A Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues

Forum Report No. 23

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Foreword

The basic purpose of this latest Report from the Forum is to establish a new vision, a set of principles to underpin this and related objectives aimed at achieving a more equal and caring society. It then outlines the economic, political, socio-cultural and affective contexts where policy actions are needed to achieve these objectives. Each of these poses new challenges and demands supporting actions.

The Report establishes initial directions to guide responses to these challenges, together with detailed recommendations under each of the seven actions / dimensions of the proposed Strategic Framework for Action on Equality. Initiatives will be required at a later stage to develop and strengthen the linkages between the objectives and actions. Further consensus-building will be required in due course to shape more detailed programmes under each of the four objectives. This will not be an easy task, given the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved and the wide range of interests that are represented on the Forum.

Action on equality is, of course, not the sole responsibility of Government and must be shared by all the various interest groups and leadership bodies in our society. The Social Partners, across and including all the Four Pillars in the social partnership model, have a special contribution to make, both collectively as well as in their own individual fields of activity. Given the changes that will be needed in our society's culture and attitudes to equality issues, the education system, the media and the churches have also key leadership roles to play in better informing public opinion on these issues.

The Government / State sector has the greatest role of all in leading and mobilising the resources for change and this sector is, therefore, the central focus of this Report. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy, which is at present under review by the Government, has also a key role to play in advancing the equality agenda.

In establishing ambitious goals and further steps towards a Strategic Framework for Action on Equality, the Forum is conscious of the extra demands that this will make on an already stretched and overburdened system within the State sector. It would be unrealistic to expect that these new demands can be met by relying on the goodwill of a few committed key civil servants. Additional investment in staffing and training resources will, therefore, be required for this Report to be implemented effectively. This is justified by the resulting economic and social benefits, not only for the individuals directly concerned but these benefits will also accrue to our society as a whole.

Section I

Introduction and Overview

Introduction and Overview

Rationale for this Report

1.1 Equality has been and continues to be an important focus for the work of the Forum. This has involved the preparation of reports focusing specifically on equality – *'Equality Proofing Issues'* (February 1996), *'The Employment Equality Bill'* (December 1996) and *'The Development of the Equality Provisions in Partnership 2000'* (November 1997).

1.2 Equality has also provided an important dimension to the on-going work of the Forum and in the reports that it prepares on other policy issues. In this way the Forum has sought to contribute to shaping the development of policy, practice and services provision as a basis to building a more equal society in this country.

1.3 The Forum returns to the issue of equality with this present Report. It does so to mark a new stage in our pursuit of equality issues, and with our better understanding of the experience of discrimination and its roots in the complex interactions in the public and private spheres of people's lives. It is also a stage that is characterised by a new breadth to the equality agenda covering the nine grounds of:

- Age;
- Family status;
- Gender;
- Race;
- Disability;
- Religion;
- Marital status;
- Sexual orientation; and
- Membership of the Traveller community.

The development of this nine ground agenda is the first focus of this Report.

1.4 The last few years represent a significant step forward in establishing the basis for creating a more equal society that is characterised by:

- new legislation and actions to promote equality, which are among the most advanced in Europe, and are beginning to shape up as a strategic framework for action on equality; and

- better informed and more open public debate on equality that points to the need to establish new equality objectives, agendas and mechanisms not only for particular groups but that can also be deployed to build a more equal society.

1.5 The development of a strategic framework and the establishment of new equality objectives are the second focus of this Report. This notion of a strategic framework for action on equality dates back to commitments made in the *Partnership 2000*[1] national social partnership agreement. It finds further expression in the present *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*. Given these commitments, the concept of a strategic framework now needs to be given greater clarity of definition, further analysed and to be more fully operationalised in policy terms. Hopefully, this present initiative by the Forum will make a worthwhile contribution in this respect.

1.6 The need for further action on equality strategies arises from the new potential in this context and on how best to realise this potential. It further arises from the persistence of inequalities in our society. Economic progress has brought advances and yet exclusion across the nine grounds persists and in some instances has significantly increased. The absence up to now of a conceptual model to encompass issues of multiple discrimination, situations of hidden inequality and conditions of severe marginalisation was particularly evident at the time of devising the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Inclusion (NAPincl) 2001-2003, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS)[2] and the review process now underway of our Equality Legislation.

Work Process in the Preparation of this Report

1.7 The preparation of this Report involved an extensive and protracted period of work over the following stages:

- *A Plenary Session* of the full Forum membership which was held in Dublin Castle on 18th May 2000; one of the main purposes in holding this Plenary was to set the basis for building on the Forum's previous work, notably in relation to the setting of Equality Objectives and Equality Proofing, as well as to provide an added impetus and focus to advancing action on a range of Equality Issues; the following papers were presented at this Plenary:
  - ✓ *Current Equality Policies and Strategies* by Ms. Sylda Langford, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform;

1. In its Opinion entitled *Partnership 2000: Development of the Equality Provisions* (November, 1997) the Forum highlighted what was required in relation to legislative reforms, administrative procedures, monitoring arrangements and other institutional issues so as to progress and best achieve a strategic framework for equality.
2. The Government's review of the NAPS (2002) has recently been published.

- ✓ *Challenges and Barriers in Moving to a Strategic Framework on Equality Issues* by Mr. Niall Crowley, Chief Executive of the Equality Authority; and
- ✓ *Strategic Framework for Action on Equality Issues* by Professor Chris McCrudden, Lincoln College, Oxford University.

In the afternoon, the Plenary Session divided up into the following 4 Workshop Groups, under the general policy theme of *Mainstreaming Equality*:

- ✓ UK Case Study on Racial Equality in the Workplace (the facilitator was Mr. Kamalijeet Jandu of the British TUC);
- ✓ Gender Issues and the Social Welfare System (the facilitator was Ms Rosheen Callender of SIPTU);
- ✓ Travellers' Access to the Health Services (the facilitator was Ms. Bridget Quirke from Pavee Point); and
- ✓ Access by the Disabled (the facilitator was Mr. Des Burke of the then National Rehabilitation Board).

Each of these Workshop Groups reported back and these were then discussed at Plenary level.

- *Consultancy Study*: on the basis of the discussions at the above Plenary Session and subsequent terms-of-reference drawn up by the Forum's Management Committee, the Equality Studies Centre in UCD (led by Professor Kathleen Lynch and including Dr. Sara Cantillon and Mr. John Baker) were employed to assist the Forum with its further work in this area.

The Consultant's report (entitled *Equality – Frameworks for Change)* focused primarily on providing a conceptual framework as a basis to better understanding and analysing equality issues in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

- *Second Plenary Session*: the Consultant's report was discussed at length at this Session which was held in Dublin Castle on 30th January 2001; this was the only time that the Forum devoted two Plenary Sessions in a row to the same topic, which of itself, testifies to the importance and priority which it attaches to equality issues.
- *Management Committee*: the final version of the Consultant's report, which had been revised to take into account the discussions at the above Plenary Session was submitted to the Forum towards end-March last and this provided a major input to the present Forum's own Report; in addition, all the other documents mentioned above, as well as the discussions at the two

Plenary Sessions were also key inputs for the Ad Hoc Group which prepared the present Report.

This latter Group comprised a balanced representation drawn from the Four Strands of the Forum's membership and was greatly assisted in its work by Mr. Niall Crowley, CEO, of the Equality Authority as well as by Ms. Maria Hegarty (a Consultant in the equality area); following on this, the draft Report submitted by this Group was finalised and formally adopted by the Forum's Management Committee.

Structure of the Report

1.8 The Report is structured as follows:

- ***Section I*** sets out the rationale and purposes of the Report, outlines the main legislative and institutional initiatives in the equality area since the Forum's Report No. 10 was published in 1996, details the work process involved in the preparation of the Report and summarises its main recommendations;
- ***Section II*** provides the economic and social contextual setting for the Report and lists some of the major legislative and institutional initiatives with reference to their impact on targeted groups;
- ***Section III*** defines the main elements of a Strategic Framework, involving a vision for a more equal society, equality objectives and details the seven core dimensions or mechanisms needed to achieving these objectives; and
- ***Section IV*** outlines four contexts, and correlatively, four sets of social relations where inequalities can be generated, namely the economic (the distribution and ownership of resource and inequalities of opportunity), the political (power inequalities and the representation of interests), the socio-cultural (inequalities of respect and recognition) and the affective (inequalities in love, care and other forms of solidarity-related human relations); the inter-relationship between these different forms of inequality is then examined.

The framework presented in this Section provides a conceptual model to analyse and develop, on a more integrated basis, policies to combat inequality and social inclusion.

An outline schema is next presented so as to examine, in greater detail, the interface between the status and the different contexts of inequality for the different groups identified in the Poverty Proofing Guidelines and the Equal Status Act; as a way of demonstrating how this can be used in analysing the position of the different groups, particular attention is given to gender issues; and the Section concludes by identifying the main challenges that need to be

addressed across the four equality contexts in implementing the Strategic Framework.

- ***Section V*** outlines a set of principles which the Forum considers should underpin the Strategic Framework, specifies the core objectives for this Framework and details the Forum's recommendations under each of the following proposed seven dimensions of the Framework:
    - *Legislation*;
    - *Institutions*;
    - *Mainstreaming*;
    - *Targeting*;
    - *Participation and Decision-Making*;
    - *Agenda Setting*; and
    - *Monitoring and Review*.

The Report's Recommendations

1.9 The main policy recommendations that are made in the Report are listed in Box 1 below. Action in the equality area is, of course, required by all groups in our society, not just Government alone, and all the Social Partners should both individually and collectively take a lead role in this respect.

1.10 The abbreviations used in the Box are as follows:

- D/ETE: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment,
- D/F: Department of Finance,
- D/FA: Department of Foreign Affairs,
- D/JELR: Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
- D/SCFA: Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, and
- D/T: Department of the Taoiseach.

Box 1

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT'S MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

(The number references beneath are to the corresponding paragraph numbers in the body of the Report)

Legislation

5.11

- our incorporation of EU Equality Directives should go beyond the minimum standards laid down in these Directives; our equality

legislation should now be expanded to cover new grounds such as socio-economic status, trade union membership, criminal conviction and political opinion [D/JELR];

- legal powers of enforcement and remedies should be developed to allow greater access to the Courts and for the Equality Authority to intervene in cases as a third party [D/JELR];
- all relevant public bodies should be required to develop policy mainstreaming and promote equality as part of their core functions [D/JELR];
- the recommendations by the 1996 Constitution Review Group on including equality, economic and social rights should be acted on [D/JELR]; and
- the implementation and development, in consultation with the Social Partners, of the provisions in the EU (Nice) Charter of Fundamental Rights [D/FA].

Institutions

5.14

- all Departments should include an equality dimension in their Strategy Statements/Business Plans under the SMI [D/T];
- the SMI should be extended in this regard to the Local Authorities, County Development Boards, Health Boards, etc. [D/T];
- an Equality Plan of Action is needed for the different strands of the SMI [D/T]; and
- adequate budgetary resources are needed to further develop equality work plans, including that of an Equality Unit, arising from the new requirements on the Civil Service under the Equal Status Act, as well as provision of equality training modules and development of analytical skills [D/F].

Mainstreaming

5.18

- the Working Group on Equality Proofing, set up under the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* (PPR), should report by end-2003; the Group should take into account, *inter alia*, the learning coming through from the gender mainstreaming under the National Development Plan [D/JELR]; and
- all Government Departments should now put in place the necessary arrangements for equality proofing such as staff training, engage with equality interests, collect data and develop equality indicators.

Targeting

5.21

- the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) and the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Inclusion (NAPincl) should be equality-proofed to ensure that all groups covered by the equality legislation are included [D/SCFA and D/ETE];
- the Department of Finance should equality proof the Annual Budget [D/F];
- this process should entail equality outcomes, including equality indicators, under each of the 4 main equality headings for each of the target groups [D/SCFA and D/ETE];
- lessons from pilot initiatives, such as the Equal Initiative and the Equality for Women Measure, should be taken into account in policy-making and future National Plans [D/JELR, D/SCFA and D/ETE]; and
- annual reports on initiatives such as these should be submitted to the Oireachtas and the Social Partners.

Participating and Decision-Making

5.24

- a strategy is needed on how best to include and resource representation from the nine equality grounds in the social partnership model [D/T]; and
- research is needed into the barriers to participation in representative democracy, in particular those experienced by groups across the nine equality grounds [Houses of the Oireachtas and the Political Parties].

Agenda Setting

5.26

- all relevant Government Departments should set time-scales for implementation of recommendations in Task Force/Working Group reports as well as Action Plans falling within their areas of responsibility; and
- the need for similar task forces in other cases e.g. religious minorities, ethnic minorities or any new groups that will be covered under the amended equality legislation in the future should be examined [D/JELR].

Monitoring and Review

5.28

- baseline data should be collected across all the nine equality grounds [Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Government Departments];

- a module on "*Equality Issues*" should be included in the Quarterly National Household Survey [CSO];
- this year's Population Census, or other periodic surveys, should address gaps such as data on disability, ethnicity, family status and sexual orientation [CSO];
- equality indicators need to be developed and time-lags in making data available also need to be addressed [CSO and Government Departments];
- the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law reform should submit an Annual Report to the Oireachtas on progress made, barriers encountered and further steps needed to advance achievement of the equality objectives set; and
- the establishment of a Consultative Forum to review progress and future policy priorities [D/JELR].

Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion

5.29

- This Committee should play a strategic role in providing support and direction on equality issues.

Conclusions

1.11 In conclusion, the Forum wishes to highlight once again and welcome the important advances and policy changes relating to equality issues that have been introduced by successive Governments here since 1996. These involve significant movement towards greater formal rights of access, opportunity and participation for particular groups across the nine equality grounds.

1.12 In addition to the substantive legislative changes, other policy initiatives have also been significant with the introduction of gender mainstreaming, use of mechanisms to apply in equality proofing and in impact assessments, and on-going monitoring arrangements of equality policies for targeted groups.

1.13 In the economic and social spheres there has been great improvements all round in raising living standards and in providing better social services, although those who already had least have benefited least.

1.14 The inclusion since 1996 of the Community Platform representing a wide range of interests which up to then "*had not been at the negotiating table*", represents a new departure in seeking to achieve greater equality of power in the social partnership system at national level. This has also been replicated at

local levels through, for example, the reforms in the Local Authorities and the new County Development Boards.

1.15 In the affective domain, there have also been reforms with, for example, a number of legislative provisions regulating the care of children, most notably the Child Care Act, 1991, the Parental Leave Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

1.16 The recommendations contained in the present Report would, if acted on, represent further progress in building on the above solid achievements towards creating a more caring and more cohesive society. This process would also underpin and enhance the country's productive potential for the future and thereby benefit all our citizens more equitably.

1.17 Finally, the Forum is satisfied that its recommendations are practical and would add to and further enhance the valuable work done to develop and promote equality policies over the past few years since the publication of our first major Report on this topic in 1996.

Section II

The Experience of Inequality - Setting the Scene

The Experience of Inequality – Setting the Scene

Introduction

2.1 Irish society has undergone major changes over the past decade. More traditional patterns of economic and social relationships are breaking down. Family formation has seen important changes, family size, fertility and marriage rates have gone down, while divorce and marital breakdown have increased and women's participation in the labour force has risen significantly (Fahey and Russell, 2001). There have also been changes towards a more liberal and tolerant society. We now also have greater diversity among our population, as evidenced by inward migration[3] and large numbers seeking asylum here, while emigration has dropped to its lowest level in over a decade.

2.2 However, economic and social inequalities persist despite unprecedented high levels of growth and more focused and sustained policy measures to address disadvantage and social exclusion. The nature of governance and administration is also changing as concerns are raised to ensure that the policy-making, implementation and decision-making systems and processes are operated with greater transparency, accountability and inclusiveness.

