that we harness our best responses in a coordinated and coherent way.

The issues outlined in my opening address are intended to ensure that our discourse on addressing child poverty is unambiguous and our commitment unequivocal. As the workshop also concluded, there is a lack of understanding of child and food poverty. I am encouraged that the *No Child 2020* initiative being undertaken by the Children's Rights Alliance and Irish Times this year is helping to create awareness around this issue, including through a recent opinion piece by Professor Sachs. I have held discussions to explore how we may further advance this ambition.

As I stated in my keynote speech, the role of data and research is crucial to assist in evidence based policy making, and implementation and evaluation of current policies. My Department has developed a national indicator set to track national progress against the five outcomes in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. The purpose of these indicators is to act as a barometer of progress on the five national outcomes and to inform future policy development. In the context of child and food poverty the indicator set is focusing on data relating to poverty and social exclusion including consistent poverty and deprivation indicators. The National Advisory Council and DCYA are working together to find ways where improved data can track progress, identify trends, inform policy formulations and service provision, and provide for international comparisons where possible.

I am committed to ensuring that better use of data will ensure that investment is targeted towards the most effective services and supports for children to ensure maximum impact and to help break the poverty cycle and prevent inter-generational poverty.

I would like to specifically note the exemplary approach adopted by the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* National Advisory Council to keep child and food poverty firmly on its agenda by including these issues in its workplan for 2019 and beyond. At my recent meeting with the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* National Advisory Council, I requested that they prepare a paper identifying the most impactful approaches to be considered in addressing child poverty.

I look forward to receiving their submission and meeting with them to discuss this, including their recommendations for concrete actions. I expect that their work will reflect the multi-stakeholder nature of the Council and its high level of expertise. I hope that this Outcome Report on November's workshop, and its recommendations, will assist the Council in this important task. I hope to further develop our whole-of-Government and multi-stakeholder approach based on this important work. Our children deserve our best efforts.

Dr. Katherine Zappone, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

7. Annexes

ANNEX 1: KEYNOTE SPEAKERS & VOTES OF THANKS

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS	
Minister Dr. Katherine Zappone	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Professor Jeffrey Sachs	Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University.
VOTES OF THANKS	
Elizabeth Canavan	Department of the Taoiseach
Professor Alan Barrett	Economic and Social Research Institute
Associate Professor Orla Doyle	Geary Institute of Public Policy, University College Dublin

ANNEX 2: Researchers Leading Tables at the Workshop:

<i>Theme 1 and Theme 8: Child Poverty & Reforming Budgetary Process</i>		
Deirdre Coy	Geary Institute for Public Policy, University College Dublin	Doctoral Researcher focusing on economic impact of early childhood interventions.
Róisín Farragher	NUI, Galway - UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre.	Doctoral Researcher exploring family relationships of young people who have experience of the care system.
<i>Theme 2: Measuring Child Poverty and Measuring Policy Progress</i>		
Michelle Walsh	NUI, Galway - UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre.	Doctoral Researcher with a focus on sexual harassment of adolescents.
<i>Theme 3: Economic Cost of Child Poverty</i>		
Jonathan Briody	School of Economics, SPHeRE Scholar funded by Health Research Board (HRB), University College Dublin	Doctoral Researcher on Health Economics focusing on recessionary effects on health.
<i>Theme 4: Empowering Girls in Poverty</i>		
Dr Sheila Long	IT Carlow	Lecturer on early childhood education and care.
<i>Theme 5: Food Poverty & Malnutrition</i>		
Mckenzie Dow	School of Public Health, University College Dublin; Temple Street Children's University Hospital	Doctoral Researcher on Childhood Obesity and Psychological Health.
<i>Theme 6: Food Poverty & Childhood Obesity</i>		

Claire McCafferty	School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, University College Dublin	Doctoral Researcher on Health Psychology and Nutrition and Dietetics
<i>Theme 7: Combating Child Poverty - Family Context</i>		
Melissa Bonotto	NUI, Galway - UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre.	Doctoral Researcher focused on early intervention and meaningful interactions for preschool children with additional needs
<i>Theme 9: Combating Child Poverty - Community Context</i>		
Emma Zara O'Brien	School of Psychology, University College Dublin; Marino Institute of Education	Doctoral Researcher with a focus on social and educational disadvantage, constructs of educational quality and the nature of parental involvement. Lecturer at the Marino Institute of Education.
<i>Theme 10: Child Poverty - Towards Policy Coherence</i>		
Dr. Karen Smith	School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin	Assistant Professor in Equality Studies. Research on various areas of law and policy affecting children and families including child welfare and protection; education; youth justice; social protection; children's rights and participation.

