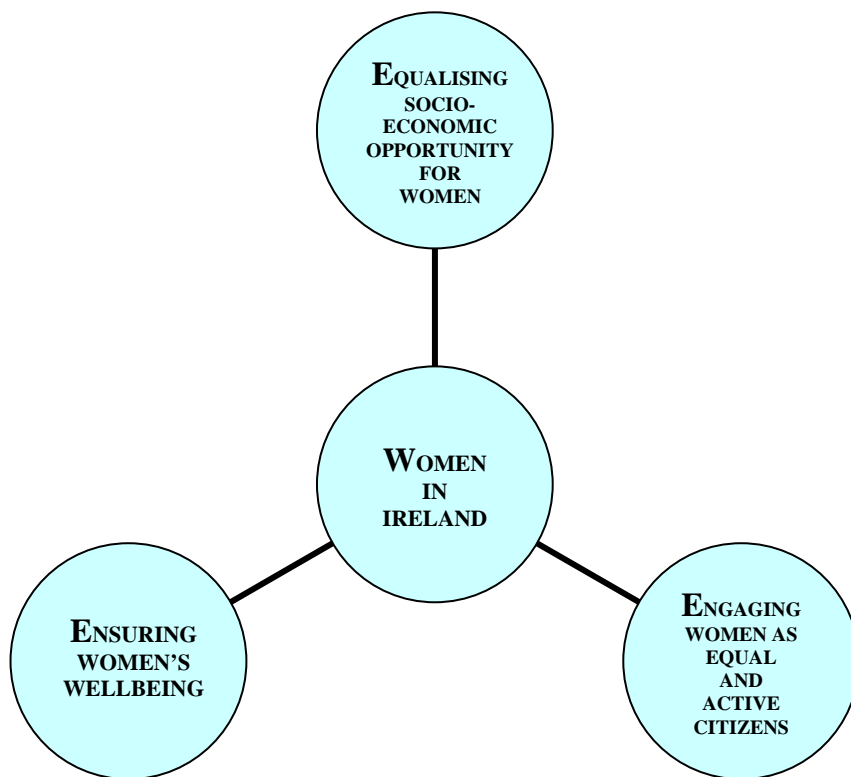


Implementing the National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016



PROGRESS 2009

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NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY
2007-2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The National Women's Strategy (NWS) was launched in April 2007. The Strategy is the Government's policy document in relation to the advancement of women in Irish society for the period 2007 - 2016.
- 1.2 The Strategy contains 20 key objectives and over 200 planned actions which together aim to achieve *an Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life*¹.
- 1.3 The objectives and actions contained in the Strategy are grouped under the three key themes of:
 - Equalising socio-economic opportunity for women;
 - Ensuring the well-being of women; and
 - Engaging women as equal and active citizens.
- 1.4 Implementation of the Strategy is overseen by the NWS Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality. The Monitoring Committee is representative of key Government Departments, relevant State Agencies and the Social Partners, including the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI).
- 1.5 The first Progress Report on the implementation of the National Women's Strategy to end 2008, was submitted to Government in Summer 2009 and was published in August 2009. This Progress Report outlines the progress made during 2009.
- 1.6 The first Interim Review of the Strategy will take place during 2010. At that stage it may be necessary to update the Strategy having regard to the changing environment.

2. Operational environment

- 2.1 In Ireland, the economic downturn first began to manifest itself in the second quarter of 2008. In the early stages of the downturn, male employment was affected to a much greater extent than female employment due to the high numbers of men employed in the construction sector. However, indicators at the end of 2008 showed that the numbers of women becoming unemployed was beginning to increase.
- 2.2 The 2009 budgets for the equality bodies and for initiatives promoted by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform were reduced as part of the austerity measures needed to reduce overall public expenditure. It became necessary to refocus the work of the Equality Authority and to redefine the parameters of the Equality for Women Measure to maximise outputs from the more limited funding.

3. International dimension

3.1 *European Union*

- 3.1.1 The European Union, and in particular the Commissioner with responsibility for Employment, spoke during 2009 about the need to maintain a focus on gender equality and gender issues during the economic downturn. In particular, the Commission was of the view that there was a need to ensure that gender is taken into account when Member States are planning their austerity measures for economic recovery, bearing in mind the differential impacts these measures may have on women and men.
- 3.1.2 During 2009, the Presidency of the European Union was held by the Czech Republic and Sweden. The Council of the European Union is the principal decision-making institution in the EU. Council Conclusions relating to gender equality which were adopted during 2009 were:

¹ National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016: Vision

- Equal opportunities for women and men: active and dignified ageing;
- Gender equality: strengthening growth and employment; and
- Follow-up of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action - Beijing +15: A Review of Progress.

3.1.3 The EU Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men adopted two Opinions during 2009:

- The effectiveness of the current legal framework on equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in tackling the gender pay gap; and
- The gender perspective on the response to the economic and financial crisis.

3.1.4 The new European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) opened its new premises in Vilnius, Lithuania, in December 2009, with a budget of €52.5 million to end 2013.

3.2 *Council of Europe*

3.2.1 The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers met in Madrid in May 2009 and adopted a Declaration on '*Making gender equality a reality*', renewing the Council's commitment to the achievement of real equality between women and men and urging the CoE member states to commit themselves fully to bridging the gaps.

3.2.2 A conference organised by the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Council of Europe, on 'State Budgets: a key factor in real equality between women and men' was held in Athens in May 2009. Gender budgeting is defined by the Council of Europe as "*An application of gender budgeting in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality*". The Council of Europe is a strong advocate of gender budgeting as a tool to achieve de facto gender equality.

3.3 *United Nations*

3.3.1 The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) met in March 2009. The Priority Theme of CSW 53 was "*The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS*". Agreed Conclusions on this theme were adopted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Review Theme of CSW 53 was "Equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels", which had been adopted at the 50th session of CSW in 2006.

4. **Progress on the Implementation of the National Women's Strategy in 2009**

Theme One – Equalising Socio-economic Opportunity for Women

4.1 This broad-ranging theme relates, inter alia, to increasing female labour force participation and the advancement of women into decision-making roles, closing the gender pay gap, supporting female entrepreneurs, ensuring women and girls can reach their full potential in the educational system, providing childcare and other supports to enable women to engage in the labour market and reducing the numbers of women experiencing poverty.

4.2 By the end of 2009, there were 871,600 women (aged 15-64) in employment, an annual decrease of 39,600 women over the same period of 2008, giving a female employment rate of 57 per cent. However, the number of men (aged 15-64) in employment decreased by 127,200 in the same period, reflecting the high numbers of men previously employed in those industries hit hardest in the early stages of the economic downturn such as construction. By the end of 2009, women accounted for just over 46 per cent of all persons in employment.

4.3 Women continue to be over-represented in part-time employment. By the end of 2009, there were 301,600 women in part-time employment compared with 117,800 men.

- 4.4 The main thrust of the first strand of the Equality for Women Measure is on the preparation of women, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, to return to work or to enter mainstream training or education. Some 38 groups each received funding of €30,000 for projects under this initiative in 2009. The Measure receives funding support from the European Social Fund.
- 4.5 The most up to date measure of the gender pay gap as published by the EU is 17.1 per cent in Ireland, just below the EU average. In 2009, the Equality Authority and the ESRI published the *Gender Wage Gap in Ireland: Evidence from the National Employment Survey 2003*. The research provides evidence that expanding the availability of career breaks for full-time female employees would improve their relative pay. The research also found that centralised wage bargaining, specifically the implementation of the national wage agreement, benefited women within both the full-time and part-time labour markets.
- 4.6 In 2009, IBEC established a *Women in Enterprise Project*. The Project has three central action points:
- the production of a Women in Enterprise Report, collating the knowledge, data and insights available to IBEC through its network of 8,000 employers;
 - the development of a set of 'maternity positive' resources for businesses; and
 - an exploration of the feasibility of developing a range of tools and audits, including a gender pay audit, gender Q mark and broader diversity benchmarking initiatives.
- 4.7 A number of initiatives funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform under the Equality for Women Measure fostered female entrepreneurship.
- 4.8 In recent years, girls have consistently outperformed boys in education in Ireland. However, this high level of educational attainment does not always transfer to the labour market. One of the reasons for this may be the persistent gender segregation in subject choices which sees girls underrepresented in higher level mathematics and in some of the science subjects. The Department of Education and Science has developed new guidelines and indicators on gender mainstreaming for primary and second level schools. The Guidelines were circulated to all post-primary schools in December 2009.
- 4.9 The availability of quality, affordable and accessible childcare is central to encouraging more women into the labour market and advancing in their chosen careers. Since 2000, capital funding under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) has resulted in the creation of approximately 40,000 new childcare places while capital funding allocated to date under the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) is expected to result in the creation of a further 25,000 new childcare places.
- 4.10 Evidence shows that women are more exposed to the risk of poverty than their male counterparts. For lone parents, of whom almost 98 per cent are women, the risks are much higher. The latest poverty statistics by the CSO were published in November 2009 and relate to 2008. The statistics show that nearly two-thirds of persons living in lone parent households (63.4%) reported experiencing at least one of the eleven deprivation indicators and nearly one-third (30.3%) experienced three or more deprivation indicators, with 20.5% reporting an inability to afford heating at some stage in the previous twelve months. The consistent poverty rate for women in 2008 was 4.2%, a reduction of 0.7% on the 2007 level. The consistent poverty rate for persons in lone parent households in 2008 was 17.8% down from 20.1% in 2007.
- 4.11 Increases in social welfare payments in Budget 2009 benefited, inter alia, widow's pensions, old age contributory pensions and non-contributory pensions. The combined value of child income supports in July 2009 was equivalent to 33.4% of the minimum adult social welfare payment rate. This is in line with the recommendation in the National Women's Strategy that the value of child income support measures for those on social welfare should be maintained at 33 to 35 per cent of the minimum adult social welfare payment rate.
- 4.12 Further detail on progress made under all the key objectives in Theme 1 - Equalising Socio-economic Opportunity for Women, during 2009 can be found in Chapter 3 of this Progress Report.

5 Theme 2 – Ensuring the Wellbeing of Women

- 5.1 This Theme links a number of diverse objectives contained in the Strategy, including work/life balance, health, promotion of physical activity, sexual and reproductive health, violence against women and human trafficking.
- 5.2 The promotion of work/life balance or "family-friendly" policies is key in enabling both women and men to reach their full potential in the labour market. During 2009, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment continued to support the provision of training and advice to organisations and their employees about putting work/life balance initiatives in place and to review and develop further existing work/life balance arrangements.
- 5.3 Within the HSE, a Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming in Health Service Policy and Provision was established in April 2009.
- 5.4 The delivery of BreastCheck to all thirteen counties in the expansion area was completed two months ahead of schedule in October 2009. To date, BreastCheck has provided almost 560,000 free mammograms to over 276,000 women and has detected over 3,500 breast cancers. CervicalCheck, which was launched in 2008, aims to invite over 1.1 million women in Ireland to participate in the programme during its initial three year interval.
- 5.5 The Crisis Pregnancy Agency was integrated into the HSE from 1 January 2010 and is now called the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme. A number of initiatives aimed at improving the sexual and reproductive health status of women in Ireland were progressed during 2009. In December 2009, the Agency launched **b4udecide**, a new education and information initiative that aims to encourage teenagers to make healthy, responsible decisions about relationships and sex.
- 5.6 Over €2.9 million was allocated in 2009 to the area of crisis pregnancy and post-termination counselling, including the improvement of standards through training and supervision.
- 5.7 Physical wellbeing and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle are key policies for both the Department of Health and Children and the HSE. In 2009, the HSE led an expert working group in developing National Physical Activity Guidelines for Ireland entitled "Get Ireland Active". In 2009, the HSE also launched an anti-smoking media campaign targeting young girls and women. The campaign will also run in 2010.
- 5.8 Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, was involved in a number of important initiatives during 2009 to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence in Ireland. In January 2009, Cosc launched the report "Attitudes to Domestic Abuse" which outlined the findings of a survey of perceptions and beliefs in relation to domestic violence among the general population in Ireland. Based on the findings of this report, Cosc also ran a national awareness campaign entitled "Your silence feeds the violence".
- 5.9 Cosc's priority work in 2009 was the development of a National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. The consultation process was completed during 2009 and it was anticipated that the strategy would be published early in 2010, once approved by Government.
- 5.10 Evidence of trafficking in human beings, particularly women and children, has begun to emerge in Ireland in recent years. In June 2009, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform published the National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Ireland 2009-2012.
- 5.11 Further information on progress made during 2009 on all the objectives under Theme 2 - Ensuring the Wellbeing of Women, in the Strategy can be found in Chapter 4 of this Progress Report.

6. Theme 3 – Engaging Women as Equal and Active Citizens

- 6.1 The involvement of women in decision-making positions in all sectors is a prerequisite for any democratic society. This has been a key objective of EU, Council of Europe and UN policy for many years.
- 6.2 In Ireland, the low numbers of women in decision-making positions can be seen as a democratic deficit. In politics, the percentage of women in Dáil Éireann was just 13 per cent in 2009. In fact, Ireland ranks in 24th place out of the 27 EU Member States for the percentage of women in the national parliament, well below the EU average of 24 per cent. Female representation in Seanad Éireann is only slightly higher at 20 per cent.
- 6.3 An Oireachtas Sub-Committee looked at the issue of women in politics in Ireland and identified five key obstacles: childcare, cash, culture, confidence and candidate selection. The Sub-Committee made a number of proposals to increase women's representation.
- 6.4 Following a proposal by the National Women's Council of Ireland, the Monitoring Committee of the National Women's Strategy has agreed to the establishment of a Sub-Committee on Women in Decision-Making. Preparatory work on the Sub-Committee was undertaken during 2009 and work will be advanced during 2010.
- 6.5 The 2008 figures for female representation on State Boards show no change on the 2007 figure of 34 per cent. In December 2009, all Ministers agreed to take proactive measures in Departments to work to achieve the 40 per cent target for female participation on State Boards.
- 6.6 Ireland's overseas aid programme and work on gender issues in the multi-lateral sectors has been more positive. In 2009, a review of the Irish Aid gender equality policy was initiated in order to identify progress and challenges in implementing the policy over the last six years and to reflect on how implementation might be strengthened. The review is expected to be completed in 2010.
- 6.7 Ireland is continuing to develop its National Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Cross-learning events were held in June 2009 in Northern Ireland and in Dili, Timor Leste, in December 2009. In March 2009, Dame Nuala O'Loan was appointed Ireland's Special Envoy on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and is playing an important international role in this regard.
- 6.8 Ireland is also playing an active role in the on-going negotiations to agree the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution for the establishment of a new UN Gender Entity. The new entity will consolidate the four existing entities (OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW). In particular, Ireland is working to ensure that the new entity has strong leadership, is well resourced and plays a strategic role in mainstreaming gender and holding the UN member states to account for commitments made on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- 6.9 Further detail on progress made in 2009 on all of the objectives contained in the Strategy under Theme 3 - Engaging Women as Equal and Active Citizens, can be found in Chapter 5 of this Progress Report.

7. Implementation of the National Women's Strategy

- 7.1 Implementation of the Strategy is overseen by the National Women's Strategy Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee is representative of key Government Departments, relevant State Agencies and the Social Partners, including the National Women's Council of Ireland. The Monitoring Committee is chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality.
- 7.2 The objectives and actions contained in the Strategy fall under the remit of various Government Departments, reflecting the "whole-of-Government" approach of the Strategy.
- 7.3 The first progress report on the implementation of the Strategy entitled '*Implementing the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, Progress 2007/2008*' was published in August 2009.

- 7.4 During 2009, total funding of just over €1.1 million was allocated to 38 groups under Stand I - Access to Employment, of the Equality for Women Measure, which had previously been launched by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in May 2008.
- 7.5 The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform also made funding of €548,000 available to the National Women's Council of Ireland to enable it to undertake its programme of work. An additional small grant of €10,000 was made available to CURAM/Women in the Home.
- 7.6 Further information on progress made during 2009 on the objectives contained in Implementing the National Women's Strategy can be found in Chapter 6 of this Progress Report.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. The National Women's Strategy (NWS), launched in April 2007, is the Government's statement of priorities in relation to the advancement of women in Irish society for the period 2007-2016. It is intended to have a resonance with all women in Ireland. Its vision is

*An Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential,
while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life.*

2. The Strategy contains twenty Key Objectives and over two hundred Planned Actions. These objectives and actions are clustered under the three key themes of
 - Equalising socio-economic opportunity for women;
 - Ensuring the wellbeing of women; and
 - Engaging women as equal and active citizens.
3. The Strategy was prepared by the Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (D/JELR) under the direction of an Inter-Departmental Steering Committee.
4. A Monitoring Committee, representative of the key Government Departments, relevant State Agencies and the Social Partners, including the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI), has been established under the chairmanship of the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality. This Committee is tasked to review progress on the Strategy's implementation. The Committee had two full meetings during 2009, while the Chair and Executive met the Social Partnership Members in July 2009 to discuss the economic downturn and its possible impact upon the Strategy.
5. The first progress report on the implementation of the National Women's Strategy entitled *'Implementing the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, Progress 2007/2008'* was published in August 2009.
6. An extensive three-year review of progress on the implementation of the Strategy will take place during 2010 when the changing environment will also be considered with a view to amending the Strategy as necessary.

STRUCTURE OF THE 2009 PROGRESS REPORT

7. This 2009 Progress Report has been prepared by the Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR in collaboration with the relevant Departments and the State Agencies which together deliver the broad range of actions encompassed in the Strategy. The Report gives an overview of progress made in implementing the Objectives contained in the Strategy during 2009.
8. The present chapter updates some of the key indicators which were included in the Strategy and includes a short overview of the key issues which have arisen in relation to gender equality and the advancement of women.
9. Chapter 2 outlines some of the developments which have taken place in an international context during 2009, including the work of the multi-lateral organisations: the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.
10. Chapters 3 to 5 respectively look at progress by objective under each of the three key themes identified in the Strategy: equalising socio-economic opportunity; ensuring women's wellbeing and engaging women as equal and active citizens. These chapters include material supplied by the key Government Departments and State Agencies and incorporate relevant national and international statistics and contextual comment prepared by the Gender Equality Division, D/JELR.

11. Chapter 6 summarises progress on practical issues in relation to the mainstreaming of gender equality as a key element for the achievement of de facto gender equality.

OVERVIEW OF KEY INDICATORS DURING 2009

12. Table 1 below shows an update of the key indicators which were included in the Strategy.

TABLE 1
UPDATE OF KEY INDICATORS ON WOMEN 1971 – 2009

	1971	1991	2007	2008	2009
Number of women in population**	1,482,488	1,772,301	2,118,677	2,215,800	2,241,600
Number of marriages	20,788	16,859	22,544	22,243	21,541
Rate per 1,000	7.1	4.8	5.2	5.0	4.8
Average age of woman on marriage	25.1	25.8	31.1	31.1	31.3
Number of births	64,382	52,690	70,620	75,065	74,278
Birth rate per 1,000	21.9	15	16.3	17.0	16.7
Extra marital births	1,709	8,766	23,170	24,844	24,532
Extra marital births as % of total births	2.7	16.6	32.8	33.1	33.0
Total fertility rate	3.5	2.1	2.03	2.1	2.1
Percentage of women aged over 15 in the labour force	28.0	32.9	54.4	53.9	53.2
Percentage of married women in the labour force	8.0	26.9	54.1	54.6	54.1

Source : Central Statistics Office, various

Notes : * CSO Estimate for population 2008, 2009

** Estimated figure based on extrapolation of 2008 data

13. Table 1 shows that the number of women in the population continues to increase, as do all of the “childbirth related” statistics, including the fertility rate which is now among the highest in Europe. The percentage of women aged over 15 in the labour force was maintained at just over 53% in 2009 and with the absolute numbers in the female population increasing, this will reflect a considerable increase in the numbers of women at work. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

TABLE 2
SELECTED CENSUS STATISTICS IN RELATION TO WOMEN – 2002 AND 2006

	2002	2006	% Increase/ (Decrease)
Number of Women in Ireland	1,971,039	2,118,677	+7.4%
Number of Women born outside Ireland	201,107	294,297	+46.3%
Percentage of women born outside Ireland	10.2%	13.9%	
Women/Girls in Ireland by Age Group			
0 – 14	403,384	421,405	+4.5%
15 – 24	315,817	311,725	(-1.3%)
25 – 44	591,951	663,885	+12.2%
45 – 64	413,041	460,831	+11.6%
65 and over	246,846	260,831	+5.7%
Women in Ireland aged over 15 by Marital Status			
Single	616,073	679,831	+10.3%
Married – first marriage	712,582	756,349	+6.1%
Remarried	13,487	18,323	+35.9%
Separated including deserted	57,359	61,480	+7.2%
Divorced	18,904	32,308	+70.9%
Widowed	149,250	148,981	(-0.2%)

14. The publication of the detailed volumes of the 2006 Census of Population during 2007 and 2008 has increased the contemporary picture of women in Ireland. Table 2 above gives a number of statistics drawn from the census, offering a comparison with the statistics from the 2002 census.
15. The total number of women in the country grew by 7.4 per cent over the four years since the 2002 Census. This represents an increase of 3 per cent in the population of Irish women while the

population of women born outside Ireland grew by over 46 per cent. This population growth was most concentrated in the cohorts of women most likely to be in employment – there was growth of some 12 per cent in the numbers aged between 25 and 64, illustrating a significant increase in the potential female labour force.

