



The Development of Mechanisms to Monitor Progress in Achieving Gender Equality in Ireland

*Report commissioned
by the
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Foreword by John O'Donoghue T. D., Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform



I am very pleased to be associated with this Report, which was commissioned and funded by my Department as part of its' work in relation to gender equality. My Department is committed under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness to have a review undertaken of the overall structures for monitoring and implementation of present commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women.

The Beijing Platform for Action called on Governments to develop national action plans to implement the Platform for Action. The UN General Assembly meeting in June 2000, which I attended, reviewed and appraised progress in implementing the Platform for Action and agreed strategies to accelerate implementation. The Outcome Document from this General Assembly called on Governments to adjust or develop national plans for women for the future. In recognition of this requirement, my Department is developing a draft National Plan for Women, 2001-2005, on which there will be an extensive consultation process.

This Report was overseen by my Department's Gender Equality Monitoring Committee. It is the result of intensive research by Dr Yvonne Galligan and her research team from the Department of Government, University College Cork. It reviews progress in relation to the implementation of the report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women, recommends future action including the development of indicators and a national integrated statistical system and proposes mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving gender equality in Ireland. This Report is timely and it will form the debate and content of the National Plan for Women.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee for their sterling work and dedication over the years. The Committee, who met between June, 1997 and November, 2000, comprised the social partners, women's organisations and representatives from Government Departments and agencies.

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Executive Summary

1. Equality between women and men is based on the belief that all human beings, female and male, are of equal worth and are equally worthy of dignity and respect. The Irish Government is committed to supporting and advancing gender equality, through, *inter alia*, its endorsement of the Declaration and the Platform for Action agreed at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995. The Platform for Action identifies specific targets and actions in 12 policy areas where the main obstacles to equality between women and men reside. Chapter 1 discusses the current context for gender equality.
2. Gender mainstreaming is an instrument through which equality between women and men is advanced. This involves an assessment of the gender impact and outcome of all policies and programmes, thus placing gender at the centre of all policy concerns. It has two dimensions: a gender impact assessment of policy at formulation stage and a gender-sensitive evaluation of policy outcomes. While a number of models have developed to assist a gender based analysis of policy proposals, gender equality indicators are used to evaluate the impact of any given policy on women and men.
3. This research charts the position in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Ireland. It examines the statistical pre-requisites for effective gender mainstreaming. It presents a range of gender equality indicators to monitor progress in implementing the Platform for Action and it suggests a revised institutional framework to accommodate ongoing progress in the advancement of women's human rights.
4. The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women forms a backdrop to the evolving gender equality programme outlined in the Platform for Action. This report is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. A review of this report found that 164 of the 211 recommendations are implemented or on the policy agenda, with 41 remaining to be acted upon and 6 obsolete recommendations. The majority of the outstanding recommendations deal with relatively straightforward matters. Others, such as women and the economy, women in poverty, women and decision-making and women and the media require more detailed consideration. This positive record should not be interpreted as a final or satisfactory resolution of the issues raised in the Report. Indeed, this is far from being the case. While many of the recommendations have been acted upon, the issues themselves remain salient. Today, they are analysed and understood in the light of new information and in the context of the Platform for Action. Thus, the Platform for Action provides a framework within which obstacles to women's advancement and empowerment in Ireland can be addressed.
5. Gender statistics are one of the main instruments used to monitor and promote gender equality. However, the gender statistics needed for gender mainstreaming are often not available or, when available, are scattered between different locations. There is a clear set of minimum data required for the development of social indicators reflecting the realities of women's and men's lives. There is also a code of practice to be followed in the compilation of statistics that ensures they are of the highest quality. These issues are discussed in Chapter 3. The main recommendations seek the compilation of a national integrated data base of gender statistics, with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) as the primary agency for the collection, co-ordination and dissemination of gender statistics. It is expected that the CSO would engage in consultation with diverse groups of women, policy makers and specialists as part of the process of developing gender statistics that are appropriate to user needs. There are considerable gaps in current statistical data, particularly in the area of paid and unpaid work. A full time-use survey is required to measure the contribution of unpaid work to the national economy, and this information should be published in satellite national accounts.
6. While statistics are the bedrock of a gender based policy analysis, gender equality indicators provide visible evidence of progress or otherwise in equality between women and men. Chapter 4 discusses the development of social indicators for gender mainstreaming and uses the UN gender index models, GDI and GEM, to illustrate the power of gender-sensitive indicators. Gender equality

indicators for the 12 areas identified in the Platform for Action are presented, along with indicators for Culture and Sport – a category left over from the Second Commission and not captured by the areas covered in the Platform for Action. It is clear that indicator development is an ever-evolving process, with consultations between users and producers of indicators an integral part of this process. The indicators in this chapter present an initial step in the development of gender-sensitive indicators across the Platform for Action areas. Further elaboration of gender equality indicators will take place in the context of the National Plan for Women, which is a requirement under the Beijing Platform for Action.

7. Progress on gender equality is assisted by a strong institutional framework. The Platform for Action pays particular attention to the institutional supports for the advancement of women's rights. This is also the concern of Chapter 5, where the existing legislative, administrative and institutional structures are assessed.
8. While new equality legislation has substantially progressed gender equality, there is a strong argument for a constitutional amendment that clarifies the existing equality commitment in Article 40.1. It is recommended that a clear and unequivocal statement on gender equality be included in the Constitution.
9. On a collective and individual basis, Government departments need to pay more attention to gender mainstreaming as a policy and human resource concern. The National Plan for Women will require all Government departments to submit targeted, specific and realistic plans for gender equality, with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform co-ordinating this process. This has obvious resource implications.
10. In a review of national machineries for gender equality in other countries, the importance of a connection with the office of the Prime Minister became obvious, given that the office co-ordinates all Government policy. In an Irish context, it is considered that a cabinet sub-committee, chaired by the Taoiseach, offers the most effective way forward in giving overall direction to the gender equality agenda and mainstreaming gender equality in all national plans and strategies. A realistic option in this regard would be to have the brief of the cabinet sub-committee on social inclusion extended to include gender equality, with a change of name to reflect this wider remit.
11. A number of important institutional players have made very significant contributions to the advancement of gender equality – among them being the successive Oireachtas Committees on Women's Rights, the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee, the Equality Authority (Employment Equality Agency) and the National Women's Council of Ireland. These organisations have provided important consultative channels and a strong advisory role to Government in this area.
12. The Platform for Action expects that consultative mechanisms will be strengthened in the development of national plans for women, with the inclusion of a diverse range of equality-seeking voices and representatives. A discussion on consultative practices is presented as an aid to this process. The establishment of a Task Force to review the implementation of the National Plan for Women and an expert Commission to examine and make recommendations on the advancement of women in decision making, work-life balance, employment law and social welfare/taxation issues is recommended.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that a National Plan for Women be developed to replace the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women as the framework for Ireland's gender equality agenda.
2. We recommend that the National Plan for Women should take the outstanding recommendations of the Second Commission's Report into account, integrating them into the Plan
3. We recommend that a national integrated statistical system, extensively disaggregated by gender, should be developed.
 - 3(i) We recommend that this should incorporate data gathered by the CSO and all public and private sector organisations operating in the areas covered by the Platform for Action.
 - 3(ii) We recommend that data-gathering agencies adhere to 'quality statistics' principles.
 - 3(iii) We recommend that data-gathering organisations should agree on the definitions, concepts and classifications employed to ensure comparison and co-ordination of statistics.
 - 3(iv) We recommend that the CSO be the primary agency for the collection, co-ordination and dissemination of gender statistics.
 - 3(v) We recommend that the official statistical system be made gender-sensitive.
 - 3(vi) We recommend that the CSO work with centres for women's studies, research organisations, target groups and policy makers in developing and testing appropriate indicators and research methodologies to strengthen gender analysis.
 - 3(vii) We recommend that meaningful consultations take place with diverse groups of women, including all minority groups, about gender issues relevant to these groups to facilitate the design, collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-sensitive data.
 - 3(viii) We recommend that a statistical publication, *Women and Men in Ireland*, be prepared and presented on an annual basis for a broad audience, nationally and internationally.
 - 3(ix) We recommend that this publication be available in print and electronic form.
 - 3(x) We recommend that the CSO assist in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the goals and strategies of the Platform for Action.
 - 3(xi) We recommend that a full-scale time-use survey be initiated to enable quantification of women's and men's unpaid work in the informal, home and voluntary sectors.
 - 3(xii) We recommend that satellite accounts be published, consistent with core national accounts, to enable the value of women's and men's unpaid work to become visible and its contribution to the national economy assessed.
 - 3(xiii) We recommend that statistics in the 20 areas identified be gathered as part of a national integrated database.
 - 3(xiv) We recommend the development of advanced indicators and a gender empowerment index on the basis of existing and new data.
4. We recommend that the National Plan for Women include specific targets and indicators.

5. We recommend that the National Plan for Women contain agreed indicators and benchmarks along with nominated actors to facilitate the measurement of progress on gender equality.
6. We recommend that these indicators be monitored on a yearly basis.
7. We recommend that a gender equality index be constructed and operational by 2005.
8. We recommend an amendment to Article 40.1 extending the constitutional guarantee of equality to individuals and including an additional section naming gender equality as a fundamental right.
9. We recommend that the brief of the cabinet sub-committee on social inclusion be broadened to include gender equality. The name of the committee to reflect its wider remit.
10. We recommend that Ministers be individually responsible for the integration of gender equality in all policies of their departments.
11. We recommend that day to day responsibility for gender equality rest in a more substantially resourced Equality Division within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, or within a Department of the Government's choosing.
12. We recommend that adequate resources be made available for each Department to develop gender expertise on the policy issues confronting the Department.
13. We recommend that adequate resources be made available to enable individuals, women's organisations and equality-seeking groups to participate in the gender mainstreaming process.
14. We recommend that a Task Force on the National Plan for Women be established to monitor progress in implementing the National Plan for Women.
15. We recommend that a Gender Equality Commission be established to devise strategies for bringing about gender equality in political, economic and social decision making, work-life balance, employment law and social welfare/taxation issues.

Chapter 1

Gender equality – the context

Gender equality as a principle

Gender equality is a core principle of democracy and is reinforced in constitutions, treaties and legal texts. It is inherent in Article 40.1 of the Constitution, which states that ‘All citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law’.¹ It is enshrined in Articles 2, 3 and 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty. Gender equality is made explicit in the Charter of the United Nations, and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.² As one of the 189 participating Governments that adopted the Beijing Declaration in 1995, the Irish Government reaffirmed its commitment to ‘ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms’.³ The commitment to implement the Beijing Platform for Action was again endorsed by the Irish Government at the special session of the UN General Assembly in June 2000.

Gender equality is based on the assumption that all human beings, female and male, are of equal worth and therefore equally worthy of dignity and respect. A historical understanding of equality saw human beings as persons without gender – without being female or male. In reality, however, gender was important, as seen in the valuing of men and male roles and the lack of recognition accorded to women and female roles. This male-dominated construction of the relationship between the sexes was woven into laws on marriage and employment, into cultural practices and into political and social rights and norms. As Carol Pateman⁴ points out ‘the social contract, made by brothers, is constructed in such a way that women can become citizens of civil society only as ‘individuals’, never as women, and yet, at the same time, the ‘individual’ is constructed from a male body so that his identity is always masculine’.

Today, this historical and patriarchal understanding of women as subordinate to men is no longer tenable. Modern society requires the involvement of women and men as equals if a nation is to prosper. Nevertheless, the legacy of women’s subordination has led to continued discriminations against women. These discriminations are socially constructed. They can be economic – such as women’s lower income and lesser access to wealth than men. They can be structural. Anne Phillips⁵ notes that ‘individuals are born into pre-existing positions in a social and economic hierarchy and the structures they enter will significantly shape their future lives’. And they can also be cultural, perpetuating deeply ingrained attitudes towards women’s social role and status and the structures within which women are expected to contribute to society.

Increasingly, the importance of gender equality in achieving balanced economic and social development is recognised. Modern democracy explicitly acknowledges that women should not be disadvantaged because they are women. It seeks to guarantee the same range of rights to women as are enjoyed by men and to eliminate various forms of discrimination against women. This is the premise underpinning the legal frameworks discussed above. It is also the principle informing the development of gender mainstreaming as a tool to assist in the elimination of inequality between women and men. Thus, gender equality in a modern democratic society means that women and men have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and their potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and to benefit equally from their results. This does not imply that men and women are basically alike. Treating women and men identically does not ensure equal outcomes because women

¹ The Constitution Review Group recommended that gender equality be made explicit (along with other categories of persons that suffer direct or indirect discrimination) in an additional section to Article 40.1. Constitution Review Group, *Report of the Constitution Review Group* (Dublin: Government Publications Sale Office, 1996), p. 230.

² The preamble of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) explicitly recognises that women and men are equal, and entitled to equally enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

³ United Nations, *The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action* (New York: United Nations, 1996), para. 9.

⁴ Pateman, Carol, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), pp. 222-3.

⁵ Phillips, Anne, *Which Equalities Matter?* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999), p. 17

and men experience different living situations. Gender differences are embedded in our cultural, social, political and economic systems. As a result, these systems often support and reinforce women's unequal status. Gender inequality is further intensified by race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation and other factors. To achieve true equality, actions must be taken that adjust for the differences in experiences and situations between women and men, and among women. Strategies for true equality also correct the systemic nature of inequality. The ultimate aspiration inherent in national and international commitments to gender equality is to create a society where women and men are equal in every respect, in terms of political, economic, social and cultural roles. Within this broad aspiration is the understanding that the diversity of women's situations - stemming from ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation and other forms of identity - are seen as positive dimensions of womanhood in a gender-equal society.⁶

Gender equality in Ireland

Gender relationships constitute a fundamental organising structure of Irish society. In recent years, equality between women and men has become a focus of aspects of economic and social policy. A broad framework for delivering equality between women and men was established by the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women together with European Union equal opportunities policies and commitments arising from the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. These four sources have provided the impetus to gender equality policies in Ireland, bringing the issue to the centre of Government policy making.

The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women contained 211 recommendations for action across all aspects of social and economic policy.⁷ Progress on the implementation of these recommendations was monitored in three subsequent reports.⁸ However, the 'checklist' approach of the monitoring documents has been superseded by a more integrated 'gender mainstreaming' perspective on equality policy. This change of focus has introduced a new way of analysing and evaluating policies that treats gender as an integral part of all policies. Gender mainstreaming is concerned with measuring and evaluating the impact and outcome of policy from a gender perspective at all stages of the policy process rather than seeking to add gender to already designed policies. The promotion of gender mainstreaming as a tool for bringing about equality between women and men is advocated by the European Commission. The Amsterdam Treaty recognises equality for women and men as a basic democratic principle and all policies of Member States are obliged to incorporate an equal opportunity dimension.⁹ A Statement of the principles underpinning the European Union is contained in Article F,

The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States.

In particular, Article 2 calls for the promotion of

a high level of employment and social protection, equality between men and women, the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity

⁶ For further elaboration on the concepts of gender and equality see Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Siobhán Mullally and Olivia Smith, *Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds: Outline Guidelines* (Dublin: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, July 1999) Appendix 1, pp. 45-6; National Economic and Social Forum, *Equality Proofing Issues: Forum Report No. 10* (Dublin: NESF, February 1996), pp. 11-19 and Teresa Rees, *Mainstreaming Equality in the European Union: Education, Training and Labour Market Policies* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 26-48.

⁷ Second Commission on the Status of Women, *Report to Government* (Dublin: Government Publications Sale Office, 1993).

⁸ Department of Equality and Law Reform, First Progress Report of the Monitoring Committee on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women (Dublin: Department of Equality and Law Reform, 1994); Department of Equality and Law Reform, Second Progress Report of the Monitoring Committee on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women (Dublin: Department of Equality and Law Reform, 1996); Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Third Progress Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women (Dublin: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 1999).

⁹ Treaty of Amsterdam. In a referendum held on 22 May 1998, 62 per cent of the Irish electorate voted to permit the Government to ratify the Treaty.

among Member States.

Article 3 sets as a goal for the members of the EU

To eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between women and men,

while Article 13 includes gender in an all-encompassing anti-discrimination provision,

The Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

In addition, Articles 137 and 141 restate the EU commitment to equality between women and men at work.

The European Commission has adopted a strategy of combining the integration of a gender perspective into all EU policies and programmes with specific actions in favour of women, and a new Community programme on gender equality for 2001-2005 is currently awaiting a Council decision.¹⁰

The impact of the EU gender mainstreaming requirement is evident in national policy. Equal opportunities is one of four key principles permeating all aspects of the National Development Plan and will result in gender equality being examined as a central policy concern.¹¹ The Plan incorporates positive actions for women as a complement to the gender mainstreaming strategy.¹²

In the social partnership agreement, *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*, four areas with a specific focus on gender equality are marked out for particular attention in the national agreement— women's poverty, violence against women, women in decision making and the mainstreaming of gender equality issues in the National Development Plan.¹³ In addition, many other actions in the *Programme* have clear implications for gender equality – for instance, proposals relating to childcare, income adequacy, health, rural poverty, the social economy and supports for voluntary effort and participation contain distinctive gender equality challenges. Improving the status of women is also a concern of the United Nations, as a fundamental principle in the founding Charter, repeated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and given practical effect in a range of conventions, most notably the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, adopted in 1979) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (adopted in 1995).¹⁴

These international treaties and agreements have also had an influence on Irish gender equality policies. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is an international bill of human rights for women. It defines what constitutes discrimination and sets an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. By accepting the convention, countries commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women. Countries that have ratified or acceded to CEDAW are committed to submitting national reports at least every four years on measures taken to comply with their obligations. Ireland acceded to the Convention on 22 December 1985 and presents periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on legislative and other steps taken to implement the provisions of the Convention.¹⁵

¹⁰ European Commission, *Towards a Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005)*, (EC: Brussels, 7.6.2000), COM (2000) 335 final.

¹¹ The other three horizontal principles are the environment, poverty and rural impact.

¹² Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 'Current Equality Policies and Strategies', paper circulated to NESF Plenary Session on Equality, 18 May 2000.

¹³ *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness: Framework III for Social Inclusion and Equality*, paragraphs 3.1; 3.12, <http://www.irlgov.ie/taoiseach>.

¹⁴ Pietilä, Hilkka and Jeanne Vickers, *Making Women Matter: The Role of the United Nations*, 3rd edition, (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1996)

¹⁵ The first report was presented in 1987, the combined second and third reports in 1997. The text of the Convention can be found appended to *Ireland's Combined Second and Third Reports under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (Dublin: Department of Equality and Law Reform, 1997) and at the UN website

The Irish Government accepted without reservations the Platform for Action agreed at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reflects a new international commitment to the goals of equality, development and peace for women everywhere. The Platform identifies 12 'critical areas of concern' considered to represent the main obstacles to women's advancement. It defines strategic objectives in each area and spells out actions to be taken by Governments, the international community, non-Governmental organisations and the private sector for the removal of the existing obstacles to gender equality. The critical areas of concern are:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision making
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl child

The Platform advocates an 'active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective' in the monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes as the most effective way of advancing gender equality.¹⁶ The United Nations General Assembly Special Session 'Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century' took place in June 2000 and agreed further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Together, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Platform for Action set an international standard for equality between women and men that has influenced Irish Government policy in the area of gender equality. The Government reaffirmed its endorsement of the Platform for Action at a special session of the United Nations in June 2000.¹⁷

At national, European and international level, gender mainstreaming is now the preferred instrument for effective monitoring and evaluation of equality policies.

Two trends are clear. One is that gender equality policies in Ireland are driven by national, European and international commitments on the advancement of women's status in society. The second is that policy making in the area of gender equality is evolving from being a marginal issue to becoming an integral part of all policy development. Those committed to an equal and inclusive society advocate that gender be placed at the centre of policy concerns, as distinct from attaching a gender dimension on to policies that are already decided. This has led policy makers to considering a more inclusive approach to policy development. The tool, or mechanism, for developing a gender-sensitive policy style is gender

<http://www.undcp.org/unlinks.html>.

¹⁶ Platform for Action, paragraph 292.

¹⁷ Statement by Mr John O'Donoghue, T.D., Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session, *Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century*, 6 June 2000.

mainstreaming. According to the Council of Europe¹⁸, this entails

the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuate. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

In the same vein, the European Commission¹⁹ defines mainstreaming as

Mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving gender equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women (the gender perspective).

The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that women and men benefit equally in respect of all public policies and programmes. It is a long-term strategy designed to frame policies in terms of the realities of women's and men's daily lives. It puts women and men, and their diverse needs and experiences, at the heart of policy-making.

Gender mainstreaming is slowly filtering into the Irish policy process. Currently, gender mainstreaming is a required strategy only for the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP). A Gender Equality Expert has been engaged to advise on the gender impact assessment of policies and measures in the NDP and is playing a role in the detailed elements of the Plan (e.g. the Operational Programmes and the Programming Complements). In addition, Gender Impact Assessment Guidelines for the NDP have been approved by the Government. The revised *Action Programme for the Millennium* contains a commitment to gender mainstreaming across all areas of Government policy. The detail of how this commitment will be realised has yet to be worked out.²⁰ One aspect of gender mainstreaming is the 'proofing' of all policy proposals at the planning stage to determine their likely impact on the respective situations of women and men. The second aspect of gender mainstreaming is the monitoring and evaluation of policy outcomes to determine if gender equality is advanced. This aspect requires the construction of indicators that facilitate clear and objective policy evaluation. Gender equality indicators are a tool for measuring the effectiveness of a policy in delivering gender equality, thus placing a focus on policy outcomes. Critiques of the strategies adopted by the Irish Government in implementing gender equality highlight a number of deficiencies.²¹ These include the absence of agreed indicators, the lack of a comprehensive bank of gender disaggregated data and the low level of women's input into the Government's gender equality strategy.

The research

The purpose of this research was to advise the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the development of mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving gender equality in Ireland. The terms of reference were to:

- Assess the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women
- Develop indicators that could measure the impact of Government policies on the status of women

¹⁸ Council of Europe, *Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Presentation of Good Practices*, Final Report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (EG-S-MS (98) 2) (Strasbourg: May 1998), pp. 3-4.

¹⁹ Quoted in DJELR, Mullally and Smith, *Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds*, p. 9.

²⁰ Government of Ireland, *An Action Programme for the Millennium*, revised November 1999 (Dublin: Department of an Taoiseach, 1999).

²¹ DJELR, Mullally and Smith, *Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds*, pp. 10-11; National Women's Council of Ireland, *Promises Made, Promises Broken, Beijing +5 Alternative Report for Ireland* (Dublin: NWCI, May 2000); Ursula Barry, *Building the Picture: The role of data in achieving equality*, (Dublin: Equality Authority, May 2000).

- Make proposals with regard to the establishment of a comprehensive gender-disaggregated statistical base and
- Advise on an institutional framework for monitoring gender equality.²²

In order to manage this multi-task research brief, it was decided to focus on the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action and to use these as a basis for integrating the outstanding recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women and incorporating comments by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland's combined second and third reports. This work was seen as a precursor to the development of a national plan of action for women, that would in turn set implementation of the Platform for Action in an Irish context. This research contributes to a dynamic, ongoing and systematic process of building consensus on the way forward for gender equality and the advancement of women's human rights in Ireland.

This chapter discusses the principles of gender equality and gender equality mainstreaming. It sets the context for this report.

Chapter 2 assesses the extent to which the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women are implemented.

Chapter 3 focuses on the requirements for developing a statistical data-base that meets the monitoring needs of gender mainstreaming. It suggests a code of best practice for the gathering of gender-disaggregated statistics and identifies data gaps that need to be filled.

Chapter 4 discusses issues surrounding the development of gender equality indicators. It presents a number of core gender equality indicators that begin the process of assessing gender equality policies as identified by the twelve critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and the area of culture and sport drawn from the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women.

Chapter 5 examines the existing institutional framework for monitoring gender equality and makes specific recommendations in this area.

Research methodology

This report draws on the experiences of existing gender mainstreaming practices and processes in Ireland and elsewhere. Two research strategies were adopted in compiling the report. One consisted of a comprehensive review of literature and information on the research tasks. The second comprised a wide range of interviews and discussions with gender experts and individual subject experts, policy makers and leading spokespersons of non-governmental organisations in Ireland and abroad.

The literature and information review consisted of a number of different strands. An analysis of the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women was carried out. A close review of the national plans of the United Kingdom, Finland, Canada, Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands and other jurisdictions was conducted. International benchmarking procedures and best practice models on the development of performance indicators were assessed. An extensive range of reports compiled by national bodies, departmental agencies and non-Governmental organisations in Ireland were analysed in the course of developing recommendations on performance indicators. An assessment of gender statistical data-bases was conducted, with particular reference to Sweden, Canada and the United Kingdom. A survey of national machinery for gender mainstreaming in Europe and in English-speaking countries was conducted and a review of the existing Irish machinery undertaken.

These extensive literature and information reviews were supplemented by a series of discussions and interviews with key personnel in Ireland and elsewhere. Semi-structured interviews were held with 26 policy actors in Ireland on the four research areas, and discussions were held with individual experts and non-Governmental organisations in Ireland and experts in other countries on specific aspects of the research. Close liaison was maintained between the research group and other consultants engaged in

²² The complete terms of reference are contained in Appendix 1.

developing a gender-disaggregated statistical data base for the National Development Plan. Leading experts on statistical data base construction in Ireland and the United Kingdom were interviewed in the course of preparing a model of best practice in this area. Consultations took place with experts on national machinery in the United Kingdom, Finland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden. The research team was represented at a seminar on developing gender-sensitive performance indicators in Edinburgh, Scotland in March 2000. In addition, a seminar to assess the gender equality indicators arising from the research was held in May 2000. A full list of individuals consulted in the course of this project is contained in Appendix 2.

The project was overseen by a steering committee drawn from a sub-group of the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Membership of this committee is contained in Appendix 3.

This research builds on gender and equality proofing reports compiled by Siobhán Mullally and Olivia Smith for the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform with the assistance of a working group established under Partnership 2000.²³ The foundations of this research also reside in the guidelines on poverty indicators developed by the Combat Poverty Agency and in the National Social and Economic Forum report, *Equality Proofing Issues*.²⁴ It is underpinned, too, by the gender mainstreaming strategies developed within the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. The report identifies a series of core gender equality indicators applicable to Ireland for each of the twelve critical areas of action and for culture and sport. It makes suggestions on the creation of a gender disaggregated statistical database and recommends specific institutional actions to advance the process of mainstreaming gender in all policies and programmes.

²³ DJELR, Mullally and Smith, *Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds*; Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Siobhán Mullally and Olivia Smith, *Partnership 2000 Working Group Report on Equality Proofing* (Dublin: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, January 2000).

²⁴ NESF, *Equality Proofing Issues*.

Chapter 2

The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women

Introduction

The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women, published in January 1993, marked an important development on the path to gender equality in Ireland. It provided a comprehensive review of women's status in Irish political, economic and social life. The report was underpinned by a concern that 'women should be facilitated to develop economic independence' and it sought to contribute to a society 'based on the principles of equal opportunity, mutual support and the free and equal partnership of women and men'.²⁵

In this chapter, the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women is assessed in detail and any outstanding recommendations are identified for further action. The evolution of the equality agenda since the publication of the Commission Report is then considered and a way forward for gender equality is identified.

Review

The Commission on the Status of Women made 211 recommendations with over 600 parts for implementation within a ten-year period. Three monitoring reports were published – one in 1994, a second in 1996 and the third in 1999. These reports monitored the implementation of the recommendations, indicating where progress was made and where obstacles to implementation occurred. The first task in this chapter is to evaluate the extent to which these recommendations were given effect. Two methodological questions became immediately apparent. One related to the differentiation of recommendations from the wider policy issues addressed. The second centred on the classification of the recommendations as required by the terms of reference. Although distinct questions, they were inextricably linked and a consideration of the Report required that both be answered.

The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women addressed women's rights in policy areas, and made a large number of recommendations on these issues. It was obvious that the recommendations highlighted central aspects of the general issues as understood by the Second Commission at the beginning of the 1990s. It was also clear that the Second Commission framed its recommendations so as to offer a feasible and realistic programme for government action on women's equality. In the course of assessing the recommendations a decade later, it became apparent that a substantial number had been addressed by government. It also became clear that although these recommendations were the subject of policy attention to a greater or lesser degree, the actual general issues remained alive. For example, the 13 specific recommendations on childcare sought to create a policy framework and a structure for the delivery of childcare services. These are now in place, and it is legitimate to say that the recommendations are implemented. However, it is also appropriate to recognise that childcare is a major policy and political issue today. While the recommendations of the Second Commission are implemented, they have not resolved the more general issues of childcare funding, access to, and availability, of childcare services. This demonstrates that while the proposals of the Second Commission on childcare are to all intents and purposes addressed, the issue requires further policy attention to address the difficulties manifest today. In the current context, the lack of appropriate and affordable childcare services presents an obstacle to women's access to education, training and employment opportunities and perpetuates women's poverty. Another example is the recommendation on the introduction of a community property regime within marriage so as to give wives an equal entitlement with their husbands to the property, finances and other assets of the marriage. This issue was addressed in the Matrimonial Home Bill, 1993, but was subsequently deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. This finding makes the recommendation itself redundant, but does not negate the validity of the general issue of the equal rights of spouses to property and income within marriage. In this review, then, the extent to which the recommendations were acted upon is assessed, with a full

²⁵ Commission on the Status of Women, *Report to Government* (Dublin: Government Publications Sale Office, January 1993), pp. 7-8.

realisation that the general issues remain alive and require further action. In this regard, the Platform for Action provides a more up-to-date context for a focus on gender equality.

The second problematical issue to be addressed concerned the categorisation of the recommendations. The terms of reference called for the recommendations to be categorised according to whether they were (i) implemented/substantially implemented; (ii) remain to be implemented or (iii) obsolete. In effect, the task involved the researchers making an informed judgement as to the extent of progress on the recommendations. The three-tiered categorisation was understood as a way of making an assessment of the influence of the Second Commission Report in advancing the equality agenda. In the absence of benchmarking indicators constructed around the recommendations that could provide a quantified measure of progress, a broad judgement based on categorising the recommendations into three general groups was deemed the most productive way forward. The first category, that of implemented/substantially implemented, was broadly taken as indicating a positive policy response ranging from a full implementation of the recommendation to a consideration of the recommendation within a wider policy initiative along with other in-between responses. In other words, it identified if recommendations were on the policy agenda and were the subject of governmental attention. The second category, that of remaining to be implemented, was used to identify recommendations where no policy action had taken place. The third category, that of obsolete, was interpreted as meaning recommendations that may or may not have been the subject of policy action on the part of government, but were no longer relevant to the equality agenda for a variety of reasons. This does not imply that legal barriers or other obstacles deny the relevance of a particular policy to the equality agenda. Nor does it exclude a reinterpretation of the policy in question in a different manner and in the relevant context. The category of obsolete merely records that a specific recommendation has been found to be no longer workable in the policy context in which it was situated. In other words, it was no longer implementable at this point in time, but could possibly be open to implementation in the future. The recommendation on the reimbursement of sterilisation expenses by the Voluntary Insurance Board is a case in point.

Working through the issue of policy implementation or otherwise reinforced the need for specific indicators to give a more accurate measurement of progress on gender equality. While the report concentrates on the development of such indicators, the remainder of this chapter will focus on three matters: general difficulties encountered in assessing the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women, a considered evaluation of the recommendations contained in the Report within the parameters discussed above, and finally, a discussion of the way forward for a gender equality agenda in Ireland.

As stated earlier, the Report presents many challenges to objective assessment. Part of the difficulty lies with the recommendations – the large number of reforms sought and the generalized nature of many of the recommendations. There is a challenge, too, in measuring the policies produced in response to many of the recommendations. Unless subsequent policies did exactly as the recommendations called for, it was sometimes difficult to evaluate whether policy responses matched the Report's recommendations.

An additional complexity was introduced when individual views were sought on the extent of implementation of the Report. Perceptions as to what constituted substantial as distinct from partial implementation depended on the location of the person in relation to the Report – as civil servant, expert, activist in women's non-Governmental organisation, social partner or member of an organisation without links to the women's sector.

Furthermore, the three progress reports did not always provide definitive answers as to the extent to which a recommendation was implemented. In many instances the progress reports documented policy activities that had some relation to a recommendation without assessing whether it met the requirements expressed in the Report – even if the policy response was more comprehensive than the original recommendation. In sum, this exercise highlighted the difficult nature of monitoring policy implementation in the absence of a clear structure to guide the assessment of policy change.

Bearing these caveats in mind, a review of the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women was undertaken using the three monitoring reports as a guideline, supplemented by the

Government's report to the UN on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, consultations with members of the project steering committee and clarification from individual policy experts. Although quantification was problematic, this review revealed that over three quarters (164) of the 211 recommendations were implemented or were on the policy agenda by 1999-2000. Another one-fifth (41) were outstanding and there were a tiny number of obsolete recommendations. Specifically, substantial progress was made in achieving the agenda for reform in constitutional and legal issues, childcare, women in the home, women and work, education, training and labour market initiatives and health. Less progress occurred in implementing the recommendations on rural women, participation, politics and power, women in culture and sport and women in situations of disadvantage.

The review showed that the recommendations in the Report of the Second Commission were influential in developing a body of women-specific, equality-seeking policies. The Report provided a valuable blueprint for gender equality and raised many important issues with respect to women's lives that had not previously been the subject of political attention. It gave status and legitimacy to a gender-based reform agenda and raised public awareness of the extent of discrimination, much of it indirect, against women in policy and practice. In doing so, the Report set out a framework for policy reform that served to structure and focus policy developments in subsequent years.

The review highlighted a number of drawbacks in the Report. The 211 recommendations were given equal weight, although some were clearly more significant than others. This made it very difficult to prioritise policy reform, and reinforced an incremental approach to gender concerns as distinct from a coherent, planned strategy to tackle discrimination against women. Second, the monitoring and evaluation framework provided for in the Report was inadequate. This hampered the charting of progress on the implementation of the Report. Third, the structure of the Report ruled out the possibility of providing for policy updating and incorporation of change in the reform agenda. This led to the Report becoming time-bound. The review also indicated that the equality agenda had moved forward since the Report was published. Thus, even in areas that appear to have been reasonably well addressed, the agenda of the early 1990s is clearly not adequate for today. Static recommendations became dated and overtaken by political, social and economic developments.

On another level, the reform agenda laid down by the Commission had a national focus. The Commission was not required to link the domestic equality agenda with international equality commitments (CEDAW). Yet, there was a clear overlap between the Commission recommendations and the CEDAW commitments, as is evidenced by the continued references to the Commission agenda and to initiatives arising from the implementation of this agenda in Ireland's 1997 CEDAW report.²⁶ Given the national focus of the terms of reference of the Commission, however, the Report did not address gender equality in the context of Ireland's international equality commitments.

In spite of these disadvantages that emerged over time, it is clear that much was achieved through the implementation of the recommendations of the Report. In many instances, recommendations are implemented. Others are part of wider policy initiatives and are subject to ongoing implementation. A small number of recommendations are obsolete due to the passage of time and the findings of legal judgements. This leaves a handful of outstanding recommendations that await the attention of specific departments, State agencies and overall strategic Government consideration. The next section reviews the Report of the Second Commission in greater detail. For each chapter in the Report, an overall assessment of the status of the recommendations is given, followed by a series of subsections that indicate the recommendations that are implemented, are outstanding and obsolete.

Introduction: This introductory section contained one recommendation concerning the monitoring and implementation of the Commission Report (paragraph 0.7.2). A monitoring committee was established under the aegis of the Department of Equality and Law Reform and three progress reports were published and laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

²⁶ See Government of Ireland, Ireland's Combined Second and Third Reports under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Dublin: Department of Equality and Law Reform, February 1997), pp. 24-5, 33-4, 45.

Constitutional and Legal Issues. This chapter dealt with the Constitution as it affects women and equality legislation and contained 20 recommendations on these matters. This evaluation indicates that 17 recommendations are implemented or are on the policy agenda, 2 are outstanding and there is 1 obsolete recommendation.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: A referendum on divorce took place in November 1995 (paragraph 1.2.7) at which voters consented to the removal of the constitutional ban on divorce. The Family Law (Divorce) Act, 1996 gave effect to this decision and came into operation in February 1997. The Equality Authority was (paragraph 1.4.5) established in 1999 and equal status legislation (paragraph 1.3.8) enacted in 2000. Family law recommendations were also implemented, in particular those in relation to enforcement of maintenance orders (paragraph 1.5.7), the expansion of the mediation service, working towards its placement on a statutory basis (paragraph 1.5.8), raising the marriage age to 18 years (paragraph 1.5.9) and the separation of the civil registration of a marriage from the religious ceremony (paragraph 1.5.10). In the case of violence against women, the Domestic Violence Act, 1996 reformed the Family Law (Protection of Spouses and Children) Act, 1981 in line with the recommendations in the Report (paragraph 1.6.4). Counselling services for victims of domestic violence have received increased State support, while a pilot programme for perpetrators of violence is under way (paragraph 1.6.5).

Recommendations in respect of the civil legal aid scheme have largely been implemented (paragraph 1.7.3) as has the recommendation on prostitution (paragraph 1.8.1), the ending of the use of discriminatory language in Oireachtas documents and the reform of birth registration regulations (paragraph 1.10.2).

Other initiatives in this area include the establishment in December 1997 of a National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women with the purpose of providing a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency and cohesive response to the problem of violence against women.²⁷ The work of this committee is shaped by the Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women, published in April 1997, which addressed many of the issues contained in the Report of the Second Commission, expanding and developing a national strategy on violence against women and children in an integrated, multi-agency, inter-disciplinary and multi-level fashion. In particular, intervention programmes for offenders and counselling and support services for victims comprise important areas for action, as is the treatment of the complainant in rape trials (paragraph 1.6.6). The Task Force Report takes on board the recommendation of specialist training for the judiciary and others involved in the judicial process to raise their awareness of the complexity of violence and sexual abuse cases, it seeks consistency in sentencing policy, and advocates the provision of victim impact reports (paragraph 1.6.7). Other recommendations on violence in the Commission Report, such as teacher training and preventive education programmes for children on sexual abuse and violence, along with training for health professionals on the dynamics of violence against women (paragraph 1.6.8) are the subject of ongoing policy attention by the National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women.

The recommendation on a nominated partner assuming next-of-kin status in case of illness or hospitalisation (paragraph 1.9.1), was considered implemented, as the power to act as ‘attorney’ was already available to such persons.

Outstanding or awaiting policy attention: Two recommendations from this chapter remain to be implemented. One is the equality rights amendment to the Constitution (paragraph 1.2.6). The Commission made an argument for an amendment to the Constitution that would prohibit all forms of discrimination either direct or indirect based on sex. The argument is again made in Chapter 5 of this report. The decision to hold a referendum on this issue is the responsibility of the Oireachtas.

The second is the issue of abortion (paragraph 1.2.8), currently under consideration by the All-Party Committee on the Constitution. The forthcoming report of that committee is expected to recommend a range of solutions that will be the subject of public and parliamentary debate.

²⁷ National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women, *First Report* (Dublin: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, March 1999), p. 1.

Obsolete: The issue of a regime of community property (paragraph 1.5.6) was considered by the Supreme Court which ruled that the Matrimonial Home Bill, 1993 was unconstitutional. The introduction of a community property regime would require a radical change in existing property law.

Women in the Home: In this section the Commission addressed the varied needs of women who work in the family home; it looked at the income and status of the homemaker; the lack of supports for homemaking as a career choice and the impact of changing roles of both men and women within the family. On review, it is found that 12 of the 13 recommendations are implemented or are on the policy agenda as individual policy initiatives or as part of wider policy actions. One recommendation is obsolete, and there are no recommendations outstanding or requiring review.

Implemented or on policy agenda: The child tax allowance for low-income families (paragraph 2.4.2) is subsumed into the wider reform of the tax system, the main features of which are increased personal allowances and lowered tax bands. Separate tax assessment of married couples (paragraph 2.4.5) is available.

With regard to social welfare, tapered cut-off limits for welfare recipients (paragraph 2.5.2) are in operation. The question of individualising social welfare payments (paragraph 2.5.3) was examined²⁸ and the practicalities of the administrative individualisation of social welfare payments is under consideration by a working group set up under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. The recommendation on the Family Income Supplement (paragraph 2.5.4), is implemented as is the recommendation encouraging and facilitating younger lone parents to gain/return to employment, education or training (paragraph 2.5.5). The issue of personal entitlements to pensions/benefits (paragraph 2.5.6) is under way.²⁹ The Household Budget Scheme (paragraph 2.5.7) assists welfare recipients with budgeting for household bills. Funding for local women's groups is extended and improved (paragraph 2.6.3) and a grant scheme is available for support of locally-based men's groups since 1994 (paragraph 2.6.4).

