

**Special session of the United Nations General
Assembly : Women 2000: Gender equality,
development and peace for the 21st century**

**UN questionnaire to governments on the
implementation of the Beijing Platform for
Action**

National Report of Ireland

January 2000

Part One

Overview of trends in achieving gender equality and women's advancement

1. Introduction

The rate of change in Irish society has been rapid over the past number of years, both economically and socially.

The recent economic growth in Ireland has given a new impetus to the legislative and other changes affecting women. The most recent figures for labour force participation indicate that 48.5% of females aged 15 to 65 were in the labour force in the June-August 1999 quarter. This compares to a participation rate of 38.5% in 1996.

In turn, Ireland's economic boom is a driving force in addressing the obstacles to women's participation in the labour force, particularly in skilled employment. Employers do not want to lose highly trained and skilled women and are looking at ways of retaining them in employment.

The need to ensure continued growth is putting the employment and the retention of women in employment at centre stage; this is now not only an equality issue but also an economic issue.

2. Family Friendly Initiatives

The development of family friendly policies was included in the most recent agreement between the Government and social partners, Partnership 2000, in recognition of the changes occurring in employment practices. It is recognised that legislation alone will not achieve the flexibility needed in employment practices and some measures would be provided on a non-statutory basis.

Childcare

The *Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme* was developed in 1998 to provide funding for the development of childcare service provision under a broad range of initiatives. It provides capital and staffing supports to community based childcare projects and supports an employer initiative aimed at stimulating and encouraging employer involvement in the development of childcare services for employees.

In addition the Programme is funding the development of a *National Childcare Census and Database* which will provide information on a county by county basis in relation to child population and the level of service provision in group based facilities. Additional EU and Exchequer funding availed of in 1999 supported further initiatives including training and development, enhancement of national voluntary childcare organisations and research into family friendly employment policies.

Childcare was highlighted as an area for priority investment under the *National Development Plan 2000-2006* which provides £250 million for childcare service development over the

period of the plan. This will facilitate expansion of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme and support new initiatives, including the development of childcare networks and a new capital grant scheme for childcare service providers caring for up to 20 children. The Government has decided that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should be responsible for co-ordinating childcare over the course of the Plan. The Department is currently establishing structures at national and local level which will include representatives of the statutory and non-statutory sectors.

In relation to the development of childcare policy, the Government established an *Expert Working Group on Childcare* to devise a national childcare framework. The Group reported to Government in February, 1999 setting out a comprehensive national childcare strategy covering a wide range of areas including supports for providers and parents, regulations, planning, employment, training, qualifications and co-ordination. The Government established an Interdepartmental Committee to evaluate, cost and prioritise the proposals along with the childcare proposals in the Government's *Action Programme for the Millennium* and the *Reports of the Commission on the Family* and the *National Forum for Early Childhood Education*. The Committee has reported to Government and the Government approved funding for the support of childcare provision amounting to IRE46.4 million per annum (including the funding in the National Development Plan).

3. Equality Legislation

Employment Equality Act, 1998

The *Employment Equality Act, 1998* came into operation on Monday, 18 October, 1999. The Act prohibits discrimination in relation to employment, including pay, on nine distinct grounds - gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community. The Act covers employees in both the public and private sectors as well as applicants for employment and training.

Equal Status Legislation

The *Equal Status Bill, 1999* deals with discrimination on the same nine grounds as the Employment Equality Act, 1998 in the provision of goods and services, accommodation, disposal of premises and education. All services that are generally available to the public, whether provided by the State or by the private sector, will be covered. It is expected that the equal status legislation will be enacted in early 2000.

Enactment of the legislation will enable withdrawal of a reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Equality Infrastructure

A new infrastructure has been put in place to underpin employment equality and equal status legislation. The infrastructure consists of two new bodies, the *Equality Authority*, which replaced the Employment Equality Agency, and the *Office of Director of Equality Investigations*, to provide a forum for redress of first instance. The remit of the bodies will be broadened beyond the employment equality area after enactment of the Equal Status Bill, 1999.

Gender mainstreaming

Under the regulations governing the EU Structural Funds for the period 2000-2006 Member States are required to use the Funds, inter alia, to promote equality of opportunity between women and men. This requires policy makers to take into account the gender impact of policy and programmes at the planning, design and implementation stages across the Structural Funds.

The *National Development Plan 2000-2006* incorporates the principle of gender mainstreaming across the Plan. This represents a new development in national policy where the gender effects of policy proposals and programmes will be assessed prior to implementation in a broad range of policy areas including infrastructure, productive investment, human resources and regional policy. In addition there is a commitment to monitor and evaluate gender outcomes across the Plan.

To support the achievement of this objective an *Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit* has been established within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to assist Government Departments and State Agencies to gender mainstream their policies and programmes. The Department also has responsibility for a positive actions budget targeted at women and for implementation of a Childcare Sub-Programme referred to above over the period 2000-2006.

The *National Employment Action Plan 1999* also includes a commitment to a gender mainstreaming policy. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has a pivotal role in assisting Government departments to meet their obligations to promote equal opportunities under the EU Employment Guidelines.

Gender mainstreaming is well advanced in Ireland's aid programme and in education and health policy.

Gender mainstreaming in the National Development Plan, 2000-2006

The *National Development Plan 1994-99* set out the Government's commitment to gender proofing and was seen as an important step towards a national gender proofing policy.

The *National Development Plan 2000-2006* will involve an investment of IR£40 billion in 1999 prices of public, EU and private funds over the period of the Plan. The NDP is designed to build on recent economic success of the country and to ensure that the foundations of continuing sustainable economic growth are strengthened. The plan is based first and foremost on the development needs of the country. A crucial challenge is the better distribution of the fruits of economic growth throughout society.

The Plan provides for a number of structural supports to assist gender mainstreaming the Plan:

- the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to assist Government Departments and State Agencies to gender mainstream their policies and programmes;
- The identification of equal opportunities as an objective of human resources and regional policy;

- Acknowledgement of the impact of equal opportunities between women and men in spending on infrastructure and productive investment;
- Provision of project gender impact assessment across the whole Plan;
- Requirement that indicators will include sex differentiated outcomes 'where the nature of the assistance permits';
- Commitment to ensure gender balance on monitoring committees;
- Establishment of an equal opportunities and social inclusion co-ordinating committee;
- Childcare investment of £250 million to help parents, particularly women, to balance their work and family commitments;
- An equal opportunities measure focused on the needs of women returning to the labour market, tackling vertical and horizontal segregation, promoting family friendly working arrangements and women in decision making;

As the lead department with responsibility for equal opportunities between women and men the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform will be involved in the implementation of the above commitments across the six operational programmes of economic and social infrastructure, productive investment, employment and human resources development, regional development (2 programmes) and peace

Poverty

The *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* was launched in April 1997. The Strategy sets out to reduce poverty and social exclusion both in general terms and in a number of key policy areas. These are unemployment, income adequacy, educational disadvantage, disadvantaged urban areas and rural poverty.

Implementation of the Strategy is supported by the social partners and is overseen by a Cabinet Committee chaired by the Prime Minister, which is a key agent in ensuring that antipoverty policies have a high priority on the political agenda.

The global target of the Strategy aimed at considerably reducing the numbers of those who are 'consistently poor' from 9%-15% of the population to less than 5%-10% over the ten year period 1997 to 2007. Recent published data shows that this global target has been virtually achieved. Substantial progress has also been made in achieving some of the other main targets set down in the Strategy.

The overall socio-economic position in Ireland is substantially different to that existing at the time the original targets were drawn up. In the light of progress made over the past 2 years, the Government agreed ambitious new targets to reduce consistent poverty to less than 5% by 2004. In addition, the Employment Action Plan aims to reduce unemployment to below 5% and long-term unemployment to 2% by the end of the year 2000.

One of the key principles underlying the National Anti-Poverty Strategy is the reduction of inequalities and in particular, addressing the gender dimensions of poverty. A number of initiatives are currently being undertaken in this regard. The introduction of poverty proofing across all Government departments, which aims to assess significant policy proposals at design stage for their impact on the poor, is also a major step in this regard. Lone parents and single adult households are among the groups given particular attention in this process.

It is also recognised that women, in both urban and rural areas, can experience particular problems arising from poverty and marginalisation and that women's groups and community groups have an important role in tackling these problems. Particular emphasis is placed on support for community-based initiatives targeted at disadvantaged women.

Education

The fundamental aim of the Irish educational system is to enable each person to achieve her/his potential as a human being. The Education Act 1998 makes specific provision for the promotion of equality of access to and participation in education and the means whereby students benefit from education. The Act specifically provides for equal access to all forms of education and courses of study and equal opportunities between female and male students and staff.

In line with Government policy, with European Union policy and with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, it is the policy of the Department of Education and Science to mainstream gender equality. The goals of the Department are:

- ***to move from perceived gender neutral to gender visible in all areas of education;***
- ***to introduce a gender perspective into the planning and design stages of all curricula, syllabuses, programmes and into all actions undertaken by the Department***
- ***to move from dispersed unrelated actions to strategies programmed integration of gender;***
- ***to develop measures for evaluation and reporting;***
- ***to develop models of good practice .***

Under the *National Development Plan* technical assistance will be provided to the Department of Education and Science to fund a dedicated Equality Unit to co-ordinate and monitor the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all areas of the educational system, a computerised management information system and higher education networks. In particular, action will be undertaken to ensure that disadvantaged women will be encouraged to participate in all training programmes. Positive Actions will continue to complement mainstreaming.

Health

A Plan for Women's Health 1997-1999, the national policy on women's health, was developed in response to concerns that women's health needs were not always being met by the health services in the past. The Plan was launched in April 1997. The Plan has four main objectives for the Health services in relation to women which are:

- to maximise the health and social gain of Irish women;
- to create a woman-friendly health service;
- to increase consultation with and representation of women in health services;
- to enhance the contribution of the health services to promoting women's health in the developing world.

The *Women's Health Council* was established in accordance with a recommendation contained in the Plan. The Council has as its main functions:

- to develop a centre of expertise on women's health;
- to foster research into women's health;
- to evaluate the success of the Plan for Women's Health 1997-1999 in meeting its objectives and
- to advise the Minister for Health and Children on women's health issues generally.

The Council is representative of a wide range of interests concerned with women's health, including the National Women's Council of Ireland, members of the professions closely involved with women's health, women in the labour force and service providers.

Reproductive health

The area of reproductive health in Ireland has changed rapidly in recent years. The main changes relate to the sharp decline in the Irish birth rate which indicates the extent to which women are controlling their fertility. In 1995 the Total Period Fertility Rate (TPFR) was 1.84 which is below population replacement level of 2.1. The figures for 1996 and 1997 show a slight reversal of this trend, with the TPFR increasing to 1.92 in 1997.

Provision of Family Planning services

Since the Cairo *Conference on Population and Development* in 1994 a formal policy on family planning has been developed and implemented. It is based on the principle that all individuals should have the freedom to decide the number and spacing of their children.

Family planning services are available free of charge from their general practitioner to holders of a medical card (entitling them, on the basis of a means test, to general medical services without charge).

Additional funding has been provided for the development of family planning and pregnancy counselling services.

Strategies employed may need to be long-term in their approach, so that young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to take a responsible approach to relationships and so minimise the likelihood of unwanted pregnancy, now and in the future.

Women in decision making

Political and public life

In Ireland we now have our second successive directly elected woman President. Four of the five candidates Presidential in 1997 were women. They were all very strong candidates, not on the basis that they were women, but due to their achievements in the political, social and

legal spheres. However, the fact that Ireland now has its second woman President is, of itself, no particular cause for complacency in the effort to ensure the greatest possible participation of women in all areas of economic, social and political decision making.

In Ireland, as in most other EU Member States, with the exception of the Nordic countries, the number of women in parliament remains below the level that anyone would reasonably consider necessary to ensure balanced participation.

Following the 1997 general election 12% of seats in the national Parliament were held by women. As a result of by-elections this figure has increased to 13.25 %.

The percentage of female candidates for the 1999 elections for the European parliament was down on the previous election, at just over 19%. However, the percentage of successful candidates increased to just over 33%, an increase on the 1994 result, when women got 26.8% of the seats.

Since the introduction of Government policy on gender balance on State boards the number of women members has increased to 27% (September 1999) from 15% in 1993.

Economic life

The proportion of women in all the management grades of the civil service has increased since the introduction of the *Equal Opportunities Policy and Guidelines for the Civil Service*, in 1986. However, it is generally accepted that women remain concentrated at the lower levels of the civil service and underrepresented in the senior management levels.

The need for further development of the Equal Opportunities Policy was articulated in *Delivering Better Government*, the blueprint for reform of the Irish Civil Service endorsed by the Government in 1996. A special committee was established to make recommendations on equality as part of this reform process. This committee commissioned independent research to investigate the reasons for gender imbalance in the higher levels of the Irish civil service. The results of this research were considered by Government and a package of measures to promote gender equality was recently approved.

The keys elements of these measures are:

- the development of a new Gender Equality Policy by a high level Management Group
- the implementation of a Programme of Affirmative Action in the areas of recruitment, placement/mobility, training and development, promotion, work and family responsibilities, language, sexual harassment and policy delivery
- the use of strategic objective setting at department/office level, including the setting of increasingly specific equality goals to be achieved over a stated period of time and
- the development of new equality structures, locally and centrally, to support implementation of the new policy.

The implementation of these measures is intended to increase female participation in senior management grades.

An Equality Action Programme for local authorities was adopted in 1998 aimed at increasing the representation of women in senior positions.

A model equal opportunity policy and action plan has been developed for the health services. Each health agency has been asked to adopt an equal opportunity policy incorporating the principles set out in the model policy and to ensure that the programme is implemented.

Development Co-operation

Since the adoption of a Women in Development mandate in 1986, gender has been a significant focus of the Ireland Aid programme. In preparation for Beijing Ireland Aid undertook a major review of the existing gender activities. This resulted in the adoption of guidelines governing the gender element in its programmes. These are outlined in "*Irish Aid Policy on Gender on an Operational Footing*" (1996). The PfA is included as one of the underlying principles of Irish Aid policy and gender. Gender is seen as a human rights issue as well as a key factor in reducing poverty and increasing development.

Ireland Aid believes that in working with host governments, institutions, local authorities and non-governmental organisations it is essential to include local men and women in the design process. The preferred method of addressing gender in Irish Aid is that of mainstreaming although it is recognised that women oriented projects, or elements of projects, may be required if circumstances demand it.

Ireland Aid has programmes involved in a diverse number of areas including education, health, human rights and the economy. These activities are underpinned by a gender strategy in the belief that sustainable development is only possible with the participation of both men and women on the basis of full equality.

Part 2

Financial and Institutional measures

Department of Equality and Law Reform

The first Minister for Equality and Law Reform was appointed in January 1993. The Minister had responsibility for seeing that equality became a reality through institutional, administrative and legal reform. The Department of Equality and Law Reform had responsibility for a wide range of legislative and other measures to promote equality principles in Irish society. Its mission was to promote equality of treatment for groups in society who had suffered from discrimination, disadvantage or disability.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

An amalgamation of the Department of Justice and the Department of Equality and Law Reform took place as part of an administrative reorganisation of departments on the formation of the new Government following the June 1997 Election. The amalgamation of the two departments reflected the Government's view that the combined department was the one most appropriate to exercise responsibility for promoting equal opportunities, especially for certain groups that have experienced disadvantage.