Legislative and Institutional Backdrop

2.3 The Employment Equality Act, 1998, came into operation on 18 October 1999[4]. The Act addresses discrimination in relation to employment on nine grounds, namely age, disability, family status, gender, marital status, membership of the Traveller community, race, sexual orientation and religion. The Equal Status Act, 2000 was enacted in April 2000[5]. This latter Act deals with discrimination outside the employment context, including education, provision of goods, services, facilities, accommodation and disposal of property on the same nine grounds as those covered by the Employment Equality Act, 1998.

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3. Apart from Luxembourg, the rate of inward migration here is now the highest in the European Union (*The Social Situation in the European Union*, European Commission/Eurostat, 2001). The number of work permits issued here last year showed an increase of nearly 50 per cent on the previous year.
4. The Act repeals and replaces the Employment Equality Act, 1977 and the Anti –Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974.
5. Equal Status legislation is a commitment in the Government's *Action Programme for the Millennium*, in Partnership 2000 and in the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*. Such legislation is also a commitment in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. The enactment of the equality legislation (comprising the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000) will now enable Ireland to ratify, for example, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

2.4 Other major pieces of legislation included the 1998 Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act and the Human Rights Commission Act, 2000.

2.5 Under the above legislation, a number of Agencies have been established. These include the Equality Authority that has statutory responsibility to work towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities. In addition, an Office of Director of Equality Investigations provides the main focus of legal redress in equality cases arising under both employment equality and equal status legislation. A National Disability Authority has also been set up. Finally, a Human Rights Commission has been established which offers possibilities to develop fundamental rights within this jurisdiction. These institutional developments, complemented by the CSF Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee (under the National Development Plan) and other Monitoring Committees such as those on Gender, Travellers, Racism and Interculturalism now provide a context and mechanisms within which to address inequality and discrimination on a more coherent and integrated basis.

Setting the Scene

2.6 Over the last number of years, our economy has been the best performer, not only in the EU, but also in the wider OECD area. The pace of this change has also been most remarkable. For example, the relatively rapid increase in national income here over the last decade has meant that our living standards now exceed the EU average (at the beginning of the 1990s we were only at 75 per cent of this average). Unemployment reached a record low of 3.7 per cent in the first half of 2001 but, with the economic slow-down, has increased since then and is now forecasted to rise to an average of 4.0 per cent this year (*Budget 2002*). However, in its latest Q*uarterly Economic Commentary* (December, 2001), the ESRI forecasts that unemployment will exceed 5 per cent during this year.

2.7 Despite such a strong economic performance, economic inequalities not only persist but also in some cases have continued to increase further. Taking just one group, women, who have had legal protection against discrimination for nearly the past 25 years, a number of important developments are worth noting. For example, women's participation in the labour force has increased steadily; the most recent figures indicate a participation rate of 50.1 per cent compared to that of 31.2 per cent in 1988 (National Household Survey, CSO, Third Quarter, 2001). While legislative provisions have helped to protect against discrimination and to provide increased and wider work opportunities, other issues have, however, also emerged.

2.8 Our economic boom, up to recently at least, with the associated labour and skills shortages, has encouraged policy changes to remove barriers and

improve the incentives to increase women's labour force participation. These have included tax and social welfare changes, and more flexible work patterns. Dual-income families and single-headed households are becoming increasingly common, while shortages in childcare facilities are continuing. At the same time, advances made by women to senior-level management positions, in both the public and private sectors, have been minimal. However, the gender pay gap persists, although this has been narrowing appreciably (see the data later on in this Section of the Report).

Economic Inequality: Resources

2.9 The benefits of our economic boom in recent years are, however, not being equitably shared. Those who have least have benefited least and a scenario of a wealthier, but more unequal, society is presenting itself (NESF, 2001 and Kirby, 2002). Moreover, there is increasing inequality of outcomes, between social classes, between other marginalised and more powerful groups, between the disabled and the non-disabled and between Travellers and settled people (Nolan and Watson, 1999; Nolan *et al.*, 2000)[6]. New pockets of inequality have also been created, especially among asylum seekers and refugees.

2.10 People with disabilities continue to experience high levels of exclusion, both in terms of labour market participation and also in their experience of poverty. The 3 per cent employment target within the public service has still to be reached, while people with disabilities are one of the five groups of people identified in the NAPS as being at greatest risk of poverty. Burke (2000) highlights that barriers such as segregation, administrative demarcation, lack of awareness among employers, negative attitudes and stereotyping and physical barriers such as lack of accessible transport all combine against people with disabilities getting a job.

2.11 Travellers are a small indigenous minority ethnic group, only about 0.5 per cent of the population, whose experience of health inequality was studied by Barry and Daly in *'Travellers' Health Status Study – Vital Statistics of the Travelling People'*. This study highlighted, for example, that Travellers had more than double the national rate of stillbirths, infant mortality rates are 3 times higher, Traveller men live an average of 10 years less than settled men and women live an average of 12 years less. Pavee Point, a non-governmental organisation committed to human rights for Travellers, highlights that health inequality is "*inextricably linked to issues regarding appropriate accommodation provision for Travellers and further to the social and economic exclusion of this community within contemporary Irish society*" (Quirke and Fay, 2000: 2). There is also an increase in

6. In the European Union, Ireland along with the UK belong to the southern grouping of Member States where the income gap between the richest and the poorest is widest (*The Social Situation in the European Union, op.cit.*).

the number of incidents of racist attacks on minority ethnic and immigrant groups in this country and of exclusion which is documented by those who are Travellers and those who are lesbian or gay[7].

2.12 The complex experience of discrimination and disadvantage is connected to the experience of poverty. This requires a poverty focus within equality strategies and an equality focus within anti-poverty strategies. Without this, a coherent approach to tackling inequality will not be effective (Equality Authority, 2001). Taking the area of gender, for example, we know that women differ on the basis of age, occupation, wealth, ethnicity, marital status, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependants, disability and so forth. We also know that households headed by women are at a higher risk of poverty than those headed by men or couples and that 70 per cent of lone parents fall below the 60 per cent poverty line, the majority of whom are women. Of the households headed by women, lone parents and older women are most at risk. It is the combination of factors arising from inequalities of income and lack of services and gender discrimination that has the most detrimental impact. The most important factor leading to the increased poverty risk for female-headed households is the level of welfare payments (NESF, 2001).

2.13 Women are also more likely to be raising children alone, are more likely to be in part-time work, which is more often low paid and consequently are more likely to be poor. In addition, older women are less likely to have an occupational pension and to be reliant on social welfare. As women earn less than their male counterparts, the links between discrimination and poverty become clearer. Gender discrimination contributes to the disadvantage and poverty experienced by some women. The important task is to distinguish between those factors that compound discrimination and those that are shown to be irrelevant, and devise responses that will achieve equality outcomes accordingly.

2.14 While a person may be better off in absolute terms than they were previously, they may be poorer, however, and more marginalised *relatively*. As Layte *et al* observe: *"Higher real incomes and lower deprivation levels, however welcome, would not then mean that everyone was able to participate fully in society: they would not represent a sustained reduction in poverty"* (Layte, Nolan and Whelan in Nolan *et al*, 2000). Measures of deprivation will need, therefore, to be developed to assess how poverty can more accurately be recorded in a wealthier society.

2.15 In addition, and while there has been a significant reduction from 15 per cent to 8 per cent in the numbers living in *consistent* poverty, the numbers living

7. Reports such as that compiled and published by the Inter-Departmental Working Group on the *Integration of Refugees in Ireland* for the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, (O'Farrell and Watt, 2001) *Responding to Racism in Ireland* and surveys such as the recent one undertaken by Amnesty International.

below *relative* income thresholds – such as half average income – have not fallen (Layte *et al.*, 2001). The richest 20 per cent of the population earn 6 times as much as the poorest 20 per cent[8]. In the wider international community, Ireland's inequality rating ranks 18 in a group of 25 industrialised countries (United Nations, 2001).

2.16 One of the more striking features of our taxation system, when compared to other countries, is the absence here of any property or wealth tax, while the capital gains tax has been halved and the capital acquisitions tax base has been eroded in recent years. These developments when combined leave this country with one of the most lenient capital tax regimes in Europe. Our relative expenditure on social welfare is also one of the lowest[9]. As a result, the level of redistribution effected through our tax / social welfare systems is also very low[10]. A large proportion of the population receives some form of welfare but considerable inequalities remain after these transfers. This is not because our welfare system is any less effective than elsewhere but because of the considerably greater increases in market incomes elsewhere in the economy.

2.17 Although social welfare payments have risen faster than inflation in recent years, this has been slower than other incomes so that the *relative* position of welfare recipients has deteriorated. For example, over the period 1994-1997 inflation rose by about 6 per cent, social welfare rates went up by around 12 per cent but average household incomes increased by over 20 per cent (Nolan *et. al.* 2000a). This has been further accentuated by recent Budgets which, in the overall, have favoured higher rather than the lower earners.

2.18 As was the case for the first time in 2001, *Budget 2002* also provided a poverty-proofing analysis of the proposed income tax measures. This is welcome but should be seen as a first step and falls well short of the poverty-proofing of the *overall* budgetary package that the Forum has been calling for (2000, 2001). In this regard, and using the ESRI SWITCH Model, Professor Tim Callan *et. al.* of the ESRI[11] have calculated that, compared to most Budgets over the past 15 years (which increased the incomes of the top 60 per cent of the population, but with no increases for the bottom 40 per cent), the impact of *Budget 2002* is progressive, with the greatest gains relatively (3 to 4 per cent) going to those on

8. Forfás (*Annual Competitiveness Report*, 2000) found that this is twice the ratio of the best performing country, Finland, and 20 per cent worse than the EU average (2000: 5).
9. A relatively recent classification of Welfare States placed this country in the low-spending social expenditure category, reversing the situation of five years earlier when it was concluded that "*the Irish welfare effort is rather higher than might be expected on the basis of level of income per head*"(Callan and Nolan, 1992). This has meant that, in terms of our "*welfare effort*", we now converge more to the US, rather than to the European social model.
10. Our welfare system, rather than the tax system, carries the primary role of redistributing income. Moreover, the core trade-off in recent years between modest pay rises and tax cuts, coupled with moderate increases in welfare, have, in the overall, tended more towards widening rather narrowing income inequalities.
11. Callan, Tim *et. al.*, *Quarterly Economic Commentary*, ESRI, December 2001.

low incomes, while those at the top gained less than 1 per cent. However, if the current policy of setting welfare increases above inflation but below earnings growth continues, the gap between rich and poor will, of course, continue to widen further.

Interface between Economic and Other Forms of Inequality

2.19 The research available confirms that the various forms of social marginalisation tend to be coterminous. Thus, those who are working-class, lone parents, disabled, Travellers or who are children are more likely to be poor than those who are adult, middle-class, settled in dual-parent households or without an impairment (Nolan *et al*, *op.cit.*). In relation to women, the evidence here is that there has been a significant feminisation of poverty throughout the 1990s (Nolan and Watson, 1999). It also seems likely that the increased economic inequality that has been occurring in recent years has worsened the *relative* position of these groups.

Inequalities of Power: Political Equality

2.20 While representative democracy is the most successful system of political organisation, it does, however, have serious limitations that are well known but not necessarily accepted by everybody. It can, for example, be undermined by the alliances which develop between the political and economic elite, but also in terms of how truly democratic, representative and accountable it is in highly diverse, mobile and complex societies.

2.21 Political constituencies are drawn up on geographical lines, yet many of the major social and political divisions in our society are not regionally based, gender and social class differences being the clearest examples. One of the challenges, therefore, is how the present electoral structures are to take account of the representation of diversity *within* regions. Moreover, it is assumed that through the party system, men can effectively represent women, middle class people can represent the interests of working class people, settled people can represent Travellers, etc.

2.22 Discrimination, arising from identity, has a significant effect on access to rights and services and the policies and systems that affect the distribution of income, wealth and consequently access to services in Ireland. Resources are not distributed equally and the systems associated with dispensing them do not do so equally. It is possible to be a woman and be rich, be a Traveller and be poor etc. and be so because the economic, social, cultural and civil institutions that are charged with dispensing resources and providing services remain unchallenged. The effects of racism and patriarchy, for example, are sporadically and often individually felt and are rarely effectively challenged. It

is the nature of those connections that is important, rather than whether they happen because of intent by some parties, because of an unintended side effect of other actions, because of a lack of information or understanding or because of a causal relationship that has not yet been established.

2.23 Whatever the reasons, the links between identity and the systems that create those conditions remain hidden and the prevailing economic, social, cultural and civil conditions that perpetuate inequalities remain largely unchanged. The Forum believes that the participation of those directly affected exposes the links more readily. Thus, the causal relationship and links between inequalities and people's participation in civil, social, cultural and political institutions are critical.

2.24 A synergy is evolving between representative and participatory democracy, through social partnership at the national and local level and involving a wide range of civil and representative organisations as well as the statutory sector. The institutional framework for social partnership has permeated a range of political and policy-making levels and has been the most significant development in attempting to make democracy more participatory and accountable, and hence more egalitarian. Moreover, developments, such as National Social Partnerships that negotiate national agreements have all been delivered even when Governments and political representatives who had negotiated them are no longer in power.

2.25 In addition, local government reform, having long been discussed, is now being delivered with the establishment of Local Authority Strategic Policy Committees and County Development Boards that involve the Social Partners. Indeed, partnership has not only been encouraged in the area of governance, it has also been promoted in the enterprise arena, both in the private and public sectors. In this respect, another important development has been the recent establishment of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance.

2.26 Achievements in the institutional sense must, of course, not be confused with substantive change in political equality however, even if successes in increasing participation are achieved. Moreover, the extent to which social partnership has empowered those who are marginalised has come to be questioned by some commentators. Some of these suggest, for example, the limitations in terms of democratising decision-making (Hardiman, 1998, 2000); others claim that they mask the extent to which the interests of the powerful are being protected in these agreements (Allen, 1999; Lynham, 1997); while others present a more positive but qualified view of their outcomes (Sabel, 1996; O'Donnell, 1998).

2.27 Such differences in perspectives on the social partnership system reflect not only the different academic disciplines of the commentators but are also related to their expectations and their ideological positions.

2.28 One area of political equality where data are available is the extent to which gender participation outcomes have been reached. At the outset, it needs to be noted that the dramatic increase in women's participation in the labour market is not matched by increased empowerment, as measured by involvement in politics or senior positions in employment. While Ireland now has its second consecutive female President, the representation of women in political life is still quite low, as is the case also in most other EU countries. One area where the lack of progress is most pronounced is that of women on State Boards. In 2001, 28 per cent on State Boards were women. Back in 1993 the then Government stated its intention to increase the gender balance for women to 40 per cent by 1997.

2.29 Wage differentials have narrowed (although the female wage is still only 84.5 per cent that of males) and women's participation in higher education now exceeds that of men (Clancy and Wall, 2000, Fahey *et al.* 2000). Despite comprising half the population, women occupy only 13 per cent of the seats in the Dáil, 18 per cent of Senators and 15 per cent of Councillors in the Local Authorities (Galligan and Wilford, 1998; Galligan 2000). Only 9 per cent of Departmental Secretary-Generals, 3 per cent of County/City Managers, 5 per cent of third-level Professors and 6 per cent of the Defence Forces are women. Over 85 per cent of employers are men, men control most large corporations and over 90 per cent of farm holders are men (O'Connor, 1998). Men are also significantly over-represented in senior positions across different sectors of employment (Ruane and Sutherland, 1999). In contrast, over 70 per cent of part-time workers are women, and women are over-represented among low-paid workers and among those living in poverty (Nolan and Watson, 1999), situations that are also associated with powerlessness.

Inequalities of Respect and Recognition: Valuing Interdependence

2.30 The difficulty in combining paid employment, family responsibilities and participation is one of the major obstacles to the achievement of equality, especially between men and women. Because women undertake most of the responsibility for childcare and work in the home, they frequently find themselves unable to take full advantage of employment opportunities and cannot participate in civil and political decision-making. Hence, women still have barriers to achieving a sustained rise in employment during their life cycle, thereby helping to avoid poverty as well as barriers to participating in the representative and democratic structures of power.

2.31 The inequalities experienced by women, in terms of status, income and power, cannot be fully addressed without recognising that women have been historically assigned the role of carers and that, despite the importance of that role for every single person in society, it remains one of low status. Care work is

generally low status, low power and low paid work. Both in or outside the home, women generally undertake it. The denigration of the role of care-giving could not be sustained if the work was accorded the same status as other productive work, notably by accounting for it in the national accounts and ensuing that it is possible to derive a decent income from it.

2.32 However the challenges do not end there. The fact is all people are dependent on each other in some way and interdependent in many ways, yet dependence is fraught with negative connotations in most modern societies like Ireland. The according of respect for care-giving work is, therefore, essential to re-framing our natural dependence in a positive way. The respect does not arise from equalising it with other productive work alone, but also from promoting respect for the values that inform such work.

2.33 Emotional nurturance is a fundamental prerequisite for human development. Relations of solidarity, care and love give people a basic sense of importance, value and belonging, a sense of being appreciated, cared for and wanted. Being deprived of intimate bonds of love and care inhibits the development of those emotional capabilities required for maintaining relations of companionship and solidarity with others.

2.34 The objective of equality of respect is concerned, therefore, with realising the value of paid and unpaid work, of realising the value of social solidarity and integrating dependence and interdependence into our conceptions of equality. Through setting the objective of equality of respect we can begin to understand not only the deprivation and injustices that can accrue from lack of care and mutual support, but also the inequalities that arise in doing dependency (care) work. Equality of respect is concerned with ascribing value to the interdependence and mutual support aspects of human welfare.

Inequality of Status and Recognition: Accommodating and Celebrating Diversity

2.35 Ensuring that the existence of difference and of diversity is recognised is crucial to both reflecting the true nature of our society and to valuing all members of society equally. Feminists have long highlighted that the experiences of women living in poverty is obscured by the hidden nature of women's poverty, which arises out of, for example, '*gender-blind*' research practices. People with disabilities highlight that because they have typically been segregated from mainstream society, and often from each other, there are serious limitations to their sense of group belonging.

2.36 A lack of collective identity can, some argue, prohibit the effective pursuit of equitable treatment, thereby perpetuating the segregation of the group and reproducing the inequality. The assumption that gays and lesbians simply do

not exist as service users or that same sex couples do not want to make long-standing commitments to each other can typically mean that they are not reflected in '*marketing*' of services or offered the same options as others. Thus, they are discriminated against in access to services and often prohibited from using public services for fear of that discrimination.

2.37 The issue of recognition places identity at the heart of a strategic framework for action on equality. It involves:

- *Affirmation of diversity* where value is given to difference and new assumptions are established to underpin how we organise our society;
- *Negotiation of diversity* where the practical implications of identity and diversity are named and negotiated into policy, practice and provision; and
- *Accommodation of diversity* where structures, systems and institutions change to allow for different norms, values, ways of living and needs. In this way real choices are offered that reflect and have relevance across the nine grounds.

2.38 Recognition is critical. The Forum believes that the current lack of action to affirm diversity and that of institutional support also to accommodate real choice, rather than imposing a sameness of aspiration, is a significant obstacle to creating a more equal society.

Affective Inequalities

2.39 This type of inequality can have a profound and debilitating effect on people's lives, although it is not as visible or as readily measured as resource, power or respect-related inequalities.

2.40 What we are especially concerned with here is the unequal distribution in relationships of love, care and solidarity with others. Such inequalities arise in the affective or emotional domains of human relations. These have sometimes been empirically studied, for example, in the 1972 Comparative Scandinavian Welfare Study which employed indicators of *Having, Loving and Being* (Allardt, 1993).

2.41 There are a number of reasons why it is important to include the love/care/solidarity relations of human life in any core equality framework. One of the most obvious is their central importance to human development (Nussbaum, 1995). A further reason is because, like economic, political and socio-cultural relations, they relate to human existence and activity over which the State exercises both direct and indirect controls, through constitutional and legislative provisions and policy measures. Although they are sometimes

defined as private matters, in policy terms, they are publicly regulated and facilitated and are, therefore, open to policy changes and developments.

Conclusions

2.42 The Forum recommends that four equality objectives, which are directly inter-linked, should be established as the foundation pillars for the Strategic Framework for action on equality. These are:

1. ***Redistribution***, that is, the maximisation of human welfare and the sharing of benefits equally;

2. ***Recognition***, that is the according of visibility and value to diversity;

3. ***Representation,*** that is the maximisation of participation of those experiencing inequality in decision-making; and

4. ***Respect***, that is maximising opportunities to value the interdependence and mutual support aspects of human welfare.

2.43 These objectives bring a new stage to the previous work of the Forum, in its Report No. 10 (1996), on equality objectives. This had focused on objectives of equality of access, opportunity, outcome and condition. Equality of access, opportunity and outcome must be sought within each of the four objectives recommended above for the Strategic Framework. The issue of identity and diversity must also influence the focus on access, opportunity and particularly outcome. This in turn emphasises the need to view outcome in terms of real choices so that homogeneity of aspiration is not imposed on everybody.

Section III

Action on Equality

Action on Equality

The Foundations of Concerted Action on Equality

3.1 Forum Report No. 10 (1996) on *Equality Proofing Issues* was a ground-breaking report as it defined a conceptual framework for setting equality objectives and some of the key elements of a framework for equality were outlined. The character of a framework for equality was secured through the national agreements, *Partnership 2000* and the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*. Both introduced the concept of a strategic framework for action on equality.

3.2 While elements of the framework are evident, further analysis is required, however, at this point to develop the constituent elements, both in terms of agendas and the implications for particular groups, and specifically to mould and move it forward in operational terms into a Strategic Framework for Equality.

Defining the Strategic Framework for Equality

3.3 The Forum believes that it is timely and necessary to now agree a Strategic Framework for Equality. This will be particularly important in the future, because up to now there has been an overlap and some omissions with regard to groups targeted. This Strategic Framework should comprise:

- a vision for a more equal society that incorporates all the nine grounds of the new equality agenda;
- equality objectives derived from a current analysis of equality issues; and
- seven core dimensions through which activity can be delivered to achieve those equality objectives.

The seven core dimensions of the Framework for Action on Equality are:

- ***Legislation***, enacted to protect rights and promote equality but also legislation that is enacted to change social and economic conditions, particularly where they directly alter the rights, circumstances and opportunities of groups experiencing inequality;
- ***Institutions***, primarily those established as part of the infrastructure to protect rights and promote equality by all public bodies that are charged with delivering public policy, and particularly those Government Departments and Agencies that are delivering public services for those experiencing inequality;

- ***Mainstreaming***, involving a range of mechanisms to mobilise all policy, provision and practice in all public bodies behind the goal of equality, but particularly led by Government Departments and Agencies that are responsible for the design and monitoring of public policy;

- ***Targeting,*** necessitating investment of resources to address current and past discrimination experienced by the groups across the nine grounds, to provide for needs and aspirations specific to particular groups and identities, and create the conditions for equality of outcome from mainstream provision;

- ***Participation and Decision-Making,*** entailing the inclusion of organisations articulating the interests of those experiencing inequality in all strands of governance, mobilising the democratically elected representatives behind the achievement of equality objectives and building greater diversity within this representation;

- ***Agenda-Setting***, involving mechanisms to develop specific agendas for particular groups or with regard to emerging issues; and

- ***Monitoring and Review***, entailing data gathering across the nine grounds of the equality agenda, the development of indicators to measure progress towards equality and public reporting and other opportunities to enhance public discourse on equality issues.

3.4 In the following sub-Sections some of the achievements to date are highlighted and a number of gaps are identified so as to demonstrate the importance of progressing a Strategic Framework for Equality. This is not meant to be a comprehensive detailing of all action, but rather an outline of some significant steps that have already been taken in the emergence of a framework for action on equality and to highlight the remaining challenges that need to be addressed.

Legislation

3.5 The enactment of new legislation has been significant[12]. It has established new rights, created the institutional supports for accessing those rights and has enabled an approach to tackling inequalities in an integrated and multi-

12. In its *Programme for a Partnership Government 1993-1997*, the then Government undertook in 1993 to introduce broad ranging employment equality and equal status legislation. This commitment resulted in the passage through the Houses of the Oireachtas of the Employment Equality Bill, 1996 and the Equal Status Bill, 1997 which extended equality legislation to combating discriminatory practices based on nine distinct grounds. Both Bills were found to be unconstitutional, however, following Article 26 referrals to the Supreme Court by the President in the first half of 1997. An examination of the constitutional issues raised in the judgements was undertaken so that revised legislation could be developed. This process culminated in the enactment of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000.

ground way. The legislation, in naming and describing nine discriminatory grounds (generally referred to as the grounds) establishes rights that had not previously existed. Thus, formally, the right to be protected from discrimination has been established, and it has been conferred under each of the following nine grounds:

- Age;
- Family status;
- Gender;
- Race;
- Disability;
- Religion;
- Marital status;
- Sexual orientation; and
- Membership of the Traveller community.

3.6 The scope of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 is comprehensive and covers discrimination in relation to access to employment; conditions of employment, equal pay for work of equal value, promotion, training and work experience. It covers discrimination by employers; discrimination in collective agreements; discriminatory advertising; discrimination by employment agencies; discrimination in vocational training and discrimination by certain vocational bodies. The 1998 Act also defines and prohibits sexual harassment and harassment for the first time in Irish law.

3.7 The Equal Status Act, 2000 also addresses direct and indirect discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment. It further addresses discrimination by association. It covers the same nine grounds as the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and deals with discrimination in the provision of goods, services, facilities, accommodation and education and the operation of registered clubs[13].

3.8 The Acts have been criticised with regard to the exclusion of some grounds and with regard to the limitations of certain provisions. Many have argued that the lack of inclusion of grounds like socio-economic status, political opinion, trade union membership and criminal record for example is regrettable but this viewpoint is not shared by everybody. People with disabilities argue strongly that the Act is limited by the provision that employers are only obliged to accommodate difference if it does not give rise to something other than a "*nominal cost*"[14]. The lack of access to interlocutory relief has also been

13. The Office of the Director of Equality Investigations confirmed recently that, contrary to original expectations, it has received three times the number of cases under the Equal Status Act, as compared to those under the Employment Equality Act.

14. The limitations of this provision have been highlighted by disability organisations.

highlighted, as has the lack of obligation on employers or public bodies to promote equality of opportunity across the grounds. Exemptions have also been a focus for criticism including that the Equal Status Act does not cover actions taken on foot of other legislation.

3.9 New legislative proposals, such as the Disabilities Bill, 2001, seek to provide for improved participation by people with disabilities in our society.

3.10 Moreover, EU proposals under Article 13 will require amendments to Irish legislation. Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty allows the European Commission to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Any proposal of the Commission for legislation in this area must have the unanimous agreement of all Member States before it can take effect. In November 1999, two draft Directives were tabled. The first established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (other than sex which is dealt with separately under Article 141) and the second is concerned with implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin but extending beyond the workplace[15].

3.11 The new EU Race Directive, the Framework Directive and the draft Equal Treatment Directive provide that Member States shall encourage dialogue with appropriate non-governmental organisations and promote dialogue with the Social Partners. The Race and Framework Directives were adopted in 2000 and are due to be implemented next year. However, in order to take account of particular conditions, Member States may, if necessary, have 3 more years (viz an additional 6 years) to implement the Framework Directive. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is at present participating in the deliberations at EU level aimed at finalising the draft Equal Treatment Directives.

3.12 The implementation of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and other international commitments have implications for equality and human rights legislative provisions and for institutional arrangements and structures in both jurisdictions. The Belfast Agreement committed us to an equivalence of rights North and South, a commitment that must inform the design and development of a strategic framework for action on equality. In addition, there are possibilities for joint action, with the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) in both

15. At the same time, the European Commission issued a draft Community Action Programme for the period 2002-2006 to support the efforts of Member States to combat discrimination across the EU.

jurisdictions and the commitment to prepare a Charter of Rights for the Island of Ireland. The Law Reform Commission's recommendations with regard to amending the Constitution in the South to incorporate social and economic rights should also be revisited as part of this process.

Institutions

3.13 New institutions, notably the Equality Authority (the Authority) and the Human Rights Commission have been established. A body similar to the Equality Authority has also been established in Northern Ireland – The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This is a significant development given that it also has a multi-ground agenda.

3.14 The Equality Authority has statutory responsibility to work towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities in employment and vocational training. The Authority provides information to the public in relation to equality legislation and is charged with keeping equality legislation under review. It is empowered to develop draft codes of practice for the approval of the Minister and to conduct equality reviews and prepare action plans to facilitate the development of a proactive equality-conscious approach to equal opportunities in the workplace.

3.15 The Authority, in its *Strategic Plan 2000-2002*, prioritises the commitment to realising positive change for those experiencing discrimination. It aims to do this by promoting and defending the rights established in the legislation and providing leadership in building a commitment to addressing equality issues in practice. This is an important developmental interpretation of the role of the Authority as is the commitment to creating a wider awareness of equality issues, celebrating diversity and mainstreaming equality considerations across all sectors.

3.16 The equality legislation also creates a new and challenging context for employers and service providers and for the first time focuses not only on internal human resources functions but also on external customer service functions. The multi-ground equality legislation also holds new potential in enabling integrated approaches to equality.

3.17 An integrated approach is central to the effective pursuit of a multi-ground equality agenda. It makes possible the achievement of ever more comprehensive equality strategies that embrace all those who experience discrimination and inequality. It requires a coherence of provision in relation to each ground so that common equality strategies can bring forward all grounds simultaneously.

3.18 The experience of the Equality Authority in developing this integrated approach suggests a need to work on three levels:

- *With a Single-Ground Focus*

  This involves activities focusing in on a single ground. The work of the Equality Authority in supporting an Anti-Racist Workplace Week and in exploring the implementation of the 3 per cent target for the employment of people with disabilities in the public sector are examples of this.

  A single-ground focus is necessary where an issue assumes a particular importance over a specific period, or where a ground might remain invisible within an integrated approach or where needs that are specific to one ground must be addressed. The integration element of the single-ground focus derives from the fact that a single institution is involved in the development of each focus.

- *With a Multi-Ground Focus*

  This involves activities that make the connections and focus on all nine equality grounds simultaneously. The work of the Equality Authority in its scheme of workplace equality reviews and action plans and its work on the equality dimension to customer services in the public sector are examples of this. This is the core of the work of the Equality Authority and it is being progressed in a manner that seeks to ensure that the salience of gender is not obscured, that all grounds have a visibility and that no false homogeneity is imposed.

- *With a Cross-Ground Focus*

  This involves activities that reflect the multiple identities most people hold. The work of the Equality Authority in relation to gays, lesbians and bisexuals with disabilities is an example. This work provides the potential to inject new creativity, new solidarity and new commitment into the pursuit of equality. The Equality Authority is further developing this work in partnership with the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Irish Human Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission in Britain.

  The Equality Authority and the Equality Commission jointly commissioned and have now published a report *Charting the Equality Agenda – a Coherent Framework for Equality Strategies North and South* by Katherine Zappone. This report explores the above issues further and argues, *inter alia*, that legislation which covers an extensive range of grounds for discrimination is significant for conceptualising an integrated approach to equality strategies. More

specifically, the report also highlights the possibility and challenges to examining the diverse equality agendas and to designing strategies to tackle the inter-related dimensions of poverty/social need and equality on an integrated basis.

3.19 The Human Rights Commission Act, 2000 made provision for the setting up of the Human Rights Commission. A similar body has been set up in Northern Ireland. Both arose from the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. Among other things, the possibility of an All Ireland Charter of Human Rights will be explored by the Joint Committee of representatives from both Commissions. These are important institutional developments when viewed within the context of a growing demand for rights-based approaches to public policy and the importance of respect for fundamental rights in the achievement of equality objectives.

3.20 The National Disability Authority (NDA) is an independent statutory body reporting to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, whose role is to ensure that appropriate standards of service provision are adopted, and that standards and codes of practice for services are implemented. The NDA is also to assist in the development of a coherent approach to disability policy issues.

3.21 The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) was established in July 1998. The Committee is a partnership of Non-governmental Organisations, State Agencies, Social Partners and Government Departments. The objective of the Committee is to provide an on-going structure to develop programmes and actions aimed at developing an approach to tackle racism and to advise the Government on matters relating to racism and interculturalism.

3.22 The National Council on Ageing and Older People was established to advise the Minister for Health and Children on all aspects of ageing and the welfare of older people. The Council has been responsible for a wide range of research that has sought to assist policy development particularly in relation to health and social gains for older people.

3.23 The above is an impressive institutional array. It is important, of course, for its capacity to be adequate to maintain a focus on equality agendas, to develop our understanding of these agendas and for inserting equality agendas into mainstream policies and services provision. At the same time coherence in this institutional development needs to be maintained so that the integrated approach can develop and also so that all equality grounds have a visibility. Joint ventures and joint planning between these institutions will, therefore, be important in this regard.

3.24 Other institutional arrangements are also significant in this regard. Under the EU Community Support Framework, for example, social inclusion and gender are cross-cutting issues and the creation of the Community Support Framework Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Committee is an important development that has the potential to contribute to establishing the links between these issues, at operational and administrative levels. The programme of work that this Committee will deliver, including the opportunity to focus on specific themes, could prove critical to leading the equality agenda.

3.25 In addition, the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) delivered through the different result areas is of particular importance. The published Strategy Statements, which aim to clarify the policy objectives of Government Departments and the Business Plans which translate these goals into more detailed Work Programmes are important developments. However, some limitations have been highlighted, particularly with regard to assessments of Customer needs and a tendency to list Cross-Departmental issues rather than lay down actions to be taken to redress deficiencies. These are particular challenges in the equality arena, as consultation with the groups experiencing discrimination is crucial to developing effective responses to inequality and many such responses will have Cross-Departmental implications.

3.26 To address these, and within the framework of the SMI, significant work has, however, now been undertaken in the Quality Customer Service (QCS) area, with a particular focus on equality and diversity issues. Informed by the Equal Status Act, a specific principle on equality/diversity is now included in the revised QCS Principles, that were approved by the Government in July 2000. The Customer Action Plans, mentioned above, that are published by Government Departments and Offices are based on this equality/diversity principle. To support this focus, a QCS Working Group, Chaired by the CEO of the Equality Authority, focuses on the nine grounds listed under the equality legislation. This Group has overseen the production of a "*Support Pack on the Equality/Diversity Aspects of QCS for the Civil and Public Service*" and a research report on "*Equality/Diversity and QCS"* as a resource for Government Departments and Offices.

3.27 Another example of an institutional development that is directed at achieving equality outcomes is the Civil Service Equality Unit. This Unit has been established within the Department of Finance and is charged with achieving human resource equality objectives for the Civil Service. Initiatives such as the gender equality policy for the Civil Service that was launched last Autumn by the Taoiseach and the Minister for Finance set out lines of responsibility and provide guidelines for achieving greater gender equality through the setting of strategic objectives, including equality goals or targets, and the development, *inter alia*, of a programme of affirmative action.

Mainstreaming

3.28 Mainstreaming attempts to incorporate equality and non-discrimination into official decision-making processes. As emphasised by Professor Chris McCrudden, in the Policy Paper he presented at the Forum's Plenary Session in May 2000[16], the two crucial features of mainstreaming are impact assessment and participation. This encourages greater transparency in decision-making, since it necessitates defining what the impact of policies is at an earlier stage than is currently the case and, through the participation of those potentially affected, helps to ensure that policy-makers come to better decisions.

3.29 One of the dangers to mainstreaming emphasised by Professor McCrudden, however, is that it may become over-fragmented and not applied consistently across Government Departments according to common standards. A strong political commitment to mainstreaming is, therefore, crucial given the considerable cultural change demanded of Civil Servants in their decision-making procedures.

3.30 The Government has already adopted a strategy of mainstreaming equal opportunities between women and men (gender mainstreaming) in the *National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006*. In accordance with commitments in that Plan, a gender perspective has been incorporated across the six Operational Programmes of Economic and Social Infrastructure, Productive Investment, Employment and Human Resources, Regional (2) and Peace. This represents a new development in national policy-making, whereby equal opportunities between men and women are examined as a central policy concern in NDP spending areas[17]. Langford highlights that "*the strategy is applied to reinforce the effect of existing laws and positive actions in support of equal opportunity for women and is considered to be the most effective way of achieving de facto equality*" (Langford *op.cit.*).

3.31 The strategy provides that project selection criteria must have regard to the equal opportunities objective and statistical outcomes under the Plan will be sex differentiated. Gender balance on Monitoring Committees is also an objective. An Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit has been established within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to support all implementing Departments and delivery agencies to meet the equal opportunity objective in their programmes, measures and initiatives. That Department and the new Unit developed common gender impact

16. *op.cit.*

17. The adoption of the gender-mainstreaming strategy will assist Ireland to meet EU requirements contained in Structural Funds Regulations and in the EU Employment Guidelines. The scope of the strategy adopted by Ireland is wider than that proposed in the EU requirements. The gender-mainstreaming obligation in the NDP extends beyond EU co-funded elements governed by the EU Structural Funds Regulations to the broad scope of NDP expenditure.

assessment guidelines for use across the Plan, which were approved by Government and have been distributed to implementing Departments and agencies.

3.32 The implementation of the equality proofing report prepared by the Partnership 2000 Working Group is proving essential to mainstreaming. Equality Proofing is defined by the Group as involving:

> *"The (re) organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of all policy processes … so the equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making"*[18].

3.33 Equality mainstreaming in policy-making is characterised then by a number of features:

- establishing clear equality objectives as a dimension of all policy objectives;
- assessing the impact of policy decisions on all nine grounds and the contribution of policies to the achievement of equality objectives;
- participation by equality interests in these impact assessments; and
- collection and publication of equality data and the development of equality indicators that allow outcomes to be monitored.

3.34 Operationalising the Learning Phase of Equality Proofing, as proposed by the Partnership 2000 Working Group, is crucial to the design and implementation of a Strategic Framework for Equality. The Equality Proofing Working Group, established subsequently under the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* and convened by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, is vital to this next phase. This has involved work by the Equality Authority in the development of a template for equality proofing the work of the County Development Boards and in supporting an equality focus in the Quality Customer Service initiative under the SMI. It will also involve FÁS and the Department of Education and Science in piloting an equality proofing approach in a selected number of measures for which they are responsible.

3.35 Equality Proofing requires outcomes for groups experiencing inequality and is an integral dimension of the Strategic Framework for Equality, specifically for the role it plays in mainstreaming equality objectives and outcomes into the fabric of decision-making across all spheres of Government. Poverty proofing

18. A Partnership 2000 Working Group comprising representatives of the Social Partners, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, the Equality Authority and the Combat Poverty Agency is responsible for the implementation of the Learning Phase of Equality Proofing.

has been in place now for some time and usefully it also includes a focus on inequalities leading to poverty. This highlights the importance of evolving an integrated proofing system that incorporates a focus on poverty, gender equality and the wider equality agenda. The tools for this approach need to be developed urgently. The work of the Equality Proofing Working Group is, therefore, very important in this regard.

3.36 The implementation of the statutory-based equality duty in Northern Ireland is also worth noting, particularly in the context of the commitment between the equality institutions North and South to cooperate and work closely together to achieve equality outcomes. Public authorities have been given new statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity under the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 through equality schemes. This statutory duty under Section 75 (1) of the Act requires these authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equal opportunities and to have regard also to the desirability of promoting good relations[19].

3.37 Equality schemes must show how the public authority proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 of the Act and are understood to encompass positive action. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) produced a guide on the implementation of these duties for public authorities. The ECNI subsequently produced a practical guide on conducting Equality Impact Assessments that are "*intended to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality at the heart of public policy*".

3.38 Legislation (Schedule 9, paragraph 9) requires public authorities to publish the results of equality impact assessments. This ensures that the considerations and actions as to data and research information, differential policy impacts on groups, mitigating measures, consultation processes and monitoring systems are all matters for public information and are policy mainstreamed.

Targeting

3.39 The targeting of resources on groups experiencing inequality is an important accompaniment to mainstreaming. This is necessary to address current and past discrimination, to provide for the needs and aspirations specific to particular groups and to create the conditions for groups to achieve equality outcomes from mainstream provision.

19. The promotion of equal opportunities is defined as entailing more than the elimination of discrimination for the following groups: a) between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation; b) between men and women generally; c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and d) between persons with dependants and persons without. The obligation to promote good relations refers to persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions and racial groups.

3.40 The *National Development Plan 2000-2006* contains significant commitments to targeting, particularly in relation to women, Travellers, people with disabilities and refugees. The targeting primarily occurs within the Human Resources Operational Programmes or within the Social Inclusion elements of the Regional Operational Programmes. There is a range of positive actions for women in conjunction with the overall gender mainstreaming strategy. These include initiatives to tackle vertical and horizontal sex segregation in the labour market and a research and information campaign focused at women who are available to return to the workforce after a prolonged absence because of family responsibilities.

3.41 Positive action is a feature of the equality legislation and is allowed to assist integration into the workplace on the gender, age (older workers), Travellers and disabilities grounds. It is allowed across the nine equality grounds in relation to the provision of goods, services and facilities to address disadvantage experienced by any of the groups covered by the legislation. Again, the focus on the nine grounds is emerging as of strategic importance. In this case, it provides a basis through which resources and dedicated investment programmes can be provided.

3.42 Two significant policy initiatives with regard to targeting are the *National Employment Action Plan* and the *National Anti-Poverty Strategy*. Both involve the implementation of EU guidelines and consultation processes to agree priorities with the Social Partners. Within both measures, target groups are prioritised and targets for action to assist these groups are set. This imposes a significant new challenge to integrate equality objectives into these targeting processes.

Participation and Decision-Making

3.43 In this context more organisations and consequently more people are becoming involved in all layers of policy and decision-making at both local and national levels. As a consequence, there are more organisations articulating the experience and interests of those experiencing inequality. Alliances are being formed among those with similar interests in order to secure specific outcomes more effectively and more speedily.

3.44 This evolution of governance in recent times, fuelled in part by the desire for a more sustainable development model, has been remarkable with the integration of elements of participative democracy with institutions of representative democracy. As a consequence, the process of policy-making is becoming more inclusive with a wider range of actors now involved in setting the equality agenda.

3.45 The growth of participative democracy and the development of links between it and representative democracy have resulted in the development of many social partner arrangements in policy formulation and implementation. These include bodies such as the Forum, the National Economic and Social Council and the social partnership negotiating and monitoring structures at national level. At local level, these include a wide range of new structures such the Local Authority Strategic Policy Committees and the County Development Boards which now form part of the changes in local governance.

3.46 Partnership is now also a feature at the level of the enterprise. One example of this is the National Framework for the Development of Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise. This was established under the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* comprising IBEC, ICTU and the public sector employers and is convened by the Equality Authority. The purpose of this National Framework is to identify actions to be undertaken by the Social Partners at national level which support the development on a voluntary basis of family-friendly policies in the workplace. The Framework will assist in the development and implementation of equal opportunity policies and practices at enterprise level and will provide encouragement, training, information and support to employers and employees / representatives for this purpose.

3.47 Three key challenges remain however, namely:

- the lack of comprehensive representation, particularly with regard to all the nine equality grounds;
- the need for greater resources to facilitate more effective participation; and
- the increased diversity of Irish society needs to be more fully reflected within the systems and structures of representative democracy.

Agenda Setting

3.48 There have been many examples of work to set down a comprehensive agenda for change related to a specific ground. The Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community involving representatives of Traveller interests, Social Partners and relevant Government Departments is notable in this regard as is the Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities. Also, there are now two Advisory Committees working with the Equality Authority, one on the equality agenda for Older People and the other one on the equality agenda for Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals. Both are working to develop comprehensive equality agendas for their respective groups.

3.49 Equality agendas are also being developed on foot of international commitments. Of particular note here is the draft *National Plan for Women*

(2001-2005), which is designed to deliver on the commitments that were contained in the 1995 UN World Conference in Beijing. The consultation phase of this agenda-setting exercise was launched recently and women's groups are engaging in this process, which will lead to the finalisation of the Plan this Spring. Also of note is the obligation to develop a National Plan to combat Racism on foot of the UN Conference on Racism that was held in South Africa last year.

3.50 Key challenges in relation to agenda setting lie in ensuring that the process happens within all nine grounds and that procedures and processes are put in place to secure the implementation of these negotiated agendas.

Monitoring and Review

3.51 The need to monitor activity, by measuring progress in achieving outcomes and identifying gaps that remain has emerged as an important aspect of any equality framework. Work in recent years has highlighted the inadequacies of our information systems, both in terms of the data that are gathered across the nine grounds and in terms of the presentation of that data. The inclusion of additional new questions within the next Census of Population to cover more comprehensively the nine grounds are, therefore, of particular importance.

3.52 Specific criticisms with regard to the methodologies being gender blind and a lack of dis-aggregation of collected data have been highlighted as contributing to keeping gender invisible. Barry (2000) also highlights deficiencies with the follow up programmes. The presentation of collected information could also be improved to include specific reports on equality issues; and the regular reporting of, for example, gender specific information would greatly inform the processes for monitoring equality actions.

3.53 The challenge of addressing current data deficiencies, namely the lack of adequate information on the nine grounds and the development of equality indicators is a key aspect in the development of a Strategic Framework for action on Equality.

Conclusions

3.54 While valuable work has already been undertaken, and in some instances is on-going, the following are the key headings that need to be further developed and inter-linked into a Strategic Framework for action on Equality:

- Legislation;
- Institutions;

- Mainstreaming;
- Targeting;
- Participation and Decision-Making;
- Agenda Setting; and
- Monitoring and Review.

3.55 The further development of this Framework needs to focus in particular on its capacity to deliver on the equality objectives set out in Section II of this Report.

Section IV

The Four Contexts of Inequality

The Four Contexts of Inequality

Introduction

4.1 Achieving equality requires action in the following four contexts or spheres:

- the ***economic sphere*** is concerned with the production, distribution and exchange of goods and services;
- the ***socio-cultural sphere*** is concerned with the production, transmission and legitimisation of cultural practices and products, including various forms of symbolic representation and communication;
- the ***political sphere*** refers to all activities where power is enacted, including decision-making procedures within all types of organisations and institutions, policy-making procedures, and decision-making within political life generally; and
- the ***affective domain*** connotes those activities involved in developing bonds of solidarity, care and love between human beings; it refers to the socio-emotional relations that give people a sense of value and belonging, of being appreciated, loved and cared for in their personal, community, associational and working lives.

Correspondingly, therefore, in the pursuit of a socially just society, there are four core equality issues that must be addressed[20]. The main elements and the interrelationships are illustrated in Figure 4.1 overleaf.

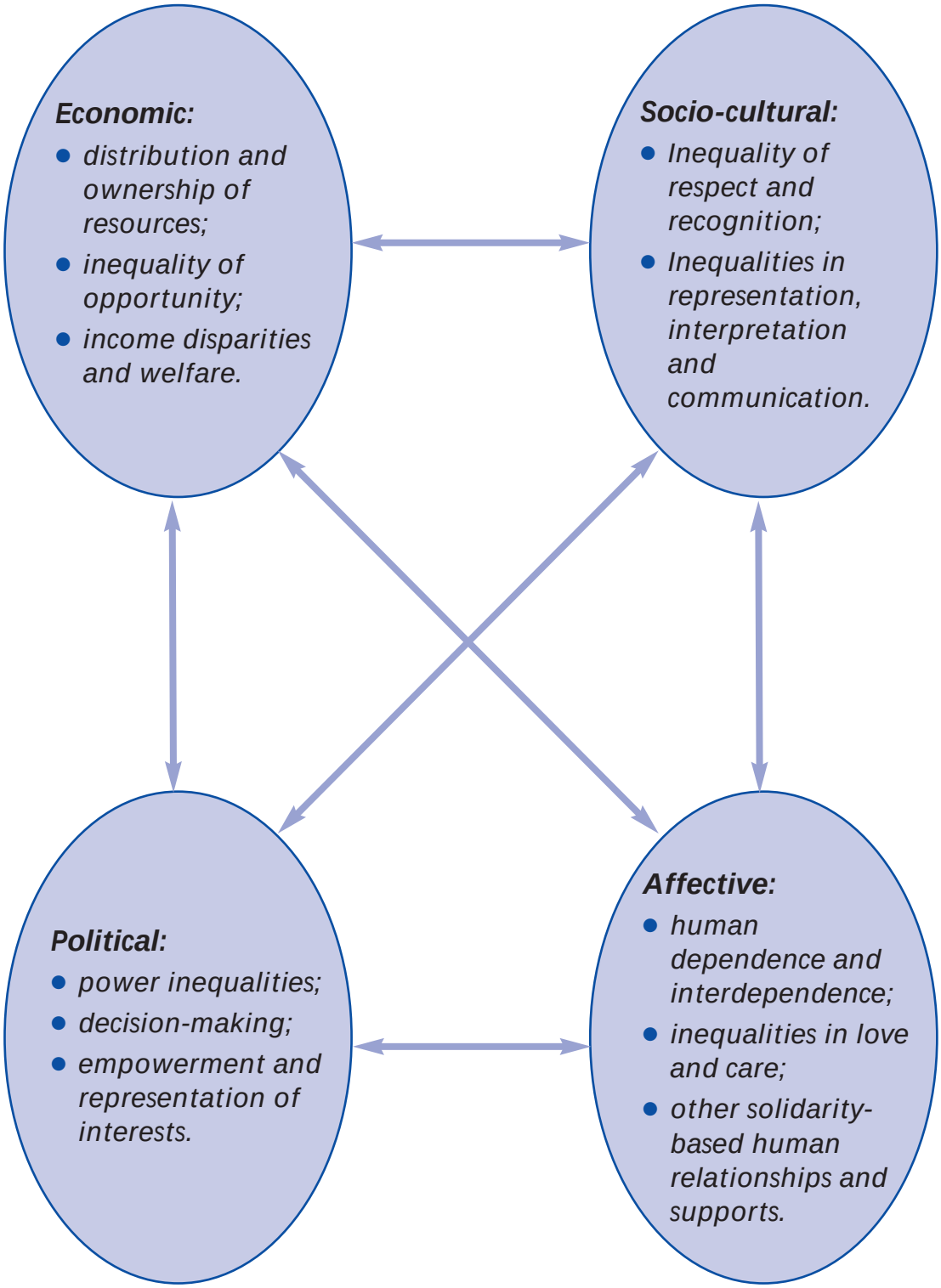
(i) Economic Context: Resource Inequality – Issues of Distribution and Redistribution

4.2 Economic injustice refers primarily to the unequal distribution of material resources and inequality in their ownership and control. In societies in which these inequalities are substantial, an additional aspect of economic injustice is inequality in people's opportunities to improve their economic position. It is manifested in various forms of exploitation and deprivation of a material kind, notably in exclusion from employment and wealth ownership. It is also evident in inadequate welfare or income provision, or exploitative pay.

4.3 Poverty is not an inevitable outcome of economic inequality. It is logically possible to have an economically unequal society in which there is no poverty.

20. For further discussion, see works by Arneson, Baker, Barry, Brighouse, Cohen, Dworkin, Fraser, Miller, Nielsen, Norman, Nussbaum, Phillips, Rawls, Roemer, Walzer, and Young listed in the references in Annex 1.

Figure 4.1 The Four Inequality Contexts: Main Elements and Interrelationships



In practice most societies in which there are substantive wealth and income disparities also tend to have a sizeable number of people living in poverty. One important political and cultural reason for this is that societies which tolerate, or even foster economic inequalities, also tend to be societies where there is limited allegiance to eliminating poverty. The cultural values that promote economic inequality also tend to be those that more readily tolerate poverty. Finally, economic inequality is revealed in systems of exclusion and discrimination that work to reproduce the unequal distribution of resources and to pass privilege from one generation to the next.

4.4 The cost of living in a given country is not set in the abstract it is determined by the cost of participating in the relevant social, political and civil institutions of a given State. In market societies basic services are often dependent in whole or in part on the ability to pay. In an economically unequal society, not only is access to health, education, housing and leisure most accessible to those who have good, secure incomes, even political participation itself is affected. Those with most money are best positioned to buy the time that it takes to be involved in political life (Phillips, 1999: 74-76). This further exacerbates the exclusion and marginalisation of those in poverty, making it difficult for them to influence the very decisions that determine their own economic future.

4.5 One of the factors that makes economic inequality so destructive is the potential it offers those who are economically powerful to easily and visibly convert money (economic capital) into other valued forms of capital. Those with most economic capital are best positioned to acquire cultural capital such as formal education but also work-related learning or social capital, such as valuable social networks a fact that further reinforces their dominance (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Woolcock, 2000). Through gaining the combination of social and cultural capital those with most economic capital are also best positioned to exercise political power (Phillips, 1999).

4.6 Education is one essential cultural process that has a direct impact on economic equality. It is often presented as a neutral exercise, giving credentials to those with greatest competence. However, those with wealth can buy cultural capital in the form of education credentials through extra investment in their children's education both in and out of school, and investment in ancillary goods and services which boost educational achievement including grinds, summer schools, travel, student exchanges, etc.

4.7 Because of the connections between economic and cultural and social capital, the relatively wealthy and privileged in society exercise considerable influence over lifestyles and expectations. They become the arbiters not only of economic value, but also of cultural and social values; their tastes, modes of dress, lifestyles, etc., are presented as the 'ideal type', the symbols, the pinnacle of 'high' culture for others to emulate. The process whereby elite lifestyles are

constructed, "*commodified*" and sold as an image commercially to subordinate groups takes time; it often appeals initially to the social ambitions of the upwardly mobile middle or better off working classes, gradually permeating other classes. Over time, however, it recreates a sense of cultural value, changing the customary behaviour or norms of participation that are socially appropriate for all classes.

4.8 Social exclusion for those who are poor does not arise simply therefore from lack of money, it arises also when those who are economically excluded also become culturally and socially excluded. Their lifestyles and values are negatively defined by those with economic power as being both outside the customary behaviour and subordinate.

4.9 While economic inequality is not synonymous with poverty, it is a powerful factor in its perpetuation in most societies. Firstly, it is evident that the cultural norms and values that allow significant economic inequalities to develop also facilitate the perpetuation of poverty. Secondly, because the economically powerful exercise a strong role, by setting standards, in determining desirable lifestyles and tastes, the tastes and lifestyles of the economically marginal become subordinated.

4.10 The relatively high-cost of participation contributes to excluding the poor from involvement in what would widely be regarded as desirable forms of participation in areas such as leisure, education, housing and health. The inability of those who are economically marginal to participate further exacerbates their poverty and isolation over time, as they lose access to the forms of social and cultural capital that can be acquired when associating as equals with those who are rich in both.

Relationship between Resource Inequalities and Inequalities of Opportunity

4.11 Research to date shows that economic inequality inevitably undermines equality of opportunity by ensuring that the children of privileged parents have greater opportunities than the children of the disadvantaged (see for example Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993). Inequalities of resources operate in the ways mentioned above to provide the privileged with a wide range of mechanisms for passing their advantages to their children. Thus, any thorough equalisation of opportunity requires a more substantial shift towards greater equality in the distribution of resources.

(ii) Socio-Cultural Context: Inequality of Respect and Issues of Recognition

4.12 Socio-cultural injustices are injustices that are rooted in patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. They take the form of cultural domination, symbolic misrepresentation or non-recognition all of which can lead to and result in a lack of respect.

4.13 Promoting socio-cultural equality is concerned fundamentally, therefore, with the status or social ranking systems that exist in a given society. It is about moving beyond tolerance to respect for diversity and the development of a critical inter-culturalism (Baker, 2000). The core concern is with the mutual respect and recognition that is due to all members of society independent of their race, gender, age, marital or family status, sexual orientation, physical or mental capacities, ethnicity, social origin, or political or religious affiliations. Because a person's status is both a function of personal characteristics and group affiliations, equality of recognition relates to both individuals and groups.

4.14 The evolution of social relations in Ireland today is undermining respect and recognition. The increased racial attacks on minority ethnic and immigrant groups, the ongoing religious/ethnic divisions in Northern Ireland, and the exclusions documented by those who are Travellers or who are lesbian or gay, make it clear that addressing status inequalities is a matter of urgent concern. Social relations of recognition and respect are essential for maintaining social unity and civility and for sustaining people's sense of their own worth. Institutionalising respect for differences also matters because unequal respect can exacerbate both economic and political injustices.

4.15 It is not really possible to conceive of systems of recognition without examining the ways in which cultural institutions legitimise certain cultural forms and values while omitting, denigrating or marginalising others. Systems for cultural production, transmission and legitimisation are highly developed in societies like Ireland, through systems of communication, media presentation and education especially.

(iii) Political Context: Inequality of Power, Issues of Empowerment and Parity of Representation

4.16 Political injustice occurs when and wherever power is enacted – for example, in the realms of decision-making, including policy-making, and in power structures generally. It may take the form of political exclusion, political marginalisation, political trivialisation or political misrepresentation (Baker, 1998). Equality of power, the third core egalitarian principle, is about eliminating relations of dominance and subordination in social life. It refers to all types of political equality, including the protection of civil and political rights and the democratisation of decision-making procedures in public and private institutions.

4.17 As Phillips points out, "*when there is a significant under-representation of disadvantaged groups at the point of final decision, this can and does have serious consequences*" (Phillips 1995: 44). Their interests can be easily ignored in the privacy of the decision-making table. It is only when people who are affected by

particular decisions, are consistently present in the process of working out alternatives that they have much chance of challenging dominant discourses and conventions (Phillips 1995: 45). This is a particularly pertinent issue for people who are marginalised as they are almost universally excluded from participation in the policy-making arena.

4.18 Those who are marginalised in our political system are subordinated and highly dependent on services over which they generally exercise little choice or control, be these housing, health, education or welfare. Thus the democratisation of service planning, provision, and delivery seems central to realising equality in their case. It is especially important given the social and geographical distance between the poor and service providers. Democratising service provision will be symbolic rather than substantive, unless those who are marginalised are enabled, by resources, training, information, child care supports, etc., to be effective participants in the democratic process, and unless systems of accountability, appraisal and replacement are built into the representative structures.

4.19 Even if they had substantial resources to participate, organisations representing marginalised groups would continue to face a number of obstacles to real empowerment. One is their exclusion from some of the key decision-making processes, such as the central economic negotiations at national level. Another is the danger of incorporation into a consensus politics that weakens the independence and passion of advocates of change. There is, thirdly, the fact that existing political structures are designed to suit the life-styles and culture of those who currently occupy them, and so need to be restructured to accommodate the needs of those currently excluded.

4.20 These problems suggest that the democratic participation of marginalised groups needs to be strengthened both inside and outside of formal decision-making structures, in a way that is unlikely to be comfortable to existing power holders. Political equality therefore, is about empowering those who are currently marginalised in terms of political influence. International evidence[21] suggests that this is a difficult task, not least because of the capacity of those who are powerful and wealthy to use their social networks in particular to advance their interests by informal means.

4.21 The strengthening of local government, and the widening of access to information and technical expertise are all elements of a more radical democratic programme. But political equality is not simply concerned with local, regional or State governance, important as these may be. It also demands the democratisation of social relations in other institutions where power is

21. See various studies cited in Woolcock and Narayan, 2000.

exercised, including work, education, social welfare, health, the family and the administration of justice.

(iv) Inequality in the Affective Context: Dependence and Interdependence

4.22 When equality is discussed, it is normally conceived in terms of an equitable distribution of benefits and burdens among individuals, be that in terms of economic, political and status considerations. The individuals involved are assumed to be free and equally autonomous agents. However, this view of justice largely ignores the reality of human dependency and interdependency. Because dependence and interdependence are an integral part of the human condition, taking dependence and interdependence seriously is a prerequisite for social justice (Nussbaum, 1995b).

4.23 Human beings are not simply rational actors in social life, they are also affective (emotional actors) engaged with others at various levels of intimacy and care throughout their existence. One of the defining features of being human is being interdependent, and at various times in life, dependent. Dependency is a defining feature of early childhood. It is also a feature of life when one is frail due to old age, severe impairment or illness. There is no person who is not at some time, to a greater or lesser degree, dependent on others. Interdependence and human functioning are essential elements of being human, from the intimate to the most impersonal parts of our lives, we live in varying states of interdependency.

4.24 Dependence, howsoever it arises, requires care and ongoing solidarity-related work to maintain systems of mutual support. To care for others and/or to develop supportive relations requires time and effort that is regulated and distributed in society according to norms and procedures that have profound egalitarian implications (Delphy and Leonard, 1992).

4.25 Affective inequalities exist when a person is deprived of the emotional nurturance they need to develop and/or maintain intimate, trusting and solidarity-based human relations. They may exist when a child is deprived of close, trusting and loving relations, or when an adult is deprived of the intimacy s/he has the capacity to enjoy, or is denied opportunities for friendship, solidarity and belonging in his/her community, associational or work relations[22].

22. The affective sphere of human relations in which inequalities arise has not received much attention and has been treated as a private or personal matter rather than an issue of public policy for those writing on social justice. However, social scientists and feminist scholars have recognised that the relations of love, care and solidarity are fundamental to the reproduction of the human species. Therefore, they should be of central concern to policy makers (Delphy and Leonard, 1992; Finch and Mason, 1990, Leira, 1994; Lynch and McLaughlin, 1995; Ungerson, 1990).

4.26 It is the inequalities in doing the dependency and interdependency work that are of significance here. These arise when the work itself is not recognised for what it is and consequently when it is given neither status nor income. Second, it arises when this important, but unrecognised work is unequally distributed between genders and social classes in particular.

4.27 Promoting equality in the spheres of human solidarity and love involves recognising the complex ways and contexts in which deprivations can occur as well as promoting conditions for a quality of life that includes intimacy, solidarity, trust and care. It also involves recognising the importance of care work in and of itself and offers the potential to shape policy in relation to unpaid caring work and the reconciliation of work and family life.

4.28 The State does intervene in the ordering of affective relations in society. It strongly regulates sexual relations between adults, care relations between children and parents, relations between adult carers and adult dependants, and relations between peers at work. The State also indirectly influences the way in which affective relations are managed by regulating everything from time spent on formal education to hours spent in paid employment, to the time spent at rest when in work. Consequently, to ignore the ways in which inequalities may arise in the affective domain is to ignore a significant sphere of life which is influenced by public policy.

4.29 All human beings have the capacity for intimacy, attachment, and expressive relations with others. We all recognise and feel some sense of affiliation and concern for others; we value the various forms of social engagement that come from such relations; and we define ourselves in terms of them. Solidarity bonds, be they ones of friendship or kinship are frequently what give meaning and purpose to life. Being deprived of the capacity to develop such supportive affective relations, or of the experience of engaging in them when one has the capacity, is therefore a serious human deprivation.

4.30 Ireland is a society which is experiencing rapid social change. There is ample evidence of the increasing tension between different parts of our lives, most especially between the reward-bearing paid work and unpaid love or solidarity work.

4.31 Developing the human capacities to form and maintain solidarity relations takes time, energy and commitment. It is work in the emotional sense, especially in the developmental stages of life, but also in adulthood (Delphy and Leonard, 1992). It takes an intense and prolonged engagement with others to establish and maintain relations of solidarity and bonds of affection, to provide moral support, to maintain friendships, to give people a sense of belonging and to make them feel good. Caring labour and love labour are

demanding on our energies and resources (Lynch, 1989; Lynch and McLoughlin, 1995).

4.32 There is a lack of understanding about dependence and interdependence being an integral part of the human condition. Furthermore, the conflicts between the demands of paid work on the one hand, and the demands of unpaid socio-emotional work are likely to be increasingly acute, especially, *albeit* not exclusively, for women. This is increasingly recognised in public debates about childcare, adult care, family friendly policies, individualisation and financial support for carers who work full-time in the home.

4.33 The debate about the care of dependants also raises awareness of the lack of time for mutual care relations. Most of the tension between care and paid work has to be managed in the home, the kitchen, the living room, and the bedroom. It is thus a privatised one, although it is also of deep public importance. Individual couples, families, friends, work colleagues, etc., have to achieve a balance between these demands. Furthermore, there is no serious recognition of the complexity of the task.

4.34 The tension between care or solidarity-related work (as this can occur with friends, and neighbours outside the family) is not simply a problem of time and resources. Moreover, people's choices and decisions in this area can be supported or discouraged by the facilities and support mechanisms made available for those trying to balance work and family life.

4.35 Much social science analysis presupposes that those who do not act in terms of economic self-interest are effectively irrational. Yet Hays (1996) argues (like Gilligan, 1982; Held, 1995; and Jagger, 1995) that carers operate on different ethical principles and that these are not irrational.

4.36 Tensions over the available time to develop nurturing relations are not confined to families. They also apply in the community, associational and work domains. If we recognise the place of the affective in public life, it poses value choices that are as problematic and contentious as conflicts over economic policies, political policies or cultural policies. The relative invisibility and privacy of affective deprivation makes it a much more difficult issue to address. Moreover, there are no sophisticated measures developed in our own society for assessing levels of belonging, loving, solidarity in persons' lives, although some work has been done in this area in Northern Europe (Allardt, 1987).

4.37 Finally, equality policies and strategies also need to recognise more fully the valuable contribution made by women in generating and developing social capital and voluntary work. The role of social capital and its positive policy contribution in areas such as better health, lower crime, child welfare and

community development have already been highlighted by the Forum (2001) in its Report No. 21.

Interrelationships between the various Forms of Inequality

4.38 Defining resource, recognition, power and affective inequalities as if they were discrete entities is an exercise for the sake of conceptual clarity. In practice, all forms of inequality are inter-related, most especially there are very strong connections and interfaces between economic, political and culturally generated inequalities.

Interface between Economic and Other Inequalities

4.39 Those who depend on poorly paid work, or are on low welfare incomes, for example, lack not only economic capacity *per se*, they also frequently lack the capacity to exercise political power due to lack of time, energy and financial resources. Their inability to exercise political influence may also arise from factors that have contributed to their low income in the first place, such as lack of formal education and credentials, or factors that derive from their economic position, such as the low social status of their occupation. Each of or all of these may be reasons why they are regarded as unsuitable for political office or influence.

4.40 At the other end of the economic spectrum, the wealthy are advantaged politically, not only through their access to privileged social networks in expensive schools, colleges, clubs or societies, but also through their ability to obtain political influence through the funding of political parties and/or political causes. In addition, they are generally holders of valued educational credentials, occupational positions and roles that develop the skills and experiences deemed necessary for political offices of different kinds.

4.41 Economic inequality also impacts on the socio-cultural sphere as it shapes our relationship to property, income or wealth, and it also shapes perceptions of fellow citizens (Phillips, 1999: 83). Thus those who are poor (without choice) do not simply experience economic inequality; they also frequently experience cultural marginalisation or even denigration. Their accents, tastes, lifestyles, music, etc., are often defined as socially inferior, a factor that further exacerbates their social exclusion.

Interface between Socio-cultural and Other Inequalities

4.42 The interface between economic and other inequalities is not one-way however. Low status or lack of recognition in the cultural sphere can have profound implications for economic well-being. Research within Ireland

demonstrates the direct connection between the lack of recognition of differences in the cultural sphere and the negative impact on several social groups economically.

4.43 There are many reports that support the above such as those relating to sexual orientation and poverty (NEXUS/Combat Poverty Agency, 1995); disability and poverty (Combat Poverty Agency, 1994); childhood status and poverty (Nolan, 2000); Traveller status and poverty (Government of Ireland, Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, 1995); and gender and poverty (Daly, 1987; Nolan and Watson, 1999).

4.44 The links are made in different ways: in the case of married women their status has led to their official designation as dependants in the welfare system that, in turn, exacerbates both their poverty and their subordination to men; the low status of Travellers has led to experiences of discrimination in housing, often being forced into types of accommodation that are not of their choosing, and that further reinforce their isolation and marginalisation.

4.45 Groups like Travellers, asylum seekers or people with certain disabilities may also avoid unnecessary social contact with dominant groups to minimise their experience of prejudice and discrimination. In so doing, they are precluded from occupational and social opportunities that may assist them economically. Indeed, their segregation further exacerbates their exclusion as they have fewer opportunities to interact with dominant groups on an equal footing. When there is little social or occupational convergence in people's lives it is difficult to develop equality of respect.

4.46 Socio-cultural marginalisation can also exacerbate political marginalisation. Groups that are ignored, misrepresented, trivialised, or otherwise negatively portrayed in institutions such as the media or education, are generally not granted political credence in other social contexts. Consequently, they may be excluded from consultative arrangements, decision-making processes, or other relevant political engagements.

4.47 The exclusion of the unemployed for many years from certain social partnerships, and of Gay and Lesbian organisations from partnership bodies, are each examples of how lack of cultural recognition can impact negatively on the level of political equality granted to a particular group (Mee and Ronayne, 2001). Another example is the case of those who use Sign Language; they are not recognised as a linguistic minority in Ireland. Consequently it is difficult for them to be granted the political opportunity to influence language policy, a factor that further reinforces their cultural subordination.

Interface between Political and Other Inequalities

4.48 Lack of political equality can, in turn, exacerbate cultural marginalisation. The absence of democratic procedures within decision-making systems in the media and education, for example, will mean that there is no opportunity for those who are marginalised to define what is culturally valued. Only those who have immediate and direct access can influence cultural policy.

4.49 In an Irish context, for example, Travellers have traditionally been an example of a group who have not exercised influence in cultural spheres, such as education. They have not been defined as 'educational partners', consequently, much of the education provided for Traveller children failed to take sufficient account of their culture and lifestyles (Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, 1995). Their lack of power to influence education policy added to their experience of cultural exclusion in education.

4.50 The sense of alienation that ensued precipitated their early departure from education, further reinforcing their marginalised status in society, economically and socially, through lack of education. Political exclusion, working through, and being reinforced by, cultural exclusions led ultimately therefore to particular forms of economic marginalisation through lack of education.

Interface between Affective and Other Inequalities

4.51 Although the ways people receive emotional nurturance in life are both personally and culturally specific, we know from the extensive research undertaken across the psychological and related disciplines that deprivation of love and care, especially in the formative years of life, has a profoundly debilitating effect on human development. Deprivation of this kind is not confined, however, to any given class or status group in society.

4.52 Indeed, research in the Scandinavian countries, where material living standards are one of the highest in the world, indicates that companionship and solidarity are zero-correlated to level of material well-being (Allardt, 1993).

4.53 Certain groups in society are likely to experience a severe lack of emotional nurturance at different times. These include children who are exposed to abuse and experience fragmented systems of care, people who are homeless or people who are in prison. In the latter two cases, we know from extensive research in the field, that it is those who are economically marginalised who are most likely also to become homeless or to go to prison (Focus Point, 1993; O'Mahony, 1997).

4.54 In addition, there are others who may be involuntarily institutionalised for reasons of mental illness or because of a disability who may also lack the

opportunity to develop relations of intimacy and/or of personal or sexual attachment. In general, it is arguable that affective inequality is likely to be a disproportionately greater problem for disabled people (especially the learning disabled) than it is for those who do not have such disabilities (see the 1995 Paper on Disability by the UCD Equality Studies Centre). The inequality may be a function of either the lack of status (and hence of rights) accorded the person, their powerlessness, or the limitations imposed by their impairment *per se*. Or it may arise from a combination of all three factors.

4.55 Older people, especially when they live alone (and there is evidence that this is a growing pattern) and are immobile, are also susceptible to loneliness and isolation and hence may lack a sense of belonging, inclusion and importance. Their difficulties are exacerbated in a society like Ireland where migration is the norm, in which family size has fallen dramatically, and in which improved employment opportunities have resulted in a severe decline in the availability of unpaid (and paid) carers.

4.56 Loneliness and isolation can also be a problem for those who are gay or lesbian in a society that negatively sanctions same-sex relationships. This is especially the case outside large towns and cities where there may be little privacy and where fear of reprisal will force people to live lives of isolation.

Locating the Generative Causes of Inequality across Social Groups

4.57 Although the economic, political and socio-culturally-generated inequalities are closely interrelated, they may be generated for different social groups in different ways. Even within a given group at a particular point in time, they may have different sources.

4.58 The ability to name the causes of inequality in one's own case requires the time, opportunity, and in some cases education as disadvantaged people may have very low expectations and accept injustice. There is a language to be learnt, and those who are poor or marginalised are frequently deprived of that language by lack of education and information about the politics and economics of their own position.

4.59 In addition, their voice is often taken by 'experts', who claim to know their world and speak on their behalf (Lynch and O'Neill, 1994). This is an important consideration when analysing inequality as groups vary considerably both in their level of education, politicisation and awareness of their own inequalities. Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual groups, for example, have, in recent times, become more politicised and educationally well informed about the causes of their own oppression in Irish society. Other groups, however, such as ethnic minorities who are asylum seekers, may be at a very early stage of

education both of themselves and of the public about the inequalities that they experience.

4.60 The Learning Disabled are also a group that does not have a self-advocacy movement behind it to research, name and give support in seeking equality. Thus, even if one engages in empirical research about the causes of inequality, there is a need to be mindful of the differences in resources, abilities and experience of different groups that impact on how groups name their world and describe their experiences.

Understanding the Position of Different Groups

4.61 To clarify the interface for various groups identified in the Poverty Proofing Guidelines and in the Equal Status Act, an outline of the interrelations between their status and different contexts of inequality is presented in Box 2 below.

4.62 While there is a sense in which most groups experience all of the inequalities in different degrees, depending on what sub-category of the group one belongs to, particular contexts of social action are more important in generating inequalities. Selected groups have also been partially disaggregated in the Box (within the limits of the space allowed) for the purpose of illustrating the diversity within groups, many of whom are defined as homogenous in public discourse, but who are highly diverse in practice.

4.63 It needs to be emphasised, of course, that the schema presented in Box 2 is an ideal-type model and would need to be confirmed by more detailed empirical research and investigation. It is, therefore, only presented here for discursive proposes and as a basis to identifying the main causes of the inequalities that are experienced by different social groups. It is readily accepted, of course, that research with different groups, especially research that takes account of the heterogeneity within groups, may arrive at a different understanding of these generative sources of inequality.

Box 2

Key Contexts Generating Inequality for Specific Social Groups in Ireland

STATUS GROUPS

4 Key Contexts of Inequality	*Typical Forms of Inequality*	Travellers	Homeless	Age		Social Class	Disability		Gender		Ethnic/Racial Minorities		Family/ Marital Status		Sexual Orientation
				Older People	Children	Low Income Welfare	Learning Impairment	Physical Impairment	Low Income Welfare Dependent Women	Middle Class Professional	Refugee/ Asylum Seekers	Established Ethnic Arab/ Jews/ Chinese	Lone Parent	Home Maker	
Political	Powerlessness & issues of Representation	*	*	*	**	*	**	*	*	**	**	*	*	*	*
Economic	Lack of adequate Resources	*	**	*	*	**	**	**	**	—	**	—	*	*	*
Socio-Cultural	Lack of Recognition of culture, values, etc.	**	*	*	*	*	**	**	**	*	**	**	**	**	**
Affective	Lack of love, care and solidarity relations	P	**	*	P	P	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	*

Note: the focus in this schema is on the primacy of particular contexts in generating inequality in the first instance. Each context is defined as being of some (one asterisk) or of major (two asterisks) significance for a particular group in generating inequality. A dash — indicates that this context does not create inequality in any significant way for this group. P signifies that it is possible that this context generates inequality but lack of knowledge either about the group as a whole or large sections within the group, makes it difficult to be precise. Given the lack of research in the affective domain, it is not surprising that this is the field about which it is most difficult to hypothesise for any given group.

4.64 The causes of the inequalities experienced by large diverse groups, such as women and people with disabilities, vary greatly within the group itself. We give particular attention to the case of women in our analysis so as to show the way different statuses or identities occupied by women may generate inequality in particular cases.

4.65 What is clear from the Box is that the four contexts that generate inequality vary for different groups. The differences between groups are most visible where economic, political, socio-cultural or affective factors have a very powerful and/or overriding influence in generating the inequality. They are less clear, however, for those groups that are internally diverse, and where inequalities are cumulative across all four areas with no one context predominating.

4.66 So, for example, while the economic context may be the principal one generating inequality among those groups whose most defining status is an economic one (the homeless, low-income workers or those who are welfare dependent such as the long-term unemployed), other groups may experience economic inequality or poverty as a derivative of either socio-cultural and/or political factors.

4.67 To say that economic change is a priority for those who are poor for class reasons is not to underestimate the interface between other inequalities and economic factors. People are not singular in their social identity. They have multivalent identities, at any given time, any given person is a member of a multiplicity of social groups in society, some of which may be oppressed, some of which may not. This is particularly evident among *people with disabilities*. For those whose poverty arises from their inability to access work, arising from a lack of support services for disabled workers, including accessible transport, inclusive work environments, etc., their main concern may be with having substantive (fair) equality of opportunity in employment.

4.68 For people who are severely learning disabled, and who are unlikely to enter formal employment, poverty may be derived primarily from their low status in society generally. Linked to this is the failure of welfare and other State and voluntary institutions to grant them their full educational and welfare entitlements due to the low value placed on them as disabled persons. Their inability to voice their concerns in political terms in turn exacerbates their low status, and reinforces their poverty.

