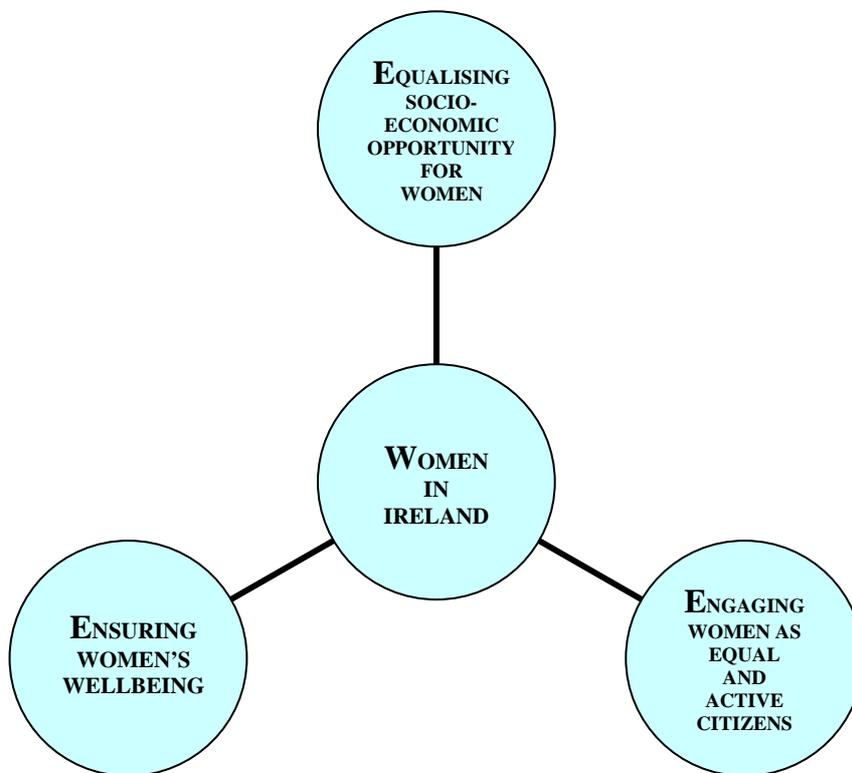


Implementing the National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016



PROGRESS 2007/2008



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The publication of the National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016 responded to a commitment sought in the context of partnership and a commitment given to the women of Ireland in the context of the U.N. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action published in 1995.

The Beijing Platform for Action had identified twelve areas of concern while the National Women's Strategy contains over 20 objectives and 200 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.

The objectives and actions contained in the Strategy are grouped under three key themes:

- Equalising socio-economic opportunity for women;
- Ensuring the well-being of women; and
- Engaging women as equal and active citizens.

The full implementation of the National Women's Strategy requires the engagement of most of the Government Departments and a wide range of their Agencies. Contemporary international thinking considers that all Government policies should include consideration of the impact of each policy proposal on both men and women. This mainstreaming approach is a goal within the Strategy and as a result the Strategy will impact upon all Government Departments before the end of 2016.

External environment

Changes in the international and national economic climates were beginning to emerge by the end of 2008. This brought about an increase in unemployment and a small decline in female labour market participation. The sector which suffered most in the early period of the current recession was construction. As the construction sector is a largely male dominated sector, the impact of the recession on the employment of women was less marked in late 2008.

All of the multilateral organisations have written of the need to maintain the focus on gender equality issues during the current recession.

Theme One – Equalising Socio-economic Opportunity for Women

Female labour market participation is considered to be a major contributor to socio-economic opportunity for women. While the number of women at work increased throughout 2007, the first stages of the recession began to impact upon the numbers of women at work during 2008. About 18,000 fewer women were at work at the end of 2008,

¹ National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016: Vision

compared with a year earlier. The more significant decline was among women working full-time.

It is also noteworthy that, at the end of 2008, there were over 800,000 women of working age outside the labour market, compared with fewer than 500,000 men. While this figure includes students, parents engaging in caring and recipients of long term welfare benefits, it also includes an untapped pool of potential human resources.

As a result of the decrease in women at work, Ireland has again fallen below the Lisbon target of 60 per cent for female labour market participation, which was set by the EU to stimulate jobs and economic growth.

A revision in the statistical methodology has led to a revision in the statistics published by the EU on the gender pay gap. As a result the unadjusted gender pay gap for Ireland is now 17.1 per cent, very close to the EU average. (Provisional data published previously by Eurostat had suggested that the gender pay gap in Ireland was as low as 9 per cent.) The National Employment Rights Authority has undertaken nearly 5,000 inspections of firms in relation to the implementation of the National Minimum Wage Act since 2007.

Gender segregation is regarded as a key determinant of the gender pay gap and CSO published figures (table 7) show that women still predominate in a number of sectors – including the less-well remunerated clerical and secretarial; personal and protective services and sales sectors. FÁS statistics show that trades are still dominated by young men, with women only accounting for less than 0.6 per cent of throughput in 2008.

The advancement of women into decision-making roles is another key recommendation towards the achievement of de facto gender equality. Decision-making roles exist in many fields of life, including in the workplace. CSO statistics show that the number of women managers and administrators grew by almost 6,000 between the end of 2007 and the end of 2008, while the numbers of women in professional positions² increased by almost 12,000.

Although 2008 data are not yet available, the 2007 statistics show an increase in the numbers of women involved in early stage entrepreneurship in Ireland. Department of Education and Science initiatives help to encourage young women to develop their entrepreneurship skills, while the Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has sponsored a National Women's Enterprise Day in 2007 and 2008, attracting over 150 participants each year.

Girls have out-performed boys academically in Ireland for many years. However, the choice of subjects by girls may impact negatively on their career progression in later life. The Department of Education and Science actively supports the education of teen parents and contributes towards the childcare costs of participants in a range of programmes aimed at early school leavers and the unemployed. It is interesting to note that the participants in such programmes are more likely to be female than male although the target population (both early school leavers and the unemployed) are more likely to be male.

The availability of childcare is central to the needs of women who wish to participate in the labour market. The National Childcare Investment Programme 2006 – 2010 is expected to

² ILO sectoral definitions

provide a further 25,000 centre placed childcare places. The revised subvention scheme for Childcare is expected to benefit parents in the greatest need, while the increase of €6 per week in Child Benefit announced in Budget 2009 represents a further increase in the State's contribution to parents to meet the cost of caring for their children.

Statistics from the Department of Social and Family Affairs showed that over 28,000 women and 6,800 men availed of carer's allowance/benefit in 2007 while 29,800 women and almost 7,500 men received a respite care grant. This reflects the continuing division by gender in the caring role.

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, including a reduction in earning potential as women take time out of the workforce to raise children. Similarly women are more likely than men to become lone parents and may experience a reduced income. Both of these factors will affect the pension entitlement of women, impacting upon their income in old age.

The most recent statistics on poverty in the Irish population were gathered under the EU-SILC survey³ and relate to 2007. A comparison with 2005 data shows that, while there was a decrease in the number of female-led households in consistent poverty, there was a significant increase in the number of female led households at risk of poverty.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs is spearheading work across a number of Government Departments and Agencies to increase labour market participation for lone parents with a view to breaking the cycle of disadvantage. Significant increases to the various welfare payments were announced in Budgets 2007, 2008 and 2009 (published October 2008). These may help to reduce the poverty gap for women.

Greater detail on progress under the actions which support the equalisation of economic opportunity for women is contained in Chapter 2.

Theme 2 – Ensuring the Wellbeing of Women

The reconciliation of work and family life is a key focus in the work of the European Union to stimulate employment and growth. The sharing of family responsibilities has been debated at length and has led to a new draft EU Directive in relation to maternity leave. The Irish statutory provision in this regard already exceeds the provision contained in the draft Directive. The Equality Authority has engaged with employers to encourage them to adopt more family friendly policies.

The period 2007 to 2008 has seen the further expansion of BreastCheck services and the introduction of a national cervical screening service. The development of designated cancer treatment services is also advancing and will be in place nationally by the end of 2009. Research into cancer related treatment for older women is ongoing, while work has also been undertaken in relation to cardiovascular disease in women and their Emergency care treatment when presenting with acute coronary syndrome.

³ Survey on Income and Living Conditions: CSO

The Crisis Pregnancy Agency continues to deliver a full programme of actions to address and reduce the incidence of crisis pregnancy in Ireland. Statistics suggest that the numbers of women with Irish addresses presenting for abortion in Britain has diminished somewhat and the Agency is currently working with other countries to determine the incidence of women seeking abortions in their jurisdictions. The Agency has developed a specialist counselling model to support women who have undergone an abortion and continues to develop its extensive suite of tools which assist parents and schools with sex and relationships education.

A number of “healthy lifestyle” initiatives have been developed to reduce alcohol intake and tobacco usage and to increase the involvement of women in sport as a lifestyle/health promotion choice.

Violence against women is a crime where the victims may come from all parts of society. National Crime Council research had shown that it was a significant problem in Ireland. While the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform had co-ordinated the delivery of services to support victims for many years, the National Women’s Strategy had recommended the strengthening of this role. As a result, Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, was established in June 2007. Cosc has undertaken an extensive consultation process to inform a new Strategy to address violence against women and domestic violence.

In a further development to address women’s wellbeing, an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit was established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in February 2008. While women are not the exclusive victims of trafficking, they are more likely to fall victim to this exploitative crime. The new AHT Unit immediately began consultations on the development of a national Action Plan to prevent and tackle human trafficking and it is expected that it will be published in 2009. This initiative is accompanied by new legislation which has already resulted in prosecutions and convictions. The new Unit also launched an awareness raising campaign during 2008 to highlight the issue.

Greater detail on progress under the actions which ensure women’s wellbeing is contained in Chapter 3.

Theme 3 – Engaging Women as Equal and Active Citizens

The advancement of women into decision-making roles has been a key objective of European and multi-lateral social and gender policy for many years. Notwithstanding this goal, statistical evidence shows that Ireland has made little progress in this field. Statistics, recently published by the European Union, show that Ireland ranks 23rd of the 27 EU member States for female participation in the single or lower house of parliament. (If the Seanad were included there would be very little improvement in Ireland’s performance.)

The same series of Eurostat data looks also at women’s involvement as leaders in business. Here Irish women rank 24th of the 27 EU Member States.

Despite a Government commitment to increase the percentage of women on State Boards to 40 per cent, statistics for 2007 show that the percentage was only 34 per cent. It has not improved significantly in recent years.

The issue of “women in politics and decision-making” will be addressed by a sub-committee of the National Women’s Strategy Monitoring Committee during 2009. The establishment of this Sub-Committee was proposed by the National Women’s Council of Ireland and it will be chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality, Disability Issues and Mental Health.

It is widely believed that stereotypes contribute adversely to the advancement of women and de facto gender equality. As a result, the media can play an important role in furthering the positive portrayal of women. The Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland has adopted a manual of advertising self-regulation which fosters dignity and the avoidance of offence and stereotypes in relation to a range of groups including women. The Equality Authority has also undertaken new work in recent times to overcome gender stereotypes.

Irish Aid, the Government's programme of assistance to developing countries, has actively promoted gender mainstreaming in all its actions and in all its programme countries for many years. In addition, Ireland through the Department of Foreign Affairs has been very influential in promoting enhanced co-ordination of women’s development issues by the UN gender entities during 2007 and 2008 as part of the UN’s reform process on system wide coherence. The impact of this work should be beneficial to women throughout the globe.

Greater detail on progress under the actions which support the engagement of women as equal and active citizens is contained in Chapter 4.

Implementation of the National Women’s Strategy

Responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the National Women’s Strategy rests with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The Department established an Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Committee to gather information on progress on each of the actions included in the Strategy. This meets on a half yearly basis.

In addition a Monitoring Committee has been established to afford an opportunity for all relevant Government Departments, State Agencies and the Social Partners to meet to discuss progress on the implementation of the Strategy. This Committee is chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality, Disability Issues and Mental Health, Mr. John Moloney, T.D. It met on three occasions during 2007/2008 and, as mentioned previously has agreed to the establishment of two sub-committees to address particular issues.

The new “Equality for Women Measure”, making financial supports available for positive actions, was announced in May 2008. However the extremely difficult Exchequer position has made it difficult to commit funding and the future structure of the Measure was under review at the end of 2008.

A small EU grant was received under EU PROGRESS to facilitate a study of the gender mainstreaming experience in other Member States with a view to its being implemented in a more structured manner in Ireland.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 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.*

1.1.2 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.

1.1.3 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 and a similar Inter-Departmental Committee meets regularly to discuss issues in relation to the implementation of the Strategy. The Inter-Departmental Committee met on four occasions during the period 2007/2008.

1.1.4 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 Mr. John Moloney, T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for Equality, Disability Issues and Mental Health. At present this Committee meets twice a year and is tasked to review progress on the Strategy's implementation.

1.1.5 In addition to its work in reviewing progress of the Strategy, the Monitoring Committee decided in late 2008 to establish two Sub-Committees. The first of these was proposed by NWCI and it will consider the issue of women's engagement in politics and decision-making. The second, recommended by IBEC, will review the needs of women in business. Work on these sub-committees will be supported with a secretariat from Gender Equality Division, D/JELR and will progress during 2009.

1.1.6 An extensive three-year review of progress on the implementation of the Strategy will take place in 2010 when the changing environment will also be considered with a view to amending the Strategy as necessary.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE 2007/2008 PROGRESS REPORT

1.2.1 This 2007/2008 Progress Report has been prepared by the Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR in collaboration with the NWS Inter-Departmental Committee 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, since its launch in April 2007 to the end of 2008.

1.2.2 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 since the Strategy was published in April 2007. It also outlines some of the developments which have taken place in an international context, including the work of the multi-lateral organisations: the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

1.2.3 Chapters 2 to 4 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 Departments

and State Agencies and incorporate relevant national and international statistics and contextual comment prepared by the Gender Equality Division, D/JELR.