A Strategy Statement for the Department for the years 1998 - 2000 prepared in the context of the Government's *Strategic Management Initiative* sets out the Department's policy objectives for the amalgamated Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Government's Strategic Management Initiative is focused on modernising the public sector. The Initiative is directed at achieving the twin goals of better government, in terms of improved service delivery, better quality regulation and more effective management of major national issues, and delivering better government through ongoing improvements in performance and a clear focus on attaining objectives. The Department's Strategy Statement sets out its policy objectives as follows:

To maintain and enhance community security and equality through the development of a range of policies and high quality services which underpin:

- the protection and assertion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, consistent with common good;*
- the security of the State;*
- an effective and balanced approach to tackling crime; and*
- progress towards the elimination of discrimination.*

The realisation of the Department's mission is to be achieved through the implementation of nine identified high level goals. One of the high-level goals specifically relates to the elimination of discrimination and is as follows:

Bringing about a more equal society by outlawing discrimination and facilitating equality of opportunity, especially for certain groups that have experienced disadvantage. Nine specific grounds are earmarked for inclusion in planned legislation prohibiting discrimination: gender, marital status, family status, sexual

orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

A number of specific objectives - together with the strategy to achieve them and the policy output which would ultimately result - are detailed in the Strategy Statement. The following are the most notable of these objectives: -

- 1 Put in place a statutory foundation for equality, especially rights-based, anti-discrimination legislation;*
- 2 Provide a sound infrastructure to work towards the elimination of discrimination, to promote equal opportunities and to provide redress for persons who have suffered discrimination contrary to employment or equal status legislation.*

Legislative and administrative action is underway to achieve these objectives on an ongoing basis.

Employment Equality Act, 1998

The *Employment Equality Act, 1998* came into operation on Monday, 18 October, 1999. The Act prohibits discrimination in relation to employment including pay on nine distinct grounds - gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community. The Act covers employees in both the public and private sectors as well as applicants for employment and training. The scope of the Act is comprehensive and deals with discrimination in work related areas, from vocational training to access to employment and employment conditions generally, including training, work experience and advancement within employment. The publication of discriminatory advertisements and discrimination by employment agencies, vocational training bodies and certain vocational bodies i.e. trades unions and employer, professional and trade associations are also outlawed. An explanatory booklet on the Act is available.

Equal Status Legislation

The *Equal Status Bill, 1999* deals with discrimination on the same nine grounds in the provision of goods and services, accommodation, disposal of premises and education. All services that are generally available to the public, whether provided by the State or by the private sector, will be covered including facilities for refreshment and entertainment, credit facilities and transport services. The measure will also contain sanctions against private registered clubs that are found to be discriminating. It is expected that the equal status legislation will be enacted early in the year 2000.

Equality Infrastructure

A new infrastructure has been put in place to underpin employment equality and equal status law. The infrastructure consists of two new bodies, the *Equality Authority*, which replaced the Employment Equality Agency, and the *Office of Director of Equality Investigations*, to provide a forum for redress of first instance. The new bodies have been established under the Employment Equality Act, 1998. The remit of the bodies will be broadened beyond the employment equality area after enactment of the Equal Status Bill, 1999.

Equality Authority

The Equality Authority works

- to eliminate discrimination; and
- to promote equality of opportunity.

The Equality Authority provides information to the public in relation to equality legislation, the Maternity Protection Act, 1994, the Adoptive Leave Act, 1995 and the Parental Leave Act, 1998 and is charged with keeping equality legislation under review.

The Authority is empowered to develop draft codes of practice for the approval of the Minister and to conduct equality reviews and prepare action plans. These plans will facilitate the development of a proactive equality conscious approach to equal opportunities in the workplace.

The Equality Authority, comprising 12 members, was appointed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on a designate basis on 8 March, 1999 and has been constituted on a statutory footing from 18 October, 1999. The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform has appointed a Chief Executive Officer and other staff (ultimately about 45 employees) to work with the Authority to implement its statutory remit.

State funding for the Employment Equality Agency in 1995 was IR£473,516. A financial allocation of IR£3.7 million was provided for the equality infrastructure in 1999. The funding for 2000 is IR£4.2 million.

Office of Director of Equality Investigations

The Office of Director of Equality Investigations provides the main locus for redress of first instance for equality cases arising under both employment equality and equal status legislation. The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform has appointed a Director and other staff (ultimately 27 in all) to investigate and to mediate in cases referred to the office.

Equality cases, other than those involving dismissal, may be referred to the Director of Equality Investigations. The Director may, subject to the agreement of the parties to the claim, refer a case for mediation, if it appears possible to resolve it in that way. The Director investigates each case (except those resolved at mediation) submitted to the office and will issue a decision. There is provision for the award of redress where discrimination is found to have occurred. Decisions of the Director and mediation settlements are binding and enforceable through the Circuit Court. Decisions of the Director may be subject to appeal.

National Development Plan

The *National Development Plan (2000-2006)* will involve an investment of IR£40 billion in 1999 prices of public, EU and private funds over the period of the Plan. The NDP is designed to build on the recent economic success of the country and to ensure that the foundations of continuing sustainable economic growth are strengthened. The plan is based first and foremost on the development needs of the country. A crucial challenge is the better distribution of the fruits of economic growth throughout society.

The following national objectives will underpin the strategy for the NDP:

- Continuing sustainable national economic and employment growth
- Consolidating and improving Ireland's international competitiveness
- Fostering balanced regional development
- Promoting social inclusion

The key elements of the strategy to meet these objectives are:

- Continuation of the stable macro-economic policies of recent years;
- A major investment programme in economic and social infrastructure;
- A commitment to a better regional distribution of public and private investment;
- The promotion of education and employment training policies attuned to the needs of the labour market and a special focus on those most at risk of unemployment;
- A multifaceted approach to the promotion of social inclusion, including equal opportunities between women and men.

The NDP comprises three national or inter-regional operational programmes, two regional operational programmes and a separate operational programme for the PEACE programme which operates in the border counties and Northern Ireland. As outlined above gender mainstreaming is being incorporated into the NDP through the use of Gender Impact Assessment, gender targets, monitoring and evaluation across all activities funded under the NDP. Particular priorities will be attached to promotion and monitoring the gender outcomes from the human resources and regional operational programmes investment. However, a gender assessment will also be carried out of infrastructure and productive investment.

A technical assistance budget is being provided for the setting up of an *Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit* in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Funding is also being provided to the Department for positive action for women, particularly in employment, e.g., through assisting women to break the glass ceiling and through the promotion of family friendly policies.

In accordance with the EU Employment Guidelines, gender mainstreaming is a feature of all four pillars of the *National Employment Action Plan*, i.e. Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability and Equal Opportunities. Thus the total investment under the NEAP of almost IR39.9 billion on education and training measures is intended to assist women and men to achieve labour market integration. The childcare investment effected through the regional programmes represents an important new initiative to assist parents, particularly those in disadvantaged areas, to reconcile their family and economic life.

Monitoring

The *Gender Equality Monitoring Committee* is charged with monitoring gender equality with particular reference to the Platform for Action agreed at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and the Second (national) Commission on the Status of Women. The Committee deals with the PFA in relation to action at a national level to implement the strategies agreed at Beijing. The Committee has the following terms of reference:

- To monitor gender equality in Ireland in the light of the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women and the actions agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women;

- To draw up and submit to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, from time to time, a report on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women;
- To draw up and submit to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, from time to time, a report on progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in a manner appropriate to Irish conditions;
- To make recommendations to Ministers to accelerate implementation of the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women which have been accepted by Government or by Ministers and the Beijing Platform for Action, as appropriate and
- To serve as a forum for consultation.

Future Monitoring

An overlap in the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women and the areas of concern in the PFA was apparent to the members of the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee. This overlap and the perceived limitations of the descriptive nature of the various reports on gender equality prompted the Committee to propose research to develop mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving gender equality in Ireland. The research will seek to develop performance indicators, to develop proposals for the establishment of a comprehensive gender segregated statistical base to be used in examining progress and to make recommendations regarding options for monitoring gender equality commitments, including those made under the PFA. A contract has been placed for the research and the completion date is mid 2000. The following are the terms of reference for the research:

(a) Assess recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women that:

- (i) have been implemented or substantially implemented;
- (ii) remain to be implemented, and the desirability and feasibility of implementing them;
- (iii) are obsolete;
- (iv) require review due to a change in circumstances.

(b) In relation to (ii) above, examine and make recommendations regarding:

- (i) concrete steps towards implementation where recommendations can be implemented;
- (ii) a timetable for implementation;
- (iii) the budget required (if necessary);

(c) Develop performance indicators, excluding the areas covered by the Structural Funds, which could be used for measuring the practical impact of policies and programmes on the status of women and for measuring progress as appropriate for gender monitoring requirements under various national and international commitments, with particular reference to commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women:

(d) Develop proposals for the establishment of a comprehensive gender segregated statistical base to be used in examining progress in the area of gender equality, excluding the areas covered by the Structural Funds. The current availability of such statistics should be identified and

- i. new base line statistics should be drawn up or, where this is not possible,
- ii. mechanisms to fill these gaps proposed.

Particular attention should be paid to statistics available and required in the areas of life expectancy, literacy rates and property rights amongst disadvantaged groups, childcare provision, sexual harassment in the workplace and in schools, violence against women, the position of women suffering from double disadvantage, e.g., women with disabilities, women affected by poverty, Traveller women, refugee and migrant women, elderly women, rural women and also women in management roles and women in academic fields;

(e) Make recommendations regarding options for monitoring gender equality commitments:

- i. possibility of a reconstituted gender equality monitoring committee, membership, terms of reference, working methods, representation and accountability;
- ii. develop proposals for streamlining some areas of gender equality into other existing/on-going monitoring areas (e.g. P 2000, childcare framework monitoring systems, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's equality-proofing working group, Women and Violence Task Force, Women's Regional Health Committee;
- iii. Examine departmental Strategic Management Strategy Statements in relation to gender and develop proposals for mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and actions in all Government departments.

In the 1994-1999 round of Structural Funds equal opportunities focus was only observed in relation to human resources area. An evaluation of Equal Opportunities and the ESF was published in 1999 and is available from the ESF Evaluation Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Overall the report found women's participation to have increased in all areas except apprenticeship. Women's participation in 1997 courses stood at 54% of all European Social Fund assisted measures, or 43% if training of teachers was excluded. The report identified the need for a more comprehensive approach to gender proofing/mainstreaming to ensure greater gender balance across the board, more systematic monitoring of data and tailoring of course times to match women's availability. The NDP 2000-2006 provides for a gender impact assessment and for a systematic monitoring and evaluation of gender outcomes across the Plan

Gender Equality in Education

The fundamental aim of the Irish educational system is to enable each person to achieve her or his potential as a human being. Principles of justice, freedom and democracy demand that no individual should be handicapped by their sex from self-realisation and full participation in the country's social, cultural and economic life.

The *Education Act, 1998* makes specific provision for the promotion of equality of access to and participation in education and the means whereby students may benefit from education. The Act specifically provides for equal access to all forms of education and courses of study and equal opportunities between female and male students and staff.

One of the key strategic functions of the Department of Education and Science, as set out in the Department's April 1998 Strategy Statement is the promotion of equality of opportunity throughout the system. Specifically, the strategy of the Department in this regard is to secure appropriate interventions at all the various levels to maximise participation by all relevant groups in society in every programme run or supported by the Department.

A working group in the Department, the Equality Committee, chaired at a senior level, monitors and co-ordinates activities relating to equality of opportunity for boys and girls in education. The committee has an annual budget which is used to initiate specific positive actions, to commission research and to support positive actions undertaken by NGOs.

It is the policy of the Department of Education and Science that both girls and boys should have equal access to all subjects, subject to the availability of resources, and that approved texts and teaching materials should not include stereotyping of any kind.

The promotion of gender equality is to be included in the work of the *National Centre for Guidance in Education*, a specialist agency of the Department of Education and Science. Gender equality has been introduced on a pilot basis as part of a monitoring programme, *Whole School Evaluation*. It is proposed that guidelines for teachers on non-sexist behaviour, which have been issued to schools, will be monitored as part of Whole School Evaluation.

Statistics

In the Department of Education and Science, all statistics are disaggregated by sex, this has been the practice since the mid 1980s.

Difficulties Encountered in Implementing Initiatives

In relation to difficulties encountered in implementing initiatives, the major obstacle which is constantly encountered, is one of attitudes, stereotyped attitudes are still common even amongst some women but more especially among men and boys.

Another obstacle encountered in implementing special initiatives has been a difficulty with a "crowded curriculum". Students in post primary schools study approximately twelve subjects in junior cycle, eight to nine of which they will sit for in a Public Examination at the end of 3rd year. At Senior cycle the average number of subjects studied is nine, seven of which they will sit for in the Public examination in their final year in school. Entry into 3rd level and further study is based on the results obtained in this examination.

Impact Assessment

All Interventions undertaken by the Department of Education and Science are piloted and evaluated, prior to dissemination. The evaluation is generally carried out by an external evaluator, who submits a report to the Department, which would include an analysis of the impact of the initiative on the target population.

National Development Plan

Under *the National Development Plan 2000-2006* training and educational institutions will ensure that the participation of both women and men is promoted and facilitated. This will be extended to further develop monitoring systems and gender proofing procedures. A technical assistance budget will be provided to enable the Department of Education and Science to fund a dedicated equality unit to co-ordinate and monitor the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all areas of the educational system, a computerised management information system and higher education networks. In order to ensure that disadvantaged women are encouraged to participate in all training programmes positive action measures will be taken where necessary.

All third level institutions are charged with developing an equality policy. Equality networks have been set up by some institutions for the development and promotion of strategies to encourage equality of access, benefit and outcome for participants in third level education. These networks act as a catalyst in testing innovative approaches, documenting and sharing good practice, networking providers, information and awareness raising and liaison and collaboration with a range of interests with an equality focus outside the third level system. It is proposed to support third level institutions to facilitate access of mature students to third level education.

Sexual Harassment in Schools

The Teacher Unions have procedures in place to deal with cases of sexual harassment of teachers, either by management, other teachers or by students. These procedures may lead to legal proceedings if considered appropriate.

In relation to sexual harassment of students by students, school authorities are assisted by the Teacher Unions and by the Department of Education and Science in developing a school policy on this issue with procedures for dealing with both the perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment. Two of the Department 's intervention programmes deal specifically with the issue, BALANCE and Exploring Masculinities (this is an intervention project for boys)

Both of these programmes also deal with other gender related issues, such as the need to share responsibilities in the home and in the community.

Health

Health capital is included in the National Development Plan 2000-2006, unlike its two predecessors. In relation to health capital the priorities will be:

- To provide facilities for persons with an intellectual disability;
- To develop a range of facilities for the elderly;
- To address major unmet needs in the provision of modern accommodation for the mentally ill and physically disabled;
- To provide a comprehensive, quality and accessible acute hospital infrastructure;
- To address child care needs;
- To remedy deficiencies in the network of health centres;
- To maximise the potential of information and communication technology in the health care sector.

The investment in health should be particularly beneficial to women. Women are more frequently involved in caring for the elderly, children and adults with disabilities and children who need hospital treatment. The health investment in the NDP will improve the infrastructure in these areas, making it better for patients and carers.

World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen +5

The NAPS is a major cross-Departmental initiative designed to place the needs of the poor and the socially excluded among the issues at the top of the national agenda in terms of Government policy development and action.

The development of NAPS involved widespread consultation with various sectors, including the voluntary and community sector, and those who are affected by poverty. Following consultation with the social partners a new procedure designed to evaluate the impact of policy proposals on those experiencing or at risk of poverty has been adopted by the Government and has been introduced across all central Government Departments on a pilot basis.

While the feminisation of poverty is not specifically targeted, social groupings known to be at particular risk of poverty are identified for special attention. These include groups which are largely comprised of women, e.g. households headed by people on home duties, lone parents.

Appropriate institutional arrangements have been put in place to support NAPS. For example the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion (including Local Development) is a key agent in ensuring that anti-poverty policies have a high priority on the political agenda. This Committee is chaired by the Taoiseach (prime minister) and includes all the Ministers whose brief includes policy areas relevant to tackling poverty.

There are a number of other institutional arrangements supporting NAPS. There are also a number of institutions that support the practical and policy sides of social development. These include:

- *Senior Officials Groups on Social Inclusion:* senior civil servants from the relevant Government Departments.
- *NAPS Interdepartmental Policy Committee:* responsible for the Strategy, focus for addressing key issues and agreeing future plans and programmes of activity.
- *NAPS Liaison Officers:* each Government Department has a liaison officer who takes on the co-ordination role for NAPS issues.
- *NAPS Unit:* established in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs the Unit acts as secretariat to the NAPS Interdepartmental Policy Committee and liaises with Departments, agencies and the social partners in relation to NAPS implementation.
- *National Economic and Social Forum and the National Economic and Social Council:* the council and forum discuss, respectively, the principles and strategic issues, and, monitor and analyse the implementation of measures relating to economics and social inclusion.
- *Integrated Services Project:* an initiative, under the aegis of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, to develop new procedures to ensure a more response by the statutory authorities to the needs of disadvantaged communities.
- *Equality Infrastructure:* the Equality Authority and the Office of Equality Investigations will underpin the anti-discrimination provisions of equality legislation, primarily the Employment Equality Act 1998 and, once enacted, the Equal Status Bill 1999.

Given that NAPS was developed in response to the original WSSD in Copenhagen in 1995, and as social development issues lie at the heart of NAPS, the NAPS Interdepartmental Policy Committee has a central role in the WSSD follow-up process. *Ireland's National Report on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development* was submitted to the UN Secretary General in September 1999, was prepared by that Committee

Funding

While the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs has a central co-ordinating role for the NAPS, funding for the various initiatives tackling social exclusion is provided through the relevant Department with lead responsibility for the particular area, although implementation and monitoring may be done on an interdepartmental basis.

Social Inclusion in Partnership 2000

Partnership 2000 is the current national agreement negotiated between the Government and the Social Partners -employers, trade unions, farmers and the community/voluntary sector. The agreement focusses on areas such as employment, taxation and agriculture as well as social inclusion and equality to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are shared by all sections of society. The social partnership process provides a forum within which the social partners can work together to find solutions and has resulted in striking economic and social progress over the last decade.

International Conference on Population and Development

The preparation process for ICPD+5 included co-ordination at a national level between the Departments of Health and Children, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Office of the Attorney General and Social, Community and Family Affairs. The lead Department was the Department of Health and Children. Ireland formed part of the EU delegation and contributed to the EU agreed statement through participation in the EU co-ordination meetings.

Ireland attended a number the preparatory meetings for the 21st UN Special Session including the EU Co-ordination meeting in Budapest in December 1998 and in New York in March 1999.

Ireland attended the International Forum for the Operational Review and Appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development which was held in the Hague in February 1999.

The ICPD+5 process concluded at the 21st The Irish delegation to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, 30 June - July 1999 was lead by the Minister for Health and Children, Mr. Brian Cowen T.D., with senior civil servants from his Department and a representative from the Multilateral Aid Policy Section from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

National Women's Council of Ireland

The *National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)*, then known as the Council for the Status of Women, was established in 1973 to monitor implementation of the recommendations of the First National Commission on the Status of Women. Membership is open to all women's organisations and organisations with a sizeable female membership or interest. In 1999 there were 149 organisations affiliated to the NWCI.

NWCI is recognised by Government as the body that puts forward women's concerns and perspectives. As such it receives an annual Exchequer grant through the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform towards its operating costs. In 1995 this grant was £140,000; £170,000 in 1996 and 1997, in 1998 £200,000 and in 1999 £270,000 was provided. There is a provision of £405,000 in the Estimates for 2000.

In addition, the Council received once off funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for particular purposes, as follows:

1999	* grant towards North-South conference on mainstreaming	£25,000
	* grant for Millennium research project	£10,000
	(an additional amount of £10,000 will be provided in 2000)	
1997	* relocation to new offices and IT costs	£50,000
	* childcare research	£23,000
1996	* report on crimes against women and children	£6,412
1995	* report on crimes against women and children	£8,000
	* grants towards attendance at FWCW	33,300
	* preparations for FWCW	£5,232
	* divorce information campaign	£7,879

It is not the intention that the NWCI should be fully funded by the Government. As an NGO it must be independent of Government and use of other sources of funding is an important component of this independence.

NWCI identifies its core functions as lobbying Government, acting as a watchdog on equality issues, providing training and support for its members, changing society's attitudes on gender and linking and networking women's organisations within Ireland and the European Union.

In October 1996 the Government invited a wide range of social partners to participate in discussions on the development of a new national agreement (*Partnership 2000*). In extending that invitation the Government signalled that the process of negotiation would be more inclusive and wider than in the past. The development of a new four pillar structure for Partnership 2000 added the *Community and Voluntary Pillar* to the traditional pillars of Government, social partners and farming. The Community and Voluntary Pillar is made up of eight organisations, including the National Women's Council of Ireland. They, in turn, have a range of national networks and organisations participating. The success of this pillar is reflected in the fact that Partnership 2000 contains a specific chapter dedicated to developing a strategy which enhances equality and counters discrimination, both in employment and non-employment areas. NWCI are also represented on the monitoring mechanisms for Partnership 2000.

In addition to forming part of the community and Voluntary Pillar the NWCI is also represented on the National Economic and Social Council and the National Economic and

Social Forum. The NESC and NESF are the principal social partnership institutions and are influential in the policy making and monitoring processes.

Participation by non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental organisations with an interest in gender equality, particularly women's organisations, take part in informal and formal arrangements to set policy for the improvement of gender equality in the public arena.

Formal participation occurs by the presence of non-governmental representatives on various committees such as the Expert Working Group on Childcare which reported in January 1999 and their involvement in supplying pre-budget submissions on issues that should be dealt with in the upcoming Government budget.

Formal institutional participation in relation to gender is primarily through the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee. The GEMC includes equality representatives of a number of non-governmental organisations. It includes 2 representatives of the main umbrella non-governmental women's organisation, the National Women's Council of Ireland, as well as a representative of the main farming body, the central trade union body, the main employers body and a representative of Irish rural women.

Informal participation can take the form of consultative meetings relating to national or international matters such as national budgets, legislation or international commitments. For example, meetings were held with a wide range groups of NGOs in advance of the meeting of the UN Commission for the Status of Women in March and the CEDAW examination in June. The groups invited to these preparatory meetings included NGOs involved with domestic violence, lesbians, members of the Travelling community, refugees and disabilities. The material supplied by the Government to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was circulated to the groups invited to the preparatory meetings for Ireland's CEDAW examination. The subsequent statement by Ireland to the UN Committee, the UN coverage of the examination and the concluding comments were circulated to the NGO's involved. It is planned that similar meetings will take place in the future, particularly in relation to Beijing +5.

Comhar: the National Sustainable Development Partnership

Comhar has been set up as the forum for national consultation and dialogue on all issues surrounding Ireland's pursuit of sustainable development. One of the criteria used in the selection of the members of Comhar was that of gender balance. While the remit of Comhar is not gender specific it does have the flexibility to address gender related sustainable development issues. Specific women's organisations represented in Comhar are from the Irish Women's Environmental Network and the National Women's Council of Ireland.

Irish Overseas Aid

In relation to development Ireland Aid has made a commitment to equitable, participatory, poverty focused and sustainable development. This includes ensuring that women and men are equally involved in planning and implementing development initiatives supported by Ireland Aid. In order to help implement this commitment Ireland Aid has produced

guidelines *'Irish Aid Policy on Gender on an Operational Footing'* to support the incorporation of a gender perspective throughout its activities.

Rural Development

The White Paper, published in August 1999, articulates a vision of the long-term future of rural society in Ireland. It identifies issues critical to the development of rural communities and in particular recognises the problems of poverty and social exclusion in rural areas which have a distinct impact on women.

In the rural context, social exclusion manifests itself in ways that reflect the distinct features of rural life, particularly in more remote areas. It is frequently the result of multiple disadvantage. Economic factors like unemployment or inadequate incomes together with wider social issues of isolation, unequal opportunity and participation are often compounded by further problems of distance from services and amenities. For example, the absence of an adequate transport service and affordable childcare facilities in many areas make it difficult for women to avail of training and education or to enter into or retain employment.

The strategy set out in the White Paper endorses and supports the objectives contained in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) and will ensure that the overall strategy for rural development is underpinned by a socially inclusive dimension. It acknowledges that Government intervention is required to ensure balanced regional development and to provide a particular focus on addressing social inclusion needs. There are five themes in the NAPS, i.e. Employment, Educational Disadvantage, Income Adequacy, Disadvantaged Urban Areas and Rural Poverty. It is recognised that the combined effects of actions in the first three are central to achieving significant change in both urban and rural poverty.

In addressing Rural Poverty, the target is to ensure that strategies are developed with regard to the provision of services in rural areas, especially those concerned with educational disadvantage, unemployment and income adequacy so that the overall target of the NAPS is achieved.

Critical areas of concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern to the Beijing Platform for Action	Examples of obstacles encountered / lessons learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives	Other
1. Women and poverty	<p><i>National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS)</i></p> <p>As NAPS, introduced in 1997, is a long term strategy (10 years), new initiatives will be continuously introduced over this period. Initiatives include a multi-annual employment plan, measures to tackle early school-leaving, rural poverty and a national drugs strategy. Annual progress reports will be compiled with effect from 1999.</p> <p>An overall target was set to reduce the numbers living in "consistent poverty" from 9-15% of the population to 5-10% by 2007. Recent published information indicates that the target of 5-10% has been virtually achieved. In view of this, the Government set a new consistent poverty target of below 5% by 2004.</p> <p>Relevant Government departments have drawn up baseline documents which provide a broad strategic statement on social inclusion policy relevant to each Department.</p> <p>They also draw up annual NAPS work plans.</p>	<p>The poverty proofing process is still relatively new. It will be reviewed shortly to assess the lessons to be learned, etc.</p> <p>A report published by the Combat Poverty Agency in 1999, <i>Women and Poverty in Ireland</i>, stated that, drawing on the 1994 Living in Ireland Survey, women experience a greater risk of poverty than men and that female headed households are at a greater risk than those headed by men or couples.</p>	<p>A report by the Economic and Social Research Institute on trends in poverty during 1994-1997 was published in June 1999. It showed that consistent poverty had been reduced from 9-15% of the population to 7-10%. Analysis of the results will inform future policy development in the poverty area.</p> <p>A Working Group of Partnership 2000 is advising on the implementation of a research project entitled 'The Evaluation and Development of equality proofing in the context of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy'. The Working Group assisted with the drafting of the document on <i>Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds: Outline Guidelines</i>. The Working Group is currently advising on the production of a second publication on Equality Proofing. The Equality</p>	<p>A recent White Paper on Rural Development addresses rural poverty</p>

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<p>I. Women and poverty</p>	<p>One of the key principles underlying NAPS is the reduction of inequalities in general and in particular, addressing the gender dimensions of poverty. The introduction of poverty proofing across all Government departments is a major step in this regard.</p> <p>Lone parents and single parent households are among the groups given particular attention in this process. Payments for lone parents have been improved in recent years. The aim is to encourage lone parents to move into employment and away from long-term dependency on social welfare payments.</p> <p>In order to make the re-entry into the labour market easier for One Parent Families (OPF), lone parents benefit from earnings disregards which enhance total income</p> <p>The Commission on Social Welfare, which reported in 1986, laid the foundation for the further development of the Irish social welfare system. The income adequacy target, as defined by the Commission, has been achieved in full with all social welfare payments now</p>		<p>Proofing document has the following terms of reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make recommendations on the nature of, and means of undertaking, a suitable equality proofing policy, specifically in the context of the NAPS and • To make recommendations on the feasibility of a wide ranging application of equality proofing <p>The new support scheme for lone parents, the One-Parent Family Payment, which was introduced in 1997, is being reviewed under the Department's Expenditure Review Programme. This will include an examination of the effectiveness of the income disregards in encouraging lone parents to consider employment as a viable option.</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>above the minimum target set by the Commission.</p> <p>Substantial increases in the universal <i>Child Benefit</i> have been made in recent years coupled with a lessening of the importance of child dependant allowances with social welfare payments. This ensures that child income supports are more neutral vis a vis the employment status of parents. Child Benefit rates have increased between 72.4% and 84% from 1995 to 1999.</p> <p>As women's and community groups can play an important role in tackling problems caused by marginalisation and poverty experienced by women in both rural and urban areas particular emphasis is placed on support for community based initiatives targeted at disadvantaged women. Support for such groups continues to be expanded.</p> <p>A Working Group was set up in 1997 to compare the treatment of one and two parent households under the Tax and Social Welfare codes, including an examination of the income support arrangements attached to labour market programmes.</p>		<p>A further increase in Child Benefit of 22%-23% will be awarded in 2000.</p> <p>The Government is deeply committed to supporting carers and delivered on that commitment in its 1999 Budget when it introduced a range of new measures for carers. In this year's <i>Budget 2000</i>, the Government have reiterated this commitment once again both by improving the Carer's Allowance and by introducing an innovative and new social insurance benefit scheme.</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>The Working Group reported in August, 1999. The Group did not reach agreement on the direction tax and social welfare policy should take in this area. However, the Group did consider a number of options for change and the report of the Group builds on other work already undertaken in this area by the Commission on the Family and the Expert Working Group on the integration of the Tax and Social Welfare Systems and it is hoped that it will make a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on these issues.</p> <p><i>Vulnerable women Traveller women</i></p> <p>Membership of the travelling community is a category covered by the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the proposed equal status legislation.</p> <p><i>The Task Force on the Travelling Community</i>, which reported to Government in 1995, made a number of recommendations specifically relating to Traveller women. In particular, the report recommended that the gender dimension be examined in order to ascertain how policies in each area of State services to Travellers contributed to</p>			

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>or blocked progress for Traveller women. The report drew particular attention to the special needs of young Traveller women, recognising that young women from minority groups can experience particular discrimination.</p> <p>The health status of the Traveller Community is substantially inferior to that of the general community. This is partly due to their low level of take up of health services. The main thrust of health policy in relation to Traveller health is to increase the level of take-up. Measures such as outreach services, on-site clinics and special clinics are in place or planned. One promising initiative is the training of Traveller women for involvement in the delivery of primary health care services for Travellers.</p> <p>A <i>Traveller Education Co-ordinating Committee</i> was established by the Department of Education and Science in 1998. Its objective is to draw up a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the implementation of the Task Force recommendations, including target dates. The Department has a policy of total integration of</p>			

