



Sinn Féin

Assembly Election Manifesto 2007

DELIVERING FOR
IRELAND'S FUTURE

Saoirse, Ceart agus Síocháin

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A Message from **Gerry Adams**

This manifesto is Sinn Féin's contract with the electorate. It is our Programme for Government. This election will decide if a functioning government is to be established. A vote for Sinn Féin is a vote for political progress. A vote for Sinn Féin is your best guarantee that the future will be based on equality. A vote for Sinn Féin is the best guarantee that the DUP will be moved to take up its place in the power sharing institutions.

The peace process has transformed Irish society. Problems that only a decade ago seemed intractable are now being addressed one by one. In the post-Good Friday Agreement period, increased all-Ireland cooperation is creating huge opportunities for everyone. Sinn Féin has driven the peace process. As the only all-Ireland party, we continue to drive the agenda for positive change.

If the DUP refuse to accept the outcome of this election then Sinn Féin is committed to ensuring that the agenda for positive change continues. That is what Irish Republicanism is about.

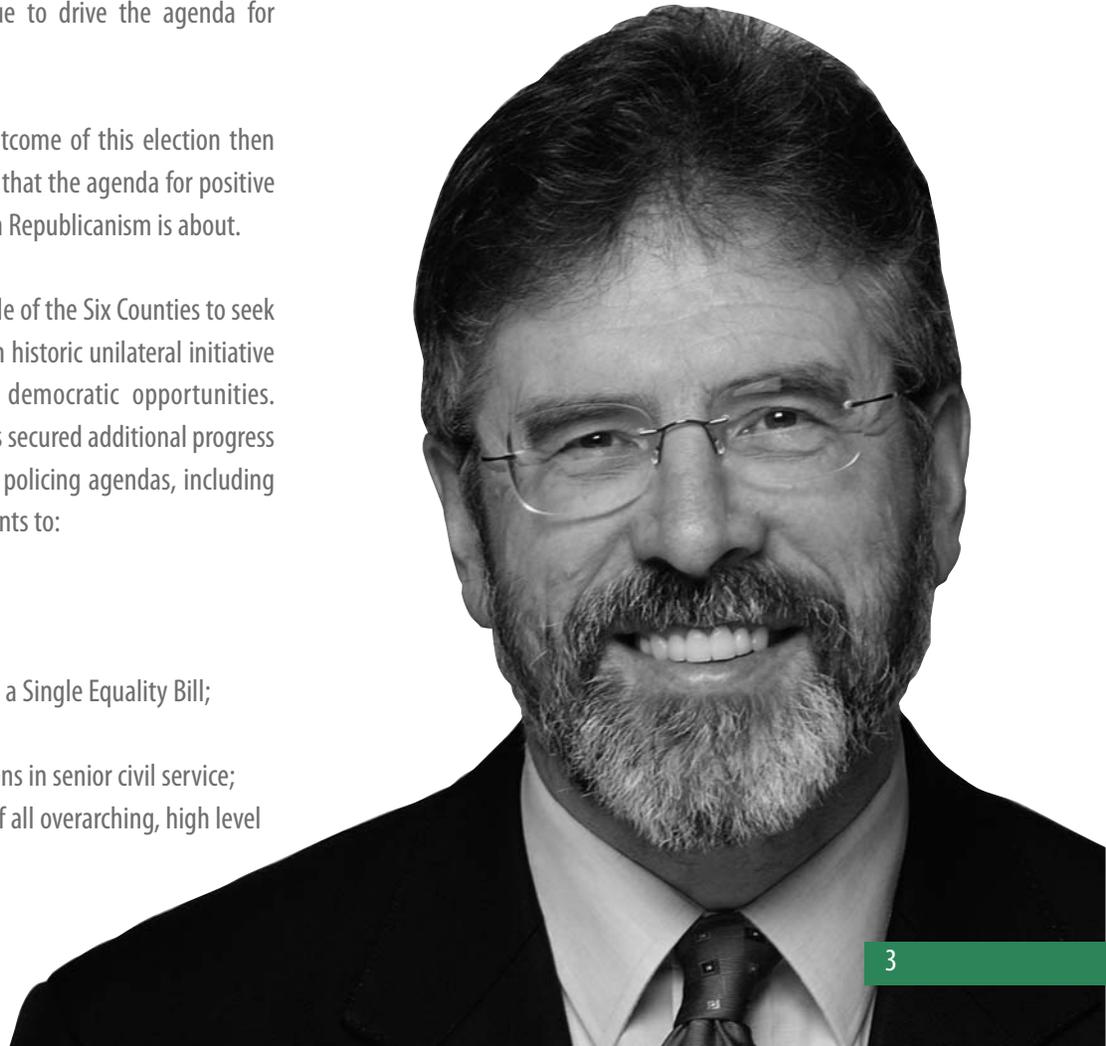
Since we last went before the people of the Six Counties to seek a mandate in 2005, the IRA took an historic unilateral initiative that has opened unprecedented democratic opportunities. Subsequently, Sinn Féin negotiators secured additional progress on the equality, human rights and policing agendas, including commitments from both governments to:

- a substantial Peace Dividend;
- an Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- progress on a Bill of Rights and a Single Equality Bill;
- an Irish Language Act;
- an end to the bar on Irish citizens in senior civil service;
- Equality Impact Assessments of all overarching, high level policies;

- legislation to restore policing and justice powers to the Assembly;
- the removal of MI5 from civic policing in the Six Counties.

We commenced 2007 by taking our own historic unilateral initiative on policing. The Sinn Féin Ard Fheis decision challenges the DUP to finally live up to its responsibilities on power-sharing, and ensures that the new beginning to policing will be realised and Sinn Féin will be in a position to hold the PSNI fully to account.

Enormous progress has been made but Sinn Fein will not rest until we have established a United Ireland of Equals.



Over the past decade, republicans have proven our ability not just to negotiate successfully but also to show leadership by taking major and sometimes difficult decisions in the national interest. We have brought a new energy and a new dynamic to Irish politics. We are providing strong, principled leadership and strong representation at every level. Wherever we have engaged – in the peace process, in political institutions including the Executive, or on the ground locally – we have made a real difference.

Sinn Féin delivers.

Republicans are ready for the next step. We are ready for government. It is time that British Ministers were sent home for good. The Assembly and Executive need to be restored with full powers and we need to start planning for the future. We are ready to share power with the DUP and the other parties on the basis of equality and to use our enlarged democratic mandate to press for maximum social change. Poverty must be eradicated. Sectarianism has to be confronted. A rights based society has to be established.

Republicans are working to secure not only peace with justice, equality and human rights, and reunification, but also an ambitious broader economic and social programme for the benefit of all.

This manifesto will be taken into the heart of the power sharing arrangements. Sinn Féin MLAs will drive the programme to safeguard the rights of senior citizens and those disadvantaged citizens with the same determination as we drove the peace process. Sinn Féin is about equality whether it is on the issue of water charges, housing, healthcare or education.

In the incoming Assembly and Executive we mean to deliver further on all the gains made to date by:

- ending sectarianism, promoting a fully-inclusive society, and making equality real;
- building a strong and equal economy;
- promoting justice and a rights-based society;
- preparing for unity by expanding all-Ireland political and economic cooperation and by strengthening local democracy.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to make politics work, to deliver radical positive social and economic change and to continue the journey to a United Ireland. We are seeking an even stronger mandate for this.

Bigi linn. Deanfaidh muid an gnoth.