1.2.4 Chapter 5 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.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF KEY INDICATORS DURING 2007/2008

1.3.1 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 – 2007**

	1971	1991	2005/6*	2007/2008
Number of women in population	1,482,488	1,772,301	2,118,677	2,215,800**
Number of marriages	20,788	16,859	20,723	22,544
Rate per 1,000	7.1	4.8	5.0	5.2
Average age of woman on marriage	25.1	25.8	30.4***	31(2005)
Number of births	64,382	52,690	61,042	70,620
Birth rate per 1,000	21.9	15	14.8	16.3
Extra marital births	1,709	8,766	19,528	23,170
Extra marital births as % of total births	2.7	16.6	31.0	32.8
Total fertility rate	3.5	2.1	1.98	2.03
Percentage of women aged over 15 in the labour force	28.0	32.9	52.5	53.7**
Percentage of married women in the labour force	8.0	26.9	52.4	54.1**

Source : Central Statistics Office, various

Notes : * Final Census Figure for 2006, vital statistics 2005, labour force 2006

** CSO Estimate for population 2008, vital statistics, 2007, labour force Q4/2008 (Sep-Nov 08)

*** This 2003 figure was the most recent available at the publication of the Strategy

1.3.2 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 also continues to increase 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 explored 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%)

- 1.3.3 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.
- 1.3.4 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.
- 1.3.5 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.
- 1.3.6 Changes in other aspects of women and their lives which took place between the census periods will be explored later in this Report.

1.4 CHANGES IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

- 1.4.1 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.
- 1.4.2 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. 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.
- 1.4.3 The European Union and in particular the Commissioner with responsibility for Employment has spoken at length of the need to maintain a focus on gender equality and gender issues.

1.5 GENDER EQUALITY – THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

1.5.1 The European Union

- 1.5.1.1 DG Emploi is the Directorate General of the European Commission which has responsibility for gender equality policy. It chairs a High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming which meets on a half yearly basis to review progress on the achievement of gender equality. Both the Commission and the High Level Group 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.
- 1.5.1.2 During the period 2007/2008 the Presidency of the European Union was held by Germany, Portugal, Slovenia and France. 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 2007/2008 included:
- Balanced roles of women and men for jobs, growth and social cohesion
 - Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in Society

1.5.1.3 Reviews of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action were undertaken in the following areas:

- Education and Training of Women
- Women and Poverty
- The Girl Child,
- Women in political decision-making,
- Women and the Economy: Reconciliation of work and family life,
- Women and Armed Conflicts.

1.5.1.4 EU Presidency Conferences and/or Informal Councils on Gender Equality held during 2007/2008 focused on the following topics:

- “Let’s share the benefit – with gender budgeting towards social justice and equal opportunities” – June 2007, Frankfurt/Main
- “Employability and Entrepreneurship – Gender Stereotypes” – October 2007, Lisbon
- “Trafficking in Human Beings and Gender”, October 2007, Porto
- “Elimination of Gender Stereotypes: Mission (Im)Possible?” – Jan/Feb 2008, Brdo, (Slovenia)
- “Professional equality between women and men, the demographic challenge and the economic stakes” – November 2008, Lille.

1.5.1.5 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.

1.5.1.6 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 is currently a member of the Board. The first competition for the appointment of a Director for the Institute failed to produce a suitable candidate but a second competition, which concluded with interviews by the Board in December 2008, was more successful and the selected candidate will take up her position in early 2009. The Director will establish the Consultative Committee in due course.

1.5.2 The United Nations

1.5.2.1 The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) met in February/March 2008. The Minister of State with responsibility for Equality at the D/JELR delivered the Irish statement, noting recent developments in the area of gender equality and informing those present of the publication of the National Women’s Strategy. He also emphasised the important role which Irish Aid plays in supporting gender equality and the needs of women, particularly in areas of conflict.

1.5.2.2 The Priority Theme of CSW 52 was *financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women*. Agreed Conclusions on this theme were presented to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and were brought to the attention of the General Assembly as an input into the preparations for and outcome of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. In the Agreed Conclusions,

- CSW urged Governments and /or, as appropriate, the relevant funds, programmes and specialised agencies of the UN system, within their respective mandates, and invited the international financial institutions, civil society, non-governmental organisations and the private

sector, bearing in mind national priorities, to take a series of actions to implement the conclusions.

- CSW invited the CEDAW (UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) Committee to continue to give due consideration to financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women in its work while exercising its mandated functions.
- CSW requested Member States, with a view to strengthening financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, to integrate gender perspectives in the preparations for and outcome of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

1.5.2.3 During the 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 *women’s equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building*.

1.5.2.4 A Resolution on the *situation of and assistance to Palestinian women* was submitted to ECOSOC.

1.5.2.5 The following Resolutions were brought to the attention of ECOSOC:

- 52/1 *Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts;*
- 52/2 *Ending female genital mutilation;*
- 52/3 *Strengthening of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women;*
- 52/4 *Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS.*

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

1.5.3.1 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.

1.5.3.2 The following is a summary of the work which has been undertaken by CDEG over the past two years.

- At its 37th Meeting in June 2007, the CDEG:
 - agreed that the 7th *European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men* would be hosted by Azerbaijan in 2010 in Baku;
 - adopted the draft *Recommendation on Gender Equality Standards and Mechanisms* and agreed to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers (CM) for adoption;
 - discussed the possibility of the CoE preparing an international legally binding instrument to combat *violence against women* and underlined the need for a multidisciplinary approach in preparing such an instrument;
 - took note of the CoE activities in the framework of the *Campaign to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings*; and
 - examined the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) *Recommendation 1796 (2007): The situation of elderly persons in Europe* and *Recommendation 1798 (2007): Respect for the principle of gender equality in civil law*.
- At its 38th Meeting in November 2007, the CDEG:
 - adopted the draft *Recommendation on the Role of Women and Men in Conflict Prevention and Resolution and in Peace Building*. The draft Recommendation was forwarded to the CM for adoption. However the text has not yet been adopted and was discussed again in 2009.
 - took note of the adoption of CM/Rec(2007)13: *Gender Mainstreaming in Education*;

- examined the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) *Feasibility study for a convention against domestic violence*. CDEG's opinion was based on:
 - the necessity to draft a convention on combating violence against women based on the underlying principle that gender-based violence affects women disproportionately;
 - the view that it should apply to women throughout life and should not be limited to domestic violence and should cover other forms of violence against women;
 - the view that it should take a holistic approach covering prevention, protection and prosecution as well as multidisciplinary expertise;
 - that it should foresee the setting up of an independent monitoring mechanism;
 - took note of the up-coming entry into force on 01/02/2008 of the *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*;
 - welcomed the adoption of CM/Rec(2007)17: *Gender Equality Standards and Mechanisms*.
- At its 39th Meeting in June/July 2008, the CDEG:
 - decided on the outline for the preparation of the *Conference on Gender budgeting* (Athens 2009);
 - took note of the adoption of CM/Rec(2008)1: *Inclusion of Gender Differences in Health Policies*;
 - adopted its opinion on the proposal for a convention on violence against women, including domestic violence, as outlined at its 38th Meeting;
 - took note of the results of the second round of monitoring of the implementation of CM/Rec(2002)5: *Protection of women against violence*;
 - took note that GRETA, the monitoring system for the convention on trafficking in human beings would be set up by the end of 2008.
 - At its 40th Meeting in November 2008, the CDEG:
 - examined a draft *Declaration on achieving de facto gender equality*;
 - took note of information from the second round of data collection for monitoring implementation of CM/Rec(2003)3: *Balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making*;
 - took note that the CM was examining the scope of application of a CoE Convention to prevent and combat violence against women/domestic violence.

1.6 ACHIEVEMENTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2007 – 2008

- 1.6.1 The remainder of this Report shows that much progress has been made across all Government Departments and Agencies to implement the National Women's Strategy. Within the D/JELR this has included the establishment of new executive offices to address violence against women and domestic violence (Cosc) and human trafficking (AHTU), two "wellbeing" issues where the victims are most frequently women.

CHAPTER 2

THEME ONE - EQUALISING SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 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.

2.2 - Objective 1-A

To increase the participation of women in the labour force

2.2.1 CONTEXT

2.2.1.1 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 Q4/08 showed that 42,600 women were unemployed for less than a year, compared with 85,300 men.

2.2.1.2 Table 3 below shows some headline statistics on women in Ireland in relation to employment and enterprise.

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%	
Average hourly earnings for industrial workers 2006 (Q3)	€15.84	€12.33	
Average hourly earnings for industrial workers 2007 (Q2)	€16.62*	€12.73*	
	WOMEN		
	1995	2006 (Q4) REV	2008 (Q4)**
Number of women in employment	454,000	879,000	906,700
Number of women in employment who work full time	365,600	607,200	608,400
Number of women in employment who work part time	88,400	271,800	298,300

* CSO Industrial Earnings and Hours Worked Released Oct 2007

** For the period September – November 2008

2.2.1.3 The number of women in employment fell by about 18,000 between Q4/2007 and Q4/2008 while the number of men at work fell by 75,000 in the same period. The actual number of women at work at the end of 2008 was 906,700, of which 298,300 were working part-time.

2.2.1.4 Changes by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in relation to the collection of data on earnings mean that it is no longer possible to update the dataset for average hourly earnings for industrial workers, disaggregated by sex.

2.2.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The FÁS “Expanding the Workforce” Initiative, which focused specifically on women returning to the workforce, ran from January 2005 to December 2006. During that time 2,099 women registered of whom 57% were over the age of 45. 717 women completed pre-employment

training and a further 493 women completed specific skills training. 52% of those who completed training received certification. The FÁS system recorded 10% of those who registered have progressed into employment but this was felt to be under-reported. This Initiative has been mainstreamed. Women who present to FÁS Employment Services Offices may be case-loaded to provide a focused support to assist them re-integrate into the workforce.

- FÁS provided training programmes across its organisation for approximately 72,750 persons in 2007 and again in 2008. About 42 per cent of these participants were women. However female participation varies across the range of programmes offered. For example, women make up less than 0.5 per cent of those participating in formal apprenticeships, with a throughput of only 102 women apprentices in 2008. Women comprise 57.4 per cent of those participating in the community based employment and training programmes which include the Community Employment and Jobs Initiatives. FÁS also offers training courses suited to the needs of both jobseekers looking for employment and for employees wishing to take One Step Up and improve their skills. In 2008, 53.5 per cent of the participants in these training/traineeship courses were women.
- The Employment Action Plan Activation process has been extended to all persons approaching three months in receipt of Jobseeker’s Allowance/Benefit and to those who are over 55 years of age.
- Following on from evaluation of the Lone Parent Pilot Initiative, roundtable discussions were convened by the Department of Social and Family Affairs with representatives of lone parents and with FÁS. The resulting Social Inclusion Model is to be tested in Dublin in early 2009. The programme will be an “intensive recruitment” approach that will provide participants with the opportunity to identify their barriers to progression, become aware of the wide range of programmes and options available to them and facilitate them to develop a realistic learning/career plan. Promotion and recruitment, which will be community-based and will involve an inter-agency approach, is planned for Summer 2009. The Programme will be delivered in September 2009 to coincide with the school calendar.

2.3 - Objective 1-B
To decrease the gender pay gap

2.3.1 CONTEXT

2.3.1.1 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.

2.3.1.2 In its most recent Report on Equality between Women and Men, the Commission have published data based on men’s and women’s average gross hourly earnings. Table 4 below is drawn from the data published recently by the European Commission.

TABLE 4
GENDER PAY GAP (UNADJUSTED) 2007 – EU

Top Four		IRELAND/EU AVERAGE		Bottom Four	
Italy	4.4	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

2.3.1.3 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.

2.3.1.4 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.

2.3.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the level of the Enterprise, which is facilitated by the Equality Authority, undertook planning work on possible enterprise-centred and trade union led projects to address the gender pay gap. It is anticipated that these projects will be undertaken in 2009.
- There were two increases to the National Minimum Wage rate in 2007 – on 1 January and on 1 July. This brought the minimum wage to €8.65 per hour.
- In November 2008, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) requested the Labour Court to examine the National Minimum Wage and make a recommendation to the Minister for Labour Affairs on the matter. The recommendation of the Labour Court is awaited.
- The National Employment Rights Authority carried out 1,942 inspections/visits in relation to the National Minimum Wage Act in 2007 and 3,079 inspections/visits in 2008. The majority of the inspections/visits undertaken were part of focused employment rights compliance inspection campaigns in sectors covered by the National Minimum Wage.

2.4 - Objective 2

To promote the advancement of women in the labour force

2.4.1 CONTEXT

2.4.1.1 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.

2.4.1.2 Table 5 gives an overview of the labour force in Ireland at the end of both 2007 and 2008.

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

	FEMALES (000)		MALES(000)	
	Q4/2007	Q4/2008	Q4/2007	Q4/2008
In Labour Force	962.3	959.6	1277.7	1263.1
In Employment	924.8	906.7	1214.1	1145.3
Full Time	625.7	608.4	1128.7	1052.1
Part-Time	299.1	298.3	85.4	93.2
Unemployed	37.5	52.9	63.6	117.8
Not In Labour Force	803.3	828.4	463.9	487.2
Total aged 15 Or Over	1,765.5	1,787.9	1,741.5	1,750.3
	%	%	%	%
Unemployment Rate %	3.9	5.5	5.0	9.3
Participation Rate %	54.5	53.7	73.4	72.2

Source: CSO: QNHS Q4 2008

2.4.1.3 The table shows that a significant number of women work part time, representing about a third of all women at work. Fewer than 10 per cent of men work part-time. The QNHS also shows that only 8,300 of those women working part time (2008 data) would prefer to work longer hours.