16. Census statistics on marital status also show a significant increase in the numbers of women who are described as single, separated, divorced or widowed. However this does not take account of those who are living with a partner and it is necessary to review the Census volume on living arrangements to determine the numbers of women who are head of a household. Including women living alone, there is an increase of almost 18 per cent in the number of female-led households in the four year inter-censal period, compared with an overall increase of just 14 per cent in the number of private households.
17. Changes in other aspects of women and their lives which took place between the census periods will be explored later in this Report.
18. The CSO *Population and Migration Estimates*, which was released in September 2009, with a reference period of April 2009, shows that the number of women in the population continues to rise steadily. Between 2006 (the Census year) and 2009 it is estimated that the number of women in the population increased by almost 6 per cent or 122,900 women.
19. Significantly, the CSO forecast also shows that between 2006 and 2009 the greatest increase in the female population occurred in the number of women aged 25-29 years. This cohort increased by over 14 per cent or 25,000 women. Logically, one could assert that the numbers of women in the labour market would also have increased significantly over this period. This has impacted on employment rates.

CHANGES IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

20. The economic downturn began to manifest itself in the second quarter of 2008 and gathered momentum thereafter. Much has been written about its impact on economic growth, employment and public services.
21. While the early stages of the downturn in Ireland affected the employment status of the male population more sharply than the female labour force, indicators at the end of 2008 showed that the numbers of women becoming unemployed was beginning to increase. This was reflected in the employment rate for women aged 15 to 64 in the labour force, (the Lisbon target) which fell to 59 per cent in Quarter 4 of 2008, or 1 percentage point below the European Council target, after five successive quarters above the target level. This downward trend continued in 2009 with the female employment rate falling to 57% in Quarter 4 2009. The Irish rate had peaked at 61.5 per cent (Q3/2007) and the downturn may now make it more difficult to achieve the 2010 target in Ireland and across the EU. However, it is also important to note that the increase in the number of women in the population in Ireland over this period, referenced at paragraphs 18 and 19 above, will have had an impact on the measurement of the employment rate in Q4 2009.
22. The European Union and in particular the Commissioner with responsibility for Employment spoke at length and on a number of occasions during 2009 of the need to maintain a focus on gender equality and gender issues during the economic downturn to ensure that the momentum towards women's increased labour market participation is not lost.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2009

23. This Report shows that progress has been made across all Government Departments and Agencies to implement the National Women's Strategy during 2009. However, there are still significant deficits between women and men in many important sectors, particularly in decision-making roles, both in economic and political fields.

CHAPTER 2

GENDER EQUALITY – THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Introduction

1. The European Union and the all of the key multi-lateral bodies place considerable emphasis on gender equality. The concept of gender equality has been enshrined in EU legislation since the foundation of the EU in 1958 while the Council of Europe and the United Nations have addressed gender equality since their foundation in the 1940s. Each body continues to play a significant role in promoting gender equality.

The European Union - Presidency Activities on Gender

2. Both the Commission and its High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (representative of all Member States at official level) collaborate with each EU Presidency country to advance a programme of activities in relation to gender equality. This will usually include the organisation of a Ministerial Conference and an Informal Ministerial Council. It will also frequently result in a major research report and a series of Agreed Conclusions which are submitted to the Employment, Social Protection, Health and Consumer Affairs (ESPHCA) Council for final decision.
3. The European Union actively participated in a review of activity to mark the 15th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, which takes place in 2010. This included an analysis, prepared by the Swedish Presidency, of the questionnaires submitted by Member States to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). UNECE in tandem with the other regional bodies of the UN had been mandated by the UN Secretary General to undertake a UN-wide review of progress under the Beijing Platform.
4. During 2009, the Presidency of the European Union was held by the Czech Republic and Sweden. The Council of the European Union is the principal decision-making institution in the EU. Council Conclusions relating to gender equality which were adopted at the EPSCHA Councils were during 2009 were:

Equal opportunities for women and men: active and dignified ageing

5. The Czech Presidency oversaw the adoption of Council Conclusions on 'Equal opportunities for women and men: active and dignified ageing' in June. Member States are:
 - Encouraged to adopt appropriate policies to promote the reconciliation of work, family and private life and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the home in order to facilitate the achievement of the Lisbon employment target of 50% for older workers (aged 55-64) by 2010.
 - Encouraged to adopt a gender mainstreaming strategy in health policies and to ensure equality of access to affordable health care and long-term health care for both women and men.
 - Called on to take women's higher exposure to the risk of poverty, especially in old age, into account, especially when reforming their pension systems and are encouraged to ensure that pension systems take into account the situation of women and men who interrupt their careers due to caring obligations.
 - Called on to take measures to enable older women and men to assume a variety of roles in communities, public life and decision-making.

Gender equality: strengthening growth and employment

6. The Swedish Presidency oversaw the adoption of Council Conclusions to ESPHCA Council in November on 'Gender equality: strengthening growth and employment'.

7. The Council Conclusions were prepared amid the worsening of the economic downturn and financial crisis which was affecting many of the EU Member States in the second half of 2009, including Ireland. The Council Conclusions stress the need to incorporate a visible gender dimension into national austerity measures for economic recovery. In the Council Conclusions Member States are called on :
- In collaboration with the European Commission, to strengthen the gender dimension when adopting the post-Lisbon Strategy (on economic growth, employment and competitiveness) in 2010 and to ensure that gender equality is promoted in a consistent manner.
 - To ensure that the differential impact on women and men of the global economic and financial crisis is taken into account in the development and adoption of policy measures to tackle the crisis, with a view to addressing the specific needs of women and men, to ensuring equal opportunities for both sexes, and to achieving gender equality.
 - To continue to reduce the persisting gender gaps in the labour market, inter alia, as regards employment, unemployment, part-time work, career development, decision-making positions, pay, sectoral and occupational segregation, and entrepreneurship, with a view to providing opportunities for both women and men to meet their aspirations and to fulfil their potential and to preventing in-work poverty.
 - To consider reviewing relevant policies and schemes, with a view to promoting incentives for both women and men to enter, re-enter and remain in the labour market, while providing access to quality services and adequate income support.

Follow-up of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action - Beijing +15: A Review of Progress

8. In the context of the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted during the United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, the Swedish Presidency produced a report entitled "Beijing + 15: The Platform for Action and the European Union", based on a review of the Platform over the past 15 years.
9. The Presidency report was based on the information provided by Member States in their replies to a questionnaire from the United Nations Economic Committee for Europe (UNECE) in 2009.
10. The Council Conclusions prepared on the basis of the Presidency report:
- Take note of the progress made by Member States in implementing the indicators developed under the twelve critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action.
 - Calls on the Member States to develop indicators on two critical areas of concern that have yet to be addressed by the EU - namely 'Women and the Environment' and 'Women and the Media'.
 - Calls on the Member States to support the European Commission in its preparation of the future strategy for gender equality.
 - Invites Member States to reaffirm the European Pact for Gender Equality adopted by the European Council in 2006. The Pact emphasised the importance of utilising women's untapped potential in the labour market and of the need to close gender gaps, combat gender stereotypes and to promote better work/life balance for women and men.
11. EU Presidency Conferences and/or Informal Councils on Gender Equality held during 2009 focused on the following topics:
- Czech Presidency conference on '*New Ways to Overcome Gender Stereotypes*' - 27 May 2009, Prague.
 - Swedish Presidency conference on '*What does Gender Equality mean for Economic Growth and Employment*' - 15/16 October 2009, Stockholm.

European Union - Revisions to EU Family-Friendly Legislation

Proposal for European Parliament and Council Directive on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women and repealing Directive 86/613/EEC.

12. This proposed Directive aims to improve social protection for self-employed workers and assisting spouses and was approved at Council in November 2009.
13. The initiative is part of a range of initiatives designed to better reconcile work, family and private life. It aims to improve the social protection of self-employed workers, with a view to removing disincentives to female entrepreneurship. It also seeks to improve the social protection of "assisting spouses" and life partners, who often work in the self-employed sector without enjoying the corresponding rights. It provides for 14 weeks maternity leave for female self-employed workers and assisting spouses.

Revised Parental Leave Directive

14. A revised framework agreement on parental leave was concluded between the European Social Partners (which included ICTU and IBEC) in June 2009. This led to a proposal from the European Commission to the European Council to repeal existing legislation in this area. The new legislation has now been adopted and Member States are required to transpose it within two years.

The main elements are as follows:

- The duration of Parental Leave will now be for 4 months. This was previously 3 months. Up to 3 of the 4 months will be transferable under this agreement.
 - It requires Member States to assess the need to adjust conditions for access and modalities of application of Parental Leave to the needs of parents of children with either a disability or long-term illness.
 - It confers the right on parents returning to work from Parental Leave to seek changes to their working hours or the structure of same. An employer is now legally obliged to consider the request but not obliged to grant this.
 - It provides for an assessment of the needs for additional measures to address specific needs in relation to adoptive parents.
15. Some positive aspects of the proposal include the balancing of gender responsibilities and gender equality. The fact that one month is non-transferable may encourage fathers to avail of Parental Leave while mothers may be induced to remain in the workforce.
 16. The transposition of the proposed Directive into Irish law will require an amendment to the existing Parental Leave Acts, 1998 and 2006, and work has commenced on this process. Ireland's current statutory Parental Leave entitlement is 14 weeks per parent, per child and it is unpaid.

European Commission Annual Report on Equality between Women and Men

17. The European Commission produces an annual report on gender equality between women and men for the Spring European Council. The report includes a statistical annex which gives an overview of the situation of women and men in Europe and allows for comparison between Member States in relation to gender equality. The Commission's seventh annual report was presented to the ESPHCA Council in March 2010 and outlines the situation across Europe in 2009.
18. The report highlights the importance of gender equality in recovering from the economic downturn and notes that gender equality is a precondition for sustainable growth, employment, competitiveness and social cohesion. The Commission report voices the concern that the economic crisis could be used as an excuse to limit or cut gender equality measures. However, the report also notes that recovery from the recession will provide an opportunity for policy makers to implement policies to make the labour market and society more gender-equal in future.

19. The Commission report emphasises that, although male employment was hardest hit at the beginning of the economic downturn, particularly in the industry and construction sectors, the recession is likely to have a greater long-term impact on women due to their overrepresentation in part-time positions which are more precarious by nature. The report also notes that, despite high educational attainment, women continue to be under-represented in politics and decision-making roles and in some sectors of employment which have traditionally been seen as male dominated.
20. The report notes that an equal sharing of responsibilities as regards children and other dependants between women and men is necessary not only to achieve gender equality but to foster economic growth and women's advancement in the labour market.
21. The Swedish Presidency also undertook a major analysis of the responses made by EU Member States to UNECE (see below) on progress made in individual Member States on the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the advancement of gender equality in each State.
22. A Conference held by the Swedish Presidency on *'What does Gender Equality mean for Economic Growth and Employment'* in October 2009 highlighted how strengthening gender equality policy can lead to increased economic productivity and employment. A report was presented at the Swedish Presidency conference entitled *'Gender equality, economic growth and employment'*. Research presented at the Conference estimated the potential increase in GDP that would occur following the elimination of gender gaps in employment, i.e. if women's rates were to reach those of men's in terms of employment, part-time work and productivity (measured by wages). The report predicts a gain in GDP of almost 30% for the EU as a whole and a gain in GDP of 35% for Ireland following a transition to full equality in the labour market.

EU Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women

23. The EU Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women is composed of representatives from Member States Government Departments, national bodies responsible for equal opportunities, employers' organisations at Community level, employees' organisations at Community level and observers such as the European Women's Lobby and others. The Advisory Committee assists the European Commission in formulating and implementing Community measures aimed at promoting equal opportunities for men and women. The Committee also encourages the continuous exchange of information and experience gained on policies and measures undertaken in relevant fields between the Member States and the various other actors. The Advisory Committee prepares opinions at the request of the EU Commission and also delivers opinions on its own initiative. The Advisory Committee adopted two Opinions during 2009.

Opinion on the effectiveness of the current legal framework on equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in tackling the gender pay gap.

24. The average figure for the gender pay gap across the EU stands at 17.4%. The Advisory Committee Opinion notes that the reasons for the pay gap are multi-faceted and complex in nature. The Opinion contends that the gender pay gap is the result of persistent inequalities in the labour market which mainly affect women.
25. The Advisory Committee Opinion has identified five types of causes of the gender pay gap, namely:
 1. The undervaluing of women's work;
 2. Horizontally and vertically segregated labour market;
 3. Wage structure/Composition of pay;
 4. Reconciliation of work and private life;
 5. Traditions and stereotypes.
26. Some of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in tackling the causes of the gender pay gap include:

- transparent policies in relation to wage composition, regular review of pay scales and implementation of jobs classification systems to ensure they do not contain any direct or indirect discriminatory features;
 - a review of the criteria used to assess the value of work, which may now be outdated;
 - the Social Partners should actively engage in fostering equal pay and collective bargaining practices should include a provision concerning the implementation of the principle of equal pay between women and men;
 - strengthening policies and provision to reconcile professional and private life for both women and men including by strengthening provisions for parental and other family related leave and by continuing all efforts to meet the Barcelona targets on the provision of childcare and other services for facilitating the work/life balance of both women and men;
 - creating a European Equal Pay Day and the use of awareness raising campaigns to highlight the gender pay gap;
 - improving statistical data collection so that statistics are coherent, comparable and complete;
 - the Member States and the European Commission might collaborate in awareness raising actions to combat gender stereotypes;
 - provision of a gender pay indicator in the macro economic guidelines and/or the employment guidelines of the post Lisbon Strategy on Growth and Jobs.
27. The gender pay gap in Ireland is 17.1%, slightly under the EU average of 17.4%. In 2009, women continued to be overrepresented in lower paid employment in Ireland, with women accounting for approximately three-quarters of all clerical and secretarial workers.

Opinion on the gender perspective on the response to the economic and financial crisis.

28. The Advisory Committee Opinion highlights the challenges presented by the global economic crisis. The Opinion notes that the downturn will affect women and men differently and urges the Member States and the European Union in preparing their austerity measures to combat the economic downturn to take account of their differential impacts on both women and men.
29. The recommendations of the Opinion can be grouped into three categories:
1. To ensure that women are not disproportionately affected by the impact of the economic and financial crisis on the labour market;
 2. To ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated in the policy responses to the crisis; and
 3. To ensure that gender equality policies remain visible despite the effects of the economic crisis.
30. Some of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee Opinion on the gender perspective to the economic and financial crisis include:
- Member States should shape their responses to the economic and financial crisis in a way which is sensitive to its differential impact on women and men and demonstrates commitment to gender equality, including a gender dimension in national recovery plans;
 - All proposed policies should be subject routinely to gender impact assessment;
 - Key employment statistics should be gender disaggregated to improve monitoring and analysis of the gender impact of the economic and financial crisis;
 - Member States should work to combat gender stereotyping and continue to focus on reconciliation measures, including by taking steps to promote these as good practice for both women and men; and
 - Member States should consider gender budgeting, in particular in respect of national budgets.
31. In Ireland, the effects of the economic crisis on female employment was mostly keenly felt during Quarter 4 2009 when figures from the CSO QNHS showed a drop in the female employment rate from 59.3% in Q4 2008 to 57% in Q4 2009. The female unemployment rate showed an annual increase of 25,800 women or 49% to bring the female unemployment rate to 8.3% for Q4 2009. However, these figures should be qualified by reference to the increase in the number of women in the population, particularly those of working age.

Other EU Matters

32. The **European Institute for Gender Equality** (EIGE) is a European agency created to support the Member States and the European Union in their efforts to promote gender equality, to fight gender discrimination and to raise awareness about gender issues. The proposal for its establishment was reactivated during the 2004 Irish Presidency.
33. The tasks of the Institute are:
 1. To collect and analyse comparable data on gender issues;
 2. To develop methodological tools, in particular for the integration of the gender dimension in all policy areas;
 3. To facilitate the exchange of best practices and dialogue among stakeholders, and to raise awareness among EU citizens.
34. The Management Board of the newly established European Gender Institute met for the first time in 2007 and has met regularly since. The Board includes representatives of 18 of the 27 Member States on a three year rotational basis. Ireland was a member of the Board throughout this period.
35. The new Director was appointed to the Institute in early 2009. The Gender Institute opened its new premises in Vilnius, Lithuania, in December 2009 and will move from its temporary premises in Brussels to Vilnius in the early months of 2010. The budget for the Institute for the period 2007-2013 is €52.5 million. The Institute will employ approximately thirty staff in 2010.
36. Much of the work of the Management Board in 2009 related to the completion of the work programme for the Institute for the period 2010 - 2012 incl. The Institute's Advisory Forum also met for the first time in 2009. All Member States are represented on the Advisory Forum.

Roadmap for Equality between women and men 2006-2010

37. The European Roadmap for Equality between women and men was adopted on 1 March 2006. The Roadmap represents the European Commission's commitment to accelerate progress towards gender equality in partnership with Member States and other actors. The Roadmap had identified six priority areas for action:
 1. Equal economic independence for women and men;
 2. Reconciliation of private and professional life;
 3. Equal representation in decision-making;
 4. Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence and trafficking;
 5. Elimination of gender stereotypes; and
 6. Promotion of gender equality in external and development policies.
38. As the Roadmap is due to expire in 2010, preparatory work began during 2009 on a successor to the Roadmap. A two day conference was hosted by the European Commission on 15/16 June 2009 on 'Equality between women and men in a time of change'. The aim of the conference was to discuss the current situation and the future challenges for gender equality with all stakeholders in this field.
39. The conference provided an opportunity to take stock of the achievements of the Commission's Roadmap for Equality between women and men and to discuss future priorities. One of the items for debate was the possible repercussions of the economic crisis on gender equality. In addition, the participants at the Conference seemed to concur that the priority areas addressed in the previous Roadmap were likely to remain unchanged although there might be some re-ordering of them in line with emerging trends.
40. During 2009, discussions took place at Commission and Council levels on the future labour and economic policy focus for the European Union - to be known as Europe 2020. Some discussion focused on the extent to which gender equality would be reflected in this new approach.
41. Although it post-dates this Report, it is also worth noting that the appointment of the new European Commission in February 2010 has led to some structural changes in the Commission, which may

impact upon gender equality. Responsibility for gender equality now rests with the Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship and Ms Viviane Reding, the three term Luxembourgish Commission Vice-President, has taken responsibility for this dossier. However, the staff of the Gender Equality Directorate will remain attached to DG Emploi, the Employment and Social Affairs Directorate General.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

42. The Council of Europe has 47 member countries. 2009 represented the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.
43. At the 119th meeting of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in Madrid in May 2009, the Committee adopted a Declaration on '*Making gender equality a reality*'. The Declaration renews the commitment of the Committee of Ministers to achieve real equality between women and men and urges the CoE Member States to commit themselves fully to bridging the gap between equality in fact and in law and to act to:
 - I. Eliminate the structural causes of power imbalances between women and men, including in political, public and economic decision-making process at all levels;
 - II. Ensure economic independence and empowerment of women by guaranteeing that equality is respected in the labour market and economic life. This will be possible by eliminating discrimination generally, and in particular that emanating from gender stereotypes, and by guaranteeing an equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;
 - III. Address the need to eliminate established stereotypes by investing further in gender mainstreaming in education and research including gender focused research to ensure that both women and men achieve their full economic and social potential;
 - IV. Eradicate violations of the dignity and human rights of women through increased and effective action to prevent and combat gender-based violence against women, provide the necessary assistance and support for all victims and prosecute the perpetrators;
 - V. Integrate a gender equality perspective in governance by ensuring openness, transparency, participation of all relevant stakeholders as well as real accountability in the process of achieving full gender equality.

Council of Europe Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG)

44. Within the context of its Human Rights Division, the Council of Europe (CoE) established a Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men which meets twice a year for three days on each occasion. The following is a summary of the work which was undertaken by CDEG during 2009.
45. At its 41st Meeting in April 2009, the CDEG:
 - Completed the declaration referred to above;
 - Began the preparations for the 7th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for equality for women and men in Azerbaijan in May 2010;
 - Oversaw preparations for the Conference on Gender Budgeting in Athens in May 2009 (see below);
 - Noted information from the first meeting of the Ad hoc Committee on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in April 2009;
 - Took note of developments since the entry into force on 1 February 2008 of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, including the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), which was in the process of being set up.

46. At its 42nd Meeting in November 2009, the CDEG:

- Advanced the working documents for the Conference of Ministers in Azerbaijan in May 2010;
- Approved the study on '*Parity democracy: a far cry from reality*' which had been prepared as a follow up to Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
- Took note of the outcomes from the conference on gender budgeting in Athens, May 2009;
- Took note of further information on the preparation of a Council of Europe Convention to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence;
- During this meeting, Ireland was elected to the CDEG Bureau.

Gender Budgeting and the Council of Europe

47. A conference organised by the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Council of Europe, on '***State Budgets: a key factor in real equality between women and men***' was held in Athens on 5/6 May 2009. Gender Budgeting² is defined by the Council of Europe as

"an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality".

48. A handbook on the practical implementation of gender budgeting was produced for the Council of Europe conference in Athens on 5/6 May 2009. The handbook suggests that gender budgeting can be broken down into three stages:

- Stage 1: Analysis of the budget from a gender perspective;
- Stage 2: Restructuring the budget based on gender analysis;
- Stage 3: Mainstreaming gender as a category of analysis in the budgetary process.

49. Delegates heard a number of presentations from Member States on initiatives undertaken to implement gender budgeting.

Council of Europe work on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

50. The Deputies of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe approved the establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CAHVIO) at their 1044th meeting on 10 December, 2008. The work of this Committee is ongoing and Ireland is represented on it by Cosc, D/JELR.

51. The terms of reference for CAHVIO are to prepare one or more legally binding instrument(s), as appropriate, to

- prevent and combat:
 - domestic violence including specific forms of violence against women;
 - other forms of violence against women.
- protect and support the victims of such violence and prosecute the perpetrators.

52. The Committee is to have regard to the definition of violence against women and the examples of domestic violence given in Council of Europe Recommendation Rec(2002), bearing in mind that domestic violence is not limited to violence against women.

53. Other instructions given to CAHVIO include the :

² Gender Budgeting: Practical Implementation, Handbook:, Council of Europe, April 2009.

- design of a comprehensive framework for the protection and assistance of victims and witnesses, including child victims and witnesses, paying particular attention to gender equality aspects, as well as on the effective prevention, intervention, investigation, prosecution and, where appropriate, international co-operation;
- definition of a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance of States Parties with the provisions of the instrument(s).

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - 53RD SESSION 2009

54. The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) met in March 2009. The Priority Theme of CSW 53 was "**The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS**". Agreed Conclusions on this theme were transmitted to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for adoption and as an input into the annual ministerial review of 2009.
55. In the Agreed Conclusions,
- CSW urged Governments, along with the United Nations, civil society and the private sector, among others, to intensify efforts to fully implement the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action;
 - CSW urged Governments to mainstream gender perspectives into all legislation, policies and programmes, and incorporate a gender-responsive budgeting process across all policy areas;
 - On the specific issue of care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS, CSW called for scaling up efforts significantly to achieve universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010;
 - CSW called on Governments to incorporate the value and cost of unpaid work to societies in policies, strategies and budgets across relevant sectors; ensure that women and men have access to maternity and paternity leave; increase access to public infrastructure, such as transportation, to reduce the care burden on households; develop strategies to eliminate gender stereotypes; collect gender-disaggregated data to inform policymaking; adopt measures to overcome the negative impacts of the economic and financial crisis; and allocate financial resources at the international level for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, among other instruments.
56. During the 53rd CSW session, time is also set aside for consideration of progress in relation to a "review theme" since that theme was discussed in detail some years previously. On this occasion, the Review Theme was *Equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels*, which had been adopted at the 50th session of CSW in 2006.
57. The following Resolutions were agreed and submitted to ECOSOC where they were adopted.
- *The future organisation and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women*
 - *Future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women;*
 - *Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS;*
 - *Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women.*
58. The 53rd Commission on the Status of Women also decided to recommend, through the Economic and Social Council, that the General Assembly of the UN hold a commemorative meeting during the Commission's session in March 2010 (CSW 54) to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+15).

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

59. The United Nations Economic Committee for Europe (UNECE) was established in 1947 by the UN Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC). The main aim of UNECE is to promote pan-European economic integration. UNECE has 56 member states from the European Union, non-EU Western and

Eastern Europe, South-East Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and North America.

60. In relation to gender equality, UNECE mainly concentrates on economic aspects. Under this mandate, UNECE carries out periodic reviews of progress made in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). In early 2009, Member States of UNECE were asked to complete a detailed report of progress on gender equality over the previous five year period. This resulted in a composite report prepared by the UNECE Secretariat and submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women for discussion at the 2010 meeting of the Commission.
61. In November 2009, UNECE held a Beijing +15 Regional Review meeting on 'New Challenges and Opportunities for Gender Equality in the ECE Region: Key Issues and Policy Responses'. Following this meeting a report from UNECE and Chairman's Conclusions from the Conference were transmitted to the Secretary General in New York for consideration at the 2010 meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women.
62. The responses of EU Member States to the UNECE questionnaire were also used as the basis for EU Council Conclusions prepared under the Swedish Presidency on 'Follow-up of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action - Beijing +15: A Review of Progress'.

CHAPTER 3

THEME ONE - EQUALISING SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

1. This key theme of the National Women's Strategy aims to equalise socio-economic opportunity for women by addressing their employment status, putting in place measures to overcome poverty which is more prevalent among women and looking at issues such as caring services which support the economic engagement of women.

Objective 1-A
To increase the participation of women in the labour force

CONTEXT

2. The slight downward trend in the employment rate for women, which began to manifest itself towards the end of 2008, has already been noted as has the initial impact of the recession. The Quarterly National Household Survey for Q4/09 showed that 57,300 women were unemployed for less than a year, compared with 117,700 men. The report for Q4 2009 also showed that 68,800 men were unemployed for more than one year compared with 20,300 women.
3. Table 3 updates headline statistics on employment rates for women in Ireland originally contained in the Strategy. Statistics on average hourly earnings by sex are no longer available and expanded information on the numbers of men and women in employment is given in a later table.

TABLE 3
WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE – SOME HEADLINE STATISTICS

	MALE	FEMALE
Employment Rate 1994	65.9%	40.1%
Employment Rate 2006 (Q4) (ILO Definition)	77.7%	59.6%
Employment Rate 2008 (Q4) (ILO Definition)	72.6%	59.0%
Employment Rate 2009 (Q4) (ILO Definition)	66.5%	57.6%

4. The statistics in Table 3 above also relate to the targets for female employment contained in the EU Lisbon Strategy for Economic Competitiveness and Growth which aimed to see that the employment rate for women aged 15 to 64 years would be 60 per cent by 2010. Ireland actually exceeded this target in 2007 and early 2008 but a combination of the economic downturn and a continuing increase in the baseline population means that the employment rate for women in the target group has now fallen to 57.6 per cent.

TABLE 4
EMPLOYMENT RATES (WOMEN AND MEN AGED 15-64) IN EU MEMBER STATES – 2008

	Employment Rate		Gender Gap*	Rank by Gender Gap
	Women	Men		
	%	%		
Top Three				
Denmark	74.3	81.9	7.6	6
Sweden	71.8	76.7	4.9	2
Netherlands	71.1	83.2	12.1	13
IRELAND (15th)	60.2	77.4	14.7	19
EU – 27 Average	58.3	72.5	13.7	-
Bottom Three				
Greece	48.7	75	26.3	26
Italy	47.2	70.3	23.1	25
Malta	37.4	72.5	35.1	27

Source: European Commission: Report on Equality between Women and Men 2010

** Difference in rates between rates for men and women*

Note: These statistics do not reflect the subsequent economic downturn

5. Table 4 on the preceding page looks at trends in relation to employment for women in selected EU States. The table summarises the three Member States with the highest and the three Member States with the lowest employment rates for women (women aged 15 to 64 only). Comparative data for men are included as are the Irish and EU mean data.
6. Ireland ranked fifteenth for the employment rate for women in 2008. On the other hand, the employment rate for men in Ireland is tenth highest among the 27 EU Member States and accordingly the absolute gap between women and men is among the widest in the EU, ranking at 19th (improved from 21st).
7. Table 5 below gives an overview of the labour force in Ireland at the end of 2007, 2008 and 2009.

TABLE 5
PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER CLASSIFIED BY SEX AND ILO ECONOMIC STATUS

	FEMALES (000)			MALES(000)		
	Q4/2007	Q4/2008	Q4/2009	Q4/2007	Q4/2008	Q4/2009
In Labour Force	962.3	959.6	949.9	1,277.7	1,263.1	1,205.3
In Employment	924.8	906.7	871.6	1,214.1	1,145.3	1,016.2
Full Time	625.7	608.4	569.9	1,128.7	1,052.1	898.3
Part-Time	299.1	298.3	301.6	85.4	93.2	117.8
Unemployed	37.5	52.9	78.4	63.6	117.8	189.1
Not In Labour Force	803.3	824.2	837.2	463.9	487.2	528.6
Total aged 15 Or Over	1,765.5	1,788.0	1,787.2	1,741.5	1,750.3	1,733.8
	%	%		%	%	
Unemployment Rate %	3.9	5.5	8.3	5.0	9.3	15.7

Source: CSO: QNHS Q4 2009

8. The table shows a small decline in the numbers of both men and women in the labour market (total employed and unemployed) over the period 2007 to 2009. However this masks a considerable difference in trends between the sexes. The total number of women in employment fell by about 50,000 during this period (about 5.7 per cent) while the number of men in employment fell by over 16 per cent or over 200,000. About a third of women work part-time with little significant change over the past two years. However there has been an increase in the numbers of men working part-time although this only represents 12 per cent or an eighth of men in employment. It is note worthy that the Quarterly National Household Survey also shows that only 7,800 of those women working part time (2009 data) would prefer to work longer hours.
9. As the economy had not yet climbed out of recession by the end of 2009, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from these employment data. A downturn in the retail trade and restrictions on recruitment in the public sector are just two factors which may lead to a greater impact on levels of female employment over the coming months.

ACTIONS 2009

10. FÁS, the State training agency has primary responsibility for the provision of training to enable people to enter or advance in the labour market. Over the time period which coincided with sustained economic growth in Ireland and the move towards full employment, Fás reports that there had been a decrease in programme completions under a number of its training schemes. However the economic downturn has led to a reversal of this trend. The paragraphs which follow show women's uptake of the range of training interventions provided by FAS to increase labour market participation.

FÁS Programme Completion by Gender - 2009

- Looking specifically at FAS training programmes, male participation has always been higher than female participation and it has increased from 63% in 1998 to 70% in 2007 and at December 2009 was 68%; Female participation on training programmes has decreased from 37% in 1998 to 30% in 2007 and this increased slightly in 2009 to 32%.
- The number of women completing FÁS training and employment programmes has also decreased, year on year, from 40,678 (45.6%) in 1998 to 31,065 (42.7%) in 2007. In 2009,

programme completions increased to 79,323. Women accounted for 42% of completions in 2009.

- Excluding Apprenticeship programmes which traditionally have had poor take-up by women, the gender balance on programme completion is better. Excluding Apprenticeship programmes 54% of programme completions were female (12,306) in 2007, this has increased from 47.7% (11,109) in 1998, but fell back to 46% in 2009 – despite this, 2009 showed the highest number of women completing FÁS programmes (15,229) in the eleven year period 1998-2009.

Training Programmes:

Standard Based Apprenticeship

- Apprenticeship is the recognised means by which persons are trained to become craftspeople in Ireland. The main craft trades have been designed by FÁS and come within the scope of the Statutory Apprenticeship system.
- In 2009, 69 women completed Apprenticeships out of a total of 14,930, this is just 0.5% of the total. It is important to note that apprenticeship is a multi-year programme and the same individual will be included in successive years in the data presented.

Specific Skills Training

- The Specific Skills Training (SST) Programme consists of courses which are employment-led and lead to qualifications that offer learners both generic and advanced skills. The courses are suitable for people with good personal skills i.e. literacy, numeric and communication skills and meet the learner profile for the course.
- In 1998, 4,878 (42%) women completed specific skills training; in 2000 this peaked at 5,837 (45%). Since 2000 there has been a gradual decrease in female completion rates to 2,905 in 2007 – this represents however 51% of completions in 2007, so while the numbers of women completing Specific Skills Training have decreased in this period the proportion has increased. In 2009 the reverse has happened, a record number of people completed specific skills training – 15,775, of this 41% (6,485) were women.
- In 2009, 1,453 people completed employer-sponsored Specific Skills Training that was sponsored; the majority participating on this sponsored type training were male, 1,384 (95%).

Traineeship

- The Traineeship Programme consists of occupational specific training courses that use a combination of off-the job and structured on-the job workplace training. Courses are developed in conjunction with social partners, union/employer organisations and regulatory bodies. The total number of people completing Traineeships was 2,630 in 2009 – a significant increase from 2004 at 964. The proportion of women completing traineeship programmes has increased from 43% (626) in 2000 to 70% (1,823) in 2009.

Bridging/Foundation Programmes

- Foundation Training Programmes include courses for people who have left school early and/or mature people who have been out of work for a considerable period of time.
- Participation on Bridging/Foundation Programmes has increased three-fold from 1999 (total: 1,844) to 2008 (total: 5,480). The proportion of women completing these programmes has also increased from 52% in 1999 to 58% in 2007. In 2009, completions decreased to 4,819, of which 2,286 were women (47%).

Return to Work Programmes

- The Return to Work Programme is suitable for people who may have been out of paid employment for a long time and who are interested in returning to the labour market. The programme is mainly for mature adults who have good basic skills i.e. literacy, numeracy and communication skills.

- Women make up the majority of people completing Return to Work Programmes. In 1998, 1,065 (96%) women completed these programmes. Women completing Return to Work programmes decreased from 1,450 (89%) in 2001 to 489 (80%) in 2009. Overall the total numbers completing Return to Work programmes (610) in 2009 were similar to 2006 levels.

Community Training Programmes:

Local Training Initiative (LTI)

- The Local Training Initiative programme is a project-based training and work experience programme carried out in the local community run by local community groups. In 2009, there were 2,483 people completing LTI programmes, of which 65% (1,623) were women. The number of women completing Local Training Initiatives has ranged from 884 (74%) in 2003 to 1,902 (72%) in 2007. Participation by women on LTI's peaked in 2001 at 77%.

Linked Work Experience (LWE)

- In 2009, 218 people completed LWE programmes, of which two-thirds were women (143).

Community Training Centres (CTCs)

- Participants at the Community Training Centres are primarily young men and women between 16 and 21 years of age, who have left school without completing formal examinations (the Junior Certificate); who are experiencing difficulties finding a job; and who are keen to gain a qualification.
- In 2007, the number of women completing programmes in CTCs was 820, 50% of the total. The number of women completing programmes has ranged from 45.6% to 50.3% of overall completions in the 9 year period 1998 to 2007. In 2009, the total number of people completing CTC programmes was 1,693 and of these, 775 were women.

Specialist Training Providers

- FÁS contracts with 20 Specialist Training Providers (STPs), such as the National Learning Network, to deliver training courses to people with disabilities who require more intensive support than would be available in non-specialist training provision.
- In 2009, 1,494 people, of which 727 were women (49%), completed training provided by specialist training providers. The numbers completing training provided by specialist training providers has remained the same for the last five years, as has the proportion of women.

Employment Programmes:

Community Employment (CE)

- The criteria for participating on the Community Employment programme are based on age and length of time in receipt of various social welfare payments. In general, it is for people aged 25 years or over. Members of certain groups such as Travellers and refugees aged 18 or over are also eligible.
- The number of women completing FÁS employment programmes (Community Employment (CE) and Job Initiative (JI)) in 2009 was 17,797 or 57% of total completions. Overall it should be noted that the numbers completing Community Employment programmes have decreased.

Other FAS Initiatives

- In December 2009, eligibility criteria for the Work Placement Programme was extended to enable Women Returners (not in receipt of Job Seekers Allowances) and Lone Parents (in receipt of One Parent Family Payment) to access the programme. Just over two hundred people availed of the programme in 2009 and approximately 50% were women (exact gender data and type of Social Welfare payment is not readily available).
- The Social Inclusion Model commenced in two Dublin locations with a target group of sixty Lone Parents. A Steering Group, consisting of Lone Parent representative organisations, the

IVEA and D/SFA joined FÁS in the promotion and recruitment of for the programme as well as providing supports for clients who participated.

- The first two groups have completed and are progressing to training, education or employment. A full evaluation will be available when the second two groups complete their programme. The Social Inclusion (SI) Model is aimed at tackling the obstacles faced by Lone Parents and other socially-disadvantaged groups in accessing the Labour Market

Objective 1-B
To decrease the gender pay gap

CONTEXT

11. As indicated in the National Women’s Strategy, the measurement of the gender pay gap is subject to different interpretations, resulting in wide variations in statistics. While the European Commission and Eurostat published data drawn from the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) for some years, there were reservations about these data. For Ireland it showed a gender pay gap of 9 per cent in recent years. One of the weaknesses of this data source was the fact that it included part-time workers working fewer than 15 hours per week. It was likely, given employment trends, that most of these workers would be female and the data would therefore be skewed.
12. In its most recent Report on Equality between Women and Men, the European Commission has revised its methodology and has published data based on men’s and women’s average gross hourly earnings. Table 6 below is drawn from the data published recently by the European Commission.

TABLE 6
GENDER PAY GAP (UNADJUSTED) 2007 – EU

Top Four		IRELAND/EU AVERAGE		Bottom Four	
Italy	5.1	IRELAND (13TH)	17.1	Netherlands	23.6
Malta	5.2			Slovakia	23.6
Poland	7.5	EU – 27	17.4	Austria	25.5
Portugal	8.3			Estonia	30.3

Source : European Commission : Report on Equality between Women and Men 2010

13. The table shows that Ireland is ranked in 13th place in terms of the Gender Pay Gap, marginally better than the EU average. Italy and Malta are the best performers on this indicator while Estonia and Austria have the widest gender pay gap.
14. Issues affecting the gender pay gap are also complex and a wide number of factors are considered to impact upon it. For example, the introduction of a minimum wage and the greater availability of childcare following implementation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme and its successor National Childcare Investment Programme, are likely to have impacted positively on the gender pay gap in Ireland. However extensive statistical research based on gender disaggregated data is required before valid conclusions can be reached.
15. In 2009, the ESRI and the Equality Authority published an analysis of the *Gender Wage Gap in Ireland: Evidence from the National Employment Survey 2003*". This dataset³ enabled the authors to identify:
 - the size of the gender pay gap for all employees
 - the nature of the gap in the full-time and part-time labour markets
 - the importance of various policy-related factors, such as collective bargaining and family friendly policies, on the wage gap
 - the factors that contributed to the gender pay gap within both occupations and industries.

³ Source: ESRI Press Release September 2009

16. The key findings from the research were as follows:

- The observed or "raw" gap between men's and women's hourly wages was about 22 per cent for all employees. About two-thirds of the observed gap was due to differences in observable characteristics between men and women, such as different levels of education and labour market experience, job and firm characteristics, etc. When account is taken of such factors, the remaining adjusted (or unexplained) wage gap was close to 8 per cent.
- For full-time employees, the raw gap was about 18 per cent and the adjusted gap was just under 7 per cent. For part-time employees the observed wage gap was around 6 per cent, but the adjusted gap was higher, at 10 per cent. This suggests that part-time female workers are on the whole more qualified and experienced than their male counterparts.
- The difference in the labour market experience levels of men and women - which widened the gap by 3 percentage points, equivalent to 14 per cent of the raw gap - was the largest single influence in explaining the gender wage gap. Higher levels of educational attainment among women did help to reduce the wage gap, but this factor alone was not sufficient to compensate for the effects of labour market experience on the gap.
- Many other factors - such as a higher incidence of supervisory responsibility, longer tenure and higher trade union membership among men, and a higher incidence of part-time work among women - also widened the gap.
- Centralised wage bargaining, specifically the implementation of the national wage agreement, benefited women within both the full-time and part-time labour markets.
- The study found that the existence of some family-friendly policies within firms, specifically career-breaks, helped to reduce the gender wage gap. However, this result was only evident within the full-time labour market. Working flexitime had a neutral impact on the pay gap, while the greater concentration of women in part-time work, the most common form of flexible employment, was found to widen the gender wage gap by almost 2 percentage points.
- In relation to the occupational analysis, the authors found that the raw wage gaps across the eight occupations examined were broadly similar. However, much larger variations occurred in terms of the adjusted gap, which reflected substantial differences in the role of observable characteristics (e.g. education, experience, family structure and organisational) across occupations. The adjusted wage gap varied from about 2 per cent in Clerical occupations to 21 per cent for Plant and machine operatives.
- Regarding the sectoral analysis, the raw gender wage gap was widely distributed, ranging from 13 per cent in the Hotel sector to 46 per cent in the Education sector. The adjusted wage gap was somewhat more uniformly distributed: ranging from under 1 per cent in the Transport and Communications sector to 20 per cent in Construction.

17. In terms of policy implications, the ESRI/Equality Authority researchers comment that this research provides evidence that expanding the availability of career-breaks for full-time females would improve their relative pay. The research also demonstrates that social partnership arrangements, through the implementation of the national wage agreement, have helped to standardise wages both within and across firms and sectors, and this in turn has improved the relative position of women across all labour markets.

ACTIONS 2009

18. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2009:

- In 2009, the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) carried out 2,981 inspections/visits under the National Minimum Wage Act. Inspections under both the Industrial Relations and Minimum Wage legislation saw a total of €2.5 million in unpaid wages recovered for over 6,000 workers who were identified as having been paid less than their statutory minimum entitlement. While the amount recovered for individual employees varied significantly, the average amount paid was approximately €110 per employee. In 2009, NERA were also given the additional important role of securing compliance with Employment Permits legislation.