Teachtaireacht ó Gearóid Mac Ádhaimh

Is conradh Shinn Féin é an forógra seo leis na toghthóirí. Seo ár gClár um Rialtas. Cinnfidh an toghchán seo má tá rialtas feidhmithe le bunú. Is vóta chun dul chun cinn polaitiúil a dhéanamh é vóta do Shinn Féin. Is é vóta do Shinn Féin an ráthaíocht is fearr atá agat le go mbeidh an todhchaí bunaithe ar chomhionannas. Is é vóta do Shinn Féin an ráthaíocht is fearr atá agat go gcorrófar an DUP chun a áit a ghlacadh ar na hinstiúidí cumhachtroinnte.

D'athraigh an próiseas síochána sochaí na hÉireann. Táthar ag tabhairt faoi fhadhbanna, a síleadh a bhí righin deich mbliana ó shin, ceann i ndiaidh cinn eile. Sa tréimhse i ndiaidh Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta, tá comhoibriú uile-Éireannach ag cruthú deiseanna ollmhóra do chách. Thiomáin Sinn Féin an próiseas síochána. Mar an t-aon pháirtí uile-Éireannach, leanann muid ar aghaidh chun an clár d'athrú dearfach a thiomáint.

Má dhiúltaíonn an DUP chun toradh an toghcháin seo a ghlacadh tá Sinn Féin geallta le cinntiú go leanfar ar aghaidh leis an chlár chun athrú dearfach a dhéanamh. Is é seo faoina bhfuil Poblachtánachas.

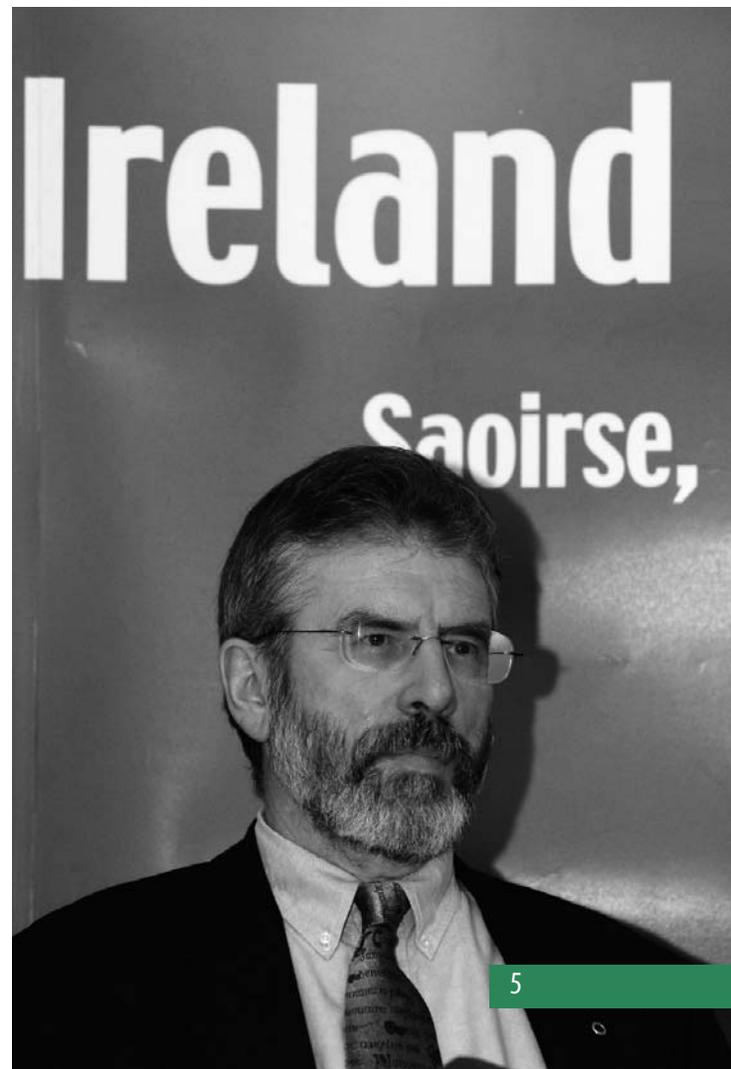
Ón am deireanach a ndeachaigh muid os comhair mhuintir na Sé Chontae i 2005 chun údarás a fháil, thug an tIRA faoi thionscnamh aontaobhach stairiúil a d'oscail deiseanna gan fasach daonlathach do phoblachtaigh. Ina dhiaidh sin, dhaingnigh idirbheartaithe Shinn Féin dul chun cinn breise, ón dá rialtas, ar chomhionannas, chearta daonna agus ar chlár phóilíneachta, san áireamh sna gealltanais tá:

- Díbhinn Síochána shubstaintiúil;
- Straitéis Frith-Bhochtaineachta;
- Dul chun cinn ar Bhille Ceart agus ar Bhille Aonair Comhionannais;
- Acht na Gaeilge;
- Deireadh a chur le bac ar shaoránaigh Éireannacha sa státseirbhís shinsearach;
- Measúnuithe Tionchair ar Chomhionannas ar gach polasaí ardleibhéil uileghabhálach;

- reachtaíocht chun cumhachtaí póilíneachta agus ceartais don Tionól a athbhunú;
- deireadh le M15 i bpóilíneacht sna Sé Chontae.

Chuir muid tús le 2007 lenár dtionscnamh aontaobhach stairiúil féin ar phóilíneacht. Tá cinneadh Ard-Fheis Shinn Féin ina dhúshlán don DUP chun a bhfocail maidir lena bhfreagrachtaí ar chumhachtroinnt a chomhlíonadh, agus cinntíonn sé go mbeidh an tús nua le póilíneacht torrach agus beidh Sinn Féin san áit chun tabhairt ar an SPTÉ miníú iomlán a thabhairt.

Tá dul chun cinn ollmhór déanta ach ní bheidh scíste ag Sinn Féin go dtí go mbunófar Éireann Chomhionann, Aontaithe.



Le deich mbliana anuas, chruthaigh poblachtaigh ár n-ábaltacht, ní amháin chun idirbheartaíocht thorrach a dhéanamh, ach chun ceannaireacht a thaispeáint trí chinní ollmhóra, agus cinní deacra in amanna, a ghlacadh ar mhaithe leis an náisiún. Thug muid fuinneamh nua agus dinimic nua isteach i bpolaitíocht Éireannach. Tá muid ag soláthar ceannaireachta láidre ar bhonn prionsabail agus ionadaíochta láidre ag gach leibhéal. Áit ar bith a ghlac muid páirt – sa phróiseas síochána, in institiúidí polaitiúla an Coiste Feidhmiúcháin san áireamh, nó ar an talamh go háitiúil – rinne muid fíordhifear.

Soláthraíonn Sinn Féin.

Tá poblachtaigh réidh don chéad chéim eile. Tá muid réidh do rialtas. Tá sé in am chun Airí na Breataine a chur abhaile. Is gá an Tionól agus an Coiste Feidhmiúcháin le cumhachtaí iomlána acu a athbhunú agus is gá dúinn pleanáil don todhchaí a dhéanamh. Tá muid réidh chun cumhacht a roinnt leis an DUP agus na páirtithe eile ar bhonn comhionannais agus chun ár n-údarás mór daonlathach a úsáid chun uasathrú sóisialta a bhrú.

Is gá bochtaineacht a dhíothú. Is gá aghaidh a thabhairt ar sheicteachas. Is gá sochaí ceartas-bhunaithe a bhunú.

Tá poblachtaigh ag obair chun, ní amháin síocháin agus ceartas, comhionannas agus cearta daonna a dhaingniú, agus athaontú a bhaint amach faoi dheireadh, ach ag obair chomh maith ar chlár

eacnamaíoch agus shóisialta níos leithne ar mhaithe le cách.

Glacfar an forógra seo isteach go croí na socrúithe cumhachtroinnte. Tiománfaidh Comhaltaí Tionóil Shinn Féin an clár chun cearta sheanáirí nó iad faoi mhíbhuntáiste a chosaint, leis an diongbháilteacht chéanna lena thiomáin muid an próiseas síochána. Is faoi chomhionannas atá Sinn Féin cé acu gur ceist faoi Tháillí Uisce, thithíocht, chúram sláinte nó faoi oideachas atá sé.

Sa Tionól agus Choiste Feidhmiúcháin atá ag teacht isteach tá sé mar rún againn tuilleadh a bhaint as gnóthachain a rinneadh go dtí seo trí:

- déanamh réidh d'aontú trí chomhaontú eacnamaíoch agus polaitiúil uile-Éireannach a mhéadú agus trí dhaonlathas áitiúil a dhaingniú;
- geilleagar láidir agus cothrom a thógáil;
- ceartas agus sochaí bunaithe ar chearta an duine a chur chun cinn;
- deireadh a chur le seicteachas, sochaí lánchuimsitheach a chur chun cinn agus rud fíor a dhéanamh as comhionannas.

Tá deis gan fasach againn chun tairbhe a bhaint as polaitíocht, chun athrú sóisialta dearfach agus eacnamaíoch radacach a sholáthar agus chun leanúint ar aghaidh chuig Éirinn Aontaithe. Tá muid ag cuardach údarás níos láidre faoina choinne seo.



Executive Summary

Towards Unity and Democracy

- Restore the Assembly, Executive and All-Ireland Ministerial Council with full powers.
- Ensure full delivery of the Good Friday Agreement.
- Prepare for Irish Unity.
- Expand the areas of all-Ireland cooperation and increase the number of all-Ireland Implementation Bodies.
- Establish dedicated All-Ireland Units in each government department to cooperate with their corresponding departments in the 26 Counties.
- Increase all-Ireland integration and coordination of public services.
- Convert dismantled military installations and buildings to civilian use in co-operation with local communities.
- Secure a referendum on Irish Unity to be held simultaneously, north and south.
- Change the face of local government through the seven council configuration, by ensuring D'Hondt is used for the appointment of all positions of authority on councils and to outside bodies, and robust legislation to prevent sectarian or other abuse of powers.
- Establish Community Planning Fora on a statutory basis to provide for direct community input into the development of local policy.
- Ensure that councils and related public bodies work closely together on an island-wide basis, especially in the Border Corridor area.

Building a strong and equal modern economy

A real Peace Dividend

- Campaign for a £10 billion Peace Dividend from the British Government over 10 years, additional to other measures such as the £16 billion Investment Strategy.
- Secure a substantial contribution from the Irish Government to the Peace Dividend.

Increased fiscal flexibility

- Tax varying powers for the Assembly and Executive.
- An Executive Borrowing Facility, as opposed to the Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (RRI).
- Use public procurement contracts to deliver equality and inclusion.

Radical overhaul of the rates system

- Pending a radical overhaul, comprehensively review the rates system to ensure fairness and consistency across all council areas.
- Freeze industrial rates pending the outcome of the review of industrial rating policy.

All-Ireland economy

- Adopt an Economic Development Plan with all-Ireland cooperation as a core principle.
- Amalgamate inward investment agencies such as Invest NI and IDA Ireland into a single All-Ireland Investment Agency with a remit to assist indigenous industry. In the short-term, ensure they work together in a regionally balanced manner, rather than competing with each other.

- Commence harmonisation of tax rates on an island-wide basis, within a progressive taxation framework.

Supporting local business development

- Provide increased financial support for indigenous small and medium enterprises and for social economy projects.
- Provide increased financial support for R&D and for island-wide networking and clustering to boost innovation.

Tackling discrimination

- Create incentives for investment and implement an investment programme in areas of high unemployment or social deprivation, for example, West of the Bann, the border areas and North and West Belfast.
- Decentralise government departments to communities West of the Bann and in the border counties.

Eliminating poverty

- Ringfence a meaningful proportion of the annual budget for programmes aimed at tackling economic inequality and poverty.
- Ensure that all resources are targeted on the basis of objective need.
- Tackle ongoing employment-related discrimination against nationalists through a time-framed strategy to eliminate the unemployment differential.

Enhancing workers rights

- Establish an effective inspection and enforcement system to protect all workers, particularly young apprentices and migrant workers, against exploitation and abuse.
- Launch a multilingual public education campaign on workers' rights and employers' responsibilities and actively encourage trade union recognition, membership and representation.

- Effectively enforce the existing minimum wage and argue for its increase.
- Ensure that public spending does not encourage exploitation of workers, locally or internationally.

Rural regeneration

- Agree a comprehensive, fully integrated, properly resourced Rural Regeneration Strategy.
- Remove 'UK' status from our food exports, and integrate the agri-food industry and agricultural services on an all-Ireland basis.
- Develop an island-wide animal health strategy, and keep Ireland as a whole GM crop-free.
- Radically reform the planning service to protect the right of rural people to live within their own community.
- End cutbacks in the provision of public services to rural communities and provide long-term funding for development of rural community infrastructure and capacity.



Defending Public Services, Delivering Rights-Based Governance

Opposing Water Charges, Privatisation, Double-Taxation

- Oppose the imposition of water charges and the privatisation of the water service, and any other forms of regressive double-taxation.
- Ensure the water charges legislation is deferred to the incoming Assembly and Executive to allow for an open debate and consultation around the issue of water reform.
- Ensure that the legacy costs of the failure to invest in water and sewerage are covered by the British Government.

Health

- Fully resource and implement the 'Investing for Health' Strategy.
- Remove the barrier to proper GP access in border areas through enhanced all-Ireland cooperation in GP Out of Hours Services.
- Dramatically reduce or eliminate treatment waiting lists, and ensure that all waiting lists are managed on the basis of clinical need alone.
- Oppose privatisation of healthcare services and staff.
- Fully implement the regional Suicide Prevention Strategy and promote a coordinated all-Ireland approach.
- Support the introduction of legislation to protect workers and the public from tobacco smoke in the workplace like that introduced in the 26 Counties, and to raise the minimum age for the purchase of tobacco products from 16 to 18 years of age.

Education

- Finally end academic selection – using parental preference and a Pupil Profile to inform parents of children transferring to all ability (11-18) post-primary education.
- Oppose cuts in vital front-line education services, and ensure additional investment in schools and children where the measured social and educational need of the school population is high.
- Provide appropriate supports within mainstream classrooms for children with additional needs.
- Introduce legislation to guarantee the rights of those on the autistic spectrum, agree an Autism Strategy.
- Properly resource integrated and Irish Medium education.

Housing

- Eliminate the housing waiting list by launching a major renewed investment in a comprehensive social housing programme, resulting in an annual new build of 5,000 units and 70,000 new homes by 2025.
- Introduce a radical approach to maximise development of social and affordable housing by using: available land banks, starting with former British Army and former RUC and PSNI barracks and brownfield sites in government ownership; Compulsory Purchase Orders on derelict properties vacant for more than 12 months; and a legislative requirement that at least 30% of all private development sites are earmarked for social and affordable housing.
- Establish a Cross-Departmental Ministerial Task Force on Fuel Poverty.
- Respect, protect and promote the rights of Travellers to adequate and appropriate housing.

Environment

- Establish an all-Ireland Environmental Protection Agency to drive forward a strong programme of enforcement.
- Ban the development of municipal incinerators in Ireland and close landfill sites that have not been properly engineered to minimise the danger of contamination.
- Extend the plastic bag levy on an all-Ireland basis.
- Build major national recycling facilities and support government intervention to create markets for recyclables.
- Mandate and support all councils to produce waste strategies including a minimum target of 50% recycling and a total ban on disposal of compostable waste in landfills by 2010.

Arts and culture

- End the funding crisis in arts and culture and reach a minimum investment target of 1% total budgetary spend.
- Devote significant support to cooperatively-run and community arts projects including community festivals, and particularly those that innovate to actively promote social inclusion and oppose sectarianism and racism.

Irish language

- Establish a Gaeltacht Quarter in Belfast.
- Achieve the introduction of an Irish Language Act, as proposed in the St. Andrews Agreement, that will give Irish speakers in the Six Counties at least the same rights as those in the rest of Ireland.
- Establish a Commissioner for the Irish Language in the north.
- Establish a third level Irish language college that will develop, deliver and regulate a range of courses through the medium of Irish.

Justice and Community Safety

- Achieve fully democratically accountable Civic Policing.
- Ensure the transfer of powers on policing and justice to the power-sharing Executive and All-Ireland Ministerial Council by May 2008 as set out in the St. Andrews Agreement.
- Hold the British Government to their commitment to separate MI5 from civic policing structures in the Six Counties.
- Secure truth, justice and equal treatment for all victims and survivors.
- Expose and dismantle the structures of collusion and state murder inside the PSNI, Military Intelligence and MI5.
- End the use of plastic bullets.
- Enhance Community Safety measures.



Diversity, Equality, Respect

- Continue a constructive engagement with unionism, and promote a shared future based on equality 'cherishing all of the people equally'.
- Develop a programme for removing sectarian symbols in public offices and institutions.
- Ensure that sectarian attacks are confronted and eradicated and promote anti-sectarianism programmes.
- Introduce specific measures that support women's equal right to work and to equal pay, such as a plan for childcare and standards and supports for flexible, family-friendly working arrangements.
- Increase secure funding for local crisis and support services for women experiencing violence, enlarge the network of refuges and expand their capacity so that no woman in need will be turned away.
- Use the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to develop a detailed and timeframed Strategy for the Elimination of Child Poverty.
- Establish a Commissioner for Older People.
- Initiate a review of the standard of living of older people, including pension provision, cost of living, fuel poverty

and disposable income, resulting in a comprehensive Strategy for Equality for Older People.

- Promote stringent compliance with all aspects of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Ensure that disability access is available in all public buildings and that universal design standards are met in the construction of new buildings.
- Promote anti-racism programmes and ensure that racist attacks are confronted and eradicated.
- Promote equal rights for same sex couples, anti-homophobia programmes, and ensure that homophobic attacks are confronted and eradicated.

Demilitarisation and Solidarity for a Better World

- Continue to share our experience of conflict resolution.
- Oppose the war in Iraq.
- Campaign for Irish military neutrality and UN reform, and to promote our policy of positive neutrality in action.
- Continue to campaign for global social justice including debt cancellation and fair trade, and for the full realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.



Achoimre Feidhmiúcháin

I dtreo Aontaithe agus Daonlathais

- An Tionól, an Coiste Feidhmiúcháin agus an Chomhairle Aireachta Uile-Éireannach a athbhunú le cumhachtaí iomlán acu.
- Cur i bhfeidhm iomlán Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta a chinntiú.
- Ullmhú d'Aontú Éireannach.
- Na réimsí comhoibrithe uile-Éireannaí a leathnú agus líon na gComhlachtaí Chur i bhFeidhm uile-Éireannaigh a mhéadú.
- Aonaid Uile-Éireannacha tiomnaithe a bhunú i ngach roinn rialtais chun comhoibriú lena ranna comhfheagracha sna Sé Chontae is Fiche.
- Imeascadh agus comhordú seirbhísí poiblí uile-Éireannacha a mhéadú.
- Suiteálacha míleata agus foirgnimh mhíleata a iompú d'úsáid shibhialtach i gcomhar le pobail áitiúla.
- Reifreann ar Aontú Éireannach a dhéanfar go comhuaineach Thuaidh agus Theas a chinntiú.
- Aghaidh an rialtais áitiúil a athrú trí cumraíocht na seacht gcomhairle, trí chinntiú go n-úsáidtear D'Hondt chun gach áit cheapacháin chumhachtaigh ar chomhairlí agus ar chomhlachtaí taobh amuigh, agus reachtaíocht láidir chun seicteachas nó mí-úsáid cumhachtaí eile a chosc.
- Fóraim Pleanála Pobail a bhunú ar bhonn reachtúil chun freastal ar ionchur díreach pobail isteach i bhforbairt polasaí áitiúil.
- Cinntiú go n-oibríonn comhairlí agus comhlachtaí poiblí bainteacha go dlúth lena chéile ar bhonn uile-oileáin, i gceantar Dorchla na Teorann go háirithe.

Ag tógáil geilleagair láidir chothroim agus nua-aimseartha

Fíor-Dhíbhinn Síochána

- Díbhinn Síochána £10 billiún a chinntiú ó Rialtas na Breataine thar deich mbliana, mar bharr ar bhearta eile amhail an Straitéis Infheistíochta £16 billiún.
- Ranníoc substaintiúil a chinntiú ó Rialtas na hÉireann don Díbhinn Síochána.

Solúbthacht fhioscach mhéadaithe

- Cumhachtaí athrú cánach don Tionól agus don Choiste Feidhmiúcháin.
- Áis lasachta Feidhmeannaí in áit Tionscnamh Leasaithe agus Athinfheistíochta (TLA).
- Úsáid conarthaí soláthair poiblí chun comhionannas agus cuimsitheacht a sholáthar.

Ollchóiriú radacach ar chóras na rátaí

- Go dtí go ndéanfar ollchóiriú radacach, déanfar athbhreithniú uileghabhálach ar chóras na rátaí chun cothromaíocht agus comhsheasmhacht trasna gach ceantar comhairle a chinntiú.
- Rátaí tionsclaíocha a choinneáil mar atá go dtí go nochfar torthaí athbhreithniú polasaí rátaí tionsclaíocha.

Geilleagar Uile-Éireannach

- Glacadh le Plean Forbartha Geilleagrach le comhoibriú uile-Éireannach mar chroíphrionsabal.
- Gníomhaireachtaí infheistíochta isteach a chónascadh amhail Invest NI agus IDA Ireland ina Ghníomhaireacht

Infheistíochta Uile-Éireannach le téarmaí tagartha chun cuidiú le tionsclaíocht dhúchasach. Sa ghearrthéarma, cinntigh go n-oibríonn siad le chéile ar dhóigh chothrom agus réigiúnach, in áit iad a bheith in iomaíocht lena chéile.

- Tús a chur le chomhchuibhiú rátaí cánach ar bhonn uile-oileáin, laistigh de chreatlach cánachais fhorásaigh.

Ag tacú le forbairt gnó áitiúil

- Tacaíocht airgeadais mhéadaithe a sholáthar d'fhiontair bheaga agus mheánacha dhúchasacha agus do thionscadail gheilleagair shóisialta.
- Tacaíocht airgeadais mhéadaithe a sholáthar do Thaighde & d'Fhorbairt agus do nascadh agus cnuasach ar fud an oileáin chun nuálaíocht a mhéadú.

Ag dul i ngleic le hidirdhealú

- Spreagthaí d'infheistíocht a chruthú agus clár infheistíochta a chur i bhfeidhm i gceantair ina bhfuil an dífhostaíocht ard nó ina bhfuil díothacht shóisialta, mar shampla, taobh Thiar den Bhanna, na ceantair teorann agus Béal Feirste Thuaidh agus Thiar.
- Ranna rialtais a dhílárú go pobail taobh Thiar den Bhanna agus do phobail agus contaetha na teorann.

Ag díothú bochtaineachta

- Coibhneas fiúntach den bhuiséad bhliantúil a chosaint do chlár dírithe ar dhul i ngleic le neamhionannas eacnamaíoch agus bochtaineachta.
- Cinntiú go mbíonn gach acmhainn dírithe ar bhonn gá oibiachtúil.
- Dul i ngleic le hidirdhealú bainteach le fostaíocht in éadan náisiúnaithe trí straitéis de réir achar ama chun an difreálach dífhostaíochta a dhíothú.

Ag feabhsú cearta an lucht oibre

- Córas éifeachtach cigireachta agus forfheidhmithe a bhunú chun gach oibrí a chosaint, printísigh agus oibríthe imirceacha ach go háirithe, in éadan dúshaothraithe agus mí-úsáide.
- Feachtas oideachais phoiblí ilteangaigh ar chearta oibríthe agus ar fhreagrachtaí fostóirí a lainseáil agus aithint cheardchumann, ballraíochta agus ionadaíochta a spreagadh go gníomhach.
- Cur i bhfeidhm éifeachtach an phá íosta láithrigh agus cás a dhéanamh chun é a mhéadú.
- Cinntiú nach spreagann caiteachas poiblí dúshaothrú oibríthe, go háitiúil nó go hidirnáisiúnta.



Athfhorás tuaithe

- Straitéis Athfhorás Tuaithe iomlán, chuimiseitheach lánimeasctha agus cheartmhaoinithe a chomhaontú.
- Stádas na 'RA' a chealú ónár n-onnmhairí bia, agus an tionscal biathalmhaíochta agus seirbhísí talmhaíochta a chomhtháthú ar bhonn uile-Éireann.
- Straitéis sláinte ainmhithe uile-oileánda a fhorbairt agus Éirinn san iomlán a choinneáil saor ó bhairr ghéinathraithe.
- Leasú radacach a dhéanamh ar an tseirbhís pleanála chun ceart mhuintir na tuaithe le cónaí laistigh dá bpobal féin a chosaint.
- Deireadh a chur le ciorruithe i soláthar seirbhísí poiblí do phobail tuaithe agus maoiniú fadtéarmach d'fhorbairt bhonneagar agus toilleadh phobail na tuaithe a sholáthar.

Ag Cosaint Seirbhísí Poiblí, Ag Soláthar Rialú ceartbhunaithe

Ag Cur i gCoinne Táillí Uisce, Príobháidithe agus Cánachais-Dhúbáilte

- Cur i gcoinne forchur táillí uisce agus príobháidíú na seirbhíse uisce, agus foirm ar bith eile de chánachas dúbáilte aischéimnitheach.
- Cinntiú go dtugtar an cinneadh don chéad Tionól agus Choiste Feidhmiúcháin eile ar reachtaíocht na dtáillí uisce chun ligean do dhíospóireacht agus do chomhairliúchán oscailte ar cheist an leasaithe ar uisce.
- Cinntiú go gclúdaíonn Rialtas na Breataine costais oidhreachta a dteipe le hinfheistiú in uisce agus i séarachas.

Sláinte

- An Straitéis 'Infheistiú sa tSláinte' a lánmhaoiniú agus a chur i bhfeidhm.
- An chonstaic ar rochtain cheart DGí i gceantair teorann a chealú trí níos mó comhoibriú uile-Éireann i Seirbhísí as Uaireanta oibre DGí.
- Liostaí feithimh ar chóireáil a laghdú go suntasach nó deireadh a chur leo, agus cinntiú go láimhseáiltear na liostaí feithimh go léir ar bhonn riachtanais chliniciúil amháin.
- Cur i gcoinne príobháidíú seirbhísí agus oibríthe cúram sláinte.
- Cur i bhfeidhm iomlán na Straitéise réigiúnaí um Chosc ar Fhéinmharú agus cur chuige comhordaithe uile-Éireann a chothú
- Tacú le tabhairt isteach reachtaíochta le hoibríthe agus an gnáthphobal a chosaint ar thoit tobac san áit oibre cosúil léi sin a tugadh isteach sna 26 contae, agus an íosaois ag gceannaítear táirgí tobac a ardú ó 16 go 18 bliain d'aois.



Oideachas

- Deireadh a chur le roghnú acadúil – ag úsáid rogha tuismitheora agus Próifíl an Dalta le cur in iúl do thuismitheoirí páistí ag aistriú go hoideachas iarbhunscoile uile-ábaltachta (11-18).
- Cur i gcoinne gearrthaí airgid i bpríomhsheirbhísí riachtanacha oideachais agus tuilleadh infheistíochta a chinntiú i scoileanna agus i bpáistí a bhfuil riachtanas sóisialta agus oideachais measta an daonra scoile ard.
- Tacaí cuí a sholáthar laistigh de sheomraí ranga príomhshruthaithe do pháistí a bhfuil riachtais bhreise acu.
- Reachtaíocht a thabhairt isteach chun cearta na ndaoine sin ar speicream an uathachais a ráthú agus comhaontú a dhéanamh ar Straitéis Uathachais.
- Oideachas imeasctha agus lánGhailge a mhaoiniú go ceart.

Tithíocht

- Deireadh a chur leis an liosta feithimh tithíochta trí phríomhinfeistíocht nua i gclár cuimsitheach tithíochta sóisialta, a mbeidh toradh de nuathógáil bhliantúil 5,000 ionad agus 70,000 teach nua faoi 2025 aisti.
- Cur chuige radacach a thabhairt isteach chun forbairt tithíochta sóisialta agus inacmhainne a uasmhéadú ag úsáid bruach talaimh atá ar fáil, ag tosú le hiarrbhearaicí Arm na Breataine, CRU agus SPTÉ agus láithreáin ghoirt dhoinn ar leis an rialtas iad; Orduithe Éigeantacha Ceannacháin ar shealúchais thréigthe atá folamh le níos mó ná 12 mí agus coinníoll reachtúla a thabhairt isteach go gcuirtear in áirithe ar an laghad 30% de na láithreáin phríobháideacha go léir do thithíocht shóisialta agus inacmhainne.
- Tascfhórsa Trasrannach Aireachta ar Bhochtaineacht Bhreosla a bhunú.
- Meas a bheith ar chearta an Lucht Taistil ar thithíocht shásúil agus oiriúnach agus iad a chosaint agus a chothú chomh maith.



Timpeallacht

- Gníomhaireacht Cosanta Timpeallachta uile-Éireann a bhunú le clár láidir forghníomhaithe a chur i bhfeidhm.
- Cosc a chur ar fhorbairt loisceoirí cathrach in Éirinn agus druidim láithreán líonta talún nach ndearnadh innealtóireacht cheart orthu le baol an truailithe a íoslaghdú.
- An cháin ar mhálaí plaisteacha a fhairsingiú ar bhonn uile-Éireann.
- Áiseanna móra náisiúnta athchúrsála a thógáil agus tacaíocht a thabhairt d'idirghabháil an rialtais le margai d'ionaid athchúrsála a chruthú.
- Údarás agus tacaíocht a thabhairt do na comhairlí go léir straitéisí dramhaíola a chumadh, íos-spríoc d'athchúrsáil 50% agus cosc iomlán ar dhiúscairt dramhaíola inmhúirínithe i láithreán líonta talún faoi 2010 san áireamh.