2.4.1.4 Table 6 below 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.

**TABLE 6
EMPLOYMENT RATES (WOMEN AND MEN AGED 15-64) IN EU MEMBER STATES – 2007**

	Employment Rate		Gender Gap (Difference between rates for men and women)	Rank by Gender Gap
	Women	Men		
	%	%	%	%
Top Three				
Denmark	73.2	81	7.8	5
Sweden	71.8	76.5	4.7	2
Netherlands	69.6	82.2	12.6	14
IRELAND (14th)	60.6	77.4	16.8	21
EU – 27	58.3	72.5	14.2	
Bottom Three				
Greece	47.9	74.9	27	26
Italy	46.6	70.7	24.1	25
Malta	35.7	72.9	37.2	27

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

2.4.1.5 Ireland ranked fourteenth for the employment rate for women in 2007. On the other hand the employment rate for men in Ireland is sixth 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 21st.

**TABLE 7
EMPLOYMENT: BROAD OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS BY SEX 2007 AND 2008**

Broad occupational group	Men			Women			Women as % of total	
	Q3/2007	Q4/2008	% Change	Q3/2007	Q4/2008	% Change	Q3/2007	Q4/2008
	Managers and Administrators	219.4	217.2	-1.0	101.7	107.5	5.7	31.7
Professional	117.1	126.0	7.6	115.9	127.5	10.0	49.7	50.3
Assoc. Prof and Technical	78.3	82.5	5.4	111.2	112.2	0.9	58.7	57.6
Clerical and secretarial	65.9	60.2	-8.6	199.4	187.5	-6.0	75.2	75.7
Craft and related	295.0	252.4	-14.4	12.9	11.7	-9.3	4.2	4.4
Personal/Protective services	87.7	88.9	1.4	156.1	156.3	0.1	64.0	63.7
Sales	72.8	68.7	-5.6	117.6	109.9	-6.5	61.8	61.5
Plant and machine operatives	153.1	143.1	-6.5	28.7	25.0	-12.9	15.8	14.9
Other	133.5	106.2	-20.4	79.6	69.1	-13.2	37.4	39.4
TOTAL	1,222.8	1,145.2	-6.3	923.1	906.7	-1.8	43.0	44.2

Source: CSO: Quarterly National Household Survey Q4/2008

2.4.1.6 Table 7 above reflects the first effects of the economic downturn, with a significant decrease in employment in the craft sector particularly impacting upon men. However, the key message to be drawn from this table is the increase in the numbers of women in the top two categories listed – women working as managers and administrators or as professionals. In the relatively short time period covered by this table the number of women working as managers/administrators has increased by 5.7 per cent, although women still only represent almost a third of all persons in this category (they represented 44 per cent of the total number in employment at the time).

2.4.1.7 The table also shows that women now predominate in the category “professionals”. This group includes a wide range of professional groups including the medical professions and educationalists at all levels. Similarly skewed in favour of females is the “associate professional and technical” group which includes all the paramedic professionals.

2.4.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- FÁS has developed new trades in the following areas: Industrial Insulation, Electronic Security Systems, Jewellery and Print Media.
- The development of new trades in the following areas is progressing: Environmental Stone, Pipe Fitting and Woodcraft.
- A new procedure has also been developed under the National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee whereby industry may propose new trades.
- The Equality Mainstreaming Unit (EMU) of the Equality Authority operates an equality support scheme for enterprises to enable them to develop an equality infrastructure. One hundred and seventeen Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) were supported in 2008.
- The EMU supported the Athlone Promoting Workplace Equality project, led by Athlone Chamber, to develop planned and systematic approaches to workplace equality in Athlone. During 2008 the project focused on running an equality officers network for enterprises and on developing a tool, with Athlone Institute of Technology, on the business case for equality in an SME context.
- The Equality Authority and the Office of the Minister for Integration have developed an Integrated Workplace Action Strategy, which was launched in November 2008. Through the Strategy funding has been provided to:
 - The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) 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; and
 - to produce practical training and support materials for employers
 - The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) received funding to establish an Equality and Diversity Champions Fund to resource trade union initiatives to:
 - communicate to trade union members the benefits and challenges of integrated workplaces;
 - communicate to trade union members information on good practice in creating integrated workplaces;
 - support identified and trained equality and diversity champions within the trade union movement to implement action plans to support trade union members to advocate for and engage in developing integrated workplaces; and
 - provide training for trade union representatives (e.g. branch chairs or secretaries, shop stewards) on advocating and negotiating for integrated workplaces.
 - The Irish Construction Industry Federation also received funding to provide training to its members on integrated workplaces.

2.5 - Objective 3
To support more women as entrepreneurs

2.5.1 CONTEXT

2.5.1.1 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.

2.5.1.2 There are positive signals from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey nevertheless as Table 8 below shows. Early stage entrepreneurship by women in Ireland grew between 2006 and 2007. This increase brought Ireland above both the OECD and EU averages but Ireland still ranks well below the United States.

TABLE 8
WOMEN EARLY STAGE ENTREPRENEURS 2006 AND 2007

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

Source: Entrepreneurship in Ireland 2007, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)

2.5.1.3 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. Over a quarter of women entrepreneurs did not envisage creating additional jobs, compared with less than 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 (2003-2007)

Growth Expectations (Jobs expected in 5 years)	Percentage of all early stage entrepreneurs	
	Men	Women
No additional jobs	19%	27%
1 to 5 jobs	41%	42%
6 to 19 jobs	24%	23%
20 or more jobs	16%	8%

Source: Entrepreneurship in Ireland 2007, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)

2.5.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) have successfully attracted the active participation of women in their range of enterprise training programmes including; the Start Your Own Business course and the Management Development Programme. More than 21,000 people participated in these training programmes in 2007, of which nearly 60% (12,000) were women. This percentage increased to 61% in 2008 when of the 20,219 people who participated in the training programmes, 12,473 were women.
- The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report for Ireland for 2007 showed a significant increase in the number of women entrepreneurs, with women's entrepreneurial activity rising to 5.9% in 2007 from 4.2% in 2006. This represented an average of over 1,000 women in Ireland starting a new business each month.

- Enterprise Ireland supports the Going for Growth Initiative, which was launched in October 2007. This initiative 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. A series of roundtables on a pilot basis were set up in 2007. In 2008, another series of roundtables (8 in total with 8 participants in each) were held.
- The inaugural National Women’s Enterprise Day was held in Mullingar in November 2007. Its success was repeated a year later at the second National Women’s Enterprise Day, again hosted in Mullingar, in November 2008. National Women’s Enterprise Day is hosted by the County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) with the principal funding for the event provided by the Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR. Over 150 entrepreneurs attended the event in 2008, which was oversubscribed. Apart from a series of key note speakers, participants were also offered a one to one mentoring session during the event which aims to support women already in business and those thinking of starting their own business. The event offered women the opportunity to meet and to avail of enterprise support available to them and to:
 - network with other businesswomen,
 - listen to case studies of successful women who have set up their businesses,
 - talk to exhibitor service providers,
 - meet other people in start-up and more advanced stages of business and
 - attend a free mentoring clinic with experienced mentors.
- The Department of Education and Science supports enterprise in schools through the development of core skills in the curriculum and through specific programmes in Enterprise in the senior cycle. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme both provide for action learning approaches, community based learning, a strong focus on personal development and teamwork and a work experience programme. The Link Modules within the LCVP include a specific module on Enterprise Education. As part of this approach, mini-company activities are supported whereby students plan, develop and manage a mini enterprise or organise a major event such as a trade fair or fashion show. Some 8,000 girls (out of a total of 14,000) were assessed in the LCVP Link Modules in 2007 and 2008, while about half of those who undertook the Leaving Certificate Applied examination in both years were girls.
- Schools are also active participants in Enterprise schemes such as Junior Achievement, Youth Enterprise Ireland, and Young Entrepreneurs or in school industry links programmes. This work is supported extensively through the CEBs and Chambers of Commerce.

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

2.6.1 CONTEXT

- 2.6.1.1 Subject choice, particularly at second level, is an important factor in future educational achievement. For example, a certain mix of subjects may be required in order to access some third level courses. Gender mainstreaming in the education system is vital to ensure that a gender perspective informs all aspects of education.
- 2.6.1.2 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 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.
- 2.6.1.3 Table 10 overleaf shows the actual number of pupils taking higher level science, mathematics and related subjects in 2007 and 2008 in the Leaving Certificate examination.

2.6.1.4 The numbers of girls taking higher level mathematics has fallen slightly while the fall in the number of girls taking physics has fallen more sharply. Female participation in the vocational subjects showed some increase in 2008 but still amounts to less than 10 per cent of the numbers of boys who undertake these courses.

TABLE 10
NUMBERS TAKING SELECTED SUBJECTS 2007 AND 2008 – BOYS AND GIRLS

Subject (higher level)	Boys			Girls		
	2007	2008	Absolute Change	2007	2008	Absolute Change
Biology	5,441	6,033	+592	12,080	12,289	+209
Chemistry	2,407	2,504	+97	3,322	3,400	+78
Mathematics	4,472	4,630	+158	3,916	3,880	-36
Physics	3,657	3,495	-162	1,566	1,434	-132
Technical drawing	2,610	2,751	+141	268	300	+32
Construction studies	5,922	6,399	+477	404	449	+45
Engineering	3,227	3,477	+250	134	160	+26

Source CSO 'Women and Men in Ireland 2007&2008'

2.6.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The Report of the Science, Education and Technology (SET) Committee was completed in 2008. It is anticipated that the Report will be published in 2009.
- Funding was provided by the Department of Education and Science in 2008 for the education element of eight Teenage Parenting Support projects as a specific gender element of the School Completion Programme under the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) Programme in preventing early school leaving among teenage mothers. Links have been established between local School Completion projects in these areas, assisted by the SCP National Coordination Team and the Teenage Parenting Support Initiative Coordinators. The aim of these projects is to enable young women who are pregnant and young mothers to stay in second level education and to progress to third level education or training. The Project does this by providing individual support, information and grinds where necessary. Young people participating in Teen Parenting Support Programmes are targeted in-school, out-of-school and in higher/further education. The eight projects continue to be funded for the 2008/2009 school year, targeting approximately 520 young people, of which more than 480 are girls.
- The Crisis Pregnancy Agency made funding available to five groups in 2007 to enable them to develop further creative and innovative projects to address the needs of early school leavers and others at risk who were new parents, while a further five groups received funding from the CPA to offer supports to enable young mothers to remain in education. The Agency has also worked with Treoir to develop a comprehensive guide for young parents on existing educational programmes and financial supports.
- Work was ongoing in the Department of Education and Science in 2008 on developing a resource pack on gender mainstreaming guidelines for second-level schools. It is anticipated that this resource pack will issue to schools in 2009.
- Indicators to evaluate gender mainstreaming in schools have been developed and form part of subject evaluations in primary and second-level schools. Work was ongoing in the Department in 2008 on incorporating these indicators into the criteria for school inspections at primary and second-level schools.
- All new school Inspectors received training on gender mainstreaming in 2007. In addition, all serving Inspectors received gender mainstreaming training as part of the Inspectorate's

Continuing Professional Development training programme. Training continued in 2008 for all new Inspectors.

- Hard to reach groups are targeted through a number of measures in the Adult and Further Education sectors. The main providers of these services are the Vocational Education Committees (VECs).
- Full-time programmes include:
 - Youthreach, 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) – mostly for members of the Traveller community who are over 15 years (10% of the cohort are from the settled community); and
 - Post Leaving Certificate Courses which offer students 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 education options. This initiative is particularly suitable for adults who are re-entrants on the lifelong learning ladder or have other commitments that do not allow them to partake in full time education. BTEI is free to students 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 and the provision of childcare support for participants on Youthreach, Traveller Training, VTOS and BTEI. These measures are targeted towards the 'hard to reach' cohort of students and are not specifically designed to target women, however 72% of the cohort in PLC and 85% of the cohort in STTC's are female, demonstrating the high rate of female participation in further education. Table 11 below shows the number of participants (male and female) in these interventions.

**TABLE 11
PARTICIPANTS IN DEPT. OF EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES 2002 -2008**

Programme	2002 (learners)	2007(learners)	2008(learners)**	
			Men	Women
PLC courses	26,711	30,188	11,160	22,206
(VTOS):	5,708	5,403	1,767	3,616
Youthreach	2,647	3,692	1,865	1,576
Senior Traveller Training *	811	1,084	150	920
Back to Education Init.	Places	9,000	9,500	
	Learners	n.a.	6,457	20,647
Community Education	Start up 2003	30,000	10,984	40,664
Adult Literacy	23,973	43,903	19,868	30,094
Self-funded p/t Adult Ed.	147,000	150,000	150,000	
Childcare	Children	1,308	2,316	2,316
	Parents	1,050	1,733	1,707

Source: Department of Education and Science

* From 1st January 2009 Senior Traveller Training will be confined to learners over 18 years of age.

**Except where otherwise stated

- 223,693 FETAC Awards were issued to participants in further education in 2007 and 47% of recipients were women while 219,550 FETAC Awards were issued to participants in further education in 2008 and 49% of recipients were women.

- The Drumcondra Educational Centre is now running a “Women into Educational Management” course. This initiative provides support to female teachers who wish to move into administrative or management roles. A two day course was held in Spring 2008 attended by approximately 20 women interested in going for promotion in their schools. Due to the considerable interest from female teachers a further two day course will be held in early 2009 and similar events will be delivered in the future.
- Three gender-related research projects were finalised in 2007:
 - Anti-Bias Education – Towards New Understandings
 - This report takes the form of two handbooks entitled “Educators Handbook” and “Parents/Caregivers Handbook”. The handbooks provide material for gender mainstreaming particularly in relation to early childhood education and gender awareness for the inspectorate and teacher education.
 - Senior Management Appointments in Education – A Study of Management Culture
 - This was the first major study in Ireland to examine the cultural codes enshrined in senior appointments at different educational levels and across different sectors of education.
 - It provides a valuable insight as to how gender is encoded in the process and procedures for recruiting suitable candidates and in the definitions and terms and conditions of appointment.
 - It provides an informed context for reviewing existing procedures with a view to making them more genuinely inclusive not only of women but of men who do not subscribe to the dominant definitions of performance based, competitive cultures of management.
 - By developing a counterfactual model for educational management that is more women friendly and care friendly, it will also provide a valuable tool for a gender inclusive framework for all future public (and private) sector senior appointments.
 - Gender Inequality in Seeking and Accessing Promotional Posts in Irish Schools
 - The research from this study resulted in the development of a databank of empirical evidence upon which a range of policy initiatives promoting gender equality in educational management and leadership can be used.
 - It will be used in the development, implementation and evaluation of a module intended to prepare female participants for leadership roles. This module will be included in postgraduate programmes concerned with educational leadership and management.

2.7 - Objective 5-A
To ensure that childcare services are optimised to meet the needs of parents and children alike

2.7.1 CONTEXT

2.7.1.1 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.

2.7.1.2 Support towards the cost of children is met by the State through child benefit which is payable monthly to mothers (and guardians). Child Benefit has increased significantly in recent years and was complemented with the introduction of an Early Childcare Supplement in Budget 2006.

2.7.1.3 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.

2.7.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- A National Standards Working Group has been established by the Office of the Minister for Children to develop a set of Standards for the Pre-School Sector. The Working Group met nine times during 2008 and made significant progress in relation to drafting a set of Standards. It is anticipated that Standards in respect of full-time pre-school services will be completed during the first half of 2009.
- An Inter-Departmental group drawn from the funding Departments/Agencies has been set up to develop a National Training Strategy for childcare. Their work is supported by a sub-group drawn from the Awarding Bodies such as the NQAI, HETAC, FETAC, the universities and DIT. The VEC sector and other training providers are also represented. A number of background papers have been prepared, building on the 2002 Model Framework for Education, Training and Professional Development in Early Childhood Care and Education. These papers include:
 - An analysis by FÁS of the demand and supply of labour in the childcare sector.
 - A comparative mapping across the 2002 Model Framework, Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education [CECDE], 2006) and the Framework for Early Learning (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA], forthcoming).
 - An analysis of a 2007/8 survey of the educational attainment of the workforce.
 - An analysis of course provision at Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) level.
- Funding continued to be provided until the end of 2007 under the EU co-funded Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006 (EOCP). The EOCP had a total allocation over 8 years of €530 million, including a capital allocation of €230 million. The total number of new childcare places created by the end of 2007 under the EOCP amounted to 39,551 with a further 26,912 pre-existing places supported.
- €193m in capital grants had been approved to childcare providers under the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010 (NCIP) by the end of January 2008. Under the NCIP, more than 25,500 new childcare places are expected to be created as a result of funding committed to date. One of the Guiding Principles of the NCIP is to support families to break the cycle of disadvantage. To ensure this, one of the criteria for assessing all project applications is the extent to which a service will provide affordable childcare places to disadvantaged families.
- The new Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (introduced in January 2008) under the NCIP supports community based services with a focus on disadvantage to enable them to provide reduced childcare fees to qualifying parents. Services receive grant subvention for childcare places on the basis of the type of service provided and the economic profile of the parents of children accessing those places. There are three categories considered as disadvantaged parents and these comprise a majority of parents in these services. Parents who do not qualify for the subvention but who are accessing community-based services continue to benefit from quality services at below market cost, due to capital and other State supports which are available to this sector, and so services should have a good social mix. Tiered fees are paid, ensuring equality of access. Grants were made throughout 2008 under the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme.
- Total FÁS expenditure on childcare in 2008 amounted to €37.6 million. The largest single programme expenditure came from 1,760 ring-fenced childcare places on the Community Employment Scheme. Other programmes included Childcare Traineeships and local training initiatives with 487 participants completing programmes in 2008. Expenditure on the FÁS

childcare allowance (a contribution towards the cost of childcare incurred by participants in FÁS training) amounted to €4.9 million.

- For people employed in the childcare sector, some €15,000 was spent on childcare training through the FÁS Competency Development Programme in 2008, while the County Childcare Committees were supported with grant funding of just over €230,000 in 2008 to achieve their strategic objectives.
- The NCIP set a target of 10,000 childcare places to be provided for 3-4 year olds with an educational focus. This target was reached in 2008.
- Within the DEIS project (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the commitment given to Early Years education is that the Department of Education and Science will work in partnership with other Departments and Agencies to complement and add value to existing childcare programmes in disadvantaged communities, with a view to ensuring that the overall care and education needs of the children concerned are met in an integrated manner. The Department is working with the Prevention and Early Intervention programmes on the implementation of Sfolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.
- Child Benefit increased from €160 per month in 2007 to €166 per month since 2008 in respect of each of the first two children and from €195 per month in 2007 to €203 per month for the third and subsequent children.

2.8 - Objective 5-B
To ensure that the care infrastructure supports women's socio-economic engagement

2.8.1 CONTEXT

2.8.1.1 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. Again 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.

2.8.1.2 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 12 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 12
RECIPIENTS OF CARER'S ALLOWANCE, BENEFIT AND RESPITE CARE GRANT 2007

Age	Carer's Allowance			Carer's Benefit			Respite Care Grant[1]		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Under 25 yrs	89	400	489	2	16	18	305	68	373
25 - 44 yrs	1,634	9,076	10,710	116	969	1,085	1,469	8,705	10,174
45 - 54 yrs	2,065	6,681	8,746	101	575	676	1,909	7,463	9,372
55 - 64 yrs	1,716	6,171	7,887	51	241	292	1,771	7,287	9,058
65 yrs and over	1,093	4,142	5,235	2	7	9	2,043	6,283	8,326
of which over 75 yrs	287	781	1,068	0	0	0	753	1,651	2,404
Total Recipients	6,597	26,470	33,067	272	1,808	2,080	7,497	29,806	37,303

[1] Respite Carer Grant figures refer to payments made in June 2007

Source: Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2007, Department of Social and Family Affairs

2.8.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- As a general rule only one weekly social welfare payment is payable to an individual. Persons qualifying for two social welfare payments receive the higher payment to which they are entitled. This had been a cause of particular concern to people in receipt of a social welfare payment when they became carers. For that reason Budget 2007 provided for a fundamental structural reform in this regard. This new measure means that people in receipt of certain other social welfare payments who are also providing full time care and attention to a person can now retain their main welfare payment and receive another payment depending on their means, the maximum of which will be equivalent to a half rate Carer's Allowance. The measure came into effect from 27 September 2007.
- Budget 2008 increased the income disregard for a couple in the Carer's Allowance means test to €65 per week from April 2008. This means that a couple with two children can earn in the region of €7,200 and still qualify for the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance as well as the associated free travel and household benefits. A couple with an income in the region of €6,400 can qualify for a minimum payment, as well as the associated free travel, household benefits package. Recipients of Carer's Allowance also qualify for the Respite Care Grant. This measure surpasses the commitment in *Towards 2016* to ensure that those on average industrial earnings can continue to qualify for a full Carer's Allowance. In June 2007 the Respite Care Grant increased from €1,200 to €1,500 per year in respect of each care recipient. Budget 2008 provided for the grant to increase to €1,700 from June 2008.
- Budget 2009, announced on 14th October 2008, increased the rate of Carer's Allowance for those aged 66 or over to €239 per week. The rate of Carer's Allowance for those aged under 66 increased to €220.50 per week. The rate of Carer's Benefit increased to €221.20 per week. These increases will take effect from January 2009.
- Income support issues are also being considered in the context of the development of the National Carer's Strategy.
- The legislation providing for the Nursing Home Support Scheme Bill was published on 9 October 2008. It is anticipated that the legislation will be enacted during 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 who 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.
- Carers were identified as a priority theme under the "Economic and Social Disadvantage Category" in the Dormant Accounts allocation for 2007. The allocation for carers will be used to fund appropriate training programmes. The focus of the measure is to provide training to assist carers in undertaking their caring role. The measure was widely advertised and the closing date for applications was 11 April 2008. Applications for funding for appropriate training programmes for carers were assessed by Pobal during 2008. Funding for 12 groups totalling €1.48 million was approved.
- In December 2007, the Government agreed to the establishment of a working group to develop a National Carer's Strategy. The working group, chaired by the Department of An Taoiseach, was established in early 2008 and includes officials from the Department of Social and Family

Affairs (which provides the secretariat to the group); the Department of Finance, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment, the Department of Health and Children, the HSE and FÁS. The focus of the Strategy is on all informal and family carers in the community – not just those in receipt of a social welfare payment. The Strategy will cover the period 2008 to 2016.

- Developing the Strategy involves consultation with other Departments and Government Agencies not represented on the working group. The Department of Social and Family Affairs hosted a consultation meeting on 1 April 2008 with several organisations including the Equality Authority and the National Economic and Social Council.
- The National Carer’s Strategy was the theme for the carer’s consultation meeting hosted by the Department of Social and Family Affairs on 23 January 2008. An update in relation to the Strategy was provided to the Social Partners plenary session in February 2008. A request for submissions from the public was published in national and regional newspapers in early March 2008. The closing date for submissions was 18 April 2008.
- The first meeting with the Social Partners was held on 8 May 2008. Key issues raised were recognition for carers and their work, access to suitable health services, income support, training, gender issues and balancing employment and care.
- A second carer’s consultation meeting was hosted by the Department of Social and Family Affairs on 16 December 2008.
- A draft Strategy produced by the working group is being considered, taking into account the current and future economic climate.

2.9 - Objective 6-A
To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty

2.9.1 CONTEXT

2.9.1.1 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.

2.9.1.2 The latest poverty statistics relating to women were published in December 2008 and relate to 2007. The percentage of women in consistent poverty in 2007 was 5.2%, representing a reduction of 1.4% on the 2006 level. The percentage of those within single female parent families in consistent poverty in 2007 was 18.3%, down from 32% in 2006.

2.9.1.3 Table 13 below reviews the mean exposure to poverty risk of households headed by a man or by a woman in the three years 2005 to 2007:

TABLE 13
HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF POVERTY AND IN CONSISTENT POVERTY
BY SEX OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD 2005 AND 2007

	2005			2007		
	% 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	63.1	59.0	47.4	61.9	53.2	50.3
Female	37.0	41.1	52.6	38.1	46.8	49.7

Including all social transfers, 60 % median income threshold.

Source: Extract from Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) in Ireland 2007, CSO

2.9.1.4 These statistics fluctuate quite significantly from year to year but suggest that there was an increase in the “at risk of poverty” rate in households headed by a woman between 2005 and 2007, while the percentage of households headed by a woman which were in consistent poverty fell slightly over the same period. The table shows that, while 38.1 per cent of all households were led by a woman in 2007, these households accounted for almost 47 per cent of those at risk of poverty and almost 50 per cent of those in consistent poverty. A comparison with 2005 data shows an increase of 1.2 percentage points (3 per cent) in the number of households led by a woman. Furthermore, while there was a decrease in the number of female-led households in consistent poverty, there was a very significant increase in the number of female led households at risk of poverty.

2.9.1.5 The CSO’s 2007 EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2007 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 2007 was €40,386, whereas male-headed households had an annual disposable income of €53,406, more than 32% higher than female-headed households.*
- *At risk of poverty rates showed no significant change over the year for either male or female-headed households. Female-headed households had a higher at risk of poverty rate (20.7%) than male-headed households (15.7%).*
- *There was a decrease in the consistent poverty rate for female-headed households, from 9.0% in 2006 to 5.8% in 2007, while the consistent poverty rate for male-headed households was 4.3%.*

2.9.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The NAPinclusion 2007-2016, which was launched in February 2007, contains a high-level goal to support lone-parents into education, training and employment, in addition to commitments on income supports and childcare. (See paragraph 2.10.2 for further detail.) The Annual Social Inclusion Report, launched in November 2007, contains updates on progress in these areas. The NAPinclusion also links to commitments in the National Women’s Strategy on labour market participation, workplace advancement and the gender pay gap.
- The National Report for Ireland on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010 (NSSPI) was submitted to the EU in October 2008. The NSSPI social inclusion chapter, which deals separately with gender perspective and wider equal opportunities, sets out the main priorities for tackling poverty and social exclusion over the three-year period of the plan. The contents reflect commitments already made in the NAPinclusion and the social inclusion measures in *Towards 2016* and the National Development Plan (NDP) and subsequent developments. The NSSPI’s four priority policy objectives for 2008-2010 are as follows:
 - Child poverty;
 - Access to quality work and learning opportunities (activation measures), with a focus on lone parents and people with disabilities;
 - Integration of immigrants;
 - Access to quality services, with a focus on the homeless.
- Under the priority objective of ‘Access to quality work and learning opportunities’ the NAPinclusion sets out the goal to support 50,000 people, including lone parents and the long-term unemployed, with an overall aim of reducing by 20% the number of those whose total income is derived from long-term social welfare payments by 2016.
- The NESF/OSI Annual Social Inclusion Forum (SIF) facilitates the involvement of people experiencing poverty, and their representatives, in the social inclusion process. The workshop themes for the SIF, held in November 2008, included priorities for childhood care and development and facilitating employment participation for those vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market.

