



Press Statement

Report highlights potential statistical value of administrative records

The Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach Ms Mary Hanafin T.D., today welcomed the publication of the report ***Developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics to meet Policy Needs***. The report was issued by the National Statistics Board (NSB).

The report identifies a wide-ranging variety of administrative data sources in government departments and agencies that could significantly support the development of social policy in Ireland. The availability of statistics from these sources are an essential component for monitoring progress on achieving agreed social and equality outcomes. The report concludes that a considerable effort, involving the CSO and the relevant government departments, will be required to develop these data sources to international statistical standards.

In its 2001¹ Progress Report, the NSB recognised that Ireland needed a comprehensive long-term strategy to develop the social statistics required for policy formulation. As a first step, a study was undertaken to determine the scope of expected or likely requirements for social and equality statistics and the extent to which these could be met by existing statistical surveys and administrative records. To undertake the study, a ***Steering Group on Social and Equality Statistics*** was established comprising key policy and statistical staff in relevant government departments, CSO staff, and experts with experience in analysing social data in Ireland from a range of perspectives.

The Steering Group report includes twelve recommendations on actions necessary to ensure that Ireland has the statistical information required to plan and monitor progress on social inclusion:

- ◆ A collectively agreed national framework for social and equality statistics which delivers a comprehensive picture of Irish society and its diversity;
(Recommendations 1 and 2)
- ◆ Systematic identification of the data required by the public sector and by society in order to track change, identify issues, plan policy, and monitor progress;
(Recommendations 3 and 4)

More/....

¹ NSB (2002), "Implementation of Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002: Progress Report 2001", Stationery Office, Dublin

Board Members *Professor Frances Ruane (Chairperson), Ms Paula Carey, Mr Frank Cunneen, Mr Ciaran Dolan, Ms Mary Doyle, Ms Helen NicFhlannchadha, Mr Cathal O'Loughlin, Mr Donal Garvey (Director General CSO)*

Secretary *Gerry Brady*

- ◆ Methods which deliver the required statistics at high quality, least cost and with due regard for data protection; and

(Recommendations 5 to 9)

- ◆ Effective use of social statistics to inform policy and assist planning.

(Recommendations 10 to 12)

The Government has agreed to the recommendations of the Steering Group and, in particular, to the development of a national framework for social and equality statistics. In this context, under the guidance of the NSB and the Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion, the CSO has been asked to develop a comprehensive set of indicators that portray how Irish society is evolving and how social and economic policy is influencing these changes. As a first step in getting consensus on which indicators really determine whether national social and economic objectives are being achieved, the CSO will prepare a preliminary *National Progress Indicators Report* by Summer 2003.

For information, contact Gerry Brady (NSB Secretary) at 01 498 4006 or nsb@cso.ie

17 April 2003

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