Na hEalaíona agus cultúr

- Deireadh a chur le géarchéim an mhaoinithe sna healaíona agus i gcultúr agus spríoc íos-infheistíochta de 1% de chaiteachas iomlán an bhuiséid a bhaint amach.
- Tacaíocht mhór a thabhairt do thionscadail chomhoibrithe agus ealaíona pobail, féilte pobail san áireamh agus go háirithe dóibh siúd a chothaíonn cuimsitheach shóisialta go gníomhach agus atá in éadan seicteachais agus ciníochais.

An Ghaeilge

- Ceathrú Gaeltachta a bhunú i mBéal Feirste.
- Tabhairt isteach Acht na Gaeilge mar a bhí molta i gComhaontú Chill Rímhinn a bhaint amach a thabharfaidh ar a laghad na cearta céanna do Ghaeilgeoirí sna Sé Chontae agus atá acu sin sa chuid eile d'Éirinn.
- Coimisinéir Gaeilge a bhunú sa tuaisceart.

- Coláiste Gaeilge tríú leibhéal a bhunú a fhorbróidh, a sholáthróidh agus a stiúrfaidh réimse cúrsaí trí mheán na Gaeilge.

Ceartas agus Sábháilteacht an Phobail

- Póilíneacht Shibhialta chuntasach, dhaonlathach go hiomlán a bhaint amach.
- Cinntiú go n-aistrefar cumhachtaí ar phóilíneacht agus ar cheartas don Choiste Feidhmiúcháin cumhachtroinnte agus don Chomhairle Aireachta uile-Éireann faoi Bhealtaine 2008 mar a bhí leagtha amach i gComhaontú Chill Rímhinn.
- Rialtas na Breataine a choiméad le cloí lena ngealltanas MI5 a scaradh ó na struchtúir phóilíneachta sibhialta sna Sé Chontae.
- An fhírinne, ceartas agus bail chothrom a chinntiú do na híospartaigh agus na marthanóirí.
- Struchtúir na claonpháirtíochta agus dúnmharú stáit laistigh den SPTÉ, den Lucht Faisnéise Míleata agus de MI5 a nochtadh agus a díchoimeáil.
- Deireadh a chur le húsáid piléar plaisteach.
- Bearta Sábháilteachta Pobail a fheabhsú.

Iolrachas, Comhionannas, Meas

- Plé dearfach le haontachtaithe a leanúint agus comhthodhchaí bunaithe ar chomhionannas a chothú 'agus meas gach uile duine go cothrom'.
- Clár a fhorbairt le fail réidh le siombail sheicteacha in oifigí agus in institiúidí poiblí.
- Cinntiú go dtugtar aghaidh ar agus go gcuirtear deireadh le hionsaithe seicteacha agus cláir fhrithsheicteacha a chothú.
- Bearta ar leith a thabhairt isteach a thacaíonn le ceart

cothrom ban le hobair a dhéanamh agus ar phá chothrom, amhail plean do chúram leanaí agus do chaighdeáin móide tacaí do shocruithe oibre solúbtha agus teaghlach-chairdiúil.

- Maoiniú a méadú agus a chinntiú do sheirbhísí áitiúla géarchéime agus tacaíochta do mhná a bhfuil foréigean á dhéanamh orthu, agus gréasán na dtearmann a mhéadú agus a dtoilleadh a leathnú sa dóigh is nach ndiúltófar do bhean ar bith ar an ánas
- Úsáid Oifig an Chéad Aire agus an leasChéad Aire chun Straitéis mhion agus amtheoranta um Dheireadh a Chur le Bochtaineacht Páistí a fhorbairt.
- Coimisinéir do Dhaoine Níos Sine a bhunú.
- Tús a chur le hathbhreithniú ar chaighdeán beatha dhaoine níos sine, soláthar pinsin, costais beatha, bochtaineacht breosla agus ioncam indiúscartha san áireamh a mbeidh Straitéis chuimsitheach Chomhionannais do Dhaoine Níos Sine an toradh as.
- Comhall dian leis na gnéithe go léir leis an Acht Idirhealaithe Míchumais a chur chun cinn.
- Cinntiú go bhfuil bealach isteach do dhaoine mhíchumasaithe ar fáil i ngach foirgneamh poiblí agus go gcomhlíontar caighdeáin dearaidh uilíoch i dtógáil foirgneamh nua.
- Cláir fhrithchiníochais a chothú agus cinntiú go dtugtar aghaidh ar agus go gcuirtear deireadh le hionsaithe ciníocha
- Cearta cothroma a chothú do lanúineacha den ghnéas céanna, cláir fhrith-homafhóibeach a chothú agus cinntiú go dtugtar aghaidh ar agus go gcuirtear deireadh le hionsaithe homafhóibeacha.

Dímhíleatú agus Dlúthpháirtíocht i nDomhan Níos Fearr

- Ár n-eispéaras ar réiteach coimhlinte a roinnt.
- Cuir i gcoinne an chogaidh san Iaráic.
- Feachtas do neodracht mhíleata Éireannach agus do leasú na NA agus ár bpolasaí de neodracht dhearfach i bhfeidhm a chothú.
- Leanúint le dul i mbun feachtais do cheartas shóisialta dhomhanda, ina measc, cealú fiach agus trádáil chothrom, agus comhlíonadh iomlán Spriocanna Fhorbairt na Mílaoise.



Towards **Unity** and **Democracy**

Sinn Féin Priorities for 2007-2012:

- Restore the Power-Sharing Institutions
- Prepare for Unity by Strengthening the All-Ireland Architecture
- Change the face of Local Government

Restore the Power-Sharing Institutions

In the four years since the British Government suspended the power-sharing institutions in October 2002, Direct Rule has undermined the Programme for Government and other priorities agreed by the democratically elected members of the Assembly and the Executive. British Direct Rule Ministers – driven not by a commitment to serve the people of the north but by a British Treasury agenda to slash public spending – have taken decisions contrary to the best interests of people in the Six Counties. They have refused to adequately finance badly needed services, programmes and reforms that were identified as essential to make social and economic progress. They have presided over a rise in sectarianism, a growing gap between rich and poor, economic stagnation; dilapidated physical infrastructure; serious cutbacks in health and education; closure of rural schools, a virtual ban on house building for families in rural areas and the steady destruction of the agriculture industry; as well as privatisation, water charges and increased rates. They have flatly refused to listen to either the genuine concerns raised by democratically mandated local politicians or the expertise of local sectoral organisations and NGOs. It is past time to end Direct Rule once and for all. Governance by locally

accountable elected representatives through the power-sharing Assembly, Executive and All-Ireland Ministerial Council is in the best interests of all our people. This must happen on 26 March 2007.

Vote Sinn Féin to:

- Send the British Direct Rule Ministers home.
- Restore the Assembly, Executive and All-Ireland Ministerial Council with full powers.
- Ensure full delivery of the Good Friday Agreement.
- Deliver the republican social and economic programme.

Prepare for Unity

As the peace process advances we need to look to the future, and increase the pace of change. The vast majority of people now recognise that partition is restricting political, economic and social potential across the island. There is growing support for all-Ireland planning in both the public and private sectors and in civic society. As a result we now see significant practical initiatives with the capacity to improve everyday life for all, such as the introduction of an all-Ireland energy market. Clearly, support for reunification is growing and it is time to start the real work to prepare the transition to unity.

Sinn Féin negotiators ensured that the Good Friday Agreement put all-Ireland cooperation at its centre. Eight years on we must accelerate towards full delivery on all these provisions by 2012. This means increasing all-Ireland cooperation and planning politically, economically and socially. It also means ensuring the full engagement of the Assembly and the Executive, the Dáil and

the Irish Government, as well as comprehensively expanding the work of the All-Ireland Ministerial Council, the All-Ireland Implementation Bodies and the Cross-Border Corridor Groups. Without question, Sinn Féin is the party with the greatest commitment to strengthening the All-Ireland architecture.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Re-establish the All-Ireland Ministerial Council.
- Expand the areas of all-Ireland cooperation and increase the number of all-Ireland Implementation Bodies.
- Establish dedicated All-Ireland Units in each government department to cooperate with their corresponding departments in the 26 Counties.
- Establish the All-Ireland Inter-Parliamentary Forum.
- Establish a Six County Civic Forum and the All-Ireland Consultative Civic Forum.

- Ensure maximum coordination and cooperation between the human rights and equality bodies north and south, and real progress towards the All-Ireland Charter of Rights.
- Pursue a comprehensive programme to maximise all-Ireland economic and social planning across a range of areas outlined in the following sections of this manifesto.
- Increase all-Ireland integration and coordination of public services to improve delivery, particularly in the border areas, with a special focus on the development of the road/rail network and the delivery of health services.
- Convert dismantled military installations and buildings to civilian use in co-operation with local communities.
- Secure a referendum on Irish Unity to be held simultaneously, north and south.



Change the Face of Local Government

Sinn Féin is committed to open and transparent representative and participative governance that is efficient, effective, fair and responsive, and underpinned by appropriate checks, balances and equality provisions. We believe that democratic decisions should be made at as local a level as is feasible, and that the Assembly should provide strategic direction, and oversee and monitor standards of public administration. We oppose the use of QUANGOs (Quasi-Non-Governmental Organisations) to administer large areas of public policy because QUANGO appointees are not democratically accountable, and the appointment system has profoundly advantaged certain sections of the community to the cost of others. No community should be excluded from representation or participation in local government, nor be governed by those who are unaccountable to them.

We support the '7C' (seven council) configuration under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) because it provides the best model for equality and fairness. Not only would a seven council configuration be most effective in ensuring greatest fairness in the rates burden, it would also provide greater protection of minority communities in that in all council areas – whether they are majority nationalist or unionist – there will be a significant minority. In conjunction with strong legal requirements and the effective operation of the D'Hondt system, we believe that the seven council model for the RPA can best support equal and fair treatment both inside the councils and in the delivery of council functions. If properly implemented, the RPA has the potential to change the face of local government for the better.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Ensure D'Hondt is used for the appointment of all positions of authority on councils and to outside bodies, following a single post-election exercise including all posts for the entire period of that council.
- Bring forward robust legislation to prevent sectarian or other abuse of powers, including a compulsory Pledge of Office and a Code of Conduct, and an Independent Commissioner with powers to ensure adherence, investigate complaints about breaches and impose significant sanctions including dismissal from office.
- Support the appointment of Equality Officers by all councils to ensure adherence to Section 75 of the equality legislation and the allocation of resources and services on the basis of objective need alone.
- Improve democratic accountability by transferring the functions of as many QUANGOs as possible to councils or to the appropriate regional government department.
- Establish Community Planning Fora on a statutory basis to provide for direct community input into the development of local policy.
- Ensure that councils and related public bodies work closely together on an island-wide basis, especially regarding spatial planning in the Border Corridor Area.



A Strong and Equal Economy

Building a Strong Economy

The Six County economy has failed. Partition has failed. The Six County economy is not viable in isolation from the rest of the island. It has been held back through its dependence upon, and domination by, the British economy. Its needs have always been at best peripheral to British priorities. It has no fiscal or monetary independence and has been cut off from the economic expansion which has characterised the rest of Ireland over the period of the 'Celtic Tiger'. Current economic activity and growth is excessively low. Research and Development (R&D) expenditure – a key barometer of future economic growth – is also low. 'Brain drain' continues to be a major problem: 75% of all graduates leave the north and don't return.

Sinn Féin has an ambitious social programme that can only be achieved if underpinned by a strong economy. We are committed to this, and this is what we intend to deliver in Government.

A Real Peace Dividend

The conflict and British Direct Rule have left us economically disadvantaged, with a substantial infrastructure deficit and unbalanced regional development. We need a road and rail network, a telecommunications infrastructure, an education system and other public services that will meet the needs of a modern economy operating in a global environment, as this will provide the basis for our future economic competitiveness. We also urgently need to redress regional underdevelopment West of the Bann, in other areas suffering similar underdevelopment

Sinn Féin Priorities for 2007-2012:

FOR A STRONG ECONOMY:

- A Real Peace Dividend for Investment in Infrastructure
- Increased Fiscal Flexibility to Meet the Needs of the People
- A Radical Overhaul of the Rates System
- An All-Ireland Economy for Sustainable Growth
- Supporting Indigenous Enterprise and the Social Economy

FOR AN EQUAL ECONOMY:

- A Plan to Redress Regional Economic Inequality
- A Plan for Eliminating Poverty
- Enhancing Workers' Rights for an Ireland of Equals
- Rural Regeneration to Empower Rural Communities

and in border areas. This should be paid for by a Peace Dividend financed by the British Government. It should be supported by the Irish Government through a Peace Dividend and an expanded National Development Plan that is all-Ireland in scope.

The infrastructure deficit came about as a direct result of failures by successive British and Unionist regimes to invest in roads and transport, in water and sewerage, in health, in housing and education and in the general economy. Direct intervention is now needed to redress the imbalance, remove the burden of paying for past failures, to aid economic recovery and to bring income levels up to sustain fair taxation. In addition to the question of fairness and the need for the British Government to

take responsibility, the costs cannot realistically be met by a society that has income levels significantly lower than either the 26 Counties or Britain. The Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (RRI) is no substitute for a Peace Dividend as it must be repaid – and is now being used to justify rates increases and the imposition of water charges.

Sinn Féin negotiators have been and will continue to be to the forefront in advocating for a meaningful Peace Dividend. However, we have concluded that the Financial Package offered by the British Treasury on the back of the St. Andrew's talks does not contain additional resources, nor does it assist the Assembly to create additional finances. As a consequence, the incoming Assembly and Executive will be severely curtailed in their ability to create the conditions to provide a progressively better standard of life as all our people deserve. Without the proper resources the Assembly and Executive will be set up to fail.



To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Secure a £10 billion Peace Dividend from the British Government over 10 years, additional to other measures such as the £16 billion Investment Strategy.
- Secure a substantial contribution from the Irish Government to the Peace Dividend.
- Use the Peace Dividend to enable economic recovery by addressing legacy issues such as underdevelopment, regional imbalance and the general infrastructure and skills deficits.

Increased Fiscal Flexibility to Meet the Needs of the People

In addition to a Peace Dividend, we need significantly increased public finance to allow an Assembly and Executive to invest adequately to meet the needs of all our people. At present the Assembly and Executive are hamstrung by a lack of fiscal independence. We cannot set overall budgets or tax rates and we have limited borrowing powers. The population-based Barnett Formula used by the British Government to calculate the Block Grant is fundamentally unjust as it does not take into account the greater levels of need in the Six Counties. We need a package of fiscal flexibility measures including tax varying powers for the Assembly and an end to borrowing restrictions.