- The Office for Social Inclusion (OSI) commissioned the production of statistical ‘social portraits’ of the socio-economic circumstances of the NAPinclusion lifecycle groups. The report on people of working age, including lone parents, was published in February 2008.
- Budget 2008 provided for increases in Widows pensions of from €12 to €14 per week. Widows Contributory Pension rates increased to €203.30 for widows aged less than 66 years old and increased to €233.30 for widows aged 66 years and older.
- Budget 2009, announced on 14 October 2008, provided for increases in widows pensions of from €6.50 to €7 per week. The rates of payment were then €209.80 for widows under 66 years of age, €230.30 for widows over 66 years, and €240.30 for widows aged 80 and over.
- In Budget 2008, there was an increase of €7 per week for State Pension (Contributory), State Pension (Transition) and Invalidity Pension qualified adults aged 66 years of age or over. This increase brings the maximum rate payable to €200 per week (or over 94% of the target rate) thereby making significant progress on the Government commitment under *Towards 2016*. Payment of the allowance was being made direct to the qualified adult on a mandatory basis in respect of new pension claims made from September 2007. Over 42,100 Qualified Adults benefited from the 2008 increase, including those on reduced rates of payment who benefited on a proportional basis.
- Budget 2009, announced on 14 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. In 2009, the Qualified Adult rate (aged 66 and over) will be equivalent to 94.2% of the personal non-contributory rate.

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

2.10.1 CONTEXT

2.10.1.1 The CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) for 2007 noted that over one third of persons living in lone parent households (35.6%) reported experiencing at least two of the eleven deprivation indicators, with 21.4% 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, 2007

Age Group	Unmarried Parent, Separated Parent, Prisoner's Spouse		Widowed Person		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Under 20 yrs	1	1,805	-	-	1	1,805
20 to 24 yrs	38	13,557	-	4	38	13,561
25 to 29 yrs	120	19,321	2	23	122	19,344
30 to 34 yrs	164	16,003	4	58	168	16,061
35 to 39 yrs	284	13,684	10	114	294	13,798
40 to 44 yrs	385	9,742	23	138	408	9880
45 to 49 yrs	322	5,303	24	120	346	5,423
50 to 54 yrs	196	2,321	30	105	226	2,426
55 to 59 yrs	111	752	21	91	132	843
60 to 64 yrs	31	126	6	41	37	167
Aged 65 yrs	1	3	-	-	1	3
Total	1,653	82,617	120	694	1,773	83,311
Overall Total	84,270		814		85,084	
Women as % of Total	98.1%		85.3%		97.9%	

Source: Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2007, Department of Social and Family Affairs

2.10.1.2 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.

2.10.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

2.10.2.1 The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- 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 including the introduction of a new social assistance payment for low income families with young children.
- Any proposed new payment cannot be introduced without co-ordinated supports and services being put in place by other Departments and Agencies. The Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion is continuing its work on bringing forward a plan on the key issues of childcare, education, training and activation measures while the Department of Social and Family Affairs continues to work on developing the new income support scheme.
- Testing of the non-income measures to support lone parents contained in the discussion paper took place in Coolock and Kilkenny from November 2007 to February 2008. The experience of this engagement process is feeding into the development of an approach to working with lone parents and qualified adults.
- Changing the existing system of supports for lone parents and qualified adults is a complex process. However, while the new mechanism of support is being developed, engagement with the Social and Economic Participation Programme by Facilitators of the Department of Social & Family Affairs commenced at the end of 2008 with a small number of One-Parent Family Payment recipients, particularly those whose children are older. It is hoped to progress this process further in 2009.
- A study on the level of take up of Family Income Supplement (FIS) was completed at the end of 2008 and will be available in 2009. The main conclusion of the study was that there was already a high awareness of the scheme overall. The main recommendations were:
 - The Department of Social and Family Affairs needs to ensure that information about the scheme is advertised in a focused way;
 - That the eligibility and qualification criteria are communicated as clearly as possible; and that the network of Citizens Information Centres (CICs), and also the Department's website, should be used to the greatest extent possible as a means of advertising and raising awareness of the scheme.
- As FIS thresholds have been increased substantially for many families in recent years, and as the number of FIS recipients has continued to increase (at end Dec 2008, 27,800 FIS claims in payment, benefiting some 58,000 children), an analysis of the existing FIS customer base has been carried out. This analysis will assist with future policy decisions.
- Following a commitment in the previous partnership agreement ‘Sustaining Progress’, the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) was requested by the Department of the Taoiseach to examine the amalgamation of ‘Increase for Qualified Children’ and FIS. While NESC was unable to reach a consensus on the issue, a discussion document by Dr. John Sweeney was made available in December 2007. This document will also inform future policy in this area.
- A Child Income Support (CIS) review is to be considered as part of a broader expenditure review of CIS policy to be commenced in 2009.

- Following on from the consolidation of the three rates of Increase for Qualified Children (IQC) into one uniform rate of €22 in Budget 2007, IQCs were increased to €24 per week from January 2008. Child Benefit increased by €6 and €8 (lower and higher rates respectively) from April 2008, bringing rates to €166 per month in respect of each of the first two children and €203 per month for the third and subsequent children. In addition, the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, which is paid to the poorest families with children, was increased in 2008 to €200 for children aged 2 to 11 years and €305 for children from 12 years of age, increases of €20. Following implementation of the above increases, combined child income support ranged from over 34% to over 44% of the lowest personal social welfare rate.
- In addition, an increase of €50 in the thresholds of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, which is paid to the poorest families with children, will ensure that approximately an additional 18,000 families will now be entitled to the scheme. Following implementation of the above increases, combined child income support ranges from 34.5% to 43.7% of the lowest personal social welfare rate.

2.11 - Objective 6-C

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

2.11.1 CONTEXT

2.11.1.1 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.

2.11.1.2 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.

2.11.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- Supplementary pension coverage for workers aged between 20 and 69 was 54% in the first quarter of 2008. Coverage for the key target group, those aged 30 years and over, stood at 61%. Coverage has been estimated by the Quarterly National Household Survey on six occasions between 2002 and 2008. The coverage rate has remained relatively stable over this period though there has been a significant improvement in the position of women over the period. Pension cover for female workers has increased significantly in comparison to their male counterparts. In Q1 2002, 45% of females and 57% of male workers had a pension. In Q1 2008, this gap had narrowed, as the rate for female workers had increased to 50% and the rate for males was 56%.
- As mentioned previously, Budget 2008 provided for pension increases of €14 and €12 for contributory and non-contributory pensions, respectively. This brought the maximum rate of payment for the contributory pension to €23.30 per week and the non-contributory maximum rate to €12 per week, effective from January 2008. These increases ensure that progress is being made to achieve the Government commitment.
- Budget 2009, announced on 14 October 2008, gave the following additional commitments in relation to 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.
- 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 of Carer's Allowance is €239. Some 5,100 recipients of "Half Rate" Carer's Allowance received an increase of €3.50 per week (in addition to an increase on their primary payment).
- The Green Paper on Pensions was published in October 2007. Following the launch of the Green Paper, an extended consultation process was undertaken and this closed at the end of May 2008. Overall the process was very successful with a wide range of submissions received from both representative organisations and members of the public. While there is a general acceptance that reforms are required, and that increasing pension coverage is a key issue, no consensus on a particular approach emerged in the process. All the submissions are available at www.pensionsgreenpaper.ie and the Department of Social and Family Affairs published a report in September 2008 which summarises the views expressed.
- The Government is currently finalising a framework to address the pension's agenda for the longer-term. The nature of any reforms decided on will dictate the period over which it will be implemented.
- The Pensions Board is continuing to run focused initiatives through the National Pensions Awareness Campaign aimed at increasing pension coverage amongst women.
- An information leaflet entitled "*Working With Your Spouse: how it affects your social welfare contributions and entitlements*" was developed by the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) and the Revenue Commissioners and was published in June 2008. The Department has participated in a number of events to publicise the leaflet and has assisted organisations who wished to bring the publication to the attention of their members.
- The leaflet outlines how spouses, who operate in a commercial partnership, may be brought into the social insurance system, subject to certain criteria. In this way, both spouses incur a liability to pay self-employed Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) and build up entitlement towards a contributory state pension and other Social Welfare benefits.
- Application for benefits would take place in the usual way, following any approval of an application for commercial partnership status and the payment of any resulting PRSI liabilities. The information leaflet is available at www.welfare.ie and sets out the application procedure in detail. Since publication there has been a significant rise in applications for partnership status, mainly from members of the farming community but also from couples operating small businesses.

CHAPTER 3

THEME TWO - ENSURING THE WELLBEING OF WOMEN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 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.
- 3.1.2 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.
- 3.1.3 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.*
 - *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.*
- 3.1.4 It is worth noting that Irish provision in relation to maternity leave already exceeds the provisions in the new EU Directive being proposed by the European Commission and under discussion at the Council at time of going to press.

3.2 - Objective 7

To enhance the work/life balance for women

3.2 CONTEXT

- 3.2.1 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...

3.2.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The National Framework Committee on Work/Life Balance established a Panel of Consultants whose services organisations can avail of to assist them to introduce new work life balance policies or to enhance existing ones. The Committee covers the cost of up to five days consultancy per organisation. In 2008 forty-six applications for consultancy services were received with support provided to thirty organisations.
- Work/Life Balance Day is held annually in February. The National Framework Committee on Work/Life Balance organised a public awareness campaign to mark the event in 2008. In addition, the Committee supported ten regional partnership groups to host events and organise seminars in their localities.
- In relation to the treatment of part-time and atypical workers, the Department of Social and Family Affairs has established a group to examine the feasibility and possible impact of implementing the recommendations of the 2006 report on the review of the Jobseeker schemes, which focused on the application of the scheme's conditions to workers who are not employed on a full-time basis.
- Following a review undertaken by the Department of Social and Family Affairs on atypical employment, a group has been tasked to examine the feasibility and possible impact of implementing the report's recommendations.

<p style="text-align: center;">3.3 - Objective 8-A To improve the health status of women in Ireland through gender focused policies</p>

3.3.1 CONTEXT

3.3.1.1 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 will be amalgamated with the Department of Health and Children.

3.3.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- A new Cardiovascular Disease Policy has been developed by the Department of Health and Children. The Policy is being revised in light of recent budgetary constraints and the configuration of acute hospital centres.
- The Women's Health Council (WHC) continued to engage with the Department of Health and Children and the HSE to introduce gender mainstreaming within policy and service provision and to ensure that targeted services for women are delivered. The WHC published its Guide to creating Gender Sensitive Health Services in 2007 and hosted a seminar on this topic with national and European experts to inform policy makers and service providers. In 2008 the WHC

met with representatives of the HSE Population Health Division to discuss how to progress matters.

3.4 - Objective 8-B To improve the physical health status of women in Ireland
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3.4.1 CONTEXT

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.

3.4.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- Improved cancer screening and services for women is a commitment under the HSE National Cancer Control Programme.
- Expansion of the BreastCheck screening programme has continued. Two new purpose built screening units to serve women in the West and South were opened by the Minister for Health and Children in December 2007. During 2008, the expansion of BreastCheck extended into Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Tipperary South, Tipperary North, Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.
- The National Cervical Screening Programme was launched on 1 September 2008 and is available free of charge to all eligible women (aged 25-60) in Ireland.
- As of December 2008 there were four institutions awaiting transfer of breast services to one of the eight designated cancer services for breast cancer. The process of transfer will be complete by the end of 2009.
- The Women's Health Council and the National Cancer Registry are jointly conducting a study to investigate the factors underlying the lower rates of cancer-related treatment in older women in Ireland. The study 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.
 - Phase 2 involves in-depth interviews and a national survey of cancer patients, to explore the patient-factors involved in treatment receipt. Ethical approval for both phases of the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Cork University Teaching Hospitals in December 2008.
- In 2007 the Irish Council of General Practitioners and the Women's Health Council produced a booklet '*Cardiovascular Disease in Women*' for GPs aimed at highlighting the impact of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) on women's health, and to illustrate the differences between CVD in women and men.
- 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, for publication in 2009.

3.5 - Objective 8-C

To improve the reproductive and sexual health status of women in Ireland

3.5 CONTEXT

- 3.5.1 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.
- 3.5.2 Statistics published by the British Department of Health show that the numbers of women who give 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 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 abortion rate (number of abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44) has fallen from 7.5 in 2001 to 4.8 in 2008.

3.5.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum in primary schools and in both junior and senior cycles in secondary schools. An evaluation of the implementation of RSE in second level schools indicated that the content of the programme may be being implemented selectively. In response, lesson plans linked to a DVD resource for teachers on contraception, sexually transmitted infections and sexual orientation have been developed in collaboration with the Health Services Executive and the Crisis Pregnancy Agency. In-service training for the use of the resources commenced in November 2008. The RSE TRUST pack is available and will be provided to teachers undertaking the SPHE training. The TRUST resource is also available to youth workers and others providing Relationships and Sexuality Education to teenagers.
- An evaluation of the implementation of the Social Personal and Health Education Programme at primary level has been completed as part of the second phase of reviews of the implementation of the revised primary curriculum and is available on the NCCA website (www.ncca.ie).
- The Crisis Pregnancy Agency (CPA) published a new five year Strategy in November 2007 entitled "Leading an Integrated Approach to Reducing Crisis Pregnancy 2007-2011". The Strategy was developed following a comprehensive consultation process between March and May 2007 with a range of Government Departments, State Bodies, and professional and voluntary organisations. The Strategy aims to provide a blue-print to guide policy makers and service providers towards the delivery of co-ordinated programmes to prevent crisis pregnancy and to provide a comprehensive and caring response to the needs of women who experience a crisis pregnancy. The Strategy has seven Strategic Priorities:
 - **Knowledge about Relationships and Sexuality for Adolescents**
Achieve measurable improvements in knowledge about relationships and sexuality among adolescents through home-, school- and community-based education.
 - **Contraception**
Improve access to and information on contraception and contraceptive services – particularly for groups at risk of crisis pregnancy.
 - **Communications**
Conduct effective and innovative communications campaigns to promote positive behavioural and cultural changes regarding sexual attitudes, choices and behaviour.