Objective 2

To promote the advancement of women in the labour force

CONTEXT

19. This objective has two points of focus – efforts to engage women in a broader range of economic (labour) sectors and efforts to enable women to rise to more senior positions in their work place. Both may require a breakdown of barriers and stereotypes.

TABLE 7
EMPLOYMENT: BROAD OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS BY SEX 2008 AND 2009

Broad occupational group	Men			Women			Women as % of total	
	Q4/2007	Q4/2009	% Change	Q4/2007	Q4/2009	% Change	Q4/2007	Q4/2009
Managers and Administrators	218.1	212.6	-2.5	101.1	105.3	4.2	31.7	33.1
Professional	121.2	125.5	3.5	120.3	126.5	5.2	49.8	50.2
Assoc. Prof and Technical	79.5	83.1	4.5	115.6	111.8	-3.3	59.3	57.4
Clerical and secretarial	61.9	59.8	-3.4	192.9	182.8	-5.2	75.7	75.4
Craft and related	287.4	181.4	-36.9	12.8	9.2	-28.1	4.3	4.8
Personal/Protective services	87.7	86.1	-1.8	160.4	151.7	-5.4	64.7	63.8
Sales	74.0	66.2	-10.5	117.1	101.6	-13.2	61.3	60.6
Plant and machine operatives	152.6	117.1	-23.3	25.2	20.7	-17.9	14.2	15.0
Other	131.3	84.4	-35.7	79.6	62.0	-22.1	37.7	42.4
TOTAL	1213.7	1016.2	-16.3	925.0	871.6	-5.8	43.3	46.2

Source: CSO: Quarterly National Household Survey Q4/2009

20. Table 7 above is equally relevant to this objective and to the earlier objective in relation to women's engagement in the labour market. It also clearly reflects the first effects of the economic downturn, with a significant decrease in employment for both sexes. The last two figures in the table show that women have moved from just 43.3 per cent of those in employment in 2007 to 46.2 per cent in 2009. The table also shows the marked decline in some occupational sectors. In this table caution must be exercised in comparing the percentage change data due to significant differences in the base line data.
21. From the perspective of advancing women in the labour market, the table shows that the number of women in managerial/administrative positions has increased by 4,200 since 2007, while there are an additional 6,200 women in the professions. The number of women in the "Associated Professional and Technical" grades fell slightly. As this would include all the paramedical staff, this may reflect the numbers who opted for early retirement during 2009.
22. The table also shows that women now account for half of the total figure in the category "professionals". This group includes a wide range of professional groups including the medical professions and educationalists at all levels. Also skewed in favour of females is the "associate professional and technical" group which includes all the paramedic professionals.

ACTIONS 2009

23. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- FÁS, the National Training and Employment Authority, anticipates the needs of and responds to, a constantly changing labour market. FÁS has increased the range of training options available to Job Seekers to assist their re-entry into the labour market.

FAS Competency Development Programme

- The FÁS Competency Development Programme (CDP) assists the up-skilling of people in employment. Training Programmes supported under the CDP are intended to provide participants with portable and transferable skills. Since 2008, priority has been given to programmes aimed at the up-skilling of low-skilled persons employed in eligible sectors. These training programmes are aimed, in the main, at below level five (or its equivalent) on the National Framework of Qualifications and are targeted at low-skilled employees who have not previously had career development opportunities made available to them.
- In 2009, 9,921 persons participated on CDP training programmes, of whom 4,971 (50.1%) were women.

24. *IBEC Women in Enterprise Project*

In 2009, IBEC established a 'Women in Enterprise Project' to complement the actions and objectives of the National Women's Strategy in relation to women and work. A project plan was drawn up with three central action points:

1. production of a **women in enterprise report**, collating the knowledge, data and insights available to IBEC through its network of 8000 employers;
2. development of a set of '**maternity positive**' resources for business, maternity issues having been identified as a key pivot for women's career development and opportunity;
3. exploration of the feasibility of developing a range of **tools and audits**, including a gender pay audit, gender Q mark and broader diversity benchmarking initiatives.

The work is carried out by IBEC's Diversity Project Officer and the project is being supported by an advisory group which includes CEOs and senior female business executives from Dell, Microsoft, Goa Games, St Luke's Hospital, Ernst & Young, EIQA and Business in the Community.

Action 1: Women in enterprise report

- IBEC are compiling a "women in enterprise report," based on the significant data it collects as part of its HR and other surveys, that will shed light on the current position of women in a variety of Irish industries and sectors. The report will act as a back drop to some of the other initiatives planned, and will be made available to organisations wishing to improve their gender performance and lacking a benchmark.
- The report will specifically look at numbers of women in management at various levels and attempt to track both positive and negative trends for women's representation in management.
- Following consultation with the IBEC survey unit, there is a wealth of data available over the last 10 years on the representation of women and men in management across industry.
- Review of various current reports has identified key points on women in business which may set the context or backdrop to such a report.
- Additionally, the IBEC survey unit are willing to incorporate a number of additional questions specifically examining relevant areas to women in business within the current survey programme.

Action 2: Development of 'maternity positive' resources

The maternity resource initiative will involve the development of a range of proactive resources and approaches to engaging women pre and post-maternity leave, including tools such as:

- a pre-maternity leave checklist;
- a post-maternity leave workshop;
- guide for managers in dealing positively with pregnant employees

Other supports will be researched and developed. These will be made available to organisations to facilitate their interactions with pregnant and returning female employees (following maternity leave or a related leave period). This should improve women's transition and assist their reintegration into the workforce. The aim is to help to reduce female workforce attrition following pregnancy; increase awareness of the issues that women face; and lessen the difficulties encountered by parents and employers alike.

Meetings have been held with a number of key organisations who have engaged such proactive resources and approaches in their organisations. They have shared these resources for discussion among the advisory group.

Meetings with the Crisis Pregnancy Agency have elicited further areas of concern for pregnant women which will be raised at the meeting. Similarly, they have commissioned a piece of research with the ESRI regarding the experiences of women around pregnancy and employment. The data from this study will be available in June 2010.

Action 3: Audits and tools

- The gender pay audit initiative and the Gender Q mark initiatives have been examined in tandem given their relevance to company good practice. The proposal in both cases is to engage in feasibility work to explore the interest of organisations in testing their practices for compliance and best practice. In particular, a focus group will be organised to explore interest in:
 - pay audits;
 - gender Q marks;
 - diversity and inclusion audit/standards.
- Meetings have been held with Business in the Community to explore the possibilities of a joint focus group between BITC employers and IBEC employers on these related good practice areas.
- A meeting took place with EIQA to discuss what was involved in developing a standard, the types of standard and how the process is conducted.
- A minor review of other national and international awards was conducted to examine the range of options available to employers. Further work will be carried out to ascertain what exactly companies are using predominantly or would prefer i.e. nine equality marks or one over-riding diversity and inclusion Q mark.
- A focus group will be carried out with organisations to explore:
 - the idea of standards and pay audits;
 - what employers are currently using, prefer to use;
 - what employers would consider using in the future i.e. a single diversity ground versus an entire diversity and inclusion Q mark;
 - the obstacles to such an audit or standard;
 - how they might be overcome;
 - the benefits of such tools.

25. *Equality in the enterprise*

- The Equality Authority's Equality Mainstreaming Unit, which receives European Social Fund (ESF) funding, operates an equality support scheme for enterprises to enable them to develop an equality infrastructure. 39 SMEs were supported in 2009.
- The Equality Mainstreaming Unit also provides supports to employers' networks and trades unions.
 - IBEC's projects aim to pursue actions that will address the labour market gaps for women, in particular women pre and post maternity leave by developing a range of maternity positive resources.
 - SIPTU, in cooperation with the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland, is producing equality guidelines for SIPTU members, particularly targeted at the needs of migrant women workers working in the agricultural sector in rural areas.

- Congress is designing and delivering five equality training days for Congress and affiliate unions. The aim is to develop equality competency within the trade union movement to represent the interests of workers, including women workers, more effectively.
- The Irish Hospitality Institute received funding from the Equality Mainstreaming Unit to produce the resource *10 Steps to Equality and Diversity for the Irish Hospitality Sector*. This leaflet outlines 10 steps that businesses can take to promote equality and diversity in their organisations.
- The Equality Authority ran an Action Strategy for Integrated Workplaces, funded by the Office of the Minister for Integration.
- IBEC received funding to:
 - put a dedicated support structure in place to enable employers to achieve workplace integration; create networking and learning opportunities for employers in different industry sectors and regions;
 - identify and promote models of good practice in workplace integration;
 - produce practical training and support materials for employers.
- Congress received funding to establish an Equality and Diversity Champions' Fund to resource trade union initiatives to:
 - communicate to trade union members information on good practice in creating integrated workplaces;
 - provide training for trade union representatives (e.g. branch chairs or secretaries, shop stewards) on advocating and negotiating for integrated workplaces.

Objective 3
To support more women as entrepreneurs

CONTEXT

26. This objective seeks to encourage more women to become entrepreneurs and to foster the availability of childcare and of improved work/life balance options so that it is possible for women to engage as entrepreneurs. Statistics from the County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) show that significant numbers of women participate in the CEBs' "Start your Own Business" courses but this high level of activity is not actually translating into business start ups.
27. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey for Ireland for 2008 shows that early stage entrepreneurship by women in Ireland grew between 2006 and 2007 but decreased sharply in 2008. As Table 8 below shows, this decrease brought Ireland below the OECD average and just above the EU average.

TABLE 8
WOMEN EARLY STAGE ENTREPRENEURS 2006, 2007 AND 2008

	Percentage of adult women engaged in early stage entrepreneurship		
	2006	2007	2008
Ireland	4.2%	5.9%	4.0%
United States	7.4%	7.3%	8.8%
Average across the OECD	4.3%	4.3%	4.8%
Average across the EU	3.5%	3.6%	3.9%

Source: Entrepreneurship in Ireland 2008, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)

28. Table 9 below is also drawn from the GEM Entrepreneurship survey. It shows that women have slightly lower expectations of the success of their ventures than do men. Almost a third of women entrepreneurs did not envisage creating additional jobs, compared with just over a fifth of men. On the other hand, a sixth of men expected to employ 20 or more persons within 5 years, while less than a twelfth of women had such an expectation.

TABLE 9
GROWTH EXPECTATIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS (2004-2008)

Growth Expectations (Jobs expected in 5 years)	Percentage of all early stage entrepreneurs	
	Men	Women
No additional jobs	23%	33%
1 to 5 jobs	40%	38%
6 to 19 jobs	20%	20%
20 or more jobs	17%	9%

Source: Entrepreneurship in Ireland 2008, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)

ACTIONS 2009

29. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:

- The City and County Enterprise Boards (CEBs) Network has indicated that alongside their male counterparts, the demand for services from female entrepreneurs and potential female entrepreneurs has increased during 2009.
- The Entrepreneurship and Regional Development Unit in Enterprise Ireland is evaluating various promotional programmes and 'start your own business' courses aimed at female entrepreneurs. The Unit is also researching the main factors which contribute towards female owned High Potential Start Ups in Ireland and international comparisons for female owned SMEs.

National Women's Enterprise Day 2009

- A number of events specially targeting women entrepreneurs took place during 2009, including National Women's Enterprise Day. This event received grant support from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Irish Exchequer under the Equality for Women Measure. The third annual National Women's Enterprise Day took place on 20 November 2009 in Mullingar. Keynote speakers on the day included prominent national and international female entrepreneurs. The event attracted 176 participants.

The event aimed

- To provide a national networking forum for women in business that will support them in starting and growing their businesses.;
- To promote best practice of networking and facilitation for women in enterprise.;
- To facilitate female entrepreneurs from throughout Ireland in developing useful business contacts and in improving their own business management / networking skills;
- To facilitate access to a broad range of specialist business information from relevant agencies;
- To involve entrepreneurs engaging in networking and learning;
- To highlight female entrepreneurship.

Going for Growth Initiative

- The Going for Growth Initiative was launched in October 2007. The initiative is supported by Enterprise Ireland and with grant support from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Irish Exchequer under the Equality for Women Measure. It aims to support women entrepreneurs with a clear aspiration for growth by providing peer support and the leadership of a more experienced or *lead* entrepreneur. In 2009, 62 female entrepreneurs participated in the Going for Growth Initiative.

Other initiatives to support entrepreneurship

- The Department of Education and Science supports enterprise in schools through specific programmes in Enterprise in senior cycle. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme both provide for action learning approaches, community based learning, a strong focus on personal development and teamwork, and a work experience programme.
- In the 2009 certificate examinations, 8,294 girls were assessed in the LCVP Link Modules out of a total of 15,084 candidates while 1,553 girls sat the Leaving Certificate Applied examination (out of a total of 3,263 candidates).

Objective 4
To seek to ensure that girls and women achieve their full potential in the education system

CONTEXT

30. Subject choice, particularly at second level, is an important factor influencing future achievement both in education and in employment choices. For example, a certain mix of subjects may be required in order to access some third level courses. It is essential that girls are facilitated to participate in the full range of subject options to ensure that their career choices are not limited in later life.
31. Gender mainstreaming in the education system is vital to ensure that a gender perspective informs all aspects of education. The education sector has been strongly focused on gender equality for many years, particularly through a strong focus on gender mainstreaming within the Department of Education and Science and the broader Education sector. However this has not hugely influenced subject choice, particularly in relation to course selection which would lead to greater involvement in sectors such as computing, architecture and engineering.
32. Table 10 below shows the actual number of pupils taking higher level science, mathematics and related subjects in 2008 and 2009 in the Leaving Certificate examination.
33. The numbers of girls taking higher level mathematics has fallen at almost the same rate as the number of girls taking physics. Female participation in the vocational subjects showed some increase in 2009 but still amounts to less than 8 per cent of the numbers of boys who undertake these courses.

TABLE 10
NUMBERS TAKING SELECTED SUBJECTS 2008 AND 2009 – BOYS AND GIRLS

Subject (higher level)	Boys			Girls		
	2008	2009	Absolute Change	2008	2009	Absolute Change
Biology	6,033	6,858	+825	12,289	13,244	+955
Chemistry	2,504	2,614	+110	3,400	3,423	+23
Mathematics	4,630	4,681	+51	3,880	3,739	-141
Physics	3,495	3,398	-97	1,434	1,296	-138
Technical drawing*	2,751	3,714*	+963	300	396*	+96
Construction studies	6,399	6,703	+304	449	510	+61
Engineering	3,477	3,422	-55	160	181	+21

Source CSO 'Women and Men in Ireland 2008 & 2009'

**In 2009 the Subject "Technical drawing" was renamed as "Design & Communication Graphics"*

ACTIONS 2009

34. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:

The Department of Education and Science has

- Developed new guidelines & indicators on gender mainstreaming for primary & second-level schools
 - The guidelines were circulated to all post-primary schools in December 2009.
 - Indicators to evaluate gender mainstreaming are included in the criteria for school inspection at primary and second level schools.
 - In April 2009 all new inspectors received training as part of the Inspectorate's CPD programme.
- Targeted supports for "hard-to-reach" groups of adults, including women through a number of measures in the Adult and Further Education sectors. In general, these programmes are delivered regardless of gender. The main providers of these services are the Vocational Education Committees (VECs).

Full-time programmes include

- Youthreach, which is a programme for early school leavers aged 15 – 20 years;
- Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) for adults who are over 21 years and are unemployed;
- Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs) – for members of the Traveller community who are over 18 years; and
- Post Leaving Certificate Courses which offer learners accreditation at FETAC levels 5 and 6.

Part-time provision includes

- community education, particularly for adults who are hard to reach and are accessing informal/non-formal education as a first return step on the lifelong learning ladder;
- literacy and numeracy for adults with specific needs in this area, including catering for the English language needs of migrants who wish to learn the language or improve their proficiency in English;
- the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI), which enables adults to access part-time further education options. BTEI is free to all adults with less than upper second level education;
- adults who self-fund their education, usually through participating in evening classes. These classes are self-financing.

Support services include the Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI) and the provision of childcare support for participants on Youthreach, STTCs, VTOS and BTEI.

Supporting women into management posts in education

- A 2 day course was run in March 2009. It was organised by the Drumcondra Education Centre. Approximately 20 women, who were interested in seeking promotion, participated in the course.

Supports for young mothers

The Crisis Pregnancy Agency has undertaken a number of initiatives in order to target educational supports for young mothers. These include:

- Support for Teenage Parenting Projects through school completion programmes;
- Providing funding for training, educational and development programmes to be delivered to young mothers in a variety of settings;
- Engaging employers and educational institutions in providing support to women experiencing crisis pregnancy. This extends to include support to encourage women to return to work, study or training;
- The Agency has also funded the development of a resource called “Information for Young Parents in Education” which is a comprehensive guide to existing educational programmes and financial supports (41 pages). 3,000 copies of the resource have been printed and Treoir has circulated them to Teen Parents’ Support Programmes, Pregnancy Counselling Agencies, Youth Information Centres, Youthreach centres, Maternity Hospitals, Youth Officers in the VECs and School Completion Officers.

Objective 5-A

To ensure that childcare services are optimised to meet the needs of parents and children alike

CONTEXT

35. The need to develop childcare to support the labour market participation of women has been recognised in Ireland for the past ten years and had led to the implementation of the National Childcare Strategy and a significant increase in the availability of childcare services across Ireland.
36. Support towards the cost of children is met by the State through child benefit which is payable monthly to mothers (and guardians).

37. The ongoing availability of childcare is central to the continuing engagement of mothers in the labour market. In addition the European Union continues to emphasise the importance of greater sharing of family responsibilities between women and men as a key support for women's labour market participation and for their advancement into decision-making roles.

ACTIONS 2009

38. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:

- Since 2000, capital funding under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) has resulted in the creation of approximately 40,000 new childcare places while capital funding allocated to date under the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) is expected to result in the creation of a further 25,000 new childcare places.

Free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

- As part of the April 2009 Budget, a new scheme to provide for a free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), without charge to parents, was announced by the Government.
- The ECCE scheme is being introduced from January 2010 with the objective of benefiting children in the key developmental period prior to starting school.
- Children will normally be eligible to avail of the scheme where they are aged between 3 years 3 months and 4 years 6 months on 1st September each year.
- It is open to both private and community pre-school service providers to participate in the scheme. The closing date for applications from service providers was July 2009. Payment under ECCE will be by way of capitation fees which will be paid directly to the service provider.

FÁS spending in relation to childcare

- In the period January to December 2009, FÁS expenditure on childcare training and employment programmes amounted to €36.5 million.
- The largest single programme expenditure came from childcare places ring-fenced on Community Employment which amounted to €29.4 million with 1,760 places ring-fenced for childcare in 2009. The cost per place was on average €16,700.
- Expenditure on Childcare Traineeship programmes across the country came to a total of €5 million and expenditure on Local Training Initiatives was just under €2 million.
- In addition to these programme costs, €3.9 million was spent on the FÁS childcare allowance, a contribution towards the cost of childcare incurred by a person as a result of attending FÁS training.

Objective 5-B

To ensure that the care infrastructure supports women's socio-economic engagement

CONTEXT

39. The care of children, older family members as well as the care of other dependent persons has traditionally fallen to female family members in Ireland, as elsewhere in Europe. Accordingly the European Union has begun to emphasise the importance of a comprehensive caring infrastructure to support elder care and the care of other dependants to complement childcare. A number of EU Presidency initiatives have reviewed the importance of care sharing for elder care to ensure that these responsibilities do not fall to women only or impact upon the careers of women only.

40. Statistics from the Department of Social and Family Affairs show that the primary beneficiaries of the range of income supports for carers in Ireland are largely women. Table 11 below shows the number of persons in different age groups who receive Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit and the Respite Care Grant. The number of very elderly people in a caring role is noteworthy as is the (mainly) female majority of carers.

**TABLE 11
RECIPIENTS OF CARER'S ALLOWANCE, BENEFIT AND RESPITE CARE GRANT 2008**

Age	Carer's Allowance			Carer's Benefit			Respite Care Grant[1]		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Under 25 yrs	101	521	622	1	12	13	305	68	373
25 - 44 yrs	1998	12078	14076	124	1020	1144	1,469	8,705	10,174
45 - 54 yrs	2481	8297	10778	121	609	730	1,909	7,463	9,372
55 - 64 yrs	2149	7469	9618	79	258	337	1,771	7,287	9,058
65 yrs and over	2114	6361	8475	6	17	23	2,043	6,283	8,326
of which over 75 yrs	657	1518	2175	0	0	0	753	1,651	2,404
Total Recipients	8843	34726	43569	331	1916	2247	7,497	29,806	37,303

[1] Respite Carer Grant figures refer to payments made in June 2007 - No 2008 figure available

Source: Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2008, Department of Social and Family Affairs

ACTIONS 2009

41. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- Carers have been identified as a priority theme under the 'Economic and Social Disadvantage Category' in the Dormant Accounts allocation for 2007. The focus of the carers measure is to provide training to assist carers in undertaking their caring role. Applications were assessed by Pobal and 12 groups have been approved for funding totalling €1.48 million in December 2008. It is expected that groups will draw-down their funding in 2009 and 2010. By the end of December 2009, the 12 groups had drawn down €0.4million in funding, with the remainder of the funding having carried over into 2010.
 - During 2008 an inter-Departmental group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, with secretariat support provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, undertook work to develop a National Carers' Strategy. Unfortunately, faced with the prevailing economic situation, it was not possible to set targets or time lines which could be achieved. In that context, rather than publishing a document which does not include any significant plans for the future, the Government decided in February 2009 not to proceed with publication of a National Carers' Strategy at this time.
 - Work on the long-term care future funding model is ongoing and will continue to be progressed during 2010.
 - The fourth annual carers' consultation meeting was held on 17th November 2009. The meeting was hosted by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Representatives of thirteen groups, eight Departments/other Government bodies attended, as well as academics who made a presentation.
 - Since September 2009, the Department of Social and Family Affairs has taken over responsibility for the payment of all Domiciliary Care Allowance claims from the Health Service Executive. The Department began deciding new claims on 1 April 2009.