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>Traveller children in both primary and second level schools. The mainstreaming policy of the Department will ensure that the gender perspective will be included in the monitoring and reporting of the participation rates in education and training programmes.</p> <p>Through its funding for community groups the Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs is committed to targeting particular support to Travellers groups. The aim of this support is to raise awareness of Travellers issues and contribute to development initiatives by Travellers themselves.</p> <p>A number of the projects focus particularly on the needs of Traveller women. All projects focusing on Traveller women must be community-driven and managed by members of the target group. The Department's support for such groups is based on the group identifying and prioritising their own needs and also identifying the appropriate means to address these needs.</p> <p><i>Women with disabilities</i></p>		<p>It is intended that other specialist Travellers projects, including those addressing the needs of Traveller women, will be included in the Community Development Programme or Core-funded Community and Family Groups Programme as appropriate in the future.</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>Since the <i>Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities</i> reported in 1996 substantial progress has been made in promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Disability is a category covered in the <i>Employment Equality Act, 1998</i> and the proposed equal status legislation.</p> <p>The Government has facilitated the establishment of the <i>Irish Council for People with Disabilities</i> to which substantial State funding has been made available.</p> <p><i>Older women</i> Age is a category covered by the <i>Employment Equality Act, 1998</i> and the proposed equal status legislation. The cornerstone of health policy towards older people is to support the dependent older person at home in dignity and independence and, when this is no longer possible, to ensure that ill and dependent older people have access to high quality hospital and residential care. A major focus since the Government came into office (1997) has been on increasing the level of State pension payments. The Government has firmly committed to the early achievement of an</p>		<p>With the demographic changes taking place an <i>Action Programme</i> for health services for older people for the new millennium will be prepared, based on tackling the service shortcomings identified in the <i>Review of the Years Ahead</i> prepared for the National Council on Ageing and Older People.</p> <p>The <i>National Development Plan 2000-2006</i> includes additional provision of extra day hospitals, day care centres,</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>Old Age (Contributory) Pension rate of £100 per week and, furthermore, to extend this £100 commitment to all social welfare pensioners by 2002. In line with this, the 1998 and 1999 budgets provided for substantial increases which were above the rate of inflation. In addition, a commitment has been given to increasing all social welfare pensions in line with increases in average earnings over the life time of the Government. In line with this, Budget 2000 provided for increases in the rates of retirement and old age pensions to £96 per week.</p> <p>Under the <i>Homenaker's Scheme</i> women who take time out of the labour market to care for their children or caring full time for an elderly or incapacitated person will have a maximum of twenty years disregarded for the purpose of calculating entitlement to old age pension.</p> <p>A study entitled <i>Abuses, Neglect and Mistreatment of Older People in Ireland</i> investigated elder abuse, including older women and advised on how it should be responded to. The <i>Domestic Violence Act, 1996</i> extended protection to cover violence perpetrated by adult children.</p>		<p>new community nursing units as well as improved capacity on palliative care and hospices.</p> <p><i>Budget 2000</i> provides for a new system of capital assessment for means-tested pensions ensuring that the majority of such recipients will not incur any reduction in their pension due to savings.</p> <p>The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs is also reviewing the qualifying conditions for the insurance-based pensions (Old Age Contributory and Retirement) with a view to maximising coverage and ensuring continued equity.</p> <p>In accordance with one of the recommendations of the study <i>Abuses, Neglect and Mistreatment of Older People in Ireland</i> it is proposed to establish an Expert Group to advise on policy procedures and guidelines to lessen the</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>Women in prostitution The <i>Women's Health Project</i>, based in Dublin, provides outreach services and a drop in clinic for women involved in prostitution where they can access health services. The clinic offers a safe place and services include counselling, needle exchange, condom distribution, STD screenings, contraceptives and general health checks. Peer leaders in the project encourage others to avail of services. An interagency network was set up involving the <i>Women's Health Project</i>, voluntary agencies, the police, rape crisis centre and sex workers to help resolve issues that arise.</p> <p>Lesbians Sexual orientation is included as a category for protection under the <i>Employment Equality Act, 1998</i> and the proposed equal status legislation. Since the publication of the report of the <i>National AIDS Strategy Committee</i> (1992) a number of initiatives have been</p>	<p>In developing services for women in prostitution it is essential to have a partnership approach and that there is a concerted approach by all agencies working with women in prostitution. For this reason workshops are provided by the <i>Women's Health Project</i> for nurses, social workers, students in addition studies and other professional and community groups.</p> <p>Because prostitution is illegal there is a difficulty in identifying women who may need support or treatment services.</p>	<p>possibility of elder abuse and response mechanisms</p> <p>The <i>National AIDS Strategy</i> is being reviewed and consideration will be given in this process to the needs of all groups, including lesbian women, in relation to HIV prevention, treatment and care.</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>undertaken to address the needs of the gay community. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach services for gay men and women in Dublin, Cork and Galway. These include counselling and advice on accessing health services; • Research on HIV prevention. A number of gay and lesbian associations were involved in the research process; • A Gay HIV Prevention Strategies Project which includes education and awareness in relation to safer sex, linking with the health boards to improve support for the gay community and linking voluntary groups dealing with the gay community with each other. <p><i>Refugees and asylum seekers</i> All applications for refugee status are determined in accordance with the Geneva Convention and the Refugee Act, 1996. The definition in the Act goes beyond the definition contained in the Convention by defining 'membership of a particular social group' to include membership of a group of persons whose defining characteristic is their belonging to the female or male sex or having a</p>	<p>The Irish Refugee Council (the representative body for 56 NGOs working both overseas and in Ireland to promote the cause of refugees) raised a number of concerns in relation to the situation of women refugees in Ireland, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of culturally appropriate childcare 		

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>particular sexual orientation. All asylum seekers arriving into Ireland can avail of medical services for themselves and their families. Those who have been sexually assaulted are referred to a rape crisis centre.</p> <p>The following measures adopted in the last year or so are of particular note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff engaged in interviewing asylum seekers have been given a comprehensive training programme for which the UNHCR provided training staff • The establishment of a 'one stop shop' for asylum seekers • The establishment of the Refugee Legal Service. <p><i>A National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism</i> was established by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in 1998. The committee is a partnership of NGOs, State agencies, social partners and Government departments. The objective of the Committee is to provide an ongoing structure to develop an integrated approach against racism and to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council opposes proposals to implement measures for the direct support of asylum seekers and considers that it will particularly affect asylum seeking women • Lack of State funded English language classes • There should be culturally appropriate health services, with information in a language that asylum seeking women understand • Problems faced by asylum seeking women who wish to leave the State to access reproductive services not available in the State • The Council is concerned about reception strategies proposed to regionally relocate asylum seekers throughout the State. This measure should, they say, be accompanied by the dispersal of appropriate services such as legal advice, specialised medical services, counselling and 	<p>The <i>National Committee on Racism and Interculturalism</i> will endeavour to promote a more participatory and intercultural society, inclusive of such groups as migrants and refugees, Travellers and minority ethnic groups in Ireland</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>advise the Government on matters relating to racism and interculturalism.</p> <p>'True Colours', a two week programme of events focussing on how Irish society can be more inclusive of ethnic minorities took place from 8 to 20 November 1999. The aims of the two weeks were to highlight the challenge of cultural diversity, identify some of the steps needed for building a more inclusive, intercultural society and address issues such as racism and discrimination suffered by ethnic minorities in Ireland. Amongst many events in the True Colours calendar it hosted a conference on refugee women, which examined the social, legal, health and sexual violence issues facing refugee women in Ireland. True Colours was funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and co-ordinated by the National Consultative Committee on Interculturalism, in association with UNICER and a range of organisations at national level.</p> <p><i>Women in prison</i> Female offenders constitute approximately 3% of the prison</p>	<p>translation facilities. There is also concern that asylum seekers will be housed in collective accommodation.</p> <p>Drug abuse is seen as the major problem in relation to female imprisonment. A 1996 survey of female prisoners showed that 37% had taken drugs before they were 16 years old and that 98% of female offenders were</p>	<p>A new purpose built women's prison opened in September 1999. Women are housed in single cell accommodation with in cell sanitation. A full range of education, work training and physical education facilities are being provided. A medically</p>	

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<p>1. Women and poverty</p>	<p>population at any given time. They are most likely to be in their mid-twenties, with a history of drug and alcohol abuse, are less likely to have a stable relationship and more likely to have had prior psychiatric treatment.</p>	<p>still taking drugs on committal to prison.</p> <p>At present only drug detoxification is available in prisons. However, work is underway, involving statutory services responsible for prisons and health services, to provide the range of drug treatment services which are available at community level so that there would be a continuum of care both inside and out of prison.</p>	<p>supervised detoxification programme and counselling is available</p>	

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<p>2. Education and training of women</p>	<p>The <i>Education Act, 1998</i> makes provision for the promotion of equality of access to, means of, and participation in education. The Act provides for equality of opportunity between boys and girls.</p> <p>The Act requires School Boards of Management to promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions and ways of life in society.</p> <p>All interventions undertaken by the Dept. of Education and Science are piloted and evaluated prior to dissemination. The evaluation is usually carried out by an external evaluator.</p> <p>All statistics collected by the Department of Education and Science are disaggregated by sex.</p> <p>A module on gender equality is a mandatory component of in-career development programmes funded under the Human Resources Programme of the European Structural Fund.</p> <p>In-career programmes for post-primary teachers, which are organised regularly, deal with the area of gender issues and</p>	<p>The major obstacle is one of stereotypical attitudes, common among some women but especially among boys and men.</p> <p>Another obstacle is the 'crowded curriculum'. At senior cycle most students study nine subjects, seven of which will be sat in the Leaving Certificate examination.</p> <p>In 1997 a national survey, carried out for the OECD, found that, while there was near universal literacy, there were approximately 20% of the population at the lowest level of the literacy scale. There was no significant gender difference in the literacy rates. This is seen by the Government as a barrier to the eradication of poverty.</p> <p>Obstacles to increased participation of women in agricultural training courses include the poor likelihood of inheriting the farm, lack of time</p>	<p>The <i>Education Act, 1998</i> will establish a statutory body for the promotion of equality of access to education. This body will be charged with ensuring that post-primary syllabi are gender fair with the appropriate representation of women.</p> <p>The promotion of gender equality is to be included in the plan of work of Leargas, an agency of the Department of Education and Science. It's roles are to support and develop guidance practice in all areas of education and to inform the policy of the Department in this field.</p> <p>Strategies for mainstreaming gender equality are being developed. A dedicated Equality Unit will co-ordinate mainstreaming and will monitor progress. Intervention projects will continue to complement mainstreaming.</p> <p>The 1999 <i>National Employment Action Plan</i></p>	

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<p>2. Education and training of women</p>	<p>include discussion of non-sexist teaching materials.</p> <p>Materials addressing gender issues have been distributed by the Department of Education and Science.</p> <p>It is the policy of the Department of Education and Science that both girls and boys have equal access to all subjects, where the resources are available, and to provide as wide a choice of curriculum as possible. The Department has a policy that approved texts and teaching materials should be free of stereotyping.</p> <p>The teachers' unions have procedures in place to deal with cases of sexual harassment of teachers, either by management, other teachers or by students. The Employment Equality Act, 1998 includes provisions regarding sexual harassment.</p> <p>In relation to sexual harassment of students by other students school authorities are assisted by the teachers unions by the Department of Education and Science in developing a school policy, with procedures for dealing with</p>	<p>to attend and social and cultural barriers.</p>	<p>reiterates Ireland's commitment to gender mainstreaming in education</p> <p>Under the <i>National Development Plan</i> technical assistance will be provided to the Department of Education and Science to fund a dedicated Equality Unit to co-ordinate and monitor the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all areas of the educational system, a computerised management information system and higher education networks. In particular, action will be undertaken to ensure that disadvantaged women will be encouraged to participate in all training programmes.</p> <p>The need for long term impact assessment of interventions is recognised and procedures for this work will be included in the remit of the proposed Equality Unit.</p>	

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2. Education and training of women	<p>Both the perpetrators and victims. Two of the Department's intervention programmes deal specifically with the issue.</p> <p>Research on the situation of women in the management structure in schools was commissioned by the Department of Education and Science. This was followed up by a series of pilot courses designed specifically for women who were interested in seeking promotion to positions of decision making. Results of the research and evaluation of the pilot courses have been published. <i>Stepping out of the Shadows</i>, published at the end of 1999, deals with women in educational management in Ireland.</p> <p>Through the <i>New Opportunities for Women Project</i> (NOW) the Institutes of Technology provider "baster" courses in technological subjects aimed at girls entering the last phase of post-primary education.</p> <p>The <i>Institutes of Technology Equality Network</i> has produced a module on mathematics aimed at encouraging young women into non-traditional areas of study.</p>		<p>The Department of Education and Science is undertaking <i>Wkote School Evaluation</i> which will include monitoring of gender equality. It is also planned that the guidelines for teachers on non-sexist behaviour will be monitored as part of the Evaluation.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Science piloted a project, <i>Exploring Masculinities</i>, in single sex boys schools which, once evaluated, will be disseminated via the in-career training programme for teachers.</p> <p>Gender equality will continue to be expected in the appointment of primary school principals, teachers and board of management members.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Science is funding a history project <i>Women in History</i> which plans to produce a CD-ROM for schools.</p>	

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<p>2. Education and training of women</p>	<p>The introduction of <i>Foundation Studies</i> courses in colleges has facilitated the entry of women into mainstream courses.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Science, supported by the European Social Fund, provided funds for voluntary women's groups to facilitate access to lifelong education opportunities.</p> <p>The <i>Women's Educational Initiative</i>, funded by the Department of Education and Science and aided by the European Social Fund, was established to assist projects to address the current gaps in provision for educationally disadvantaged women. It was established in 1998 and over a two year period to 2000, thirteen projects are being supported to develop models of good practice to improve provision for educationally disadvantaged women. The aim is that these models will be capable of wider application and will impact on future policy, thereby bringing about long-term change in future educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged women.</p>		<p>A research project, <i>Co-education, Gender and Mathematics Achievement</i> is being conducted. The results will determine if the use of single sex groupings in certain subjects should be considered.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Science monitors participation by women in mainstream vocational education and training as part of the performance indicators underpinning the report of progress on the EU Operational Programme for Human Resources.</p> <p>Further funding for adult literacy programmes has been provided. An interdepartmental working group has been set up to examine literacy initiatives for the unemployed.</p> <p>The Employability sub-programmes of the <i>National Development Plan</i> will comprise a combination of</p>	

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<p>2. Education and training of women</p>	<p>The initiative is managed by the Women's Education Initiative Working Group. The Group is made up of representatives from the key organisations in Adult Education.</p> <p>Following consultation with local women's groups Tougaie (the agricultural training authority) embarked on a series of training courses designed to suit women's needs. As participation increased these are regarded as having been successful.</p> <p>The State training agency, FAS, first launched its <i>Action Programme for Women</i> in 1990. Since then FAS has developed and operated an annual action programme each year, building on the success of previous years. The programme aimed at increasing and broadening the range of job opportunities available to women.</p> <p><i>Women in Focus, 1998</i>, reviewed the overall level of women's participation across all FAS programmes and outlined the strategy to be adopted over the life of the new Women in Focus Programme 1998-2000. FAS undertook a review of the role and function of the programme in 1998 and decided to change its focus</p>		<p>social inclusion measures in the education sector and labour market training measures targeted at disadvantaged people. These will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early education • School completion • Early literacy • Traveller education • Career guidance and a third level access programme. 	<p>FAS is committed to ensuring that the full range of FAS services are available to groups such as long term unemployed women, women returning to work, women with disabilities, Traveller women and early school leavers.</p>

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	<p>by putting more emphasis on monitoring and ensuring that progress made is maintained and built upon. Over 1998-2000 the focus is on ensuring that FAS services reach key groups, such as long term unemployed, women returnees, women with disabilities, Traveller women and early school leavers.</p> <p>FAS has committed itself to developing performance indicators intended to ensure that the participation rates for women throughout the full range of FAS programmes are maintained. FAS has produced an open learning module - <i>Equality Matters for training</i>, as part of a FAS/NOW gender proofing project. The module was designed to be delivered as either a "stand alone" module or fully integrated in the FAS / Maynooth course <i>Foundation in Training and Continuing Education</i>.</p>			

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<p>3. Women and Health</p>	<p>In June 1997 a <i>Plan for Women's Health</i> was published after a process of consultation. The Plan addresses 12 key issues in women's health. As a result of the plan a <i>Women's Health Council</i> was established. The budget for the Council was increased from IR£70,000 in 1998 to IR£300,000 in 1999.</p> <p>In 1997 an action plan for the implementation of the <i>National Cancer Strategy</i> was announced. Pilot programmes in relation to national breast cancer screening are being introduced. A national steering committee was established to guide the implementation of the breast screening programme. The national cervical screening programme is being introduced on a phased basis. The Department of Health and Children has provided £2.9 million for the 1999 costs</p> <p>The area of reproductive health in Ireland has changed rapidly in recent years. The sharp decline in the birth rate indicates the extent to which women are now controlling their own fertility.</p> <p>Since the ICPCD conference in Cairo (1994), a formal policy on family planning has been developed and</p>	<p>While the availability and accessibility of family planning services have been significantly improved in recent years it is accepted that the services need to continue to be developed, particularly outside the major urban areas. For women outside the main urban areas a</p>	<p>Additional funding is being provided for the development of family planning and pregnancy counselling services.</p> <p>Funding has been allocated in 1999 regional health boards with a request that the health boards concentrate on measures aimed at reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in the 15-34 age group.</p> <p>The Women's Health Council has a remit to develop a centre of expertise on women's Health, to foster research into women's health, to evaluate the success of the Plan for Women's Health 1997-1999 in meeting its objectives and to advise the Minister for Health on women's health issues generally.</p> <p>The goal of the Committee dealing with the breast screening programme is to deliver a world class screening programme which will reduce mortality in screened women</p>	<p>The health boards are at various stages in the preparation and implementation of regional plans in accordance with the national policy on women's health. Implementation of the various recommendations in the plan is underway in all health board regions.</p>

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<p>3. Women and Health</p>	<p>implemented. The policy is based on the principle that all individuals should have the freedom to decide the number and spacing of their children.</p> <p>Each health board (statutory regional health authority) is required to ensure that an equitable, accessible and comprehensive family planning service is available in its area. The principles underpinning the service are that services should be within easy reach and that a choice of service provider should be available.</p> <p>In 1999 additional funding was allocated to health boards with a request that they concentrate on measures aimed at reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in the 15-34 age group, in which the greatest proportion of abortions occur (the abortions are those obtained by Irish women in the United Kingdom).</p> <p>Family planning services are available free of charge from a general practitioner to holders of a means tested card for free general medical services.</p> <p>Ireland continues to have a low rate of maternal mortality. The maternal</p>	<p>choice of service provider is not always available.</p>	<p>by 20% within the decade. The Government is committed to making the resources available to the programme to facilitate the commencement of screening.</p> <p>Phase 1 of the National Cervical Screening Programme will commence in early 2000.</p> <p>An Expert Advisory Committee is overseeing the implementation and operation of Phase 1. In addition, the committee is providing advice on best practice, including quality assurance and new technologies, development of protocols and the further phasing of the programme.</p> <p>Family planning services will continue to be developed. The Government is also developing a programme of measures aimed at reducing the number of unplanned pregnancies and hence the number of Irish women having abortions in the UK.</p>	

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<p>3. Women and Health</p>	<p>mortality rate has declined from 31.06 per 100,000 live births in 1970 to 1.96 per 100,000 live births in 1996</p> <p>The <i>Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative</i>, a WHO/UNICEF global campaign to encourage breast feeding, was established recently in Ireland. In addition, the Department of Health and Children supports the work of voluntary organisations working in the area.</p> <p>There are two substance misuse prevention programmes which have been introduced in primary and post-primary schools. At community level <i>Drug Questionnaires Local Answers</i> is a training course to help participants cope better with alcohol and drug related problems that they may meet in their work/lives. The Family Communication and Self-esteem Programme is a training programme to prevent long-term drug and alcohol abuse.</p> <p>In keeping with the <i>National Health Promotion Strategy</i> there are a number of initiatives targeting young people as a priority populations. A report <i>Youth as a Resource - Promoting the Health of Young People at Risk</i> was recently published. The report attempts to ensure</p>	<p>Serious drug abuse (in particular heroin) is a major problem in Irish society. A targeted approach to the problem through, for example, Local Drug Task Forces has met with significant success, particularly through its emphasis on community participation in responding to local needs.</p> <p>An Action programme of <i>Drug Misuse and Drug Treatment in the Prison System</i> has been agreed. It includes a strategy to increase the level of treatment for drug offenders.</p>		

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<p>3. Women and Health</p>	<p>that young women, who may be more at risk due to their socio-economic status or educational experience, do not experience discrimination.</p> <p><i>Local Drugs Task Forces</i> have been set up in areas experiencing the worst levels of drug misuse. The Task Forces comprise a partnership between the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and have prepared action plans. These include a range of measures in relation to treatment, rehabilitation, education, prevention and curbing local supply. The plans focus of the development of community based initiatives to link in with and add value to the programmes and services already being delivered or planned by the statutory agencies in the Task Force areas.</p> <p><i>A Young Peoples' Facilities and Services Fund</i> has been established with a commitment of £30 million from the Exchequer over the period 1998-2000. The private sector will also contribute to the fund. The purpose of the fund is to develop youth facilities and support will be provided for a range of capital and non-capital projects in target areas where</p>			

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	<p>a drug problem exists or has the potential to develop.</p>			

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<p>4. Violence against women</p>	<p>Gender mainstreaming has been used in developing the approach for dealing with domestic violence. A model has been developed by an interactive process between policy makers and women's organisations. The approach has resulted in helping to ensure that women get support from the police and the health services.</p> <p>The <i>Domestic Violence Act 1996</i> improved the protection available to victims of domestic violence. The Act extended the powers of the courts to grant barring orders against a respondent who is a spouse and extends the procedure so that it is available to protect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohabitants and their children and • Parents from violent adult children. <p>The Act also empowers the courts to grant safety orders that prohibit a person in the home from using or threatening to use violence. The Act also strengthens the powers of arrest without warrant where there is a serious assault in the home or such assault is suspected.</p> <p>As part of its response to the issue of violence against women the Government established a <i>National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women</i></p>			<p>The Department of Health and Children through the regional health boards funds a number of refuges and rape crisis centres around the country.</p> <p>An Assistant Commissioner of the Gardaí (police) has been assigned specific responsibility for monitoring action in relation to violence against women.</p> <p>All Gardaí receive training on the investigation of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault. A wide range of expertise is used in the training from psychologists, social workers and experts from non-governmental organisations.</p> <p>Research into the operation of the Domestic Violence Act, part funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law</p>

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<p>4. Violence against women</p>	<p>which is working on the development of a national response to the problem. This implements a recommendation of the <i>Task Force on Violence Against Women</i> which reported in 1997. The Steering Committee is representative of a wide range of interests concerned with violence against women and it is providing a multidisciplinary and collective response to the problem.</p> <p><i>Regional Committees on Violence Against Women</i> have also been established in the eight health board regions. They will draw together the services available to women in order to provide a sympathetic and consolidated approach.</p> <p>The <i>National Plan for Women's Health 1997-1999</i> provides a coherent framework for the improvement of health services for women. Violence is one of the key issues dealt with in the Plan.</p> <p>Exchequer funding is provided to the eight health boards through which refugees and rape crisis centres are funded annually. Close liaison between health boards and rape crisis centres has developed in recent years to ensure an</p>		<p>The <i>Regional Committees on Violence Against Women</i> are involved in the assessment of existing services in their areas and will draw up service targets in terms of delivery and development.</p>	<p>Reform, was carried out by Women's Aid (NGO dealing with violence against women) and results were published in April 1999.</p> <p>The Department is examining a number of proposals to amend the Domestic Violence Act to cover situations where couples leave a child in common but do not live together and to amend the requirement that cohabitants must be living together for a specified period to apply for orders under the Act.</p> <p>The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is funding a research project on the reasons for high attrition rates in bringing prosecutions in rape cases. It is expected that the findings will be published shortly.</p>

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<p>4. Violence against women</p>	<p>adequate response for victims of rape and sexual assault.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Science has developed a social and personal education programme for use with boys on post-primary schools which includes a module on violence against women.</p> <p>The <i>Employment Equality Act, 1998</i> defines <i>sexual harassment</i> for the first time in Irish law. It is defined to include all unwelcome and sexually, or otherwise on the gender ground, offensive, humiliating or intimidating actions involving acts of physical intimacy, spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written material or pictures, or requests for sexual favours.</p> <p>The Act outlaws sexual harassment in the workplace and in the course of employment, whether by an employer, another employee or by clients, customers or business contacts of an employer. It also provides that different treatment of a person in the workplace or in the course of employment, because of rejection or acceptance of sexual harassment, whether in the workplace, in</p>	<p>Precedent legal decisions have established that <i>"freedom from sexual harassment is a condition of work that an employee of either sex is entitled to expect"</i>.</p>	<p>The Departments of Education and Science and Health and Children have developed a range of programmes dealing with aspects of social, personal and health education. Most second level schools offer a Transition Year programme, the curriculum of which is a matter for each individual school. Schools that do not deal with the issue of interpersonal violence and violence against women in the Transition Year programme are encouraged to deal with the issue in future.</p>	

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	the course of employment or outside the workplace, constitutes discrimination on the gender ground.			

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<p>5. Women and armed conflict</p>	<p>Women played a vital and positive role in the development and the successful outcome of the multiparty agreement on Northern Ireland. The agreement makes implicit and explicit references to what are commonly but incorrectly referred to as women's issues. Implicit, in that all the political, economic, social, cultural and reconciliation issues are equally applicable to all citizens. Explicit in its expression of support for an agenda of equality and full participation in public life.</p>			<p>The multiparty agreement commits the Irish Government to take steps to further strengthen the protection of human rights in its jurisdiction. The Government is determined to recognise the increasingly diverse nature of Irish society and to ensure there is equality both in employment and in society in general.</p>

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<p>6. Women in the economy</p>	<p>Ireland's economic boom is a driving force in addressing obstacles to women's participation in the labour market, particularly in skilled employment. The need to ensure continued economic growth is putting the employment of women centre stage.</p> <p>In Ireland, the unemployment rate has been falling over the last few years from an annual average of 12.1% in 1995 to 5.7% at June to August 1999. The female unemployment rate has fallen from a rate of 10.8% in the last quarter of 1997 to 5.9% at June-August 1999. The female participation rate for June-August 1999 was 48.3%. The overall long term unemployment rate was 2.6% in 1999. The female long term unemployment rate was 2.1% for June-August 1999.</p>	<p>Childcare is one of the most important ways of reconciling work and family life. The Government accepts that there are problems in relation to the provision of childcare.</p> <p>The increase in female labour force participation and the contraction on the supply side has caused an increasingly acute problem in the provision of childcare, particularly for employed parents.</p>	<p><i>Partnership 2000</i> provided for the establishment of a working group to review participation by women in mainstream education, training and employment programmes with a view to increasing gender equality and job opportunities. The Working Group, which reported in November 1999, made a number of recommendations to improve women's access to training, education and employment programmes. The report will be discussed with the social partners and it is envisaged that it will then feed into the ongoing process in the context of a new national agreement.</p>	<p><i>Partnership 2000</i> contains a commitment to examine the causes of the male/female wage differential. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has commissioned a follow up to a 1994 study on wage differentials. It is</p>

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<p>6. Women in the economy</p>	<p>Childcare The <i>Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme</i> has been in operation since 1998 and provides funding for a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the quantity and quality of childcare services from the equal opportunities and social inclusion perspectives. The programme has funded the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital grants for the establishment, upgrading and enhancement of community based facilities • Grants towards the cost of childcare personnel in flagship community based projects • Development of the Employer Demonstration Initiative to stimulate employer involvement and interest in developing childcare services for employees • Assistance for training and development • Funding of national childcare organisations • Development of a National Childcare Census and Database which will provide information in relation to child population and the 		<p>anticipated that the report will be finalised mid 2006.</p> <p>The <i>National Development Plan</i> provides for funding of £250 million over the period 2000-2006 for the development of childcare. This will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the expansion of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, the enhancement of national voluntary childcare organisations, building on current initiatives and innovative, flexible measures; • Fund the development of local childcare networks; • Fund a new capital grant scheme for childcare service providers caring for up to 20 children. <p>Responsibility for co-ordinating childcare has been assigned to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The following structures are being established:</p>	<p>In addition to the IR£250 million in the National Development Plan for childcare the Government has provided IR£1.4 million per annum to the Departments of Education and Science, Social, Community and Family Affairs and Health and Children in respect of after school and out of school childcare services and the establishment of a childcare advisory service.</p>

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<p>6. Women in the economy</p>	<p>level of service provision in group based facilities. Additional funding was secured in 1999 to support the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and development for projects which received capital and staff grants • Training and capacity building for community groups and local partnerships • Development of the national voluntary childcare organisations • Research in relation to the development of family friendly employment policies in small to medium sized enterprises • Training for childcare personnel in drug treatment centres • Enhancement of the National Childcare Database. <p>The <i>Expert Working Group on Childcare</i> was established under Partnership 2000 to develop a national framework for childcare. The Group reported to Government in February 1999.</p> <p>The Government established an <i>Interdepartmental Committee on</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdepartmental committee to focus on childcare policy, comprising senior officials from relevant Government departments; • National Co-ordinating Childcare Committee to oversee the development of a childcare infrastructure in an integrated manner over the period of the National Development Plan, with representatives from the statutory and non-statutory sectors • County Childcare Committees, to advance the provision of childcare facilities within the local area in line with national policy. 	