ANNEX 3: WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Patrick Paul Walsh	Professor of International Development, Director of Centre for Sustainable Development Studies, School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin	Chair
Enda Murphy	Professor of Planning, School of Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy, University College Dublin	Rapporteur
Aparajita Banerjee	Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin	Organisation & Table Coordination
Caitriona Devery	School of Politics and International Relations, Research Administration, University College Dublin	Organisation & Table Summary
Charlotte Thumser	Research Assistant, School of Politics and International Relations, MPA Development Practice Student, University College Dublin	Organisation & Table Summary

ANNEX 4: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Government and Government Agencies:

Elizabeth Canavan	Department of the Taoiseach
Fergal Lynch	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Bernie McNally	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Anne-Marie Brooks	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Hazel O'Byrne	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Eimear Fisher	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Conor Rowley	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
John Cole	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Kasey Treadwell-Shine	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Mark Considine	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Máire Ní Chuiric	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Michael Cunningham	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Eifion Williams	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
Leslie Carberry	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment: <i>Sustainable Development, Environment Coordination, and Governance Division</i>
Joe Gallagher	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Colma Níc Lughadha	National Coordinator for Children and Young People's Services Committees

Denis Harrington	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Niall Colbert	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Irish Aid
Dr Mary Smyth	Central Statistics Office Ireland
Angela McCourt	Central Statistics Office Ireland: <i>Statistical Systems Coordination Unit / Horizontal reports</i>

Civil Society Organisations:

Tanya Ward	Children’s Rights Alliance
Sinéad Keenan	Early Childhood Ireland
Lisa Collins	Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Karen Kiernan	One Family
Mary Cunningham	National Youth Council of Ireland
Deirdre Garvey	The Wheel
Bernadette MacMahon	Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice
Elaine Nevin	ECO-UNESCO
Mike Allen	Focus Ireland
Emma Lane-Spollen	Tomar Trust
Eilis Murray	Philanthropy Ireland
Deirdre Mortell	Social Innovation Fund
Francis Chance	Katherine Howard Foundation

Frank Geary	Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) & Coalition 2030
Tricia Keilthy	Saint Vincent de Paul - Social Policy Development Officer
Valerie Duffy	National Youth Council of Ireland & Coalition 2030
Jean Marie Cullen	National Youth Council of Ireland
Declan Dunne	Respond

Research and Academia:

Prof Alan Barrett	The Economic and Social Research Institute
Orla Doyle	UCD Geary Institute of Public Policy
David Martyn	UCD Doctoral Researcher, School of Politics and International Relations
Michael Collins	UCD Assistant Professor of Social Policy at School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice
Ayae Kanemitsu	UCD Masters Student
Mark Bell	UCD Masters Student
Rebecca Alt	UCD Masters Student
Benn Ó hÓgain	UCD Masters Student
Stepanka Kralikova	UCD Masters Student
Laure Tymowski	UCD Masters Student
Aoife McNamara	UCD Masters Student
Boonsita Kitikhun	UCD Masters Student

Alice Luraghi	UCD Masters Student
Catherine Carty	IT Tralee
Dr Sinead O'Flanagan	MIT (Maynooth University)
Susan Murphy	TCD & Coalition 2030
Sara Burke	TCD
Giuliana Rocca	UCD
Barry Andrews	IIEA

Other Stakeholders:

Aisling O'Boyle	UN Youth Delegate
Jamie Moore	UN Youth Delegate
Damian McDonald	Irish Farmers' Association
Dr Michael Jackson	Church of Ireland
Kitty Holland	The Irish Times
Dr Fionnuala Cooney	Specialist in Public Health Medicine
Eabha Reid	TY Student, Coláiste Íosogán, Booterstown
Donal Leader	Edmund Rice International



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Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