Care sharing

- The facility for care sharing has been given greater publicity. Under the care sharing scheme, two carers who provide care on alternate weeks can be accommodated on the carer's allowance scheme. Under legislation the carer must provide this care for a complete week i.e. Monday to

Sunday. Each carer will share the carer's allowance income support payment and the annual respite care grant.

- A carer who provides care on alternate weeks with the care recipient attending a residential institution every other week can also be accommodated on the carer's allowance scheme.
- All the usual qualifying conditions for carer's allowance will apply to carers availing of these arrangements. The rate of payment for each carer will depend on their individual circumstances. Both carers will receive the household benefits package of free schemes if they meet the qualifying criteria for the scheme.

Carers' Allowances

- Budget 2009 increased the rate of Carer's Allowance for those aged 66 or over by €7 per week to €39 per week. The rate of Carer's Allowance for those aged under 66 increased by €6.50 to €20.50 per week. The rate of Carer's Benefit also increased by €6.50 to €21.20 per week. These increases took effect from January 2009.
- In December 2009, the carer's allowance rates for carers over 66 years of age were not changed for the 2010 Budget and remain at €39. The rate of carer's allowance for someone under 66 was reduced to €12. However, rates of payment had been increased in every Budget prior to the recent one. Carers allowance was increased in 2007, 2008 and 2009 by 12.1%, 6.5% and 3.3% respectively. As a result, even with the reductions provided for in Budget 2010 for carers under 66, the weekly rate of payment for the carers allowance is still almost 20% higher in 2010 than in 2006 and more than 147% higher than in 1997.
- FÁS reports that a training bonus of €1.80 per week is payable, in addition to normal FÁS training allowances, to persons who were in receipt of Carer's Allowance for twelve months or more prior to participating on a FÁS training course.

Nursing Home Support Scheme Act, 2009

- The Nursing Home Support Scheme Act was enacted on 1 July 2009.
- The Scheme, also known as "A Fair Deal", is designed to ensure that everyone who enters a nursing home in either the public or private sector has their need for residential care assessed and pays a fair portion of their means as a contribution towards the cost of their care.
- Under the Scheme a person or their family/guardian can apply to the HSE for an assessment of care needs. If the person to whom the application refers is assessed as needing residential care, they can apply to the HSE for financial support. Subject to the limit of the resources available for the Scheme those that opt for private nursing home care will pay their contribution and the State will pay the balance of the cost to the service provider. For those whose care is provided in a public nursing home the State will collect the patient contribution and provide the service.

Objective 6-A

To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty

CONTEXT

42. There is significant evidence to show that women are more exposed to the risk of poverty than their male counterparts. This may be caused by one or more of a number of factors. By taking time out of the workforce to raise children, women can affect their long term income level and pension entitlement. Women are more likely to become lone parents, frequently experiencing a reduction in family income and ultimately pension entitlement.
43. The latest poverty statistics relating to women were published in November 2009 and relate to 2008. The percentage of women in consistent poverty in 2008 was 4.5%, representing a reduction of 0.7% on the 2007 level. The percentage of those within single female parent families in consistent poverty in 2008 was 17.8%, down from 18.3% in 2007 and 32% in 2006.

44. Table 12 below reviews the mean exposure to poverty risk of households headed by a man or by a woman in the years 2007 and 2008:

TABLE 12
HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF POVERTY AND IN CONSISTENT POVERTY
BY SEX OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD 2007 AND 2008

	2007			2008		
	% of households by sex of head	% of households at risk of poverty by sex of head	% of households in consistent poverty by sex of head	% of households by sex of head	% of households at risk of poverty by sex of head	% of households in consistent poverty by sex of head
Male	61.9	53.2	50.3	63.8	58.1	46.5
Female	38.1	46.8	49.7	36.2	41.9	53.5

Including all social transfers, 60 % median income threshold.

Source: Extract from Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) in Ireland 2008, CSO

45. These statistics fluctuate quite significantly from year to year but suggest that there was an decrease in the “at risk of poverty” rate in households headed by a woman between 2007 and 2008, while the percentage of households headed by a woman which were in consistent poverty increased by nearly four percentage points over the same period. The table shows that, while 36.2 per cent of all households were led by a woman in 2008, these households accounted for almost 42 per cent of those at risk of poverty and almost 54 per cent of those in consistent poverty. A comparison with 2007 data shows a decrease of 1.9 percentage points in the number of households led by a woman. Furthermore, while there was a decrease in the number of female-led households at risk of poverty, there was a significant increase in the number of female led households in consistent poverty.
46. The CSO’s 2008 EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2008 noted that
- *Households headed by a female have lower levels of disposable income and higher poverty rates than those headed by a male;*
 - *The annual disposable income of households headed by a female in 2008 was €41,469, whereas male-headed households had an annual disposable income of €54,224, more than 30% higher than female-headed households;*
 - *"At risk of poverty" rates showed no significant change between 2007 and 2008 for either male or female-headed households. Female-headed households had a higher at risk of poverty rate (16.7%) than male-headed households (13.1%);*
 - *There was a decrease in the consistent poverty rate for female-headed households, from 5.8% in 2007 to 4.5% in 2008, while the consistent poverty rate for male-headed households was 4.0%.*

ACTIONS 2009

47. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- The latest poverty statistics were published in November 2009 and relate to 2008. The statistics showed that the overall percentage of people in poverty was 4.2%. The percentage of women in consistent poverty in 2008 was 4.5% representing a reduction of 0.7% on the 2007 level. The consistent poverty rate for people in lone parent households was 17.8% down from 20.1% in 2007. Data for 2009 is due for publication in November 2010.
 - The Office for Social Inclusion commissioned the production of statistical ‘social portraits’ of the socio-economic circumstances of the NAPinclusion lifecycle groups.
 - The second National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 Annual Report for 2008 was published in November 2009. The goal of the Action Plan is to progressively reduce the numbers of people experiencing consistent poverty and to eliminate consistent poverty by 2016. It reports progress on the twelve high level goals in the Plan and on some of the key targets that apply to all stages of the lifecycle. Overall, the report shows that in 2008 progress towards achieving the main goals in the NAPinclusion was largely on track.

- Ireland's National Programme for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010) was submitted to the European Commission in June 2009. The Social Inclusion Division of the Department of Social & Family Affairs, has been designated as the National Implementing Body for the Irish National Programme which was launched on 5th February 2010.
- It is recognised that a changing labour market has resulted in a move away from the more traditional work patterns, with a consequent increase in the number of atypical workers. In response, the Department of Social and Family Affairs conducted a 'Review of the Application of the Unemployment Benefit & Assistance Schemes Conditions to workers who are not employed on a full-time basis' which examined the application of the Jobseekers Benefit/Allowance schemes conditions to workers who are not employed on a full-time basis, i.e. part-time, casual and systematic short-time workers.
- The review made a number of recommendations including broadening Jobseeker's Benefit conditions to provide compensation for loss of employment in the case of part-time and other atypical workers. The report is under active consideration within the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Social welfare payment rates

- Budget 2009 provided for increases in widow's pensions of between €6.50 and €7 per week. The rates of payment are now €209.80 for widows under 66 years of age, €230.30 for widows over 66 years of age, and €240.30 for widows aged 80 and over. These increases came into effect in January 2009. In Budget 2010 there was no change for widows over 66 years of age but the rate for widows under 66 years of age was reduced from €209.80 to €201.50 per week.
- In order to increase the Qualified Adult payment to the level of the Old Age (Non-contributory) Pension in accordance with the terms of *Towards 2016*, Budget 2009, announced in October 2008, provided for an increase of €6.30 per week (3.2%) for State Pension (Contributory), State Pension (Transition) and Invalidity Pension Qualified Adults aged 66 years of age or over. 44,600 Qualified Adults benefited from this increase, including those on reduced rates of payment who benefited on a proportional basis. The weekly rate of payment for State Pension (Contributory), State Pension (Transition) and Invalidity Pension Qualified Adults aged 66 years of age or over was maintained in Budget 2010.
- In 2010, the Qualified Adult weekly rate (aged 66 and over) is equivalent to 94.2% of the personal non-contributory rate (€19). The increased rate came into effect from the beginning of January 2009.

Contributory Pensioners

- In Budget 2009, an increase of €7 a week was provided for some 257,800 contributory pensioners on maximum rates of payment, with proportionate increases for a further 87,050 contributory pensioners on reduced rates of payment. The 2009 maximum personal rate of contributory pensions is now €230.30 per week.

Non-Contributory Pensioner

- An estimated 97,710 non-contributory pensioners and 2,050 recipients of Carer's Allowance (aged 66 and over) received an increase of €7 (3.3% increase in respect of non-contributory pensioners and 3% in respect of Carer's Allowance recipients) a week. The maximum 2009 rate of non-contributory pension is €219 and the maximum personal rate (aged 66 and over) of Carer's Allowance is €239. Some 5,100 recipients of "Half Rate" Carer's Allowance aged 66 or over received an increase of €3.50 per week (in addition to an increase on their primary payment). The increased rates came into effect from the beginning of January 2009.

Women in Rural Communities

Axes 3 & 4 of the Rural Development Programme Ireland 2007-2013 will provide €425m towards the objectives of improving quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy. The funding available under the new programme is significantly more than that available under the previous

programme. Overall responsibility for the Programme rests with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

- The involvement of women, young people and older workers is identified as a priority for Axes 3 & 4 of the Programme and a range of indicators have been set to monitor progress. On an ongoing basis, data will be collected on male and female participation and this will be reviewed by the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee and external evaluators. As Programme activity did not commence until after contracts were signed in late January 2009, the Department, as the Managing Authority, has not yet been in a position to collect the specific indicators in relation to women as the majority of the projects funded to date have not as yet reached maturity. The Department will be reporting annually to the European Commission through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on these indicators.

Community Development Programme

- The Community Development Programme supports locally based groups involved in anti-poverty and social inclusion initiatives in their communities. Projects funded under the Programme receive financial assistance towards the staffing and equipping of local resource centres and provision of facilities such as meeting rooms, crèches, office facilities and training or education projects, to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups in their communities. Some 180 projects were funded under the Community Development Programme in 2009, including 24 Women's Groups plus Women's Aid.
- During 2009, a of total allocation of 2009 to €1.8m was made to Women's groups under the Community Development Programme.

Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (January to September 2009)

TABLE 13
DEPT. COMMUNITY, RURAL AND GAELTACHT AFFAIRS OUTPUT/RESULTS INDICATORS
JANUARY - SEPTEMBER 2009

Output/Result Indicators (January – September 2009)	Total	Male	Female
Adults supported under the Services for the Unemployed measure (SUE)	19,405	53%	47%
Adults supported to participate in education and training under SUE	6,883	44%	56%
Adults supported into employment under SUE	1,508	42%	58%
Adults supported into self-employment under SUE	1,073	67%	33%
Youths supported under Community Based Youth Initiatives	29,612	52%	48%
Adults supported under Community Based Youth Initiatives	5,312	36%	64%

- The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme aims to counter disadvantage and to promote equality and social and economic inclusion. The Programme targets the most marginalised areas, communities and individuals, in particular those experiencing cumulative disadvantage.
- As table 13 shows, during the first nine months of 2009, 19,405 adults were supported under the Services for the Unemployed Measure of the Programme, of which 9,118 were women. Of this number, 3,866 women were supported to participate in education and training, 873 were assisted into employment and a further 351 were helped to enter self-employment.
- All LDSIP performance indicators are disaggregated by gender where appropriate. As the table shows, on most of the indicators, the number of women progressing under the programme is either equal to, or greater than the number of men (see table for key indicators), including in relation to most labour market indicators, e.g. % of adults supported into education / training, % of adults supported into employment, etc. A notable exception being numbers supported into self employment.

Objective 6-B
To reduce the numbers of female lone parents who experience poverty

CONTEXT

48. The CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) for 2008 noted that nearly two-thirds of persons living in lone parent households (63.4%) reported experiencing at least one of the eleven deprivation indicators and nearly one-third (30.3%) experienced three or more deprivation indicators, with 20.5% reporting an inability to afford heating at some stage in the previous twelve months.

TABLE 14
NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS OF ONE-PARENT FAMILY PAYMENT BY
STATUS OF PARENT, AGE AND SEX, 2008

Age Group	Unmarried Parent, Separated Parent, Prisoner's Spouse		Widowed Person		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Under 20 yrs	1	1,497	-	-	1	1,497
20 to 24 yrs	23	12,979	-	4	38	12,983
25 to 29 yrs	105	19,294	2	24	107	19,318
30 to 34 yrs	138	16,617	7	62	145	16,679
35 to 39 yrs	295	1,589	10	123	305	14,712
40 to 44 yrs	429	10,611	23	142	452	10,753
45 to 49 yrs	306	6,138	28	146	334	6,284
50 to 54 yrs	221	2,591	29	97	250	2,688
55 to 59 yrs	113	851	23	86	136	937
60 to 64 yrs	39	134	6	45	45	179
Aged 65 yrs and over	3	5	3	1	6	6
Total	1,673	85,306	131	730	1,804	86,036
Overall Total	86,979		861		87,840	
Women as % of Total	98.1%		84.8%		97.9%	

Source: Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2008, Department of Social and Family Affairs

49. Table 14 gives statistics from the Department of Social and Family Affairs which show that women predominate as recipients of D/SFA family support payments as unmarried and separated parents, accounting for some 98 per cent of recipients of these payments.

ACTIONS 2009

50. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- The Government discussion paper, "Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents," put forward proposals to tackle obstacles to employment for lone parents and other low income families. These included proposals for the extension of the National Employment Action Plan to focus on lone parents, focused provision of childcare and the introduction of a new social assistance payment for low income families with young children.
 - It has not been possible to progress the proposals as outlined in the Government discussion paper, including the abolition of qualified adults in social assistance, due, in part, to current economic conditions. These proposals have, however, informed deliberations regarding the One-Parent Family Payment. The Government is considering various options for limiting the length of time for which the One-Parent Family Payment (OPF) can be paid (including the age of the youngest child). Any such changes would be phased in over a period of years for existing recipients to enable lone parents to access education and training and to prepare for their return to the labour market.
 - Any proposed new payment cannot be introduced without co-ordinated supports and services being put in place by a number of Departments and Agencies. Issues including access to childcare support, education, training and activation measures are being discussed with the relevant Departments and Agencies in tandem with the development of a new payment scheme.
 - To facilitate the development of the policy and operational details of the new scheme the Department of Social and Family Affairs, with the co-operation of FÁS, the Office of the

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Education and Science, tested the proposals in 2008. The experience of this engagement process is feeding into the development of the approach to working with lone parents and qualified adults.

- The Department of Social and Family Affairs is continuing to keep policies in relation to lone parents under consideration. However, the extent and speed at which these can progress will be impacted by the current economic climate.
- The combined value of child income supports in July 2009 was equivalent to 33.4% of the minimum adult social welfare payment rate, this figure is in line with the recommendation in the National Women's Strategy that the value of child income support measures for those on social welfare be maintained as 33 to 35 per cent of the minimum adult Social Welfare payment rate.
- Following the announcement in Budget 2010 of a reduction in the Child Benefit (CB) rate accompanied by compensatory increases in Qualified Child Increases (QCI) and Family Income Supplement (FIS), revised payment rates were introduced in January 2010. As of January 2010 the combined value of child income supports (standard definition of CB plus QCI) is equivalent to 32.9% of the minimum adult social welfare payment rate while the wider definition (which includes Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance) is equivalent to 34.8% of the main adult rate.
- A Policy and Expenditure Review on Child Income Supports and associated spending is being undertaken. Work progressed solidly on the review aimed at assisting children in families on low incomes including a review of child income supports which avoid employment disincentives. This work will be informed by the NESC study on second tier child income support with the development of a detailed work programme overseen by a Steering Group and the preparation of a draft interim report identifying the issues to be considered in the main review.

Objective 6-C

To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty by increasing pension cover

CONTEXT

51. As mentioned previously, periods away from the labour market among women can increase their risk of poverty. This also can influence their pension entitlement in later years. Accordingly the Pensions Board has actively engaged in awareness raising to encourage people to consider their pension needs at an early age.
52. In 2007, the Pensions Board published a comprehensive book entitled "Women and Pensions" which describes the ways in which women can provide financial security for themselves and their dependants in retirement. It addresses issues of particular interest to women such as maternity leave, career breaks and re-entering the workforce.

ACTIONS 2009

53. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - Actions were completed to improve information and awareness among families working together to ensure that they are appropriately insured for social welfare purposes through the preparation of information leaflets and subsequent publicity campaigns.
 - Work continued on the development of a long-term framework on pensions to ensure qualifying conditions for contributory pensions are appropriate and strike a reasonable balance between the level of contributions made and benefits paid.

- Work continued on the development of a long-term framework on pensions to review the issues and costs associated with a switch to a system of credited contributions and review the backdating of the Homemakers Scheme.
- Budget proposals in relation to pension rates and conditions were implemented in January 2009. The weekly personal rates of payment for all contributory and non-contributory schemes payable to persons of pension age was maintained in Budget 2010.
- Work continued on the development of a long-term framework on pensions to promote extensive, secure and adequate supplementary pension provision, particularly for women, in consultation with the Pensions Board. It is hoped that the framework will be published shortly.
- Women are a specific target group under the Board's National Pensions Awareness Campaign.

CHAPTER 4 THEME TWO - ENSURING THE WELLBEING OF WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

1. It will be recalled that the National Women's Strategy makes mention of the WHO definition of "health" as "*a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing*". Accordingly, this Theme links a number of very different objectives, relating to topics as diverse as work/life balance and sport while also including a number of issues which can impact negatively on the lives of women, such as domestic violence and trafficking.
2. As noted previously, issues such as the sharing of family responsibilities, violence against women and human trafficking have been the focus of significant bodies of work at the EU, Council of Europe and the United Nations in recent years. In relation to the latter two topics, new Conventions at the Council of Europe provide structures to enable CoE Member States to achieve optimal provisions.
3. During 2009, the National Women's Council of Ireland published the outcomes of a research project it had undertaken with funding from EU PROGRESS on the topic of women's role as carers⁴. The study looked at previously published data⁵ on women's time use which had shown that women still play the major role (80 per cent plus) of the tasks of family life - supervision of children, cleaning, cooking and adult care. This impacts on work/life balance. The NWCI comments in its Report that

Providing care involves energy, time and effort. It can be rewarding, but can also be a burden. Time invested in providing care is time that cannot be spent doing other things - working, studying, recreation and participating in social and political life. People who provide high levels of care can experience stress and exhaustion, potentially damaging their own health.

This is why the way in which care work is divided between man and women is so important. Fairly shared, both sexes have the opportunity to fully realise their potential. But the majority of care work is done by women. Women's disproportionate investment in care work generates substantial benefits for those they care for, but at a cost to themselves - women remain less economically independent and under-represented in decision-making.

We all lose out from an unfair sharing of caring. Men miss the opportunity to benefit from the rewards of providing care. Women sacrifice the opportunity to achieve economic independence and to contribute to shaping the world we live in. Care is essential and integral to our lives, but unless care work is more equally shared between women and men, our society and economy will be the poorer for it.

4. The European Commission in its 2009 Annual Report to the European Council on Gender Equality notes in particular that

Reconciliation policies are key responses to long-term economic and demographic challenges, and should therefore be reinforced to stimulate growth. A better work-life balance for both women and men requires a more equitable share of time spent on paid and unpaid work. Women's time is more tied up in domestic and family responsibilities than is the case for men. Reconciliation measures need to target men too, since the promotion of gender equality implies changes and new opportunities for both sexes.

- *The development of affordable, accessible and quality care services for children and other dependants will allow more women to enter and remain in the labour market and to facilitate the work-life balance of both women and men.*
- *Reconciliation policies need to allow for individual choices for both women and men as regards flexible working and leave arrangements. Measures such as paternity leave can encourage men to share parenting and other care responsibilities equally with women.*

⁴ NWCI: Who Cares, Challenging the Myths about Gender and Care in Ireland: 2009

⁵ ESRI/DJELR: Time Use in Ireland 2005

- *Reconciliation policies need to be implemented at all levels in the workplace, so that a more equitable use of women's and men's time becomes the norm and attitudes to both women's and men's need to balance work and family life are better attuned.*
- *The proposals reviewing the two directives on maternity leave and rights of self-employed women need to be adopted swiftly by the legislator. They represent a concrete contribution to improving work-life balance in the EU.*

<p>Objective 7 To enhance the work/life balance for women</p>
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CONTEXT

5. This objective reflects the ongoing debate at EU level about the need to address inequalities which persist in the sharing of family and caring responsibilities between women and men. A Ministerial Conference convened under the German Presidency in 2007 which focused on this topic led to the approval of European Council Conclusions which included a recommendation that Member States

promote effective policies to reconcile work, family and private life that do not compel women and men to choose between family and work or to prioritise one to the detriment of the other, in order to encourage the fulfilment of the employment goals of the Lisbon Strategy, particularly with regard to access to permanent employment and good working conditions...

6. A proposal by the European Commission for an amendment to Directive 92/85/EEC to increase the statutory provision of maternity leave in the European Union from 14 weeks to 18 weeks has been under discussion at a Council Working Group for some time. It is worth noting that Irish provision in relation to maternity leave already exceeds the provisions in the European Commission proposal. Women in Ireland can currently avail of up to 42 weeks maternity leave of which 26 weeks attracts a payment and they may opt to take up to 16 weeks of additional unpaid leave for each confinement.
7. The Commission also proposed the extension of maternity cover to self-employed women and assisting spouses and the proposal was still under examination in the Council Working Group at the end of 2009.

ACTIONS 2009

8. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- The priority activity in 2009 for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in the area of work/life balance was to continue to support the provision of training and advice to organisations and their employees about putting new work life balance initiatives in place at enterprise level and to review and further develop existing work life balance arrangements, particularly in response to deteriorating economic conditions.

<p>Objective 8-A To improve the health status of women in Ireland through gender focused policies</p>
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CONTEXT

9. The Women's Health Council has actively fostered the development of health policy to maximise health for women in Ireland and to foster gender-focused health policies. Following the reorganisation of some of the State Agencies in 2009, the Council was integrated into the Department of Health and Children on 1st October 2009.

ACTIONS 2009

10. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- Following discussions with the Women's Health Council, the Health Service Executive set up a Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming in Health Service Policy and Provision in April 2009. The group has met twice to date and it is due to meet again to finalise the scope of the project and its timeframe. Membership of the Working Group includes a representative from the Equality Authority, the Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and from the National Women's Council of Ireland.
 - The HSE has recently adopted a health policy on gender-based violence which will have implications for all frontline healthcare staff in relation to their responsibilities in recognising domestic and sexual violence, in responding appropriately to the issue and making good referrals.
 - The HSE is currently completing a Strategic Framework for Health Promotion. Women's health will be considered in the context of the framework and emerging structures.
 - The Primary Care Strategy has recommended the development of primary care centres throughout the country. These centres will provide local access to a suite of services which the community requires, thereby reducing their need for hospital interventions. The development of these primary care units is ongoing.
 - Health centres also provide community health services as close as possible to where people live. Respite and day care services are provided in older persons settings and special needs settings. Day centres at local level provide support to carers. Limited counselling services are supported by HSE grants. Referrals by primary care staff for financial support are made to money advice services (MABS) and other advice centres.

Objective 8-B

To improve the physical health status of women in Ireland

CONTEXT

11. Education and awareness raising about health and prevention strategies, fitness, good diet, taking part in fitness and sports programmes and mass sports events e.g. women's mini marathon.

ACTIONS 2009

12. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:

Information from the Office for Older People (DoHC):

- Ongoing work in the continued development of the Elder Abuse Service (67% of referrals are women).
- Ongoing work in the development of the *National Positive Ageing Strategy* (dealing with all older people but will also impact on women).

Improve cancer screening and services for women

- The aim of the Women's Health Council and National Cancer Registry of Ireland (NCRI) study is to investigate the factors underlying the lower rates of cancer-related treatment in older women in Ireland. It comprises two phases.
 - Phase 1 is an investigation of the practices, experiences and views of healthcare professionals involved in the treatment of women diagnosed with breast, colon or ovarian cancer. This involves a postal survey of clinicians' practices and views regarding cancer

treatment in older women and in-depth interviews with a sample of consultants and nurses, to explore in more detail the many and complex issues involved in making treatment decisions for older and younger cancer patients. The survey has now been completed and analysis of this data is currently being carried out by statisticians in the NCRI. Interviews are still ongoing.

- Phase II involves in-depth interviews and a national survey of cancer patients, to explore the patient-factors involved in treatment receipt. The national survey will take place in 2010. A total of 32 cancer patient interviews have taken place to date. The qualitative analysis will be completed by Spring 2010.

BreastCheck

- BreastCheck was established in 1998 as a specialist agency to provide Ireland's first quality assured, population-based breast screening programme for women aged 50 to 64. Governance of BreastCheck was transferred to the Board of the National Cancer Screening Service (NCSS) on its establishment in January 2007. The aim of BreastCheck is to detect breast cancer at the earliest possible stage.
- Breast cancer diagnostic and surgical services are now delivered in the eight designated cancer centres only plus an outreach service in Letterkenny General Hospital.
- When screening started in the south and west in December 2007, BreastCheck indicated that it would take in excess of 24 months to deliver the service to all 13 counties in the expansion area. In October 2009, BreastCheck had reached all remaining counties in the expansion area, within 22 months of initial expansion.
- Screening is either completed or has commenced in all 13 counties in the first round of screening. The number of women screened in the BreastCheck Southern Unit from commencement of screening to end of October 2009 was over 37,000 women. The number of women screened in the Western Unit from commencement of screening to the end of October 2009 was over 30,000 women.
- To date, BreastCheck has provided almost 560,000 free mammograms to over 276,000 women and detected over 3,500 breast cancers.

CervicalCheck

- A successful National Cervical Screening Programme has the potential to cut current incidence rates from cervical cancer by up to 80% in Ireland. The NCSS launched CervicalCheck – The National Cervical Screening Programme on 01 September 2008 and provides free smear tests to women aged 25 to 60.
- Over 4,000 smear takers (general practitioners, medical practitioners and practice nurses) in over 1,400 locations had signed up to participate in the CervicalCheck programme. This invaluable support of the primary care community is appreciated and has enabled CervicalCheck to become a truly national programme.
- Over 1.1 million women in Ireland will be invited to participate in the programme during the initial three year interval.

Reduction in the number of women dying from cardiovascular disease

- The Report of the Cardiovascular Health Policy Group, which will be submitted to Government shortly, covers all areas of cardiovascular disease and addresses the issues of prevention, pre-hospital emergency care, primary care, rehabilitation and palliative care. The report will be published in the first quarter of 2010, subject to Government approval.
- The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine and the Women's Health Council jointly produced *The Emergency Department Assessment of Women with acute Coronary Syndrome*

document, to increase awareness among Emergency Medicine healthcare professionals of issues relating to women and heart disease. (Launched 2009).

- The gender differences in prescribing of certain medications and in the use of some interventions has been explored. This needs further work. The Directorate of Quality and Clinical care plan to target attention to improving care for patients with Acute Coronary Syndromes in 2010.

HSE Social Inclusion Division has made the following observation:

- None of the actions listed in the National Women's Strategy are the direct responsibility of the Social Inclusion Care Group. However, our way of working in Social Inclusion involves identifying priority actions and linking in with other Care Groups and areas to support them in progressing these, with particular attention to ensuring that access to services by people from vulnerable groups is facilitated and improved. Women from traditionally disadvantaged groups, such as Travellers and ethnic minorities would appear particularly vulnerable, with the physical and mental wellbeing of asylum seeking women being of special concern. The unique health needs of women with addiction issues, mental health difficulties, HIV/AIDS and so on are also identified and addressed within Social Inclusion. Women living in poverty also constitute a group at risk of social exclusion.
- Some examples of the actions progressed within Social Inclusion include:
 - Consultations in relation to the development of the HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy were organized with particular reference to supporting the active participation of women. In this regard, separate focus groups were held for women who were not comfortable attending large formats, while arrangements were put in place to facilitate childcare and transport. A Consultation "checklist" was developed around this.
 - A number of programmes have been established to empower and support Traveller women in improving their own health and that of their families - peer led primary care programmes form an important element of this approach. Traveller women have been supported in playing a very meaningful role in collecting information for the All Ireland Traveller Health Study.
 - Efforts have been wide ranging around providing relevant information in accessible formats to assist all service users in accessing necessary health and care services. Planning has also taken place around provision of information in relation to recognising gender-based violence and accessing appropriate services.
 - We are at present working collaboratively with the National Cancer Screening Service around improving access of "hard to reach" women to breast and cervical screening programmes. Support for staff in working with this cohort is an important element of this initiative.
 - Specific projects are also currently supported by HSE Social Inclusion with such aims as improving the mental health of asylum seeking women, enhancing their access to appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and supporting staff in hospitals and other settings to deliver culturally competent services, responsive to the needs of women service users. The production of the Intercultural Guide is a significant development in this regard, with application to the cultural and religious practices of both women and men service users. Awareness raising and associated training of staff around female genital mutilation is a further important project in which the HSE Social Inclusion Unit is actively engaged.
 - Work in such areas as the National Drugs Strategy, Rehabilitation Strategy, Homeless Action plans etc contains some focus on the specific needs of disadvantaged women.
 - The Service Plan for 2010: Social Inclusion contains a key deliverable of establishing a framework addressing the emerging issue of trafficking of women.

- Social Inclusion will be represented on the newly established Oversight Implementation Committee, linked to the launch of the HSE Policy on Domestic and Sexual Violence and the health related actions of the COSC Strategy addressing this.

<p>Objective 8-C</p> <p>To improve the reproductive and sexual health status of women in Ireland</p>
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CONTEXT

13. Since its establishment in 2001, the Crisis Pregnancy Agency has worked closely with Government Departments and Agencies to reduce the incidence of crisis pregnancy in Ireland.
14. Statistics published by the British Department of Health show that the numbers of women who gave an Irish address when obtaining an abortion in Britain fell from 6,673 in 2001 to 4,600 in 2008. It is recognised that some women go to other European countries and the Agency works with a number of countries to gather statistics to enable it to have the fullest picture. From its research, the Agency has found that the Netherlands is the only other country to which women resident in Ireland travel in significant numbers. Statistics suggest that about 330 women travelled there in 2008. Accordingly there appears to be quite a significant decrease in the number of women from Ireland who are availing of abortion as a solution to a crisis pregnancy. The estimated abortion rate (number of abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44) has fallen from 7.5 in 2001 to 4.8 in 2008.

ACTIONS 2009

15. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - The Crisis Pregnancy Agency was integrated into the Health Service Executive in line with the objectives of the Health Service Reform Programme and Government policy on agency rationalisation on 1st January 2010. (The Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 (Commencement (No. 3) Order 2009). The Agency, the HSE and the Department worked very closely during 2009 to ensure that the integration took place in a smooth and efficient manner.
 - The Agency, now called the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, is situated within the new Integrated Services Directorate of the HSE as a national programme. The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme will function as a Unit within the HSE's Children and Families Directorate in order to conclude its current Strategy.
 - The Crisis Pregnancy Agency noted that there has been a decrease in the number of births to teenagers in 2008. While the total number of births to all women rose from 70,620 in 2007 to 75,065 in 2008, the number of births to teenagers (women under 20) decreased slightly from 2,464 in 2007 to 2,426 in 2008. Since 2001, there has been a 21% decrease in the number of births to teenagers, while the total number of births across all age groups rose by 30% in the same period.
 - The Agency progressed a number of initiatives aimed at improving the Sexual and Reproductive Health Status of Women in Ireland these include:

Access to information on fertility, contraception and sexual health matters

- **Adolescent Girls** – In December 2009 the Agency launched **b4udecide**, a new education and information initiative that aims to encourage teenage girls (and boys) to make healthy, responsible decisions about relationships and sex. The website, www.b4udecide.ie, features quizzes, polls and video interviews with young people on forming healthy relationships, dealing with peer pressure and why it's better for young people to wait until they are older before having sex for the first time. A section on the website, called "The Facts" deals with the age of consent, contraception, STIs and crisis pregnancy. Visitors to the website can also view interviews with professionals who work in the fields of sexual health, youth work, and counselling. Materials have been

developed for youth workers and teachers to assist them in delivering Relationships and Sexuality Education in the classroom and youth work settings. A booklet has also been developed for parents with tips on talking to teenagers about relationships and sex. The web site has had 16,000 visits since its launch on December 14th 2009.

- **Women in early adulthood** - The Agency has developed the 'Think Contraception' campaign, aimed at sexually active young women and men aged 18-24 years. In the period January – December 2009 the "Think Contraception" website received 78,825 visits. 105,160 leaflets were distributed through pharmacies, GP surgeries and to Student Health Centres.
- **Women aged 35-55** - The Agency has developed 'Contraception 35-55'; a leaflet on contraception, fertility and sexual health information for women 35 – 55 years of age. 173,773 'Contraception 35-55' leaflets were disseminated to GP surgeries, pharmacies and directly to women at various national events in Jan – Dec 2009. The Agency ran a special promotion with the RTE Guide in the Autumn which facilitated the dissemination of 125,000 of the leaflets.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Resources

- The Agency has developed a number of resources to help parents communicate with their children about relationships and sexuality. These include the 'You can talk to me' DVD and booklet for parents of 11-15 year olds and the 'Parents Make the time to talk' supplement for parents of 15-17 year olds. The Agency has developed a sex education resource called 'The Facts' for use in the home, school and community settings. This DVD and booklet covers fertility, sexually transmitted infections and crisis pregnancy counselling.
- The Agency, the HSE and the Department worked very closely during 2009 to ensure that the integration took place in a smooth and efficient manner.
- Providing increased information on sexual and reproductive wellbeing through the SPHE programme in schools

Developing a framework to ensure equity of access to contraception services for women

- In its current Strategy, the Agency has committed to improving access to and information on contraception and contraceptive services particularly for groups at risk of crisis pregnancy. The Agency has provided funding for ongoing and pilot models of service delivery to improve access to contraceptive services, to increase take-up of services, and to promote consistent and correct contraceptive use – particularly among at-risk groups.
- The Agency has developed a number of policy proposals on how the cost of contraception can be minimized in order to facilitate consistent contraceptive use by sexually active young women.

Improving access to and delivery of Crisis Pregnancy Counselling and Post-Abortion Medical and Counselling Services nationally

- Since 2001, crisis pregnancy counselling services have been expanded nationally by over 50%, with crisis pregnancy counselling now available free of charge at over 50 centres in 27 locations throughout Ireland.
- Over €2.9 million has been allocated to the area of crisis pregnancy and post-termination counselling in 2009, including the improvement of standards through training and supervision.

Ensuring that information and counselling services are available in cases of crisis pregnancy

- The 'Positive Options' campaign is aimed at all women, but particularly 18-24 year old women, to raise awareness of State-funded crisis pregnancy counselling services. Awareness is high with 72% of the target audience aware of the "Positive Options" Campaign and its messages.

- In 2009, 112,700 “Positive Options” leaflets and 72,800 “Positive Options” wallet cards were distributed, primarily to GP surgeries and pharmacies. The website www.positiveoptions.ie received 96,650 visits. Approximately 20,000 text messages were received requesting crisis pregnancy counselling information. The Agency placed regionalised “Positive Options” advertising in the Golden Pages nationwide.

Increasing awareness of post-abortion medical check-ups and counselling

- The website www.abortionaftercare.ie was developed to generate awareness of post-abortion medical check-ups and counselling available free of charge to women who have had an abortion abroad. The website was advertised through online and print advertising. In 2009, the website received 13,399 visits and 14,000 ‘aftercare’ leaflets have been disseminated to services in the same period.

Development of Guidelines to support Counselling Service Providers: Vulnerable women

- The Agency commissioned the first stage of a project which envisages the design of Guidelines for counselling women with an intellectual disability who experience crisis pregnancy. The first stage is a review of the relevant literature which has now been completed and will inform the subsequent stages of the project. The National Disability Authority is partnering the Agency in this project

Objective 8-D

To improve the mental health status of women in Ireland

CONTEXT

16. Following the publication of “A Vision for Change” by the Mental Health Commission, an independent Monitoring Group was established to review progress on its implementation. The structure of the Strategy addresses the needs of both women and men collectively with some short reference to gender specific issues such as perinatal mental health. The reports of the independent Monitoring Group to date have not made mention of gender specific initiatives.

ACTIONS 2009

17. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - ‘A Vision for Change’ the Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy was launched in January 2006. The objectives are to create a mental health system that addresses the needs of the entire population. Mental health services are designed to make available the supports and expertise required at every stage from childhood to later life – for both men and women. Accordingly, the Actions in ‘A Vision for Change’ are not being progressed on a gender specific basis.
 - The HSE consulted with the general public on their attitudes to mental health. ‘Mental Health in Ireland- Awareness and Attitudes’ was published in 2007 as a baseline survey for the HSE Your Mental Health campaign. It is available on www.nosp.ie.
 - The HSE also undertook a similar baseline study in 2009 relating to young people. ‘Young People and Mental Health – A National Survey’ is also available on www.nosp.ie.
 - In conjunction with the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, the HSE participated in the 2009 study ‘Teenage Mental Health – What helps and what hurts’ which is available on www.omc.gov.ie.
 - The HSE runs two mental health awareness campaigns aimed at the general population www.yourmentalhealth.ie and at young people www.letsomeoneknow.ie. These campaigns began in 2007 (general) and 2009 (young people) and will continue through 2010.

Objective 8-E To promote healthy lifestyles for the women of Ireland

CONTEXT

18. This objective links a healthy lifestyle with the achievement of optimal health.

ACTIONS 2009

19. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:

Promote healthy lifestyles for women (reduce obesity, smoking, drinking rates)

- The Department of Health and Children and the HSE jointly developed and published National Guidelines on Physical Activity which set out specific recommendations on physical activity for children and young people, adults, older people and disabled people.
- The National Healthy Eating Guidelines and Food Pyramid were reviewed and revised versions will be issued in 2010.
- In 2009, the HSE led an expert working group in developing National Physical Activity Guidelines for Ireland entitled "Get Ireland Active". These guidelines provide clear, concise and user-friendly guidance to support the public, professionals and policy makers in promoting physical activity across the population. A number of fact sheets and a dedicated website with links to other relevant organisations are available on: www.getirelandactive.ie.
- In 2008/9, the HSE supported 17 Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) to increase physical activity participation among 3,572 women from a wide range of age and social economic groups.
- The National Obesity Campaign, which commenced in 2008, is a three year campaign aimed at supporting parents/guardians as positive role models for their children for healthy eating and physical activity. This is an Island of Ireland Campaign in Partnership with Safefood. In 2009, 8 in 10 parents stated that they had already made changes to their child's eating habits. There were 102,197 page views by 35,000 visitors to the dedicated website www.littlesteps.eu.
- 2009 saw the introduction of anti smoking media campaigns targeting young girls and women. These media campaigns will also run in 2010. The focus of the campaigns is on the fact that young girls grow up to emulate their parents attitudes and behaviour and are more likely to smoke as a teenager/adult if they see their mother smoking.

National Drugs Strategy - Drug and Alcohol Use

- Among the key findings of the two All-Island Drug Prevalence Surveys (2002/2003 and 2006/2007), carried out by the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD), were the findings that drug use continues to be predominantly a younger adult phenomenon, with those under 35 accounting for the bulk of usage and that males are twice as likely to use illegal drugs, though the rate of increase among females was significantly higher over the above period than that among males.
- With respect to alcohol use, the extent of the health consequences of problem alcohol use can be illustrated through examining alcohol-related discharges from acute hospital services. An analysis of the data over the period 2001-2007 indicated that while males accounted for approximately 75% of discharges annually, an underlying trend is the significant increase in alcohol consumption and binge drinking among young women in recent years, with women under 30 comprising 25% of females being treated. This is further emphasised by the fact that 47% of discharges of those under 18 years were women. A further All-Island Drug Prevalence Survey will be carried out in 2010-2011.
- The National Drugs Strategy 2009- 2016 (interim) was launched in September 2009.

- The Strategy includes the following:
- Action 29 (Prevention Pillar)- ‘Develop a series of prevention measures that focus on the family under the following programme headings:
 - supports for families experiencing difficulties due to drug/alcohol use;
 - parenting skills; and
 - targeted measures focusing on the children of problem drug and/or alcohol users aimed at breaking the cycle and safeguarding the next generation’
- Action 32 (Treatment & Rehabilitation Pillar) – ‘Develop a comprehensive integrated national treatment and rehabilitation service for all substance users using a 4 - tier model approach. This will incorporate the recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation.’ This Action includes the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation which has measures dealing with childcare and families.
- Action 41 (Treatment & Rehabilitation Pillar) – ‘Support families trying to cope with substance - related problems, in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation.’ This Action refers to children and families and would, of course, also include males.
- Drugs initiatives with a family support dimension (in the region of 60%) continued to be supported in 2009 in the Drugs Task Force areas with funding from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. In addition, roll out of the 80 family support focussed projects approved under the Dormant Accounts Fund in the amount €1.56m started in the second half of 2009. The Family Support Network continued to receive funding from the Department of Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs to build on its capacity to support networks across the country. In addition, family support networks continue to be established more broadly across the country.

