



Minister Hctor welcomes significant decline in poverty rates for Older People

Máire Hctor TD, Minister of State with Responsibility for **Older People**, has this afternoon (29 November 2007) welcomed the results of the **EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) 2006** published today by the Central Statistics Office which shows that in 2006, the 'at risk of poverty' rate for people aged 65 years or over was 13.6%, representing a decline on the 20.1% recorded for 2005. (In 2003 the equivalent figure was 29.8%).

The Survey also shows that the rate of consistent poverty for older people also reduced from 3.7% in 2005 to 2.1% in 2006, (having been at 5.8% in 2003).

Overall, 17% of the **population** were at risk of poverty in 2006, compared to 18.5% in 2005. (This figure was at 19.7% in 2003).

Welcoming these reductions, **Minister of State Hctor** said: "These changes are evidence of the success of the Government's commitment to tackle poverty and social exclusion. This is especially the case for older people. The State Pension has increased by some 33% between 2003 and 2007 going from €157.30 to €209.30 and overall social welfare expenditure has increased from €5.7 billion in 1997 to over €15 billion in 2007."

Minister Hctor added: "The vision for older people as set out in *Towards 2016* is to enable people to maintain their health and wellbeing and to live full and active lives in an independent way in their own homes and communities for as long as possible."

"The Government aims to build on the significant progress that has been made in reducing poverty over the past 10 years and to deliver real improvements in living standards and wellbeing for the most vulnerable in our society. *The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion* aims to tackle poverty in a coordinated way. As Minister for Older People, I intend playing my part in the drive to ensure that the income and living standards of older people are maintained and improved."

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