The housing and planning aspects of the complex recommendation on the built environment (paragraph 2.7.5) come under the remit of local authorities who have responsibility for social housing and related issues. The content of this recommendation as a whole is covered by local authority development plans, the National Development Plan and transportation strategy.

The implications of individualisation for the tax and social welfare codes was examined in a 1999 Government report.³⁰ The tax individualisation measures introduced in the 1999 Budget subsume the recommendation on the review of the income tax code (paragraph 2.4.4).

Obsolete: The recommendation on joint ownership of family income and raising the legal right share on testacy to one-half (paragraph 2.3.1) is obsolete with the failure to introduce the community of property regime.

Women and Work: In this section the Commission addressed the issues facing women already in work or looking for employment. The Commission sought to devise an approach to women's employment that would reflect the actual patterns of women's family and employment activities and take into account such factors as the growing participation in employment by women with young children, structural and attitudinal barriers militating against women's employment, problems caused by a segregated labour market and the low pay rates of many women. Of the 12 recommendations in this chapter, 11 are implemented and 1 is outstanding. There are no obsolete recommendations and none requiring review.

The issues raised in this chapter were given further consideration by the Partnership 2000 Working

²⁸ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *The Report of the Working Group Examining the Treatment of Married, Cohabiting and One-parent Families Under the Tax and Social Welfare Codes* (Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, August 1999).

²⁹ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *Social Inclusion Strategy of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs* (Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, August 1998), pp. 119-121

³⁰ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *The Report of the Working Group Examining the Treatment of Married, Cohabiting and One-parent Families Under the Tax and Social Welfare Codes* (Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, August 1999).

Group on women's access to the labour market, established on October 29, 1997. This group gave detailed attention to women's labour force participation, made 45 recommendations and provided an updated policy context for the recommendations of the Second Commission and social partnership commitments contained in the Programme for Economic and Social Progress and the Programme for Competitiveness and Work.³¹ Therefore, while the majority of the recommendations in the Commission Report are implemented or on the policy agenda, the agenda for women's participation in the labour force is now advanced beyond that envisaged by the Commission.

Implemented or on policy agenda: Women's labour force participation is a major area of Government attention, and progress has been made in introducing flexibility into working life, support for childcare arrangements and access to appropriate training (paragraphs 3.2.1, 3.2.2). While full resolution of these issues has not yet been achieved, the issue of reconciling work and family life, the national childcare strategy and the increased participation of women in training programmes are important Government priorities. The National Development Plan, National Employment Action Plan, the National Childcare Strategy and the provisions of the social partnership agreements constitute the main planks of women's labour market participation policy, supplemented by a range of legislative and other policy initiatives. Pilot schemes on term-time working and work-sharing are being refined, and while initially applying to the civil service, the concepts are likely to have applicability in the wider public sector and, with modifications, in the private sector. Home workers (that is, persons who earn a wage by working from home) are categorised as self-employed under current legislation and the Government intends to ratify the 1996 International Labour Organisation Convention on the Recommendation on Home Work.

Statistics on women's employment patterns are gathered regularly by the Central Statistics Office (paragraph 3.2.3). The Report of P2000 Working Group went beyond the Commission in examining available measures for women's unemployment and found current data collection inadequately reflected the true level of women's unemployment. It called on the Central Statistics Office to examine this issue in greater depth.³² The Amsterdam Treaty, the National Development Plan and the Employment Equality Act 1998 places an onus on Government to examine the equal opportunities perspective of all employment policies and programmes (paragraph 3.6.3). Proofing of policies for gender equality is the subject of a Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform report authored by Siobhán Mullally and Olivia Smith.³³ Equality proofing is also discussed in a National Economic and Social Forum report.³⁴ The extent to which equal opportunities initiatives are operating in the State sponsored sector is the subject of a report issued by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in 1999³⁵, while national agreements such as *Partnership 2000* and *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* contain specific commitments to equal opportunities between women and men. The National Development Plan also provides for the integration of a gender-based analysis in employment and other policies.

The advent of economic growth since the publication of the Report has created an environment in which women are encouraged to remain in or return to the workforce. Thus, the recommendation on an employment strategy for women (paragraph 3.2.4) is implemented through increased opportunities for women to engage in paid work and by developments in employment policies and in the equal opportunity framework. In addition, the implementation of other measures sought by the Report has occurred, such as the introduction of the national minimum wage (paragraph 3.3.4), pro-rata social welfare pensions since 1991 for people with mixed insurance and gaps in their insurance record (paragraph 3.4.5 and 2.5.6b) and the review of employment equality legislation (paragraph 3.5.7). Sexual harassment is outlawed in the new equality legislation (paragraph 3.6.4). Combining work and family responsibilities is facilitated through a range of educational, childcare and flexible working policies. Adoptive leave and parental leave is available, as is the provision of leave for family reasons,

³¹ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *Report of the P2000 working group on women's access to labour market opportunities* (Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000).

³² *ibid.*, pp. 21-33.

³³ DJELR, Mullally and Smith, *Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds*.

³⁴ NESF, *Equality Proofing Issues*.

³⁵ Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, *Equal Opportunities in the State-Sponsored Sector*.

while the Maternity Protection Act, 1994 is undergoing review (paragraph 3.7.16). Although these provisions are modest in the entitlements they confer on working parents, they nonetheless constitute advances in policies designed to reconcile home and working lives. In addition, employers are encouraged to develop flexible working arrangements to assist employees in combining work and family responsibilities. Although much work remains to be done in this area, the recommendations in the Report of the Second Commission are addressed.

Women entrepreneurs (paragraph 3.8.6) comprise 20 per cent of existing business owners and account for 40 per cent of new business start-ups. Their specific needs centre on access to information, finance and technology. The current economic climate is supportive of women entering the world of business, and the continued health of the economy rests to some extent on the creation of sustainable indigenous small and medium enterprises. Women's business creation falls into this category. County Enterprise Boards are encouraged to provide support for women entrepreneurs at local level, while the women in business organisation, NETWORK, offers a wide range of support and advice to women entrepreneurs.

Outstanding: One recommendation is outstanding: that concerning the provision of improved public transport during twilight shift hours in local areas (paragraph 3.7.17). Today, this recommendation can be incorporated as part of a much wider ongoing assessment of the public transport infrastructure and access to public transport – particularly as it affects women's pursuit of work, family and recreational activities. This evaluation of an appropriate and effective public transport system, in rural and urban areas, requires a strong gender based perspective integrated into all policy decisions in this area. In terms of specific local transport plans, women and women's groups in communities affected by these plans should be consulted as to their transport needs. Their patterns of transport use should be researched and integrated into the design of routes, planning of timetables and provision of buses/trains/light rail that meet their needs as users. In terms of overall transport policy, a report by ADM on rural transport highlighted the need for a flexible response combining public and private services.³⁶ Women's representatives and persons with specific expertise in women's transport needs should be participants in all planning teams formulating transport policy, especially those established under the National Development Plan. This should take effect immediately and clear evidence of the integration of a gender perspective in transport plans should be made available as a matter of priority.

Women and childcare: The Commission adopted a dual perspective on childcare. Firstly, it was concerned that the lack of supports for childcare seriously limited women's potential to play an equal part in society, and if they wished, to pursue paid employment. Secondly, society had a responsibility to ensure the highest possible quality of care for dependent children: it was not enough to devolve responsibility for providing this on to mothers alone. Of the 13 recommendations in this chapter, all are implemented, and childcare is the subject of a national strategy that encompasses any outstanding aspects of the recommendations while integrating the issue into a wider policy framework designed to reconcile family and working life.

The increased participation of women in the labour market, brought about by a sustained period of economic growth since 1994, has highlighted the challenges contained in the recommendations in this chapter. In particular, the lack of appropriate and affordable childcare is repeatedly identified as a significant barrier to women's opportunities for engaging in paid employment. This issue is being addressed through the National Childcare Strategy³⁷ and through supporting measures contained in national budgetary programmes in 1998 and 1999. In addition, the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme has been in operation since 1998 and provides funding for a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the quantity and quality of childcare services from the equal opportunities and social inclusion perspectives.

The recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women on childcare were brought to the attention of the expert working group on childcare, established under Partnership 2000 to develop a national strategy for childcare in Ireland. The expert working group addressed these recommendations,

³⁶ ADM, *Rural Transport: A National Study from a Community Perspective* (Dublin: ADM, July 2000).

³⁷ Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, *National Childcare Strategy, Report of the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare* (Dublin: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, January 1999).

and, together with other initiatives such as the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, the introduction of the Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations, 1996, the establishment of the Child Care Policy Unit in 1993 in the Department of Health and Children and the introduction of the Parental Leave Act, 1998, a policy and framework for childcare is now in place.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: The development of a policy framework for the reconciliation of work and family life (paragraph 4.1.8) and for childcare (paragraph 4.3.1) is implemented. A childcare development plan (paragraph 4.3.2) is in place and the functions of a childcare policy unit (paragraph 4.3.3) are addressed. Regional childcare co-ordinators are appointed (paragraph 4.3.4). Regulations setting standards for childcare facilities are in operation (paragraph 4.3.5 (i)) and qualifications for childcare workers are developed (paragraph 4.3.5 (ii)). The training and regulation of childminders (paragraph 4.3.5 (iii)) is incorporated into the National Childcare Strategy as is the development of after-school and holiday care (paragraph 4.3.6). The development of workplace childcare facilities is ongoing (paragraph 4.4.3) and childcare funding (paragraph 4.5.2) is significantly increased, including funding from the Structural Funds (paragraph 4.5.3). The tax treatment of childcare facilities (paragraph 4.5.4) is in place.

Women in situations of disadvantage: This chapter considered eight categories of women with particular problems – women in poverty, older women, young single mothers, women with disabilities, lesbian women, Traveller women, women prisoners and women involved in prostitution and made specific recommendations in each case. Many of the recommendations had a number of sub-sections. Of the 9 recommendations, 6 were implemented and while there was some implementation of 3 others – older women, women with a disability, Traveller women and women in prostitution, a significant amount of work remains to be done in these areas. These 3 recommendations could be readily addressed through existing policy frameworks, and it is suggested that this is the appropriate course of action in each case. In general, the rights of women in these groups are protected under the reformed employment equality and equal status legislation. The issue of women in poverty is a critical area of concern for the Beijing Platform for Action, and provides an international context for the development of a national anti-poverty strategy that takes account of the impoverishment of older women, Traveller women, women with disabilities, women in prostitution, rural women, girl children and women in other situations of economic disadvantage. The national anti-poverty strategy, together with the Platform for Action agenda for the eradication of poverty among women can incorporate outstanding Commission recommendations in this area.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: There was a substantial body of action undertaken on the recommendation on women and poverty (paragraph 5.2.5). To a large degree, the agenda on women and poverty has become part of the wider National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) pursued on an inter-departmental basis and accorded Government priority. There is a relatively limited appreciation of the gendered nature of poverty within that strategy, but subsequent research commissioned by Combat Poverty Agency highlights the greater risk of poverty among women and children. Ongoing review of the NAPS strategy under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness should include consideration of the differential risk and experience of poverty between women and men.

The issues identified in the recommendation on young single mothers (paragraph 5.4.4) have been the subject of Government action through relationship, sexuality and parenting programmes, education and training assistance and the provision of support groups in some health board regions. Young single mothers are also identified as being at increased risk of poverty, and the NAPS and social inclusion strategies recognise this problem and seek to address it.

On women with disabilities (paragraph 5.5.3), the agenda for action contained in this recommendation is largely incorporated into the report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities, published in 1996. The National Disability Authority, set up as a statutory agency in 1999, is responsible for the research and development of standards for services and programmes provided to people with disabilities. It also monitors and evaluates implementation of standards in the services provided, and acts as an expert body assisting the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in the development of policy in relation to disability issues. It is suggested that a gender based analysis of

disability permeates the work of the Authority.

The recommendation on homosexuality (paragraph 5.6.5) is implemented, and lesbian women's rights are protected under equal status and employment equality legislation.

The needs of women prisoners (paragraph 5.8.6) have been substantially addressed with the opening of the new women's prison in 1999, which has special pre-release residences, provides relevant and properly resourced educational, training, recreational and work opportunities, allows for longer periods to be spent outside the cell and provides visiting facilities suitable for children. Supports for victims of crime (paragraph 5.8.7) have also been put in place, with some increased funding for Victim Support, training of Garda on dealing sympathetically with victims of crime and reparation to victims possible under the Criminal Justice Act, 1993.

Outstanding: A number of initiatives specifically addressing the needs of older women (paragraph 5.3.6) are now underway. While this is an area that is in its infancy in strategic policy development, there is evidence of a growing awareness of the needs of older women, in particular as related to adequate income and health. Older women are found to be more vulnerable to poverty than women in younger age groups. Budgetary initiatives have improved both the contributory and the non-contributory State pension. Also, increasing numbers of women are now qualifying for contributory pensions in their own right as a result of increased participation in the labour force and the easing of qualifying conditions. These qualifying conditions are currently being reviewed. Nevertheless, an overall pensions strategy should address the issue of reducing older women's poverty. The health needs of older women - prevention, medical and care - are an issue for health care professions and are given specific attention in the Plan for Women's Health. Another major issue for older women is access to safe, inexpensive transport. This is part of a gender dimension to transport policy that needs to be examined in the context of developing an adequate, affordable transport system in urban and rural areas.

A start has been made in implementing the recommendation on Traveller women (paragraph 5.7.4). The rights of Traveller women are protected under the new employment equality and equal status legislation, and in addition Traveller women's needs are highlighted as an issue of citizenship and ethnic rights. Initiatives in the area of multi-culturalism, such as the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (established in 1998 by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform) include the Traveller community. With regard to health, measures such as outreach services, on-site clinics and special clinics are either in place or planned. A Traveller Education Co-ordinating Committee was established in 1998 by the Department of Education and Science. Its objective is to draw up a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on the Travelling Community that reported to Government in 1995. While local authorities have the responsibility for providing appropriate accommodation for the Traveller community, little progress has been made in this area.

On women in prostitution (paragraph 5.9.3) there has been some progress in implementing this recommendation. The recommendation on prostitution is most appropriately situated in the context of the human rights of women, as laid down in the Beijing Platform for Action, which states that 'gender-based violence, such as battering and other domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual slavery and exploitation and international trafficking in women and children, forced prostitution and sexual harassment...are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated'.³⁸ The issue of prostitution requires a serious policy initiative at a number of levels. Women in prostitution have specific educational, health, rehabilitation, employment and other needs. It is also important to build a general recognition in society of the exploitative nature of this activity and the abuse of women's human rights it entails. Service providers, professionals and the Garda Síochána, need to develop an understanding of the complex interaction of social and economic patterns that lead women and girls into prostitution. Specific pilot projects, such as the Women's Health Project, exist where the health needs of women engaged in prostitution are addressed. This project, based in Dublin, provides outreach services and a drop-in clinic for women involved in prostitution where they can access health services and counselling. The Women's Health Project also provides workshops for nurses,

³⁸ Platform for Action, para 224.

social workers, students in addiction studies and other professional and community groups on aspects of prostitution. This project should be evaluated and a best practice model developed and applied in each health board. Although 'clients' of prostitutes can be prosecuted, there is little evidence to suggest that this has led to a reduction in the sexual exploitation of women. In this regard, prostitution and the related issue of trafficking of women and girls, should be a focus of attention by the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women, as this offers an integrated framework for tackling this abuse of women.

Rural women: This chapter recognised that rural women have very varied economic, employment and social backgrounds. It addressed rural women as a specific category for three reasons. Firstly, by virtue of their residence in rural areas, women experience particular problems of physical isolation and access to services. Secondly, many of them are living on farms and face specific difficulties associated with the occupation of farming. Thirdly, the current emphasis on rural development as a means of revitalising rural economies gives rise to particular issues for women. Of the 13 recommendations in this section, 6 were implemented or are on the policy agenda, 6 are outstanding and 1 is obsolete. The 7 outstanding recommendations are raised in the report of the Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture. This committee was established by the Minister for Agriculture in 1999. It has a remit to address education and training, the underrepresentation of women at political and organisational level, health and welfare and isolation and marginalisation of women in agriculture. In effect, the Advisory Committee places a renewed focus on policy practices that discriminate against farming women. The deliberations of the Advisory Committee on Women in Agriculture can be seen as part of a strategic management plan for rural development introduced by the Department of Agriculture and Food in 1999.

The plan is contained in the White Paper on rural development.³⁹ The report of the Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture identifies two fundamental issues as essential to improve the lives of women in rural Ireland – the development of a comprehensive rural transport service and individual entitlement to social security. This report, in the context of the overall strategic plan for rural development, provides a new agenda for women in rural Ireland, bringing the outstanding Commission recommendations to a new level of policy formulation.⁴⁰

Implemented or on the policy agenda: Access to information on social welfare and other State services (paragraph 6.2.2) is substantially improved. Administrative individualisation of social welfare payments was the subject of a study by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs in recent times. The recommendation on social security for wives of self-employed men (paragraph 6.3.6) is part of the larger issue of insurability and social welfare entitlements for such persons. The report of the Advisory Commission on Women in Agriculture discussed this issue. The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs is examining administrative individualisation and its implementation in the context of a working group set up under PPF. A move to administrative individualisation of the social welfare code would be of some assistance in addressing the issues in this recommendation.

The education and training needs of rural women (paragraph 6.2.4) and women in agriculture (paragraph 6.3.8) are also substantially addressed. However, agricultural education courses provided by Teagasc for women are not always certified, with the result that it can be more difficult for women than men to progress through an agricultural education programme. The educational needs of farm women is the subject of consideration by the Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture, while the educational and training needs of rural women in general are addressed in the National Development Plan and in the White Paper on Rural Development.

A gender based analysis of all Operational Programmes for the Structural Funds and Community Initiatives that promote rural development (paragraph 6.5.1) is already underway. Structural Fund and National Development Plan guidelines incorporate gender mainstreaming across all plans and activities. The recommendation on multi-functional centres in the context of community care and rural

³⁹ Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, *Ensuring the Future – A Strategy for Rural Development in Ireland: a white paper on rural development* (Dublin: Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, August 1999).

⁴⁰ Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture, *Report prepared for the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Development* (Dublin: Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, September 2000).

development (paragraph 6.2.3) is part of the rural development strategic plan for balanced regional development.

Outstanding: The integrated strategy on rural transport (paragraph 6.2.1) is a subset of the larger issue of transport policy on which statements have already been made. The White Paper on Rural Development identifies transport as part of a regional approach to promote sustainable economic growth and maintain the rural population.⁴¹ The Women in Agriculture report considers this a critical issue for rural women in particular, while the independent ADM report on rural transport also highlights the vital need for an adequate rural transport service to build and sustain rural communities.

The recommendation on mobile health centres (paragraph 6.2.3) has not been implemented, and in the light of increasing centralisation of hospital services, thought must be given to delivering health care at local level and in an accessible manner. Current policy thinking has moved away from mobile health clinics to ensuring adequate access to existing and planned facilities. This is expressed in the White Paper on Rural Development in which it is stated that ‘the Government is committed to meet the challenges of healthcare provision in rural communities’.⁴²

Recognition of the work of farm wives (paragraph 6.3.4) is treated in the report of the Advisory Committee on Women in Agriculture. The work of farm wives is not recognised as work in national statistics, largely because many farm wives are not registered as partners in the family farm and therefore farm wives cannot register for contributions and entitlements to social insurance based on their work on the farm. The fact that wives working on farms are not registered as business partners means that they are not covered for social insurance pensions or benefits. This also means that women’s access to relief services in cases of childbirth, sickness and vocational training (paragraph 6.3.7) as a tax deductible expense is not possible. The same issues apply to helper spouses (paragraph 6.4.1). This was considered by the Advisory Committee on Women in Agriculture, who recommended that both farm spouses have the option of gaining on-farm income in order to access individualised tax allowances and PRSI entitlements, or off-farm employment.⁴³ The Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has recognized a need for a thorough examination of the issues drawing on the expertise of the various stakeholders.

Although farming organisations state that women are welcome to apply for national office-holding positions (paragraph 6.3.9), there is still a resistance to adopting a pro-active approach to women in agricultural decision-making, and a reluctance by women to come forward for these positions. The NOW programme adopted by MACRA was a good example of equal opportunities in agricultural decision-making and should be extended to other farming organisations. The White Paper on Rural Development is committed to achieving gender balance in the rural institutional framework, in terms of wide consultation and participation in planning and representation of women and men in regional, county and local decision making forums.⁴⁴ The Advisory Committee on Women in Agriculture explores the barriers to women’s participation in agricultural decision-making and identifies lack of adequate transport services as an important constraint.

Obsolete: The introduction of a community property regime (paragraph 6.3.5) is now obsolete, given the findings of the Supreme Court on the Matrimonial Home Bill.

Participation, politics and policies: This chapter dealt with the participation of women in political and economic life. Many of the recommendations in this chapter focus on increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions, and others examine ways in which women’s concerns and perspectives can be taken into account in policy-making. In relation to the first issue, that of women’s presence in decision-making, some improvement can be seen, but recommendations are largely ignored by a number of parties and organisations. This is because the recommendations are framed as requests and

⁴¹ *ibid*, p. 5

⁴² *ibid*, p.6.

⁴³ Report of the Advisory Committee on the Role of Women in Agriculture, p. 52.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, p. 7.

exhortation rather than as binding commitments with in-built accountability mechanisms. On the integration of women's concerns and perspectives, this has been overtaken by the requirement to introduce gender mainstreaming as an integral part of policy development. While technically many of the recommendations of this chapter have been met, the outstanding issue is the need for leadership capacity building among women. To this end, a range of initiatives have been developed by the National Women's Council of Ireland, the Irish Countrywomen's Association and others that address leadership training for women.⁴⁵ Disappointingly, however, a critical mass of women representatives has not yet been achieved in either national or local politics. Of the 16 recommendations, 10 are implemented or on the policy agenda, and 6 are outstanding. The outstanding recommendations require a new, integrated initiative on equal opportunities for women and men in decision making.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: The two recommendations on educating for political participation (paragraphs 7.2.3 and 7.2.4) are substantially implemented, and the recommendation on the abolition of the dual mandate (paragraph 7.3.2) is accepted for elected representatives holding ministerial positions and is being more widely observed at other levels of government. The National Women's Council of Ireland is included in the social partnership process (paragraph 7.4.4), and the NWCI has received substantial increases in the annual grant and in funding for specific projects (paragraph 7.4.5). Politically, a ministry for Equality and Law Reform existed from 1992-1997, when it was integrated into the ministry of Justice, and became the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (paragraph 7.5.2), and the policy functions of this Department as recommended (paragraph 7.5.3) are implemented.

The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs monitors guidelines for the equal treatment of women and men in social welfare matters on an on-going basis (paragraph 7.6.1), application forms and correspondence are reviewed to eliminate sexist phrases and status-differentiating forms of address (paragraph 7.6.2), while it is an established practice that public sector job advertisements specify the relevant body to be an equal opportunities employer (paragraph 7.6.3).

Outstanding: The representation of women in decision making remains very low. Although there have been some initiatives taken by organisations and parties to open decision making to women, these measures have not proved to be effective. There is also resistance to implementation of the recommendations contained in the Commission Report. Thus, the adoption of programmes and timetables for the proportional representation of women in social partner organisations (paragraph 7.2.5) has encountered difficulty in IBEC and in the farming organisations. Although the ICTU has reserved seats for women on the executive, it does not have targets for women's representation. In a similar vein, the political parties have developed some initiatives towards increasing women's participation in politics (paragraph 7.3.10), but these efforts have not resulted in more women in electoral politics.

The recommendation on equal representation of women in Seanad Éireann (paragraph 7.3.11) has yet to be implemented, while no action has been taken on the recommendation to review the number of women representatives in Dáil Éireann (paragraph 7.3.12). While nominating bodies have put forward more women than before for service on State boards (paragraph 7.4.1), their practices fall far short of the 40 per cent gender balance. A similar situation arises in respect of the recommendation on women's interest representation (paragraph 7.4.3).

It is clear that a new initiative in the area of women and decision making is required – one that encourages organisations to share power among women and men, that sets targets and timetables for balancing gender representation and that facilitates women to avail of opportunities for participating in decision-making structures. The EU equal opportunities programme and the Beijing Platform for Action specifically address these issues. Recent legislation provides for a gender balance in decision making in specific areas – for example, school boards, university and third level governing boards, the Sports Council and others. The SMI process within the civil service has led to the development of a positive action strategy for the promotion of women to senior positions, the local authority system adopted an equality action programme in 1998, while a model equal opportunity policy and action plan is in place

⁴⁵ The POWER Partnership is an innovative cross-border initiative between women's organisations and academic institutions in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland providing an accredited course for women activists on feminism, politics and the State in both jurisdictions.

for health boards. These initiatives, while welcome, require regular monitoring and review to ensure that equality targets are met.

The Beijing Platform for Action and the EU programme on gender equality for 2001-2005 identify equal participation and representation as a strategic objective. Further initiatives to bring more women into economic, social and political decision making are required and can be formulated in a new national plan for gender equality.

Culture and Sport: The Commission was concerned with culture and the impact of culture in its broadest sense, not only as a range of activities to be shared and enjoyed, but also with the role of culture as a shaper of society and as a creative force in making and reinforcing images. The 20 recommendations cover women's arts policy, women's contribution to Irish cultural heritage, women and organised religion, women and the media, advertising, pornography and women and sport. To date, 13 are implemented or are on the policy agenda, 7 remain to be implemented. Of these, 5 recommendations come under the remit of the Equality Authority in association with the Arts Council and the media, 1 is the responsibility of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation and 1 calls for the churches to take the lead.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: Recognition of women's cultural contribution (paragraphs 8.2.3 and 8.3.2) are implemented, as is the recommendation on assistance to parents, particularly mothers, to promote the Irish language and culture (paragraph 8.3.3). The recommendation on broadcasting policies (paragraph 8.5.1) has received some attention from RTE and the IRTC, mainly in a monitoring context. The recommendation on the jury of critics on media awards (paragraph 8.5.4) is implemented, as is the recommendation on visual images of women (paragraph 8.5.5). The recommendation on equal opportunities in broadcasting guidelines (paragraph 8.5.6) is also implemented, and the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland has given effect to the recommendation on sexism and sex stereotyping (paragraph 8.6.2). Women and men are portrayed as equals in advertisements (paragraph 8.6.3), and the Video Recordings Act is monitored for its effectiveness (paragraph 8.7.1). The Irish Sports Council promotes an equal opportunities policy in sport (paragraph 8.8.2), and this area comes under the Equal Status legislation. The Irish Sports Council is now the national sports authority (paragraph 8.8.4) and a minimum one-third gender balance is provided for in the legislation underpinning this body. The Irish Sports Council has developed a national sports policy that includes equal opportunities for women and men (paragraph 8.8.3). The Council established a Women in Sport Task Force to examine issues in relation to women in sport and to make recommendations on making sport, sport policy, sport funding agencies and sporting organisations more responsive to the needs of women and girls as athletes and recreational sports persons. This Task Force reported in September 2000 and made a range of recommendations on gender-proofing sports policy.

Outstanding: The two recommendations on women's arts policy (paragraphs 8.2.1 and 8.2.2) are outstanding, as the Arts Council does not see gender segregation of the arts as a positive suggestion. It is suggested that the Arts Council enter into discussions with the Equality Authority with a view to assessing if the arts policy meets equally the needs of women and men artists.

The churches in Ireland outlined their commitment to gender equality, but the relationship between women and the churches (paragraph 8.4.4) is one that requires churches to give further attention to the role of women within their organisations and to initiate a dialogue with women in the wider community.

While the NUJ Code of Professional Conduct is operated within the print media, women are not proportionally represented in senior planning and decision making positions within the industry (paragraph 8.5.2 (b)). This requires an active equal opportunities policy with monitored plans and targets to ensure the advancement of women within the media. Such a strategy could be developed by the industry with assistance from the Equality Authority. This could include specific job-sharing plans or other forms of flexible working to enable a reconciliation of work and family responsibilities (paragraph 8.5.3).

Coverage of women's sport is subject to ad-hoc decisions by broadcasting agencies and the print media (paragraph 8.5.7), although there is an increase in the coverage of women's sport and in the number of

women sports commentators. The recommendation on a phased policy of increasing coverage of women's sporting events is still outstanding. This can be considered as part of a strategy to promote a balanced, non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media as part of a national plan for women and as advised in the Platform for Action.

A recommendation on sports funding (paragraph 8.8.5), suggests the adoption and implementation of an equal opportunities code as a criterion for sports funding. The Sports Capital Programme should be reviewed in the light of this recommendation by the Department of Tourism and Sport, as should the funding of sports organisations by the Irish Sports Council.

Education: In this chapter the Commission considered the issues of gender equity and opportunities in education for girls and women from pre-schooling through third level to second chance education. This chapter contained 41 recommendations. The educational curriculum has undergone a number of important reforms since the publication of the Commission Report. As a result, almost all of the recommendations are implemented or are in the process of being implemented. In total, 36 recommendations are implemented, 4 are outstanding and 1 is obsolete.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: On the legislative aspect, equality of access to and participation in education (paragraph 9.1.2) are incorporated in the Education Act, 1998, and the Equality Authority has the general function of promoting equality of opportunity in education. The promotion and monitoring of gender equality is now part of the brief of specific civil servants in the Department of Education and Science (paragraph 9.1.3), and the Equality Committee of the Department is chaired by an Assistant Secretary. A Gender Equality Unit, which is being set up under the National Development Plan, will have responsibility for monitoring gender equality throughout the educational system.

The Education Act, 1998 makes specific provision for equality of opportunity in subject choice between girls and boys. The School Development Planning and Whole School Evaluation programmes incorporate a gender equality dimension. The statutory and policy obligations to address equal opportunities at school level means that an equality policy with in-built monitoring and review mechanisms must be formulated in all schools, be they co-educational (paragraph 9.1.5) or single sex (paragraph 9.1.6). This requirement also addresses the concern that girls are not disadvantaged in co-educational schools *vis a vis* boys (paragraph 9.1.4).

The gender balance in recruitment and promotions in the school inspectorate has steadily improved (paragraph 9.1.7), in-service training courses on gender equality are available and regularly reviewed (paragraph 9.1.8), while a range of actions have been taken to eliminate sexism and sex stereotyping in books and materials (paragraph 9.1.9). Guidelines for teachers on non-sexist behaviour (paragraph 9.1.10) were issued in 1994, and this matter is addressed in in-service education and by the School Development Planning programme. The School Development Planning programme provides a structure within which gender equality policies are developed for students, staff and in administrative practices (paragraph 9.1.11).

The inclusion of parents in educational structures and policies (paragraph 9.1.12) is provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the administrative practices recommended in this paragraph have been adopted by many schools. Child abuse prevention programmes are in operation in the majority of schools, primary and post-primary (paragraph 9.1.14), but are not a mandatory part of the curriculum. Education for life, relationships and parenting programmes (paragraph 9.1.15) are included in the Civic, Social and Political Education and SPHE programmes. Issues of gender equality and prejudice against members of the Traveller community, homosexuals and people of different racial origin or religious belief form part of this programme.

The recommendation on equal opportunities programmes in youth organisations and training for more women youth leaders (paragraph 9.1.17) is implemented, as is the recommendation on statistical data gathering (paragraph 9.1.18).

The provision of pre-school education (paragraph 9.2.1) is only partially the function of the Department of Education and Science, and is conducted mainly through its Early Start programme in disadvantaged

areas. On the whole, pre-school education (that is, education up to the age of 4 years) is provided by the private sector, and the Department of Education and Science does not regulate standards in this area. This matter is considered in the National Childcare Strategy. The Strategy addresses the recommendation on guidelines for pre-school education (paragraph 9.2.3) and standards for pre-school teachers and assistants (paragraph 9.2.4).

The individual health boards are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996 and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1997, that give effect to Part VII of the Child Care Act, 1991 (paragraph 9.2.2).

The revised primary teachers curriculum handbook and teacher guidelines promote equality between girls and boys (paragraph 9.3.1).

In educational decision-making at school level, the Education Act, 1998 provides for the inclusion of a range of recognised interests on primary school boards (paragraphs 9.3.2 and 9.4.5). It requires patrons of boards of management to comply with ministerial directions on gender balance on such boards. Both recommendations also call for the election of the chairperson of a board of management by the members of the board, but this was not provided for in the Education Act, 1998.

The recommendation on appointment and promotion of teachers (paragraph 9.4.6) is substantially implemented. Research on the situation of women in school management was commissioned by the Department of Education and Science, and was followed by a pilot training programme for women interested in seeking promotion to decision making positions in schools. An evaluation of this programme is reported in *Stepping Out of the Shadows*.⁴⁶ A second training programme has been undertaken.

Disadvantaged areas have received, and continue to receive, specific attention (paragraph 9.4.7), with the extension of the home-school liaison scheme in primary schools and extra funding for schools taking part in the 'Break the Cycle' programme.

It is difficult to encourage girls into non-traditional courses at third level, given the rigidity of the entry system to third level, the formation of preferences at early stages in secondary schooling and the absence of a woman-friendly culture in some technical courses. In spite of these obstacles, a range of initiatives exists that encourage young women to consider non-traditional subject and career options. The Institutes of Technology have been to the fore in encouraging women into non-traditional areas of study through specific programmes directed at senior cycle female pupils (paragraph 9.5.2). Universities, however, could be more pro-active in this area while the Institutes could build on existing programmes and initiatives. This point is related to the recommendation on equal opportunities in third level institutions (paragraph 9.5.3). The elements of this recommendation are in place in third level colleges, and all third level institutions are statutorily required to draw up an equality policy and designate an equality officer. Much remains to be done in third level colleges to foster a climate of gender equality.

Access to third level by adult students (paragraph 9.5.3) is a growing policy issue, and the Higher Education Authority has set a target for adult student enrolments over the next five years, funded through a special initiatives programme. Many colleges now run foundation courses that introduce people returning to education to college study demands and learning expectations. Entry to college has become more flexible, with life experience and personal skills and knowledge taken into account in the case of mature applicants. State financial support for students returning to full-time education is more flexible, as the value of educational attainment in improving employment prospects is recognised. Further development of this area is in the remit of the HEA.

Childcare facilities (paragraph 9.5.5) are available in many third level institutions for students and staff with childcare needs. The establishment and the size of these facilities is a matter for each individual institution.

It is the policy of the Department of Education and Science that the widest possible curriculum is

⁴⁶ Warren, Leonie and Eileen O'Connor, *Stepping out of the Shadows: Women in Educational Management in Ireland* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1999).

available in all schools and that both girls and boys have equal access to all subjects and to as wide a curriculum as possible, where resources allow (paragraph 9.4.1). This policy also applies to new technological subjects (paragraph 9.4.2). A positive action programme on subject choice (paragraph 9.4.3) is underway through the School Development Planning process. Other initiatives in this area include the publication of a pamphlet addressing the increase in subject choice for girls, individual research projects such as that on co-education, gender and mathematics achievement and the production of resources for schools in the form of manuals, videos and CD-ROMs.

The introduction of a vocationally-oriented Leaving Certificate (paragraph 9.4.4), known as the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), has taken place, and the Commission's recommendations in relation to the broadening of subjects has been implemented. The programme now includes Home Economics, Art and Agricultural Science, which can be combined with each other or with other subjects. There is ongoing liaison between the Department of Education and Science and State training agencies in relation to subject choices, training and career opportunities for young women.

The adult education needs of women (paragraph 9.6.2), and the provision and funding of these needs (paragraph 9.6.3), along with the recommendations on self-help initiatives (paragraph 9.6.4) have been substantially met through funding to voluntary women's groups, the development of good practice models of educational provision for women in disadvantaged circumstances through the Women's Educational Initiative, and the response of Teagasc to women's educational needs. The adult education organisers of Vocational Education Committees (VECs) have the brief to address the educational needs of women in their catchment areas (paragraph 9.6.5). Specific attention to women's post-school education is an integral part of the National Development Plan, while the White Paper on Adult Education issued by the Department of Education and Science provides an overall context for the further development and improvement of educational services to diverse groups of adult women.

The adult education initiatives in the National Development Plan, specifically the employability sub-programmes of the Plan and the activities of FÁS in relation to linking women's training and employment opportunities, along with the strategies contained in the White Paper on Adult Education fulfil the recommendation on linking adult education and training (paragraph 9.6.7). However, the issue of live register qualification can act as a barrier to accessing training opportunities and needs to be removed.

Outstanding: Guidelines on the composition of interview boards for the appointment of school principals and teachers and requirements in relation to gender equality (paragraph 9.1.13) are addressed to some extent through the revised Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure for boards of management of national schools. In addition, interview board members are issued with the Equality Authority code of practice on interview procedures. Appointment decisions can be challenged through the employment equality code. However, the recommendation is not fully implemented, and it is clear that there is scope for a more coherent approach to training in interview practices for members of interview boards in an effort to eliminate sexism and gender bias in appointments to principal posts at primary and second level.

The national policy for school sports (paragraph 9.1.16), a key objective of which is the equitable access of girls and boys to sport and physical education in schools, is part of the Whole School Evaluation Programme. It is also overlapping with the remit of the Irish Sports Council, which has an important role in developing a recreational sports policy. Given the imbalance in sports participation between girls and boys (see chapter 4 of this report), the issue should be given further attention by the Department of Education and Science in conjunction with the Irish Sports Council and other interested parties.

The recommendation on establishing a common recognised standard or range of standards for pre-school teachers and assistants, (paragraph 9.2.4), is outstanding. This issue is discussed in the National Childcare Strategy report and is best pursued in that context.

The Report of the Committee on the Position of Women Academics in Third Level Education (paragraph 9.5.6) highlighted the absence of equal opportunities for women in third level institutions in employment contracts and promotional prospects. The Universities Act, 1997 requires universities to put an equality

policy in place that addresses gender equality along with other concerns. The HEA and the NCEA need to assess the extent to which the recommendations of this report are implemented.

Obsolete: Many of the initiatives in the area of adult education meet and supercede the recommendation on implementing the PESP commitment to developing adult education, (paragraph 9.6.6), rendering it obsolete at this point in time.

Training and Labour Market Initiatives: This chapter in the Report of the Second Commission looked at the importance of the training programmes and employment schemes run by the State as a means of bringing about equal opportunities for women in working life. When reviewed, some of these recommendations were found to have become incorporated into initiatives on education, dealt with in the previous chapter, in childcare policies and training policies intended to facilitate women to remain in work or return to the labour market and in broader policy initiatives such as the National Development Plan. Others were found to be outstanding and ought to be the subject of further attention. Of the 12 recommendations, 9 are implemented or are on the policy agenda, 3 are outstanding.

The report of the Partnership 2000 working group on women's access to the labour market provides a thorough examination of this issue. It draws attention to women's participation patterns in training, educational and employment programmes, identifies trends in women's employment and problems in measuring unemployment levels among women. The report also finds that the live register is a barrier to participation in labour market programmes for a significant number of women. It highlights the importance of adequate and affordable childcare for women's entry to training, education and work. It also stresses the strong connection between women's educational attainment and their participation in the work force. In effect, this report and its recommendations takes women's training and labour market opportunities as identified by the Commission into a new framework, and highlights the need for action on two outstanding Commission recommendations – women's participation in apprenticeships and removal of the live register requirement for access to training programmes. This report provides a national strategy for addressing the objectives on education and training contained in the Platform for Action.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: The issue of subject choice in education (paragraph 10.2.1) is by and large a reiteration of the recommendations in chapter 9 on education and is fully addressed in this context. The links between schools and training/third level institutions (paragraph 10.2.2) are facilitated through transition year programmes, the Youthreach programme jointly operated by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and a range of activities in which FÁS is a participant – for example, the Skills Awareness Working Group, which creates awareness of career opportunities in sectors that are likely to experience skills shortages. As it stands, this recommendation is implemented.

The Commission recommended that positive action measures be taken to increase women's participation on training programmes (paragraph 10.3.4). In the overall context of training and labour market participation, the National Development Plan requires that all initiatives provide for a gender-based analysis to enable women as well as men participate in training and employment opportunities. This applies to all State training agencies, educational establishments that provide vocational training and other training bodies in receipt of public funds. In addition, the Employment Equality Act, 1998 allows an employer to put in place positive action measures to promote equal opportunities, particularly those geared to removing existing inequalities which affect women's opportunities in access to employment, vocational training and promotion. In this context also, the National Action Plan on Employment gives specific importance to equal opportunities for women and men in training and labour market programmes.

The recommendation that FÁS review the designation of apprenticeships, with a view to extending the range of occupations involved to take account of skilled occupations which are predominantly female (paragraph 10.3.6) is implemented.

The recommendation that more training courses should be run as part-time courses (paragraph 10.4.6) was intended to provide flexible and readily accessible work-related training for women. This has been

implemented in a series of local initiatives by FÁS.