Objective 9
To increase the number of women participating in Sport and Physical Activity in Ireland

CONTEXT

20. This objective envisages a holistic approach to women’s health by encouraging more involvement in sport and in mass participation events in order to improve women’s overall well being.

ACTIONS 2009

21. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- Research on mass participation events (e.g. Mini Marathon) has been completed by the Irish Sports Council and the report was published in February 2009.
 - All of the main recommendations from the report are being followed up by the Irish Sports Council (ISC) through (i) engagement with stakeholders (mini-marathon sponsors, Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs), media and charities) and (ii) dissemination of information through the ISC webpage established specifically for this purpose.
 - Action to encourage more women to take up volunteer positions in National Governing Bodies is becoming more mainstreamed and women are becoming better represented as both volunteers and coaches and there are increasing opportunities for women to upskill.
 - Plans to hold two “Women in Sport” networking/information sharing sessions per year were not continued because the ISC is of the view that the NGBs are already undertaking significant

initiatives to address this issue. Many women in NGBs have already created links with women in other sports with similar remits.

- Resources for use in NGBs to encourage women to take up senior positions have become more mainstreamed as women are being recruited to NGBs with the requisite skills. Many CEOs of NGBs are currently women.
- The development of “Women in Sport” coaching projects to advanced coaching levels has now become Core Business where NGBs are facilitating women at all levels in coaching and women feel more empowered to take up opportunities.
- Targeted funding to NGBs in 2009 for special initiatives to attract/retain women's involvement in sport was €1.53 million for the Women in Sport (WIS) programme and an additional €400,000 for field sports and €289,000 for LSPs.
- The ISC continues to fund projects to promote greater female participation in sports activities at local level and in mass participation events such as mini-marathons through the LSP network. The ISC also works in partnership with the HSE to target women & girls at local level through joint funded initiatives.
- To increase awareness of opportunities for female participation in sport among women and in the media, the ISC promotes all participation events for women run by NGBs or LSPs on its website and NGBs themselves promote them through their communication channels. All WIS initiatives are also promoted on the ISC website.
- Participation initiatives targeted at women are specifically funded through the WIS programme in order to increase the capacity of organisations to deliver programmes to women and girls.
- Awareness of the “Women in Sport” brand has been significant with usage of the WIS logo among NGBs who have branded initiatives with it and it is prominent on many websites alongside their programmes. The Women in Sport calendar for 2010 was produced in December 2009 and was circulated among the various NGBs and LSPs.
- The WIS website is maintained and updated regularly with content provided by the public and NGBs. The Ezine has been suspended temporarily while moving to a new web platform.

Objective 10

To ensure the health and safety of pregnant and breast feeding women at work

ACTIONS 2009

22. The following actions have taken place during 2009:

- The Crisis Pregnancy Agency and the Equality Authority have jointly commissioned the ESRI and Amárach Research to carry out a research project on *Women's Experiences in Paid Work During and After Pregnancy*. The main element of this project is a nationally representative sample survey of women who have had a baby within the previous 30 months. A sample of 5,000 mothers was drawn from the Child Benefit register, with the assistance of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The survey fieldwork was carried out in Autumn 2009. The data collected is now being analysed and the survey report will be published in 2010. A literature review of research on 'Women's Experiences in Paid Work During and After Pregnancy' and a review of pregnancy related cases decided by the Equality Tribunal, Employment Appeals Tribunal and the Labour Court between 1998 and 2008 are also being carried out as part of this research. These ancillary reports will also be published in 2010.
- The Health and Safety Authority developed a '*Safety Toolkit and Short Guide to General Application Regulations, 2007*', aimed at small and micro businesses. The Toolkit contains a section on Pregnant, Post Natal and Breastfeeding Employees.

- A proposal by the European Commission for a Directive to amend Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding was forwarded to the European Parliament in 2009 with a vote in plenary expected to take place in summer 2010.

<p>Objective 11</p> <p>To protect women from bullying and harassment in the workplace</p>

CONTEXT

23. Much had been written in recent years about the problem of workplace bullying which can be perpetrated against workers of both sexes, but where women are more frequently the victims.
24. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) published the *Code of Practice on the Prevention and Management of Workplace Bullying* in 2007.

ACTIONS 2009

25. The following actions were reported for 2009.
 - The Health and Safety Authority's Annual Report for 2008, which was published in June 2009, states that inspections of anti-bullying policies were undertaken during 2008 in 550 companies with more than 50 employees. A bullying prevention policy was present in 94% of cases.
 - The Equality Authority's Annual Report for 2008, which was published in September 2009, states that the Authority received 113 bullying queries and 158 harassment queries under the Employment Equality Acts during 2008 and in the same period received 30 harassment queries under the Equal Status Act.
 - The Annual Reports of the Equality Tribunal also show that a number of cases of bullying and harassment are referred to and determined by the Equality Tribunal every year.

<p>Objective 12</p> <p>To combat violence against women through improved services for victims together with effective prevention and prosecution</p>
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CONTEXT

26. The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform announced the establishment of Cosc, the new executive office to address violence against women and other forms of sexual and domestic violence, at the launch of the National Women's Strategy in April 2007.

ACTIONS 2009

27. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - In January 2009, Cosc launched the report "Attitudes to Domestic Abuse", which outlined the findings of a survey of perceptions and beliefs of domestic abuse among the general population in Ireland. The main findings of the research were:
 - Just over 70 per cent of people consider domestic abuse to be a common problem in Ireland;
 - 44 per cent of people know somebody who personally had been a victim of domestic abuse;

- 94 per cent of people would help a friend, 65 per cent would help a stranger and 38 per cent would help a neighbour being subjected to domestic abuse; and
 - 74 per cent said that other people would be unlikely to report domestic abuse incidents to An Garda Síochána.
- Based on the findings of the report, Cosc ran a national awareness campaign entitled "Your silence feeds the violence" in January 2009, which focussed on raising awareness among members of the public that they can contribute to the prevention of domestic violence through taking a more active role.
 - Cosc has awarded €251,000 in grant funding to 56 groups for local awareness raising activities in 2009. Projects were funded to advertise services locally, to produce information materials such as leaflets and posters and for activities designed to raise awareness of issues surrounding sexual and domestic violence.
 - Cosc's priority work in 2009 was to prepare a National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. This strategy will set out the policy on addressing the forms of violence concerned as well as the preventative and responsive actions to be taken by a broad range of organisations to ensure a well co-ordinated system is in place. Good progress on the preparation of the strategy was made throughout the year. In the second half of 2009, a wide range of organisations dealing with such violence assisted with the development of the strategy. The organisations concerned included Government Departments, State offices and agencies as well as non-governmental organisations at national and local level which deal with victims of domestic and sexual violence. Cosc has completed the consultation process and the strategy is expected to be published early in 2010, once approved by Government.
 - Work continued during 2009 on a research project to map the relevant services currently available in Ireland for victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and this work was also used to inform the preparation of the strategy.
 - Work to implement the recommendations of the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women subgroup on treatment services for victims of rape and sexual assault is ongoing in the HSE.
 - Action 125 in the National Women's Strategy relates to domestic violence and accommodation. In 2009, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (D/EHLG) provided input to Cosc in connection with the development of the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence in relation to the drafting aspects relevant to housing. This input related particularly to the development of policy guidance for housing authorities to assist effectiveness and consistency in the development of housing responses for victims of domestic violence.
 - From a housing perspective, important principles to be borne in mind in relation to housing options are that the preferred option is to avoid victims having to leave home, but where this is unavoidable, to ensure that the maximum number can return home as soon as possible. Where alternative accommodation is required, either pending a return to home or on a longer term basis, a key objective would be availability of suitable mainstream housing (social, private rental, or owner-occupied, as appropriate) as quickly as possible and where necessary in addition to accommodation, availability of any specialist supports or services from relevant agencies with responsibility for the provision of such supports or services.
 - Specific issues to be considered in developing guidance for housing authorities include: assessment of housing need; housing allocation policies; local authority tenancy aspects where appropriate; and identification of accommodation options to be considered for victims of domestic violence, with an emphasis on housing as a means of preventing homelessness for victims of domestic violence.

Objective 13 To address the issue of trafficking of women and children

CONTEXT

28. In recent years, evidence of the practice of human trafficking began to emerge in Ireland. International intelligence led to the multi-lateral organisations highlighting the international character of this problem.

ACTIONS 2009

29. The following actions have been reported by the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform during 2009:

National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of Human Beings in Ireland 2009-2012

On 10 June 2009, the Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform published the *National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of Human Beings in Ireland 2009-2012*. The purpose of this Plan is to set out the measures which have been undertaken already across Government Departments and Agencies to address the issue, identify areas which require further action, and to set out the structures which, when in place, will bring Ireland into line with its international obligations and allow for the ratification of the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* and the *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. The Plan is divided into four main headings, namely

- Prevention of human trafficking and Awareness Raising,
- Protection of the Victim,
- Prosecution of the Trafficker, and
- Response to Child Trafficking.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, in conjunction with each of the 5 Working Groups dealing with Sexual Exploitation, Child Trafficking, Awareness Raising and Training, Labour Exploitation and the Development of a National Referral Mechanism, has identified a number of priority issues in the Plan to be implemented in 2010.

The Garda Síochána established a dedicated unit within the Garda National Immigration Bureau. The Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-ordination Unit serves as an investigation and co-ordination unit for human trafficking cases. There were a number of joint policing operations with other jurisdictions which resulted in sentences being imposed in other jurisdictions for human trafficking which occurred in or was connected to Ireland. Trafficking in human beings was a policing priority in 2009.

EU Framework Decision on Human Trafficking

A Proposal for a Framework Decision on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims was published on 26 March 2009. This proposed Framework Decision is to repeal and re-enact the 2002 EU Council Framework Decision with additional criminal law provisions to bring it in to line with other international instruments. The Proposal also contains additional measures primarily dealing with victim support, prevention, investigation, prosecution and monitoring. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit is representing Ireland at negotiations on the *European Framework Decision on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings* which are currently in progress. Irish legislation will be reviewed in the light of the outcome of negotiations on the new Framework Decision.

The Proposed Framework Decision was not adopted before the end of 2009. It will therefore be resubmitted as a Directive under the Lisbon Treaty in 2010.

Services for victims of trafficking

Service arrangements for victims of human trafficking have been finalised. Services provided to victims of human trafficking include: appropriate and secure accommodation, psychological and material assistance, access to emergency medical treatment, individual care plans, translation and

interpretation services, when appropriate, counselling and information, legal assistance and access to education for children.

Awareness raising campaign

A number of initiatives were undertaken during 2009 including

- *Facebook*
The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, D/JELR (AHTU) has set up a Group on the social networking website *Facebook* called "Anti Human Trafficking Unit Ireland" which enables the Unit to share information and updates with its users and generate awareness of the issue amongst a broad range of people. The site is updated by AHTU staff on a regular basis.
- *Articles*
The AHTU has contributed articles to the magazines and in-house newsletters of a variety of organisations. During 2009, articles have been submitted for inclusion in publications such as the Judicial Studies Journal, the Romanian Community of Ireland Website and magazine, *ChildLinks* magazine - which is published by Barnardos, a Non Governmental Organisation.
- *Information seminars*
Two lunch-time information seminars on human trafficking were given: The first was to Department of Foreign Affairs in February, 2009 geared towards a target audience of Diplomats going abroad to a variety of missions including Africa and Asia. Approximately 40 participants attended the seminar which was followed by a questions and answers session. Handouts/information provided at this seminar have been forwarded to the Irish Aid offices in Limerick and the visa offices at the Irish Embassies in Abuja, Beijing, Cairo, London, Moscow, New Delhi, Hanoi and Shanghai.

The second such seminar was given to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on 12 March 2009. The target audience included Officers with responsibility for the examination and granting of work permits. Approximately 30 participants attended the seminar which was followed by a questions and answers session.

- *Presentations*
The Executive Director of the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit addressed a Seminar on Strategies for Tackling Forced Labour on 1 October 2009 organised by the Migrant Rights Council of Ireland (MRCI) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Attendance and participation in a Cross Border Crime Conference between Garda Síochána, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and other law enforcement agencies in both jurisdictions in October 2009.

- *Advertisements*
In 2009, advertisements and/or articles have been submitted for inclusion in publications such as a Romanian newsletter entitled 'Informatia', the Irish Road Haulage Association, Emergency Services Ireland bi-monthly magazine and the Irish Taxi Drivers Federation Yearbook. Advertisements were placed in three newspapers (The Irish Times, Independent and The Sun) to mark EU Anti Trafficking Day on 19 October, 2009.

A notice on human trafficking has been made available to Marine Services Personnel (covering areas from merchant to fishing and leisure, ports, harbours, offshore energy, marine engineering companies, etc). The notice issued electronically via email and was posted on the Department of Transport's website.

- *Training*
A Train the Trainer course on human trafficking was delivered to personnel from public sector organisations likely to encounter victims of trafficking. The idea is that the people attending this training course will train others in their organisation on human trafficking. The first course took place on 25th and 26th November 2009 and the second was on 8th and 9th December 2009. A third course will take place in early 2010.

A specialised training course took place in September 2009 for staff of the Legal Aid Board who are providing legal aid and advice to potential and suspected victims of trafficking in human beings.

Further training courses, entitled 'Tackling Trafficking in Human Beings: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution' were delivered to 100 members of the Garda Síochána in November and December 2009.

- *Data Strategy*
A data strategy was developed in 2009 to assess the nature and extent of trafficking in human beings in Ireland.
- *FÁS Activity*
FÁS participated on a cross-departmental working group chaired by Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, D/JELR, and agreed processes whereby victims of trafficking can access the full range of FÁS services. FÁS provided funding of €138,145 to the Dublin Employment Pact to support the Dignity Project through working with Ruhama to test approaches for supporting victims of trafficking to build their capacity or progress to, or enter, training, education and work

EU Action Oriented Paper

The EU Council of Ministers endorsed a Strategy for the External Dimension of Justice and Home Affairs (i.e. between the EU and third countries and regions) in December 2005 and called for action oriented papers (AOPs) covering specific priority countries, regions or themes. The AOPs are to include (i) an analysis of the issue and the EU's objectives (ii) a summary of current actions being carried out by both the EU Commission and Member States and (iii) identification of what needs to be done at the political, technical and operational levels in order to meet EU objectives.

The Action Oriented Paper on strengthening the EU external dimension on action against trafficking in human beings 'Towards Global Action against Trafficking in Human Beings' was first published on 29 June, 2009 and agreed by Ministers in December 2009. The AOP aims at providing a series of non-exhaustive key actions to be pursued and promoted to enhance partnerships on sustainable preventative action, to enhance protection, support and rehabilitation of victims and the strengthening of the international law enforcement and judicial response to trafficking in human beings (THB). Measures will include:

- the establishment of a coordination mechanism at EU level,
- the development of a standardised system on the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on THB,
- the continuation of the work being done on setting up an EU anti-THB portal to facilitate the coordination and exchange of information such as on national anti-THB legislation,
- awareness raising and training activities, and
- the development of a template outlining the actions taken by Member States to tackle THB.

CHAPTER 5

THEME THREE - ENGAGING WOMEN AS EQUAL AND ACTIVE CITIZENS

INTRODUCTION

1. The advancement of women into decision making roles has been a key objective of European and multi-lateral social policy for many years. The Council of Europe recommends that the membership of national parliaments include representation of at least 40 per cent of persons of each sex. Similar targets have been set by the European Union.

Objective 14
To increase the number of women in decision-making positions in Ireland

CONTEXT

2. The involvement of women in decision making positions may bring them into politics or into senior positions in professional life. There is evidence from recent research in Scandinavian countries and in France that female participation in the boards of major publicly quoted companies has correlated directly with the success of those companies, in terms of stock market performance and profits. A number of European countries now have significant female presence in national politics and at Ministerial level.
3. Table 15 below shows statistics gathered by the European Commission in relation to women's participation in national politics across all Member States. The three top ranked countries and the three bottom ranked countries are shown, as is the EU average and the statistics for Ireland.

TABLE 15
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL POLITICS – EU - 2005 AND 2009

Per cent of women in single/lower House of National Parliament			Percentage of Women serving as Senior Ministers in 2005 and 2009		
	2005	2009		2005	2009
Top Three			Top Three		
Sweden	49	47	Finland	47	60
Netherlands	39	42	Spain	47	50
Finland	38	40	Sweden	50	45
EU – 27	23	24	EU – 27	22	26
IRELAND (24th)	13	13	IRELAND (17th)	21	20
Bottom Three			Bottom Three		
Hungary	9	11	Cyprus	0	8
Romania	11	11	Estonia	15	8
Malta	9	9	Hungary	12	0

Source : European Commission: Report on Equality between Women and Men 2010

4. The first part of the table refers to women's participation in national parliaments. These statistics refer to the Dáil only in Ireland's case, women's representation in Seanad Éireann is slightly higher. With a female participation rate of only 13 per cent in 2009, Ireland ranks 24th of the 27 Member States in terms of women's participation in the national parliament. This is well below the EU average of 24 per cent. It is worth noting that the top three countries listed are the only EU Member States where female representation in national parliament exceeds the target of 40 per cent while representation exceeds 30 per cent in a further five Member States.
5. The second part of the table looks at female representation among senior Ministers. Here Ireland performs better, ranked at 17th of the 27 Member States. The EU average was 26 per cent and five Member States exceeded 40 per cent, with a further two exceeding 30 per cent of women in senior Ministerial roles.
6. Table 16 below reviews women's participation as leaders in business. Drawn from the European Commission's report on Equality between Women and Men 2010, the table shows that there are relatively few women in the senior ranks of Irish business at present.

TABLE 16
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS LEADERS IN BUSINESS - EU

Percentage of Leaders of Business (*) who were Women 2008		Percentage of Members of Decision-making Body of Largest Publicly Quoted Companies (**) who were Women 2009	
	%		%
Top Three		Top Three	
France	40.0	Sweden	27
Latvia	35.3	Finland	24
Spain	35.1	Denmark/ Slovakia	18
EU – 27	32.5	EU – 27	11
IRELAND (25th)	19.2	IRELAND (18th)	8
Bottom Three		Bottom Three	
Ireland	19.2	Malta/Italy/Portugal	4
Malta	16.0	Cyprus	3
Cyprus	8.2	Luxembourg	3

Source : European Commission: Report on Equality between Women and Men 2010

Notes: () Leaders of Business – Directors and Chief Executives and Managers of Small Enterprises*

*(**) Blue chip index companies, except in Luxembourg and Slovakia, 10 largest companies*

7. The table looks at two indicators. The first relates to the involvement of women as leaders in businesses, including the roles of directors and chief executives and as managers of SMEs. Under this indicator, Ireland ranks in the bottom three, 25th among Member States, at just over 19 per cent. The EU average is 32.5 per cent.
8. The second indicator in Table 16 looks at women's participation at board level in blue chip, publicly quoted companies. Here, Ireland ranks slightly higher than the previous indicator but, at 8 per cent, is only placed joint 18th of the 27 Member States and is below the EU average of 11 per cent. The Scandinavian Member States are the fore in this indicator and the decision of the Norwegian Government to impose a quota of 40 per cent for board membership of its publicly quoted companies has created interest throughout Europe.
9. The Irish Government has committed since 2002 to increase female representation on State Boards so that women occupy at least 40 per cent of these places. Nevertheless, while there has been some increase in female representation in recent years, progress towards the target has been slow.

ACTIONS 2009

10. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Affairs established a Sub-Committee to review women's representation in politics in Ireland. Senator Ivana Bacik served as Rapporteur for the Sub-Committee. The outcome report was published in late 2009 and identified a number of barriers to women's participation in politics in Ireland. These included Childcare, cash, confidence, candidate selection and culture. There was less agreement of the issue of quotas. The Sub-Committee made a number of additional recommendations:
 - legislation to set an upper limit on the proportion of candidates of any one gender
 - civic education programme
 - financial supports for female candidates from State and political parties
 - development of a databank of potential candidates
 - mentoring and training programmes
 - recruitment drives by parties
 - supports for women's networks
 - The establishment of a "Women in Politics and Decision-Making" Sub-Committee has been proposed by the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) under the National Women's Strategy Monitoring Committee. Preparatory work on the sub-committee was undertaken during 2009.

Women on State Boards

- Since the 1990s, the Government has monitored the percentage of women appointed to State Boards with a view to achieving a minimum representation of 40 per cent for women.
- At the end of 2008, there were 4,140 persons serving on 290 State Boards. Of these Board Members, 1,325 were women, which gives a female representation rate of 34 per cent (compared with the target of 40 per cent). Female representation for 2008 represents no change on the 2007 figures. Where Ministers had made the nomination to the Boards, the female representation rate was 33.7 per cent. The total number of female chairpersons was 44 representing 16.5% of the overall figure.
- As external nominations still fall far below the 40 per cent level, the Government agreed that Ministers and their Departments will interact with nominating bodies, well in advance of the expiry of existing State Boards, and encourage such Boards to be proactive in seeking female nominees for submission to the Minister as potential candidates.
- In December 2009, all Ministers agreed to take proactive measures in Departments to work to achieve that target for female participation on State Boards.