- **Crisis Pregnancy Services**
Improve access to and delivery of crisis pregnancy counselling services and post-abortion medical and counselling services.
 - **Continuation of Pregnancy**
Improve the range and nature of supports central to making continuation of pregnancy more attractive. Ensure that women, their partners and families are fully informed about these supports.
 - **Research**
Strengthen understanding of the contributory factors and solutions to crisis pregnancy; use research findings to promote evidence-based practice and policy development.
 - **Policy Influence**
Influence policy makers and key players regarding prevention of crisis pregnancy, reproductive decision-making and crisis pregnancy outcomes.
- The “Positive Options” campaign was redeveloped and re-launched in September 2007 with a new campaign message “An unplanned pregnancy is not the end of the world”. New television, radio and print medium advertisements were developed. Post campaign testing was very positive with 75 per cent of women recalling the campaign.
 - The “Think Contraception” public awareness campaign which targets the prevention of crisis pregnancy in the 18 to 24 year old age group, was also redeveloped and was re-launched in October 2008. It incorporates the “Think Contraception” communications campaign and the “Think Contraception” promotional campaign. The website attracted almost 45,000 visits while over 66,000 leaflets were distributed. Research showed that 79 per cent of the target group were aware of the campaign.
 - The Crisis Pregnancy Agency has also made funding available for ongoing and pilot models of service delivery to improve access to contraceptive services, increase the take up of those services and to promote consistent and correct contraceptive use.
 - The CPA made over €4.5 million in funding available in 2007, which increased to €4.6 million in 2008, for projects which provide supports in the fields of
 - Crisis pregnancy prevention;
 - Services and supports for women experiencing crisis pregnancy;
 - Crisis pregnancy counselling; and
 - Post crisis pregnancy supports.
 - The Crisis Pregnancy Agency has developed a Manual of Good Practice in Crisis Pregnancy Counselling. In addition, the Crisis Pregnancy Counselling Certificate, a year-long certificate level course delivered by the Department of Adult and Community Education, NUI Maynooth, in partnership with the CPA, who funds it, has been developed as the first accredited course in crisis pregnancy in Ireland. In November 2008 the first 30 participants of the course graduated. The second year of the pilot training course, also funded by the CPA, commenced in October 2008.
 - Approximately 52,000 “You can talk to me” DVDs and booklets were disseminated by the CPA to parents in 2007, with 10,800 parents ordering the resource through a freetext number, promoted through two short advertising and public relations campaigns. The “You can talk to me” resource was created to help parents of 11-15 year olds to talk to their children about sex. This resource has been supplemented by a publication called “Parents Make the Time to Talk” aimed at 15 to 17 year olds. A resource called “Busy Bodies” has been developed for use in 5th and 6th classes in primary schools.
 - The CPA developed a newspaper supplement to help parents of 15-17 year olds to discuss relationships and sexual health with their teenagers. 330,000 copies of the supplement were distributed through the Sunday Independent in November 2007, giving parents’ information and communication tips on talking to their teenagers about relationships, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, fertility and social pressure.

3.6 - Objective 8-D To improve the mental health status of women in Ireland
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3.6.1 CONTEXT

3.6.1 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.

3.6.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- An independent monitoring Group was established in March 2006 to monitor and assess progress on the implementation of the recommendations contained in “A Vision for Change”. The First Annual Report of the independent Monitoring Group, covering the period 1 February 2006 to 31 January 2007, was published in May 2007. The Monitoring Group’s Second Annual Report, covering the period 1 February 2007 to 31 January 2008, was published in June 2008.

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

3.7.1 CONTEXT

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

3.7.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- A public awareness campaign aimed at delaying the age at which young people in Ireland start to drink alcohol was launched by the HSE in May 2008. A television advertisement was broadcast during May and June 2008.
- The HSE have continued to provide a range of services aimed at reducing tobacco use. Work undertaken includes:
 - anti-smoking media campaigns
 - awareness raising through the formal education system
 - continued support for the ‘Smokers Quit-line’ and
 - the provision of a range of smoking cessation services.

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

3.8.1 CONTEXT

3.8.1.1 This objective also advocates 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.

3.8.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The Women in Sport (WIS) Programme run by the Irish Sports Council has seen increased funding year on year to €2.8 million in 2008. In 2007 sixteen National Governing Bodies (NGBs) ran WIS programmes. This number increased to twenty-eight participating NGBs in 2008.
- The Women in Sport website (www.wis.ie) was the winner of the Golden Spider Award for 2007. The website is an effective tool in promoting participation of women in sport and links closely with events like the Women's Mini Marathon.
- Funding has also been allocated through the Women in Sport Programme to encourage more women to participate in the National Coaching Development Programme. Through the WIS Programme women are encouraged to take up more decision-making roles in NGBs, e.g., funding was provided for Swim Ireland's event management course in 2007 and for coaching programmes run by the Irish Surfing Association and The Volleyball Association.
- Female CEOs were appointed in the following NGBs; Swim Ireland, Basketball Ireland, Ladies Gaelic, Camogie and the Irish Ladies Golf Union.

3-9 - Objective 10
To ensure the health and safety of pregnant and breast feeding women at work

3.9.1 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have taken place during the period 2007 and 2008:

- In 2007 the Health Service Executive published a booklet called "Breastfeeding and Work", which gives advice and tips on how mothers can combine working and breastfeeding as well as giving information about what employers should be doing to help breastfeeding mothers.
- In 2008 the HSE prepared a range of promotional materials to support GPs in encouraging mothers to breastfeed their infants.

3.10 - Objective 11
To protect women from bullying and harassment in the workplace

3.10.1 CONTEXT

3.10.1.1 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.

3.10.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008:

- In March 2007 the revised Code of Practice entitled “Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work” was published by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). The revised Code came into effect on 1 May 2007. A media campaign and press releases to highlight awareness of workplace bullying were undertaken to coincide with the publication of the revised Code of Practice.
- In October 2008, the Health and Safety Authority part funded a National Conference on Bullying in the Workplace run by the Awareness Education Office in Cabra.

3.11 - Objective 12

To combat violence against women through improved services for victims together with effective prevention and prosecution

3.11.1 CONTEXT

3.11.1.1 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 May 2007.

3.11.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence was established in the D/JELR in June 2007.
- The main priority for Cosc is the development of a National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. A consultation process on the development of a National Strategy was undertaken during 2008. A dedicated research unit has also been established within Cosc and a public call for submissions was made in 2008 to determine Cosc’s priority research programme for 2009.
- In 2007, Cosc established a Justice Sector Working Group to make progress on the identification and resolution of significant interagency issues within the Justice sector affecting the effective handling of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Membership of the Working Group includes nominees from; An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Probation Service and Cosc.
- Cosc provides funding for intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence. Funding of over €780,000 was provided in 2007. Cosc continued to fund the intervention programmes in 2008. In addition, a mapping study of services currently provided was commissioned to inform future policy development in this area.
- In 2008 Cosc awarded €495,000 in grant funding to a total of 88 groups for awareness raising activities:
 - about the nature and extent of domestic, sexual and gender based violence
 - about the services available for those experiencing these forms of violence
 - to identify and change the attitudes and behaviours that allow these forms of violence to continue.

- Cosc has worked with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to ensure that victims of domestic violence have been included as a specific category to be prioritised in the prevention of homelessness under the Homeless Strategy 2008-2013, launched by the D/EHLG in August 2008.
- The Cosc website (www.cosc.ie) was re-launched in November 2008.
- The Health Service Executive (HSE) fund sixteen Rape Crisis Centres, twenty Refuges, and twenty-five support services, which provide front-line services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, and in some instances support and counselling to members of their families, at a cost of €205 million.
- The HSE continues to implement the key priority tasks identified in the 2006 National Review of Sexual Assault Treatment Service, many of which are now at an advanced stage of implementation, including the development of two new Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) in the Midlands and Galway, which are due to open in 2009.
- In 2008 the HSE established a Working Group to develop a Policy and Action Plan on Domestic Violence for the HSE. This HSE Policy includes a commitment to training for all frontline healthcare professionals and more in-depth training for staff in key areas e.g. Accident and Emergency, Mental Health, Reproductive Health & Primary Care.
- Sixteen General Practitioners (GPs) completed a national training programme in December 2008 and are available to Sexual Assault Treatment Units on an on-call basis.
- The Gardaí completed a new policy document on Domestic Violence response in December 2007. This policy document has been distributed to all members of the Force and its implementation is monitored by nominated Garda Inspectors in each Garda Division in the country.
- A Cosc Report 'Attitudes to Domestic Abuse in Ireland' is being prepared and will be launched in early 2009.
- Preparations are under way for a forum on the management of sex offenders which will take place in Spring 2009.

3.12 - Objective 13

To address the issue of trafficking of women and children

3.12.1 CONTEXT

3.12.1.1 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.

3.12.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) was established under the aegis of the D/JELR in February 2008. An Interdepartmental High Level Group, with representatives from key Government Departments and the AHTU, was appointed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to draw up a National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Trafficking in Human Beings. The National Action Plan, when completed, will focus on four key areas:

- Child Trafficking;
 - Prevention and Awareness Raising;
 - Prosecution of Traffickers; and
 - Protection of Victims.
- The National Action Plan will set out the structures which will facilitate ratification of the *Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings* in 2009 and the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, when the parent Convention is ratified.
 - The Government has adopted a multidisciplinary partnership approach to tackling human trafficking in Ireland. Roundtable discussions are held between the High Level Group and NGOs on a quarterly basis. In addition, the High Level Group is supported by five Interdisciplinary Working Groups dealing with issues related to:
 - Development of a National Referral Mechanism
 - Awareness raising and training
 - Child trafficking
 - Labour exploitation
 - Sexual exploitation
 - The five Interdisciplinary Working Groups report to the High Level Group. In total, 34 different State, International, and Non-Governmental Organisations are involved in this process.
 - A data strategy is being developed and implemented through these partnership structures to support evidence-based policy making in the area of trafficking in human beings in Ireland. Part of this strategy is that data will be gender disaggregated.
 - The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 became fully operational on 7 June 2008. The Act includes the following provisions:
 - It creates offences of trafficking in children and adults for the purposes of their sexual or labour exploitation or the removal of their organs. It also makes it an offence to sell or to offer for sale, or to purchase or offer to purchase, any person for any purpose. Penalties of up to life imprisonment apply in respect of these offences.
 - The Act also makes it an offence for a person to solicit a trafficked person for the purposes of prostitution where the person soliciting knows, or has reasonable grounds for believing, that the person has been trafficked. Any person who accepts, or agrees to accept, any kind of payment in exchange for the prostitution of the trafficked person will also commit an offence. Fines of up to €5,000 and 12 months imprisonment apply if a person is summarily convicted. An unlimited fine and up to 5 years imprisonment will apply if a person is convicted on indictment.
 - The Act also provides that if an Irish citizen or a person ordinarily resident in Ireland is alleged to have committed a trafficking offence abroad, Ireland will accept the jurisdiction to try the offence in Ireland. Penalties of up to life imprisonment will apply.
 - With effect from 7 June 2008, recovery and reflection periods of 45 days for suspected victims of trafficking and periods of temporary residency of up to six months renewable where the victim is willing to assist the Gardaí with an investigation or prosecution in relation to the alleged trafficking were introduced on an administrative basis. The enactment of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill in 2009 will provide a statutory basis for these provisions.
 - The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Garda Commissioner jointly launched the “Blue Blindfold” campaign on 21 October 2008.

- The campaign is being run as part of the European G6 Human Trafficking Initiative, which includes the UK, Poland, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland in conjunction with Interpol, Europol and Eurojust.
- The key theme of the campaign is “Don’t close your eyes to human trafficking”. The blue blindfold represents the risk of people having their eyes closed and being unaware of the crime that may be going on around them in relation to human trafficking.
- Funding for the “Blue Blindfold” campaign was provided by the Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR, under the National Women’s Strategy.
- The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit commissioned Ruhama (an NGO which provides support services to women involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation) to make a three minute film and a 50 second edited version for the purpose of educating ‘punters’ or potential ‘punters’ to the exploitation underpinning the commercial sex industry and to address the demand side of sex trafficking.
 - The film was launched in November 2008 and was broadcast on a number of national television channels and on a satellite sports channel.
 - Funding for the Ruhama film was provided by the Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR, under the National Women’s Strategy.
- The Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) liaises with a number of Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with regard to trafficking in human beings, including: the International Organisation for Migration, Ruhama, the Women’s Health Project, Ireland En-Route, the Irish Refugee Council, the Migrants Right Centre and the Immigrant Council of Ireland. Relevant information is shared on a case-by-case basis and Liaison Members from GNIB have been appointed to a number of Government and NGO agencies operating in this area.
- Members of the GNIB also sit on the five Interdisciplinary Working Groups established by the High Level Group to assist in the development of a National Action Plan.
- A training course entitled “Tackling Trafficking in Human Beings, Prevention, Protection & Prosecution” has been jointly developed by An Garda Síochána and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). A number of NGO’s were involved in delivering this training to ensure a multagency approach. Approximately 250 Gardaí and 520 Probationer Gardaí have received this training course.

CHAPTER 4

THEME THREE - ENGAGING WOMEN AS EQUAL AND ACTIVE CITIZENS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 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.

4.2 - Objective 14

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

4.2.1 CONTEXT

4.2.1.1 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.

4.2.1.2 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 - 2004/2005 AND 2008

Per cent of women in single/lower House of National Parliament			Percentage of Women serving as Senior Ministers in 2005 and 2008		
	2004	2008		2005	2008
Top Three			Top Three		
Sweden	48	46	Finland	47	60
Netherlands	38	41	Spain	50	50
Finland	40	41	Sweden	50	45
EU – 27	23	24	EU – 27	22	26
IRELAND (23rd)	12	13	IRELAND (16th)	21	20
Bottom Three			Bottom Three		
Hungary	9	11	Cyprus	0	8
Romania	11	10	Slovakia	7	6
Malta	9	9	Romania	20	0

Source : European Commission: Report on Equality between Women and Men 2009

4.2.1.3 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 2008, Ireland ranks joint 23rd 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 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.