The recommendation on childcare facilities (paragraph 10.4.7) has largely been implemented and is generally superceded by wider developments in the area of childcare as an employment-related issue.

The recommendation on training for women in employment (paragraph 10.6.2) is substantially implemented and is given a policy context through the provisions of the Employment Equality Act, 1998. A businesswoman of the year award (paragraph 10.7.1) is sponsored by the business community.

The recommendation that national level women's organisations should be involved, insofar as possible, in the delivery of initiatives dealing with the employment, training or labour market participation of women (paragraph 10.8.1) is implemented.

Outstanding: The recommendation on women's participation in apprenticeships (paragraph 10.3.13) has not met with much success, even though FÁS has devised and implemented a range of measures to encourage the participation of women in apprenticeships. Given that in the present context there is a shortage of skilled workers and craftspersons, and given also that equal opportunities is an integral part of employment and training policies, this recommendation deserves to be revisited and a strategic plan of action drawn up for the inclusion of much greater numbers of women in apprenticeship programmes and in skill-based employment.

Access to training programmes is determined by an individual's employment status – for many work-related retraining programmes, one is required to be on the 'live register', that is, officially registered as unemployed with the local Social Welfare Services Office. This policy militates against many women who find it difficult to prove their availability for work in order to register as unemployed. The Commission recommended a relaxation of the live register requirement (paragraph 10.4.5). Economic prosperity and the associated demand for women to return to the workforce has taken the urgency out of the issue of women's access to the live register and in turn, their entitlement to participate in work-related training programmes. However, the issue is still not resolved, and it affects in particular farm women, women working in family business concerns and women working in the home. A close examination of the problems presented by the live register to women's employment opportunities was conducted by a working group set up under *Partnership 2000*.⁴⁷ This study found that the register excluded a significant number of women from training opportunities. Three specific categories of women were identified as facing significant problems in accessing education, training and employment programmes under live register rules.⁴⁸ The working group made 14 recommendations on the extension of access to education, training and employment programmes for the three categories, addressing the different needs of each group of women. The Government subsequently accepted these recommendations along with the other recommendations in the study. In the light of a strengthened equality framework it is time to implement these 14 recommendations, as to do otherwise is to perpetuate a patriarchal, discriminatory and outdated view of women's economic and social roles.

The recommendation on training for re-entry to the labour market (paragraph 10.5.3) has had a mixed level of implementation. The number of places on the Return to Work training programme has expanded, and it offers access to further skills training opportunities for women. However, it is clear that many of the other training programmes are open only to those who are listed on the live register. This raises the question of establishing eligibility for registration on the live register, an issue identified earlier as discriminating against a broad range of women. Thus, it seems appropriate at this point in time that the recommendations of the P2000 working group, already accepted by Government, are implemented without delay.

Health: This section of the Commission Report examined how health policy impacts on women. It focused on the administrative aspects of health policies, hospital policies, maternity, parenting and family planning issues along with the role of voluntary organisations, mental health, preventive health

⁴⁷ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *Report of the P2000 working group on women's access to labour market opportunities* (Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000), pp. 37-55.

⁴⁸ These 3 groups were: 1) the qualified adults of persons who are eligible to participate in ALMPS; 2) spouses in low income households; 3) returners/entrants to the labour force primarily engaged in domestic and home caring duties. Ibid, p. 43.

and women, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Together with education, the 41 individual recommendations in this chapter comprise the largest number of recommendations in a policy area, 30 of which are implemented or on the policy agenda, 9 are outstanding and 2 are obsolete.

Implemented or on the policy agenda: The first recommendation, concerning a national plan for women's health (paragraph 11.2.2) is implemented with the publication of a *Plan for Women's Health* in June 1997 and the establishment of a statutory agency dedicated to women's health issues, the Women's Health Council. The Council assists the Department of Health in assessing the gender differential effects of policy decisions on women and men.

The Freedom of Information Act, 1997 gives effect to the recommendation on enacting appropriate legislation to establish the right of access by individuals to all their hospital records (paragraph 11.2.3). Progress is also evident in implementing the recommendation on equal opportunities in the health services (paragraph 11.2.4). The development of a model equal opportunities policy and action plan for the health service incorporates issues such as recruitment, training and development, promotion and flexible working arrangements. The next stage is the adoption and implementation of this policy throughout the health service. In addition, equal opportunities is a key concern of the management strategy for health and personal social services implemented by the Office for Health Management.

The recommendation on the working conditions for non-consultant and junior hospital doctors (paragraph 11.2.5) was the subject of negotiation in June 2000 between representatives of junior hospital doctors and the Department of Health and Children. The agreement arising from these negotiations meets the concerns expressed in this recommendation.

The recommendation on the carer's allowance (paragraph 11.3.4) is implemented and superceded by additional initiatives that have increased the value of the allowance and introduced a greater degree of flexibility into the eligibility criteria. While much remains to be done to recognise the important contribution of individual carers (usually a woman family member) to the health service and to society at large, the specifics of the recommendation are addressed.

The recommendation on a policy of community care/home help (paragraph 11.3.7) is under way with an evaluation of the existing service being carried out by consultants. The same applies to the recommendation on pay for home helps (paragraph 11.3.8), who are entitled to the national basic hourly wage.

The recommendation on the funding of rape crisis centres, and liaison between rape crisis centres and health boards, along with the networking of the centres with one another (paragraph 11.3.11) is implemented. Rape crisis centres are established in all regions of the country, although there is an ongoing problem in accessing these services in rural areas.

The recommendation on women victims of domestic violence (paragraph 11.3.12) is implemented and superceded by additional policy developments. These include the establishment of a national steering committee on violence against women providing a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary and cohesive policy response to women experiencing violence, the establishment of regional planning committees on violence against women in the eight health board regions and the strengthening of protection afforded in domestic violence legislation in the Domestic Violence Act, 1996.

The recommendation on the establishment of drop-in family centres (paragraph 11.3.13) is now one part of a multi-dimensional approach to services for families and children at risk, arising from the implementation of the Child Care Act, 1991. It is found that working with at-risk families in their homes and communities is likely to yield the most promising results, and health boards are considering the establishment of drop-in centres as part of a locally-based, multi-agency response to at-risk families.

The recommendation for a study of the long-term implications for the well being of women who have had abortions and the development of a policy that would meet the needs of such women within the constraints of the law (paragraph 11.3.15) is implemented. The study, *Women in Crisis Pregnancy* was published in 1997, the Green Paper on Abortion was published in 1998 and the All-Party Committee on the Constitution held hearings on the Green Paper in 2000. The committee's report is due in the near

future. This response is part of the process of meeting with the recommendation seeking legislation on the treatment of life-threatening conditions during pregnancy (paragraph 11.6.1).

The recommendation on an individual appointments system in hospitals for outpatients (paragraph 11.4.1) is implemented, as is the recommendation that hospitals make provision for overnight accommodation and facilities for parents of hospitalised children (paragraph 11.4.2).

Consultation with women's groups (paragraph 11.4.4) is carried out by health boards as part of the process of developing a policy on women's health in each health board region. Within this broad policy framework, some hospitals consult with women's groups with regard to their services meeting women's needs. While implemented (especially in the area of maternity services), this is an ongoing issue and requires regular communication between women's groups, health boards, the Women's Health Council and hospitals as part of improving health services to women.

The recommendation on a publicity campaign directed at encouraging a take-up of dental services (paragraph 11.5.1) has been carried out, and additional funding for public dental treatment services has been made available (paragraph 11.5.2).

The extensive recommendations on childbirth (paragraph 11.6.2) are being implemented by health boards and are compatible with the policy direction on this issue in A Plan for Women's Health and other policy documents on the subject. Individual health boards are responsible for the delivery of a comprehensive care service to mothers and their newborn children in line with the overall policy of the Department of Health and Children.

The recommendation on miscarriage and stillbirth (paragraph 11.6.3) is implemented. Parenting and baby care programmes (paragraph 11.7.1) are available in public maternity hospitals and health boards are responsible for implementing a comprehensive maternity care service (see also comment on childbirth services, paragraph 11.6.1).

Progress is made in implementing the extensive recommendations on family planning (paragraph 11.8.7), and each health board is required to ensure that an equitable, accessible and comprehensive family planning service is available in its area. However, problems remain in accessing this service outside the major urban centres and health board priorities vary from area to area. Monitoring this service and ensuring health board policies are in line with overall Government policy and commitments is the responsibility of the Department of Health and Children.

The recommendations on the provision of sterilisation, female (paragraph 11.8.8) and male (paragraph 11.8.9) are largely implemented, although access to female sterilisation is problematic in some parts of the country.

The recommendation on the development of an education programme on relationships and parenting (paragraph 11.8.10) is implemented, as is the recommendation on a similar programme for early school leavers (paragraph 11.8.8). The recommendation on the funding of voluntary organisations on a multi-annual basis for the provision of agreed services (paragraph 11.9.1) is implemented, as is the preventative health education programme (paragraph 11.11.1) and the recommendation on the role of the Health Promotion Unit (paragraph 11.11.2). The recommendation on cervical screening (paragraph 11.11.3 (i)) and breast cancer screening (paragraph 11.11.3(ii)) is implemented. So, too, is the recommendation on HIV/AIDS/STIs education (paragraph 11.12.9).

Outstanding: The recommendation on the integration of carers in a community care system (paragraph 11.3.5) is implemented in some health board areas. The recommendation is superseded to some degree by the review of the home help scheme commissioned by the Department of Health and Children. Elder care and invalid care within the community is a major health and social policy issue for the future, as the population gets older, more women return to the workforce and there are fewer family members available to assume a caring role. In the light of these pressures, and in the context of the review of the home help scheme, a national integrated elder care strategy is necessary to meet the already growing demand for this service.

The recommendation on respite care (paragraph 11.3.6) is slowly being implemented, but is far from adequate. The implementation of this recommendation should be given some priority by the Department of Health and Children and individual health boards.

The provision of residential and day places for mentally handicapped people who need them (paragraph 11.3.9) is a high-profile political issue and measures have been taken since the publication of the Commission Report to meet the needs of members of this group and their families. Nonetheless, there is still considerable room for progress in this area.

The recommendation that locally-based sheltered housing be provided within the community to facilitate low-level care of elderly people (paragraph 11.3.10) is implemented on a small scale and a piece-meal basis. Sheltered housing is mainly provided by voluntary housing associations, organised charities and religious orders and is heavily subsidised by the Department of the Environment and Local Government. Although many of these housing units are individually very successful and operate to high standards of appropriate care, there is no evidence of a co-ordinated Government strategy for the overall provision of this housing and the subsequent delivery of care within these units. This should be an important part of an overall policy strategy on elder care.

The recommendation on the representation of women in decision making on health boards and hospital boards (paragraph 11.4.3 and section (d) of paragraph 11.2.4) is implemented in part. Successive Governments are committed to achieving a 40 per cent representation of women nominated by the State on public boards, and the Minister for Health and Children adheres to this policy. However, there is a difficulty in persuading other agencies and professional associations to comply with this policy. This recommendation should be treated as part of a comprehensive strategy designed to redress the gender imbalance in decision making.

Legislation on the treatment of life threatening conditions during pregnancy (paragraph 11.6.1) is not yet implemented, but will be addressed in the Report of the All-party Committee on the Constitution.

The Commission was of the view that the exclusion of routine medical maternity expenses from tax relief was discriminatory and ought to be addressed (paragraph 11.6.4). There has been no progress on this issue, and the feasibility of implementing this recommendation ought to be examined by the Department of Finance.

The recommendation on the implementation of a specific mental health strategy for women (paragraph 11.10.2) remains outstanding. It falls into the remit of the Department of Health and Children and should be given attention by the Women's Health Council.

Progress is made in implementing the recommendation on the genetic counselling service (paragraph 11.11.4), although the service is only available in one centre at present. The feasibility of extending a genetic testing and counselling service to other locations should be examined by the Department of Health and Children.

Obsolete: Given the women's health policy and institutional framework that has evolved since the Commission report, the recommendation on a patients' charter dealing specifically with women's health issues (paragraph 11.2.6) is no longer required. It would be more useful for the Department of Health and Children to monitor the services available to women (in particular access to family planning services) in each health board area and promote a more efficient and effective delivery of these services to women and men. Information regarding eligibility for community health services is the responsibility of health boards who should ensure a wide dissemination of this information.

Sterilisation expenses are not reimbursed by the Voluntary Health Insurance Board (paragraph 11.6.5) and the Minister for Health and Children has no authority to direct the organisation to provide this benefit to members. This recommendation is obsolete.

Summary

Altogether, 164 of the 211 recommendations are implemented or are on the policy agenda as of mid

2000, with a further 41 outstanding and 6 obsolete recommendations. The highest proportions of outstanding recommendations are in the areas of rural women, politics, participation and policies, women in situations of disadvantage along with culture and sport. An outline of the outstanding recommendations is contained in Appendix 5.

With the exception of the recommendations in the area of women and childcare and women in the home, each chapter contains a small number of outstanding recommendations. Many of these recommendations are uncontentious: some are part of routine policy evaluation, others require a more strategic approach. Appendix 5 illustrates the outstanding recommendations and identifies an implementing agency for the recommendation.

If the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women is to be fully implemented, a definite timescale is required for completion of the outstanding recommendations. Some of the technical recommendations could be dealt with in a short time period. For instance, the removal of the live register criterion for access to training programmes could be examined quite speedily, as could the recommendation on extending the genetic counselling service and the possibility of allowing maternity expenses for tax relief. Other recommendations require a longer term national strategy, such as the development of an integrated transport policy and an integrated community care policy. These longer-term issues lend themselves to incorporation in the gender mainstreaming approach to policy making that is now an important requirement for all public policy developments.

A third set of issues call for comprehensive treatment within the evolving EU and international equality framework. In particular, a more advanced analysis of the relationship between women and the economy and women in poverty presents issues that were not foreseen by the Commission. Women in decision making has proved particularly difficult to improve, and requires special consideration, while the role of the media in presenting images of women and men was a very minor part of the Commission report. The new agenda on women and violence is reflected in the concerns of the Platform for Action. Overall, the National Plan for Women should take the outstanding recommendations of the Second Commission's Report into account, integrating them into the Plan. The next section discusses changes in the policy environment that have occurred since the publication of the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women.

The new equality framework

The integration of domestic and supra-national commitments to equality between women and men in Ireland has intensified since the mid 1990s and can be attributed to four specific developments –

- the adoption by the EU in 1996 of gender mainstreaming as a strategy designed to ensure the attainment of equality between women and men
- the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam on 1 May 1999 integrating equality into the foundations and objectives of the European Community
- the adoption of the Platform for Action at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 designed to enhance the social, economic and political empowerment of women
- national commitments to gender equality in successive social partnership agreements.

These four initiatives have refocused attention on the inter-relationship between the national and supra-national equality agenda in Ireland with two important long-term effects. One major effect is to change practices in policy formulation and review through the incorporation of a gender based analysis of policy. The second effect is to set domestic equality goals and actions in a European and an international context. Inevitably, national gender equality initiatives are influenced by commitments to the European and international equality agenda. One example of this is the requirement in the Platform for Action that governments develop comprehensive, time-bound and benchmarked implementation strategies for the Platform to advance women's empowerment.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Platform for Action, para 297.

While the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women provided a valuable focus on gender inequality in Ireland in the 1990s, there is now a need to set the agenda it defined in a broader context as knowledge and analysis of the nature and causes of gender discrimination has deepened. Today, there is a greater appreciation of the fact that equality between women and men is not always about achieving the same policy outcome for women and men. The reform agenda of today is clearly sensitive to difference between women and men, challenging the assumption that achieving the male norm is the primary measure of progress. Present day equality agendas also highlight differences among women and no longer assume that women are a homogenous, undifferentiated group. Thus, equality policy in the new millennium seeks to address many aspects of disadvantage among women while at the same time rectifying discriminations between women and men. The issue of equality of difference, whether between women and men or among women, was embedded within the Report of the Second Commission, but not elaborated on to any degree.

A central concern of the new equality agenda is for extensive consultation with all equality-seeking groups in society. This is now seen as of key importance if an equality programme is to meet the needs and reflect the interests of women and women's diversity. Consultation is also important for refining and redefining equality agendas so that they remain relevant to women's and men's lives. In this way, the problems of a time-bound agenda can be overcome. Although the concept of an evolving equality agenda could become diffuse over time, this risk must be balanced against the need to develop relevant policy actions that are responsive to the changing needs of women and men.

The third major focus of the equality agenda of today is on mainstreaming gender as an integral component at all stages in the policy process. This perspective calls for gender proofing of all policies and practices, and for a gender impact analysis of new policy proposals. The aim is to shift gender equality away from being an additional dimension to already formulated policies, as is traditionally the case. Instead, gender equality has assumed a significant position at the heart of policy formulation. This major repositioning of gender in the policy process has come about because of a growing national and international political realisation that while gender equality may be provided for in law, it may not translate into equality in everyday life.

Monitoring and evaluating policy practices and outcomes are essential components in making gender mainstreaming work. This aspect of mainstreaming seeks to develop objective tools for measuring policy outcomes with the intention of informing further equality initiatives. It is an attempt to move beyond anecdotal evidence to deliver a relatively dispassionate, yet sensitive, evaluation of the actual effects of policy on target groups. It entails building consensus with affected groups on targets and timetables for progress. The lack of a set time frame for implementation of specific policy actions in the Report of the Commission resulted in recommendations being postponed without any reason being given. The new equality framework identifies implementation bodies and charges them with the responsibility of ensuring agreed policies are put into effect within a definite time frame. The Report did not identify implementing agencies, leading to some recommendations being moved from one Government department to another. This lack of identifiable responsibility led to delays or postponement of implementation. The commitment to monitoring in the Report of the Second Commission was not sufficiently structured to ensure full and effective implementation across the wide range of issues covered.

In short, the way of thinking about equality has shifted since the Report of the Second Commission. The new paradigm applies to Ireland as much as to other countries, given our commitments under European and international treaties. Within this new framework, the underlying principle in the report of the Second Commission – the empowerment of women in Ireland – is restated in a way that is relevant for women and men today.

The way forward

The Platform for Action provides a broad global framework for the development of national agendas for the advancement of women's human rights. As an endorser of the Platform for Action, Ireland is

required to produce a national strategy, or plan of action, for implementation of the Platform. The linking of global strategic objectives and actions designed to improve women's human rights with a national plan for gender equality allows Ireland to develop policy responses tailored to national gender equality needs and priorities while at the same time respecting and fulfilling international obligations on women's human rights.

An examination of the issues in the Commission Report and of the critical areas of concern identified by the Platform for Action highlights the broad similarity of the two agendas. Poverty, education and training, health, violence, the economy, power and decision making, to name but a few, are areas of common concern. Both agendas are based on the principle of the empowerment of women and the full realisation of equality between women and men.⁵⁰ The majority of the recommendations in the Commission Report are now implemented. Many of the outstanding issues are quite specific in intent. They will not introduce major changes to the existing body of equality policies. The Commission Report has now made its unique and important contribution to building a more gender equal society. It is time to shape a new, forward-looking equality agenda. The Platform for Action provides the blueprint for the development of a national strategy for Ireland that integrates a gender perspective in all policies and programmes and that develops concrete measures to address critical areas of discrimination against women.

⁵⁰ Commission on the Status of Women, *Report*, pp. 7-9; *Platform for Action*, para 9.

1. *We recommend that a National Plan for Women be developed to replace the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women as the framework for Ireland's gender equality agenda.*
2. *We recommend that the National Plan for Women should take the outstanding recommendations of the Second Commission's Report into account, integrating them into the Plan.*

Chapter 3

Gender Equality Statistics

Statistics are figures, i.e., numerical information answering the question How much? How many? They are usually presented in aggregate form as numbers or proportions in tables and graphs.⁵¹

Developing gender statistics

Statistics are one of the main instruments used to monitor and promote gender equality. Gender statistics are designed to reflect the realities of women's and men's lives, presenting a correct measurement of their participation in social and economic life. It is obvious that no set of numbers can capture the rich diversity and complexity of women's and men's lives. However, statistics underpin the identification of quantitative targets for gender equality and the development of indicators to measure progress towards those targets. The uses to which gender statistics can be put is summarised in the document, *Engendering Statistics*:

Gender statistics are needed in different contexts: to inform the public and the media, as a basis to formulate, monitor and evaluate policies, programmes and projects; as a basis for analysis and investigation of causes and effects of different phenomena and relationships among different variables.⁵²

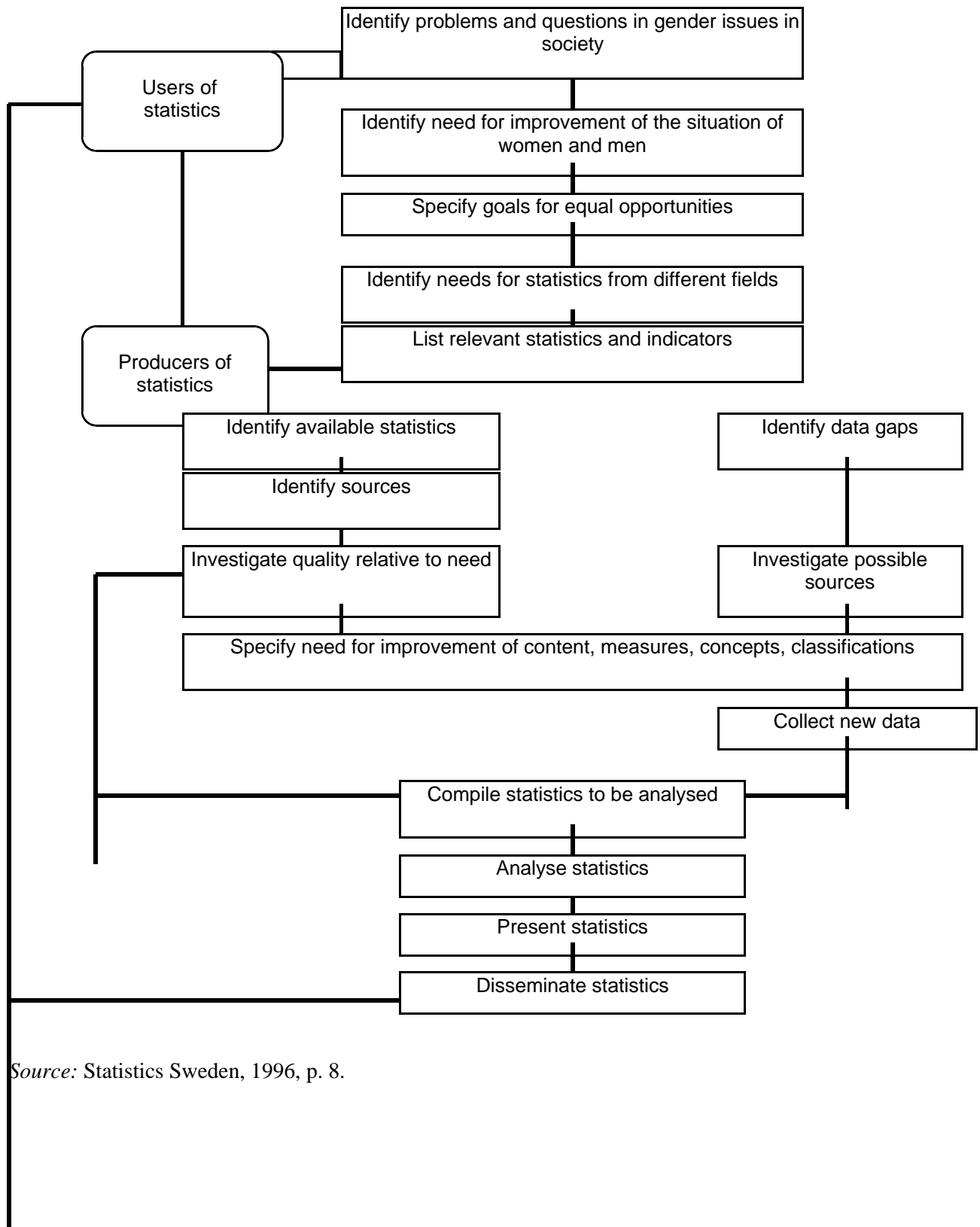
The Platform for Action calls on Governments to 'generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation'.⁵³ It then outlines a series of actions to be taken by statistical services, Governments and UN agencies designed to provide a comprehensive data set of information that can be used for policy development and assessment. How gender statistics are produced is illustrated by the following diagram.

⁵¹ Statistics Sweden: *Engendering Statistics: A Tool for Change* (Orebro: Statistics Sweden, 1996), p. 41. This publication details the issues involved at each stage in compiling gender statistics.

⁵² *ibid*, p. 44

⁵³ Platform for Action, p. 118.

Gender Statistics: the Production Process



Source: Statistics Sweden, 1996, p. 8.

The main goal identified by the Platform is that all statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex and age and reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society. It also recommends that appropriate staff be appointed to work on gender statistics programmes and that centres for women's studies and research organisations be involved in developing and testing appropriate indicators and research methodologies.⁵⁴

At present, statistics needed for a gender based analysis are often not available and where they are available they are scattered among different organisations and publications. The result of having a wide variety of sources of statistical information is a lack of uniformity in definitions, classifications and methods of analysis used. This is a major problem for policy makers and practitioners who need statistics to plan and implement programmes and policies. A comprehensive study of equality data in Ireland was conducted by Ursula Barry. She found that

*Generally data is highly uneven and variable, dispersed across a variety of different organisations and structures, reflecting a lack of co-ordination and integration in the approach to data and data collection systems in this country.*⁵⁵

There is a need for a more co-ordinated and integrated system of registering what statistics are gathered and where they can be located. This is the brief of a research project commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in connection with the National Development Plan.

The main sources of public information on gender in Ireland are found in the following data sets:

- Census of population
- Quarterly National Household Surveys
- Live Register of Unemployment
- Living in Ireland surveys
- The administrative records of government departments
- National Accounts
- Occasional reports by the Central Statistics Office on specific issues, e.g. crime.

Information can also be obtained from European and international databases such as Eurostat and the UN statistics section, from private companies, voluntary and community organisations and individuals.

Future sources of data that have the potential to contribute significantly to the range of gender-disaggregated statistics include the information collected in relation to gender in the National Development Plan 2000-2006, the National Employment Action Plan and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.⁵⁶

These official sources of data are supplemented by statistics gathered by individual agencies, professional organisations and service providers. In comparative terms, the EU, OECD and UN provide relevant gender-disaggregated data on a range of economic and social issues. This information enables gender equality in Ireland to be assessed in relation to the performance of other countries. Much of this information is based on official figures provided by the countries concerned.

A minimum international social data set (MNSDS) for EU countries was proposed in 1996 by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination. Intended to provide key statistics important to social development, it is envisaged that the MNSDS would consist of regularly available statistics disaggregated by sex and broad age groups. In terms of measuring the status of women and men, the Group recommended the collection of the following gender-disaggregated data:

Population and households

Health

⁵⁴

ibid, para. 206.

⁵⁵ Barry, *Building the Picture*, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Ursula Barry provides a critical discussion of the potential of the above sources to provide equality-relevant data, see, pp. 19-31

Diseases and cause of death	Education
Enrolment rates	Drop-out rates
Higher level education by subject	Time use
Childcare	Gainful employment
Wage, salary and income	Individual/household income
Informal sector	Income control
Access to land and credit	Influence and power
Decision making	Violence and crime

This list is similar to the one presented by Ursula Barry, who also calls for the measuring of diversity among women and men. She suggests that in developing an equality database in Ireland, systematic information be gathered in the following areas:

Social status	Family status
Economic status	Employment status
Unemployment situation	Occupation
Income	Educational attainment
Training	Housing
Health	Time use
Assets	Care services
Violence	Dependants
Geographical area	Representation

The Platform for Action, in turn, lists similar priorities for data collection to advance women's human rights. It highlights the need for information based on sex, age and other relevant indicators in the economy (including unemployment, unpaid work and the informal economy), health, poverty, violence against women, disability and the sharing of power and influence in society. It calls for regular time-use studies to be carried out to measure unremunerated work, and suggests that this information be produced in official accounts that are consistent with core national accounts. It also encourages Governments to improve the measurement of women's unemployment and underemployment in the labour market.⁵⁷

There is considerable overlap between these three agendas for statistical collection, particularly in the areas of the economy, the informal and unremunerated sectors, health, violence, power-sharing, poverty and access to resources. These are core areas that need systematic and co-ordinated statistical attention for tracking the situation of women and men in society.

Mainstreaming gender statistics: a quality approach

Gender statistics can best be produced and improved when a gender perspective informs traditional statistical gathering. Such work must be integrated into the development of the overall national statistical system, a process that is termed 'mainstreaming'. This requires producers of statistics (such as the Central Statistics Office) and users (such as policy makers and women's groups) to work together. Producers need to improve their understanding of gender issues. Users need to express their demand to statisticians and learn how best to use statistics in their work. This involves examining gender concerns and goals in society and identifying the necessary statistics and indicators to address them.⁵⁸

The National Plan for Women is an important part of this process, as it will identify and prioritise actions for the advancement of women in Irish society. Statisticians, in collaboration with policy makers and other groups of users can then look at gender issues, problems and goals as identified in the National Plan, and collect the appropriate data.

In order to create reliable indicators that provide a measure of women's advancement and empowerment in society, the statistics gathered must ideally conform to a number of criteria. A number of fundamental

⁵⁷ Platform for Action, pp. 118-120.

⁵⁸ Hedman, Birgitta, 'New challenges in the improvement of gender statistics', paper presented at symposium *Gender Equality Indicators: Public Concerns, Public Policies*, held at Statistics Canada, March 26 and 27, 1998.

principles applying to official statistical agencies have been drawn up by the United Nations. These appear in Appendix 6. Drawing from these principles, EUROSTAT has produced a list of criteria for quality statistics.⁵⁹

Good statistics should be:

Relevant: Statistics are relevant if they meet user needs. So identification of users and their expectations is necessary.

Accessible and clearly presented: statistical data have most value when easily accessible to users, available in ways they want and adequately documented. Providers should give assistance in using and interpreting the statistics. The collection and dissemination of gender statistics requires a central agency to develop a database of this information.

Comparable and coherent: statistics have the greatest usefulness when they enable reliable comparisons across space and time. They need to be comparable nationally and internationally. This means that all organisations involved in collecting statistics on the situation of women and men need to ensure that they are using the same definitions, concepts and classifications.

Timely and punctual: most users want up-to-date figures, published frequently to an established timetable. This is essential in producing data that can reveal social and economic trends and policy impacts. Data needs to be current to provide the optimum amount of useful information for policy makers and the public.

Comprehensive and complete: statistics should reflect the needs and priorities of the users. In the case of gender statistics, there should be coverage of the full scope of women's and men's lives, and as complete a picture as possible of the economic and social situations of groups experiencing multiple disadvantage. This may involve the targeted collection of data on specific groups to supplement more general data-gathering routines. Representatives of these groups, both women and men, should be consulted with regard to the collection of targeted data.

Accurate: statistical accuracy needs to be calculated and displayed so those using the statistics know how reliable or valid are the figures.

Barry suggests that systems of data collection should be secure and protected from unethical interference. The privacy of individuals and groups is of paramount importance at all stages in the data process. Data protection issues, then, constitute a serious issue for all parts of a data system.⁶⁰ The principles outlined above provide a broad framework for the collection and dissemination of high quality gender statistics, and apply equally to all forms of statistical data gathering, irrespective of the nature of the collecting agency.

⁵⁹ 'Quality – A challenge worth the fight', *Sigma* 3, 1998, p. 6. A detailed code of best practice for data-gathering agencies is contained in Appendix 7.

⁶⁰ Barry, *Building the Picture*, p. 16.

A gender equality statistical database should be developed over time in accordance with the Recommendation presented here.

3. We recommend that a national integrated statistical system, extensively disaggregated by gender, should be developed:

- 3(i) This should incorporate data gathered by the CSO and all public and private sector organisations operating in the areas covered by the Platform for Action*
- 3(ii) We recommend that data-gathering agencies adhere to 'quality statistics' principles*
- 3(iii) We recommend that data-gathering organisations should agree on the definitions, concepts and classifications employed to ensure comparison and co-ordination of statistics*
- 3(iv) We recommend that the CSO be the primary agency for the collection, co-ordination and dissemination of gender statistics*
- 3(v) We recommend that the official statistical system be made gender-sensitive*
- 3(vi) We recommend that the CSO work with centres for women's studies, research organisations, target groups and policy makers in developing and testing appropriate indicators and research methodologies to strengthen gender analysis*
- 3(vii) We recommend that meaningful consultations take place with diverse groups of women, including all minority groups, about gender issues relevant to these groups to facilitate the design, collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-sensitive data*
- 3(viii) We recommend that a statistical publication on 'Women and Men in Ireland' be prepared and presented on an annual basis for a broad audience, nationally and internationally*
- 3(ix) We recommend that this publication be available in print and electronic form*
- 3(x) We recommend that the CSO assist in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the goals and strategies of the Platform for Action.*

Gaps in existing statistical data

Having discussed the general principles underpinning the gathering of gender-sensitive data, we now identify what major gaps need to be filled to support the indicators outlined in Chapter 4. There are 20 areas listed below in which data needs to be compiled to enable a more accurate portrayal of the situation of women and men in Irish society. The economy, work and access to financial resources constitute 12 recommendations, with the remaining areas covering health, violence against women, decision making, cultural and recreational activities and the media. In addition, we suggest that data on children be gender disaggregated and cover all areas of the Platform for Action. The information provided by these statistics will complement existing data and will enable the development of advanced indicators and an empowerment index providing an accurate measure of the advancement of women's rights in Ireland.

1. It is clear that the measurement of women's and men's work in the informal and unpaid sectors of the economy requires particular attention. Specifically, this involves the measurement of unpaid work in the home, including caring for dependants, rearing and educating children, preparing meals, cleaning and home-making. It also involves quantifying the value of unpaid voluntary work in society carried out by women and men. A full time use survey is required to make unpaid work visible and to estimate the value of unpaid work done by women and men, building on the pilot time-use survey recently carried out by the CSO.⁶¹
2. Measurement of women's and men's participation in the informal sector, that is household enterprises owned and operated by own-account workers or employing a few employees (below a given limit) and are usually not registered. Family businesses, home-based working and farming are three important work locations in this category.
3. The compilation of 'satellite' National Accounts, consistent with core national accounts, to quantify the unremunerated work of women and men in the home, informal and voluntary sectors.
4. Improving measurements of women's unemployment to give a more accurate interpretation of women's employment status than is currently available. A related issue is women's and men's underemployment, in terms of adequacy of time worked and income earned.
5. Financial outcomes for women and men, in terms of earnings, pensions, benefits and promotions, related to career interruptions due to child rearing and caring duties.
6. Percentage of women and men harmonising work and care responsibilities.
7. Investigation of those engaged in 'home duties' to ascertain the percentage wishing to enter the labour force and those wishing to remain in the home; the length of time engaged in 'home duties' and expected duration of 'home duty' obligations.
8. Accurate data on rural women – women engaged in agriculture and women not engaged in agriculture but living in rural areas. In particular, data on women's mobility in rural areas.
9. Comprehensive information on poverty among women and men that extends beyond measuring levels of income to collecting data on individual access to social services such as housing, education and health care.
10. Information about the distribution of assets and income within the family.
11. Improving data on household characteristics and gender roles in the household.
12. Information about women's and men's access to credit facilities.
13. The percentage of wealth owned and controlled by women and men.

⁶¹ A recent study of carers in the Western Health Board by David Evans and Siobhan O'Neill estimated that the 20,000 carers in the region covered by the Board saved the public purse £67million a year. *Irish Independent*, September 18, 2000.

14. Improved statistics related to incidence of violence against women - emotional, financial, social, sexual or domestic violence including sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, trafficking in women and girls. This information should include the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator to distinguish stranger and intimate assaults.
15. Specific statistics on sub-groupings of women and men, especially those experiencing multiple disadvantage i.e. disabled, Traveller, rural, refugee, homosexual and other.
16. Comprehensive national data on women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and high quality health care, including maternity and family planning services, with special priority for adolescent mothers and for elder care.
17. Systematic and comprehensive data on women's presence in situations of power and influence in social and economic life
18. Data on women and men in the media, as participants in the media industry and the presentation of images of women and men
19. Comprehensive information on women's and men's participation in cultural and recreational activities and on the resources allocated to enable women and men to do so.
20. Data on girls and boys across all areas of the Platform for Action.

The compilation of the above statistics along with the data that is already available would enable the production of a national set of basic gender-sensitive social and economic statistics and indicators for national use and international comparisons.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 3(xi) | <i>We recommend that a full-scale time-use survey be initiated to enable quantification of women's and men's unpaid work in the informal, home and voluntary sectors</i> |
| 3(xii) | <i>We recommend that satellite accounts be published, consistent with core national accounts, to enable the value of women's and men's unpaid work become visible and its contribution to the national economy assessed</i> |
| 3(xiii) | <i>We recommend that statistics in the 20 areas identified be gathered as part of a national integrated database</i> |
| 3(xiv) | <i>We recommend the development of advanced indicators and a gender empowerment index on the basis of existing and new data.</i> |

Chapter 4

Gender Equality Indicators for the Platform for Action

*Indicators are statistical information chosen specifically to shed light on a particular economic, demographic or social problem or question. Indicators can be a single figure or a distribution. Figures can be expressed as numbers, percentages, rates or ratios.*⁶²

The above definition clearly and simply outlines the purpose and utility of performance indicators. However, it does not outline the highly complex processes required to develop an indicator for public policy. An indicator does not offer the solution to the problem it uncovers. Rather, it is the first stage in identifying trends and patterns in society that combine to produce a social problem. It is a tool that allows one to show that a problem exists. It does not guarantee the eradication of that problem.

Developing indicators

Performance indicators of any kind are costly and demanding to produce. If this is the case, why produce them at all? Why not tackle the problems that are easily identifiable? Without indicators to inform and evaluate policy-making, it is impossible to know which policies are working; whether existing policies are producing the desired effect or whether current policy is neglecting sectors of the population. Indicators, then, provide a framework for action, monitoring and accountability. The more specific the targets and indicators, the more accurately progress in compliance can be monitored.

Economic indicators such as GDP, inflation and unemployment levels are in everyday usage. They are accepted measures of economic growth and performance. However, policy-makers are now required to produce more than economic output. In the current climate of economic growth in Ireland, decreasing unemployment rates and sustained increases in GDP do not necessarily imply parallel improvements in social conditions. This is best summed up by Mirginoff et. al. who state:

*If exports are strong, dividends high, interest rates low, inflation stable, and the GDP and stock market rising, we generally assume this country is on the right track...Social data...are rarely presented and assessed as a unified body of statistics serving notice of significant improvement or decline.*⁶³

The constraints of economic indicators, therefore, call for the development of social indicators. Social indicators measure progress over time towards social goals such as gender equality. Indicators also facilitate the measurement of the quality of life that all forms of policy-making provide for its citizenry. The Canadian publication *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*⁶⁴ identifies the different uses of indicators.⁶⁵ Equality indicators can be used to inform gender-based analysis; to provide information on women's and men's social and economic status and activities; to establish goals and priorities; to identify problems and to anticipate effects of equality policy. In effect, once indicators are built into the evaluation process they can be used to help shape solutions to policy problems.

There are a number of baseline criteria necessary to develop useful social indicators. While many of these concerns refer to quantitative indicators, the desire for qualitative measures of policy performance cannot be ignored. However, the construction of coherent qualitative indicators, capable of measuring 'quality of life' is dependent on the successful development of the quantitative dimension in the first

⁶² Statistics Sweden, *Engendering Statistics*, p. 41.

⁶³ Mirginoff, M.L.; Mirginoff, M. and Opdycke, S, 'The Growing Gap between Standard Economic Indicators and the Nation's Social Health' *Challenge* 39(4), 1996, pp. 17-22.

⁶⁴ Federal Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* at <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/> (1997).

⁶⁵ Morris, Marika, *Harnessing the Numbers: Potential Use of Gender Equality Indicator for the Performance, Measurement and Promotion of Gender-Based Analysis of Public Policy*. (Canada: Status of Women, 1997).

instance.⁶⁶

Key criteria for the construction of performance indicators have been identified in Canadian research.⁶⁷ A performance indicator should be a quantitative measurement that is clear, consistent and sensitive. It should have a specific focus allowing accurate measurement of the problem concerned. The data that provides the foundations for the indicator should be reliable, timely and well-documented. The indicator should be reflective of something that is relevant to the user and important in its own right. Ideally, an indicator should be transferable across geographical areas and societal groups. Relevant to this criterion is the need for the development of indicators to be conducted in a participatory fashion, with inputs from all stakeholders. Finally, an equality indicator should be constructed with some foresight. This implies an awareness of past trends, but also of the possibility of uncovering concerns that may not seem immediately apparent or relevant.⁶⁸ These are the necessary pre-requisites for the successful development of performance indicators for gender equality.

Indicators as mainstreaming tools: the UN model

The search for mechanisms to enable decision-makers adopt a pro-active approach to gender equality has led to an awareness of the need for gender mainstreaming. This involves ‘the integration of selected equality considerations into policy formulation, programme planning and implementation at all levels of society and as an impact assessment mechanism in the evaluating stages’.⁶⁹ A range of mainstreaming models are now available that offer ways of inserting a gender based analysis into the policy process. The best known is the gender impact assessment model SMART, developed in the Netherlands and now widely accepted as a useful analytical tool by Irish policy-makers. The evolution of monitoring tools to enable evaluation of policy outcomes has, however, been more problematic. Emphasis is now placed on the development of indicators, quantitative and qualitative, that show the effects of policy outcomes on the target groups - in this case the differential impact of policies on women and men.

There is considerable familiarity with traditional economic and social indicators – Gross Domestic Product (GDP), per capita income, unemployment rates, life expectancy, literacy levels, to name but a few. These indicators, while giving a global picture of the economic and social situation of people living in a country, do not incorporate women’s experiences and the diversity of experiences among women. GDP, for instance, excludes unpaid work, and thereby excludes much of women’s work. This points to the fact that many accepted economic and social indicators are based on a male standpoint and present male experiences and standards as the norm. In doing so, these indicators render invisible women’s experiences, activities and lack of equal opportunities. Often indicators that are labelled as ‘gender neutral’ are in fact making gender invisible.

The contrast between the picture drawn by ‘gender neutral’ indicators and the analysis offered by gender-sensitive indicators is clearly shown in the UN Human Development Reports. These reports contain a general measure of average achievements in three basic components of human development – longevity, knowledge and standard of living. This measure is known as the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI measures a country’s average achievements in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and income. In 1992, 23 industrialised countries, including Ireland, had a combined HDI value of 0.9 out of a possible total of 1 (Table 4.1). However, the HDI measure is a classic example of a gender neutral statistic. It does not represent gender differences in achievements nor can it reflect significant gaps in opportunities between women and men. To capture these aspects of human development, two gender-related indices were constructed – the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The GDI measures achievements in the same basic measures as the HDI but takes account of inequality in achievement between women and men. It measures women’s and men’s life expectancy, adult literacy, enrolment in education at all levels and

⁶⁶ McCracken, Mike, Social and Economic Indicators: Underlying Assumptions, Purposes and Values at <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/> (1997).

⁶⁷ *ibid*, p. 123.

⁶⁸ *ibid*; 124.

⁶⁹ NESF, *Equality Proofing Issues*, p. 23

income. The differences between women and men in these combined areas are expressed as a value between 0 (total inequality) and 1 (total equality).⁷⁰

The GEM examines gaps in opportunities between women and men. It does this by examining women's access to political, professional and economic opportunities as compared with men and expressing this as a value between 0 and 1. Four specific indicators are used to measure the relative empowerment of women and men: women's and men's holding of parliamentary seats, share of administrative and management positions, share of professional and technical occupations and women's and men's income.⁷¹

When the GDI and GEM values are placed alongside the HDI index, gender differences in achievement and opportunity become clear. In 1992, The GDI value for industrialised countries measured 0.86, indicating that the average achievement of women on a basic scale of human development was lower than that of men in the industrialised world. When the GEM value for industrialised countries was calculated, it came to 0.55, clearly highlighting a denial of economic and political opportunities for women in these countries (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Human and Gender Development Indicators, World 1992.

	HDI	GDI	GEM	GNP per capita (US\$)
World	0.6653	0.6050	0.3737	4,470
Developing countries (81)	0.5939	0.5311	0.3225	924
Industrial countries (23)	0.9168	0.8650	0.5542	21,352
Africa (27)	0.4023	0.3771	0.2791	365
Arab (11)	0.6464	0.5278	0.2491	1,662
Asia (17)	0.6219	0.5610	0.3036	638
Latin America (25)	0.7509	0.6701	0.4181	2,779
Least Developed Countries (28)	0.3862	0.3618	0.2671	356

Source: Jahan, 1998.

⁷⁰ A clear explanation of how the HDI, GDI and GEM indices are computed can be found in the 1999 human development report, *Globalisation with a human face*, pp. 159-163. It can be downloaded from www.undp.org/hdro.

⁷¹ A fuller discussion of these three indicators and others can be found in the article *Analytical Tools for Human Development* on the UN Development Programme website at www.undp.org/hdro/.

The annual human development reports allow a tracking of a single country over a period of time. In terms of the human development index (HDI), Ireland is ranked at the lower end of the top 20 countries in the world. When the gender indices are calculated, the values show that while women's average achievements in basic areas are somewhat less than those of men (GDI), clear inequalities in women's empowerment (GEM) are evident (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Human and Gender Development Indicators, Ireland 1998-2000

Year	HDI		GDI		GEM	
	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value
2000	18	0.907	18	0.896	21	0.593
1999	20	0.900	20	0.892	20	0.556
1998	17	0.930	27	0.859	21	0.554

Source: UN Human Development Reports, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Thus, familiar and widely accepted indicators can hide inequalities between women and men. Increasingly, policy-makers are required to consider the effects of public policies on women and men and to assess whether or not policy outcomes treat women and men equally. There is an added expectation that the effects of policies on different groups of women will be measured. Socio-economic indicators such as the HDI, GDI and GEM mark a significant advance in measuring the gender equality outcomes of public policies and actions.

If gender equality indicators are to assist in monitoring and evaluating progression towards stated equality goals, the development of useful indicators depends on a broad-based involvement of relevant interests – policy-makers, decision-makers, non-Governmental organisations, equality-seeking groups and agencies, persons with specific expertise and the public. Ultimately, the aim is to progress gender equality – a task best achieved when the combined perspectives and respective strengths of people working inside and outside of Government are drawn together. One of the challenges presented by this multi-dimensional dialogue is in building consensus around indicators. One of the key issues likely to arise in the course of this debate is what can be defined as progress for women. Is it parity with men or is it about an improvement in the quality of life for women? Clearly, both perspectives are valid. The question is how and when to use one approach as opposed to the other.

Difficulties in Developing Indicators

The quality of equality indicators produced depends on other factors being in place to support their development. These include the availability of timely and accurate gender disaggregated data on each issue area. The absence of suitable data is one of the most common difficulties facing those responsible for the development of indicators. Moreover, gaps in available data can lead to gaps in the indicators themselves. Therefore, it is important to note that all indicators can only be as comprehensive as the statistics on which they are based.

Other difficulties can arise when implementing indicators. A lack of familiarity as to the benefits and usage of indicators amongst those faced with the task of operating indicators is a common problem. It is easy to see the benefits of performance indicators at the development stage. However, for those involved in the day-to-day implementation of policy, to which gender equality indicators may not seem immediately relevant, this is not so easy. The introduction of "yet another" set of indicators to the work of people already expected to conduct rural, environmental and poverty proofing exercises at the beginning of every task can decrease motivation amongst policy-makers and ultimately the successful implementation of the indicator.

Indicators in Ireland

In Ireland, indicators are a relatively new development in public policy. In *Delivering Better Government*, the co-ordinating group of secretaries recommended that a performance measurement framework be developed for the Irish civil service. Performance indicators are crucial to the

development of effective performance management.⁷² Recent initiatives towards improving performance measurement include poverty, environmental and rural proofing exercises. It is important, then, to realise that gender equality indicators will exist within a framework of performance measurement. Moreover, indicators of gender equality will exist alongside indicators designed to reveal other policy problems. The existence of a framework for performance measurement will assist the implementation of the gender equality indicators. The framework provides a familiarity as to the importance and usage of indicators amongst those responsible for policy implementation. However, the existence of a number of different (and potentially competing) indicators could lead to confusion, overlap or to some geographical areas or social groups, that straddle issue areas, being forgotten.

Therefore, the first task of gender equality indicators is to sensitise policy-makers to the existence of gender inequalities and the need for indicators. The indicators themselves must be in tune with current conditions and developments within the civil service. Therefore, to avoid over-specification and in light of the large number of diffuse issue areas covered in this report, we have opted to suggest a number of coherent, core indicators of gender equality in each of the critical areas of concern covered in the Platform for Action. These indicators aim to reveal gender inequalities across key organising arenas within society. They also aim to reveal the gender dimension to other manifestations of inequality in Irish society.

While the indicators provided aim to meet as many of the baseline criteria for indicators as possible, they are restricted by lack of availability of data. Moreover, in the current climate of change in the Irish economy, indicators must be specific enough to provide focus and guidance for policy-makers, but flexible and malleable enough to be worked into the broad framework for performance measurement currently underway within the civil service.

Not surprisingly, targets for women's equal opportunities in areas such as health and education are more easily set than targets for progress in women's economic empowerment. This is because the connections between women's unpaid work, economic policies and the informal sector have yet to be measured in detail. At this point in time, policy expertise in Ireland is at a very early stage in the development of performance indicators, and especially indicators that measure the advancement of women. The indicators presented in this chapter look at specific dimensions of women's lives and the obstacles to women's empowerment in Ireland. This is the first step in the construction of composite indicators that attempt to aggregate several indicators into a single index similar to that of the UN Gender Sensitive Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and the Canadian Economic Equality Index. The development of issue-specific indicators in themselves, while important in measuring women's advancement, risks providing a fragmented view of overall progress towards gender equality. An index constructed from a small number of carefully selected indicators can link different dimensions of women's lives and provide an overall measure of progress. Given the stage of indicator development in Ireland at this point in time, it is too early to construct a gender equality index of this kind. However, as targets and indicators become an integral part of policy development, a single measure of gender equality will provide a powerful indicator of progress towards gender equality.

⁷² Boyle, Richard, 1997, *Developing an Integrated Performance Measurement Framework for the Irish Civil Service*, (Dublin: IPA), p. 1.

4. *We recommend that the National Plan for Women include specific targets and timetables*
5. *We recommend that the National Plan for Women contain agreed indicators and benchmarks along with nominated actors to facilitate the measurement of progress on gender equality*
6. *We recommend that these indicators be monitored on a yearly basis*
7. *We recommend that a gender equality index be constructed and operational by 2005*

However, the development of indicators as tools to measure policy performance is but the beginning of a process that tracks progress in achieving gender equality. These indicators are not very useful unless they are accompanied by specific policy targets that are expected to yield clear evidence of progress. For instance, it is important for many good reasons that women's and men's earnings are similar. An indicator showing the earning differential between women and men is one way of making inequality visible. However, on the basis of the indicator, policy makers and other interested groups need to take strategic action to improve the earning situation of women over time. They need to set targets to achieve equality in earned income, and they also require a time-scale within which targets can be realistically achieved. The indicator charts progress (or lack of progress) in the earnings ratio between women and men, giving policy makers and the public information on the effectiveness of whatever policies are designed to eliminate the gender differential in earnings.

The successful use of indicators, and the development of targets, benchmarks and time-scales for their achievements is most fruitful when agreed between policy makers and women through consultation. Targets and indicators are set for gender equality in the National Development Plan, and the National Plan for Women will contain targets, benchmarks and indicators to measure progress on the implementation of the Platform for Action agreed between the Government and women. This is an evolutionary process, with targets and indicators needing regular review to ensure that they are relevant. The rest of this chapter offers a first step at developing gender equality indicators across thirteen issue areas, twelve of which are identified in the Platform for Action. It follows a format that first outlines the concern expressed in the Platform for Action. Then the situation in relation to that issue in Ireland is discussed with reference to relevant and available statistical material. Finally, a range of indicators is suggested facilitating the evaluation of progress towards gender equality. These are preliminary indicators and will need to be elaborated upon following consultation with relevant parties.

Poverty

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women. It is also a concern of the Irish Government. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS), introduced in 1997, commits the Government to specific targets for reducing the level of poverty in Ireland over a ten year period.

Poverty in Ireland, as in much of the developed world, is a relative concept. The NAPS definition of poverty⁷³ is as follows:

People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living, which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society.

⁷³ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *Sharing in Progress: National Anti-Poverty Strategy* (Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 1997), p. 3.

In this definition, income inadequacy and deprivation are used to assess and measure the extent of poverty.⁷⁴ The analysis reveals a strong gender dimension to poverty. In terms of income inadequacy, it is found that households headed by women are at substantially greater risk of poverty than households headed by men or couples. Particularly vulnerable are households headed by elderly women living alone and women engaged in home duties.⁷⁵

The deprivation aspect of poverty also has a specific gender dimension that bears more heavily on women than on men. The NAPS document observes that women are marginalised from participating in society due to a wide range of constraints including family and child-rearing responsibilities, economic dependence, parenting alone and difficulties in gaining access to education, training or employment opportunities.⁷⁶

While it appears that women as a group are at greater risk of poverty than men, certain groups of women run higher risks of being in poverty than others. The Report of the Commission on the Status of Women identified eight groups of women as being particularly vulnerable to poverty - female lone parents, women in low paid work, Traveller women, homeless women, elderly women (especially those living alone), women full-time carers, women dependant on social welfare and wives of low-paid workers or social welfare dependants.⁷⁷

In analysing the extent of poverty in Ireland, the NAPS report identified the following groups as at the highest risk of poverty –

- the unemployed
- children, particularly those living in large families (i.e. families of four or more children)
- single adult households and households headed by someone working in the home
- lone parents
- people with disabilities⁷⁸

Households headed by an unemployed person were found to constitute the single largest group of poor. In 1994, households where the head was unemployed and with an income level of 50 per cent of the average household disposable income had a 59 per cent risk of poverty. Those with an income that was 60 per cent below the average household income ran a 78 per cent risk of being poor.⁷⁹ Long-term unemployment was seen as placing households at a particularly high risk of poverty. This poverty was also seen as having a more significant impact on children than on adults.⁸⁰ The current economic prosperity has reduced unemployment from 12 per cent in 1996 to 5 per cent in 2000. The growth in the economy has removed many households from poverty, but poverty is still high among a core of long-term unemployed persons.

The NAPS study found households headed by a person working in the home made up the second largest group of poor. Within this category, elderly women were identified as being at considerable risk of poverty. Many of these women depend on the non-contributory old age pension or on widows pensions as their only source of income. The NAPS report points out that support rates for these programmes increased much more slowly than incomes between 1987 and 1994.⁸¹ A review of the NAPS strategy in

⁷⁴ *ibid*, pp. 31-2

⁷⁵ *NAPS*, pp. 38-9

⁷⁶ *ibid*, pp. 39.

⁷⁷ Commission on the Status of Women, *Report to Government* (Dublin: Government Publications Sale Office, January 1993), p. 164.

⁷⁸ *NAPS*, p. 40

⁷⁹ *ibid*, p. 44

⁸⁰ *ibid*, pp. 45-7

⁸¹ *NAPS*, pp. 50-1.

1999 found that the risk of poverty for elderly women had increased since 1994.⁸²

Lone parent households were found to be one of the groups at greatest risk of poverty in 1987 and again in 1994. In 1994, lone parents with incomes at the 50 per cent line had a 59 per cent risk of being poor; lone parents with incomes 60 per cent below this standard had a 67 per cent chance of being poor.⁸³ Poverty among lone parents is closely associated with the low rates of economic activity of this group. However, recent trends indicate an upsurge in female employment. This is likely to bring many lone parents out of poverty. The One-Parent Family Payment scheme introduced in 1997 provides incentives in the form of generous income disregards for lone parents who wish to return to work. Nonetheless, there are specific barriers to lone parents employment opportunities, chiefly, lack of child care, job segregation, low pay and traditional attitudes to mothers working outside the home.⁸⁴

While the NAPS report identifies other groups as being poor – persons with illness and/or disabilities, Travellers, homeless persons, farmers and others, it does not address female poverty among these groups. The gendered nature of rural poverty is also ignored. An evaluation of the NAPS strategy found that the risk of poverty for households headed by persons with disabilities and households headed by persons working in the home (mainly women) had increased between 1997 and 1999. The poverty risk for lone parents had almost halved to 30 per cent in this time, but their poverty risk remained relatively high compared to the 22 per cent poverty risk for all households. Children in large families remained at high risk of poverty, as did Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and homeless persons. It was also noted that the risk of poverty for women had increased in the 1997-1999 period.⁸⁵

A comprehensive study of women in poverty was undertaken by Nolan and Watson on behalf of the Combat Poverty Agency. This revealed that:

- 24 per cent of female-headed households experience poverty compared to 17 per cent of male-headed households
- lone parents, women working in the home, women living alone and older women are facing increased risk of poverty
- there has been a sharp rise in the risk of poverty facing female-headed households since 1987, whereas the risk of poverty for couples and male-headed households has remained stable.⁸⁶

Poverty is consistently correlated with low levels of educational achievement, unemployment, low pay and part-time work when in employment. These characteristics mark the experience of many poor women. However, there are other contributing factors to female poverty such as lack of child and elder care facilities and dependence on State income supports. Thus, employment history, education, income and child/family responsibilities interact to increase or decrease the risk of poverty. In measuring the gendered nature of poverty, indicators in the area of employment profile, labour force participation and education clearly overlap. Unremunerated work is also an important consideration in examining women's poverty. The division of wealth within a family is also seen as critical to understanding the gendered nature of poverty. With the exceptions of unpaid work and the distribution of economic resources within families, these factors are clearly quantifiable and there are ready data-sets available from the CSO, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. Researchers at the Economic and Social Research Institute and NUI Maynooth have conducted a major study on male-female wage differentials and the Equality Authority has published a significant report on women's labour market participation.⁸⁷ However, they specifically relate to income

⁸² Combat Poverty Agency, *NAPS initial review* at www.cpa.ie

⁸³ *NAPS*, p. 48.

⁸⁴ *ibid*, p. 48.

⁸⁵ Combat Poverty Agency, *NAPS initial review* at www.cpa.ie

⁸⁶ Nolan, Brian and Dorothy Watson, *Women and Poverty in Ireland* (Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency, 1999).

⁸⁷ Barrett, Alan et al, *How Unequal? Men and Women in the Irish Labour Market* (Dublin: ESRI, 2000); Ruane, Frances and Julie Sutherland, *Women in the Labour Force* (Dublin: Employment Equality Agency, 1999).

inadequacy and, although they provide a useful measure of women's poverty risk, they do not portray other forms of resource and opportunity deprivation. Much more qualitative work is required in this area before gender-sensitive measures can be fully developed.

Gender equality indicators

To begin the measurement of female poverty, the following generic indicators are suggested:

- Percentage of female-headed households below the relative income poverty line
- Percentage of risk of poverty for women according to age, educational background, employment situation, geographical area and specific disadvantage
- The female percentage of high risk poverty groups: the elderly and lone parents
- The poverty risk for disadvantaged women not covered by the Living in Ireland Survey: Traveller women, homeless women, women living in crisis accommodation (such as women asylum seekers and refugees, ethnic minority women, women with disabilities and lesbian women)
- Percentage of women below the poverty line disaggregated by age, educational background, employment situation, geographical area and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women in poverty in rural and urban contexts, disaggregated by age, educational attainment, employment situation and specific disadvantage
- Number of dependants (children and older persons) of women living in poverty
- Percentage of women without an independent income (from employment or the State)
- Percentage of women and men in receipt of State income support only
- Percentage of women and men in paid employment and in receipt of income support from the State
- Percentage of women and men on low pay (defined by the OECD as two thirds of median weekly earnings), disaggregated by occupational categories, age, educational attainment, number and ages of dependants
- Percentage of women and men from disadvantaged backgrounds completing upper second level education
- Percentage of women and men from disadvantaged backgrounds leaving school early
- Percentage of women and men in employment, unemployed and engaged in home duties, including caring duties
- Educational attainment of women in full-time caring duties by age
- Percentage of women and men re-entering training, education and employment-related training programmes
- Level of women's and men's educational attainment across the life-cycle
- Distribution of income within households
- Analysis of household headship according to gender and family status
- Percentage of women and men in housing need, with and without dependants.

Education and Training of Women

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, education and training.

Education is central to developments in all areas of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Second Commission on the Status of Women. The Platform for Action identifies how equality of access to, and

participation in education, is central to achieving equality between men and women.⁸⁸ Equal access to all levels and across all sectors of education is necessary if women are to become decision-makers in society.⁸⁹ However, specific barriers to educational attainment exist for women. Family responsibilities and gender-biased teaching methods inhibit the academic participation and ultimately performance of older women.⁹⁰ The Beijing Platform for Action also highlights the importance of promoting the education of women in science and technology in allowing women to take an active role in the technological and industrial development of their country.⁹¹ Finally, the Platform for Action recognises that the creation of an educational environment where men and women and boys and girls are encouraged to reach their full potential is critical in eliminating the root causes of gender inequality across society.⁹²

In order to ensure equality of opportunity within educational and training systems it is necessary to identify trends of inequality, and to realise the centrality of education in addressing progress in the areas of power and decision-making, poverty and the economy. Education is often a key factor in determining the choices open to young people. This is especially so for young women. A recent survey on educational levels and participation in the labour force revealed stark differences between women and men. It observed that ‘for women there is a very substantial link between educational levels and participation in the labour force, and a comparative absence of such a link among men’.⁹³ A study by Kathleen Lynch, *Equality in Education*, recognises the need for the voices of Travellers, working class people and other marginalized groups to be heard within the education system.⁹⁴ It must be noted, therefore, that gender equality indicators must be relevant to different types of women from different social backgrounds with a variety of life experiences. Moreover, there has been little analysis of young people’s experience as a student from a gender perspective. While it is easy to assess academic performance in terms of grades and results, it is very difficult to measure how a child’s experience of the educational system affects their self-image and level of ambition.⁹⁵ Therefore, any indicator of educational equality must attempt to address levels of inequality within and across educational sectors. This means establishing where women are concentrated within subject areas and across strata of the education system. Thus, the number of girls and boys taking different subjects at second level is as relevant as the number of female professors and lecturers in Irish universities.

A brief examination of the subject take-up of boys and girls at Junior Certificate reveals a prevalence of gender stereotypes in certain subject areas. This is illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Number of Students in Second Level Schools Taking Selected Subjects in the Junior Certificate by Gender, 1998

Subject	Total	Male	Female	% Female
Irish	190,023	97,096	92,927	49
English	192,902	98,659	94,243	49
Maths	192,906	98,663	94,243	49
History	179,485	90,015	89,470	50

⁸⁸ Platform for Action, para 69.

⁸⁹ *ibid*, para 69.

⁹⁰ *ibid*, paras 70, 71

⁹¹ *ibid*, para 75.

⁹² *ibid*, para 72.

⁹³ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *Report of the P2000 working group on women’s access to labour market opportunities* (Dublin: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000), p. 71

⁹⁴ Lynch, Kathleen, 1999, *Equality in Education*. (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan), p. 24.

⁹⁵ *ibid*, p. 143.

Geography	180,830	90,995	89,835	50
French	144,282	68,349	75,933	53
Other Modern Languages	61,993	28,487	33,515	54
Science	170,417	90,514	79,903	47
Home Economics	76,787	12,924	63,863	83
Music	40,957	11,198	29,759	72
Art, Craft and Design	84,593	36,171	48,422	57
Materials Technology (wood)	56,768	48,222	8,546	15
Metal Work	30,962	27,034	3,928	13
Technical Graphics	58,710	49,885	8,845	15
Technology	13,491	8,845	4,646	34
Business Studies	130,908	60,440	70,468	54
Typewriting	3,433	917	2,516	73
Physical Education	171,380	84,887	86,493	50
Computer Studies	52,810	29,589	23,221	44
Choir & Orchestra	28,266	3,263	25,003	88
Religious Education	188,099	95,940	92,159	49
Civic, Social and Political Education	89,392	44,671	44,721	50
Health Education	12,074	4,783	7,291	60
Speech & Drama	5,695	688	5,007	88
Other Subjects	84,219	42,874	41,345	49
Total	192,944	98,686	94,258	49

Source: Department of Education and Science *Statistical Report 1997/1998*, p. 68

Teenage girls are more likely to take subjects in the arts, while boys tend to take more technical subjects.⁹⁶ This fact illustrates how the segregation of genders into male and female roles begins at a very young age. The Junior Certificate is a three-year programme. Therefore, boys and girls make significant subject choices on entry to second level school, usually between the ages of twelve and thirteen. Moreover, choices at Junior Certificate often determine subsequent subject choice at Leaving Certificate (Table 4.4).

⁹⁶ Ruane and Sutherland, *Women in the Labour Force*; p. 86

Table 4.4: Number of Students in Second Level Schools Taking Selected Subjects in the Leaving Certificate by Gender, 1998

Subject	Total	Male	Female	% Female
Irish	121,502	58,908	62,594	52
English	123,040	59,679	63,361	51
Maths	123,406	59,903	63,876	52
Applied Maths	2,240	1,867	373	17
French	77,980	32,425	45,555	58
German	23,001	10,282	12,719	55
Other Modern Languages	3,911	1,555	2,356	60
History	31,058	17,504	12,554	40
Geography	59,307	31,716	27,591	47
Physics	19,671	14,681	4,990	25
Chemistry	14,291	6,942	7,349	51
Physics and Chemistry	2,696	1,882	814	30
Biology	60,531	20,805	39,726	66
Agricultural Science	6,149	5,191	958	16
Agricultural Economics	315	236	49	16
Engineering	12,145	11,520	625	5
Technical Drawing	16,743	15,631	1,112	7
Construction Studies	19,136	17,951	1,185	6
Home Economics (S. S. & General)	44,982	6,416	38,566	86
Accounting	19,754	9,237	10,517	53
Business Organisation	47,995	21,821	26,134	55
Economics	10,336	6,497	3,839	37
Art	21,333	8,970	12,363	58
Music	4,621	812	3,819	83
Physical Education	76,808	34,384	42,424	55
Classical Studies	1,424	817	607	43
Computer Studies	33,299	14,200	19,099	57
Keyboarding	508	125	383	75
Choir or Orchestra	9,536	670	8,866	93
Religious Education	110,352	52,296	58,056	53
Typewriting	1,863	318	1,545	83
Civics	8,112	3,501	4,611	57
Health Education	4,324	1,021	3,303	76
Speech & Drama	1,797	188	1,609	90
Other Subjects	614	397	217	35
Total	123,956	60,128	63,828	51

Source: Department of Education and Science *Statistical Report 1997/1998*, p. 72

At Leaving Certificate, girls are very unlikely to take technical or ‘practical’ subjects such as applied maths or engineering.⁹⁷ This segregation of study areas continues into third level education, and ultimately the labour force. This is illustrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: All Full-time Students by Field of Study and Gender, 1999

Field of Study	Total	Male	Female	% Female
Arts	17,671	5,727	11,844	67
Education	4,173	804	3,269	78
Art & Design	643	223	419	65
Business, Economic and Social Studies	1,430	835	601	42
Equestrian	174	50	124	71
European Studies	664	178	487	73
Social Science	1,097	181	916	84
Communications & Information	1,054	270	784	74
Commerce	8,529	4,243	4,286	50
Law	1,238	858	380	31
Science	9,757	4,360	5,397	55
Engineering	5,288	4,279	1,009	19
Architecture	329	184	145	44
Medicine & Nursing	6,434	1,980	4,454	69
Dentistry	459	180	279	61
Veterinary Medicine	386	208	178	46
Agricultural Science & Forestry	567	189	378	67
Food Science & Technology	1,260	738	522	41
Combined Studies	14	6	8	57
Computing & IT	5,068	2,534	1,227	24
Totals	65,288	27,785	37,503	57

Source: HEA, 2000

This cursory examination of the choices young people make at second and third level demonstrates two things. Firstly, while 50 per cent participation rates may exist at second and third level, the figures would suggest that equality of participation does not exist in many subject areas at third level. Secondly, the fact that when the choice does exist, many girls choose not to take traditionally ‘male’ subjects, suggests that gender stereotyping still exists, within second level schools at least.⁹⁸

The ESRI report *Co-education and Gender Equality* identifies how lack of subject choice for girls leads to a gender bias in allocating options according to academic performance.⁹⁹ Ultimately, this means that boys who do not perform well in assessment have more options (they can take technological and practical subjects) than their female colleagues, who have to choose more ‘academic’ courses. This is especially the case in single sex schools where many of the more practical ‘male’ subjects are not on the curriculum.¹⁰⁰ These trends are reflected in the lack of female participation in the technological and scientific sectors of the economy. While recent efforts such as the Women in Technology and Science¹⁰¹ *Managing Diversity* initiative to promote the activity of women in these sectors are commendable, there

⁹⁷ Department of Education and Science *Statistical Report 1997/1998* (Dublin: Stationary Office 1999), p. 72

⁹⁸ Hannan, D., Smyth, E., McCullagh, J., O’Leary, R. and McMahon, D, *Co-education and Gender Equality* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1996), p. 102.

⁹⁹ *ibid*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁰ Department of Education and Science, *Statistical Report 1997/1998* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1999), p. 68.

¹⁰¹ Women in Technology and Science (WITS) produced a CD-ROM *Managing Diversity* in co-operation with Kerry Group and Golden Vale plc. as part of the NOW programme.

is still no coherent strategy on mainstreaming equality across educational sectors.

Participation rates in the provision of educational services are also significant. A gender bias in the staffing of schools has been noted.¹⁰² The disproportionate number of female staff at lower level positions has also been identified at third level.¹⁰³ These trends are illustrated in Tables 4.6 and 4.7.

Table 4.6: Gender of Staff and Positions of Authority in Second Level Schools, 1995, percent

	Boys only	Girls only	Secondary	Vocational	Comprehensive/Community	Total
Female as % of Total Staff	26	88	63	48	51	56
% of principals female	0	92	50	15	12	36
% of vice principals female	0	77	35	18	18	31
% of 'A' post holders female	5	82	53	28	37	43
% of 'B' post holders female	18	84	52	35	46	48
No. of Schools	18	26	20	34	17	115

Source: Adapted from Hannan, D., Smyth, E., McCullagh, J., O'Leary, R. and McMahon, D., *Co-education and Gender Equality*, 1996, p. 76

While women represent over 50 per cent of staff members at second level, they make up only 36 per cent of principals and 31 per cent of vice principals. At third level the gender gap is even more obvious. Women make up between 6 and 7 per cent of professors and 48 per cent of assistant lecturers.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Staff at Third Level Colleges by Gender, 1998

	Total	Male	Female	% Female
ACADEMIC				
Professor	339	319	20	6
Associate Professor	190	176	14	7
Statutory/Senior Lecturer	622	520	102	16
College Lecturer	1,703	1,164	539	32
Assistant Lecturer	553	289	264	48
Other Teaching staff	198	103	95	48
TOTAL ACADEMIC	3,605	2,571	1,034	29
NON-ACADEMIC				
Management/Senior Admin	305	215	90	30
Administration	2,000	262	1,738	87
Technical	1,326	930	396	30
Maintenance	952	553	399	42
Student Services	69	25	44	64
TOTAL NON-ACADEMIC	4,652	1,985	2,667	57

Source: Higher Education Authority, 2000

A study of female academics recognises how women make huge sacrifices in order to combine work and family life.¹⁰⁴ However, Ireland is not particularly unique in this profile. A study of international equal

¹⁰² Hannan, D., Smyth, E., McCullagh, J., O'Leary, R. and McMahon, D., *Co-education and Gender Equality* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1996), p. 76

¹⁰³ Egan, Orla (ed.), *Women Staff in Irish Colleges* (Cork: HEEU, 1996)

¹⁰⁴ Keher, Nuala in Orla. Egan (ed) *Women Staff in Irish Colleges* (Cork: HEEU, 1996), pp. 126-138.

opportunities practices at third level by Malcolm Skilbeck reveals that ‘gender equity has been largely achieved at the stage of initial higher degree qualifications across OECD membership, but not at advanced levels and not across all major fields of study and professional life’.¹⁰⁵ His study proposes a general framework for advancing equality, including gender equality, in higher education in Ireland.

Leonie Warren and Eileen O’Connor’s report *Stepping Out of the Shadows: Women in Education Management in Ireland* provides an in-depth analysis of the occupational status of women in primary and second level teaching, and echoes many of Skilbeck’s findings on the barriers to women’s equal opportunities in higher education. This study identifies the dearth of female principals as the result of a complex interplay between the value women put on their caring roles, lack of role models in management and the problem of mobility.¹⁰⁶ These factors combine to prevent women from applying for promotion in the first place.¹⁰⁷

Horizontal segregation can also be observed in the participation of men and women in employment-related training courses. Men are more likely to take ‘practical’ courses such as welding, warehousing or engineering. However, the gender stereotypes do not seem to apply to new technology training, which is female dominated (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Participation in Selected FÁS Traineeship Programmes, 1998

	Total	Male	Female	% Female
Computer Applications	505	144	361	71
Introduction to New Technology	27	9	18	67
Software Developing	53	40	13	25
Programming				
Business Skills	76	17	59	78
Childcare	89	0	89	100
Retail Sales	94	0	94	100
Warehousing and Distribution	22	19	3	14
Computer Aided Design	24	19	5	21
Computerised Business Studies	140	20	120	86
Manual Arc Gas Welding	149	147	2	1
Machine Tool Operation	150	150	0	0
Other Courses	10,208	6,113	4,095	40
Total Non-sponsored	7,678	3,525	4,153	54
Total Sponsored	3,859	3,153	706	18
Total	11,537	6,678	4,859	42

Source: Adapted from DSCFA, *Report of the P2000 Working Group on Women’s Access to Labour Market Opportunities*, pp. 143-146.

The International Adult Literacy Survey examined why respondents chose not to begin an adult education course. Distinct gender differences were observed. While men were more likely to be too busy to do a course, almost 24 per cent of women cited family responsibilities as a barrier to participation. This is illustrated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Reasons for Non-Participation in Adult Education (%)

	All	Males	Females
Too busy	26.2	31.9	20.8

¹⁰⁵ Skilbeck, Malcolm, *Access and Equity in Higher Education: An International Perspective on Issues and Strategies* (Dublin: HEA, May 2000), p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Warren and O’Connor, *Stepping Out of the Shadows*, p. 96

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*, p. 82.

Work demands	10.4	11.7	9.1
Course not offered	16.0	17.7	14.3
Family responsibilities	15.1	5.9	23.9
Too expensive	21.3	19.7	22.8
Lack of qualifications	3.6	4.0	3.3
Lack of employer support	2.8	4.9	0.8
Course time inconvenient	7.1	6.9	7.4
Other reasons	2.7	2.8	2.6

Source: Morgan, M., 1997, p. 92.

A survey assessing equal opportunities in ESF-funded programmes found also that caring responsibilities formed the main obstacle to women's participation in education, training and work.¹⁰⁸ The International Adult Literacy Survey also identified a link between levels of literacy and participation in training courses. It estimated that approximately 25 per cent of the adult population suffered basic literacy problems.¹⁰⁹ This study also identified a number of gender differences in literacy performance.¹¹⁰

A recent National Adult Literacy Agency study suggested that more women than men suffer literacy problems.¹¹¹ This is especially the case amongst older women. It also revealed that female respondents were more likely to have left school early.¹¹² Moreover, men were found to be more likely to have courses paid for them by their employers, whereas women were more likely to have paid for courses themselves.¹¹³ These findings, together with data gathered as part of the International Adult Literacy Survey, suggest that women, as carers and mothers, are less likely to be concerned with expanding skills such as reading and writing that are not immediately relevant to their roles in life. In the final outcome, this amounts to relative educational disadvantage of girls and women.

A brief examination of the status of Irish women as regards education and training reveals a series of difficulties. Gender stereotyping at second level means women are less likely to pursue scientific or technological training at third level. Stereotyping also results in horizontal segregation on training courses. Structural and attitudinal barriers have resulted in a dearth of women in education management. Moreover, while little is known about literacy levels generally, it seems that women are more likely to be deprived of basic education due to their domestic responsibilities. The participation of women in education highlights the importance of defining participation within sectors in order to reveal horizontal and vertical segregation.

The Department of Education and Science already collects a comprehensive data set on education, disaggregated by gender. Many of the indicators set out below are already being gathered by Education and Science. In this case, the next stage is the setting of realistic targets and benchmarks that can be used to analyse policy performance and its effectiveness in bringing about equality between women and men, girls and boys, in the educational system. The Department should now look to disaggregating all gender statistics for Traveller, ethnic, disability, rural and socio-economic status, to give a deeper picture of the impact of educational policy and related targets on equality between women.

Gender Equality Indicators

- Percentage of teenage mothers in full-time education.
- Percentage of girls and boys taking higher-level science and technology subjects at second level.

¹⁰⁸ European Social Fund Evaluation Unit, *Equal Opportunities for Men and Women and the ESF: Evaluation Report* (Dublin: ESF, October 1999), pp. 82-83.

¹⁰⁹ Morgan, M. Report to the Minister for Education and Science on the International Adult Literacy Survey: Results for Ireland, (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1997).

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 98.

¹¹¹ Bailey, Inez and Ursula Coleman, *Access and Participation in Adult Literacy Schemes* (Dublin: NALA, 1999), p. 9.

¹¹² *ibid*, p. 11.

¹¹³ *ibid*, p. 10.

- Percentage of women and men students enrolled in science and technology subjects at third level.
- Percentage of women and men students achieving first class honours in primary degree, by subject.
- Percentage of women and men principals at first and second level schools.
- Percentage of women and men applicants for posts of principal in first and second level schools.
- Percentage of women and men holding higher level academic posts in universities.
- Percentage of women and men applicants for higher level academic posts in universities.
- Percentage of women and men apprentices.
- Percentage of women and men early school leavers who return to training/adult education
- Percentage of female and male students participating in each of the special programmes for disadvantaged students, e.g., the Stay in School initiative.
- Percentage of female and male pupils at primary and post-primary levels receiving remedial education.
- Gender breakdown of staff at schools and universities according to qualifications and rank.
- Percentage of male and female staff who take career breaks and are subsequently promoted.

Health

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services.

The World Health Organisation defines health as ‘a State of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’¹¹⁴ This ethos is reflected in the Beijing Platform for Action, which outlines the key issues that must be addressed if women are to enjoy the level of well-being stipulated by the World Health Organisation definition above. These issues include access to affordable and high quality healthcare, especially in relation to reproductive health. Significantly, the Platform for Action recognises health and healthcare as central to the alleviation of problems of poverty, economic dependence, violence and other forms of discrimination experienced by women.¹¹⁵ In Ireland, there are a number of situations where distinct health risks arise for women. These include access to family planning education and resources, support for young mothers, the impact of mental illness on women, the increasing healthcare needs of women in an era of increased life expectancy and the impact of inadequate healthcare facilities on the quality of life of women¹¹⁶. The Platform for Action also highlights the importance of the collection and analysis of gender disaggregated statistics on women’s health.

Equal access to healthcare is necessary if women are not to suffer relative disadvantage in their reproductive and caring roles. The *Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 1999* identifies the eradication of inequalities in the healthcare provision to different groups in society as key to improving general levels of health. It also recognises that health is influenced by many factors - biological, physical, social and personal lifestyle.¹¹⁷ In a discussion on the causes of inequalities in health, it observes that

The relationship between socio-economic status and physical health are complex. Social inequalities in health are believed to result from a variety of cultural and behavioural factors including the following

¹¹⁴ World Health Organisation, *Health for All in the Twenty-First Century* at <http://www.who.int/> 1998, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ Platform for Action, para 92.

¹¹⁶ Platform for Action, paras. 89-105.

¹¹⁷ Department of Health and Children, *Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 1999*, (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 2000).

Health related behaviour and biological risk factors

Material conditions; unemployment, lack of access to adequate housing, poor transport, etc;

Low educational attainment;

Factors operating early in life, genetic, biological, results of early life experiences

Psycho-social factors, lack of control over working lives, poor support networks, stressful life events including violence and abuse

Inadequate medical care¹¹⁸

The report highlights the fact that improvements in health status and reduction in health inequalities can only be achieved by committed multisectoral collaboration which is increasingly being identified as the way forward.

The report conceptualises health as ‘a fundamental human resource to be promoted and protected and, therefore, something to be invested in.’¹¹⁹ It points to the inextricable link between social and economic deprivation and health inequalities. In Britain, the report of the independent inquiry into health inequalities was published in 1998. The Acheson Report made the following recommendations which it regarded as crucial

- All policies likely to have an impact on health should be evaluated in terms of their impact on health inequalities
- High priority should be give to the health of families with children
- Further steps should be taken to reduce income inequalities and improve the living standards of poor households
- Following on from this report, six modernisation action teams have been established to develop a plan for a national health service.

The key principles underlying health policy generally are health gain, social gain, equity, quality and accountability. Gender equality reflects the goal of fostering equitable conditions for women and men rather than treating them as the same. Equity requires fairness to both sexes, respect of differences and freedom from discrimination. A focus on gender equality in health recognises that males and females are gendered and that their health is determined not only by their biology and reproductive function, but also by their socially determined roles and relationships.

