

**Nationwide consultation on poverty and social exclusion launched by  
Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Coughlan TD**

Mary Coughlan TD Minister for Social and Family Affairs today announced a nationwide consultation process on poverty and social exclusion.

The first regional consultative seminar will be held in Bundoran on Tuesday (8<sup>th</sup> April) with further consultative seminars in Limerick, Kilkenny, Balbriggan, Co Dublin followed by two further consultations in Dublin next month – they will be themed on the topics of migrants and ethnic minorities, and standards in public services.

In addition to the public meetings, submissions from organisations and individuals will also be sought, and a research seminar will be held on indicators to monitor progress in tackling poverty.

The consultations will help the development, implementation and monitoring the second National Action Plan against poverty and social exclusion.

”The challenge of eradicating poverty requires not just action by the State but by society as a whole, “ said Minister Coughlan today.

”We are engaging in the current consultation process to draw on the experience of those living in situations of disadvantage and of those working with them in preparing this Plan of action. We want to ensure that our policies and programmes are effective, “ said Minister Coughlan.



The revised national Anti-Poverty strategy, Building an inclusive society, as well as the new Social Partnership Agreement, Sustaining progress, would be reflected in the plan, said Minister Coughlan.

”I would welcome as large an attendance as possible at the public seminars, and I would equally welcome written submissions from those unable to attend.

”I would hope to hear suggestions about emerging issues in relation to poverty, inequalities that lead to poverty and in particular gender dimensions of poverty, ideas on how local service providers can be involved further in tackling poverty and issues relating to children, disadvantaged families, older people, people with disabilities, and both rural and urban disadvantage,” said Minister Coughlan.

Each member state of the European Union is required to submit a two year National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPincl) to the EU Commission by July 2003. This will be Ireland’s second Plan to the EU and follows a previous Plan for 2001 – 2003. This is an ongoing process at EU level –in 2005 Ireland will be expected to review and develop a further plan.

The regional consultations will be held in the Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran on 8<sup>th</sup> April, the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Castletroy, Limerick on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel, on the 25<sup>th</sup> and the Bracken court



hotel Balbriggan, Co Dublin on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The two thematic seminars will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May.

ENDS  
April 4<sup>th</sup> 2003