

*BRENNAN URGES WIDE PARTICIPATION AS CONSULTATION TAKES PLACE
IN MULLINGAR FOR NEXT ACTION PLAN ON POVERTY*

Following the launch of an extensive consultation process earlier this month by the Minister for Social Affairs, Seamus Brennan T.D., the Office for Social Inclusion now invites participants to the next in a series of regional consultation seminars which takes place on 29 November in the Mullingar Park Hotel, in Mullingar. These consultations will assist in the development of Ireland's National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006-2008 (NAP/inclusion).

Ireland, together with the other 24 EU Member States, is due to present its Action Plan to the EU Commission next September, as part of an EU wide drive to honour the pledge made at Lisbon in 2000 "to make a decisive impact on poverty" by 2010. Ireland's action plan, when completed within the next year, will establish the priorities that should be addressed up to 2008.

Minister Brennan encourages a wide range of community and voluntary organisations and groups, both national and local, to attend this seminar. The nationwide public consultation seminars also provide those who are not directly involved with the social partnership process with an opportunity to contribute their views on, and experiences of, the implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Minister Brennan is looking forward to getting a wide range of views on the policy changes and developments necessary to continue the substantial progress being made to tackle poverty and, in particular, to establish the priorities up to 2008. The Minister would like the next

National Action Plan to be focused and to sharply reflect the experience, views and priorities of Irish society in meeting one of our greatest challenges-that of building not just a prosperous, but a fair society, which values and supports all people, and particularly the most vulnerable.

Over the next month regional seminars will be held over a morning in each of the following locations:

Carlow, 22 November at Seven Oaks Hotel

Cork, 23 November at Maryborough House Hotel

Limerick, 24 November at Lynch South Court Hotel

Mullingar, 29 November at Mullingar Park Hotel

Carrick-on-Shannon, 30 November at The Bush Hotel

Donegal, 1 December at The Mill Park Hotel.

Persons wishing to attend these seminars should register with the Office for Social Inclusion at 01 7043596 or e-mail osi@welfare.ie as places will be limited. Further information is available at www.socialinclusion.ie

The regional consultation seminars, organised by the Office for Social Inclusion, will culminate with the Social Inclusion forum in February 2006.

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