Gender based analysis is concerned with understanding how gender effects health and other conditions of women and men. It calls for an approach to health that seeks to understand the effect of gender and of gender biases in society and in the health care system on the health of women and men. It is important to understand that it may not be sufficient to simply replicate for women the policies, programmes and research studies previously conducted for men. On the other hand there are areas in which men have tended to be ignored, for instance with respect to family stresses and occupational hazards that effect reproduction.

A comprehensive evaluation of female health in Ireland must recognise that women in poverty, rural women, Traveller and disabled women have specific health needs. The Department of Health document, *A Plan for Women’s Health* offers a comprehensive overview of the issues for women’s healthcare. The plan identifies six key target areas to improve women’s health in Ireland:¹²⁰

- Decrease the number of women smokers

¹¹⁸ *ibid*, pp. 28-29

¹¹⁹ *ibid*, p. 6.

¹²⁰ Department of Health, *A Plan for Women’s Health 1997-1999*, (Dublin: Department of Health, 1997), p. 4.

- Establish a national breast and cervical cancer screening programmes
- Improve services for victims of domestic violence and rape
- Improve access to healthcare for Traveller women
- Increase representation of women in the health services
- Increase research into women's health problems.

It has been noted that health policy has not been particularly sensitive to the needs of women as producers and consumers of healthcare. Rather, health policies often reflect the strengths of various interest groups and are often the product of political compromise rather than the outcome of integrated and gender-sensitive health strategies¹²¹. The Platform for Action challenges health policy makers to become more aware of women's needs within the healthcare system. The following questions are useful in assisting health policy makers to recognise gender bias in proposed health initiatives:

- Are females appropriately included in all components of the policy programme or research processes?
- Are the norms comprehensive or are males taken as the norm and females compared against it?
- Is the process or study premised on an underlying notion of gender equality?
- Is sex recognised as a socially relevant issue or variable?¹²²

Cancer

Cancer is the second most frequent cause of death in Ireland and was identified in *Shaping a Healthier Future* as an area that needed to be urgently tackled. In 1997, cancer accounted for 23 per cent of all female deaths below 65 years of age, and 19 per cent of all male deaths.¹²³ In Europe, Ireland ranked 10th of 23 countries in the diagnosis of cancer among women and 15th in the rate of cancer detected among men.¹²⁴ Breast cancer is the most frequent cause of death among Irish women. It was responsible for 18 per cent of female deaths in 1997, most frequently in women over the age of 40. Lung cancer was the most frequent cause of cancer death among men (22 per cent) and second among women (14 per cent) in 1997. However, it is also evident that lung cancer rates have increased among women since 1994 and have decreased significantly among men in the same period.¹²⁵ This is connected with the higher rates of smoking among women. Lung cancer among women in Ireland is 6th highest in Europe as compared to lung cancer among men, which is 20th, one of the lowest in Europe.

Cancer of the skin (non-melanoma) accounted for over one third of all cases in 1997, and has increased, for women and men, since 1994 (Table 4.10). Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Ireland, accounting for 16 per cent of new cases in 1997, followed by cervical (9 per cent) and bowel cancer (8 per cent). For men, prostate (11 per cent), bowel (10 per cent) and lung (9 per cent) cancers were most common.¹²⁶ Ireland has above average death rates from breast cancer. It has been recognised that the best way to prevent deaths is to diagnose breast cancer early. In Ireland, phase one of the National Breast Screening Programme has been launched. This programme will involve screening women aged 50-64 years in the Eastern Regional Health Authority, North Eastern Health Board and the Midland Health Board areas. Phases two and three of the Programme will involve its extension to the rest of the country as soon as is practicable. The second most common cancer in women is cervical cancer, at 9 per cent of all new cases in 1997. Elsewhere, comprehensive screening programmes have

¹²¹ Sachs, B. et. al. *Reproductive Health Care for Women and Babies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 1.

¹²² Suggested by the Women's Health Council.

¹²³ National Cancer Registry Ireland, *Cancer in Ireland 1997: A Summary* (Cork: NCRI, September 2000), p. 1.

¹²⁴ *ibid*, p. 5.

¹²⁵ *ibid*, pp. 3, 7, 8.

¹²⁶ *ibid*, p. 2.

reduced the death rate. In Ireland, phase one of a national cervical screening programme is now underway, concentrating in the Mid Western Health Board Region. This programme will be evaluated for its effectiveness by the National Cancer Registry.

Table 4.10: Main Types of New Cancers Diagnosed in 1997

Cancer Type	Total	% total	Male	% total	Female	% total
Non-melanoma skin	7,816	36	4,070	39	3,746	34
Bowel	1,908	9	1,069	10	839	8
Breast	1,731	8	16	0	1,715	16
Lung	1,420	7	909	9	511	5
Prostate	1,133	5	1,133	11	0	0
Cervix	965	4	0	0	965	9
Melanoma	609	3	228	2	381	4
Unknown primary site	698	3	345	3	353	3
Lymphoma	497	2	265	3	232	2
Stomach	476	2	301	3	175	2
Bladder	474	2	345	3	129	1
Myeloma	342	2	178	2	164	2
Pancreas	342	2	173	2	169	2
Leukaemia	339	2	195	2	144	1
Ovary	337	2	0	0	337	3
Oesophagus	299	1	199	2	100	1
Kidney	255	1	174	2	81	1
All other	1,767	8	927	9	840	8
Total	21,408	100	10,527	100	10,881	100

Source: National Cancer Registry Ireland, 2000, p. 2

Smoking

While fewer women than men are regular smokers, the World Health Organisation recognises smoking amongst women as a special problem for public health. Women who smoke are at increased risk of premature menopause and impaired fertility. There is also an associated risk of lung and cervical cancer as well as cardiovascular disease, which accounts for half of all deaths of Irish women.¹²⁷ The WHO also recognises the pressures on younger women to smoke.¹²⁸ The *Plan for Women's Health 1997-1999* states that 15 per cent of female second level pupils smoke, rising to 23 per cent for those of 17 and over.¹²⁹ The increase in lung cancer among women is noted by the Chief Medical Officer as a particular cause for concern, reflecting the differential rates of smoking between the sexes. Among younger women as a whole, the smoking rates are now 40 per cent while the level of smoking in the population overall is 31 per cent.¹³⁰

Carers

The specific impact of inadequate healthcare provision on women is not addressed. As mothers and primary care-givers, the level of support available for the care of the elderly, mentally ill or physically handicapped severely impacts on the quality of life and ultimately the health of women.¹³¹ For instance,

¹²⁷ Department of Health, *A Plan for Women's Health, 1997-1999* (Dublin: Department of Health, 1997), p. 19.

¹²⁸ World Health Organisation *Tobacco Epidemic: Smoking and Women* at <http://www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact176.html>

¹²⁹ *A Plan for Women's Health, 1997-1999*, p. 57.

¹³⁰ Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 1999, p. 50.

¹³¹ *ibid*, p. 62.

the impact of current policies of care within the family and community requires the provision of free healthcare by many women to mentally ill, handicapped or elderly family members¹³². Therefore, while the data on voluntary health carers within the home is inadequate, the fact that 99 per cent of those engaged in home duties are female indicates that women bear the major share of the caring work that enables ill, disabled and elderly people to live at home.¹³³

Reproductive Health

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) stated that 'reproductive health' implies that men and women have access to safe, effective, affordable and legal fertility regulation, as well as access to appropriate health-care services during pregnancy and birth.¹³⁴ The *Plan for Women's Health 1997-1999* recognises that effective family planning contributes to women's overall good health by allowing them to make informed choices about their sexuality and fertility.¹³⁵ Access to information and education on fertility is vital if a high level of reproductive health is to be attained. In Ireland, the main issues are access to information and services for young, Traveller, rural and disabled women. The problem of unplanned pregnancies is evident in the fact that the proportion of births outside marriage is now close to 30 per cent, which is above the EU average.¹³⁶ The *Plan for Women's Health 1997-1999* recognises a reduction in the number of unwanted pregnancies as key to improving women's reproductive and general health.¹³⁷

In a recent report commissioned by the Department of Health and Children, Evelyn Mahon identified the range of difficulties faced by women with crisis pregnancies. She also noted that lone mothers often experience economic and social marginalisation.¹³⁸ The Midland Health Board reported in a survey carried out in 1996 that 39 per cent of women felt that the availability of family planning services in their area was poor or very poor. Inability to pay for family planning services was cited by 74 per cent of respondents in a National Women's Council survey. A woman's ability to control her fertility is a key indicator of the level of freedom and independence she will enjoy in all other areas of her life.

Older Women

Irish women's life expectancy is below the EU average (Table 4.11). However, women do live longer than men and this often means that they live with chronic illness longer than men. Older women are likely to suffer from disability, heart disease and cancer. They are also more likely to encounter difficulties in maintaining their independence. The greater life expectancy of women also necessitates prevention and treatment of menopausal conditions such as hormonal imbalance, hysterectomy, osteoporosis and depression. Older women can also suffer from incontinence following childbirth in earlier life.¹³⁹

Table 4.11: Female Life Expectancy for EU Countries by Gender

Country	Year	Male Life Expectancy	Female Life Expectancy
Austria	1995	73.6	80.1

¹³² Department of Health *Services for the Handicapped* states that "The philosophy which underpins the provision of services to persons with mental handicap is to enable each individual ... to live within his or her family circle and local community where possible." At <http://www.doh.ie/statistics/>

¹³³ CSO, *Quarterly National Household Survey, 2000* at <http://www.cso.ie/>

¹³⁴ Hardon, A. and Hayes, E. *Reproductive Rights in Practice: a Feminist Report on the Quality of Care* (New York: Zed Books 1998), p. 5.

¹³⁵ Department of Health, *A Plan for Women's Health, 1997-1999*, p. 35.

¹³⁶ CSO, *That Was Then, This is Now': Change in Ireland: 1949-1999* at <http://www.cso.ie/pressreleases/>

¹³⁷ Department of Health, *A Plan for Women's Health, 1997-1999*, p. 36.

¹³⁸ Mahon, Evelyn et. al. *Women and Crisis Pregnancy* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1998), p. 539.

¹³⁹ *A Plan for Women's Health*, p. 63.

Belgium	1995	73.4	80.2
Denmark	1995	72.7	77.8
Finland	1995	72.8	80.2
France	1995	73.9	81.8
Germany	1995	73.3	79.7
Greece	1995	75.0	80.3
Ireland	1995	73.0	78.6
Italy	1993	74.4	80.7
Luxembourg	1995	73.0	80.2
Netherlands	1995	74.6	80.4
Portugal	1995	71.3	78.6
Spain	1994	74.2	81.4
Sweden	1995	76.2	81.4
United Kingdom	1995	74.0	79.2
EU Average	1993	73.4	80.0

Source: Adapted from Department of Health and Children , *Health Statistics 1999*, p. 22.

Traveller Women

Traveller women face specific health problems related to their lifestyle and socio-economic status. This is reflected in the fact that in the Traveller population, less than 2 per cent are in the 65+ age group in comparison with 11 per cent of the general population.¹⁴⁰ Access to healthcare services such as vaccination, ante-natal and post-natal care as well as and the availability of information on family planning are identified as key health areas for Traveller women.¹⁴¹

Women healthcare providers

The *Health Statistics 1999* report contains an extensive section on employment in the health services. It reveals that there were 65, 755 wholtime equivalent numbers working in the public health services in Ireland at the end of 1996, of which 41 per cent were engaged in nursing duties and 28 per cent provided support services. Only 7 per cent of those employed in the public health services were medical and dental practitioners.¹⁴² These figures imply that the majority of employees in the public health care sector are women. However, the data do not reveal the gender composition of the workforce or the level of posts held by women. In January 2000, there were 1440 consultant posts in the public sector. Figures show a very slight increase in the proportion of female consultants in the past decade, from 12 per cent in 1989 to 20 per cent in 1999 but it is clear that consultancy remains a very male-dominated sector (Tables 4.12 and 4.13).

Table 4.12: Permanent Consultants by Gender, 2000

Speciality	Total	Male	Female	% Female
Accident/Emergency	14	12	2	14
Anaesthesia	201	149	52	26
Medicine	226	204	22	10
Obstetrics/Gynaecology	75	64	11	15
Paediatrics	69	48	21	30
Pathology	108	74	34	31
Psychiatry	172	96	76	44
Radiology	121	99	22	18
Surgery	264	254	10	4
Total	1,250	1,000	250	20

¹⁴⁰ Department of Health and Children *Health Statistics 1999* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1999), p. 16.

¹⁴¹ A Plan for Women's Health, p. 60.

¹⁴² Health Statistics 1999, p. 204.

Source: Comhairle na nOspideal, *Consultant Staffing*, p. 21.

Table 4.13: Non-Permanent Consultants by Gender, 2000

Speciality	Total	Male	Female	% Female
Accident/Emergency	2	2	0	0
Anaesthesia	22	19	3	14
Medicine	23	16	7	30
Obstetrics/Gynaecology	10	7	3	30
Paediatrics	7	3	4	57
Pathology	6	4	2	33
Psychiatry	21	10	11	52
Radiology	5	3	2	40
Surgery	21	21	0	0
Total	117	85	32	27

Source: Comhairle na nOspideal, *Consultant Staffing*, p. 22.

Gender Equality Indicators

- A gender impact assessment of general health services to ascertain how women produce private health-care in the home and consume public health-care.
- Percentage of women and men carers of the long-term ill, disabled and elder persons in the home.
- Women's and men's unpaid labour as health-care workers as a percentage of GDP.
- Percentage of women in care, classified according to age and disability.
- National guide to sources of information on reproductive health for women.
- Access to family planning by age, class and ethnic/racial origin.
- Access to health and reproductive health education by age, class and ethnic/racial origin.
- Access to health services by rural women, classified by medical condition.
- Modes of transport used by rural women to access health services.
- Age at first pregnancy and marital status.
- Life expectancy rates of women and men.
- Life expectancy rates of Traveller women and men.
- Cancer rates among women and men.
- Survival rates from cancer for women and men.
- Heart disease among women and men by age and class.
- Smoking rates among women and men.
- Alcoholism rates among women and men.
- Rates for depressive illness among women and men.
- Eating disorder rates among women by age and class.
- Hospital waiting lists by age and health concern.
- Percentage of women and men at each level of the health service.

- Percentage of women and men in medical training across sectors.
- Percentage of women and men in senior medical posts, permanent and non-permanent.

Violence against Women

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with violence against women.

Violence against women is also a concern of the Irish Government.¹⁴³ The term ‘violence against women’ refers to ‘any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women.’¹⁴⁴

The Platform for Action outlines the main arguments condemning violence against women. It identifies the incidence of male violence against women as a reflection of unequal gender relations at broader societal and cultural levels. Violence has been identified as a mechanism used by State and society to keep women in a subordinate position.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, acts of gender-based violence are symptomatic of economic and social inequalities that exist between men and women. Moreover, it has been noted that violence against women is the result of a social construction of norms in which violence is an accepted behaviour.¹⁴⁶ The Platform for Action also recognises how the threat of violence constrains female social and economic activity and general well being.¹⁴⁷ In addition, it recognises how women in poverty, refugee women, elderly, homeless or rural women are most vulnerable to violence. It has also been noted that the effects of violence can be most traumatic for these women, and for women with mental or physical disabilities.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, the problem of violence against women cuts across all social classes and groups, affecting a diversity of women in a variety of circumstances.

One of the main problems inherent in the area of violence against women is that of measurement. The incidence of violence is under-reported, and thus the true level of violent abuse against women is not apparent. Measurement of the incidence of violence is also complicated by the nature of emotional, financial, social and other forms of non-physical abuse including bullying and sexual harassment. Objective measures of social and mental abuse are difficult to develop. Support services, such as help-lines, give some indication of these aspects, but extensive quantitative and qualitative research into non-physical as well as physical forms of violence against women needs to be undertaken.

A recent study echoes the Platform for Action in recognising how the experience of physical and sexual violence impact on a woman’s psychological health.¹⁴⁹ The experience of being attacked, raped, battered or sexually assaulted undermines a woman’s confidence. Fear of violence limits women’s access to basic activities and resources.¹⁵⁰ The fact that women are more likely to feel unsafe at night, or walking alone, demonstrates how the violence that some women experience has consequences for the status and quality of all women’s lives. The marked difference between male and female perceptions of safety is outlined in Table 4.14.

¹⁴³ Office of the Tanaiste, *Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women* (Dublin: Department of Equality and Law Reform, 1997), pp. 1-2.

¹⁴⁴ Platform for Action, para 113.

¹⁴⁵ Mulheir, Georgette and Tracey O’Brien, *Private Pain, Public Action: Violence Against Women in War and Peace* (University of Limerick: Centre for Peace and Development Studies, 2000), p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ Kelleher Associates and M. O’Connor, M. *Making the Links* (Dublin: Women’s Aid, 1995), p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*, p. 74-75.

¹⁴⁸ Community Workers Co-operative, *Violence Against Women – an Issue for Community Work*, (Galway: Community Worker’s Co-operative, 1999), p. 44.

¹⁴⁹ Mulheir and O’Brien, *Private Pain, Public Action*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Platform for Action, para 117.

Table 4.14: Perceptions of Safety by Gender and Age, 1998

	Males					Females				
	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
How safe do you feel walking in your neighbourhood at night?										
- very safe	44.7	49.3	46.1	30.4	44.0	16.2	16.8	16.9	10.4	15.6
- safe	48.1	45.0	45.4	46.8	45.8	46.9	45.1	42.5	32.1	41.9
-unsafe	6.3	4.9	7.6	19.0	8.7	30.0	31.7	32.6	40.3	33.5
-very unsafe	1.0	0.8	0.9	3.9	1.5	6.9	6.5	7.9	17.1	9.0
How safe do you feel alone in your home at night?										
- very safe	61.5	64.8	60.2	43.8	58.8	33.0	36.8	36.4	25.8	34.2
- safe	37.8	33.9	37.8	50.3	38.9	55.6	54.6	52.6	57.0	54.5
-unsafe	0.6	1.1	1.7	5.1	2.1	9.6	7.5	9.6	14.1	9.7
-very unsafe	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.3	1.8	1.1	1.5	3.1	1.7

Source: CSO, *QNHS Crime and Victimisation* at <http://www.cso.ie/publications/labour/crime.pdf>

Women of all ages feel distinctly less safe than men when walking at night and when alone at home. A brief examination of the extent and nature of violence against women in Ireland reveals that 18 per cent of Irish women surveyed said they have suffered abuse by partners, 10 per cent stated that the abuse occurred while pregnant. Moreover, 4 per cent of a random national sample questioned by the ESRI reported some experience of sexual violence.¹⁵¹ The incidence of domestic violence in recent years is illustrated in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Incidence of Domestic Violence 1997, 1998

	Incidents	Arrests	Persons Charged	Persons Injured	Persons Convicted
1997	4,184	1,135	947	992	673
1998	8,448	1,808	1,371	1,232	772

Source: Garda Síochána, *Domestic Violence Incidents 1997 and 1998* at <http://www.irlgov.ie/garda/statistics/>

The recent sharp increase in the reporting of domestic violence reflects the growing acceptance that violence against women is a social problem meriting public action. However, physical, sexual or mental violence against women was not always seen as a matter of public concern. Service providers, such as rape crisis centres and Women's Aid, grew out of a 'grass roots' identification of the problem, rather than as part of any broad national strategy on violence against women. The first rape crisis centre was established in Dublin in 1971, outside mainstream health and social services.¹⁵² There is little doubt that voluntary groups such as the Rape Crisis Centre and Women's Aid have played a crucial role in uncovering the extent and nature of the problem. Annual rape crisis centre statistics reveal the extent of sexual violence against women in Ireland. This is illustrated in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Number of People in Dublin Rape Crisis Counselling by Gender and Year

¹⁵¹ Office of the Tanaiste, *Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1997), p. 7.

¹⁵² Community Workers Co-operative, *Violence Against Women*, p. 33.

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Percentage female Number	90 (172)	84 (362)	90 (484)	90 (406)	92 (474)	90 (518)	87 (609)
Percentage Male Number	10 (19)	14 (69)	10 (54)	10 (46)	8 (41)	10 (57)	13 (88)
Total Percentage Number	100 (191)	100 (431)	100 (538)	100 (452)	100 (515)	100 (575)	100 (697)

Source: Dublin Rape Crisis Centre: Annual statistics 1999

As a result, the problem has gained the political profile necessary to formulate a strategic plan of action aimed at combating violence against women.

Numerous studies have identified the lack of co-ordination between the many public agencies involved in combating violence against women. These include the Garda Síochána, the justice system, refuges, health boards and counselling service-providers. As a result, the Task Force on Violence against Women aimed to develop a co-ordinated strategy on the problem of domestic violence against women, rape and sexual assault.¹⁵³ The Task Force identified the extent and nature of the problem, the options available to women to escape a violent situation and the role of public agencies in combating the problem. The Task Force also identified the centrality of helping the perpetrator to cease violent behaviour and examined civil and criminal justice sanctions on violence against women.¹⁵⁴ It highlighted the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to deal with the consequences of violence. This approach requires co-ordination between voluntary service-providers, Government departments and other State agencies. The Task Force also recognised the need to expand and re-organise resources in order to improve services and supports for female victims of violence and their children. The Task Force also stressed the need for strategic planning around the issue to develop a regional focus.¹⁵⁵

Undoubtedly, an important contribution of the Task Force was in providing the first official policy statement on tackling violence against women in Ireland.

Much work has been done in recent years to establish the root causes of violence against women.¹⁵⁶ As stated in the Platform for Action, violence against women is about power and control of women by men.¹⁵⁷ This power and control maintains inequality between the sexes and is reflected in the institutional structures of society. Therefore, violence against women is a matter of public concern requiring collective action by public agencies.¹⁵⁸ Although the reported incidence of violence against women continues to increase, there remains a serious under-reporting of these crimes.

Gender Equality Indicators

- Percentage of male and female victims who report violence.
- Percentage of women in poverty, refugee women, elderly women, Traveller women, lesbian women, homeless women, women with disabilities and women from other ethnic backgrounds who report

¹⁵³ *Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*, p. 98.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, p. 118.

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, Office of the Tanaiste, *Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women* (Dublin: Department of Equality and Law Reform, 1997); Mulheir, G. and O'Brien, T., *Private Pain, Public Action: Violence Against Women in War and Peace* (University of Limerick: Centre for Peace and Development Studies, 2000); Kelleher Associates and M.O'Connor, *Making the Links* (Dublin: Women's Aid, 1995); Community Workers Co-operative, *Violence Against Women – an Issue for Community Work*, (Galway: Community Worker's Co-operative, 1999).

¹⁵⁷ Platform for Action, para 118.

¹⁵⁸ Community Workers Co-operative, *Violence Against Women*, p. 2.

crimes of violence against their person to the Garda Síochána.

- Development of a modern Garda database, designed for retrieving aggregate data on violence against women, allowing cases to be tracked through the criminal courts and from the civil courts to the criminal courts.
- Percentage of reported cases of male violence against women leading to convictions.
- Disaggregation of all statistics on violence against women according to gender and the relationship of accused to victim.
- Number of domestic violence orders in existence.
- Percentage of female population whose economic or social activities are inhibited by fear of violence.
- Percentage of female population who call national help-lines.
- Number of refuge spaces available per victim at any given time.
- Percentage of refuge spaces per head of population, disaggregated by region.
- Annual percentage of victims who leave a violent domestic arrangement.
- Number of children in families being subject to male violence.
- Percentage of rapes reported leading to conviction.
- Percentage of sexual harassment reported and case outcomes.
- Percentage of national budget spent on improving services for female victims of male violence.
- Percentage of male perpetrators availing of anti-violence treatment programmes.
- Number of hours and percentage of time spent in training by individual Garda on domestic violence, rape and sexual assault.
- Additional records (civil applications) on domestic violence incidents to cover the following information for offender and victim – age, sex, relationship between offender and victim, number and ages of children, area of residence, employment status, ethnic origin, previous applications for domestic violence orders; category of violence, i.e. threats of violence, physical violence, sexual violence, criminal damage; length of time violence has been present in relationship; type of physical violence used (if appropriate), i.e. hit, pushed, attempted strangulation; weapon/implement used; injury to victim; whether or not the violence has escalated over time; whether or not offender has abused the children (if relevant); whether or not the children have witnessed the violence (if relevant).
- DVSA (1) Form to contain the above information along with the following – whether or not the accused has a serious drug/alcohol problem; whether perpetrator is harassing/stalking, watching or besetting the victim after she has taken out an order; whether or not there was a power of arrest; reasons for not making an arrest; the outcome of a warrant being issued; referrals to a support agency; times and dates of contact with victim by Garda in follow-up work.

Women and Armed Conflict

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation.

The Platform for Action recognises that peace is a prerequisite for the attainment of equality between women and men but that armed and other types of conflict still persist in many parts of the world. International humanitarian law prohibiting attacks on civilian populations are systematically ignored and human rights are often violated in situations of conflict. This affects the civilian population, especially women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Massive violations of human rights, especially in the form of genocide, ethnic cleansing and rape, including systematic rape of women in war situations, are strongly condemned and the Platform for Action says that these actions must be stopped and the perpetrators punished.

The Platform for Action calls for the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. It deems this to be an essential basis for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

The Petersberg Tasks, based on the Petersberg Declaration announced at a Western European Union meeting in Bonn in June 1992, set out a humanitarian and rescue agenda, covering peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management. The Petersberg Tasks were later incorporated in the Amsterdam Treaty of which Ireland is a signatory. In this way, Ireland is committed to encouraging the protection of human rights.

Because of women's gender and status within society they experience conflict in very specific ways. During periods of conflict the role of women, both young and old, becomes one of carer for the injured, sole household provider, sole parent, carer to the elderly and other relatives in need of care. These roles should be fully recognised and valued. The Geneva Convention related to the protection of civilian persons in time of war and the additional protocols offers special protection for women. The Vienna Declaration states that 'violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law'.¹⁵⁹ The necessity for particular protection of women against systematic rape, murder, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy is recognised.

Women and children constitute 80 per cent of the world's refugees and other displaced persons.¹⁶⁰ Since the early 1990s, Ireland is seen as a country that can offer safety for people from war-torn regions. Thus, there has been an increase in the number of persons seeking asylum in this country. Table 4.17 shows the pattern of asylum-seeking in Ireland.

Table 4.17: Asylum Seekers in Ireland, 1992-1999

Year	Total No. of Applications	Information not available	Male	Female	%Female
1992	39	4	28	7	18
1993	91	29	40	22	24
1994	361	148	154	59	16
1995	424	71	284	69	16
1996	1,179	140	765	274	23
1997	3,883	0	2,641	1,242	32
1998	4,626	0	2,874	1,752	38
1999	7,724	0	4,962	2,762	36
Total	18,327	392	11,748	6,187	34

Source: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Asylum Policy Division, December 2000.

Table 4.18 indicates the gender breakdown of refugee applicants granted refugee status.

Table 4.18: Gender Breakdown of Applicants Granted Refugee Status

Year of Application	Total granted refugee status	Male	Female	%Female
1992	8	5	3	38
1993	10	7	3	30

¹⁵⁹ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, chapter III, section II, para. 38.

¹⁶⁰ Platform for Action, para 136

1994	35	24	11	31
1995	104	74	30	29
1996	270	190	80	30
1997	535	343	192	36
1998	406	263	143	35
1999	100	61	39	39
Total	1,468	967	501	34

Source: Asylum Policy Division, Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, December 2000

Unfortunately, these men, women and children can frequently experience discrimination and resentment in this country. The Government, by means of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 have outlawed discrimination on nine grounds, including gender, race and ethnic origin, in employment and in the supply of goods and services. However, much work remains to be done by Government, the social partners and non-governmental organisations to educate the public on the diversity of cultures in order to enhance tolerance for refugees and asylum seekers and in order to respect and protect refugees and asylum seekers fleeing from very different situations from those we enjoy, and are familiar with, in Irish society. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), a partnership of State agencies and ngo's are to the fore in this task. The Government requested the NCCRI to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of how public opinion can be better informed. The NCCRI was requested to include in its evaluation a media and communications strategy, the role of statutory authorities and political parties, a public education programme and a community development strategy. The overall aim of the proposed public awareness programme - which will be by way of a comprehensive partnership approach involving the participation of Government and non-government agencies, statutory authorities, educational bodies, political parties and the media - is to contribute to creating the conditions for building a more inclusive and intercultural society in Ireland where racism is effectively addressed and cultural diversity is viewed as a strength rather than a weakness.

Women's role in peace-keeping has two aspects. One is as active agents for peace in civil society, the second is as participants in military peace-keeping tasks. The first aspect requires that national and international peace-seeking agencies facilitate, resource and provide financial and political support to women's community and grass-roots peace and conflict resolution initiatives. The second aspect calls for women's equal access to, and active participation in, decision - making structures related to peace-making.

Women's community and grass-roots peace-seeking groups have flourished in Northern Ireland and are acknowledged to have played an important role in the peace process. Women's groups in the Republic have made alliances with women's organisations in Northern Ireland, supporting their participation in building and maintaining a peaceful society. Women's groups are also supportive of women in situations of conflict in other parts of the world, and have used their skills and expertise to aid women suffering the consequences of conflict. These grass-roots initiatives in restoring peace to strife-ridden societies is vital work, and should be fostered and resourced.

The presence of women in the armed forces, at only 4 per cent, is minuscule. This means that within the armed forces as a whole, there are few women available to take up peace-keeping duties. Given that participation in these tasks is a voluntary decision on the part of members of the armed forces, this further reduces the likelihood of women offering for service on peace-keeping missions.

Gender equality indicators

- Percentage of Irish aid budget contributed to international aid funds.
- Percentage of Irish aid budget allocated to supporting women in conflict situations.
- Percentage of funding to cross-border peace projects on the island.
- Level of support to women's organisations in Ireland working for peace and development in Ireland

and abroad.

- Percentage of women and men in decision-making processes in the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- Percentage of women and men on Irish delegations to the UN.
- Percentage of women and men in permanent representations abroad.
- Percentage of women and men from Ireland on international peace-keeping duties.
- Percentage of women and men asylum seekers and numbers of accompanying persons.
- Percentage of successful applications for asylum according to gender.
- Percentage of successful grounds for asylum for women and men.

Women and the Economy

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with inequality in economic structures and politics, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources.

The Platform for Action recognises the importance of economic structures in determining the freedom, independence and social status of men and women.¹⁶¹ Economic policy-making determines the framework within which men and women make decisions about paid and unpaid work. Therefore it is central in determining an individual's access to economic resources and ultimately their quality of life. The absence of women in economic decision-making ultimately limits their life choices to those already prescribed. The Platform also recognises how inflexible working hours and the unequal distribution of domestic work forces many women to work in the informal sector or in part-time work. This results in women being restricted to low-status employment.¹⁶² The overall outcome is a male-female wage differential, where on average, women earn 84.5 per cent of a male worker's wages.¹⁶³

The Platform for Action also identifies how employment policy has typically neglected the economic sectors where women predominate, while simultaneously failing to promote equality of access to male-dominated sectors.¹⁶⁴ Despite the passage of various pieces of employment equality legislation,¹⁶⁵ under-representation of women in senior positions in both the private and public sectors persists. It is widely acknowledged that women are over-represented in low status, low skilled and part-time employment.¹⁶⁶ Economic equality refers to equal representation of women's needs and interests in all sectors and at all levels of the economy. This interpretation requires that indicators of women and the economy address levels of equality within the whole economy, including paid and unpaid employment. Equality indicators must also begin to assess women as economically productive individuals with distinctive attributes and responsibilities, rather than as part of a homogenous household unit.¹⁶⁷ Both of these facts suggest that factors beyond the labour market militate against women reaching powerful positions within the Irish economy. Therefore, women's contribution to the economy must not be viewed simply in terms of their participation in the labour force, but also in terms of their unpaid roles as mothers, carers and homemakers.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ Platform for Action, para 150.

¹⁶² Platform for Action, paras 157-162.

¹⁶³ Barrett et. al., *How Unequal?*, p. 159.

¹⁶⁴ Platform for Action, paras 161-162.

¹⁶⁵ On joining the EEC a number of pieces of equality legislation were passed, all relating to equality within the labour market. These included the Anti-discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974 and Employment Equality Act, 1977.

¹⁶⁶ Byrne, Anne and Madeline Leonard, *Women and Irish society: A Sociological Reader* (Belfast: Pale Publications, 1997), p. 59.

¹⁶⁷ For instance, traditional methods of analysis income inequality take the household as the unit of measure, see Nolan, B. and S. Cantillon, "Are Married Women More Deprived Than Their Husbands?" *Journal of Social Policy* Vol. 27 No. 2, 1998

¹⁶⁸ Fahey, Tony and John Fitzgerald, *Welfare Implications of Demographic Trends* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1997), p. 18.

A cursory examination of the statistics reveals that women are absent across sectors and between levels of the Irish economy. The absence of women from financially, economically or commercially powerful positions is illustrated by the fact there are no females corporate leaders amongst Ireland's top 10 companies, and only one female chief executive among Ireland's top 50 companies.¹⁶⁹

The absence of women from the upper echelons of the private sector is testament to the range of obstacles that prevent women from gaining promotion and developing their careers. McDevitt states that the continued absence of women from decision-making bodies will ensure that current patterns of organisational behaviour and gender-blind policy measures will continue into the near future.¹⁷⁰

An analysis of the participation of male and female workers across and within sectors reveals the horizontally and vertically segregated nature of the Irish labour force. Table 4.19 highlights the distribution of women employees across economic sectors. Women are under-represented in full-time work across all except in the categories of 'hotels and restaurants', 'financial and other business services' and 'others'. The only sector where women dominate the labour force is in 'home duties' which gives some coherence to their absence across most other sectors. However, in the absence of data reflecting women's time-use, the dual employment of women inside and outside the home, in paid and unpaid work remains hidden. Women represent over 73 per cent of all part-time employees in Ireland, while women aged between 25 and 49 years represent 46 per cent of total part-time workers.¹⁷¹

These figures, together with the absence of women across most employment sectors, reflects the fact that women assume primary responsibility for childcare in Irish society, and, therefore, results in them either being confined to sectors seen as compatible with child-rearing or in opting out of paid work altogether.¹⁷²

Table 4.19: Participation in the Labour Force by Economic Sector and Gender, 2000

Economic Sector	Total Employees (thousands)	Male Employees (thousands)	Female Employees (thousands)	% Female
Agriculture, Food and Fisheries	133.8	118.8	15.0	11
Building and Construction	159.7	151.9	7.8	5
Other production Industries	313.5	213.2	100.3	32
Wholesale and Retail Trade	233.5	124.8	108.6	47
Hotels and Restaurants	105.4	43.5	61.9	59
Financial and Other Business	206.8	104.1	102.7	50
Transport, Storage, Communication	101.2	75.7	25.5	25
Education and Health	226.7	58.7	168.0	74
Public Administration and Defence	76.8	45.9	30.9	40
Home Duties	568.9	8.5	560.4	99
Total Excluding Home Duties	1650.6	979.8	670.8	41
Total Including Home Duties	2,219.5	988.3	1,231.2	55

Source: CSO, *Quarterly National Household Survey, Dec-Feb 2000* at <http://www.cso.ie/>

Although women constitute just over 40 per cent of the workforce, they hold on average only 3 per cent

¹⁶⁹ Institute of Public Administration, *Administration Yearbook and Diary* (Dublin, IPA, 1999), p. 425.

¹⁷⁰ Joint Committee on Women's Rights and Delma McDevitt, *Barriers to the Participation of Women in Business and Business Creation*, (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1996), p. 127.

¹⁷¹ Ruane and Sutherland, *Women in the Labour Force*, p. 37.

¹⁷² This fact has been substantiated in a recent study by Coveney et al, *Women, Work and Family Responsibilities* (Dublin: Larkin Unemployment Centre, 1998) where 50% of women who worked part-time cited family responsibilities as the main motivation for choosing part-time rather than full-time work.

of executive positions in Ireland. Table 4.20 outlines the under-representation of women at higher-level grades across employment sectors. These figures demonstrate the absence of women from positions of authority across public and private sectors of the economy.

Table 4.20: Women in Senior Employment Positions by Sector

Year	Sector	Position	% Female
1998	Corporate Ireland	Managing Director	3
		Head of Function	15
		Senior Manager	21
1996-97	University Medical Faculties	Professor/Associate	3
		Professor	
		Senior Lecturer	9
		Lecturer	21
2000	Judiciary	Supreme Court	29
		High Court	7
		Circuit Court	19
		District Court	18
1998	Higher Education Academic Staff	Professor	5
		Associate Professor	9
		Senior Lecturer	16
		Lecturer	37
2000	Defence Forces	Officers	6
		NCOs	2
		Privates	5
1997	Civil Service	Secretary General	4
		Assistant Secretary	10
		Principal Officer	12
2000	Dail Eireann	Government Minister	20
		Junior Minister	12
		TDs	12

Source: Ruane and Sutherland, 1999, pp. 68-79; Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, June 2000; Humphreys, Drew and Murphy 1999, p. 82; Galligan, 1999, p. 296.

There are a number of factors that combine to produce this gender bias in employment patterns. These are outlined in Table 4.21. The European Social Fund survey asked trainers to list obstacles they perceived inhibited female involvement in training, education or work. The results suggest that women face a combination of structural and attitudinal barriers that together provide significant obstacles to their access to and participation in the paid economy.

Table 4.21: Obstacles to Women's Participation in Education, Training and Work

Obstacle	Number Citing this Obstacle
Childcare	14
Family responsibilities	6
Lack of family support	5
Total citing caring responsibilities	25
Costs of participation	9
Live Register requirements	5
Inflexible training	4
Transport difficulties	4
Lack of information	2
Poor educational record/literacy problems	2
Course not available	3
Lack of cultural awareness by providers	1
Non recognition of non-EU qualifications	1
Total citing provision issues	31
Women's attitudes	2
Lack of self-confidence	8
Lack of role models	1
Employer's attitudes	1
Age	1
Total citing attitudinal issues	13

Source: ESF, *Equal Opportunities for Men and Women and the ESF*, 1999, p. 152.

Once in the labour force, obstacles to women's promotional opportunities come into play. There is agreement among researchers that the main organisational barriers to women's advancement include lack of communications about opportunities, stereotypical attitudes about women's career abilities and aspirations, exclusion from informal male networks and the absence of women in senior positions to provide support. In addition, the likelihood that women are less confident of their abilities to perform at more senior levels along with a 'long hours' culture discourage women from applying for promotion.

There is also evidence that when women do participate in the labour force they are likely to earn less than men. A recent ESRI study on this subject indicates that the average female wage amounted to 84.5 per cent of the average male wage by 1997.¹⁷³ Evidence from the 1994 European Community Household Panel survey reveals that, with the exception of the UK, women's average pay ranges between 84 per cent and 94 per cent of the male wage (Table 4.22). Ireland ranks at the lower end of this European scale. Moreover, the persistence of a gender-wage gap, and the absence of any substantive research into the contribution of women's unpaid work to the economy, reflects how official labour market statistics assess all work in terms of the male model of full-time formal employment.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Barrett et al, *How Unequal?*, p. 159.

¹⁷⁴ Byrne and Leonard, *Women and Irish Society*, p. 61.

Table 4.22: Female to Male Wage Ratios, European Community Household Panel, 1994

All Employees	Female wage as % of Male Wage
United Kingdom	73.9
Ireland	84.5
France	83.9
Luxembourg	84.9
Spain	85.9
Belgium	87.8
Greece	88.4
Denmark	89.1
Portugal	92.2
Italy	94.3

Source: Barrett et. al., 2000, p.70

The horizontal (Table 4.19) and vertical (Table 4.20) segregation of the labour market is indicative of the fact that Irish women bear much of the burden for childcare, eldercare and other home duties, which militates against their full and equal participation in the labour force.

Official figures tend to undercount the numbers of women who would like to be in paid employment. It is estimated that approximately half of women's unemployment is registered, this is one of the lowest rates in Europe.¹⁷⁵ The *Report of the P2000 Working Group on Women's Access to Labour Market Opportunities* states that there remain a number of barriers to women joining the live register.¹⁷⁶ People who are available for part-time work only cannot sign on and people who, due to an absence from insurable employment for more than two years, are not eligible to sign for credits. These barriers impact more heavily on women, since women choose to work part-time in far greater numbers than men and those who are absent from insurable employment for more than two years often comprise women working in the home caring for children or incapacitated adults. Moreover, many women choose not to sign on because traditional roles dictate that men, as breadwinners, sign on. These barriers are compounded by the fact that registration of unemployed status is a gateway to many education, training and employment programmes.¹⁷⁷ This and other factors lead to the overall underemployment of women. The reasons for women wishing to return to the workforce and the obstacles they encounter in this endeavour are outlined in Table 4.23.