4.2.1.4 The second part of the table looks at female representation among senior Ministers. Here Ireland performs better, ranked at 16th of the 27 Member States. The EU average was 26 per cent and four Member States exceeded 40 per cent, with a further five exceeding 30 per cent of women in senior Ministerial roles.

4.2.1.5 Table 16 below reviews women’s participation as leaders in business. Drawn from the European Commission’s report on Equality between Women and Men 2009, 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 2007		Percentage of Members of Decision-making Body of Largest Publicly Quoted Companies (**) who were Women 2008	
	%		%
Top Three		Top Three	
France	39.2	Sweden	26
Italy	35	Finland	20
Poland	35	Slovenia	18
EU – 27	32.3	EU – 27	11
IRELAND (24th)	21.1	IRELAND (18th)	8
Bottom Three		Bottom Three	
Finland	17.4	Cyprus	3
Malta	12.3	Luxembourg	3
Cyprus	9.7	Portugal	3

Source : European Commission: Report on Equality between Women and Men 2009

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

4.2.1.6 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 24th among Member States at just over 21 per cent. The EU average is 32.3 per cent.

4.2.1.7 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 18th of the 27 Member States and is below the EU average of 11 per cent. The Scandinavian Member States are to the fore in this indicator (Denmark is ranked fifth) 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.

4.2.1.8 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.

4.2.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- 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, of which the NWCI is a member. Work on the sub-committee will be advanced during 2009.
- At the request of the D/JELR some Departments have refined the list of State Boards and Committees included in the process to only include boards to which Ministers make nominations. As a result the 2007 data refer to 278 boards and are not wholly comparable with earlier years. As external nominations still fall far below the 40 per cent level, the Government agreed that Ministers will interact with nominating bodies, well in advance of the expiry of existing Boards, and encourage such Boards to be proactive in seeking female nominees for submission to the Minister as potential candidates.
- At the end of 2007, there were 3,804 persons serving on 278 State Boards. Of these Board Members, 1,293 were women, which gives a female representation rate of 34 per cent

(compared with the target of 40 per cent). Female representation for 2007 represents no change on the 2006 figures. Where Ministers had made the nomination to the Boards, the female representation rate was 37 per cent. The total number of female chairpersons was 44 representing 17% of the overall figure.

- 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.

4.3 - Objective 15

To increase the number of women involved in the arts in Ireland

4.3.1 CONTEXT

4.3.1.1 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 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The Arts Council have stated that the area of governance is still an issue but not exclusively or separately on a gender basis. The Council is aware of its responsibilities under the nine grounds covered by Irish equality legislation and is currently committed to further dissemination and implementation of the existing guidelines.
- The Council has completed an overview of the arts organisations that receive funding under the five main programmes and found a balanced distribution of senior management positions in terms of gender. Based on the findings of the Senior Management Overview alongside observational evidence of strong female representation at meetings of decision-makers in the arts, the Arts Council does not consider a Women's Forum to be a priority at this time.
- The Council also examined the gender breakdown among local authority Arts Officers and found that 65% of the positions were held by women. It was interesting to note that while women were twice as likely as men to hold these positions, their senior managers were generally men. Of the 34 senior managers, only 9 are women. At a more senior level again, 32 of the local authority County Managers are men while only 2 are women.
- The Arts Council already has an Equal Opportunities policy in place; this was revised internally in 2007.
- The Arts Council looks to the Equality Authority in terms of guidance/ guidelines on equality and directs clients there. Currently, 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 areas of health and disability over the next two years as these have emerged as particular areas of need re equality and governance. Equality and diversity training will also be introduced in 2008/ 2009.

- The Council commissioned research into the public experience of the arts and published *The Public and the Arts*⁴ report in 2006. Statistics from the report demonstrated that women were significantly more likely to attend arts events than men, a finding that was further reinforced by a more recent analysis of the same statistics by the ESRI⁵. As a result, the specific targeting of women attendees is not a priority for the Council at this time.
- The statistics contained in recent CSO *Women and Men in Ireland*⁶ reports demonstrate varying levels of funding for male and female artists depending on the art form. For example, 43.1% of the total number of Arts Council grant recipients in 2006 were women. However, that percentage rose to 84.8% in relation to the area of dance and dipped to 14.2% in literature. Grants were more evenly divided between women and men in areas such as visual arts and drama. 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 provides advice to all individuals and groups who would like to participate in the arts, directly through the executive and through a number of funded organisations that promote participation in a broad range of contexts. The Arts Council does intend to do further audience research. While this will not take gender as a leading focus, it will generate data on the attendance of women/ their usage of arts facilities.

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

4.4.1 CONTEXT

4.4.1.1 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 will be reviewed again at the Ministerial Conference under the Czech Presidency in 2009.

4.4.1.2 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.

4.4.1.3 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.

4.4.1.4 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".

4.4.1.5 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.*

⁴ Hibernian Consulting with Insight Statistical Consulting, and Martin Drury (2006) *The Public and the Arts*, Dublin: Arts Council. ISBN: 1904291279

⁵ ESRI (2008) *In the Frame or Out of the Picture? A Statistical Analysis of Public Involvement in the Arts*, Dublin: NESF. ISBN: 1-8-99276-47-5

⁶ CSO (2007) *Women and Men in Ireland*, Dublin: CSO. ISSN: 1649-6299

- *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.*

4.4.1.6 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.

4.4.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

4.4.2.1 The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The Equality Authority has commissioned research to explore the representations of women in advertising, including on radio and TV. This project will be finalised in 2009.
- The Equality Authority has convened a Stereotyping Working Group which includes representatives of the community and voluntary sector to develop a programme of work to highlight the negative impact of stereotyping, including in the media. A European Commission sponsored exhibition on stereotyping was launched in Galway on 31 October 2008. Galway City Partnership is currently developing a regional strategy to combat stereotyping.

4.5 - Objective 17 - A

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

4.5.1 CONTEXT

4.5.1.1 The remainder of this chapter relates to gender 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 Right Unit. 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.”

4.5.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

Mainstreaming gender equality

- Irish Aid has adopted a policy of mainstreaming gender equality. In 2007 a mainstreaming strategy was approved and a mainstreaming reference group was established which met regularly in 2007 and 2008.
- Training in mainstreaming was carried out for two sections within Irish Aid and specific gender mainstreaming training was carried out with the Embassy and Irish Aid staff in Uganda,

Vietnam and Timor Leste. In addition, technical support on mainstreaming was provided to Tanzania during their business planning process.

- In programme countries Irish Aid continues to mainstream gender equality in sectoral programmes, for example:
 - In Ethiopia Irish Aid supported a study to examine the gender dynamics and responses of the Productive Safety Net Programme focusing on the impact at household, community and institutional levels,
 - In Uganda Irish Aid has been engaged in mainstreaming gender equality in the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) Strategic Investment Plan particularly highlighting the issue of domestic violence legislation,
 - Also in Uganda, to deepen gender mainstreaming in the growth strategies of the forthcoming National Development Plan, Irish Aid supported the Ministry of Finance to conduct two gender studies which will inform dialogue and policy-making at the macro and sectoral levels. One study undertook a gender analysis of the Uganda National Household Survey and sector policy briefs were produced. The second study quantified the contribution of reduced gender inequality to economic growth in the specific case of Uganda.
 - In Zambia, Irish Aid succeeded in getting cross cutting issues including gender equality back on the education sector agenda and participated in a stakeholders' workshop in November which discussed issues of gender, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and children with special needs.
 - In Tanzania, Irish Aid has actively promoted gender mainstreaming within the Agriculture Sector and as a result gender equality has been made a permanent feature of all sector reviews,
 - In Mozambique Irish Aid is also leading on gender mainstreaming in the agriculture sector and an assessment of the Ministry's performance in addressing gender inequality has led to the provision of technical support integrating gender equality concerns more clearly into the Ministry of Agriculture's planning process.
 - Irish Aid has also taken a lead role in supporting the mainstreaming of gender in Timor-Leste and in promoting the equality of women through support for the Government's Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) and various civil society organisations, which has resulted in an increased reflection of gender issues in the Government's annual action plans.

- Irish Aid is also mainstreaming gender equality in its support to civil society and multilaterals, for example:
 - NGO funding guidelines include gender equality as a priority for mainstreaming;
 - Monitoring, including field monitoring, of NGO partners has focussed on partners' achievement on gender mainstreaming;
 - Negotiations with UN agencies on multi-annual funding arrangements have addressed their implementation of gender equality commitments and
 - Ireland's contribution to the Asia Development Bank is targeted to their Gender and Development Cooperation Fund.

Supporting women's political and economic empowerment

- Irish Aid continues to support initiatives specifically targeting the empowerment of women, for example:
 - In Timor-Leste Irish Aid in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and local women's organisations promoted women's participation in the elections resulting in 29.2% representation by women in the national parliament.

- Irish Aid supports many other organisations which focus on women’s rights and empowerment or integrate women’s rights into their development work, e.g. through the Civil Society Fund Irish Aid supports the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID).
- Irish Aid’s gender budget supports Mama Cash which finances small scale initiatives for and by women throughout the world. Mama Cash support pioneering initiatives by women worldwide which contribute to strengthening the position of women and improving their rights. In 2008, Mama Cash received €210,000. Irish Aid also provided funding for organisations working in the area of gender based violence either directly or through a UN Trust fund on Violence Against Women.
- Irish Aid continues to support many activities aimed at improving the economic status of women including skills development, access to credit, and an enabling environment. For example: In 2008 Irish Aid signed a 3 year agreement with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). One of the key programmes supported through this agreement is WEDGE (Women’s Entrepreneurship, Development & Gender Equality) which seeks to create an enabling environment for women’s entrepreneurship.
 - Irish Aid has a 3 year agreement with Women’s World Banking (WWB) for €300,000. WWB is a global network, based in New York, of 53 micro-finance providers and banks in over 29 countries that serve 9 million micro-entrepreneurs directly, 70% of whom are women.
 - A hunger task force established by the Government issued its report in September 2008; the report has a particular focus on small holder women farmers in Africa and makes a number of recommendations in this regard.

Health, Education, Water and Sanitation

- Irish Aid supports improvements in health and education services through its bilateral programmes and support for NGOs, multilaterals and global funds. In addition to these in 2007:
 - Irish Aid allocated €2 million to a new United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) trust fund for maternal health, “*No Woman Should Die Giving Life*” which will support 75 of the poorest countries to deliver better services for women before, during and after childbirth.
- Irish Aid allocated €500,000 to a Fistula Thematic Trust Fund which aims to prevent the condition by ensuring skilled attendance at birth, and to provide treatment for those who have suffered from fistula.
- Maternal health is at the heart of Irish Aid’s health programming and this priority is foremost in Ireland’s emphasis of and support for district and community level health services provision.
- Project work has been supported in Tanzania to establish a voice for and accountability to women on maternal health within the health sector.
- The enormous burden of collecting water in general for drinking and household use falls on women and children. In 2007 Irish Aid provided substantial support for improving water and sanitation services through bilateral support to Zambia and Lesotho through NGOs and multilateral organisations. In 2008 Liberia and South Africa received support of approximately €1m each. Support to the Department of Water Affairs in South Africa is specifically earmarked for mainstreaming of gender into government programmes. NGO funding in Tanzania supports pilots to look at appropriate private sector participation in household water treatment and household sanitation.
- In 2007 Irish Aid invested over €65 million in education with more than half going to basic education. The Irish Aid Education Policy (2008) firmly establishes girls’ education as a key priority.

- Through funding to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Irish Aid is supporting improved access to and quality of girls' education in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- In Niassa Province of Mozambique, Irish Aid has been supporting the Provincial Directorate of Education to develop a 'Strategy for promoting the Human Rights of Girls in the Education sector'.
- In Uganda, Irish Aid is engaged in a new partnership with the Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU) to support implementation of an integrated advocacy strategy on the Thematic Curriculum and Gender Based Violence in primary schools.

Gender-based violence

- Irish Aid spending on Gender Based Violence (GBV) focussed interventions has increased substantially to over €2.6 million in 2007. Some of the specific activities supported in 2007 include:
 - Contributions to two UN funds one aimed at Eliminating Violence Against Women and a new fund dedicated to the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation
 - Funding for health, psychological and legal support for survivors of GBV and strengthening of national support systems in West Africa, Sudan and Malawi
 - Printing and dissemination of Guidelines on GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Settings
 - Research on best practise on preventing GBV in communities in Uganda
 - Participation in anti-GBV campaigns in Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Africa and support for local organisations working in this area.
- Irish Aid's bilateral programmes are demonstrating increased attention to the issue of GBV, for example:
 - In South Africa Irish Aid allocated €10.6 million over 5 years to the prevention of GBV and the reduction of its impact
 - In Uganda, Irish Aid focused on the legal aspect of GBV through its work in Justice Law and Order sector
 - In Tanzania, Irish Aid has taken a lead in promoting the inclusion of greater attention to the links between GBV and HIV/AIDS in Tanzania's National Multisectoral Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS and is Chair of a new donor group on GBV, promoting enhanced and harmonised responses to the issue
 - In Sierra Leone, a study on GBV commissioned by Irish Aid is being used to inform responses to GBV.
 - Adopted GBV as an advocacy campaign theme for 2008 in Uganda; (See also Objective 17-C)
 - In Ethiopia Irish Aid has partnered with the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), a key organization in promoting the legal rights of women who played an instrumental role in the introduction of a revised Family Law in 2007
 - In Timor-Leste Irish Aid provided gender expertise to the mid-term review mission of the multi-donor justice sector programme.
- Irish Aid is a founding member of the Irish Joint Consortium on GBV which is a unique collaboration between Irish humanitarian, development and human rights organisations, Irish Aid and the Irish Defence Forces. The Consortium hosted a conference in November 2008 on the development of an action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

HIV and AIDS

- The new Irish Aid HIV and AIDS policy has been completed and is now under final consideration before publication. It has a strong focus on the gender dimensions of the HIV pandemic. Programmatic guidelines are also being developed on gender and HIV. Irish Aid provided financial and technical support for the development of guidelines on how gender issues should be mainstreamed in national HIV and AIDS programme in developing countries and in global funding arrangement for HIV and AIDS. Irish Aid increased funding, despite resource

challenges, for research into microbicides to €5 million per year and also strongly advocated for increased global attention to the discovery of effective prevention therapies.

