



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

www.welfare.ie

New poverty figures highlight need to prioritise employment in tackling the economic crisis.

Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, welcomed the publication today (30th November 2011) of the ***Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2010*** by the Central Statistics Office.

Minister Burton said: "This is an important social monitoring report as it reveals the deepening impact of the economic crisis on household income and living standards in 2010."

"The figures highlight the need to prioritise employment in tackling the economic crisis. People not in employment are eight times more likely to be in poverty than those in work. Furthermore, jobless households account for 70 per cent of those in poverty. The challenge is to restore economic growth and to maximise employment. My Department has a key role to play in supporting people back into work through income supports, training and work experience", the Minister continued.

"Earlier this year I established the National Employment and Entitlements Service. It integrates the provision of employment services and benefit payment to ensure that the payment of income supports to the unemployed is directly linked to the equally, if not more important, task of supporting them in finding work and where work is unavailable, into education or training."

The Minister also highlighted the finding that social transfers reduced the at-risk-of poverty rate from 51 per cent (before social transfers) to 16 per cent after social transfers, a 'poverty reduction effect' of 69 per cent. "In 2010, when unemployment rose to 13.6 per cent, the social welfare system provided a vital safety net for people who had lost their jobs and acted as an automatic stabiliser for the economy," she said.

Minister Burton said: "My Department is spending over €20.6 billion in 2011 accounting for almost 40 per cent of Government expenditure. The services provided by my Department impact on the lives of almost every person in the State. Some 1.4 million people each week receive a social welfare payment and, when qualified adults and children are included, almost 2.1 million people



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

www.welfare.ie

in all benefit from weekly payments. In addition we pay Child Benefit to over 600,000 families in respect of over 1.2 million children each month.”

Minister Burton continued: “I welcome the fact that consistent poverty, the key indicator used for the national poverty target, is largely unchanged for 2010.* The Government remains committed to the elimination of poverty and to meeting the national poverty targets in the ***National Action Plan for Social Inclusion***. My department is conducting a review of progress towards the national poverty target which will take into account poverty trends since the economic downturn. The purpose of the review is to enable the Government to adopt appropriate and achievable national poverty targets to meet Ireland’s contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the commitment in the Programme for Government.”

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

Note to Editors:

* The consistent poverty rate for 2010 was 6.2 per cent compared with 5.5 per cent in 2009. The CSO states that this represents “no statistically significant change on the 2009 figure.” (CSO statistical release 30 November 2010).

Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade.

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm