

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Claiming Our Future - Dóchas - The Wheel**

# **Civil Society demands new focus on Equality, Governance and Sustainability**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Equality is the most important precondition for eliminating poverty according to a major gathering of activists and leaders of Irish civil society organisations at the RDS on Saturday.

The event – ‘Setting Goals for a Better Ireland in a Just World’ - was organised by Claiming Our Future in association with Dóchas and The Wheel. Through a deliberative process, participants sought to identify five priorities which the Irish Government must advance to guide European and global recovery and future development on a path that is just and sustainable.

A commitment to equality in all fields – economic, social and political – was identified as the top priority.

"Current policies are deepening inequality in Ireland and across the EU and the wider world. We need to guarantee a better future for all by setting priorities and targets relating to the areas most important to people's quality of life. It is clear from people's deliberations at this event that progress in areas such as people's well-being, employment and the environment cannot be made if we do not tackle inequality as one root cause of our current difficulties," said Níall Crowley of Claiming Our Future.

'New models of governance' was the second priority identified at the event. Creating a more just and sustainable world requires people's participation in public decision-making at all levels. Policy decisions and the rules that shape our world must be responsive to people's needs, particularly to those of the poorest in society, to ensure that people can lead the lives they aspire to.

"Participants agreed their shared vision for a flourishing and sustainable society and economy where people are treated with respect, experience equality, and participate in making decisions that affect them. Our job now is to work hard to include these goals in the new vision for global development being developed by the UN, and make sure they are applied in the Irish context," said Ivan Cooper of The Wheel

The third priority identified was the creation of a sustainable model of global development. Participants identified the mounting environmental crisis and high levels of consumption by developed countries as an area of urgent concern.

"We currently use the equivalent of one-and-a-half planets to produce the resources we consume and the waste we produce. Sustainability requires that we achieve an ecological footprint smaller than or equal to one planet. It is unjust that poor people in developing countries are paying the price for our own lifestyles in developed countries and it is time we create a new model for development that puts that right, said Hans Zomer of Dóchas.

Saturday's event took place in the context of the Irish EU Presidency and the global process to agree a successor to the Millennium Development Goals, whose deadline comes in 2015. Explaining the next steps towards the creation of a 'post-2015' global development framework, Zomer explained:

"This is a unique moment for Ireland and the world. The Irish EU Presidency means that Ireland can influence the EU's negotiation stance on the successor to the Millennium Development Goals, and this in turn can influence the final outcome to be agreed by the UN."

"As part of the UN's process towards this, civil society consultations have taken place in nearly every developing country to ask what are the priorities of people in those countries. Saturday's event was Ireland's contribution to this important global discussion."

"We hope that the voices expressed at today's event will be listened to along with other voices from around the world and reflected in this new global framework for development," concluded Zomer.

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### **Media enquiries**

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### **Notes for editors**

- More information on the Irish EU presidency's role in influencing the new global framework for development can be found at [www.worldwewant.ie](http://www.worldwewant.ie)
- Further information on the event organisers can be found at [www.claimingourfuture.ie](http://www.claimingourfuture.ie), [www.thewheel.ie](http://www.thewheel.ie) and [www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie).