



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection**

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**Minister Burton launches report on Community
Engagement in Ireland's Developmental Welfare
State**

Joan Burton, Minister for Social Protection, today (Friday 6th May, 2011) launched the report by the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (ICSG) entitled '*Community Engagement in Ireland's Developmental Welfare State: A Study of the Life Cycle Approach*'.

Speaking at the launch in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, Minister Burton said: "One of the reasons for undertaking this research was to capture the complexity of civil society engagement in social partnership in Ireland."

The Minister went on to say: "The inclusion of the community and voluntary pillar in the social partnership process in 2000 and its extension in 2003 were welcome and important developments in this regard. The report highlights some limitations with the social partnership process but I think that, overall, it provided us with a good model of how community and voluntary groups can play a central role in national policy development alongside employers and trades unions which might be considered the more traditional social partners."

Minister Burton pointed out that the Department of Social Protection regularly consults with key stakeholders including the community and voluntary pillar when developing policy, in instances such as the Review of Child Income Supports and the implementation of the National Pensions Framework.

The Minister referred to concerns about the sustainability of welfare states given increases in life expectancy and increasing dependency ratios. "It is certainly true that our welfare system, and our pension system in particular, is coming under enormous pressure, due to these demographic changes, and will do into the future. That is why reforming our pension system is a priority for me and for the Government and this is something we are working on at present. We want to build a fair system which provides people with an adequate income in their retirement but, in order to achieve that aim in the long term, the system must be sustainable", said Minister Burton.

Minister Burton paid tribute to the authors of the report saying: "Dr. Gemma Carney, Dr. Tony Dundon, Áine Ní Leime and Camille Loftus are to be congratulated for their work on this project. In recent years there have been greater linkages between academia and policy makers and it is important that we continue to build these relationships as we can all learn from each other.



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This report is another example of the type of excellent research we have come to expect from the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology at NUI Galway and its authors certainly have given us a lot to think about.”

Note for Editors:

The Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (ICSG) is a multidisciplinary research centre on ageing at NUI Galway established in 2006. ICSG focuses on research, education and training in the field of social gerontology in Ireland and internationally. ICSG was established jointly by the University and through a generous donation from Atlantic Philanthropies.

ICSG aims to develop and promote social and economic aspects of ageing in Ireland with a view to supporting a holistic and positive view of ageing, which emphasises participation and empowerment for older people at all levels of society. The first centre of its kind in Ireland, ICSG offers research expertise and practical support to public, private and voluntary agencies involved in the formulation and implementation of public policy for older people at international, national, regional and local levels.

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