¹⁷⁵ CEC, 1992, 1995.

¹⁷⁶ Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, Report of the P2000 Working Group on Women's Access to Labour Market Opportunities, p. 41.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid*, p. 41.

Table 4.23: Unemployed Females Who Would Like to Work by Age and Reason for Not Looking

Reason for Not Looking	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	ALL
Currently in education/training	19.8	5.5	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.1	-	28.0
Personal/domestic needs	0.7	2.3	3.8	6.0	6.2	4.5	3.7	1.9	0.6	-	29.8
Own illness/disability	0.1	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.6	0.3	6.7
Discouraged	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.5	4.6
Other/not Stated	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.1	3.1
All	21.3	9.2	5.9	7.9	0.8	6.6	6.0	4.2	2.1	1.0	72.2

Source: DSCFA, *Report of the P2000 Working Group 2000*, p. 48.

As stated earlier, one of the key determinants of female labour force participation is responsibility for unpaid work in the domestic sphere. While Irish equality legislation codifies equality between the sexes in the workplace, it does not ensure equality of access to employment for all. The result is that structural barriers still prevent female participation in paid employment. This fact is borne out in the lower level of labour force participation amongst married women with children (Table 4.24). These barriers also militate against women's ability to access education and training, key indicators of an individual's ability to access well-paid and high-status work.¹⁷⁸

Table 4.24: Labour Force Participation Rates for Females Aged 20-49, 1996, %

Age Group	Single	Married with	Married with	Separated	Divorced
		no children	children		
20-24	71.6	81.2	41.6	52.8	30.9
25-29	87.6	91.2	51.3	55.1	47.7
30-34	85.0	87.4	52.4	56.9	45.4
35-39	82.0	77.5	47.3	57.1	46.1
40-44	79.1	65.4	41.6	55.9	47.4
45-49	75.4	51.6	35.7	53.9	42.7

Source: Ruane and Sutherland, *Women in the Labour Force*, 1999, p. 30.

Women are often assumed to be society's carers. Many women categorised as employed in home duties provide free childcare and eldercare.¹⁷⁹ The Expert Working Group on Childcare reported that childcare in Ireland was in a state of crisis.¹⁸⁰ Provision of childcare must be a priority if Government is to achieve its goal to mainstream gender equality across all Operational Programmes of the National Development Plan.¹⁸¹

A variety of recent studies indicate a strong connection between women's participation in paid employment, labour force segregation and level of education. According to the P2000 working group on women's access to the labour market, 53 per cent of unemployed women have not completed upper second level education, as compared to 39 per cent of unemployed men. Indeed, as Table 4.25 shows, there are distinct gender differences in educational attainment according to economic status.

¹⁷⁸ Coveney et al, *Women, Work and Family Responsibilities*, p. 76.

¹⁷⁹ A number of the women interviewed for this project cited eldercare as a growing difficulty for women in full-time employment. While there has been some recognition of the need for childcare by policy-makers, there has been little recognition of the need for eldercare provision to allow equality of access to the labour market for women.

¹⁸⁰ Expert Working Group on Childcare, *National Childcare Strategy*.

¹⁸¹ Further information is available at <http://www.irlgov.ie/taoiseach/prosperityandfairness/>

Table 4.25: Educational Levels by Gender and Economic Status (ILO), 000's

	Primary	Second level		Third level		Total
		Lower	Upper	Non University	University	
Employed						
Men	153.8	251.7	273.2	92.7	124.4	899.9
Women	55.6	115.1	250.5	68.5	102.8	594.6
Unemployed						
Men	28.4	28.7	14.9	3.3	3.3	78.8
Women	9.8	15.4	15.3	3.7	3.5	47.8
Inactive						
Men	212.0	111.9	74.5	10.1	21.6	431.7
Women	337.4	224.3	197.4	22.5	31.5	816.9
Total						2869.6

Source: DSCFA, Report P2000, 2000, p. 71.

As the earlier discussion on poverty has shown, there is a strong link between marginal attachment to the labour market and poverty, especially poverty in old age. From the above tables it is clear that factors such as education, motherhood and labour-force segregation interact in complex ways to determine women's access to financial resources throughout their lives.

The formulation of equality indicators of women in the Irish economy, then, must draw on all information available on their activities inside and outside the economy. Firstly, the contribution of women to the Irish economy through the provision of free childcare and eldercare, as well as their unpaid domestic labour must be recognised and included as part of overall GDP. The economy must be viewed as an economy of both public and private spheres, in which paid and unpaid work contribute to the economic well-being of the nation. This involves recognising and valuing the importance of unpaid work, and devising flexible working practices that facilitate women and men in creating a healthy balance between their private and working lives.

Concurrently, the provision of services to alleviate the structural barriers to paid employment, presented by women's unpaid duties in the home, must be improved to ensure equal access to labour force participation. These measurements can be compared with the educational levels of women and men and their employment patterns. Once in the labour market, obstacles to women's opportunities for promotion need to be addressed. Therefore, in order to achieve substantive economic equality for men and women, current levels of economic inequality must be measured on a number of levels. The number of women in paid and unpaid employment must be calculated. Also, the quality, status and remuneration they receive for that work must be assessed. This information must also be gathered specifically for mothers and carers, in order to assess the impact of childcare and eldercare responsibilities on women's access to employment. These measures combined will serve to highlight the actual position of Irish women in terms of access to economic power and resources. It is only through recognition of the multiplicity of demands on women's time and skills that a substantive picture of their position in terms of actual economic power and access to economic resources can be drawn. These measures, supported by the gathering of adequate data on each of the key areas, could combine to form an Index of Gender Equality in the Economy. This index would act as a permanent monitoring reference for the position of women in terms of access to, and participation in, economic power and resources. To begin, however, the following range of primary information must be systematically collected.

Gender Equality Indicators

- Percentage of women and men in the labour force as per current statistics

- Percentage of women and men on the live register
- Employment and unemployment rates among women and men by age, educational attainment, number and age of dependants, geographical region and specific disadvantage
- Economic status of women and men by age, educational attainment, number and age of dependants, geographical region and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women and men in home duties
- Percentage of time women and men spend in unpaid work, according to task (care, cleaning, cooking, gardening, voluntary service in community, etc) and disaggregated by age, educational attainment and geographical area
- Estimated value of unpaid work in the home as a percentage of GDP
- Nature of unpaid work done by women and men as a percentage of total unpaid work
- Percentage of women in paid employment with children or elderly dependants
- Wage differentials for women and men based on hourly, weekly and annual earnings across public and private sector employment, economic sectors and occupational categories
- Percentage of women and men on low pay disaggregated by age, educational attainment, geographical area, number and age of dependants and separately presented for agriculture, manufacturing and service industries
- Accurate statistics on the level of female unemployment
- Economic status of women and men correlated with educational levels
- Percentage of children in childcare outside the home, disaggregated by age, number and age of siblings, nature of childcare provision and cost of childcare service
- Percentage of education and training courses accompanied by childcare provision
- Percentage of women and men in part-time, temporary and casual employment by age, number and age of dependants, educational attainment, geographical region, pay levels, economic sectors
- Levels of income and earnings (including wages and other sources of income) for women and men according to age, number and age of dependants, educational attainment, geographical region, economic sector
- Vertical and horizontal occupational segregation by gender
- Hours of work and levels of pay among women in different occupational categories
- The economic situation of specific groups of women – Traveller women, rural women, older women, women with disabilities, lesbian women and ethnic minority women
- Percentage of women managing directors and other senior positions across economic sectors
- Percentage of women on boards of economic decision-making institutions – banks, employers associations, unions and chambers of commerce.
- Percentage of public and private companies with equal opportunities policies promoting gender equality.
- Percentage of public and private companies providing care services, leave entitlements and other forms of flexible working
- Percentage of women and men with access to public and private transport, disaggregated by nature of transport and economic situation of women and men

- Percentage of women and men on training, employment and enterprise schemes, disaggregated by nature of scheme and situation of women participants – number and age of dependants, geographical location, length of absence from the labour market, educational attainment and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women and men with pension entitlements and other benefit entitlements, according to employment situation, age, length of time in labour force, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage.

Women in Power and Decision Making

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.

The Beijing Platform for Action makes two arguments for women's equal participation in decision-making with men. The Platform for Action argues that the empowerment of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for transparent and accountable Government and administration. Equal participation of women and men in decision making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society, strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. Women's equal participation in decision making is necessary to ensure that women's interests and concerns are taken fully into account. The Platform for Action considers it an integral human right of women and their interests to be present in all decision making arenas.

A cursory examination of Governments and parliaments shows that women are in the minority in all but a few exceptional cases. In Ireland, women's Dáil representation is 12 per cent, lower than that of women in the parliaments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In fact, Ireland is currently 11th in the EU, along with Belgium, in terms of women's presence in parliament. Over the last three decades there has been a modest increase in women's political representation. The table below shows that, starting from a minuscule 3 (2 per cent) female TDs in 1969, 20 (12 per cent) women were elected in 1990 and in 1997. In order to run for election, one must go forward as a candidate. The record below shows that women have not yet exceeded 20 per cent of all candidacies (Table 4.26).

Table 4.26: Women Candidates and TDs at Elections, 1969-1997

Election	Total Candidates	Men	Women	% Women	Total Elected	Men	Women	% Women
1969	372	361	11	3	144	141	3	2
1973	335	319	16	5	144	140	4	3
1977	376	351	25	7	148	142	6	4
1981	404	363	41	10	166	155	11	7
1982 (Feb)	365	330	35	10	166	158	8	5
1982 (Nov)	364	333	31	9	166	152	14	8
1987	466	418	48	10	166	152	14	8
1989	370	319	51	14	166	153	13	8
1992	481	392	89	19	166	146	20	12
1997	484	388	96	20	166	146	20	12

Source: Galligan and Wilford, 1999, p. 132.

Two women won seats in the Dail in by-elections between 1997 and 2000, bringing the total number of women currently serving in the lower house to 22. In the Seanad, women currently occupy 11 (18 per cent) of the 60 seats. Eleven Seanad seats are in the gift of the Taoiseach after a general election. In 1997, three (27 per cent) of the Taoiseach's nominees were women. In the closed contests for the remaining 49 seats, eight (16 per cent) women were returned.

Studies of women's representation in parliament highlight the fact that in order to increase the numbers of women elected to a national assembly, it is necessary to increase the number of new women

candidates while retaining women who have already made it to parliament. This simple fact hides a highly complex process of candidate selection and constituency choice that is primarily handled through political parties. Indeed, there is no escaping the critical role parties play in selecting candidates and placing them in 'winnable' seats. The record of the main parties in selecting and electing women in the 1997 general election can be seen in Table 4.27:

Table 4.27: Women Candidates and TDs by Party, 1997

Party	Total Candidates	Men	Women	% Women	Total Elected	Men	Women	% Women
Fianna Fail	114	100	14	12	77	69	8	10
Fine Gael	90	75	15	17	54	48	6	11
Labour	44	32	12	27	17	15	2	12
Prog. Democrats	30	17	13	43	4	2	2	50
Democratic Left	13	9	4	31	4	3	1	25
TOTAL	291	233	58	20	156	137	19	12

Source: Galligan and Wilford, 1999, p.132.

Over the last 20 years, more women have come to hold Government office. In the nine Governments formed between 1979 and 1997, sixteen individual women held full or junior ministerial positions. In the present administration (formed in 1997), there are three women in a 15 minister cabinet (20 per cent), and two women among the 17 junior ministers (12 per cent). At Government level, the overall representation of women in ministerial positions increased from one out of 25 (4 per cent) in December 1979 to five out of 32 (16 per cent) in June 1997.¹⁸² While this representation of women in high political office is not far off the average of 19 per cent representation of women in Government in the EU member States, this average figure hides a wide disparity between countries. A ranking of 28 countries according to the proportion of women in cabinet shows Ireland to be in 18th position along with Belgium in 1998.¹⁸³

A comprehensive database on women's participation in political life worldwide is maintained by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This provides useful comparative information on the position of Ireland in relation to other countries in this area. It is much more difficult to examine women's membership of political parties and their levels of participation within these critical organisations. Yet, this information is vital to monitor, as women's political opportunities are determined by parties. It has also been found that there is a link between the representation of women at the top of political parties and the proportion of women elected to parliament. The more women in senior party positions, the greater the number of women holding parliamentary seats.¹⁸⁴ For this reason, the representation of women on the national executives of the main political parties in Ireland is of particular interest (Table 4.28).

Table 4.28: Women's representation on party national executives, 1989-1998

Year	Fianna Fail %	Fine Gael %	Labour %	Progressive Democrats %
1989	21	Not available	15	38

¹⁸² Galligan, Yvonne 'Women in Politics' in John Coakley and Michael Gallagher (eds) *Politics in the Republic of Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 296.

¹⁸³ Siaroff, Alan, 'Women's representation in legislatures and cabinets in industrial democracies', *International Political Science Review* 21:2, April 2000, p. 200.

¹⁸⁴ Caul, Miki 'Women's representation in parliament: the role of political parties' in *Party Politics* 5:1, 1999, pp. 88-90.

1991	8	27	17	28
1993	13	24	21	Not available
1995	17	28	22	32
1998	30	21	26	47

Source: Galligan, 1999, p. 300.

Women's political representation at local level is similar to that at national level, contradicting the theory that women are likely to be found in greater numbers in the less powerful decision-making arenas. In the 1999 local elections, women made up just 16 per cent of the total candidates, with no women running in 42 (20 per cent) of the 211 electoral areas. The contest resulted in the election of 132 (15 per cent) women, similar to the outcome of the 1991 local elections.

Irish women have fared better in terms of election to other political positions. The presidential elections of 1991 and 1997 were won by women, making Ireland one of the few countries in Europe with an elected female head of State. Indeed, the 1997 election was notable for the fact that four of the five candidates were women. At European level, the number of Irish women elected to the European parliament in 1999 increased from 4 (27 per cent) to 5 (33 per cent).

Studies of voter behaviour do not provide a gender breakdown of voters. Given the lowering turnout rates at elections in the last decade, the issue of non-voting is becoming more important. A study of non-voting in Cork North-Central constituency suggests that women are less inclined to vote than men.¹⁸⁵

The absence of women in positions of power in parties and political life is part of the wider pattern of women's absence from decision-making centres generally. This can be seen in an overview of the levels of women's representation on State boards, in the civil service, the judiciary and other economic arenas.

Since the introduction in 1993 of a target of 40 per cent representation of women and men in the Government's direct appointments to State boards, there has been some improvement in women's participation in public decision making. At that time, there were 315 (15 per cent) women on State boards, the majority of whom were Government appointees. The policy of actively seeking to increase the number of women on public bodies has had some effect, as by 1997 the number of women on State boards rose to 812 (29 per cent).¹⁸⁶ Recent figures suggest a slight drop in this trend, with 28 per cent women on State boards at the end of June 2000. A major obstacle to the further advancement of women in this area is the reluctance of nominating bodies to comply with the Government target.

The poor representation of women in the senior levels of the civil service has been consistently highlighted, most recently by Humphreys, Drew and Murphy. They found that as one progressed through the ranks in the civil service, women's presence fell sharply, with only one woman (4 per cent) among the 25 secretaries general, the top position in the civil service. They also pinpointed appointment procedures at the level of assistant principal as critical for redressing obstacles to women's career progression.¹⁸⁷ There is a clear commitment to redressing the imbalance of women and men at the top in the civil service as part of the Strategic Management Initiative (discussed in more detail in chapter 5). A vital tool in the monitoring of progress in this area is the collection and dissemination of regular and timely statistics.

In July 2000, there were 20 (18 per cent) women serving in the judiciary from a total of 112. There is one woman County Manager and another woman Assistant County Manager. There are no women in the three most senior positions in the Garda Síochána - Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner - and there is one (2 per cent) female among the 47 Chief Superintendents. There is only one (12 per cent) woman serving as Chief Executive in the eight health boards.

The County Enterprise Boards are required to comply with Government policy on gender-balanced

¹⁸⁵ Fiona Buckley, *The puzzle of non-voting A study of non-voting in Cork North Central*, MSc thesis, UCC, 2000.

¹⁸⁶ National Women's Council of Ireland, *Who makes the decisions in 1997?: a review of gender balance on State boards in Ireland* (Dublin, NWCI, 1998).

¹⁸⁷ Humphreys, Peter, Eileen Drew and Candy Murphy, *Gender Equality in the Civil Service* (Dublin: IPA, 1999), pp. 81-85.

board appointments. In September 1999, 25 per cent of County Enterprise Board members were women. Within the social and voluntary sector, it is extremely difficult to quantify women's decision-making presence. Although the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women contains information on women's and men's membership of voluntary organisations, there is no research quantifying the participation of women at the top in the voluntary sector.

One of the over-riding issues in the area of women and decision making is the difficulty of data collection. There is no central, comprehensive database on women's participation in political, economic and social decision making. This makes tracking trends in the gender balance of decision makers problematic. As a consequence, developing realistic targets is difficult. In order to advance the opportunities for women in decision-making, a comprehensive statistical database on women in political, economic and social decision making is urgently required.¹⁸⁸

The National Women's Council report 'Who Makes the Decisions in 1997' provides a workable model for the collection of statistics on women in decision-making. This model could be used to develop a more comprehensive database on women's presence in decision-making sites that could be regularly updated.

Gender Equality Indicators

- Percentage of women and men candidates at all elections
- Percentage of women and men winning seats at all elections
- Percentage of women and men in Government
- Ministerial portfolios held by women and men
- Percentage of women and men chairpersons of parliamentary committees
- Percentage of women and men in local Government
- Percentage of women and men chairpersons of local authorities
- Percentage of women and men holding mayoral office
- Percentage of women and men in party national executives
- Percentage of women and men who vote in elections
- Percentage of women and men on State boards
- Percentage of women and men on local decision-making boards
- Percentage of women and men in the judiciary and in the legal profession
- Percentage of women and men in senior decision-making positions in the public sector
- Percentage of women and men chairpersons and chief executives of voluntary organisations.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women.

This section is the subject of extensive treatment in chapter 3 (statistical requirements) and in chapter 5 (institutional framework).

Human Rights of Women

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned about the lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women.

¹⁸⁸ See also Galligan, Yvonne, *Women in political, economic and social decision-making in Ireland* (Cork: Department of Government, September 1999).

The Platform for Action reaffirmed that the human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights and the principle that all human rights are interlinked and interdependent and should be exercised and enjoyed by both women and men, as expressed in the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. The Platform for Action states that Governments must not only refrain from violating the human rights of women but must also work actively to promote and protect these rights.

In promoting and protecting the human rights of women, the Irish Government is concerned with implementing all human rights instruments, especially the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Ireland has four reservations to CEDAW, none of which are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. Ireland's reservations to CEDAW are kept under regular review and the present situation in relation to these reservations is as follows:

Reservation to Article 11.1

The reservation to Article 11.1 was entered because the Employment Equality Act, 1977 which outlawed discrimination in relation to employment on grounds of sex and marital status, contained a limited number of exclusions from the general prohibition of discrimination, in relation to employment in the police force, the defence forces, prison services and employment that consists of services of a personal nature.

The existing limited exclusions in respect of services of a personal nature and where sex amounts to an occupational qualification still apply under the Employment Equality Act, 1998. Unlike the 1977 Act the legislation does not however provide blanket exclusions. Each case considered as coming within the category covered by these exclusions will have to be argued on its merits.

The exclusions in respect of the police force and prison service relate to the assignment of staff to posts on a gender basis where this is necessary in the interests of privacy and decency or to deal with violent situations. The Act also allows for the application of gender based height criteria in respect of recruitment to these employments subject to the limitation that the criteria must impact equally on men and women.

Reservation to Article 13(a) social welfare entitlements

Ireland continues to maintain its reservation under Article 13(a) in relation to family benefits because payment of Child Benefit is normally vested in the mother. In addition, some mothers still receive payments under former deserted wife and lone parent support schemes. These have been superseded by the One Parent Family Payment Scheme, which is available to both men and women applicants on the same basis.

Reservations to Article 13 (b) and (c)

Ireland entered a reservation to Article 13 (b) and (c) in the absence of specific legislation governing access to financial credit and recreational facilities.

The Equal Status Act, 2000 prohibits discrimination in the no-employment area on the same grounds as the Employment Equality Act, 1998. This legislation will allow the Government to withdraw its reservation to Article 13 (b) and (c).

Other developments in human rights advancement

Recent equality legislation outlaws discrimination on the grounds of gender (see chapter 5), and recent legislation in specific policy areas, such as education and sport, enshrine the principle of equality between women and men. The Government is also active in mainstreaming the human rights of women in public policy, beginning with the National Development Plan and the National Employment Action Plan.

The Irish Government works closely with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant bodies and persons at international level to ensure that practices in Ireland on the

implementation of women's human rights are continually improved.

Gender Equality Indicators

- Production and implementation of a National Plan of Action for Women
- Keeping remaining reservations to CEDAW under review
- Introducing legislation to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into Irish law
- Continued action to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women on all grounds covered in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000
- Strengthening of the human rights education component in the CSPE subject at second level and initiating a human rights education programme at primary school level
- Developing a general human rights education programme for the public in association with organisations working in this field
- Extending access to legal recourse for women
- Education for women on their human rights entitlements
- Continued support for non-Governmental organisations and women's groups promoting the human rights of women
- Level of support offered to human rights networks to enable them monitor Government progress on human rights conventions and protocols.

Women and the Media

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with the stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media.

The media is a powerful tool for communicating images of women and men and in portraying the economic and social roles of women and men in society. The media – print, broadcast and electronic – has played an important part in the development of modern Irish society, and is a critical medium in fostering social attitudes on gender, race, sexual orientation and disability. Yet, women and the media is a significantly under-researched area in Ireland. Similar to France and the United Kingdom, there is an absence of solid gender-based analysis of the production element of media representation. In particular, the following gaps in the research on women and the media in Ireland need to be addressed:

- Content of programmes made by women and men producers
- Cross-national comparative research between Ireland and other countries
- Research into media preferences and practices of female audience, with reference to important sub-groups of women such as ethnic groups, immigrant women, rural women, lesbians, and working class women
- The integration of the three dimensions of media-production, content and audience to provide an overall analysis and interpretation of the role of gender in media in Ireland.

The Tanaiste, Mary Harney, recently launched a report entitled 'Perception is Power: Social Exclusion and the Media'. Funded by Integra, the report is a response to poverty and disadvantage in Ireland from a media perspective. This report promoted the idea that the media should affirm people's strengths rather than underline their weaknesses. It also suggested that a media forum should take place to encourage journalists to discuss their coverage of marginalised groups. Such a forum would be a positive step towards addressing the portrayal of women in Irish society, especially rural women, Traveller women, women from other social and cultural backgrounds and women with a disability.

The representation of women in the media industry is problematic. Statistics give general categories of employment (see section on arts and culture), but do not give sufficiently precise information to enable a

mapping of the gender divisions in media employment. On the basis of the information that is available, there appears to be a stronger representation of women in the creative aspects of the media industry than in the technical areas.

It is also difficult to locate reliable information on the presence of women in decision-making roles in the media. The Irish national papers are edited by men; women do not own, or part-own local radio stations; there are no women newspaper editors and only a small number of female radio and television producers.

Within RTE in 1998, women held 9 per cent of top management positions and 9 per cent of senior management posts. However, there is a concerted effort to gender balance in regulatory broadcasting agencies. There are 5 (56 per cent) women on the 9-person RTE Authority and 5 (50 per cent) women represented on the 10-member Independent Radio and Television Commission.

To date there is no accessible research quantifying women's access to the media. This is a fruitful area of research in other countries. A range of country studies found that on average one in every three images appearing on television are female.¹⁸⁹ In a study of eight editions of a British weekly current affairs programme, it was found that 68 per cent of the speaking time was taken by male experts; women comprised 37 per cent of invited experts and 85 per cent of questions or comments on this programme were put by men.¹⁹⁰

Surveys of the portrayal of women on television in Germany and Norway suggest that 70 per cent of the viewing public are unhappy about the deprecating and discriminatory portrayal of women.¹⁹¹ A content analysis of radio advertising in the United States found that women were only present in 7 per cent of advertisements and when present they were portrayed in consumer or worker roles. Men were assigned professional roles.¹⁹²

British and Irish studies dealing with news coverage related to issues such as sex crimes reveal that the media tends to question the legitimacy of women's allegations, thus contributing to sustaining sexist attitudes towards rape victims.¹⁹³

The equality indicators listed below outline a basic framework of research that is required before more substantial issues regarding women's representation, participation and access to all media forms can be raised. Even these indicators are challenging, as there is no supporting research in Ireland on these matters at present. Funding for research of this kind should be a priority, as it can play an important role in bringing about a social climate that fosters gender equality.

Gender Equality Indicators

- Percentage of women and men employed in the media industry, with a more detailed classification of employment activity than is currently available
- Percentage of women and men entering media training courses and colleges
- Percentage of women and men in top executive positions in broadcast and print media
- Percentage of women and men producers, writers and directors in broadcast media
- Percentage of women and men in media regulatory authorities
- Percentage of airtime/space devoted to women and men and classification of the subject matter (sports, news, drama etc)

¹⁸⁹ European Commission, *Images of Women in the Media : Report on existing research in the European Union* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1997).

¹⁹⁰ *ibid*, p. 12.

¹⁹¹ *ibid*, p. 18.

¹⁹² Warren, G., L. Gilbert and J. Fowler, 'Female roles in radio advertising', *Journalism Quarterly* 1987, 64:1, pp. 145-9.

¹⁹³ *Images of Women in the Media*, p. 15.

- Percent of positive and negative portrayals of women in the media
- Percentage of positive and negative portrayals of women in print and broadcast advertising
- Content analysis of specific programmes to highlight role assignment to women and men
- Content analysis of advertising to highlight role assignment to women and men
- Percentage portrayal of women's diversity in programme content.

Women and the Environment

The Beijing Platform for Action calls for the effective participation of women in the generation of knowledge and environmental education in decision-making and management at all levels.

The National Development Plan 2000-2006 (NDP) was prepared within the overall framework of national environmental, as well as economic and social development, policy. Under the NDP, almost IR£3.6 billion is being provided for environmental investment, including water supply, waste water treatment, rural water supply, waste management, coastal protection and environmental research. The policy document *Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland* was prepared as part of the NDP. This policy aims to ensure that the economy and society can develop to their full potential within a well-protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community.

The growing importance of sustainable development as a policy concern is reflected in the creation by Government of Comhair, the national sustainable development partnership in 1998. The Irish Women's Environmental Network (IWEN) and the National Women's Council are represented on Comhair. Concern for the environment is central to all policy decisions taken under the NDP. This means in practice that NDP projects will be required to comply with relevant planning and environmental legislation. A pilot programme of policy eco-auditing began in 1999.

Part of the process of defining and articulating sustainable development considerations at local and regional level is Local Agenda 21. This is the local community element of the UN initiative, Agenda 21, to protect the planet and the way of life of its peoples through a comprehensive local review of the global environmental impact of all its actions. Local Agenda 21 is a detailed blueprint for the creation of sustainable societies in the 21st century. Local authorities are responsible for drawing up and implementing Local Agenda 21 plans for their areas.

Despite these initiatives addressing the environmental aspects of sustainable development, a gender perspective is notably absent. In particular, mainstreaming a gender perspective into Local Agenda 21 plans continues to be a challenge. An associated concern is the participation of women in the planning and development process at local level. Consultation mechanisms need to be strengthened considerably to enable local women make a meaningful contribution to local planning and development decisions. The Ballymun Women's Group NOW project has developed a model of good practice for women's participation in the local planning process that could be replicated in other local authorities.

Housing and transport are two important areas with significant impact on the environment, on sustainable development and on national, regional and local planning policies. They are areas that are substantially uninformed by a gender perspective on policy and with only a token representation of women in decision making. The NDP sets out an ambitious programme for the development of transportation links and services. The gender impact of such policies are to be assessed under the terms of the NDP. Evidence from the ADM report on rural transport services highlights the importance of access to a reliable public transport system for rural women. Research on the use of transportation services by women and men indicates the higher reliance among women of public transport to access essential services, facilities and social networks.

Housing policy is also largely bereft of a gender perspective, with the exception of sheltered accommodation developed by agencies such as Women's Aid and the Ballymun Regeneration Programme. The gender mainstreaming of housing policy needs to extend to all aspects of housing,

public, social and private. In this regard, women's participation on the board of the national planning authority, An Bord Pleanála, needs to be improved as does women's participation in decision making on housing issues at local level – as elected representatives, local authority employees and as citizens. In addition, women's access to housing and accommodation can be more problematic than that of men. Homelessness among women, and among women with dependant children, is an increasing problem. Traveller women are frequently without adequate access to water, sanitation and accommodation.

Success in introducing a gender perspective into environmental and sustainable development policies is assisted through the participation of groups such as IWEN, Comhair and local women's groups in the planning and development process at local and national level. Many women's environmental groups and initiatives are not well developed due partly to absence of funding. Yet, these advocacy and grass-roots women's groups play an important role in highlighting the link between the environment, sustainable development and overall quality of life. These groups are also sensitive to the impact of environmental changes on the health and well-being of communities. It is important that women's groups be resourced to play an integral part in developing sustainable policies for the natural and the built environment.

Gender equality indicators

- Percentage of women and men employed in environmental management as professionals and scientists
- Percentage of third level courses leading to qualifications on the environment and the built environment with modules on gender, classified as prerequisite or optional
- Percentage of women and men on each Local Agenda 21 committee
- Percentage of women and men on An Bord Pleanála
- Percentage of women and men on local authority strategic policy committees dealing with planning, housing and transportation issues
- Percentage of women and men on County Development Boards
- Percentage of women and men users of public and private modes of transport, classified by reasons for use, age, income, number of dependants, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women and men seeking public/social housing, disaggregated by age, number of dependants, current accommodation, homeless, income, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women and men living alone disaggregated by age, current accommodation, employment status, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of Traveller women and men with access to adequate accommodation, running water and sanitation services
- Percentage of women and men using public transport for work, access to essential services and facilities and social networks, disaggregated by age, employment status, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of national funding allocated to women's environmental groups as a proportion of all funding allocated to environmental organisations
- Percentage of national research funding on the environment and sustainable development allocated to proposals that investigate the gendered dimensions of environmental initiatives.

The Girl-Child

The Beijing Platform for Action is concerned with persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child.

The Child Care Act, 1991 defines a child as ‘a person under the age of eighteen years other than a person who is or has been married’.¹⁹⁴ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Ireland is a signatory, requires Governments to ‘respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth or status’.¹⁹⁵

The Convention contains a number of important social rights for children:¹⁹⁶

- The right to an adequate standard of living (with a duty on the State to assist parents, where necessary, in fulfilling this right)
- A right to benefit from social security
- A right to the highest attainable standard of health and to have access to health and medical services (with a particular emphasis on primary health care)
- A right to education
- A right to participate in leisure, recreational and cultural activities.

Three specific areas can be seen to have implications for the human rights of the girl-child in Ireland. These are poverty, teenage fertility and girl-children requiring special attention through disability, membership of the Travelling community and as children of refugee and asylum seekers.

The Combat Poverty Agency has focused on reducing the levels of child poverty as part of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. Children are seen as being at a particular risk of poverty, particularly when they belong to larger households. Recent research shows that ‘more than half the children ‘consistently poor’ in 1997 were in households seriously affected by unemployment’.¹⁹⁷ The important research on child poverty carried out by the Combat Poverty Agency does not differentiate the effects of poverty on girl and boy children. In the context of the Beijing Platform for Action, with its concern for the girl-child, it is suggested that the Combat Poverty Agency research the gender dimension to child poverty.

In 1995, teenage fertility (births per 1000) in Ireland was 15.1 compared with the EU average of 10.7. In 1998, 6 per cent of all births were to teenage mothers. Early motherhood is often correlated with early school-leaving, restricted employment opportunities and a generally lower quality of life than that of girls who become mothers after their education is complete.

Girl-children with disabilities and girl-children belonging to specific ethnic groups such as Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers have specific health and educational needs.

Many of the indicators presented here are linked to all other areas of the Platform for Action. Therefore, it is important that in assessing progress in gender equality, there is a focus on girls and boys as well as women and men. Similarly, in evaluating programmes from a gender based perspective, the analysis ought to incorporate the effects on girls and boys.

Gender Equality Indicators

There is much work to be done to produce gender-disaggregated statistics on the girl-child. A start could be made by collecting the following data:

- Percentage of girl and boy children in poverty

¹⁹⁴ Childcare Act, 1991, section 2 (1).

¹⁹⁵ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 2, para 1, quoted in *Platform for Action*, para 259.

¹⁹⁶ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

¹⁹⁷ Nolan, Brian, ‘Trends in child poverty 1990-2000’, at Combat Poverty Agency website: www.cpa.ie/Pt4/today42.html.

- Educational attainment of girls and boys aged 15-19 years
- Participation of girls and boys aged 15-19 in training programmes
- Girls and boys unpaid work in the home
- Girl and boy homelessness
- Teenage fertility
- Percentage of girls and boys with access to health care, family planning services
- Percentage of girls and boys taking part in relationships and sexuality education programmes
- Employment patterns among girls and boys – full time and part time – correlated with participation in education
- Percentage girls and boys with access to preventative health care programmes – smoking, drug and alcohol use and other age-appropriate programmes
- Percentage of girls and boys taking part in physical activity and organised sports
- Percentage of girls and boys suffering from eating disorders
- Percentage of girls and boys participating in activities that prepare them for public life and leadership: involvement in school councils, youth organisations, representative activities.

These indicators should also reflect the diversity of capacity, cultural and social backgrounds of girl-children.

Culture and Sport

Culture

Non-Beijing area: The Report of the Commission on the Status of Women understood culture to consist of ‘not only a range of activities to be shared and enjoyed, but also with the role of culture as a shaper of society and as a creative force in making and reinforcing images’.¹⁹⁸

This area overlaps with the media in the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women, which is the subject of an earlier section. Indicators for culture will be examined first, followed by sport.

The Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands is committed to the promotion and development of Irish culture, evident in its mission Statement ‘to enrich the quality of life and sense of identity of all our citizens and to preserve our inheritance for present and future generations.’¹⁹⁹

Cultural activities provide employment for a significant number of people, many with specialist skills. Statistics in this area aggregate a range of different types of employment together, due to the small numbers involved. However, this method of collection actually hides the true pattern of women’s and men’s work activity in the arts and culture. Although this is a drawback to the statistics, one can clearly see a gendered segregation within the arts and culture labour force (Table 4.29):

Table 4.29: Employment in Arts and Culture, by Gender, 1996

Employment Area	Total	Males	Females	% Female
Authors, writers, journalists	4,274	2,521	1,753	41
Actors, musicians, entertainers, stage managers, producers and	4,898	3,301	1,597	33

¹⁹⁸ Second Commission on the Status of Women, *Report*, p. 235.

¹⁹⁹ Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, *Statement of Strategy*, 1998-2000 (Dublin: DAHGI, 1998), p. 1.

directors				
Artists, commercial/industrial artists, graphic and clothing designers	5,666	3,056	2,610	46
Photographers, camera, sound and video operators	1,996	1,606	390	20

Source: CSO, 1996 census

Working in the area of arts and culture does not provide an indication of the extent to which women and men take part in artistic and cultural activities. This is a much more difficult area to measure, as clubs and societies are mainly private bodies and may not keep membership lists. For example, the Irish Sculptors Society has 413 members; 215 women and 198 men.²⁰⁰ It must also be noted that membership of a cultural or artistic society does not necessarily reflect the participation rate of women and men in a particular activity.

The Arts Council, as the major artistic policy and funding body for artistic activity, could collect data of this kind and publish it in the annual report. This would evolve into a time-series data on funding in arts and culture that could be examined for gender-related patterns. In addition, the Arts Council awards a range of grants, bursaries and scholarships to artists. A gender breakdown of this funding would also begin to reveal the extent of women's and men's involvement in artistic and cultural activities as professionals.

To date, the Arts Council has resisted developing a women's arts policy, although this was a recommendation of the Second Commission on the Status of Women. With mainstreaming, the gender effects of policy in this field will now need to be considered by the Arts Council. This process is likely to facilitate the development of a women's arts policy.

Cultural and artistic activities play an important role in shaping and defining identity. In an increasingly diverse society, policy in this area must be sensitive to the rich variety of artistic and cultural heritages represented in Ireland. Statistical collection should be designed so as to reflect the participation of women and men from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. A 1994 report by Clancy et al, commissioned by the Arts Council, shows that women are more likely to attend live arts and cultural events than men, women are more likely to be involved in amateur activities than men and that women also exceed men as purchasers of arts goods.²⁰¹

Gender Equality Indicators

- Percentage of women and men employed in the culture, arts and heritage labour force
- Percentage of women and men members of clubs and societies in receipt of public funding
- Percentage of women and men holding Arts Council bursaries and awards
- Percentage of women and men from diverse backgrounds involved in artistic and cultural activities as employees and as participants
- Distribution of Arts Council grants disaggregated by gender
- Percentage of women and men receiving funding for cultural activities (exhibitions, films, etc).

Sport

Sport is an enjoyable recreation for many people and a way of life for others. It is a life-enhancing and health-improving activity. The Irish Sports Council Act, 1999 distinguishes between competitive and recreational sport. Competitive sport is defined as 'all forms of physical activity which, through organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and at obtaining improved

²⁰⁰ Irish Sculptors Society, June 2000

²⁰¹ Clancy, Paula, Martin Drury, Anne Kelly, Teresa Brannick, Sheila Pratschke, *The Public and the Arts: A Survey of Behaviour and Attitudes in Ireland* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1994), pp. 27-28; 57-58; 65-66.

results in competition at all levels'.²⁰²

Recreational sport means 'all forms of physical activity which, through casual or regular participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being and at forming social relationships'.²⁰³ The Irish Sports Council is responsible for the promotion of both forms of sport in Ireland. It works closely with national governing bodies of sport with the general aim of improving opportunities for participation in sport in Ireland. Established in an era of equality awareness, the Irish Sports Council is required by the legislation to have at least 3 women and 3 men on its board.²⁰⁴ The current board consists of 11 persons, 4 (36 per cent) of whom are women.

Responsibility for sport rests with the Minister and Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation. The strategy Statement of the Department identifies as the goal for sport 'to formulate and oversee the implementation of policies for the promotion and development of sport, and to encourage increased participation in sport and recreation, particularly by disadvantaged communities'.²⁰⁵

Equality is one of the core principles of the national sports strategy. This is expressed as 'no one should be excluded from it [sport] on the grounds of gender, disability, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation'.²⁰⁶

At present, women's participation in sport and exercise is significantly less than that of men (Table 4.30):

Table 4.30: Percentage of Adults Engaging in Moderate Exercise*

Age	Men	Women
18-34	46	32
35-54	39	27
55 and over	22	25
All Ages	40	28

*moderate exercise is defined as exercising for at least 20 minutes three times per week

Source: Department of Health and Children, *Health Statistics 1999*, pp. 70-71.

A recent survey suggests that only 26 per cent of girls aged between 15 and 17 years participate in sport, compared to 55 per cent of boys in the same age category.²⁰⁷ The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women suggested a number of reasons for this lower level of women's sporting activity as compared with men. It isolated five factors as contributing to this pattern:²⁰⁸

It is likely that the type of sports women play and the proportionately lower number of women who participate does not so much reflect real choice as lack of opportunities to participate. This lack of opportunity derives from a number of factors. Firstly, because women generally assume most of the childrearing responsibilities within families at present, the lack of childcare at sports facilities is more likely to be a barrier to women's participation than is the case for men. Secondly, there are fewer organisational structures for women's team sports which reduces the choice of the type of sport open to women. Thirdly, the existence of sex discrimination within sports and sporting organisations further closes off opportunities for women. Fourthly, the lack of media coverage means that in many cases women's sporting achievements have not received

²⁰² Irish Sports Council Act, 1999, section 2 (1).

²⁰³ Irish Sports Council Act, 1999, section 2 (1).

²⁰⁴ Irish Sports Council Act, 1999, Section 12 (1) and 12 (3)

²⁰⁵ Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, *Strategy Statement 1998-2001* (Dublin: DTSR, May 1998), p. 14.

²⁰⁶ Irish Sports Council, *A New Era for Sport: The Irish Sports Council's Strategy 2000-2002*, (Dublin: Irish Sports Council, September 2000), p. 7.

²⁰⁷ Health Statistics 1999, p. 71.

²⁰⁸ Second Commission on the Status of Women, *Report*, p. 247.

attention and those achievements have not stimulated increased participation. Finally, girls have not been encouraged to think of participation in sport when they become adults.