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<p>6. Women in the economy</p>	<p><i>Childcare</i> to evaluate, cost and prioritise the childcare proposals in the report of the Expert Working Group, the Government's Action Programme for the Millennium and those in the reports of the Commission on the Family and the National Forum for Early Childhood Education. The committee reported to the Government in September 1999.</p> <p>Employment Equality The Employment Equality Act, 1998 came into force in October 1999 and replaced the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974 and the Employment Equality Act, 1977. The Act outlawed discrimination in employment on nine distinct grounds and covers employees in the public and private sectors, as well as applicants for employment and training. The grounds covered includes gender, marital status, sexual orientation and age.</p> <p>The Act allows an employer to put in place positive action measures to promote equal opportunities in access to employment, particularly those geared to remove existing inequalities which affect women's opportunities in access to employment, vocational training and promotion. This provision is a</p>			

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<p>6. Women in the economy</p>	<p>significant advance on the position in the Employment Equality Act, 1977, which confined positive action measures to training.</p> <p>The <i>Parental Leave Act, 1998</i> provides for a statutory entitlement to leave for both parents. It is hoped the availability of the leave will encourage fathers to take greater share of family responsibilities.</p> <p>The Parental Leave Act, 1998 also provides for <i>Force Majeure leave</i>, which is available for urgent family reasons due to injury or illness of a family member. The Force Majeure leave must be paid for by the employer although it is subject to a maximum of 3 days per annum or 5 days over 3 years.</p> <p>A new development in relation to reconciling work and family commitments is <i>terza time working</i> which provides employees with the opportunity to take unpaid leave during their children's school holidays. Those participating in a pilot scheme in the civil service may apply for the payment of basic salary in equal amounts over twelve months.</p>	<p>Parental leave, as provided for under the <i>Parental Leave Act, 1998</i> is unpaid and this is seen by many as an obstacle to parents, particularly men, availing of the leave entitlement</p>		<p>The <i>Employment Equality Act, 1998</i> contains exclusions on the gender ground for the police, military and prison services. These are of a more restricted nature than the exclusions under the 1977 Act.</p> <p>When enacted the Equal Status Bill, 1999 will outlaw discrimination in relation to non-employment areas, such as services, on the same nine grounds that appear in the Employment Equality Act, 1998.</p> <p>A large number of women are in part-time employment although the numbers are still below the EU average. The EU Directive on the Framework Agreement on Part-Time Work was adopted in December, 1997.</p>

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<p>6. Women in the economy</p>	<p>Another new initiative is <i>worksharing</i>, development of the job sharing concept. It can involve a multiplicity of work patterns. A pilot scheme for the civil service is under discussion.</p> <p><i>Maternity and Adoptive Benefits</i> were extended to the self-employed in 1997. The minimum rates of benefit have been increased annually in the interim, while the maximum rate of benefit will be increased by £10 a week from early May, 2000</p> <p>NOW</p> <p>The Irish Pension Board report <i>Securing Retirement Income</i> recommended that secondary pension coverage targets also include specific targets for increased coverage for women in both employed and self-employed areas - for example: from 54% to ultimately 75% for employees aged 30 to 65; and in this context, the proposed introduction of Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs) would facilitate the position of women with broken contribution records. The Working Group set up to progress this recommendation is continuing its work and it is intended to introduce a</p>		<p>The Government's <i>Action Programme for the Millennium</i> contains a commitment to "provide the mechanisms to allow women who take time out for family reasons to continue contributions for pension purposes. A review of this issue will take place."</p>	

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<p>6. Women in the economy</p>	<p>comprehensive Occupational Pensions Bill this year (2000).</p> <p>Pro rata pensions were introduced in 1997. Amongst the categories who will qualify are women who spent long periods outside the workforce. The main Government training body, FAS, has operated a positive action programme for women since 1990. Approximately 50% of the 1997 female trainees on the <i>Return to Work</i> programme moved into jobs or further education.</p> <p>In September 1999, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Development established the <i>Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture</i>.</p> <p>The areas which the Committee will address include education and training, the under representation of women at political and organisational level, health and welfare, and isolation and marginalisation.</p>			

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<p>7. Women in power and decision making</p>	<p>Since the introduction of a Government policy of a representation of 40% of both genders on State boards in 1993 the overall percentage of women on State boards has risen from 15% to 27% at September 1999.</p> <p>The <i>Education Act 1998</i> provides that a person appointed to a school board must be selected with a consciousness of the need for gender balance.</p> <p><i>Comhar, the national sustainable development partnership</i> was launched in February 1999. This will be the forum for national consultation and dialogue on all issues surrounding Ireland's pursuit of sustainable development. Gender balance was one of the criteria used in the appointment of members of Comhar and bodies designated to nominate persons for appointment were advised of this and it was taken into account by the Minister in making final appointments.</p> <p>The <i>Equal Opportunities Policy and Guidelines for the Civil Service</i> were drawn up in 1986 to provide a statement of basic principles on which the ongoing development of an equality policy could be based. The need for further</p>	<p>While the low representation of women in decision making positions was the subject of a number of recommendations of the national Second Commission on the Status of Women, a critical mass of women representatives has not been achieved. The lack of female political candidates, the gender imbalance in paid employment as well as socio-cultural values are seen as some the inhibitors to the achievement of this critical mass.</p> <p>Payments made under the <i>Electoral Act, 1997</i>, which provides for public funding of political parties, will be deemed to include funding for the promotion of participation by women in political activity. At the end of each year in which payments are made the party must furnish a statement to the Public Offices Commission indicating the amounts applied to the promotion of participation by women.</p>		<p>Four of the five candidates for the Presidential election were women and Ireland now has its second directly elected woman President.</p> <p>Following the General Election in 1997 women held 12% of seats in the national parliament. As a result of two by-elections the figure now stands at 13.35%. Three of the fifteen Government Ministers are women, including the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also leader of her party.</p> <p>At just over 19% the number of female candidate for the 1999 European elections was down compared to 1994, when over 23% of candidates were women. However, women took 33% of the seats, compared to 26.8% in 1994. Following the local elections in 1999 women hold 14% of elected positions in local authorities.</p> <p>The <i>POWER Partnership</i> is an innovative cross border</p>

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<p>7. Women in power and decision making</p>	<p>development of the equal opportunities policy was articulated in <i>Delivering Better Government</i>, the blueprint for reform of the Irish civil service endorsed by the Government in 1996. As part of the reform process a committee was established to make recommendations on equality.</p> <p>The Government recently approved a package of measures to promote gender equality, as part of the reform of the Civil Service. These recommendations were made on foot of a research study to identify the reasons for the considerable under-representation of women in the civil service in middle management grades and above.</p> <p>The key elements of these measures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of a new Gender Equality Policy by a high level Management Group • the implementation of a Programme of Affirmative Action in the areas of recruitment, placement/mobility, training and development, promotion, work and family responsibilities, language, sexual harassment and policy delivery 	<p>While the proportion of women in management has increased women remain under-represented in senior levels in the civil and public service. While the process of feminisation of the education system has been observed there remains a distinct under-representation of women at senior management levels. The Equality Committee of the Department of Education and Science has commissioned research into the area. The report, <i>Stepping out of the Shadows</i>, was published at the end of 1999.</p>		<p>initiative composed of two women's organisations and two third level educational institutions, i.e.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Support Network • National Women's Council of Ireland • School of Community Sciences, University of Ulster • Women's Education, Research and Resource Centre, National University of Ireland, Dublin. <p>POWER stands for <i>Politically Organised Women Educating for Representation</i>. POWER Partnership has developed a new, specially designed accredited course for women activists called <i>A Women's Political Development Programme: Feminist Approaches to Politics, the State and the Economy in Ireland, North and South</i>. The programme was delivered to over 40 women active at grass roots level in their community.</p>

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<p>7. Women in power and decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of strategic objective setting with targets and • the development of new equality structures in the Civil Service. <p>The implementation of these measures is intended to increase female participation in senior management grades.</p> <p>An <i>Equality Action Programme</i> for the local authority service was adopted in 1998. The programme involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of an <i>Active Equality Policy</i> by all local authorities • A new approach to competitions designed to achieve gender balance • Appointment of <i>Equality Officers</i> and the <i>establishment of an Equality Action Team</i> in each local authority. <p>Arising from the introduction of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 age limits have been abolished for posts in the local authority service. A special development programme is being established for women in middle management grades in the local authority service to ensure that a greater proportion of women are in a position to compete for senior posts.</p>			<p>women's organisations or trade union.</p> <p>In 1998 the first women were appointed as County Manager and Assistant County Manager. Recruitment of permanent officers to senior management and most professional non-management positions in local authorities is carried out by the Local Appointments Commission, which is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity. All other recruitment is carried out by each authority on an individual basis. Managers have been asked to ensure there is gender balance, or at least representation of both genders, on interview boards.</p>

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<p>7. Women in power and decision making</p>	<p>The need for health agencies to observe equality principles in employment and personnel practices is an essential cornerstone of personnel policy for the health service. This commitment was underlined by the development of a model equal opportunity policy and action plan for the health service. Each agency has been asked to adopt an equality policy incorporating the principles set out in the model and to ensure that the programme is implemented. The need for agencies to put in place effective mechanisms for monitoring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives has been emphasised. In relation to the appointment of boards of bodies established by the Minister for Health and Children the Minister may reject nominations if gender balance is not observed and will do so provided that s/he is satisfied that there is a qualified female candidate for the appointment.</p> <p>A new course in <i>Civic, Social and Political Education</i> became part of the core Junior Cycle at post-primary level from September 1997. The course aims to make students aware of the civic,</p>			<p>In 1997 the first female Chief Executive was appointed in a health board. In relation to medical posts while there is equal representation of the sexes at intern level, men begin to dominate the higher level jobs and women hold only 195 of Consultant posts.</p>

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<p>7. Women in power and decision making</p>	<p>social and political dimension of their lives and emphasises the importance of active, participative citizenship.</p> <p>The <i>National Women's Council of Ireland</i> (the umbrella body for women's organisations) participated in the discussions leading to the <i>Partnership 2000</i> agreement, as part of the voluntary and community sector. The Council is also represented on the monitoring mechanism for P2000.</p>			

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<p>8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women</p>	<p>The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is responsible for evaluating and implementing the Government's policies on equality. The principle of equality was incorporated into the Departments Strategy Statement for the years 1998-2000. The elimination of discrimination on a number of grounds including gender, marital status and sexual orientation is one of high level goals of the Strategy Statement.</p> <p>The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has had a major involvement in relation to gender equality in the current round of Structural Funds and in the preparation of the <i>National Development Plan 2006-2006</i>. With EU technical assistance the Department is putting in place key mechanisms that will assist Government departments and State agencies to use the Funds to support the achievement of equal opportunities between men and women, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recruitment of a gender expert from 1 December 1999; • The compilation of baseline data, broken down by gender, to assist with the setting of relevant gender 		<p>The <i>National Development Plan</i> provides for the establishment of a technical assistance unit located in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to support gender mainstreaming of the NDP. The Plan contains a number of additional mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of equal opportunities between women and men as an objective of the Regional and Human Resources Development chapters; • Acknowledgement of the impact of equal opportunities in spending on infrastructure and productive investment; • Provision of project gender impact assessment across the whole Plan; • The intention that indicators will require sex differentiated outcomes 'where the nature of the assistance permits'. 	<p>Under the regulations governing the Structural Funds for the period 2000-2006 EU Member States are required to use the Funds, <i>inter alia</i>, to promote equality of opportunity between women and men. This requires policy makers to take into account the gender impact of policy and programmes at the planning, design and implementation stages across the Structural Funds. Ireland was required to gender mainstream the <i>1999 National Employment Action Plan</i> and the <i>National Development Plan 2006-2006</i>.</p> <p>The European Commission and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform carried out a joint assessment of equal opportunities and the Structural Funds which was presented to the Human Resources Development Operational Programme in November 1998.</p>

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<p>8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women</p>	<p>targets across the various programme areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A training programme on equal opportunities between women and men for officials involved with the Structural Funds 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commitment to promote gender balance on Monitoring Committees; • The commitment to represent the equal opportunities interest on all Monitoring Committees to be drawn from a relevant Government department or appropriate statutory body; • The establishment of an equal opportunities and social inclusion co-ordinating committee; • Childcare investment of £250 million will help working parents, women in particular, to balance work and family commitments; • Provision of £23.2 million to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for an equal opportunities measure focused on the needs of women returning to the labour force, tackling vertical segregation and promoting family friendly working arrangements 	<p><i>The National Development Plan</i> includes the setting up of an <i>Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee</i> and the creation of an <i>Equality Unit</i>. Funding has been provided in the Plan to enable the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to support gender mainstreaming of the Plan for the period 2000-2006.</p>

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<p>8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women</p>	<p>A report commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform entitled <i>Gender proofing and the European Structural Funds: Outline Guidelines</i> was published in July 1999. That report is available on the Department's Internet site. The report makes recommendations on the nature and the means of undertaking gender proofing. The report also meets a commitment in Partnership 2000 to strengthening administrative procedures for equality proofing.</p> <p>A workshop on mainstreaming equal opportunities between women and men in the Structural Funds was held in March 1999.</p> <p>The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has responsibility for a variety of equality legislation including the <i>Employment Equality Act 1998</i>, the <i>Parental Leave Act 1998</i> and the <i>Equal Status Bill 1999</i> which is expected to be enacted in the near future.</p> <p>A new infrastructure has been put in place to underpin employment equality and equal status law. The infrastructure consists of two new bodies, the <i>Equality</i></p>		<p>under the National Employment Action Plan. As the lead department with responsibility for equal opportunities between women and men the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform will be involved in the implementation of the above commitments across the six Operational Programmes of the Plan.</p> <p>The remit of the bodies established under the <i>Employment Equality Act, 1998</i> will be broadened beyond</p>	<p>The use of the <i>Gender Impact Assessment</i> model included in the report on Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds: Outline Guidelines as a common model across the Structural Funds is being considered.</p>

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<p>8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women</p>	<p><i>Authority</i>, which replaced the Employment Equality Agency, and the <i>Office of the Director of Equality Investigations</i>, to provide a forum for redress of first instance. The new bodies have been established under the Employment Equality Act, 1998.</p> <p>Under the Partnership 2000 agreement it was agreed that development of statistical methods to evaluate the full extent of the contribution of <i>unpaid work</i> and its contribution to the national economy would be undertaken. A pilot Time Use Survey was carried out by the Central Statistics Office in 1997. The survey included the investigation of the methodological, practical and resource implications of conducting a full scale survey.</p> <p>An Exchequer grant is paid annually to the <i>National Women's Council of Ireland</i> (umbrella body for women's representative organisations) towards operating costs and activities. The grant for 1999 was over 136% greater than the grant provided in 1993. In addition, once off funding of £25,000 was provided in 1999 towards the cost of a</p>	<p>While processing the <i>pilot time use survey</i> to measure unpaid work it became evident that time use surveys involve many complex issues and place large demands on statistical and information technology resources. The measurement and valuation of unpaid work would involve considerable extra data collection and the pilot survey is only a first step towards this.</p>	<p>the employment area after enactment of the equal status legislation</p> <p>The findings of the <i>pilot time use survey of unpaid work</i> will be discussed with the National Women's Council and Government departments to explore how they might best be progressed.</p>	

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<p>8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women</p>	<p>joint North-South conference on mainstreaming gender equality. Other once-off grants were provided for various purposes since the Beijing conference. The Exchequer provision for 2000 (IRE405,000) is 48% greater than the 1999 grant.</p> <p>The <i>Gender Equality Monitoring Committee</i> was established to oversee implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at national level and the recommendations of the Second (national) Commission on the Status of Women. The committee includes representatives from relevant NGOs, the social partners and Government departments.</p> <p>On the recommendation of the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee research is being commissioned on progress in achieving gender equality in Ireland.</p> <p>This project will review progress in relation to the implementation of the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women, recommend future action, develop gender segregated statistics and propose mechanisms to</p>			<p>A contract for research proposed by the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee has been placed and the completion date is mid 2000.</p>

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<p>8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women</p>	<p>monitor progress in achieving gender equality in Ireland.</p> <p>The study includes the development of statistics to meet concerns expressed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women at the shortage of gender segregated statistics available following the examination of Ireland's CERD/W report in June 1999.</p> <p>A broad range of NGOs was consulted during preparations for the examination of Ireland's CERD/W report. The response to the Committee's questions, the concluding comments from the Committee and other documents were made widely available, including use of the Internet.</p> <p>Gender mainstreaming is part of Ireland's Aid programme which contains an element on <i>Women in Development</i>. Ireland has a policy of addressing the of women in the funding of aid programmes.</p>			

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<p>9. Human rights of women</p>	<p>Ireland needed to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985. Ireland has 5 reservations none of which are incompatible with the objectives of the Convention. Government approval is being sought for the removal of the reservation relating to contracts entered into by women (Article 15.3 of CEDAW).</p> <p>The Department of Foreign Affairs organised an NGO Human Rights Forum in 1998 and 1999 and will do so again in 2000. The 1999 forum included panels on Women's Human Rights and Addressing Irish Racism.</p> <p>The Family Law (Divorce) Act 1996, which came into force in February 1997, gave effect to the 1995 referendum decision to remove the constitutional ban on divorce.</p>	<p>There are limited exclusions in the area of employment in respect of services of a personal nature and where sex amounts to an occupational qualification under the <i>Employment Equality Act, 1998</i>. The Act does not provide blanket exclusions and these exclusions will be interpreted strictly. The reservation to Article 11.1 will continue for this reason.</p> <p>The reservations on Articles 13(a) and 16.1(d) and (f) are being maintained because of more favourable treatment of women.</p> <p>Article 41.2 of the Constitution has been criticised as many find the assumptions in the text regarding women's life in the home objectionable. The <i>Constitutional Review Group</i> recommended that A.41.2 should be replaced by a gender neutral text. The <i>All Party Gender Issues Committee</i> on the Constitution endorsed the</p>	<p>When the <i>Equal Status Bill, 1999</i>, is enacted the Government will be in a position to consider the removal of the reservations to Article 13 (b) and (c).</p> <p>A commitment in the <i>Good Friday Agreement</i>, under the 'equality and human rights strand' was the establishment of a Human Rights Commission along the lines of the Commission in existence in Northern Ireland. The <i>Strategic Rights Commission Bill</i> was published in July 1999 and it is hoped that it will be enacted early 2000. The Commission will be established as soon as possible thereafter. The functions of the Commission will include keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice in the State relating to the protection of human rights. The Bill provides that the Commission will be appointed in such a way to ensure that it includes representation of both</p>	<p>Ireland supported the EU position for a strong <i>Optional Protocol to CEDAW</i>. There appears to be no fundamental impediment to Ireland's ratification of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.</p> <p>Ratification of the UN <i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i> cannot take place until the proposed equal status legislation is enacted. The enactment of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 was part of the process of putting in place the necessary legislation.</p> <p>Article 41.1 of the Constitution provides specific protection for the 'family'. This was drafted with one family in mind, that based on marriage. The question of extending the Constitutional definition of the family was considered by the <i>Constitutional Review Group</i> which felt that significant amendment of this Article was</p>

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<p>9. Human rights of women</p>	<p>The report of the <i>Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities</i> (1996) recognised that women with disabilities encounter 'double disadvantage'. Significant anti-discrimination measures have been put in place in the context of implementing the Commission's recommendations.</p> <p><i>Civil, Political and Social Education</i> has been mandatory in all post-primary schools at Junior Cycle level since 1997. Topics covered must fall within the area of human rights and social responsibilities. These issues are also included in <i>BALANCE</i> and in the Intervention Project in single sex boys' schools.</p> <p>A <i>Green Paper on Abortion</i> was published in September 1999 following extensive consultations. The objectives of the Green Paper were to set out the issues, to provide a brief analysis of them and to consider possible options for the</p>	<p>Group's recommendation, with minor amendment.</p>	<p>women and men and generally reflects Irish society.</p> <p>The <i>Green Paper on Abortion</i> has been referred to the All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution for consideration.</p>	<p>needed. The <i>Commission on the Family</i>, which reported in May 1998 concluded that Article 41 should be revised to give constitutional recognition to all family units, including families not based on marriage. These proposals will be considered by the All Party <i>Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution</i> (i.e. including representatives from both the upper and lower houses of Parliament)</p> <p>The Constitutional Review Group concluded that it was not necessary to have an express guarantee of equality between women and men in the Constitution, having regard to the general guarantee of equality before the law and the prohibition of discrimination.</p> <p>The current situation regarding abortion is that, constitutionally, termination of pregnancy is not legal unless it meets the conditions laid down by the Supreme Court in 1992,</p>

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<p>9. Human rights of women</p>	<p>resolution of the problem. Submissions were invited from the public, professional and voluntary organisations and any other parties who wished to contribute. Over 10,000 submissions were received.</p> <p>A <i>Traveller Education Co-ordinating Committee</i> was established by the Department of Education and Science in 1998 to draw up a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on the Travelling Community in relation to education, including target dates. The Department has a policy of total integration of <i>Traveller</i> children in both primary and post-primary schools and has taken a range of measures to implement this policy.</p> <p>A <i>Traveller Health Advisory Committee</i> has been established to draw up a national policy for a health strategy to improve the health status of the Traveller</p>	<p>Provision of adequate and suitable accommodation is necessary in order to alleviate many of the day to day problems experienced by Traveller women. Progress at institutional level in making accommodation available is good, however, at ground level the provision of housing units has been slow, due in many cases to resistance from the settled population to proposed housing sites</p>	<p>Local authorities are required, in consultation with Travellers, to prepare and adopt, by 31 March 2000, five year programmes to meet existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers in their areas.</p>	<p>i.e., where the continuation of the pregnancy poses a real and substantive risk to the life, as opposed to the health, of the mother and where such a risk could not be averted except by means of an abortion. A 'substantial risk' included the risk of suicide.</p> <p>The report of the <i>Task Force on the Travelling Community</i> (1995) recommended that the gender dimension be examined in order to ascertain how policies and practices in relation to accommodation, education, health, etc., contributed to, or blocked, progress for Traveller women.</p>

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<p>9. Human rights of women</p>	<p>community. <i>Traveller Health Units</i> have been established in each health board area. The new structures will give Travellers an input into the planning and delivery of health services to the Travelling community.</p> <p>A sum of £300,000 was allocated in 1999 to fund a communication programme to promote a greater understanding between Travellers and the settled community. The objective of the programme is to address the underlying causes of mistrust between the two communities, while, at the same time, creating an awareness of certain issues.</p> <p>The <i>refugee legal service</i> commenced in February 1999. The new service is an independent, comprehensive legal service to assist asylum seekers in exercising their legal rights in all aspects of the asylum procedure. A monitoring committee was also established to ensure that a quality refugee legal service is provided.</p> <p>An interdepartmental working group, comprised of senior officials in departments delivering services to refugees was established to review the</p>	<p>The <i>Irish Refugee Council</i> (the representative body for 56 NGOs working both overseas and in Ireland to promote the cause of refugees) raised a number of concerns in relation to the situation of women refugees in Ireland, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of culturally appropriate childcare • The Council opposes proposals to implement measures for the direct support of asylum seekers 		

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<p>9. Human rights of women</p>	<p>integration of persons granted refugee status.</p> <p>At interview stage should an applicant make a request for a female interviewer every effort is made to facilitate the request provide that advanced notice is received and that there is a valid reason for the request. A 'best practice based' approach is being developed to deal with vulnerable categories of refugees, i.e., victims of torture, trauma, rape.</p> <p>A 'one stop shop' has been opened in the Refugee Applications Centre. Efforts to clear the backlog of applications are being made.</p> <p>Refugees enjoy the same level of welfare benefits as an Irish citizen in similar circumstances. In relation to educational services all children in Ireland, irrespective of their legal status, are provided with public education up to 15 years of age.</p> <p>The EU designated 1997 as the <i>European Year Against Racism</i>. A national co-ordinating committee was established to oversee activities for the year through which a programme</p>	<p>and considers that it will particularly affect asylum seeking women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of State funded English language classes • There should be culturally appropriate health services, with information in a language that asylum seeking women understand • Problems faced by asylum seeking women who wish to leave the State to access reproductive services not available in the State • The Council is concerned about reception strategies proposed to regionally relocate asylum seekers throughout the State. This measure should, they say, be accompanied by the dispersal of appropriate services such as legal advice, specialised medical services, counselling and translation facilities. There is also concern that asylum seekers will be housed in collective accommodation. 		

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<p>9. Human rights of women</p>	<p>focusing on several racism themes and involving initiatives at local and national level was organised. In order to maintain the momentum of 1997 and to sustain anti-racism strategies the <i>National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism</i> was established. The committee is a partnership of NGOs, State organisations, social partners and Government departments. The committee also endeavours to promote a more participative and inter cultural society that is inclusive of Travellers and minority ethnic groups.</p> <p>The police authorities are committed to ensuring that all members of the police force receive training in race relations and the changing nature of Irish society. The police authorities hosted an international conference on <i>Providing a police service in a developing multicultural Ireland</i>. They are determined to learn from the experience of other countries in policing a multiethnic, multicultural society.</p> <p>Ireland took an active part in the development of the founding statute for the <i>International Criminal Court</i>.</p>		<p>Ireland will continue to support the establishment of a permanent <i>International Criminal Court</i> by taking action to ratify the <i>Rome Statute</i> as soon as possible and</p>	

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<p>9. Human rights of women</p>	<p>Having supported national preparatory activities for the Beijing Conference <i>Ireland Aid</i> has continued to support the development of post-Beijing strategies in partner countries. Gender issues are part of Irish Aid's ongoing dialogue with partner governments and form part of any formal discussions regarding progress of its programmes. Since 1997 human rights and democratisation activities have been integrated into Irish Aid's priority countries in South Africa. A separate budget exists to provide funding to support initiatives and projects implemented by NGOs and other qualified organisations/institutions in areas outside priority countries. Through this budget Ireland Aid provides assistance towards the development of good governance and the protection and promotion of human rights in a wide range of countries.</p>		<p>by participating in the work of the Preparatory Commission.</p>	<p><i>Women in Development in Europe (WIDE), Irish National Platform</i> recommend that the commitment by Ireland Aid to gender mainstreaming should be extended beyond bilateral aid to cover all aspects of overseas development. It is further recommended that such a commitment should be backed up by the establishment of gender focal points at senior levels in relevant Government departments</p>

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<p>10. Women and the media</p>	<p>RTÉ (the national broadcast authority) operates an equal opportunities policy. The first woman at divisional head level was appointed in 1998. She is also the first woman to become a member of the Executive Board of RTÉ. The first woman at Assistant Divisional Head level was also appointed and the new position as Editor, Radio 1 was filled by a woman.</p> <p>A joint subcommittee dealing with matters of equality was set up under the RTÉ Participation Forum.</p> <p>There is ongoing attention to the training needs of women and encouraging a higher ratio of women in RTÉ posts that were traditionally male. In the latest intake of trainees for studio operational staff the ratio was 50:50.</p> <p>In the light of new legislation and ever increasing demands RTÉ has agreed to take over the responsibility for refurbishing the existing crèche facilities and has agreed to provide additional accommodation to facilitate compliance with the Child Care Regulations and provide for an increased number of children.</p>		<p>The dissemination of pornographic videos is monitored by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform under the <i>Video Recordings Act, 1989</i>. As a result of the ongoing Strategic Management Process in the Irish Civil Service the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is to retain a consultant whose brief will include a review of the implementation of the various items of legislation under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This will include the above Act and a future strategy for the Film Censor's Office.</p>	

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<p>10. Women and the media</p>	<p>RTE has a <i>Code of Standards for Broadcasting Advertising</i> which draws attention to the need for advertisers to pay heed to pay heed to the changing role of women in Irish society.</p> <p>The <i>Independent Radio and Television Commission</i> (IRTC) monitors the presence of women in the broadcast media. The IRTC has been involved with the NOW funded <i>Women on Air Project</i>. As part of the <i>Women on Air project</i> the IRTC has been involved in a major training initiative for women in broadcasting and in research on gender and employment in the independent radio sector in Ireland. Since <i>Women on Air's</i> first study of the sector in 1996 recent research indicates some improvement in the number of women entering independent radio, and the level at which they are working in the sector. There is also evidence of some slight shift in the direction of gender balance within the job categories where women are represented.</p> <p>The IRTC's <i>Community Radio Policy Document</i> (1997) sets out it's requirements in respect of gender balance</p>		<p>The <i>Independent Radio and Television Commission</i> oversees the contracts for commercial radio contracts which include an obligation to adopt good human resource practices. The IRTC considers the adoption and implementation of an equal opportunities policy as a key element in human resource practices</p>	

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<p>10. Women and the media</p>	<p>in the ownership and management structure of community radio stations.</p> <p>When entering into a contract for the provision of the first independent television service in Ireland (TV3) the IRTC included a commitment by the consortium to pursue a policy of equal opportunities in its employment practices.</p> <p>The <i>Broadcasting Act, 1990</i> directs that advertising shall not include any discrimination on the grounds of sex. The Code of Standards in broadcasting services states that advertising shall not include any discrimination on grounds of sex.</p> <p>The <i>Advertising and Standards Authority for Ireland (ASAI)</i> operates the <i>Code of Advertising Standards</i>. There is an emphasis in the Code on the principle of equality of women and men and the avoidance of stereotyping. In the period of July '97 to end June '98, less than 3% (21) of the complaints received related to women. Out of the 23 complaints received, 4 were upheld and all 4 related to 1 advertisement.</p>		<p>The <i>Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland</i> will carry out a further review of its codes and their effectiveness in the year 2000 and are undertaking wide consultation with advertising and business interests, Government departments and agencies, consumer representatives and the National Women's Council of Ireland.</p>	