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

4.6 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The Council of the European Union General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) has published its conclusions which include:
 - Specific provision on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the EU Agenda for Action on the Millennium Development Goals (June 2008);
 - Food Facility Regulation (Regulation 1337/08) establishing a facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries specifically refers to those farms run by women (Art 3).
- Through its membership of the EU gender experts group, Irish Aid is engaging in discussions on the development of an EU Action Plan for gender equality in external action.
- Ireland has advocated for poverty reduction and gender issues to be considered in the development of the EU Aid for Trade Strategy. The Economic Partnership Agreement with CARIFORUM⁷ reaffirms commitment to work to achieve the objectives of the Cotonou⁸ Agreement, Article 1 of which states that systematic account shall be taken of the situation of women and gender issues in all areas – political, economic and social.
- During 2007 and 2008 Ireland continued to provide substantial support to major UN bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Irish Aid's multi-year agreements with these three entities highlight the importance of addressing gender issues in their programming. Irish Aid also provides support to UNIFEM and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) which focuses on women's empowerment and women's rights.
- In 2007, Irish Aid provided additional funding of €3m to specifically target MDG5 on improving maternal health. €2m of this was contributed to the UN Trust fund "*No Woman should Die Giving Life*". Funding was also provided to trust funds for obstetric fistula and female genital cutting (€500,000 each).
- In 2008, Irish Aid provided an additional €1million to the UNFPA trust fund on Reproductive Health Commodity Security which aims to improve maternal health.

⁷ On 15 October 2008 the European Union signed an Economic Partnership Agreement with 13 CARIFORUM countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Guyana signed on 20 October. The Agreement is provisionally applied as of 29 December 2008.

⁸ The "Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part and the European Community and its Member States of the other part" was signed on 23 June 2000 in Cotonou, Bénin .

4.7 - 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.

4.7.1 CONTEXT

4.7.1 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 Employment, Social Protection, Health and Consumer Affairs (ESPHCA) Council.

4.7.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

UN Agencies

- In 2007 and 2008 Irish Aid contributed a total €500,000 to the UN *Trust Fund in support of actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women*; €500,000 to *Trust Fund on the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation*; and €300,000 to the UN Divisions for the Advancement of Women for follow-up actions to the UN Secretary General’s report “*Ending Violence Against Women: From Words to Action*”.
- The Irish statement to the UN Human Rights Council included a reference to GBV and was noted as the only statement to do so. Ireland contributed inputs on GBV to EU statements at UN level, and Irish statements at EU level (e.g. European Council Conclusions on Gender Equality in Development Cooperation).
- Ireland made a statement in June 2008 at the UN Security Council Thematic Debate on Women, Peace and Security, welcoming the adoption of the new Security Council Resolution 1820.
- Ireland has systematically highlighted issues of GBV under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the Human Rights Council (HRC). The UPR is a new mechanism of the HRC which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN member states every four years. Since the establishment of the UPR in 2008, Ireland has raised a number of issues related to GBV, inter alia, sexual and domestic violence and female genital mutilation.
- At a signing ceremony in Dublin in November 2008, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Micheál Martin T.D., added his signature to the international campaign “Say NO to violence against women”, which is sponsored by the UN Development Fund for Women
- The Conflict Resolution Unit (CRU) has lightly earmarked a proportion of its funding to the UN Mediation Support Unit for activities to strengthen the work of women mediators, and to involve women in peace negotiations. The Unit funded a new chapter to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Co-operation Directorate (OECD DAC) Handbook on Security Sector Reform on gender and SSR. The Unit also funded the participation of three senior army officers from Timor Leste to participate in an International Human Rights course organised by the Defence Forces. This included a module on Human Rights of Women in Peace Operations.
- In 2007, Irish Aid contributed €1million to the UNDP Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery earmarked for activities focused on strengthening women’s security in

crisis; advancing gender justice; expanding women's citizenship, participation and leadership; building peace with and for women.

- Following on Irish Aid's support for the UN Secretary General's Global Study on Violence against Women, €500,000 was committed to UNDAW follow up action, with €150,000 disbursed in 2007.
- Ireland's statement at the Security Council UNSCR Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security included strong references to the issue of impunity and the need to exclude amnesty provisions for GBV perpetrators from peace agreements.

European Union

- Ireland was a member of the EU Working Party on Human Rights' Task Force on Violence against Women which helped to draw up EU Guidelines on Violence Against Women, which were successfully adopted by the Council of the European Union in December 2008.
- Ireland advocated inclusion of a reference to GBV issues within the text of the EU Development of consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Ireland also advocated for inputs on GBV to be included in EU statements to the drafting of UN resolutions to the 51st sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.
- Ireland advocated for the inclusion of a reference to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in the revised European Security Strategy
- Ireland successfully advocated for the inclusion of a reference to the International Criminal Court and the exclusion of amnesty provisions in the EU Guidelines on Violence Against Women.

Joint Consortium on GBV

- Irish Aid is an active member of the Irish Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence (GBV) which was formed to advance the institutional and collective capacity of Irish organisations to respond on a systematic basis to gender based violence. Irish Aid contributed a total of €100,000 to the operating costs of the Consortium in 2007/2008. In 2008, the Consortium organised a conference on stepping up Ireland's responses to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820

- Ireland is developing its National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325, which looks at the increased participation of women at all levels of peacemaking and peacebuilding. In the development of Ireland's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, the Department of Foreign Affairs will liaise closely with the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.
- The Conflict Resolution Unit (CRU) in the Department of Foreign Affairs identified UNSCR1325 as a cross-cutting theme of the unit which would inform CRU activities. The CRU has begun to identify opportunities in the field for supporting implementation of UNSCR 1325.
- The CRU engaged in policy dialogue with the Joint Consortium on Gender-based Violence on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, leading to the Consortium's report supporting a national action on 1325. The CRU provided funding for women from Timor Leste, Liberia and Northern Ireland to attend the annual conference of the Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence.
- Ireland cosponsored UN Resolution 1820 on Sexual Violence against Civilians in Armed Conflict, which calls for training of peacekeepers on GBV. Ireland successfully advocated for the inclusion of a reference to UNSCR 1325 and 1820 in the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy.

Human Security Network

- Ireland is the Chair of the Human Security Network (HSN) for the period May 2008-May 2009. The HSN is an informal group of like-minded countries from all regions of the world which maintains dialogue on questions pertaining to human security. Ireland has chosen to focus on GBV as the priority theme of its Chairmanship.
- The first event of Ireland's Chairmanship was an international law conference in June 2008 on 'Reforming Laws on Sexual Violence', which was held in conjunction with University College Cork. The opening address was delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
- In October 2008, Ireland delivered a statement on behalf of the HSN at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security which emphasised the importance of implementing Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 and reiterated the need for collective efforts to combat sexual violence in situations of armed conflict.
- Ireland made a statement on behalf on the Human Security Network at the Security Council Open Debate on Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security.

<p style="text-align: center;">4.8 - Objective 17 – D To ensure the integration of gender perspectives into all parts of the United Nations System.</p>

4.8 CONTEXT

4.8.1 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 in 4.7. above as well as other support to UN agencies under 4.6 above.

4.8.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- Irish Aid committed to contribute €300,000 for the Womenwatch website, with the first €100,000 disbursed in 2007. The Womenwatch website (www.un.org/womenwatch) provides internet space for global gender equality issues and to support implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. It is an initiative of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) led by the Division for the Advancement of Women.
- Ireland once again increased its annual contribution to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) from €3.8m in 2007 to €4m in 2008. As well as earmarking a proportion of this amount specifically to the gender activities of the Office, Ireland also increased its unearmarked funding to OHCHR.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY

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

5.1 CONTEXT

5.1.1 While the Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR currently 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 will be a focus for 2009 and beyond.

5.1.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- While the NDP Gender Equality Unit ceased operation at the end of 2007, the D/JELR made a successful application in late 2008 for EU funding under EU PROGRESS to enable a project on gender mainstreaming in Government Departments to be carried out in 2009.

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

5.2. CONTEXT

5.2.1 The work to carry out the objectives contained in the NWS falls within the remit of various Government Departments. Each Government Department is provided with funding by the Exchequer as voted by the Dáil. The following comments refer only to the D/JELR.

5.2.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The Equality for Women Measure 2000-2007 had a budget of €7 million, including € million European Social Fund (ESF) funding. The Measure directly benefited approximately 41,000 women, including over 5,500 women who received certified training. Building on the success of its predecessor, 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.
- It is anticipated that Phase I of the Measure will have 4 separate Strands:
 - Access to Employment
 - Developing Female Entrepreneurship
 - Career Development for Women in Employment
 - Fostering Women as Decision Makers

- Strand 1 ‘Access to Employment’ was also launched by Minister Ahern on 27th 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 but the extremely difficult Exchequer position made it difficult to commit funding, and the matter was still under consideration at the end of 2008. As a result, Exchequer funding which had been identified for the Measure in the 2008 Book of Estimates was transferred to other Programmes within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- Funding was made available by Gender Equality Division in 2008 for targeted awareness raising under the NWS to the Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the D/JELR.
- AHTU commissioned Ruhama (an NGO which provides support services to women involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation) to make a short film for the purpose of educating ‘punters’ or potential ‘punters’ to the exploitation underpinning the commercial sex industry and to address the demand side of sex trafficking (see Objective 13 above).

5.3 - Objective 20

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

5.3. CONTEXT

5.3.1 This report covers progress made in the implementation of the NWS from its launch in April 2007 up to the end of 2008.

5.3.2 ACTIONS 2007/2008

The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies during the period 2007 and 2008:

- The National Women’s Strategy Monitoring Committee is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the National Women’s Strategy 2007-2016.
- Membership of the NWS Monitoring Committee includes representatives from key Government Departments and the Social Partners, including; the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the National Women’s Council of Ireland, the Irish Farmer’s Association and the Community and Voluntary Pillar.
- The NWS Monitoring Committee has its roots in the Consultation Group, which was established at the development stage of the National Women’s Strategy to review and offer input into the drafts provided by the earlier Inter-Departmental Committee.
- The NWS Monitoring Committee held its inaugural meeting in July 2008 and there was a further meeting later in 2008.
- An Inter-Departmental Committee was responsible for the drafting of the National Women’s Strategy in collaboration with the Gender Equality Division of the D/JELR and the NWS Consultation Group.
- Membership of the current NWS Inter-Departmental Committee includes representatives from all Government Departments with responsibility for implementing the Objectives and Actions contained in the Strategy.

- The National Women's Strategy Inter-Departmental Committee met on three occasions during 2007/2008 and progress submitted by its members on the implementation of the Objectives and Actions has informed the preparation of this 2007/2008 Progress.
- This 2007/2008 Progress Report on Implementing the National Women's Strategy details progress made under the 20 Objectives contained in the Strategy from the Strategy's publication in April 2007 to the end of 2008.
- The First Interim Review of the National Women's Strategy is due to take place in 2010. The Review will provide an opportunity for a comprehensive appraisal of the Strategy.
- In monitoring progress on addressing inequalities, the Equality Authority commissioned research to monitor progress on gender equality as follows:
 - *Gender Inequalities in Time-Use: The Division of Caring, Housework and Employment among Women and Men in Ireland* (2008, Equality Authority and ESRI).
 - *The Gender Pay Gap: Examining the latest evidence on gender pay differentials in Ireland* (to be published in 2009, Equality Authority and ESRI)
 - *Labour Market Equality: Female Participation in the Paid Labour Market* (to be published in 2009, Equality Authority and ESRI).

POSTSCRIPT

The National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016 is a ten year strategy which aims to address gender equality in Ireland. It was launched in 2007 during a period of sustained economic growth.

As has been widely documented elsewhere, signs of an economic downturn began to emerge in early 2008 and that downturn has accelerated since then. This has impacted upon employment, although by mid-2009 the impact upon male employment has been considerably greater than on female employment. Redundancy statistics under the Redundancy Scheme show that, in the 12 months to end May 2009, 33,984 men were made redundant compared with 15,430 women.

The most recent employment data relate only to the quarter to end November 2008 and show that male employment fell by 68,000 compared to a year earlier while female employment fell by 18,000.

The economic downturn has had a very significant impact on the public finances. Receipts including tax revenue fell by almost €6.3 billion in 2008 compared to 2007 while day to day spending by Government Departments increased by almost €4 billion. When capital expenditure is added, the overall deficit was €12.7 billion in 2008.

This has required the Government and the Departments to take very difficult decisions to reduce the deficit for 2009 and move to stabilise the economy. Indications to date show that tax receipts for the first five months of 2009 are €3.5 billion below the same period of 2008 showing a deficit of €6.1 billion on current expenditure over the first five months of 2009. Overall, current expenditure is set to increase by €3 billion in 2009, but this increase is largely focused on the Department of Social and Family Affairs to meet requests for income supports for the unemployed.

The majority of Government Departments have seen a reduction in their funding provision for 2009, with, for example a reduction of over 10 per cent in current funding to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The 2009 Progress Report on the implementation of the National Women's Strategy will contain a clearer picture of the impact of the economic downturn on the implementation of the Strategy and the statistical indicators contained therein.