4.69 People who are learning disabled generally rely on others to advocate on their behalf (although there is plenty of evidence from other countries that this need not always be the case) and many live in the care of others, oftentimes in institutions. As a result, they are less likely to have opportunities to form

emotionally nurturing relations, especially in the absence of a caring parent. There is a sense, therefore, where those with extensive learning impairments are likely to experience all four forms of inequality equally severely (Ryan, 1999).

4.70 In our society *children* live in a state of institutionalised dependence on their parents or guardians. The cultural code governing adult-child relations is strongly protectionist and hierarchical[23]. Children lack power and their dependence and subordination is enshrined in law and in the Constitution. They are unable to act autonomously to protect their economic interests (until after age 16) and the State does not guarantee them control of the child care benefit paid to parents on their behalf. When and where children come to experience poverty therefore, it is a derived state, arising in significant part from their economic subordination to adults.

4.71 While it is evident that most children in society are not poor although they are subordinate to parents, the proportion of children (17 per cent in 1997) living in *consistent* poverty is twice that of adults (Nolan and Watson, 1999). The lack of any independent entitlement to an income separate from that of their parents does significantly increase children's chances of poverty. The primary generator of children's poverty or lowly status is, therefore, their relative powerlessness as a political force in society, a powerlessness that is enshrined in law and in the Constitution.

4.72 *Travellers* are very clearly a group for whom the inequality is generated through a prolonged history of socio-cultural exclusion, marginalisation and denigration. While they also experience economic and political marginalisation, the generative cause of poverty among Travellers has not been because of poor pay, exclusion from wealth ownership or welfare dependence. Where welfare dependence has occurred and where it precipitates poverty among Travellers, the generative causes of this have often originated in prior exclusions that were socio-cultural in origin, including the lack of a culturally-sensitive education, exclusion from mainstream schooling and prejudicial attitudes and discrimination in housing and employment.

4.73 While the generative cause of inequality for *gays, lesbians and bisexuals* is generally defined as socio-cultural, arising from the lack of recognition and respect for sexual difference (Fraser, 1997), the implications of this extend far beyond the socio-cultural sphere. For example, those who are gay or lesbian

23. Under the Irish Constitution, and in Irish law, generally children are defined structurally as subordinate to the power of adults, mostly their parents (see Duncan, 1996; Constitution Review Group, 1996). In common with many other countries, children are treated in many respects as the property of their parents in law; the family has inalienable and imprescriptible rights while children are subject to parents within this family context (Duncan, 1996).

feel especially vulnerable in educational, health and other employments that are controlled by religious organisations that regard same sex partnerships as immoral.

4.74 The Employment Equality Act, 1998 is now set to provide them with greater protection. It remains to be seen, however, how loosely Section 37 of the Act will be interpreted in allowing employers to treat people who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual as being a threat to the ethos of the organisation in which they work. Not only does the lack of recognition impact on employment opportunities in particular areas, it also affects such issues as pension entitlements, taxation issues, property rights and adoption (Mee and Ronayne, 2001).

4.75 In addition, it impacts on political participation and on participation in the wider cultural sphere. The denigration of homosexuality generally precipitates the political subordination of a sexuality-specific politics and limits the opportunities available to enjoy emotionally and sexually satisfying relationships.

The Particularities of Different Identities: the case of Women

4.76 Women are a particularly important group to analyse, not only because they comprise half the population, but also because the problems of inequality faced by women are complex, given the high level of diversity among them. Focusing on women highlights the problems of diversity within all groups. Women are not just women; they are also women of a particular social class, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, ability type, etc.

4.77 Given the male-dominated nature of Irish society in its social, economic and legal structures (Connelly, 1993; O'Connor, 1998), and the relative absence of women from formal politics, with some notable exceptions (Galligan and Wilford, 1998), it is not unreasonable to suggest that women as a group are generally subordinate to men in Irish society. This is not to suggest that all women are subordinate to all men at all times[24]. All other things being equal, however, women are unequal to men, be that in literature or in the wider cultural, economic or social spheres (Nolan and Watson, 1999; O'Connor, 1998; Ruane and Sutherland, 1999).

4.78 The general subordination of women does not take away from the fact that certain women are subordinated to other women, working class to middle class, those with impairments or disabilities to those without disabilities, or

24. While middle class professional women experience inequalities arising from their feminine status, in social class terms they are generally neither culturally or economically subordinated, and in fact enjoy the privileges of their class denied to women and men in working class occupations. However, such women can and do experience social inequalities in the political and the cultural areas which are specific to their gender, although these do not generate poverty given professional women's strong occupational status, they do generate economic inequalities between men and women.

those who are lesbian to those who are heterosexual. In other words, gender inequalities are compounded by other inequalities.

4.79 To illustrate how multiple identities create inequalities in a given case, the focus here is on the interface between social-class-related poverty and other inequalities. Given the many and interacting characters of women's social identity, on some occasions it may be a woman's social class that is the principal generator of her poverty, in other cases, it may be her age, marital status or disability. Thus, while economic status and social class are clearly powerful precipitators of poverty for women, as for other groups, women's poverty is not singular in its cause.

4.80 The different reasons why women are poor are important in addressing their poverty. Women who are married and are dependent on a husband's low wages or a low welfare income are clearly not only adversely affected by the poverty emanating from their class position, they are also further impoverished by their lack of an independent source of income arising from their marital status. The poverty they experience, arising from an involuntary state of welfare dependence on their husbands, derives from both the patriarchal assumption that married women are dependants of their husbands, and from the subordinate cultural standing of care work and domestic work which (with some minor exceptions) receive no remuneration.

4.81 Addressing the economic inequalities experienced by women needs to take into account, therefore, the gender specific or family / marital-status specific inequalities that may exacerbate their poverty.

4.82 The poverty experienced by poor *women employed in the low paid*, often temporary, labour market is different from the case cited above. While their poverty is derived directly from their social class status, it is also compounded by both the vertical and horizontal segregation of the labour market along gender lines. As a result of the latter, in particular, working class women are disproportionately socialised, educated and guided into low status stereotypically feminine, service occupations (cleaning, catering, assisting, etc.) with low pay and insecurity. Given the lack of State-funded child care supports, such women may earn little when child care costs are taken into account, or they may be forced back, by lack of care supports, into a spouse-dependent or welfare status, which perpetuates their poverty.

4.83 As most adult disabled people are not in employment, *disabled women* who are poor are undoubtedly most often poor because of their dependence on low levels of disability-related welfare. Yet, the poverty of disabled women may be exacerbated by the unique way that disability interacts with femininity.

4.84 Given the importance of appearance and 'the beauty culture' that underpins conventional definitions of femininity in our society, and the cultural codes that assume women will be carers (O'Connor, 1998), women with physical impairment are especially vulnerable to stereotyping or prejudice. This is the case not only in intimate relationships where their physical impairments make them less desirable as partners but also in employments where appearance is valued.

4.85 For many women with physical disabilities, the sense of denigration and isolation that they experience because of their physical disabilities can be so overwhelming that cultural recognition and celebration of their differences is the crucial equality concern (Lonsdale, 1990). It is a priority beyond political empowerment, that may be the priority of the male-dominated (physical) disability movement, or even economic independence, as they cannot engage effectively in either work or politics without experiencing the affirmation and recognition that has been denied to them because of their physical appearance in the first instance.

4.86 We know that women are more likely to live longer than men in Ireland and that they are more and more likely to live alone as they get older. While living alone does not necessarily imply that one experiences loneliness or isolation, it is a condition that predisposes one to such affective deprivations, especially when it is involuntary and/or when one is cut off by poor transport and communication networks, or incapacitated by mobility impairments.

4.87 Thus for *older women*, the factor that may be most important in generating their unequal position in society may be the absence of systems of supportive relations with family, friends or even neighbours. This problem is generally exacerbated as time advances and the opportunities for emotionally supportive relations decline.

4.88 *In summary*, the above analysis suggests that it may be inadvisable to treat a given group, especially a highly diverse and large group such as women (or indeed older people or disabled people) as homogenous entities when addressing their inequalities. All groups need to be disaggregated in equality terms.

4.89 Moreover, the contexts generating inequality are interrelated with one another. While it is true, for example, that certain injustices are rooted more in political, socio-cultural or economic or affective structures, and that certain groups may be subjected primarily to one form of inequality more than others, because all human beings operate within multiple and overlapping identities, there is no person whose status, and correlatively whose experience of injustice, takes a single form.

4.90 Box 2 above attempts to present the preceding discussion in a schema to enable an indication of the main sources of the inequalities experienced by different social groups. Research with different groups, especially research that takes account of the heterogeneity within groups, would provide a more comprehensive picture as changes over a person's lifetime have an influence.

Conclusions

4.91 The Forum identifies the following equality challenges that need to be addressed as we further evolve our Strategic Framework for action on equality:

The objective of ***economic equality*** challenges us to:

- ensure that economic development takes account of diversity across the nine grounds;
- build equality objectives into economic development strategies; and
- enhance income levels for those experiencing inequalities.

The objective of ***socio-cultural equality*** challenges us to:

- develop a political culture in support of change;
- enhance the potentially progressive contribution of influential institutions, in particular the media;
- take steps to further develop the value base of the education system and direct it towards the achievement of equality; and
- design strategies that will engage people in valuing difference, celebrating diversity and addressing the practical implications of difference.

The objective of ***political equality*** challenges us to:

- make political arenas, including local government, more representative, particularly with regard to involving women and minority groups;
- ensure that the structures of participative democracy include organisations and representatives of those covered under the nine equality grounds;
- build a capacity for further democratisation and participation, particularly in areas such as the provision of public services, including education, health and housing and in the provision of justice; and
- develop initiatives to address the power relations within private spheres such as the family.

The objective of ***affective equality*** challenges us to:

- develop a public focus on care, interdependence and loving relationships that involve contributions from both men and women;
- assess the impact of changing individual and collective behaviour on public and private relationships and consider the values that are informing choices;
- design supports for the development of emotional intelligence and capacities to enrich caring and loving relations;
- develop a knowledge base on the needs of dependants and carers and respond to their needs;
- address issues of isolation across the nine ground equality agenda; and
- devise strategies to enhance the social capital of groups across the nine ground equality agenda.

4.92 While there is greater acceptance nowadays of the need for strengthened and concerted policy, there is still insufficient research and analysis of how particular private and public interests, social classes and occupational groupings operate to defend and promote their interests. This takes place more often than not behind the scenes and is not, therefore, subjected to rigorous public scrutiny. Without such knowledge and research, the efforts of those who are working for greater equality and social justice are all that much less effective.

4.93 Over the last few years there has been an important shift from a predominantly class understanding of inequality to one that embraces recognition and participation also. No longer is it sufficient to simply demand redistribution of income and wealth, without at the same time addressing the other factors that impact on life choices and freedoms. It is now increasingly accepted also that there is an intrinsic connection between identity and social relations and more recently that of participation. In short, the relationship between distribution of resources, the experiences of identity and the links between participation and recognition have emerged as policy issues with which both to frame and support the attainment of equality objectives.

4.94 Finally, what all this means is that more radical policy changes in our society will only happen if egalitarian values and the significant policy implications that this entails are supported more strongly and with greater commitment by the community at large as well as more fully across the political spectrum.

Section V

Delivering the Strategic Framework for Equality

Delivering the Strategic Framework for Equality

The Vision and Principles of the Framework

5.1 The Forum believes that a contemporary vision for a more equal society is one that sees all playing their role in maximising human welfare, achieving equality objectives and generating conditions conducive to celebrating diversity and involvement.

5.2 The challenge is to embed that vision in all economic, social, cultural, civil and political systems, as all have a role to play in creating the conditions and structures that sustain and support human welfare. The Forum believes that commitment to this Strategic Framework for Equality can be better secured if the following principles are used to guide all activity:

- ***Independence***, that is, actions within this Framework reinforce individual and group autonomy and personal freedom;
- ***Choice***, that is, actions within the Framework expand the options people have and the choices they can make;
- ***Valuing*** diversity, that is, actions within the Framework support the expression of identity and diversity, give value to this diversity and accommodate the practical implication of this diversity;
- ***Supports*** all voices, that is, actions within this Framework reinforce and create opportunities for the expression of all voices in decision-making; and
- ***Builds*** social solidarity, that is, actions within this Framework play a role in building relations of respect, openness and solidarity in society.

5.3 The aim of the Framework is to contribute to the achievement of equality objectives of redistribution, recognition and representation in Irish society.

The Core Objectives of the Framework

5.4 As discussed earlier on in Sections I and III of the Report, there are economic, political, socio-cultural and affective inequalities in our society. Thus, the Forum recommends the adoption of redistribution, recognition, representation and respect as the foundational equality objectives for contemporary Ireland.

5.5 In essence, these equality objectives should entail:

- ***Redistribution***, whereby the objective is to maximise human welfare and share benefits equally;
- ***Recognition***, whereby the objective is to maximise visibility, value and accommodate diversity;
- ***Representation***, whereby the objective is to maximise participation in decision-making; and
- ***Respect,*** whereby the objective is to assign merit and reinforce the values that underpin the interdependence and mutual support aspects of human welfare.

5.6 These equality objectives are intrinsically linked, and cumulatively, they can generate the synergy to achieve necessary change. Greater equality in the redistribution of resources, by ensuring that everyone benefits, contributes to the achievement of the recognition of diversity and the sense of value people feel, and which in turn is associated with increased motivation to participate in society.

5.7 The Forum believes that it is only through addressing and dealing with specific objectives relating to redistribution, recognition, representation and respect while at the same time addressing the connections and linkages between these issues that it is possible to take the strategic steps that are necessary to then generate the changes needed to create a more equal society.

The Core Dimensions of the Framework

Legislation

5.8 The enactment of new legislation on equality issues in recent years by the Oireachtas has been significant.

5.9 Notwithstanding this, however, limitations in terms of coverage and remedies within the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 exist and have been highlighted in a number of instances. The incorporation of the EU Directives that were adopted in 2000, under Article 13 of the EU (Amsterdam) Treaty, and the proposed Gender Employment Directive should provide an opportunity to both address these as well as to enhance our equality legislation still further.

5.10 In addition, the application of statutory-based equality proofing procedures in Northern Ireland should, in the Forum's view, also offer an unparalleled opportunity to develop models of good practice.

5.11 In this regard, the Forum recommends that the more immediate policy priorities in this area should be as follows:

- the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should ensure that the incorporation of EU Equality Directives is ambitious in moving beyond the minimum standards set out in these Directives and will be coherent in establishing common provisions across all nine equality grounds;
- our equality legislation should be comprehensive and should be expanded beyond the present nine grounds to include *socio-economic status, trade union membership, criminal conviction and political opinion*[25]*;*
- the powers of enforcement and remedies available under the equality legislation should also be developed; these changes should allow for access to interlocutory relief from the Circuit and High Courts, pending a decision from the Labour Court or the Office of the Director of Equality Investigations (ODEI), for group cases or representative actions, and for the Equality Authority to intervene as a third party in proceedings involving law, policy or practice relating to the promotion of equality or the elimination of discrimination;
- the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should develop a legal base, under our equality legislation, which would require all relevant public bodies to develop equality main-streaming and promote equality as part of their core functions and remit; this should be undertaken along the lines of the statutory duty in this area which has been developed in Northern Ireland; this, in turn, should be designed so as to ensure an equivalence of rights, both in the North and in the South;
- the recommendations of the 1996 Constitutional Review Group with regard to constitutional amendments to incorporate equality and economic and social rights should be implemented[26]; and
- the implementation and development, in consultation with the Social Partners, of the provisions in the Charter of Fundamental Rights that was agreed at the Nice European Council in December 2000.

