



*Have your say on family policy says
Mary Coughlan Minister for Social and Family
Affairs*

A series of national consultative seminars to determine how the Government can best support families was announced today by Mary Coughlan, the Minister for Social and Family Affairs.

“These national consultations will be an opportunity for family members, and those who work with them, to express the concerns and themes which influence family life today.

“Earlier this year I announced a series of five nationwide consultative family fora to take the pulse of the nation on how best the Government can support families. The first forum was held in Donegal, with great success on the first of May last.

”I can now announce four further fora which I will be attending to hear families’ concerns at first hand in the Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel on the 25th of September, Cork Metropole Hotel on October 9th, Galway Best Quality Hotel, Clarenbridge on November 6th and finally at Croke Park on the 4th of December.

“Families bind our communities together. These bonds are under increasing pressure in many areas – economic, social and demographic.

“As Minister responsible for Family Affairs I am determined to keep family issues central to Government policy, as illustrated by our ‘Families First Policy’. This policy is evident in such



initiatives as the establishment of the Family Support Agency and the nationwide consultative Family Fora.

”There are ever increasing pressures on families and a number of themes emerged during the first forum meeting –these included problems relating to relationships, economic pressures on families, child care, the care of elderly family members and a range of other topics.

”I am inviting everyone who has an interest - mothers, fathers, children, grandparents, support, professional and representative groups - to come along, feed your input into the process and help to inform and develop future family policy.

”Alternatively, if you are unable to attend in person, I would equally be happy to hear from you by writing to or emailing my Department’s Family Affairs Unit,“ said Minister Coughlan.

The contributions to all the fora will be documented in a detailed report to be prepared at the end of the series of meetings.

ENDS

12th September 2003

Note for News Editors

Places can be reserved at the fora by contacting the Department of Social and Family Affairs at the below address. People unable to attend the fora can forward their submissions to the same address.

Family Fora
C/o Family Affairs Unit
Floor 1
A.M.D



Store Street
Dublin 1

E-mail familyfora@welfare.ie
Tel. 01 - 7043506 / 7043593
Fax 01 - 7043594
Contact Denise Tully / Lorcan Hanly