Women on Local Development Boards

- The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs also monitors the gender composition of the Boards of Directors of the Local Development Companies.
- In 2009, 49% of all Board members nationally were women. The sectoral breakdown was as follows: 21% of Social Partner Representatives were women, as were 24% of Public Elected Representatives, 32% of Statutory Representatives, 45% of Community Representatives and 10% Farming Organisation Representatives.
- Table 17 below indicates that 16 companies nationally met the Government's target of 40% female membership of State Boards. Pobal, on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, is supporting these companies to strengthen female representation on their Boards, and to help them meet the 40% target.

TABLE 17
DEPT. COMMUNITY, RURAL AND GAELTACHT AFFAIRS GENDER BALANCE ON
BOARDS OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES (NATIONAL)

Gender balance on Boards of Local Development Companies (National)	
% of women on the Board	No. of Companies
< 30 %	25
30-40%	14
> 40%	16

Women in the Civil Service

- The Department of Finance notes that the delivery of actions on gender equality issues in the Civil and public service are being considered in light of the economic downturn, and the consequent moratorium on recruitment and promotion in the public service, and the proposed redeployment of staff within the public sector in particular.
- The percentage for female Assistant Principals as at December 2009 was 37.5% (compared with the target of 33.3 per cent while the percentage for female Principal Officers as at December 2009 was 28.2% (compared with the target of 27 per cent). This improvement may be related to the significant numbers of officials, more usually male officials in these grades who took the early retirement option in 2009.
- The Equality Initiatives Report, a review of Civil Service Gender Equality Policy, was completed in March 2007 by the Department of Finance. The recommendations of the report are to be considered for implementation. Following confirmation of implementation of the recommendations, Civil Service Gender Equality is to be reviewed in 2010.

- A strategy for the Public Service modelled on the Civil Service Strategy is to be developed through the establishment of a working group. It is anticipated that the report of this working group will be completed by the end of 2011.
- A female army Commandant travelled to Chad in June 2009 as the second in command for the battalion serving with the United Nations peacekeeping mission there, the first time a female from the Irish Defence Forces was deployed in such a capacity.

<p>Objective 15</p> <p>To increase the number of women involved in the arts in Ireland</p>
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CONTEXT

11. This objective relates to the engagement of women in decision making positions in the Arts, promotion of awareness of equality in the Arts and the involvement of women as audiences for the Arts.

ACTIONS 2009

12. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - The Arts Council offers leadership and guidance relating to governance but not exclusively or separately on a gender basis. In keeping with its responsibilities under Irish equality legislation, the Arts Council is committed to dissemination and implementation of existing guidelines in this regard rather than producing further resource documents.
 - Based on an Arts Council overview of funded arts organisations in 2008, which showed evidence of strong female representation at all levels, The Arts Council decided that a forum for women working in the arts which would explore common issues facing them would not be a priority at this time. However, it is interesting to note that while women held 22 out of the 34 local authority Arts Officer positions at that time, their senior managers were generally men. While the ratio of female to male Arts Officers has not changed significantly during 2009 (23 women to 11 men) there has been a discernible positive shift in the number of women at senior level to whom the Arts Officers report. While numbers were not quantified previously, the figures for 2009 (14 female line managers to 20 male line managers) represent a definite improvement in female representation.
 - The Arts Council has an Equal Opportunities policy in place. It looks to the Equality Authority in terms of guidance/guidelines and directs clients there. There are no plans to hold focused discussions with funded arts organisations in this regard. The Arts Council has prioritised the development of internal policies in the priority areas of health, disability and cultural diversity in the period 2009-2010.
 - Regarding the percentage of women participating in the arts as practitioners & facilitators, statistics contained in the CSO *Women and Men in Ireland, 2009* report demonstrate a reasonably equitable division of resources among female and male artists but a higher degree of variation from one art form to the next. For example, in 2008, female artists received 45% of all grants (approximately the same as in 2007). However, that percentage rose to 79% in relation to the area of dance and dipped to 15% in literature. Grants were more evenly divided between women and men in fields such as visual arts (51% female) and theatre (46.6% female). The Arts Council will continue to track these figures and will take them into consideration when developing broader policies in relation to inclusion across the arts.
 - The Arts Council is currently engaged in a further Audiences project, which includes elements of audience research; while this does not take gender as a leading focus, it will generate updated data on the attendance of women and their use of arts facilities, which had previously been high.

Objective 16
To use media proactively to support gender equality and the advancement of women.

CONTEXT

13. The persistence of gender stereotypes is widely considered to have a detrimental effect on the achievement of de facto gender equality. This was a focus of the Slovenian EU Presidency in 2008 and was reviewed again at the Ministerial Conference 'New ways to Overcome Gender Stereotypes' under the Czech Presidency in Prague in May 2009.
14. Much work has been done in the Department of Education and Science to overcome stereotypes in the Irish education system. However, in the wider society, much needs to be done in this area. This objective aims to address the role which the media can play in relation to the advancement of the role of women through the portrayal of positive role models and the avoidance of excessive stereotypical roles.
15. As a societal issue, responsibility for overcoming stereotypes does not rest exclusively with any single Department or Agency but is an issue which should be highlighted regularly to prompt debate and awareness of the negative impact of stereotypes.
16. The appropriate portrayal of various groups, including women, and the avoidance of discrimination against such groups in the broadcast media is covered in the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland's "Code of Programme Standards" and the "General Advertising Code".
17. This issue is also covered voluntarily by the advertising sector through the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland (ASAI). Its updated "Manual of Advertising Self-Regulation with the Code of Standards for Advertising, Promotional and Direct Marketing in Ireland" came into force in 2007. Specifically, the Code includes, inter alia, the following provisions:

Marketing communications should respect the dignity of all persons and should avoid causing offence on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community.

Marketing communications should respect the principle of the equality of men and women. They should avoid sex stereotyping and any exploitation or demeaning of men and women. Where appropriate, marketing communications should use generic terms that include both the masculine and feminine gender; for example, the term 'business executive' covers both men and women.

18. In addition the ASAI also includes a code of practice in relation to the marketing of health and beauty products and slimming products which are likely to positively impact on women as consumers.

ACTIONS 2009

19. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
20. Insofar as broadcasting and public service broadcasting is a subset of "media", the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources have made inquiries with RTÉ who have responded along the following lines:
 - During the 1980s and 1990s, RTÉ recognised that there was a need to address the advancement of women in, and on, RTÉ. This was addressed by putting in place recruitment programmes and training. In addition work was undertaken to ensure that the representation of women on screen and on microphone was based on best practice in regard to gender balance.
 - RTÉ believes that today full adherence to all equality legislation is what is required and that it is no longer necessary to have in place any specific measures in regard to either the participation of women in the media workforce or the representation of women on the media. For example

about five years ago RTÉ compiled a directory of potential women contributors to programmes. RTÉ found that researchers, producers and reporters did not use this directory as they felt their contact books already had a gender balance. Incidentally women make up over half of all production staff in RTÉ.

- RTÉ does not propose any measures specifically designed to deal with the issues of gender equality. RTÉ's recruitment over the last two decades and their career development programmes have ensured that women are not discriminated against in the workforce or in their portrayal in media under RTÉ's control.

These fundamental principles are reflected in RTÉ's ethos and in all corporate publications. For example, in the June 2004 *Public Service Broadcasting Charter* the following statement is included in relation to the Station's Public Service Remit:

"no editorial or programming bias shall be shown in terms of gender, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or membership of a minority community." Gender: "in its programming and editorial content, RTÉ shall strive to resist gender stereotyping".

This is also reflected in RTÉ's corporate documentation, such as the *Guiding Principles* publications and in the following from RTÉ *Programme Standards and Guidelines* (last revised November 2007):

"Programme-makers should familiarise themselves with relevant legislation on this area such as the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Disability Act 2005 (both accessible at www.irishstatutebook.ie) The nine stated grounds whereby discrimination is illegal are gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community".

Other sections of this document, such as 'Care in the Use of Language' emphasise the importance of using gender-inclusive terms at all times, while the entry under 'Respect for Diversity' emphasises a work environment free of discrimination on any such grounds.

- Therefore gender equality is already, and has been for many years, part of RTÉ policy at all levels across the organisation, both in its internal working environment as well as in its representation of women on any RTÉ media services. RTÉ is fully cognisant of its responsibilities in this regard, and is subject to constant scrutiny and monitoring through various regulatory channels as well as through internal oversight and editorial controls.
- RTÉ advise that the first female Managing Director of Radio was appointed in February 2009.
- An exercise was carried out in the News Division (prompted by a FOI request) which showed that, when years of service are taken into account, the pay of male and female staff are comparable.

Objective 17 - A

To foster the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals through Irish Aid.

CONTEXT

21. The following objectives relate to gender issues within the multi-lateral sector and in Ireland's overseas aid programme, implemented by Irish Aid and other Sections within the Department of Foreign Affairs including the Conflict Resolution Unit and the Human Rights Unit.
22. Ireland's overseas aid programme was reviewed by the OECD in early 2009 and the following positive comment was made in relation to gender mainstreaming within Irish Aid:

“Irish Aid’s approach to mainstreaming its priority issues – namely gender, environment, HIV/AIDS and governance – is a strong, though evolving, feature of its aid programme which already provides lessons that could be shared with other donors. Irish Aid is encouraged to improve reporting on mainstreaming and focus on measuring development impacts to enhance its own learning as well as that of other donors.”

ACTIONS 2009

23. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- During 2009, Irish Aid has aimed to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in new Country Strategy Papers being developed for Irish Aid programmes in Timor Leste, Malawi and Uganda as well as mid-term programme reviews being conducted in Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique.
 - Irish Aid has continued to support a range of civil society and UN agencies active in promoting gender equality and women’s political and economic empowerment including the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and the International Labour Organisation.
 - Training on gender mainstreaming has been conducted for all staff in the Irish Embassy in Tanzania.

Objective 17 - B
To use multi-lateral aid and development policy to promote the role of women and gender equality in developing countries.

ACTIONS 2009

24. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- The Irish Embassy in Zambia is working to strengthen gender equality results in the programme through a series of workshops and external mentoring.
 - In 2009 a review of the Irish Aid gender equality policy was initiated in order to identify progress and challenges in implementing the policy over the last 6 years and to reflect on how implementation might be strengthened. The review will be finalised in 2010.
 - The Irish Aid gender network at headquarter and field level has been reactivated and will serve as a forum for sharing information and best practice on gender equality.
 - Gender is incorporated in the internal training structures of the Defence Forces and also forms part of the external training programmes that are made available to international Defence Forces’ participants.

Objective 17 – C
To enhance the capacity of Irish Aid and Development Partners to respond effectively to Gender Based Violence in conflict, post-conflict and developing environments.

CONTEXT

25. Gender based violence was discussed at length at the 2008 meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. France, in its capacity as President of the European Union in Semester 2/2008 also undertook a study on the EU indicators on “Women and Armed Conflict”, leading to “Agreed Conclusions” on the matter at the December 09 ESPHCA Council.

ACTIONS 2009

26. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:

- Irish Aid continues to prioritise combating gender-based violence and supports a number of civil society and UN agencies in this regard. Irish Aid is an active member of the Joint Consortium on Gender based violence-a consortium of Irish international development, humanitarian and human rights organisation along with Irish Aid and the Defence Forces, which aims to strengthen institutional responses of members and to share learning on GBV.
- Ireland is developing its National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The NAP will be informed by a cross-learning process, involving participants from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Liberia and Timor-Leste. The cross-learning process is designed to draw upon the experiences of those directly affected by conflict on how best to promote and protect women's leadership and interests in conflict resolution and peace-building. Cross-learning events were held in Belfast in June 2009 and in Dili, Timor Leste, in December 2009. The events included government and civil society representatives. An event will also take place in Liberia in April 2010 and a summary of recommendations will be finalised for the UN in advance of the anniversary of 1325 in October 2010.
- In March 2009, Nuala O'Loan was appointed Ireland's Special Envoy on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and is playing an important international role in this regard.
- The comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace, and Security has been developed at EU level. Ireland continues to be supportive of EU efforts to implement UNSCR 1325, including through policy development, membership of the 1325 task force, and active participation in seminars and training courses.
- Ireland was the Chair of the Human Security Network (HSN) – a largely informal group of countries which maintains dialogue on questions pertaining to human security – for the period June 2008 to May 2009. The priority theme for Ireland's Chairmanship of the HSN was gender-based violence. The main event of Ireland's Chairmanship on the priority theme was an international conference held in Dublin on 26 May 2009 on the theme 'How can the HSN promote the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security?' The conference brought together domestic and international experts, including Ireland's Special Envoy on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Nuala O'Loan. The Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs with responsibility for Overseas Development Aid, Mr Peter Power, T.D., delivered the keynote address.
- During Ireland's deployment to the EU-led military mission in Chad and the CAR, EUFOR Tchad/RCA, a female Defence Forces Officer worked as a Gender Focal Point for the implementation of training in-theatre. This officer, since returning from Chad, has been sharing her experiences at a national and international level, most notably at a recent seminar entitled "Strengthening ESDP missions and operations through training on UNSCR 1325 and 1820" that was held in Brussels.
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Objective 17 – D

To ensure the integration of gender perspectives into all parts of the United Nations System.

CONTEXT

27. Ireland was at the forefront during 2007 and 2008 of the United Nations reform process on system wide coherence, including ways to improve coordination of the UN gender entities in addressing women's development issues. Support to the UN's work on combating gender-based violence is detailed above as well as other support to UN agencies.

ACTIONS 2009

28. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:

- Irish Aid has worked with colleagues at the Permanent Mission to the UN in New York to input into the dialogue on the restructuring of the gender architecture within the UN. Irish Aid notes the significant progress which has been made in this regard. (see note below)
- Ireland co-sponsored resolutions on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights, and on accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women at the 11th session of the UN Human Rights Council in June 2009, and on the elimination of discrimination against women at the 12th session of the Council in October 2009.
- Ireland also co-sponsored resolutions relating to combating violence against women; the elimination of discrimination against women; and on follow up to the Beijing Declaration at the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2010. Ireland made a national statement at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security in October 2009.

New United Nations Gender Entity

29. The 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly will take action on the establishment of a new UN Gender Entity. The new entity will recognize the universal nature of gender equality and women's empowerment and will consolidate the four existing entities (OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW).
30. The new entity will provide normative support to the UN's intergovernmental bodies which will continue to be the overarching policy-making bodies; advance gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system and hold the system to account for commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment; provide an effective link between the normative functions and the operational activities; and carry out operational activities more effectively and strategically with a demand-driven field presence that will build upon current assistance with a view to strengthening the impact of its support to Member States. The process of recruiting a Under-Secretary General to lead the new Gender Entity has started.
31. Ireland is playing an active role in the on-going negotiations to agree the UNGA resolution for the establishment of the new Gender Entity. In particular Ireland is concerned that entity has strong leadership, is well resourced and plays a strategic role in mainstreaming gender and holding the UN member states to account for commitments made on gender equality and women's empowerment.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY

Objective 18
To implement gender mainstreaming
as the principal instrument for the achievement of gender equality in Ireland.

CONTEXT

1. The Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR has an advisory role in relation to gender mainstreaming and the National Development Plan and the National Strategic Reform Programme, together with other national policy instruments. Work on the development of gender mainstreaming was started in 2009 and will be a focus for 2010 and beyond.

ACTIONS 2009

2. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - While the NDP Gender Equality Unit ceased operation at the end of 2007, the Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform made a successful application in late 2008 for EU funding under EU PROGRESS to enable a pilot project on gender mainstreaming in Government Departments to be carried out in 2009.
 - The aims of this project included:
 - To research and develop mechanisms for the introduction of enhanced gender based analysis in Government policy-making as a tool for gender mainstreaming;
 - To identify and replicate as appropriate good practice in other jurisdictions;
 - To develop guidance for other Departments and Agencies; and
 - To foster gender awareness and full gender mainstreaming in other Government Departments.
 - The project report draws on the experiences of existing gender mainstreaming practices and processes in other jurisdictions. Two research strategies were adopted in compiling the report. The first consisted of a comprehensive review of literature and other information sources on gender mainstreaming processes in other countries. The second comprised a series of interviews with personnel central to the mainstreaming process in Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark.
 - The particular target groups under this PROGRESS initiative are Government Departments and their associated Agencies. The focus is to ensure that within these organisations, gender equality is mainstreamed into policy-making and programme design. This entails:
 - Establishing clear gender equality objectives in the particular policy or programme area;
 - Assessing the potential impact of the policy or programme on the needs of women and men;
 - Securing the participation of gender groups in carrying out the impact assessment; and
 - Gathering and analysing data from a gender perspective to monitor outcomes from the policy/programme.
 - The results of the research assisted in the development of a framework for the introduction of a gender mainstreaming strategy within Irish policy-making infrastructures. The following implications for adopting the framework for Government Departments and their Agencies are taken from the research findings:

- Systematic work within Departments is required if gender mainstreaming is to succeed. This means formulating gender equality objectives, competency training on gender mainstreaming process, designing tools to assess impact of policy on women and men and supporting and embedding a gender mainstreaming strategy within the organisation;
 - Gender mainstreaming requires the commitment from politicians and managers in order to progress, plus deploying organisational resources to help achieve gender equality;
 - Adopt a dual strategy to promote gender equality. This includes specific targeting to address need and mainstreaming to address the structural nature of gender inequality;
 - A Central Gender Equality Unit might be established to support, co-ordinate and be the driving force in relation to the implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy across Departments; and
 - Data gathering and consultation exercises are integral to assessing the gender impact of policy outcomes.
- Consideration will be given to further work in this field as resources permit.

Objective 19
To provide financial support to implement the National Women's Strategy.

CONTEXT

3. The work to implement the objectives contained in the National Women's Strategy falls within the remit of a large number of Government Departments and their Agencies. Accordingly the funding for the Strategy flows through the funding voted by the Exchequer for each relevant Government Department. At this stage, gender budgeting is not undertaken in Ireland and it is not therefore possible to measure that part of the annual Exchequer funding which is allocated specifically to women or to actions and initiatives directly linked to the National Women's Strategy.
4. The Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007 - 2013 make an allocation of European Social Funds available to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to support positive actions under the Equality for Women Measure.

ACTIONS 2009

5. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
 - It will be recalled that Strand I - Access to Employment of the Equality for Women Measure 2008-2013 was launched by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. Dermot Ahern, T.D., in May 2008.
 - Applications for funding under this Strand were invited during 2008 with over 155 applications received, seeking €81 million under that Strand alone (for which a three year budget of €8 million had been anticipated). All the project proposals were appraised and prioritised for funding.
 - The extremely difficult Exchequer position which has prevailed since September 2008 made it difficult for the Department to make a long term commit of ESF funding and the prerequisite Exchequer match funding at that stage. The situation was monitored periodically.
 - In mid-2009, the Equality for Women Measure was again reviewed and it was decided to make a funding offer of €30,000 each to 38 groups who had previously been recommended for funding in the appraisal process. The total funding allocated for 2009 was just over €1.1 million.

- Funding was also made available under the Measure for two projects on women's entrepreneurship, which had previously received support.
- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform also made funding of €548,000 available to the National Women's Council of Ireland to enable it to undertake its programme of work while a small grant of €10,000 was made available to CURAM/Women in the Home.

Objective 20

To ensure that the National Women's Strategy is fully implemented

CONTEXT

6. This report covers progress made in the implementation of the Strategy during 2009.

ACTIONS 2009

7. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during 2009:
- The National Women's Strategy Monitoring Committee is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016. The NWS Monitoring Committee met on two occasions during 2009, on 20 May 2009 and 7 October 2009. A further meeting with social partners was convened in July 2009.
 - The first progress report on the implementation of the National Women's Strategy entitled '*Implementing the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, Progress 2007/2008*' was submitted to Government in July 2009 and was subsequently published in August 2009. Copies of the Report were made available to all Monitoring Committee Members and to the Secretaries General of all Government Departments.
 - This 2009 Progress Report on Implementing the National Women's Strategy details progress made under the 20 Objectives contained in the Strategy during 2009 and will be submitted to Government later this year.
 - In monitoring progress on addressing inequalities, the Equality Authority commissioned research to monitor progress on gender equality and the following reports were published by the Authority and/or the ESRI in 2009:
 - *The Gender Wage Gap in Ireland: evidence from the National Employment Survey 2003* and
 - *A Woman's Place: Female Participation in the Irish Labour Market*
Drawing on a wide range of evidence, this research describes how and where women's participation in the Irish labour market has changed since the mid-1990s. It explores the impact of changing participation on gender differentials in pay and on horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market.

POSTSCRIPT

On 24 March 2010, the Taoiseach announced a number of changes in Departmental responsibilities. Among these was the decision to transfer responsibility for equality issues from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to the newly restructured Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Mr. Pat Carey, T.D., was appointed as Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. Ms. Mary White, T.D., was appointed Minister of State with responsibility for Equality and Integration.

Minister of State White has agreed to chair of the National Women's Strategy Monitoring Committee in the coming period.