A task force on women and sport was established by the Irish Sports Council with the following terms of reference:

- To report on and address the key issues impacting on women's involvement in sport;
- The adoption of the principles of the Brighton Declaration on women and sport;
- Research into the involvement of women in sport;
- The encouragement of the adoption of a code of equal opportunities for women;
- The development of programmes for ensuring the greater involvement of women in all aspects of sport.²⁰⁹

In a wide-ranging examination of women in sport, Task Force Report discussed barriers to women's participation in sport and involvement in coaching, refereeing, administration and decision making. It made 19 recommendations, of which the adoption of the Brighton Principles by the Sports Council was the first. The report also raises specific health concerns for female athletes, namely disordered eating, amenorrhoea and osteoporosis.²¹⁰ The Task Force Report also highlighted the crucial importance of facilities that are available, accessible and suitable for women's sporting needs. The report found that cost, childcare, hygiene, transport and accessibility were key issues in women's participation in sport. A report on indoor leisure facilities appears to confirm that these obstacles are still substantially in place.²¹¹ This report found that of the 812 indoor facilities surveyed (halls, centres, complexes and pools), only 4 per cent of recreational and leisure facilities had crèche facilities and only 25 per cent of sports complexes had crèche and childminding facilities. This has the potential to impact directly on women's participation in sport. In addition, they found that only half the facilities had proper access for the disabled, placing women with disabilities at a double disadvantage in terms of their sporting activity. Given that research in England has found that women use leisure centres more than men, these findings have clear implications for women's opportunities for participating in sport.

The Irish Sports Council intends to establish a new national network for sport at local level, known as Local Sports Partnerships. The intention is to increase levels of local participation in sport, especially among specific target groups such as older people, girls and women, people with disabilities, unemployed people and those living in identified disadvantaged communities.²¹² This affords an opportunity for increasing girls and women's involvement in sport and recreational exercise.

In 1996, there were 2231 professional athletes and sport officials in Ireland, comprising 1432 (64 per cent) men and 799 (36 per cent) women.²¹³ This figure is not a very useful one as it does not distinguish between the proportions of men and women professional athletes and men and women sports officials. It is also difficult to source statistics on the representation of women and men professional athletes in Olympic and world events. Ireland selected a team of 66 athletes for the 2000 summer Olympics in Sydney, comprising 25 (38 per cent) women and 41 (62 per cent) men. For the Paralympic Games, held in Sydney directly after the Olympics, Ireland put forward 40 athletes, 15 (38 per cent) women and 25 (62 per cent) men.²¹⁴

Professional athletes require funding and supports to enable them pursue excellence in their chosen sports. There is a comprehensive funding and expert support structure, known as a 'carding scheme',

²⁰⁹ Department of Education, *Targeting Sporting Change in Ireland: Summary Report* (Dublin: DE, February 1997) p. 21.

²¹⁰ Irish Sports Council, *Women in Sport: Task Force Report* (Dublin: ISC, September 2000).

²¹¹ Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, *Indoor Sports Facilities in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, 1995)

²¹² Irish Sports Council, *A New Era for Sport*, p. 29.

²¹³ CSO, *Census of Population 1996*.

²¹⁴ Information from the National Coaching and Training Centre, Limerick, September 2000.

offered through the National Coaching and Training Centre based in the University of Limerick that provides support to Irish professional athletes competing at national, international and world levels. At present, women constitute 32 per cent of athletes eligible for this programme, and receive 22 per cent of the designated funding.

The national governing bodies (NGBs) serve as a channel through which a structured sporting programme, from recreational to competitive level, is delivered. The Irish Sports Council works closely with NGBs to encourage and assist them in developing a strategic and planned approach to sport. This involves NGBs having to assess their programmes, such as training programmes for coaches and officials, and sports programmes designed for girls and women. One of the elements identified as being important in the construction of a strategic plan for any sport is the quality and the relevance of the statistical records kept by NGBs. The Irish Sports Council recently issued a strategic planning workbook and guide to all NGBs.²¹⁵ It requires NGBs to collect gender-disaggregated facts and figures on individual membership, office-holding, participation in local leagues, coach training and qualifications, qualified officials, carded players or athletes, disabled sportspersons and other aspects of NGB activity. This information could be easily sent to the Irish Sports Council who could then compile a database on women and men in sport that could be used to inform future policy and target-setting in the national sports strategy.

In 1999, IR£19.99 million was allocated under the Sports Capital Programme to 416 community and voluntary groups. This funding went towards the provision of local sport and recreational facilities and to a range of sporting groups such as the GAA, IRFU and FAI. Local authorities have been allocated IR£15million to 2002 for investment in their swimming pool programme. These grants and allocations can improve access to sporting and leisure facilities. What is not clear, however, is who exactly are the beneficiaries of this spending. It has been found that halls and indoor facilities tend to get most of their users from the local catchment area, with people travelling from further afield for swimming pool facilities. This raises the question of access to sport and leisure activities for women living in rural areas.

Finally, there are certain issues specific to women in sport. Research in Canada and England highlighted a number of barriers to equal opportunities for women in sport. These include health issues for professional athletes (eating disorders, menstrual irregularities and osteoporosis), sexual harassment, personal safety (after dark), greater reliance on public transport than men for getting to and from facilities and lack of media coverage, thereby maintaining an invisibility of women in sport. These issues are confirmed by the Task Force Report as being important barriers to participation in sport for women in Ireland. At the present stage of strategic sports planning in Ireland, it is difficult to address these issues with performance indicators. Nevertheless, it is important that women-specific concerns are raised and are addressed in the context of a planned strategy for competitive and recreational sport at national and NGB level.

Gender Equality Indicators

- Percentage of women and men engaging in regular moderate physical exercise
- Percentage of women and men participating in Local Sports Partnerships programmes
- Percentage of women and men athletes admitted to the carding scheme at various standards
- Percentage of funding allocated to women and men through the carding scheme
- Percentage of women and men as members, athletes/players, coaches, officials in NGBs
- Percentage of women and men with disabilities partaking in sports
- Percentage of indoor sports facilities with creche/childminding facilities
- Percentage of indoor sports facilities with full access for disabled persons

²¹⁵ Irish Sports Council, *From Kitchen Table to Executive Office: Strategic Planning Guidelines for National Governing Bodies of Sport in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Sports Council, 2000).

- Percentage of female and male users of publicly funded facilities.

Chapter 5

Institutional Framework for Monitoring Gender Equality

Progress on gender equality is assisted by a strong institutional framework. This is made very clear in the Beijing Platform for Action, in which a key concern is the insufficiency of mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women. In order to address this concern, the Platform for Action prescribes a central policy co-ordinating unit inside Government as a mechanism for the advancement of women. The role of this unit would be ‘to support Government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.’²¹⁶ It suggests that for this national machinery to work effectively, the following conditions are required:

- Location at the highest possible level in the Government, falling under the responsibility of a Cabinet minister;
- Institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralised planning, implementation and monitoring with a view to involving non-Governmental organisations and community organisations from the grassroots upwards;
- Sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity;
- Opportunity to influence development of all Government policies.

In addition, the Platform for Action recommends that Government and other actors promote an ‘active and visible’ gender mainstreaming policy across all policies and programmes. Establishing institutional machinery for women’s advancement is closely linked to the development of a gender mainstreaming process.

Today, Ireland has a range of legislative and organisational measures that focus on gender equality dating from the 1970s. This policy machinery was developed in response to obligations of membership of the EU (then known as the European Economic Community) and was also influenced by feminist campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the major initiatives in this area include the enactment of equal pay and employment equality legislation in the 1970s, the establishment of the Employment Equality Agency in 1977, the creation of a ministry of women’s affairs in 1982 and the formation of a parliamentary committee on women’s rights in 1983. Although political and administrative responsibility for gender equality moved between a number of ministries over time, it presently rests within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. These legislative, administrative and institutional structures have been enhanced recently through substantial reforms of the equality framework and through commitments in the National Development Plan and in successive social partnership agreements, Partnership 2000 (1997-2000) and the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (2000-2004).

Legislation

The Employment Equality Act, 1998, came into effect on 18 October 1999. The Act outlaws discrimination in relation to employment on nine grounds – gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. The Act covers discrimination in a wide range of employment related areas, including access to employment, equal pay for work of equal value, promotion, training and work experience. This Act repeals and replaces the Employment Equality Act, 1977 and the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974.

In terms of gender equality, the Act allows an employer to put in place positive action measures to promote equal opportunities, particularly those geared to removing existing inequalities which affect women’s opportunities in access to employment, vocational training and promotion. This is a significant

²¹⁶ Platform for Action, para 201.

²¹⁷ These initiatives are examined in more detail in Yvonne Galligan, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Ireland* (London: Pinter, 1998), pp. 58-63; 68-89 and by Evelyn Mahon and Valerie Morgan, ‘State feminism in Ireland’ in Yvonne Galligan, Eilís Ward and Rick Wilford (eds) *Contesting Politics* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), pp. 55-73.

development on the 1977 Act which confined positive action measures to training.

The Act defines sexual harassment for the first time in Irish law. It outlaws sexual harassment in the workplace and in the course of employment whether by an employer, another employee or by clients, customers or business contacts of an employer. It also provides that different treatment of a person in the workplace or in the course of employment, because of rejection or acceptance of sexual harassment, whether in the workplace, in the course of employment or outside the workplace, constitutes discrimination on the gender ground.

The equal pay provisions in the Act have been broadened by comparison with the 1974 Act by the removal of the requirement that the comparator be employed in the same place as the claimant and the Act codifies for the first time in Irish law indirect discrimination so far as remuneration is concerned. The Act extends protection to the Defence Forces for the first time in Irish law.

The Equal Status Act, 2000 was signed into law on 26 April, 2000 and came into force in October 2000. This Act deals with discrimination outside the employment context. It includes education, provision of goods, services and accommodation and disposal of property. Discrimination is prohibited on the same nine grounds as in the Employment Equality Act, 1998.

Two new bodies are created by the Employment Equality Act: the Equality Authority and the Office of the Director of Equality Investigations. The Equality Authority replaces the Employment Equality Agency and is charged with a broad brief that includes working towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities in employment and vocational training. Its enforcement role has been strengthened. The formal investigative powers accorded under the 1977 legislation remain. The Authority is also given the power to invite businesses to carry out equality reviews and to prepare and implement equality action plans. In the case of companies with 50 or more employees, the Authority may itself carry out such a review and prepare an action plan. With the enactment of the Equal Status Act, 2000, the remit of the Equality Authority extends to the areas covered by this legislation.

The Office of the Director of Equality Investigations offers a forum of first redress for equality cases arising under employment equality and equal status legislation. In essence, this office provides an accessible, speedy and low-cost dispute resolution service – including mediation - for equality cases other than dismissals. Decisions of the Director and mediation settlements are binding and enforceable through the Circuit Court.

The new legislation has meant a broadening of the remit of the equality infrastructure from gender and marital status to include seven other grounds – family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. This has implications for the creation of institutional mechanisms to support gender equality. Gender equality, because it refers to the whole population, applies across all the other categories in the anti-discrimination legislation. It also highlights the fact that women are not a homogenous group, and that differences among women become more evident when viewed in the context of the other categories covered by the legislation. Thus, the legislation highlights that gender equality is not just about equality between women and men, it is also about equality between women in different life situations. The equality infrastructure, then, is faced with a more complex task than before, with gender a cross-cutting consideration in each of the categories defined in the legislation.

Administrative Innovation

The National Development Plan

The achievement of equal opportunities between women and men is one of the horizontal principles of the National Development Plan (NDP). The policies and programmes funded under the Plan are required to contribute to the achievement of equal opportunities between women and men. In particular, the Plan provides that ‘it will be mandatory to include...equal opportunities among the project selection criteria

for all measures'.²¹⁸ An Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit has been set up in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, gender impact assessment guidelines for the NDP have been approved by the Government, gender disaggregated statistics are being compiled in respect of the NDP and gaps are being identified, gender balance on the Monitoring Committees is being promoted and a series of training sessions have been held (Appendix 4). The NDP also provides funding for positive actions to promote equality for women.

National Agreements

Partnership 2000 and the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) agreements have contained a number of commitments supporting gender equality. Furthermore, the commitments are subject to the monitoring arrangements that apply for these agreements. The commitments in the PPF include general measures such as the minimum wage, a task force on life-long learning, a carers' benefit (introduced with effect from October 2000) and a working group to progress the implementation of administrative individualisation under the social welfare system. Specific gender equality commitments in the PPF include mainstreaming gender equality in the NDP, work by the Equality Authority and by State agencies with a view to promoting gender equality, a review of the overall structures for monitoring and implementing gender equality commitments, a co-ordinated strategy for the collection and dissemination of disaggregated data for women, the establishment of a consultative group to develop proposals to address issues identified in the ESRI report on male/female wage differentials, an examination of the low representation of women at decision making levels and measures to tackle violence against women.

These legislative and administrative reforms constitute a significant part of the gender equality framework that is now in place in Ireland. They are complemented by a number of other initiatives at administrative level, most notably the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI). The SMI was introduced into the civil service in 1994 to enable the national administration contribute more effectively to national development, become more efficient in the use of resources and provide a high-quality service to the public.²¹⁹ The SMI initiative requires all Government departments to produce a strategy statement identifying the goals of the department and the ways in which these objectives will be achieved. As such, this document comprises a public statement by which the performance of a department can be evaluated.

The strategy statements drawn up by the Departments were reviewed to assess the level of priority given to gender equality in the work of each ministry. The results were disappointing. Gender equality was not a recognised goal in 8 of the 15 statements. Five strategy statements mentioned gender equality to a greater or lesser degree, and two further statements suggested an awareness of gender equality in their commitment to policy actions.

It comes as no surprise to find that no Department presented gender equality as integrated into all its aspects and activities. It featured extensively in the strategy statement of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and is also given explicit treatment in the strategy statement of the Department of Education and Science. In this latter case, it is treated as an outcome of educational policy-making, with a commitment to monitor progress towards gender equality across the various sections of the department. Three other Departmental statements make only limited references to equality, and, by inference, to gender equality. The statement of the Department of Agriculture and Food includes equality as a value that informs the policy and management of the Department; the strategy statement of the Department of the Taoiseach refers to equality in an appendix to the main document and the statement of the Department of Defence presents equality of opportunity and treatment as a management concern for the civilian staff.

Two other departmental statements, from Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Social, Community and Family Affairs, do not identify gender equality as part of the values underpinning their strategic

²¹⁸ National Development Plan, p. 224.

²¹⁹ The plan for civil service reform is contained in *Delivering Better Government-A Programme of Change for the Irish Civil Service* (1996). A further stage in the SMI programme, *Delivering Quality Public Service – Responding to the Changing Environment* (1999), highlighted the promotion of gender equality as one of six key priorities designed to improve the functioning of the civil service.

objectives. Nonetheless, these statements contain values that appear to support gender equality and commitments to deliver on practical actions that would advance equality between women and men. The strategic management statements of the remaining Departments ignored the issue of gender equality.

However, the above review of strategy statements must be seen in context. These statements were prepared initially in 1995, and were the first visible product of the SMI process. This exercise predated the Amsterdam Treaty, when gender equality was not perceived to be a matter for all Government departments. The SMI process evolved over the following four years and with it a growing realisation that gender equality was a central issue in the management of departmental human resources. When the second phase of the SMI was launched in 1999, one of the six priorities identified was the promotion of gender equality.²²⁰ This stage of SMI is clearly committed to addressing the problem of a balanced representation of women and men at middle and senior management grades in the civil service.²²¹ It does so by identifying the following five specific actions to be taken in the short-term:

- the development and adoption of a new equality policy, which will be drafted by a high-level management equality group, and which will be discussed with the civil service unions,
- a programme of affirmative action in the areas of recruitment, placement/mobility, training and development, promotion, work and family responsibilities, language and sexual harassment and policy delivery,
- the adoption of strategic objective setting at individual Department/Office level, including the setting of increasingly specific equality goals, to be achieved over a stated period of time,
- putting in place new equality structures, locally and centrally, to support implementation of the new policy,
- a communications strategy for implementation to be put in place.

One would expect, then, that the next drafts of departmental strategic statements will place a more substantial emphasis on gender equality as a human resources issue. An indicator of gender equality in the civil service can be constructed from readily available data, using the statistical information in the Humphreys *et al* report as a benchmark. Thus, monitoring of progress in reaching targets set by Government for a substantial increase in the number of women in senior management positions in the civil service would constitute a clear indicator of gender equality within the national administration.

Of equal importance in departmental strategy statements is the emphasis on gender equality as a policy concern. This is now a mainstreaming issue, as policy formulation demands an assessment of the gender impact of policies. It is now necessary, and indeed compulsory, for policy makers to assess the likely gender impact of employment policies, structural programmes and poverty strategies. This means that responsibility for gender proofing policy proposals rests with all Government departments and not only the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Indeed, the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action assume that gender equality is a function of all Government departments and agencies, and not a concern of one specialist unit. This presents a challenge to Government departments. Their commitment shown to gender proofing of policy can be assessed through their revised strategy Statements. One way of identifying the extent to which departments demonstrate sensitivity to equality concerns is by monitoring the designation of equality officials and/or by tracking the participation of departmental staff on gender equality training courses. While this of itself is not a guarantee of gender-sensitive policy evaluation, it does indicate a willingness by a department to confront this challenge in a serious manner.

An effective national plan for action for women would require all Government departments to submit targeted, specific and realistic plans for gender equality as both a human resources issue and as a policy concern. This would involve civil servants in an extensive consultative process, within their own

²²⁰ *Delivering Quality Public Service – Responding to the Changing Environment* (Dublin: Government Publications Sale Office, 1999).

²²¹ Humphreys, Peter, Eileen Drew and Candy Murphy, *Gender Equality in the Civil Service* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1999).

organisation and with women's groups active in the area of responsibility covered by a department. Such a process is likely to require extra resources for departments in some instances. Equally important, however, is the concrete, measurable and positive response it demands from all Government ministries. The priorities and supportive actions of departments across Government will form the basis of equality indicators in policy areas as well as in human resources. The experience of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in relation to mainstreaming gender equality in the National Development Plan, the knowledge gained by the Department of Enterprise and Employment in drawing up the National Employment Action Plan, the expertise of the Department of Education and Science in developing gender disaggregated statistics and the understanding within the Departments of Social, Community and Family Affairs and Health and Children respectively on the gendered nature of poverty and health issues are experiences of proofing of value to other departments.

The strategy on gender-proofing within the civil service, then, is two-fold. On the one hand, it calls for departments to develop equality opportunities for the women and men working in the service. This calls for target-setting with regard to promotional opportunities in each department that redresses the absence (or token presence) of women in senior positions. On the other hand, it requires all departments to set gender-specific goals in relation to their policy remit in consultation with women's groups and to gender-proof all policy proposals. Both aspects of administrative action are likely to be contained in future departmental strategy Statements, and are an essential component of the national plan of action for women to which Ireland is committed. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform will serve as the co-ordinating body for these administrative initiatives, with responsibility for framing, implementing and evaluating the progress of gender equality remaining with individual departments.

Extra resources will be required to facilitate departments in carrying out their gender equality responsibilities under national, European and international commitments.

Institutional Framework

There are a number of advisory committees, interdepartmental groups and women's non-Governmental organisations concerned with the advancement of gender equality in general and with monitoring the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women. Of specific relevance are the successive Oireachtas committees on women's rights, the Gender Equality Monitoring Committee under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Equality Authority (Employment Equality Agency) and the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC). Consultative practices are also part of the gender equality institutional framework.

Oireachtas committees on women's rights

The first parliamentary committee on women's rights was established in 1983. Known as the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights, with membership drawn from the Dail and Seanad, this committee was reconstituted after every election until 1997. This committee and its successors became an important parliamentary voice for a woman-centred perspective on public policies through commissioning research and publishing reports on various aspects of gender inequality. When first established, the Dail suggested that the committee should focus on three main activities – the proposal and examination of legislation, the removal of gender-based obstacles to women's civic participation and the situation of women in the home.²²² This programme formed the remit and the basis of much of the work of the committee in succeeding years.²²³ This was supplemented by the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women, which shaped the investigations of the fourth committee.

Thus, the first committee examined equality in educational and social welfare provisions, the portrayal of women in the media and the issue of sexual violence. The second and third committees examined attitudes to the role of women in Ireland and equality of opportunity in employment. The fourth committee published a report on women in management in local administration and a report on barriers

²²² Evelyn Mahon and Valerie Morgan, 'State feminism in Ireland' in Galligan et al (eds) *Contesting Politics* (1999), pp. 63-64.

²²³ The terms of reference of the second committee, established in 1987 and the fourth committee, established in 1993, were the same as those of the first committee.

to women in business and business creation. It also examined the position of rural women, the impact of European equality legislation on women's affairs in Ireland, the equality infrastructure and a support framework for female carers. Along with publishing commissioned research, the committee held public meetings to which representatives of women's and other groups were invited to make presentations on issues of interest to the committee. In 1996, for instance, the committee held 20 meetings on issues such as the monitoring of the Second Commission Report, the provision of crèche facilities in Leinster House, childcare and research projects. It also invited women's organisations such as Positive Action and Women's Aid to make presentations to the committee.²²⁴

The focus on women's rights provided by the four successive committees was dissipated in 1997 with the introduction of a reformed committee system in parliament. The principle underlying the establishment of the new committees was that the remit of these bodies should closely match that of a Government department or departments, so that in effect there was one committee for each department. The new committees now have a formal role at the detailed third stage in legislation being put forward by their respective departments.²²⁵ Although the new committees have a more important political role than before, women's affairs is now one part of a broader committee on justice, equality, defence and women's rights. This committee also shadows the ministry of defence. Thus, since the reform of the committee system, parliamentary awareness of a gendered perspective on policy has been reduced and a formal channel of dialogue between women's groups and political representatives has been greatly diminished.

National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC)

The National Women's Council of Ireland (formerly the Council for the Status of Women) has a long tradition of representing women's interests to Government. Formed in 1973 as a voluntary-based lobbying group, the aim of the NWC is to secure equal rights and opportunities for women. Today, the Council has an affiliated membership of 156 women's organisations, ranging from network groups such as the Irish Countrywomen's Association and Western Women's Link to groups active in issues of health, violence against women, sexual orientation and education.

In recognition of its role as a voice for women, the NWC was one of the original members of the Employment Equality Agency, where the Council had three seats on an 11 member board. In 1997, the NWC was invited by Government to become a social partner and joined with other community and voluntary sector organisations to form the Community and Voluntary Pillar of Partnership 2000 and its successor, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. The Council is represented at the National Economic and Social Forum and the National Economic and Social Council, in recognition of its special position as women's rights advocate. It also takes part in many other policy-setting fora.

Since its inception, the body has sought to articulate the consensus view of its members; has initiated many political campaigns for women's rights (on childcare; women's health care; education rights; employment; unpaid work and pension rights) and has sought to influence the Government agenda in this regard. It was formed following publication of the report of the first Commission on the Status of Women in 1972, and called for the establishment of the Second Commission in 1992. Both reports have been hailed in their time as blueprints for women's rights in Ireland.

The NWC plays a role internationally in gender equality, through its membership of the European Women's Lobby since the early 1990's, where it influences the EWL's work at the EU and EC. The Council has been represented at all the United Nations World Conferences on Women from Mexico City in 1975 to the UN Special Assembly in New York in June 2000. In advance of the Beijing Conference in 1995, the NWC published an independent report on the situation of women in Ireland in each of the 12 areas of action identified for discussion in Beijing. The report outlined an extensive range of measures that required implementation by the Irish Government in order to meet the strategic objectives set out in

²²⁴ Houses of the Oireachtas, *1996 Annual Report of the Fourth Joint Committee on Women's Rights* (Dublin: Government Publications Sale Office, February 1997).

²²⁵ Michael Gallagher, 'Parliament' in John Coakley and Michael Gallagher (eds) *Politics in the Republic of Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 194-198.

the UN Draft Platform for Action. In advance of the follow-up conference, Beijing +5, held in New York in June 2000, the NWCI, as part of an NGO group committed to progressing the Platform for Action, published a report, 'Promises Made; Promises Broken', assessing the extent of progress in gender equality since 1995. This report was compiled after an extensive regional consultation exercise that went beyond members of the organisations affiliated to the Council to include many other women and women's groups. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform funded the production of the Beijing +5 shadow report along with the consultative seminars on which the report was based.

The NGO group called on the Government to carry out its commitment to developing a National Action Plan for Ireland on the Platform for Action, which it has now agreed to do.

The NWCI, then, is strategically situated at the core of decision making on gender equality in Ireland, and is an important part of the institutional framework in this area both as an independent advocate for concerns articulated by its membership and as a partner to Government in progressing the gender equality agenda.

Gender Equality Monitoring Committee

The Gender Equality Monitoring Committee (GEMC) was initially established as a 15-member committee to monitor the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women.²²⁶ At present, the GEMC terms of reference are as follows:

- To monitor gender equality in Ireland in the light of the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women and the actions agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women
- To draw up and submit to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, from time to time, a report on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women
- To draw up and submit to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, from time to time, a report on progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in a manner appropriate to Irish conditions
- To make recommendations to Ministers to accelerate implementation of the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women which have been accepted by Government or by Ministers and the Beijing Platform for Action as appropriate
- To serve as a forum for discussion.²²⁷

Since inception, the GEMC has overseen the three monitoring reports of the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women. The committee has played an important role in developing interdepartmental co-operation in the area of gender equality. It has also provided a channel of communication between the State, representatives of economic interests and women's organisations complementing the social partnership process. It is important to recognise, therefore, that the GEMC provided a valuable consultative framework for the advancement of gender equality at a time when equality between women and men was not part of, or was marginal to, national economic and social policies.

The recent past has seen a rapid transformation of the policy context for gender equality, partly as an outcome of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 and the priority given

²²⁶ The terms of reference of the original monitoring committee can be found in the First Progress Report of the Monitoring Committee on the Implementation of the recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women (Dublin: Government Publications Sale Office, May 1994), p. 8.

²²⁷ Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 'Current Equality Policies and Strategies', paper prepared for the NESF Plenary Session on Equality, 18 May 2000, Dublin Castle, p. 10.

to gender equality in an EU context. The defining feature of the new policy paradigm is the use of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving equality between women and men.²²⁸ It was adopted by the EU as a strategy for advancing equal opportunities between women and men, confirmed as a fundamental principle in the Treaty of Amsterdam and integrated into Structural Funds regulations.

Along with the strategy shift in gender equality, economic conditions in Ireland also changed with implications for the roles of women and men. A growing labour force was required to sustain a prosperous economy and women either returned to or remained in the workforce in growing numbers. Reconciling the demands of work and family, for long a concern of women's groups and equality organisations, became increasingly salient. The social partnership process broadened to involve the community and voluntary sector of which women's representatives were a part. As already noted, *Partnership 2000* and its successor, *The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*, contained specific commitments to gender mainstreaming of policy, while the SMI process and the National Development Plan, as we have also seen, gave an extra impetus to equal opportunities for women and men. In this increasingly complex and multi-layered world of gender equality policy making, the role of the GEMC is largely outdated, and the time has come to develop alternative institutions that are in keeping with the new environment in gender equality.

Consultation

The Platform for Action explicitly recognises the importance of non-Governmental and grass-roots organisations in contributing to a climate that is supportive of equality between women and men. In particular, it advises that women's organisations, feminist groups and other non-Governmental organisations, should be encouraged to participate in the development of the national plan on gender equality. This national equality strategy is intended to give effect to the Platform for Action. Consultation is a necessary requirement for the development of a strategic plan on gender equality. A recent report on equality proofing highlights the importance of a consultation process in developing policy:²²⁹

Participation in policy design and review is a crucial feature of any proofing process. Unique and comprehensive information, often not available through traditional data sources, can be obtained by consulting with community groups. These groups will have access to relevant information at the international, national, provincial and local levels. Consultation and a participatory approach to policy design ensure that this data and information is mainstreamed into the policy process.

A wide range of formal and informal consultative processes exist in Ireland as is appropriate in a democracy. They range from highly structured national negotiations on broad economic and social matters to discussions between decision-makers and interest groups on specific policy concerns.²³⁰ Some groups, such as organised economic interests, develop strong and relatively continuous links with policy-makers. Other interests are less well represented in decision-making circles. Traditionally, women and women's groups have been excluded from the policy process. Over time, however, this has changed to some degree. Today, a wide range of groups expressing women's interests and perspectives are regularly consulted by Government on policy matters. This process of consultation has the potential to become more inclusive of women in the context of the National Development Plan, given the need for policy makers to include a gender equality perspective in all programmes under this plan.

Consultation is a two-way process. It involves policy makers and women's groups expressing their respective views. It also requires participants to actively listen to one another. While the Irish

²²⁸ Although gender mainstreaming as a concept arose in the debates of the previous UN world congress on women in 1985, and was subsequently elaborated upon in academic literature, the strategy was specifically endorsed a decade later in the Beijing Platform for Action.

²²⁹ DJELR, Mullally and Smith, *Partnership 2000 Working Group Report on Equality Proofing*, p. 41.

²³⁰ Murphy, Gary, 'The role of interest groups in the policy making process' in Coakley and Gallagher (eds) *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, (1998), pp. 271-293; Hardiman, Niamh, 'Inequality and the representation of interests' in William Crotty and David E. Schmitt (eds) *Ireland and the Politics of Change* (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 122-143.

Government is charged with implementing the Platform for Action and developing a strategic gender equality plan appropriate to Irish circumstances, the opinions, concerns and suggestions of Irish women need to be heard before decisions are made. Equally, groups need to understand the constraints on decision-makers in framing the gender equality plan. The essence of a constructive consultation process is one based on mutual respect, understanding of the respective roles of the participants and of the context in which they work.²³¹

Consultation raises two important issues that need to be clarified at the outset - what does a consultative process involve and what means are used to consult with others. These issues are explored in the following paragraphs.

Consultation process

Consultation is a multi-dimensional process. In Irish society, where value is placed on direct contact and face-to-face communication with decision makers, the boundaries between a formal consultative process and informal discussions and exchanges are not always clear. In the context of the development of the National Plan for Women it is important for consultation to take place with individuals, women's organisations and other groups interested in contributing to a more equal society. There are a number of central issues that are common to any successful consultative process.²³² These are:

- Defining the meaning of consultation
- Identifying with whom decision-makers will consult
- Clarifying the purposes of the consultation
- Principles guiding the consultation
- Constraints on the consultative process.

The meaning of consultation: Defining what constitutes official consultation is an important first step in good consultative practice. At its most basic, official consultation occurs when Government or a Government agency formally requests views or participation from groups on a specific issue. This can take place at a meeting, can be provided through written input or a combination of both methods of communication. Official consultation has a number of characteristics. Good consultative practices have four features in common:

- Consultation takes place before a decision is made and before further action is taken on an issue;
- Consultation is a two-way communication process, in which all parties listen and contribute views, information and ideas. This process offers an opportunity for genuine and respectful listening by all participants. Following this activity, it is appropriate for decision-makers to communicate back to participants about what happened with their views. It can also be instructive for decision-makers to be informed of the reactions of participating groups and individuals to the discussion process;
- Consultation results in action, with decision-makers committed to acting on the views heard. This does not necessarily mean that every suggestion made in a consultative process is implemented. It recognises, however, that the views of groups and individuals will always be taken into account in arriving at a decision;
- Consultation is part of an ongoing relationship between decision-makers and groups or individuals within the gender equality policy area in which mutual trust and understanding is built up over time. This can best occur through a continuing process of discussions, decisions and evaluation.

Identifying the constituency: The Platform for Action identifies women's organisations as key players

²³¹ Status of Women Canada, *Discussion paper on approaches to consultation*, September 1997 at <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/consult/letter-e.html>.

²³² Many of the ideas on consultation are based on a consideration and abbreviation of the Status of Women Canada document on consultation cited above.

in advancing women's equality. It also recognises that a wide range of groups in civil society, such as professional associations, trade unions, local community groups and others have an important role to play in achieving women's equality.²³³ In developing a national strategy on gender equality, it is important to consult with a wide range of groups and individuals working actively to advance equality between women and men.

It is also important to take into account the reality of differences between women. Indeed, the formulation of a gender equality strategy also requires that the diversity of women's situations be respected, especially differences based on age, disability, race, sexual orientation, marital and family status, religious belief and membership of the Traveller community. Decision-makers should seek to consult with a wide range of women from diverse backgrounds, as equality can only be achieved by acknowledging and respecting this diversity.

Purpose of consultation: Although the immediate purpose of the consultation – in this instance, the preparation of a National Plan for Women – is clear, consultations with the above groups can be carried out for other reasons. The over-riding reason for consultation in the context of the National Plan for Women is to seek input on the future direction of equality between women and men before decisions are made. This does not exclude consultation for other purposes. For instance, it may be helpful for decision-makers to consult with groups on emerging issues, to help define issues and to understand how an issue affects women's lives.

In addition, consultation can have a problem-solving focus, when strategies can be developed on issues of mutual concern to policy-makers and groups or when policies are being evaluated for their gender impact.²³⁴

Guiding principles: The manner in which consultations take place will vary depending on the issue, the desired outcome, the groups involved, and the available time and resources. However, there are five general principles that guide good consultative practices:

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Mutual respect
- Diversity and accessibility
- Commitment.

Transparency requires that the objectives of the consultation will be clearly communicated from the beginning and the parameters of consultation will be clearly identified before consultation begins. It also means that the steps in the consultation process, and where the consultation fits in the overall decision-making on a particular issue or issues, will be explained to participants at the outset.

Accountability requires policy-makers to communicate back to participants about what was heard and how it was used. This may include a summary of the advice received, and an indication of how it will be incorporated into the decision-making process. Participants should also be asked to evaluate each consultation exercise after it is completed.

Mutual respect offers the most constructive climate for consultation. Consultation will not always lead to consensus, but it should lead to a better understanding of the positions of the respective participants. An effective consultation process will respect the differing roles of decision-makers and other participants, and the constraints that structure their respective roles.

²³³ *Platform for Action*, para. 295

²³⁴ The need for consultations at different stages in a policy process is also identified in the *Partnership 2000 Working Group Report on Equality Proofing*, p. 41.

Diversity and accessibility are important in giving as many women as possible from differing situations a voice in the consultative process. This requires the removal of as many barriers to consultation as possible by using appropriate language, providing financial support where needed (such as covering transport and childcare costs), making information available in a range of languages as required and through appropriate formats (discs, Braille, audiocassette), in choosing locations that are accessible and appropriate to the participants, and other measures.

Commitment to consultation with constituents, and the maintenance of an ongoing relationship with constituent groups and individuals should be an integral part of the work of decision-makers in the area of gender equality. This involves regular communication, consultation and feedback.

Constraints on consultation are of three main kinds – constraints on cost, on time and on knowledge and information. These apply to decision-makers and to participants in different ways. Often, consultative processes need to balance a trade-off between the time and money available before a decision is made and the time and financial cost required by participants to provide the best input. Knowledge constraints can seriously limit the effectiveness of a consultation. One way of addressing the information deficit is to provide common background information to all participating in the consultation. In this context, considerations of confidentiality should not overly restrict consultation and participation.

The above discussion identifies a range of important concerns inherent in a consultative process, and is designed to guide the development of consultation practices on gender equality. The next section addresses the second major issue - how to consult.

Consultation methods

There are any number of possible consultation methods and formats. A survey of the gender equality consultative mechanisms of a range of countries shows that there are a wide variety of consultation methods in use.²³⁵ These can be grouped into six broad categories –

- Large-scale face-to-face consultations
- Small group consultations
- Discussion papers
- Questionnaires
- Internet discussions
- Focus groups.

Each basic consultation method has advantages and disadvantages, and each one can be adapted in different ways to meet specific consultative needs.

Large group consultations are a popular means of communication and consultation between gender equality agencies, women's organisations and individuals. These events follow a traditional conference format and are generally national or regional in scope. Although these meetings are commonly used for all types of consultation purposes, they tend to be more effective for addressing broad issues and questions rather than more specialised or technical ones. Large consultations are also useful when it is important to obtain a broad range of input.

In Australia, the Government holds an annual two-day meeting at national level with women's organisations and prominent individuals. This event is known as the 'Australian Women's Round Table'. This meeting is supplemented by regional and State round tables. In 1998, the British Government launched a 'Listening to Women' campaign that held eight regional meetings attended by women's groups and by individuals. Since 1999, Tessa Jowell, the Minister for Employment, Welfare to

²³⁵ The countries surveyed were Australia, Canada, France, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Information was obtained through direct contact with the gender equality office or agency in each country and through their respective Government websites. Gender equality agencies and ministries in other countries were also contacted, but information on consultative methods proved difficult to obtain.

Work and Equal Opportunities, has met representatives of over 70 women's organisations on an annual basis to discuss their concerns.

Small group consultations are widely used by Governments to engage in discussions with women on gender equality issues. These consultations are more flexible than the one-off large group meetings and can take a wide variety of forms. While national or regional in scope, these consultations tend to focus on a specific issue or sector. This form of consultation is useful when time is limited, the issue is urgent and when the expertise needed is available within a limited group of participants.

The French Government holds regular meetings with women's organisations on specific policy issues. In contrast, small group consultations in Sweden focus on the Council for Equality, comprising 32 organisations of which there are 14 women's organisations. The Equality Minister meets with the Council four times a year. The Status of Women Canada also makes extensive use of small group consultations. The British Cabinet Office talks on a regular basis with organisations representing women on a wide range of issues, and in particular engages in regular dialogue with the independent advisory body, the Women's National Commission. In Australia, a women's Parliamentary Advisory Group, comprising a Government member of parliament in each State or Territory, acts as a local access point for women and a channel for consultation with local women.

Small group consultations do not have to be expert-oriented to provide useful information and feedback to decision-makers. Focus groups, or discussion groups are being increasingly used by Governments to assist them in identifying priority issues for women and to explore how these issues affect their lives. This form of consultation enables Government to obtain in-depth responses to issues from a representative sample of the population. The British Cabinet Office used discussion groups across a number of locations in 1998 during its 'Listening to Women' campaign.

Discussion papers are widely used by the Status of Women Canada to elicit feedback on specific issues from women's groups, individuals and other equality-supporting organisations. This allows participants to give detailed consideration to Government proposals, and also facilitates the expression of a broad range of views. It is an inexpensive form of consultation, but takes a relatively long time to conclude and works best when the questions being considered are well-defined.

Brief questionnaires are increasingly used by Governments to elicit a wide response to specific matters. Unlike discussion papers, the response time is short. This consultation method is particularly useful when the issue is a current one and the topic is focused and specific. It can be used for extensive consultation. However, the lack of interaction between decision makers and participants means that questionnaires tend not to elicit in-depth responses. Status of Women Canada uses this method of consultation, as does the UK Government. 'Talk Back' questionnaires in the form of pre-paid postcards that asked three key questions were made widely available in the course of the 'Listening to Women' exercise.

Internet discussions are a growing medium of consultation between Governments and women when seeking informal responses to specific issues or when exploring new ideas. Any interested group or individual with access to the internet can contribute their thoughts and ideas. This method of consultation is used on occasions by Status of Women Canada and by the Women's Unit in the British Cabinet Office. In July 2000, the Women's Unit hosted a policy discussion on the issues identified by women as important, such as the balance between work and family life. The Australian Government supports a website for women's organisations.

These are the main consultation methods used by Governments to communicate with and generate responses from women's groups, expert individuals and society as a whole. There is a growing awareness among decision makers of the need for a variety of consultative strategies to give women who are not involved in organised networks a role in the consultation process. Equally, Governments clearly value the contribution of women's expert groups and organisations and seek to sustain and build direct relationships with these participants.

National machinery: a comparative view

The Beijing Conference and its preparatory process prompted many countries to examine their institutional mechanisms for equality resulting in a wide range of reforms. A study of 18 countries showed that national political structures fell into five main categories:

- Full, stand-alone women's ministries (Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand);
- A women's or equality ministry included with another ministry (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Sweden);
- A sub-ministry within the office of the Prime Minister (Portugal, United Kingdom, Australia);
- Responsibility for gender equality subsumed in another ministry (Belgium, France, Netherlands, Norway);
- A Government agency attached to a ministry (Finland, Iceland, Spain, Canada).

This broad range of machinery acts as a focus for initiatives on equality between women and men. It is supported by an array of monitoring institutions, advisory councils and parliamentary bodies as follows:

- Consultative council attached to the ministry or unit with responsibility for equality (France, Luxembourg, Norway, United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Sweden);
- Parliamentary committee (Australia, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain);
- Inter-ministerial working group (Finland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom);
- Monitoring and enforcement agencies (Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Canada).

The range of national machineries for the implementation of gender equality bears a close resemblance to the situation in Ireland. There is a strong equality structure in place in this country, consisting of a ministry with responsibility for gender equality in addition to other remits, a consultative council (the GEMC), a parliamentary sub-committee on women's affairs and independent monitoring and enforcement agencies - the Equality Authority and the Office of the Director of Equality investigations. However, it is noticeable that many of the current institutions in Europe are either new or redesigned in the light of the Beijing process before and after 1995. In the light of developments in other countries, it is worth examining the institutional framework for equality in Ireland with a view to strengthening the national structures on gender equality. The next section will examine some proposals for institutional reform along four distinct dimensions – constitutional, political, administrative and advisory.

Reform Proposals

It is clear that gender equality is entering the Irish policy-making framework. This is coming about due to national, European and international commitment to the importance of ensuring that women and men are given the conditions under which they can become truly equal. However, the high level of attention accorded to national and European initiatives on gender equality, predicated in the main by a desire for sustainable economic prosperity, has resulted in a broadening and deepening of the equality agenda set by the Second Commission on the Status of Women, CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The time has now come to create a new vision for gender equality in Ireland and integrate this view with the gender mainstreaming process that is evolving at national level. This can be achieved through a combined series of initiatives that encompasses an enhancement of the constitution and national machinery on gender equality.

Constitution

Gender equality as a principle is now entering Irish policy making, through national legislation, binding commitments to supra-national treaties, the modernisation of the civil service and local Government and incorporation in a wide range of national economic and social plans. Equality between women and men

is a value that is clearly and unequivocally adopted by the Irish Government, and is a value supported by people in Ireland. This strategic vision of a gender equal society can be given greater clarity however. This clarity can come through the Constitution.

Christopher McCrudden²³⁶ argues that

In a modern State, we rightly expect our Constitution to reflect the basic principles that we regard as fundamental. We expect, in particular, that the Constitution provides the framework for State action, and provides guidance as to the values that the nation seeks to uphold.

As noted previously, the Constitution contains an inherent recognition of gender equality in Article 40.1. The fundamental commitment to the principle of equality *per se* is not in question. The increased attention given to gender (and, indeed, to other identities) in national and international laws and policies is now anomalous with the silence of the constitutional wording on equality. State action is guided by the Constitution. State action is also increasingly guided by EU treaties and international human rights covenants that place specific obligations on the State. Yet the Constitution remains an important fundamental document and a symbolic Statement of values and principles for the State and society.

The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women examined the constitutional scope of equality provisions and recommended that a gender-based anti-discrimination clause be inserted in the Constitution.²³⁷ In a comprehensive review of the Constitution in 1996, the Constitution Review Group²³⁸ examined Article 40.1 and the interpretations applied to the text. It considered the desirability of extending the guarantee of equality, the elimination of unacceptable bias and it evaluated the option of extending the guarantee of equality before the law. Following extensive consideration of these issues and related matters, the Group recommended that the equality guarantee should not be confined to citizens, but should be extended to all individuals. It also recommended that a further section should be added to Article 40.1 as follows:

No person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on any ground such as sex, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, colour, language, culture, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or ethnic origin, membership of the Travelling community, property, birth or other status.

The Treaty of Amsterdam formalises the fundamental importance of equality between women and men and provides scope for member States to adopt positive discrimination measures to address inequalities based on grounds of sex and other identities. It places a positive construction on gender equality as compared with the more cautious absence of ‘unjust discrimination’ offered by the Constitution Review Group. As discussed in Chapter 1, Article 2 constructs equality between women and men as a specific task of all member States. Article 3 establishes gender equality as a horizontal objective affecting all Community tasks. Article 13 provides for a non-discrimination clause that offers the Council of Ministers the possibility of action to redress inequalities to ‘combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’.

The *de facto* recognition of equality between women and men as a basic principle of national policy, the recommendation of the Review Group on Article 40.1 of the Constitution and the central importance of gender equality as enshrined in the Treaty of Amsterdam together suggest that the time has come to include a clear and unequivocal Statement on gender equality in the Constitution.

National machinery

In the course of this research, there was found to be a widespread view that gender equality was not given sufficient priority within Government separate from the social partnership agreements. Opinions

²³⁶ McCrudden, Christopher, ‘Strategic Framework for Action on Equality Issue’, paper delivered at National Economic and Social Forum *Plenary Session on Equality*, Dublin Castle, 18th May 2000.

²³⁷ Second Commission on the Status of Women, *Report to Government*, p. 27.

²³⁸ Constitution Review Group, *Report of the Constitution Review Group*, pp. 220-42.

differed, however, on strategies for addressing this matter.

A strongly expressed view suggested that the responsibility for gender equality should be located within the Department of the Taoiseach. This move, it was argued, would help break down a perceived resistance within ministries to adopting and implementing gender equality measures. An alternative view, equally strongly held, suggested that gender equality would be best served by being located in a ministry other than that of the Department of the Taoiseach. The general experience in European countries indicates that both of these options are realistic, and that the decision on where to locate political and administrative responsibility for gender equality depends on specific country arrangements.

It is clear that a link with the office of the Taoiseach is important, given the overall co-ordinating function of this department. It is possible to involve the Department of the Taoiseach in an overall capacity while retaining co-ordinating responsibility for gender equality in an enhanced Equality Division within an appropriate ministry as decided by Government, and to which substantial additional resources are given to undertake this task. The minister of that Department would take responsibility for gender equality strategies and initiatives while a cabinet sub-committee, chaired by the Taoiseach, would give overall direction to the gender equality programme and would integrate gender equality into all national strategies and plans. Individual ministers would be responsible for ensuring that gender equality was an integral component of all policies in their respective Departments. At present, a cabinet sub-committee on social inclusion exists. A practical and feasible option would be to extend the remit of this sub-committee to include gender equality, and to rename the sub-committee to reflect this broader brief. In doing so, it would be important to make clear that gender equality was not just about social inclusion, but was a broader concept, affecting the entire population of the State, women and men.

Gender equality is an issue that has implications for the work of all Government departments and agencies. It also requires a central co-ordinating secretariat to guide the implementation of gender mainstreaming, provide advice on the practical application of gender mainstreaming and undertake research to enable capacity-building on this subject within the civil service as a whole. In addition, the evaluation of policy outcomes will become an increasingly important focus of the work of this unit and thus general and specific expertise in the area must be acquired and developed by administrative personnel responsible for gender equality.

These capacity-building requirements are essential if gender mainstreaming is to have a tangible impact on policy outcomes. The equality division would require an allocation of significant personnel and financial resources to enable the civil servants in this area build on their existing expertise and knowledge. Gender mainstreaming requires technical supports, such as statistical competency, knowledge of evaluation tools and the capabilities to undertake training of personnel from other departments, alongside a high level of awareness of gender mainstreaming as a concept and knowledge of developments in this field in other countries. At present, the equality division in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has a core of highly committed and well-informed personnel supplemented by an Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit set up under the National Development Plan. Work is on hand to expand this Unit to include research, statistical and gender expertise.

Gender mainstreaming and the pursuit of substantive equality (as distinct from formal equality) cannot be the task of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform alone. It is a responsibility of all Government departments and agencies. This means that individual departments will have to build their own equality expertise if they are to be effective in gender-proofing policies, in devising equality goals and targets and in evaluating the effectiveness of these measures. It is just as important that each Government department is given sufficient resources to enable it develop and expand expertise on gender equality. While the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should provide an advice, training and co-ordinating function, each separate ministry will need resources to develop the capacity to implement gender equality strategies. As a first stage, a senior official in each department should be given training in gender equality expertise, designated as equality expert and given the responsibility of devising appropriate equality goals for the National Plan for Women.

However, it is not sufficient to resource Government departments for gender equality to take root in public policy and practices. Communication and consultation with women, women's non-Governmental organisations and other equality-seeking bodies is an intrinsic part of integrating gender into all Government policies and actions. Thus, mainstreaming recognises that ordinary women and men are 'qualified' to participate in policy-making. These individuals and organisations, and women's groups in particular, require resourcing to enable their full participation in the gender mainstreaming process. The task of removing imbalances and inequalities in society is a shared responsibility, involving Government and civil society. Government will need to extend the consultation to involve women and men in general, women's organisations and members of equality groups in order to improve the quality of policy making, deepen democratic participation and promote a more egalitarian society. This participatory framework will require an on-going, stable and realistic level of funding.

Advisory

Progress towards gender equality is a project that requires the active interchange of views between the State, agencies and civil society. It requires a channel through which the views, interests and concerns of the wider public can be expressed to policy makers. In particular, the requirement to produce a National Plan for Women under the Beijing commitments lends an urgency to the development of consultative strategies between the State and the public.

The Beijing Platform for Action recognises that non-Governmental and grass-roots organisations 'have a specific role to play in creating a social, economic, political and intellectual climate based on equality between women and men'.²³⁹ Thus, it envisages women playing a vital role in progressing gender equality. It extends this participatory environment to include other organised interests and specialist groups – 'legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, professional associations, trade unions, co-operatives, local community groups, non-Governmental organisations, including women's organisations and feminist groups, the media, religious groups, youth organisations and cultural groups, as well as financial and non-profit organisations'.²⁴⁰

The drafting of a National Plan for Women is but one part of a much larger effort to ensure greater equality in society. It is also one element in putting the Platform for Action into practice. Other commitments, deriving from the EU and CEDAW in particular, are also part of the equality agenda adopted by the Irish Government.

It is clear from this review of gender equality in Ireland that the issues fall into two main categories. On the one hand there are issues that around which it is possible to encourage and enhance equality between women and men through policy initiatives. Examples in this area include gender-sensitive perspectives on health, education, poverty and the media that can influence policy development. There are a second set of issues that are much more intractable and on which little progress has been made to date. These issues combine structural and attitudinal dimensions that have proved resistant to incremental policy development. Such issues include gender equality in decision making, work-life balance, employment law and social welfare/taxation issues. The two categories of issues require different structures to monitor and develop a more gender equal society.

Progress on issues to which policy is relatively responsive – health, education and others – can be effectively overseen by a Task Force on the National Plan for Women. This Task Force would consist of a wide range of cross-sectional interests pertinent to the advancement of women's rights. The remit of the Task Force would be to monitor the success of the National Plan for Women in bringing about a more gender equal society and in mainstreaming gender equality into all public policy. In order to carry out this function, the Task Force would be properly resourced, with the financial capacity to commission research into specific aspects of policy as needed. It would also have the power to call on Departments to make regular presentations on their strategies for implementing the National Plan for Women, the targets

²³⁹ Platform for Action, para 289.

²⁴⁰ *ibid*, para. 295.

they have set for achieving specific goals, the extent to which their policies incorporate a gender perspective and their plans for addressing gender inequalities in their fields of responsibility. This Task Force would provide an overall annual report on progress in achieving gender equality through measurement of policy effectiveness by means of agreed indicators. The Task Force would have the capacity to set up specialist sub-groups to facilitate expert review and to act as a channel of consultation with women's groups and other equality-seeking organisations in civil society. It would be chaired by a Minister or Minister of State with responsibility for equality issues or a person appointed by Government, and have a secretariat drawn from the Equality Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (or according to Government wishes). The Task Force would work closely with the cabinet sub-committee on equality and social inclusion in whatever way was deemed to be most effective in advancing gender equality. It would also work closely with the Equality Authority and the Central Statistics Office. Through the responsible Minister, the Task Force would be available and accountable to the Oireachtas committee on women's rights, or to the appropriate parliamentary body.

In tandem with the Task Force on the National Plan for Women, the Government would establish a Gender Equality Commission to examine ways of making progress on the areas most resistant to gender equality – political, economic and social decision-making, life-work balance, employment law and social welfare/taxation issues. This Commission would consist of a small number of experts, chaired by an independent person appointed by Government, with the brief of recommending practical strategies for the advancement of gender equality in these areas. The Commission would be required to report within a period of time specified by Government and would furnish a report on its findings to Government. The Commission secretariat would be drawn from the Equality Division and it would be provided with adequate financial and other resources to accomplish its task. The Commission would work in close co-operation with the Task Force on the National Plan for Women.

Together, the Task Force on the National Plan for Women and the Gender Equality Commission would provide a coherent institutional structure for the advancement of women's human rights in Ireland.

8. *We recommend an amendment to Article 40.1 extending the constitutional guarantee of equality to individuals and including an additional section naming gender equality as a fundamental right.*
9. *We recommend that the brief of the cabinet sub-committee on social inclusion to be broadened to include gender equality. The name of the committee to reflect its wider remit.*
10. *We recommend that Ministers be individually responsible for the integration of gender equality in all policies of their departments*
11. *We recommend that day to day responsibility for gender equality rest in a more substantially resourced Equality Division within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, or within a Department of the Government's choosing.*
12. *We recommend that adequate resources be made available for each Department to develop gender expertise on the policy issues confronting the Department*
13. *We recommend that adequate resources be made available to enable individuals, women's organisations and equality-seeking groups to participate in the gender mainstreaming process*
14. *We recommend that a Task Force on the National Plan for Women be established to monitor progress in implementing the National Plan for Women*
15. *We recommend that a Gender Equality Commission be established to devise strategies for bringing about gender equality in political, economic and social decision making, work-life balance, employment law and social welfare/taxation issues.*

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Appendix 1

1: Terms of Reference

- (a) To assess recommendations of the Second Commission on the Status of Women that:
 - (i) have been implemented or substantially implemented;
 - (ii) remain to be implemented, and the desirability and feasibility of implementing them;
 - (iii) are obsolete;
 - (iv) require review due to a change in circumstances.
- (b) In relation to above, examine and make recommendations regarding:
 - (i) concrete steps towards implementation where recommendations can be implemented;
 - (ii) a timetable for implementation;
 - (iii) the budget required (if necessary).
- (c) Develop performance indicators, excluding the areas covered by the Structural Funds, which could be used for measuring the practical impact of policies and programmes on the status of women and for measuring progress as appropriate for gender monitoring requirements under various national and international commitments with particular reference to commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- (d) Develop proposals for the establishment of a comprehensive gender segregated statistical base to be used in examining progress in the area of gender equality. The current availability of such statistics is to be examined, gaps in the current database of statistics should be identified and (i) new base line statistics should be drawn up or, where this is not possible (ii) mechanisms to fill these gaps proposed. Particular attention should be paid to statistics available and required in the areas of life expectancy, literacy rates and property rights among disadvantaged groups, childcare provisions, sexual harassment in schools and workplaces, violence against women, the position of women suffering from double disadvantage, e.g. women with disabilities, women affected by poverty, Traveller women, refugee and migrant women, elderly women, rural women and also women in management roles and women in academic fields.
- (e) Make recommendations regarding options for monitoring gender equality commitments:
 - (i) possibility of a reconstituted gender equality monitoring committee, membership, terms of reference, working methods, representation and accountability;
 - (ii) develop proposals for streamlining some areas of gender equality into other existing/ongoing monitoring areas (e.g. P2000, childcare framework monitoring systems, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's equality-proofing working group, Women and Violence Taskforce, Women's Regional Health Committee (with appropriate gender balance);
 - (iii) examine Departmental Strategic Management Strategy Statements in relation to gender and develop proposals for mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and actions in all Departments.

Appendix 2

Individuals Consulted

Austin, Mary	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Barry, Ursula	WEERC, University College Dublin
Bohan, Maureen	Department of Education and Science
Braiden, Olive	Rape Crisis Centre
Butler, Mary	Department of An Taoiseach
Byrne, Noreen	National Women's Council of Ireland
Callender, Roisín	SIPTU
Carmichael, Joan	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Cashen, Barbara	Equality Authority
Charlton, Denise	Women's Aid
Comerford, Frances	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Connolly, Kathleen	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Deane, Audrey	National Women's Council of Ireland
Doyle, Mary	Department of An Taoiseach
Edgehill, Angela	Fine Gael
Flynn, Mary	Labour Women's National Council
Hayes, Margaret	Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation
Healy, Gráinne	National Women's Council of Ireland
Hogan, Deirdre	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Jones, Clare	IBEC
Kelly, Vera	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Lane, Orla	NESC
Langford, Sylva	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Lawlor, Ciarán	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Lee, Patricia	National Women's Council of Ireland
Luddy, Geraldine	Women's Health Council
McCormack, Joy	Irish Countrywomen's Association
McGauran, Anne-Marie	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
McNaughton, Susan	National Women's Council of Ireland
Murphy, Betty	Irish Farmers Association
Nolan, Freda	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
O' Hara, Mary	Irish Countrywomen's Association
O'Connor, Orla	National Women's Council of Ireland
O'Shaughnessy, Pauline	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Pender, Anne	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Price, Margaret	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Quirke, Tim	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Ross, Christine	National Women's Council of Ireland
Treacy, Joe	Central Statistics Office
White, Alex	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
White, Sara	Department of the Marine
Zappone, Katherine	National Women's Council of Ireland

Appendix 3

Membership of the steering committee

Bernard McDonagh (Chairperson)	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (until 31 December 1999)
Vera Kelly (Chairperson)	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (from 1 January 2000)
Patricia Lee	National Women's Council of Ireland (until 31 May 2000)
Barbara Cashen	Equality Authority
Christine Ross	National Women's Council of Ireland (from 1 June 2000)
Betty Murphy	Irish Farmers Association
Maureen Bohan	Department of Education and Science
Frances Comerford	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Kathleen Connolly	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Secretarial assistance was provided by Maryclare Murphy, Damien Byrne and Lilibeth Higgins of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Appendix 4

Mainstreaming equal opportunities between women and men in the NDP

1. The achievement of equal opportunities between women and men is one of the horizontal principles of the National Development Plan (NDP, paragraph 13.20) and policies and programmes funded under the Plan are required to contribute to the achievement of equal opportunities between women and men. In particular, the Plan provides that 'it will be mandatory to include...equal opportunities...among the project selection criteria for all measures' (paragraph 13.37).

The commitments in the Plan involve a gender focus across the six Operational Programmes, i.e. Economic and Social Infrastructure, Productive Sector, Employment and Human Resources Development, Regional (2) and Peace Operational Programmes.

2. Programmes, Sub-Programmes and Initiatives are being assessed for their impact on gender equality issues. The Government approved guidelines to this effect in March 2000, which outlined a gender impact assessment model to be applied within the NDP. These guidelines require gender impact assessment at operational programme, programme complement and measure level. These guidelines are on the web site of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. When selecting projects for funding, both the NDP and the gender impact assessment guidelines require that project selection procedures incorporate equal opportunities issues into the criteria.
3. An Equal Opportunities (Gender Equality) Promotion and Monitoring Unit has been set up in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform with a budget of IR£4 million. Two people to date have been recruited and the process of recruiting a further five is currently underway. The Research Function of the Unit will be located in the Equality Authority.
4. The Unit has to date provided:
 - Technical assistance and advice on the methodology of gender proofing;
 - Training on gender proofing and assistance in the design of gender proofing training materials. It has together with WERRC (UCD) carried out six training sessions up to the end of June, 2000 for those working on the NDP. Four of these sessions were held in Dublin, one in Waterford and one in Roscommon. Five of the training sessions were a day long and incorporated an outline of gender mainstreaming and workshops to aid the implementation of this. One training session was addressed by the Taoiseach. Over 275 people have attended the training sessions;
 - Consultative inputs into Plan/Programme/project design and Gender Impact Assessments;
 - Advice on data and resources available on gender equality issues in consultation with organisations/agencies working in the field of gender equality;
 - Funding towards a manual for the mainstreaming of gender equality within the Social Inclusion Sub-Programmes of the Regional O.P's.

The NDP also provides for an Equality and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee. It is intended that this committee will be chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and will be set up and have its first meeting later in 2000.

In addition, funding of approximately IR£1 million is provided for a Unit under the NDP to address outcomes under the Human Resources and Employment OP for particular groups (people with disabilities, members of the Traveller community and refugees).

5. The gender impact assessment guidelines ask for a gender balance on monitoring committees and for nominating bodies to be asked to bear this in mind. Where the female participation on monitoring

committees in that area was less than 50% in the last round of structural funds, the guidelines ask that a target to improve this representation be set. The lead Departments in respect of the various OP's are drawing attention to this requirement.

The NDP requires that bodies representing equal opportunities be represented on each monitoring committee. The Equality Authority and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform will be the representatives.

6. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has contracted for the compilation of a gender disaggregated databank for NDP measures. The databank is being put on the Department's website to facilitate wider access. This web page will also outline information on mainstreaming on equality between women and men within policy making. Advice on data sources available is provided by the Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit.

Appendix 5

Outstanding recommendations from SCSW report

Outstanding recommendations, suggested actions and lead agencies

Recommendation	Paragraph	Issue	Suggested Action	Lead Agency
Constitutional and legal issues	1.2.6	Equality rights amendment to Constitution	Referendum	Government
	1.2.8	Abortion legislation	Recommendation to Government	All-Party Committee on the Constitution
Women and work	3.7.17	Public transport	Integration of a gender perspective into a comprehensive transport strategy	Department of Public Enterprise
Women in situations of disadvantage	5.3.6	Older women	Integrated strategy	National Plan for Women
	5.7.4	Traveller women	Integrated strategy	National Plan for Women
	5.9.3	Women in prostitution	Integrated strategy	National Steering Committee on Violence against Women, National Plan for Women
Rural women	6.2.1	Integrated strategy of rural transport	Devise and implement	Department of Public Enterprise
	6.2.3	Mobile health centres	Ensure access to health services and facilities	Health Boards, Women's Health Council
	6.3.4	Work of farm wives	Devise method of recording and quantifying	Central Statistics Office
	6.3.7	Relief services	Improving women's access to same	Advisory Commission on Women in Agriculture
	6.3.9	Women in agricultural organisations	Develop action plans with targets for achieving proportional balance of women and men in decision making	National Plan for Women
	6.4.1	Helper spouses	As in 6.3.4 and 6.3.6	Advisory Committee on Women in Agriculture

Recommendation	Paragraph	Issue	Suggested Action	Lead Agency
Participation, politics and policies	7.2.5	Senior level of responsibility in social partner organisations	Develop action plans with targets for achieving proportional balance of women and men in decision making	Social partner organisations and National Plan for Women
	7.3.10	Increased participation by women in politics	Develop action plans with targets for achieving proportional balance of women and men in decision making	Political parties and National Plan for Women
	7.3.11	Equal representation by women in Seanad Éireann	Initiate implementation	Government
	7.3.12	Review of number of women representatives in Dail Éireann	Assess ways of increasing women's political representation	National Plan for Women
	7.4.3	Consultation and representation of women	Develop action plans with targets for achieving proportional balance of women and men in decision making	National Plan for Women
Culture and sport	8.2.1	Women's arts policy	Implement	Arts Council and Equality Authority
	8.2.2	Women's arts policy: specific recommendations	Implement	Arts Council and Equality Authority
	8.4.4	Women and the churches	Implement	Church bodies
	8.5.2	NUJ Code of conduct and equal opportunities policy	Develop action plans with targets for achieving proportional balance of women and men in decision making	IRTC, print media and Equality Authority
	8.5.3	Job sharing for women in journalism	Assess current practice	Newspaper industry
	8.5.7	Coverage of women's sport	Implement	Broadcasting agencies, print media, National Plan for Women

Recommendation	Paragraph	Issue	Suggested Action	Lead Agency
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	8.8.5	Sports funding	Implement	Irish Sports Council and Department of Tourism and Sport
Education	9.1.13	Appointment of school principals	Assess feasibility of implementing equality training courses	Department of Education and Science, Equality Authority
	9.1.16	Physical education and sport	Implement	Department of Education and Science and the Irish Sports Council
	9.2.4	Recognised standards for teachers and pre-school assistants	Devise and implement	National childcare strategy
	9.5.6	Report of the Committee on women academics	Assess the extent to which colleges have adopted and implemented recommendations in this report	HEA, NCEA
Training and labour market initiatives	10.3.13	Recommendations on apprenticeships	Implement	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
	10.4.5	Access to training programmes	Removal of live register condition	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
	10.5.3	Re-entry to the labour market	Removal of live register condition	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Recommendation	Paragraph	Issue	Suggested Action	Lead Agency
Health	11.3.5	Integration of carers in community care system	National integrated community care strategy	Department of Health and Children
	11.3.6	Respite care	National integrated community care strategy	Department of Health and Children
	11.3.9	Mental handicap places	National integrated community care strategy	Department of Health and Children
	11.3.10	Community care and the elderly	National integrated community care strategy	Department of Health and Children
	11.4.3	Women on health boards and hospital boards	Develop action plans with targets for achieving proportional balance of women and men in decision making	Health boards and Department of Health and Children
	11.6.1	Treatment of life-threatening conditions during pregnancy	Legislation/refere ndum	Government
	11.6.4	Allowable medical expenses for maternity	Assess feasibility	Department of Finance
	11.10.2	Mental health strategy for women	Implement	Women's Health Council
	11.11.4	Genetic counselling	Assess feasibility of extending this service	Department of Health and Children

Appendix 6

Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide, according to strictly professional considerations including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

Co-ordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

Bilateral and multilateral co-operation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

(Adopted by the UN Statistical Commission (UN Economic and Social Council, 1994, Report of the Special Session of the Statistical Commission, New York, 11-15 April, 1994, E/1994/29)).

Appendix 7

The Statistical Quality Checklist

The checklist consists of questions to be considered by statisticians when describing their data in a report or publication.

OBJECTIVES

- Why was the enquiry carried out?
- What information was being sought?
- What were topics covered and the main data items?
- What national or international standards were used to define the data items?
- What is the target population of the inquiry?
- Does this population have a standard set of criteria that allows its units to be identified and classified?
- If a target population classification exists, is there a readily accessible reference to it? If so, what is that reference?

Study population

- What is the study population for the inquiry?
- How close is the study population to the target population?

Sampling frame

- If the inquiry involved the selection of a sample, what sampling frame was used for sample selection?
- Has this frame changed over time? If so, how?
- Has the frame been updated to take account of births, deaths and other relevant changes to the study population?
- What summary tabulations of key frame variables are provided in the report?

DESIGN

Sample-based enquiries

- What type of sample design was used?
- What were the target and achieved sample sizes?
- If the sample design involved stratification, how were these strata defined?
- What method was used to select the sample?
- For a continuing inquiry, have there been any changes over time in the sample design methodology?

Data Definitions

- Are underlying concepts described and definitions of key items provided?
- Is a copy of the questionnaire or return provided?
- For a continuing inquiry, is there information as to whether or not data item definitions have changed over time?

Data collection methods

- If the data were collected by interview, what was the training or relevant expertise of the interviewers?
- What checks on the quality of the information were made as it was captured?
- What procedures were used to minimise respondent errors in the inquiry?
- Was any pilot testing of the data collection methods carried out?
- Are there any items collected in the inquiry for which the data are suspect?
- What procedures were used to minimise non-response?
- What procedures were used to minimise processing errors?
- Were there systematic controls in place for the detection and verification of 'outliers' and for the correction of introduced errors?
- What procedures were followed to prevent disclosure of confidential information?

ANALYSIS

Estimation

- If the inquiry was based on a sample, what method of sample weighting was used to calculate the estimates contained in the report?
- Were the sample estimates grossed up to known population values?
- In the case of time series, were seasonal adjustment or trend estimation techniques used?

Reliability

- Are estimates of sampling standard errors provided?
- Does the report provide an assessment of the impact of non-sampling errors on the quality of the estimates derived in the inquiry?
- Is a table showing the extent of non-response provided?
- Are there any known differences between respondents and non-respondents?
- Was there item non-response?
- Were imputation methods used to create 'complete' unit records from those with item non-response?

This statistical quality checklist is compiled by the British Office for National Statistics, reproduced in *Sigma* 3:98, p. 16.

Appendix 8

Recommended Gender Equality Indicators

Women and Poverty

- Percentage of female-headed households below the relative income poverty line
- Percentage of risk of poverty for women according to age, educational background, employment situation, geographical area and specific disadvantage
- The female percentage of high risk poverty groups: the elderly and lone parents
- The poverty risk for disadvantaged women not covered by the Living in Ireland Survey: Traveller women, homeless women, women living in crisis accommodation (such as women asylum seekers and refugees), ethnic minority women, women with disabilities and lesbian women.
- Percentage of women below the poverty line disaggregated by age, educational background, employment situation, geographical area and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women in poverty in rural and urban contexts, disaggregated by age, educational attainment, employment situation and specific disadvantage
- Number of dependants (children and older persons) of women living in poverty
- Percentage of women without an independent income (from employment or the State)
- Percentage of women and men in receipt of State income support only
- Percentage of women and men in paid employment and in receipt of income support from the State
- Percentage of women and men on low pay (defined by the OECD as two thirds of median weekly earnings), disaggregated by occupational categories, age, educational attainment, number and ages of dependants
- Percentage of women and men from disadvantaged backgrounds completing upper second level education
- Percentage of women and men from disadvantaged backgrounds leaving school early
- Percentage of women and men in employment, unemployed and engaged in home duties, including caring duties
- Educational attainment of women in full-time caring duties by age
- Percentage of women and men re-entering training, education and employment-related training programmes
- Level of women's and men's educational attainment across the life-cycle
- Distribution of income within households
- Analysis of household headship according to gender and family status
- Percentage of women and men in housing need, with and without dependants.

Education and Training of Women

- Percentage of teenage mothers in full-time education
- Percentage of girls and boys taking higher-level science and technology subjects at second level
- Percentage of women and men students enrolled in science and technology subjects at third level
- Percentage of women and men students achieving first class honours in primary degree, by subject

- Percentage of women and men principals at first and second level schools
- Percentage of women and men applicants for posts of principal in first and second level schools
- Percentage of women and men holding higher level academic posts in universities
- Percentage of women and men applicants for higher level academic posts in universities
- Percentage of women and men apprentices
- Percentage of women and men early school leavers who return to training/adult education
- Percentage of female and male students participating in each of the special programmes for disadvantaged students, e.g., the Stay in School initiative
- Percentage of female and male pupils at primary and post-primary levels receiving remedial education
- Gender breakdown of staff at schools and universities according to qualifications and rank
- Percentage of male and female staff who take career breaks and are subsequently promoted.

Women and Health

- A gender impact assessment of general health services to ascertain how women produce private health-care in the home and consume public health-care
- Percentage of women and men carers of the long-term ill, disabled and elder persons in the home
- Women's and men's unpaid labour as health-care workers as a percentage of GDP
- Percentage of women in care, classified according to age and disability
- National guide to sources of information on reproductive health for women
- Access to family planning by age, class and ethnic/racial origin
- Access to health and reproductive health education by age, class and ethnic/racial origin
- Access to health services by rural women, classified by medical condition
- Modes of transport used by rural women to access health services
- Age at first pregnancy and marital status
- Life expectancy rates of women and men
- Life expectancy rates of Traveller women and men
- Cancer rates among women and men
- Survival rates from cancer for women and men
- Heart disease among women and men by age and class
- Smoking rates among women and men
- Alcoholism rates among women and men
- Rates for depressive illness among women and men
- Eating disorder rates among women by age and class
- Hospital waiting lists by age and health concern
- Percentage of women and men at each level of the health service
- Percentage of women and men in medical training across sectors

- Percentage of women and men in senior medical posts, permanent and non-permanent.

Violence Against Women

- Percentage of male and female victims who report violence
- Percentage of women in poverty, refugee women, elderly women, Traveller women, lesbian women, homeless women, women with disabilities and women from other ethnic backgrounds who report crimes of violence against their person to the Garda Síochána
- Development of a modern Garda database, designed for retrieving aggregate data on violence against women, allowing cases to be tracked through the criminal courts and from the civil courts to the criminal courts
- Percentage of reported cases of male violence against women leading to convictions
- Disaggregation of all statistics on violence against women according to gender and the relationship of accused to victim
- Number of domestic violence orders in existence
- Percentage of female population whose economic or social activities are inhibited by fear of violence
- Percentage of female population who call national help-lines
- Number of refuge spaces available per victim at any given time
- Percentage of refuge spaces per head of population, disaggregated by region
- Annual percentage of victims who leave a violent domestic arrangement
- Number of children in families being subject to male violence
- Percentage of rapes reported leading to conviction
- Percentage of sexual harassment reported and case outcomes
- Percentage of national budget spent on improving services for female victims of male violence.
- Percentage of male perpetrators availing of anti-violence treatment programmes
- Number of hours and percentage of time spent in training by individual Garda on domestic violence, rape and sexual assault
- Additional records (civil applications) on domestic violence incidents to cover the following information for offender and victim – age, sex, relationship between offender and victim, number and ages of children, area of residence, employment status, ethnic origin, previous applications for domestic violence orders; category of violence, i.e. threats of violence, physical violence, sexual violence, criminal damage; length of time violence has been present in relationship; type of physical violence used (if appropriate), i.e. hit, pushed, attempted strangulation; weapon/implement used; injury to victim; whether or not the violence has escalated over time; whether or not offender has abused the children (if relevant); whether or not the children have witnessed the violence (if relevant).
- DVSA (1) Form to contain the above information along with the following – whether or not the accused has a serious drug/alcohol problem; whether perpetrator is harassing/stalking, watching or besetting the victim after she has taken out an order; whether or not there was a power of arrest; reasons for not making an arrest; the outcome of a warrant being issued; referrals to a support agency; times and dates of contact with victim by Garda in follow-up work.

Women and Armed Conflict

- Percentage of Irish aid budget contributed to international aid funds

- Percentage of Irish aid budget allocated to supporting women in conflict situations
- Percentage of funding to cross-border peace projects on the island
- Level of support to women's organisations in Ireland working for peace and development in Ireland and abroad
- Percentage of women and men in decision-making processes in the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Percentage of women and men on Irish delegations to the UN
- Percentage of women and men in permanent representations abroad
- Percentage of women and men from Ireland on international peace-keeping duties
- Percentage of women and men asylum seekers and numbers of accompanying persons
- Percentage of successful applications for asylum according to gender
- Percentage of successful grounds for asylum for women and men.

Women and the Economy

- Percentage of women and men in the labour force as per current statistics
- Percentage of women and men on the live register
- Employment and unemployment rates among women and men by age, educational attainment, number and age of dependants, geographical region and specific disadvantage
- Economic status of women and men by age, educational attainment, number and age of dependants, geographical region and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women and men in home duties
- Percentage of time women and men spend in unpaid work, according to task (care, cleaning, cooking, gardening, voluntary service in community, etc) and disaggregated by age, educational attainment and geographical area
- Estimated value of unpaid work in the home as a percentage of GDP
- Nature of unpaid work done by women and men as a percentage of total unpaid work
- Percentage of women in paid employment with children or elderly dependants
- Wage differentials for women and men based on hourly, weekly and annual earnings across public and private sector employment, economic sectors and occupational categories
- Percentage of women and men on low pay disaggregated by age, educational attainment, geographical area, number and age of dependants and separately presented for agriculture, manufacturing and service industries
- Accurate statistics on the level of female unemployment
- Economic status of women and men correlated with educational levels
- Percentage of children in childcare outside the home, disaggregated by age, number and age of siblings, nature of childcare provision and cost of childcare service
- Percentage of education and training courses accompanied by childcare provision
- Percentage of women and men in part-time, temporary and casual employment by age, number and age of dependants, educational attainment, geographical region, pay levels, economic sectors
- Levels of income and earnings (including wages and other sources of income) for women and men according to age, number and age of dependants, educational attainment, geographical region,

economic sector

- Vertical and horizontal occupational segregation by gender
- Hours of work and levels of pay among women in different occupational categories
- The economic situation of specific groups of women – Traveller women, rural women, older women, women with disabilities, lesbian women and ethnic minority women
- Percentage of women managing directors and other senior positions across economic sectors
- Percentage of women on boards of economic decision-making institutions – banks, employers associations, unions, chambers of commerce
- Percentage of public and private companies with equal opportunities policies promoting gender equality
- Percentage of public and private companies providing care services, leave entitlements and other forms of flexible working
- Percentage of women and men with access to public and private transport, disaggregated by nature of transport and economic situation of women and men
- Percentage of women and men on training, employment and enterprise schemes, disaggregated by nature of scheme and situation of women participants – number and age of dependants, geographical location, length of absence from the labour market, educational attainment and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women and men with pension entitlements and other benefit entitlements, according to employment situation, age, length of time in labour force, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage.

Women in power and decision-making

- Percentage of women and men candidates at all elections
- Percentage of women and men winning seats at all elections
- Percentage of women and men in Government
- Ministerial portfolios held by women and men
- Percentage of women and men chairpersons of parliamentary committees
- Percentage of women and men in local Government
- Percentage of women and men chairpersons of local authorities
- Percentage of women and men holding mayoral office
- Percentage of women and men in party national executives
- Percentage of women and men who vote in elections
- Percentage of women and men on State boards
- Percentage of women and men on local decision-making boards
- Percentage of women and men in the judiciary and in the legal profession
- Percentage of women and men in senior decision-making positions in the public sector
- Percentage of women and men chairpersons and chief executives of voluntary organisations.

Human Rights of Women

- Production and implementation of a National Plan of Action for Women
- Keeping remaining reservations to CEDAW under review

- Introducing legislation to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into Irish law
- Continued action to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women on all grounds covered in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000
- Strengthening of the human rights education component in the CSPE subject at second level and initiating a human rights education programme at primary school level
- Developing a general human rights education programme for the public in association with organisations working in this field
- Extending access to legal recourse for women
- Education for women on their human rights entitlements
- Continued support for non-Governmental organisations and women's groups promoting the human rights of women
- Level of support offered to human rights networks to enable them monitor Government progress on human rights conventions and protocols.

Women and the Media

- Percentage of women and men employed in the media industry, with a more detailed classification of employment activity than is currently available
- Percentage of women and men entering media training courses and colleges
- Percentage of women and men in top executive positions in broadcast and print media
- Percentage of women and men producers, writers and directors in broadcast media
- Percentage of women and men in media regulatory authorities
- Percentage of airtime/space devoted to women and men and classification of the subject matter (sports, news, drama etc)
- Percent of positive and negative portrayals of women in the media
- Percentage of positive and negative portrayals of women in print and broadcast advertising
- Content analysis of specific programmes to highlight role assignment to women and men
- Content analysis of advertising to highlight role assignment to women and men
- Percentage portrayal of women's diversity in programme content.

Women and the Environment

- Percentage of women and men employed in environmental management as professionals and scientists
- Percentage of third level courses leading to qualifications on the environment and the built environment with modules on gender, classified as prerequisite or optional
- Percentage of women and men on each Local Agenda 21 committee
- Percentage of women and men on An Bord Pleanála
- Percentage of women and men on local authority strategic policy committees dealing with planning, housing and transportation issues
- Percentage of women and men on County Development Boards
- Percentage of women and men users of public and private modes of transport, classified by reasons for use, age, income, number of dependants, educational attainment, geographical location and

specific disadvantage

- Percentage of women and men seeking public/social housing, disaggregated by age, number of dependants, current accommodation, homeless, income, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of women and men living alone disaggregated by age, current accommodation, employment status, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of Traveller women and men with access to adequate accommodation, running water and sanitation services
- Percentage of women and men using public transport for work, access to essential services and facilities and social networks, disaggregated by age, employment status, educational attainment, geographical location and specific disadvantage
- Percentage of national funding allocated to women's environmental groups as a proportion of all funding allocated to environmental organisations
- Percentage of national research funding on the environment and sustainable development allocated to proposals that investigate the gendered dimensions of environmental initiatives.

The Girl-Child

- Percentage of girl and boy children in poverty
- Educational attainment of girls and boys aged 15-19 years
- Participation of girls and boys aged 15-19 in training programmes
- Girls and boys unpaid work in the home
- Girl and boy homelessness
- Teenage fertility
- Percentage of girls and boys with access to health care, family planning services
- Percentage of girls and boys taking part in relationships and sexuality education programmes
- Employment patterns among girls and boys – full time and part time – correlated with participation in education
- Percentage girls and boys with access to preventative health care programmes – smoking, drug and alcohol use and other age-appropriate programmes
- Percentage of girls and boys taking part in physical activity and organised sports
- Percentage of girls and boys suffering from eating disorders
- Percentage of girls and boys participating in activities that prepare them for public life and leadership: involvement in school councils, youth organisations, representative activities.

Women and Culture

- Percentage of women and men employed in the culture, arts and heritage labour force
- Percentage of women and men members of clubs and societies in receipt of public funding
- Percentage of women and men holding Arts Council bursaries and awards
- Percentage of women and men from diverse backgrounds involved in artistic and cultural activities as employees and as participants
- Distribution of Arts Council grants disaggregated by gender

- Percentage of women and men receiving funding for cultural activities (exhibitions, films, etc).

Women and Sport

- Percentage of women and men engaging in regular moderate physical exercise
- Percentage of women and men participating in Local Sports Partnerships programmes
- Percentage of women and men athletes admitted to the carding scheme at various standards
- Percentage of funding allocated to women and men through the carding scheme
- Percentage of women and men as members, athletes/players, coaches, officials in NGBs
- Percentage of women and men with disabilities partaking in sports
- Percentage of indoor sports facilities with creche/childminding facilities
- Percentage of indoor sports facilities with full access for disabled persons
- Percentage of female and male users of publicly funded facilities.