25. The Forum recently published a report on the *Re-integration of Prisoners* (NESF 2002) that contains a recommendation to include "criminal conviction" as a new ground for non-discrimination in the current review of the Employment Equality Act, 1998.
26. The Forum has already made a similar recommendation in its Report No. 10 *op.cit.*

Institutions

5.12 The Forum recognises the important institutional achievements that have been delivered in recent years. It is important, however, that this position is not only maintained but also that these developments are not undermined by inadequate budgetary resources. Also training courses need to be developed to promote attitudinal changes and encourage officials to be more empathic and better informed of the equality agenda and of the range of supporting policies.

5.13 Considerable efforts and commitments have been made through administrative innovations such as the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) to develop individual institutional capacities to respond more effectively to emerging challenges in society. The Forum particularly welcomes the achievements of all those involved in developing and implementing the SMI and considers that this process should now also be availed of to progress and advance the equality agenda.

5.14 In this regard, the Forum's recommendations are as follows:

- the Department of the Taoiseach should seek to ensure that all Departments include an equality dimension within their Strategy Statements and complement this with a detailed work programme to achieve equality objectives on an on-going basis as part of their Business Plans;
- in addition, the extension of the SMI to include bodies such as Local Authorities, County Development Boards, Health Boards, etc. should be developed so as to generate more substantive equality outcomes at local and regional levels;
- more specifically, the Department of the Taoiseach should prepare an Equality Plan of Action which would, *inter alia*, identify equality objectives and how these are to be achieved within each of the different strands of the SMI;
- the Department of Finance should, given the importance of equality work, provide adequate budgetary and staffing resources to the relevant institutions to ensure that policy commitments and work plans are not only sustained but are also further developed;
- the Department of Finance should ensure that equality training modules will form part of general training courses, including the development of specialist analytical and competency-based skills for officials working on equality policies and programmes; and
- the Department of Finance should develop a dedicated Equality

Unit to deal, *inter alia*, with the Customer Service functions of the Civil Service on foot of its obligations under the Equal Status Act; this could be based on the model of the existing Civil Service Equality Unit which focuses at present only on the human resources functions.

Mainstreaming

5.15 Activities within this dimension of the Strategic Framework ought to be aimed at mobilising all policies, services provision and practices in all public bodies behind the equality goals, and particularly led by central Government Departments and Agencies that are responsible for the design, implementation and monitoring of public policy.

5.16 However, the establishment of new policy structures, as recommended above, will not of themselves be sufficient to address institutional resistances and power dynamics which are the root cause of inequality. In essence, therefore, the central issue is that of embedding equality into decision-making processes so that equality becomes a fundamental component in policy formulation, project selection and services delivery. At the same time, it is also crucial to ensure that the institutional commitment to equality goes beyond the superficial fulfilment of legal obligations.

5.17 The recommendations for improving poverty-proofing processes, which were proposed in a recent NESC Report[27], should also be taken into account in the work currently underway to advance the implementation of equality proofing procedures and processes.

5.18 In this respect, the Forum's recommendations are as follows:

- the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform needs to be provided with the support necessary to complete the Learning Phase of the Equality Proofing Working Group that has been established under the provisions of the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* (*PPF*);
- as part of its deliberations, this Group should be asked to take into account the achievements and experiences in relation to gender mainstreaming under the *National Development Plan*;

27. NESC, National Economic and Social Council (2001) Report No. 106, on a *Review of the Poverty Proofing Process.*

- this Working Group should report by end-2003 on the progress made in relation to operationalising equality proofing and its integration with poverty and gender proofing; and
- each Government Department should put in place arrangements to allocate responsibility for equality proofing, train personnel in the implementation of equality proofing, engage with equality interests and develop appropriate data collection systems and equality indicators across the nine grounds for their Business Plans.

Targeting

5.19 The targeting of resources at groups experiencing inequality is an essential accompaniment to mainstreaming. Policy development processes such as the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (to be incorporated into the EU-wide process by 2003) and the National Employment Action Plan provide major opportunities to enhance targeting and to integrate equality objectives.

5.20 Innovative Programmes such as the Equality for Women Measure and the Equal Initiative can also afford opportunities to develop good practice that can assist policy-makers when setting targets.

5.21 The Forum's recommendations under this heading are as follows:

- the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should each conduct an exercise to equality proof the *National Employment Action Plan* and the *National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Inclusion* to ensure, in particular, that all the groups covered under the equality legislation are included under and will benefit from these Plans;
- the Department of Finance should equality proof the Annual Budget as a basis to ensuring that decisions on the allocation of resources are guided by equality principles;
- this process should entail an appropriate investment of resources to realise equality outcomes in relation to redistribution, recognition, representation and respect for each of the named target groups in these Plans;
- the process should also involve the development of equality indicators;
- the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the

Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs should ensure that the policy and practice learning generated, for each of the nine grounds under initiatives such as the Equal Initiative and the Equality for Women Measure are incorporated into policy-making and service provision strategies; these should also be identified and acted on in future Employment and Social Inclusion National Action Plans; and

- the implementing bodies for these initiatives should report annually to the Oireachtas and the Social Partners and publish the mainstreaming results achieved under each of the initiatives.

Participation and Decision-Making

5.22 The issue of political inequality has been discussed previously in Section IV of the Report.

5.23 Two points are worth repeating here, namely the need:

- ✓ to expand participation to include organisations articulating the interests of those experiencing inequality in all strands of governance; and
- ✓ to mobilise more fully the democratically-elected representatives behind the setting and realisation of equality objectives.

5.24 The Forum's recommendations in this area are as follows:

- a discussion paper, compiled by the Department of the Taoiseach in consultation with the Social Partners, should be prepared outlining a strategy on how best to ensure that the model of social partnership could include representation across the nine grounds of the equality agenda;
- resources should be provided for the specific purpose of developing the participation of groups representing the interests of those experiencing inequality, where such representation would be new to the social partnership arrangements; and
- research should be conducted to identify and address the barriers to participation in representative democracy, in particular for groups experiencing inequality across the nine grounds; this research could take account of actions being undertaken within the three main Political Parties, who are represented in the Oireachtas, under the Equality for Women Measure over the next two years.

Agenda Setting

5.25 The Forum has already highlighted the importance of building effective mechanisms to develop specific agendas for particular groups or with regard to emerging issues. Two models prevail, namely:

- ✓ the group-based model used for example for the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities; and
- ✓ the issue-based model being used to draw together the National Plan to Combat Racism.

5.26 The Forum's recommendations under this heading are as follows:

- all the relevant Government Departments should promote and advance agenda-setting by setting time-scales for the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Travellers, the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities and the forthcoming reports from the Equality Authority on Older People and on Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals;
- in addition, the consultation process on the current draft National Plan for Women (2001-2005) could also incorporate such an approach, as could the National Plan for Combating Racism; and
- finally, in cases where some groups do not have an agreed equality plan, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should examine the need for similar task forces/commissions in cases, for example, of religious minorities, ethnic minorities and any groups that will be covered when the current equality legislation is amended.

Monitoring and Review

5.27 The Forum has highlighted earlier on the current deficiencies with regard to data on equality issues, monitoring systems and policy evaluation and research.

5.28 As a first step to addressing these, the Forum's recommendations are as follows:

- the Central Statistics Office (CSO) should gather baseline data for all nine grounds covered under the equality legislation;
- in particular, a new Social Module should now be included on "*Equality Issues*" in the Quarterly National Household Survey;

- the opportunity to address gaps such as the lack of data on disability, ethnicity, family status and sexual orientation should be addressed either in this year's Census of Population or by periodic surveys, if the latter would achieve better response rates;
- the CSO should also focus on equality issues in its Follow–Up Programme on the Population Census outcomes;
- Government Departments and associated institutions should develop data-gathering systems to address data deficits across the nine equality grounds and also introduce relevant equality indicators, against which performance can be assessed in relation to targets set and barriers to progress identified and addressed; these could usefully be developed in partnership with equality interests;
- the time-lags in making available existing data also need to be addressed;
- the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform should submit an Annual Equality Report to the Oireachtas, with particular reference to identifying progress made and policy outcomes achieved, barriers and challenges to be addressed and identifying further steps that need to be taken to advance the achievement of equality objectives; and
- finally, a National Consultative Forum (representative of Government Departments, the Social Partners and other equality interests and organisations) should be convened annually to review progress and the development of future policy priorities.

Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion

5.29 The Forum recommends that:

- the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion should play a strategic role for the purposes of providing overall political direction, momentum and support in relation to equality policy issues.

Exchequer Implications

5.30 The overall thrust of the Forum's proposals is designed to ensure by and large that existing resources, both staff and non-staff, are more effectively deployed

to achieving equality objectives and implementation of the Strategic Framework as proposed in the Report. These proposals are in-keeping with the commitments in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.

5.31 In essence, what the Forum is now proposing is to have these commitments more fully operationalised and better integrated, both for policy implementation and monitoring purposes.

5.32 Additional public resources, requiring mobilisation across a range of Government Departments and State Agencies, will be required to implement the recommendations made in the Report. However, the expenditure involved would not be significant in overall budgetary terms and, as mentioned above, the recommendations are in-keeping with existing commitments. Moreover, this expenditure would be more than fully justified on economic and social grounds, for the individuals concerned. There would also be additional benefits in terms of building a more cohesive society and this, in turn, would provide a more secure basis to ensuring that economic growth and prosperity were more sustainable into the future.

Annexes

Annex I

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Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Forum

1. The main task of the Forum will be:

   - to monitor and analyse the implementation of specific measures and programmes identified, especially those concerned with the achievement of equality and social inclusion;
   - to do so through consideration of reports prepared by teams comprising the social partners, with appropriate expertise and representatives of relevant Departments and agencies and its own Secretariat;
   - with reports to be published by the Forum with such comments as may be considered appropriate; and
   - to ensure that the teams compiling such reports take account of the experience of implementing bodies and customers/clients, including regional variations in such experience.

2. The Forum may consider such policy issues on its own initiative or at the request of the Government.

3. Membership of the Forum will comprise representatives from the following four strands:

   - the Oireachtas;
   - employer, trade unions and farm organisations;
   - the voluntary and community sector; and
   - central government, local government and independents.

4. The terms of office of members will be for an initial period of at least two years during which alternates may be nominated. Casual vacancies will be filled by the nominating body or the Government as appropriate and members so appointed shall hold office until the expiry of the current term of office of all members. Retiring members will be eligible for re-appointment.

5. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Forum will be appointed by the Government.

6. The Forum will decide on its own internal structures and working arrangements.

7. The Forum will be under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach and funded through a Grant-in-Aid which will be part of the overall Estimate for that Department. The Annual Accounts of the Forum will be submitted for audit to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

8. Finally, the staffing and conditions of employment of the Forum's Secretariat will be subject to the approval of the Department of the Taoiseach.

Membership of the Forum

Independent Chairperson:	Maureen Gaffney
Deputy Chairperson:	Mary Doyle

(i) Oireachtas

Fianna Fáil:	Noel Ahern T.D. Seán Haughey T.D. Beverley Cooper-Flynn T.D. Michael Kitt T.D. Senator Margaret Cox Senator Paschal Mooney
Fine Gael:	Gerry Reynolds T.D. Paul McGrath T.D. Bill Timmins T.D. Senator Mary Jackman Senator Therese Ridge
Labour:	Derek McDowell T.D. Senator Joe Costello
Progressive Democrats:	Senator Jim Gibbons
Independents:	Michael Lowry T.D.

(ii) Employer/Trade Unions/Farm Organisations

(a) *Employer/Business Organisations:*

IBEC:	Jackie Harrison Aileen O'Donoghue
Small Firms Association:	Pat Delaney
Construction Industry Federation:	Mirette Corboy
Chambers of Commerce/Tourist Industry /Exporters Association:	Carmel Mulroy

(b)	*Trade Unions:*	Eamonn Devoy Blair Horan Jerry Shanahan Manus O'Riordan Paula Carey
(c)	*Agricultural/Farming Organisations:*	
	Irish Farmers Association:	Betty Murphy
	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association:	Pat O'Rourke
	Irish Co-Operative Organisation Society:	Seamus O'Donoghue
	Macra na Feirme:	Eileen Doyle
	Irish Country Womens Association:	Breda Raggett

(iii) Community and Voluntary Sector

Womens Organisations:	Gráinne Healy Susan McNaughton Joanna McMinn
Unemployed:	Eric Conroy Joan Condon Mary Murphy
Disadvantaged:	Joe Gallagher Frances Byrne Janice Ransom
Youth:	Valerie Duffy
Older People:	Paddy Donegan
Disability:	John Dolan
Environment:	Jeanne Meldon
Others:	Fr. Seán Healy Audry Deane

(iv) Central Government, Local Government and Independents

(a) *Central Government*

Secretary-General, Department of Finance
Secretary-General, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Secretary-General, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Secretary-General, Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation
Secretary-General, Department of the Environment and Local Government

(b) Local Government

General Council of County Councils:	Councillor Constance Hanniffy Councillor Tom Kelleher Councillor Patsy Treanor
Association of Municipal Authorities:	Councillor Tadhg Curtis
County and City Managers Association:	Donal O'Donoghue

(c) Independents

Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, National University of Ireland, Galway
Ms. Marian Vickers, Northside Partnership
Ms. Helen Johnston, Surg Equipment Ltd.
Mr. Niall Fitzduff, Rural Communities Network
Ms. Noreen Kearney, Trinity College, Dublin

Secretariat

Director:	Seán Ó hÉigeartaigh
Policy Analysts:	David Silke Laurence Bond Sarah Craig
Executive Secretary:	Paula Hennelly

Forum Publications

(i) Forum Reports

Report No.	*Title*	*Date*
1.	*Negotiations on a Successor Agreement to the PESP*	November 1993
2.	*National Development Plan 1994 – 1999*	November 1993
3.	*Commission on Social Welfare – Outstanding Recommendations*	January 1994
4.	*Ending Long-term Unemployment*	June 1994
5.	*Income Maintenance Strategies*	July 1994
6.	*Quality Delivery of Social Services*	February 1995
7.	*Jobs Potential of Services Sector*	January 1996
8.	*First Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum*	June 1995
9.	*Jobs Potential of Work Sharing*	January 1996
10.	*Equality Proofing Issues*	February 1996
11.	*Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment*	January 1997
12.	*Rural Renewal – Combating Social Exclusion*	March 1997
13.	*Unemployment Statistics*	May 1997
14.	*Self-Employment, Enterprise and Social Inclusion*	October 1997
15.	*Second Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum*	November 1997
16.	*A Framework for Partnership – Enriching Strategi– Consensus through Participation*	December 1997
17.	*Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Local Employment Service*	March 2000
18.	*Social and Affordable Housing and Accommodation: Building the Future*	September 2000
19.	*Alleviating Labour Shortages*	November 2000
20.	*Lone Parents*	July 2001
21.	*Third Period Report on the Work of the Forum*	November 2001
22.	*Re-integration of Prisoners*	January 2002
23.	*A Strategic Framework for Equality Issues*	March 2002

(ii) Forum Opinions

Opinion No.	*Title*	*Date*
1.	*Interim Report of the Task Force on Long-term Unemployment*	March 1995
2.	*The National Anti-Poverty Strategy*	January 1996
3.	*Long-term Unemployment Initiatives*	April 1996
4.	*Post PCW Negotiations – A New Deal?*	August 1996
5.	*Employment Equality Bill*	December 1996
6.	*Pensions Policy Issues*	October 1997
7.	*Local Development Issues*	October 1999
8.	*The National Anti-Poverty Strategy*	August 2000

(iii) Forum Opinions under the Monitoring Procedures of Partnership 2000

Opinion No.	*Title*	*Date*
1.	*Development of the Equality Provisions*	November 1997
2.	*Targeted Employment and Training Measures*	November 1997

NOTES

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