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<p>11. Women and the environment</p>	<p>The <i>National Development Plan 2000-2006</i> (NDP) was prepared within the overall framework of national environmental, as well as economic and social development, policy. The overall aim of <i>Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland</i>, as approved by the Government, is to ensure that the economy and society can develop to their full potential within a well protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community.</p> <p>Consistent with the aim of this strategy and ensuring that concern for the environment is central to all policy decisions. In June 1999 the Government approved the introduction, on a pilot basis, of a procedure for the eco-auditing of policies in specific sectoral areas. The NDP incorporated a range of measures to address the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development. Projects implemented under the Plan will be required to comply with relevant planning and environmental legislation.</p>	<p>Rapid economic progress has put pressure on environmental resources, particularly water. While substantial investment has been made in water and waste water treatment, considerable investment is still required to meet obligations under EU Directives in this area. Economic progress has also contributed to increased levels of CO₂ emissions; additional investment combined with other strategies aimed at lowering the CO₂ emissions intensity of growth will be required in order to meet obligations under the Kyoto Protocol.</p> <p>The main environmental challenges that must be addressed in the <i>National Development Plan</i> and other policy measures include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halting the decline in the quality of rivers and lakes; • Meeting the requirements of EU Directives on water and waste water treatment; 	<p>Almost (€)3.6 billion is being provided for environmental investment, including water supply, waste water treatment, rural water supply, waste management, coastal protection and environmental research, in the <i>National Development Plan, 2000-2006</i>.</p> <p>The inclusion of housing in the National Development Plan, 2000-2006 for the first time reflects the Government's commitment to addressing the infrastructure deficit in the size of the national housing stock in relation to the growing requirements of a growing and changing population. A key housing priority of the NDP will be to increase social housing output in accordance with increased needs.</p> <p>Housing objectives are fully reflected in public transport</p>	<p>The possibility of the emergence of some unsustainable patterns of development within the framework of the National Development Plan cannot be excluded. This could arise from a number of factors, including the pace of current economic development, unforeseen interactions between measures or unanticipated consequences of particular measures. It will, therefore, be of crucial importance to ensure that the environmental dimension is fully integrated into the further stages of programme planning and implementation.</p> <p>The overall strategy of local authorities in planning housing developments is to secure the best use of available land together with a variety of layout, good design and a high standard of construction, and to ensure that the social objectives of the housing programme are met. An evaluation of the operational Programme for Environmental Services found a consistent pattern of "gender neutrality" in each</p>

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<p>11. Women and the environment</p>	<p>Successive <i>Environmental Protection Agency</i> reports have highlighted the fundamentally good quality of public drinking water supplies. Substantial investment will continue to be made to improve where necessary the quality of supplies and to extend public water supply to areas that have an inadequate supply.</p> <p>In the area of land use, planning and development control there is no distinction between women and men or urban and rural. The Local Authority (Planning and Development) Acts provide for public participation in the formulation of policy and objectives of local development plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better management of solid waste; • Meeting commitments to limit the growth of gas emissions; • Protecting the urban environment; • Protecting flora and fauna <p>There has been record level of housing building compilations in the last few years. This is putting pressure on existing water and waste water services and is creating a demand for additional services to support these developments.</p> <p>The <i>Environmental Protection Agency's</i> most recent annual report says that overall 92% of public water supply is deemed acceptable. It highlights 'appalling quality' in group and private water schemes. The report states that contamination of rural water schemes has gone up 6% over 12 months and that 42% of group water schemes have coliforms. The rural</p>	<p>planning and investment under the NDP.</p> <p>The significant investment in economic and social infrastructure over the period of the NDP will have considerable benefits for both men and women.</p> <p>Recent analysis indicates that proportionately more women than men use public transport to travel to work. On this basis the increased investment in public transport should have a positive impact on women. Similarly, investing in improved accessibility of public transport for the mobility impaired will be of benefit to people, including women, travelling with young children on public transport.</p>	<p>sub-programme. Measures in the programme have a spatial dimension but no overall detectable bias for either men or women.</p>

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<p>11. Women and the environment</p>		<p>housing boom is seen as a contributory factor in the decline of water quality.</p> <p>Recent levels of economic growth have placed a significant strain on existing waste management infrastructure and extensive investment is needed to provide the necessary infrastructure.</p> <p>There are no impediments to equal access and control of land by women and women have the same inheritance rights as men. However, land transfer tends to operate on a patrilineal basis. The Irish farm sector is dominated by owner operators and farming is an overwhelmingly male occupation. Farm women in practice make a significant contribution to running the family farm but their work is to a certain extent invisible because they are not classified as actual farmers as by and large they are not landowners. A working group on women in agriculture, set up</p>		<p>The waste management framework is set out in the policy statement Changing our Ways (1998). The thrust of the policy statement is the need for a dramatic reduction in reliance on landfill in favour of an integrated waste management approach that utilises a range of waste treatment options to deliver ambitious recycling and recovery targets. Local authorities are required under the Waste Management Act, 1996 to prepare waste management plans. A comprehensive waste management planning exercise is now underway at local and regional level which will, inter alia, identify infra structural and investment requirements necessary to give effect to this policy approach.</p> <p>The aim of Government land policy is to ensure that, as far as</p>

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<p>11. Women and the environment</p>	<p>Iceland Aid builds its interventions around a sound understanding of the roles and needs of women and men in conservation of the environment. Under the Ireland Aid Guidelines on Gender on an Operational Footing the following key gender aware actions are to be carried out in relation to environment projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the direct and indirect linkages between gender and environmental issues in the project areas; • Identify the priority needs of women as well as men in relation to natural resources, they are likely to differ; • Increase women's opportunity to participate in decision making processes relating to natural resources. 	<p>at the end of 1999, is looking at this and at other issues relating to the role of women in agriculture.</p>		<p>practicable, the ownership and management of agricultural land is in the hands of those best fitted to work it to optimal advantage. In implementing this policy the Government does not discriminate against women.</p>

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<p>12. The girl child</p>	<p>Article 41.1 of the Constitution provides specific protection for the 'family', one based on marriage (see section 9, Human Rights of Women). The <i>Commission on the Family</i> was established in October 1995 to examine the effects of legislation and policies on families and make recommendations to the Government on proposals which would strengthen the capacity of families to carry out their functions in a changing economic and social environment. The Commission published its final report in July 1998.</p> <p>In line with the recommendations of the <i>Commission on the Family</i> and with its pro-family approach, the Government has established a new <i>Family Affairs Unit</i> in Department of Social Community and Family Affairs. The Unit has responsibility for co-ordinating family policy, pursuing the Commission's findings, undertaking research and promoting awareness about family issues.</p> <p>The Unit has responsibility for the Marriage Counselling services and the Family Mediation Service, as well as a number of other family services.</p>		<p>The Government is committed to adopting a "families first" approach by putting the family at the centre of all its policies and recommendations.</p> <p>Specific targets include the expansion of the Family Mediation Service nation-wide and the establishment of additional Family and Community Resource Centres.</p> <p>Pilot projects to enhance information services for families are being developed in three local offices of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, under the name of the <i>Family Services Project</i>. Basic information on income support, money advice and budgeting services and access to education and training will be provided.</p> <p>The expanded range of family services on which information will be available includes information about parenting issues, including local childcare services where this information</p>	<p>The Commission on the family's recommendations, in the main, relate to the approach to be pursued in various areas of policy in the years ahead to strengthening families in carrying out their functions.</p> <p>Ireland ratified the <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i> without reservation in September, 1992. The first Irish report under the Convention was submitted to the UN in April 1996. It was examined in January, 1998.</p> <p>Every school in the country was issued a copy of the report.</p> <p>Family Services Information fora on the report of the Commission on the Family are being held throughout the country.</p> <p>The <i>Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1985</i> makes it an offence to procure any girl or woman to leave this country to become a prostitute either here or abroad.</p>

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<p>12. The girl child</p>	<p>An additional £1.5m is being provided in the Budget 2000 for the scheme of grants for voluntary organisations providing marriage, child and bereavement counselling, bringing the total funding in this area in 2000 to £3.7m.</p> <p>The <i>Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998</i> gives effect to the <i>EU Joint Action on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Exploitation of Children</i> in so far as it applies to children. The Joint Action was negotiated during Ireland's Presidency of the EU and adopted in 1997. The Act is designed to protect children under the age of 17, which is the age of consent to sexual relations in Ireland. The Act includes extra territorial provision. If certain offences under the Act are committed outside of Ireland by persons ordinarily resident in Ireland on return to Ireland such persons can be dealt with as if the offences were committed in Ireland. It outlaws child pornography in a wide definition to include material transmitted through the internet. The Act also makes it an offence to organise or facilitate the</p>		<p>is available, and the State Family Mediation Service. It is proposed to develop within the pilot project an enhanced programme of support to be offered to a small group of customers with complex needs. This aspect of the pilot service will focus on the most vulnerable families, for example, very young lone mothers, other parents rearing children within the support of a partner and dependent spouses in households with children depending on social welfare payments.</p> <p>Legislation on the trafficking in human beings (adults) will be introduced to give effect to the <i>EU Joint Action on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Exploitation of Children</i>.</p> <p><i>A Discussion Paper on the Law of Sexual Offences</i> was published in 1998 to stimulate debate on the criminal laws relating to sexual offences.</p>	<p>The report of a <i>National Task Force on Suicide (1998)</i> recommends the introduction of social and personal health education programmes throughout the school cycle and for young people in the out of school sector. Such programmes should include modules on depression awareness and anger control skills and greater collaboration in the promotion of positive health in schools.</p>

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<p>12. The girl child</p>	<p>trafficking of children for the purpose of their sexual exploitation.</p> <p>The dissemination of pornographic videos is outlawed under the Video Recordings Act, 1989.</p> <p>The <i>Sexual Offences (Jurisdiction) Act, 1996</i> targets the child sex tourist by providing that Irish citizens, or people ordinarily resident in Ireland, who engage in unlawful sex with children in other countries can be dealt with in the Irish courts. It also targets the organisers of sex tourism by making it an offence to arrange transport for, or transport, child sex tourists, or to publish information on child sex tourism.</p> <p>In 1998 the Government established the <i>Independent Inquiry into Matters Relating to Child Sexual Abuse in Swimming</i> following criminal proceedings in relation to sexual abuse by two swimming coaches. The Inquiry's report provided detailed recommendations, the vast bulk of which related to the protection of young swimmers but also contained lessons of wider application across the full range of sporting bodies in Ireland. An expert</p>		<p>Over 90 submissions or responses to the paper were received and Government approval has been obtained for the preparation of a package of legislative measures designed to protect children and other vulnerable persons against sex offenders.</p> <p><i>The Children Bill, 1999</i> proposes to increase the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 10 years of age.</p>	

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<p>12. The girl child</p>	<p>group was convened to review the <i>Codé of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sports in Ireland</i>. It is expected that the review, which is taking into account the recommendations of the enquiry into abuse in swimming and guidelines from the Department of Health and Children on reporting suspected sexual abuse, will be published in early 2000. The Irish Sports Council will be responsible for implementing the code.</p> <p>In 1998 the Government announced the establishment of a <i>Commission to Inquire into Childhood Abuse</i> as part of a package of measures to deal with the issue of abuse in childhood.</p> <p>The <i>Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1996</i> gave effect to the rules protecting younger workers drawn up by the International Labour Organisation (I.L.O.) and the European Union.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Science administers a scheme of grants for special projects for disadvantaged and socially excluded young people.</p>	<p>The first <i>Irish National Health and Lifestyle Survey</i> was published in March 1999. It included a survey, <i>Health and Wellbeing in school aged children (HRSVC)</i></p> <p>Overall, 22% of children reported that they were very healthy and 67% think they are quite healthy. Girls perceive themselves as less healthy than</p>	<p>A Bill will be introduced as soon as possible to provide the legal framework to enable the <i>Commission on Childhood Abuse</i> to conduct its business.</p> <p>A <i>National Educational Psychological Service</i> is being developed for all students. The Service will be provided by a dedicated agency of the Department of Education and Science. It was established in 1999 and will be developed in a</p>	

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<p>12. The girl child</p>	<p><i>On my own two feet</i> is a substance abuse prevention programme with the aim of enabling students to develop their ability to make informed decisions about the use of drugs in their lives. It has been introduced to about 50% of schools and in-service training and wider dissemination is continuing. In 1997 national training for this programme was provided for the non-formal sector by the <i>National Youth Health Programme</i>, a partnership between relevant government departments and the National Youth Council of Ireland.</p> <p>The <i>Leadership Training Programme for Primary Prevention of Drug Misuse</i> is a pilot project which aims to develop and implement a flexible process to facilitate people in target communities in tackling their own drug prevention issues and to enable local people to develop their own skills and resources to address the issues more effectively.</p> <p>11 health boards have developed co-ordination structures to address the nation wide misuse of drugs, particularly cannabis and ecstasy, particularly among young people. Drugs co-ordinators assist health boards in developing appropriate</p>	<p>boys and rates for both girls and boys decrease with age.</p> <p>The HBSC survey revealed that 49% of children reported that they had ever smoked a cigarette and 21% report that they are current smokers. Rates increase with age and by age 12-14 both boys and girls of all social classes are exceeding the national targets of 20%, with smoking rates for girls exceeding those for boys. By age 15-17 one-third of girls and boys are current smokers.</p> <p>Substantially fewer children, 32%, report that they have had an alcoholic drink but more than one in two have had a drink prior to ages 9-11. Overall 29% of children report having had a drink in the last month, 34% of boys and "4% of girls; 29% report having been drunk (boys 35%, girls 24%); 8% of boys and 3% of girls report having been drunk more than 10 times.</p>	<p>plused way over the next five years. It will be available to support schools in introducing a particular emphasis on the personal and social needs of students at primary and post primary levels, and in enhancing the counselling and curbing provision for students. The Service was already developed in 1998 by the recruitment of additional psychologists. The establishment of the new agency will enable the continued development of the service in a focussed way.</p> <p>A programme of <i>Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)</i> will be introduced into all primary schools as part of the revised curriculum for primary level. An educational package on substance misuse prevention education, called <i>Part 7</i>, has been developed to assist teachers and schools to implement the SPHE programme. Dissemination of</p>	

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<p>12. The girl child</p>	<p>programmes and services, mostly in relation to drugs awareness, education and prevention. In addition, some health boards have set up regional co-ordinating committees to work in partnership with other relevant agencies in developing a co-ordinated response to the drug problem, having regard to needs of particular regions.</p> <p>In the Eastern Health Board area, where the heroin problem is most acute, special intervention measures are being run through <i>Local Drug Task Force</i>. Treatment services are available in 53 incursions in the health board area. A special rehabilitation programme for women drug users, the <i>SADL Project</i>, provides skill based training to assist them to return to a normal lifestyle.</p> <p>All health boards are working on the development of a database to provide better details on the nature and extent of the drug problem.</p> <p>Following the survey <i>Smoking, Alcohol and Drug Use in Cork and Kerry 1997</i> and another in primary schools to determine how many had a policy on alcohol, tobacco and drug use the</p>	<p>Overall, 53% of children report exercising four or more times per week, while 6% exercise less than weekly. There are substantial gender differences; 62% of boys and 45% of girls exercise four or more times per week. Participation decreases with age, from 63% of 9-11s and 58% of 12-14s to 40% of 15-17s. This decrease is particularly noticeable among girls, dropping to 26% of 15-17 year olds.</p> <p>The research project <i>Smoking, Alcohol and Drug Use in Cork and Kerry 1997</i> surveyed 1,500 people aged 15 to 44. It revealed that in the 15 to 16 age bracket 22% were smoking, 33% were drinking alcohol, 19% had taken a drug, 18% cannabis and 2%-5% had taken solvents, LSD, amphetamines or ecstasy.</p>	<p>this package, with concomitant in-career development, has commenced and will continue over the next two years. At post primary level SPHE will substitute substance prevention education as well as relationships and sexuality education.</p> <p>The Government established a <i>Young Peoples' Facilities and Services Fund</i> with a contribution of £30 million over the period 1998-2000. The private sector will contribute to the fund. This fund is aimed at developing projects in target areas where drugs have or may become a problem.</p>	

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	<p>Southern Health Board launched <i>Guidelines for schools on developing policy on alcohol, tobacco and drug use</i>, based on a working partnership between parents, teachers, management and students in primary, post primary and special schools.</p>			