To advance this objective, Sinn Féin in Government will work for:

- A review of the application of the unfair Barnett funding formula.
- Greater budgetary allocations to the Six Counties by the British Government.
- Tax varying powers for the Assembly and Executive.
- An Executive Borrowing Facility, as opposed to the Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (RRI).
- The utilisation of Public Procurement contracts to deliver equality and inclusion.

A Radical Overhaul of the Rates System

Sinn Féin's preferred option is for the removal of rates altogether and their replacement with a system of progressive direct taxation. In the meantime, however, we believe that equality and ability to pay must be at the heart of any continued system of rates. The rates system must also be made transparent and fair, with a clear relationship between rates, income, value for money and quality of services provided. Consequently, we believe that the whole rating system in the Six Counties would need a radical overhaul in the context of a complete review of Barnett, a meaningful Peace Dividend and the granting of tax varying powers to the Assembly and Executive.

The current rates reform proposals would not fairly distribute the rates burden. In particular, their failure to address the correlation between house value and income means that many people will still be in the unacceptable position whereby they are 'asset rich but income poor' and consequently pay higher rates than they can afford. In addition, reliefs should be addressed through an income-related system based on the ability to pay with specific exemptions for particular economically vulnerable groups such as older people, people with disabilities and other low income households. These reliefs should be centrally funded, not subsidised from other ratepayers as currently proposed.

The issue of industrial de-rating cannot be seen in isolation from the significant infrastructural deficit in the Six Counties, the higher costs for businesses here and the progressive squeezing of resources by the British Treasury. Therefore, we recognise that business rating is only one aspect of a much wider problem that requires general reforms, including democratic control of fiscal policy and the development of an all-Ireland taxation system.

Along with all the parties in the previous Assembly, Sinn Féin supported the ending of industrial de-rating in the context of needing to put measures in place that would best support local businesses and their vital role in the economy. Sinn Féin will bring forward proposals to the upcoming review of the industrial rating system advocating a progressive relief scheme to achieve specific economic and social objectives such as nurturing indigenous small businesses or protecting the farming sector or encouraging social investment in areas of objective need.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Radically overhaul the rates system in the context of a complete review of Barnett, a meaningful Peace Dividend and the granting of tax varying powers to the Assembly and Executive.
- Pending the context for radical reform, comprehensively review the rates system to ensure fairness and consistency across all council areas.
- Establish a system of progressive and targeted, centrally funded rates relief for vulnerable low income groups.
- Establish a system of progressive and targeted rates relief for businesses, linked to specific economic and social objectives.
- Freeze industrial rates pending the outcome of the review of industrial rating policy.

An All-Ireland Economy for Sustainable Growth

Over the next two years, the 26 Counties economy is predicted to grow at more than 5% and to remain one of the best performing economies in Europe. Meanwhile, the Six Counties will experience only modest growth at about 3%. As a partitioned economy, the northern economy is not reaching its full potential. Competition between north and south for investment

and wasteful duplication are costing money and jobs, and the persistent infrastructure deficit is further impeding economic competitiveness and growth. The most efficient response to the infrastructure deficit is to deal with roads and transport, energy and telecommunications on an integrated all-Ireland basis. Incentives for investment should be complementary and used to attract enterprises to both parts of Ireland. We need to remove the remaining barriers to labour mobility throughout the island to create a single Irish labour market. R & D, networking and clustering also need an all-Ireland approach. What better way to ensure efficiency, avoid duplication and make the most of finite resources? The Six Counties needs the 26 Counties. On its own, or lumped in 'with the rest of the UK', the north will continue to limp further and further behind the south's impressive economic performance. To build a strong economy, we need an all-Ireland economic development strategy. Sinn Féin is the all-Ireland economy's strongest advocate.

The 'Celtic Tiger' has created one of the most successful economies in the world, but it has failed to redress the glaring economic inequalities and growing poverty and to ensure the provision of public services on an equitable basis. The benefits of an all-Ireland economy should not be confined to entrepreneurs, to speculators and to shareholders. It needs to be shared by everyone – from Derry to Kerry, from Belfast to Dublin, and along the border corridor – and it must put people, not profits, at its core.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Include the north in the economic success of the rest of Ireland.
- Adopt an Economic Development Plan with all-Ireland cooperation as a core principle.
- Amalgamate inward investment agencies such as Invest NI and IDA Ireland into a single All-Ireland Investment

Agency with a remit to assist indigenous industry. In the short-term, ensure they work together on harmonising investment regimes, sectoral development strategies and the geographical share-out of inward investment in a regionally balanced manner, rather than competing with each other.

- Ensure maximum all-Ireland coordination in the use of EU funds.
- Begin an open and democratic debate on the benefits of one currency for the whole island.
- Commence harmonisation of tax rates on an island-wide basis, within a progressive taxation framework.
- Remove obstacles to island-wide labour mobility.
- Ensure that an all-Ireland energy market benefits all through the provision of sustainable energy and security of supply.
- Market tourism on an all-Ireland basis and provide sufficient funding to this key area of potential economic growth in the Six Counties to redress the legacy of underdevelopment.

Supporting Indigenous Enterprise and the Social Economy

Sinn Féin supports the development of locally-owned or 'indigenous' enterprise, in particular small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Developing indigenous enterprise requires active government support for Irish entrepreneurship, and practical encouragement to make it more inclusive. Indigenous enterprises are crucial to the growth of the Irish economy as they are generally more permanently embedded and the majority of sectors source proportionately more material and services from domestic suppliers than their overseas counterparts. Furthermore, indigenous enterprise is more geographically dispersed and regionally balanced than foreign-owned

enterprise and is therefore essential to the achievement of more balanced local and regional development. Indigenous SMEs provide the majority of employment, thus playing a crucial role in creating and sustaining income and employment as well as helping to maintain a balanced enterprise base.

Sinn Féin also strongly supports the further development of the 'social economy'. The social economy includes cooperatively owned and managed businesses and community-run projects for example in the agricultural, transport, renewable energy, recycling, housing, childcare and social service sectors. It is increasingly recognised throughout the EU that the social economy has an important role to play in society, particularly by enhancing the economy within socially and economically excluded communities. It transcends the often exploitative relationship between employer and worker, encourages community empowerment through collective approaches to production, and can effectively promote environmental and other sustainability. Building a strong and equal economy requires growth in the social sector, which needs and deserves active government support. Therefore, a core objective of Sinn Féin's enterprise policy is to ensure the full development of this presently neglected area.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Provide increased financial support for indigenous small and medium enterprises and for social economy projects.
- Provide increased financial support for R&D and for island-wide networking and clustering to boost innovation.
- Agree an integrated Skills and Education Strategy to support competitiveness.
- Agree a comprehensive Social Economy Strategy on an all-Ireland and cross-departmental basis.
- Create an All-Ireland Social Economy Development Agency to develop the sector strategically, under the aegis of the All-Ireland Ministerial Council and reporting directly to the Taoiseach's Office and to OFMDFM.



Building an Equal Economy

While economic discrimination against nationalists in 2007 is not the same as it was in 1969 thanks to relentless campaigning by republicans and others, economic inequality and poverty are still among the greatest challenges in the Six Counties today.

- One in four children (100,000) live in poverty, and more than a third of these children (almost 36,000) live in severe poverty.
- Over a thousand older people die every year as a result of fuel poverty.
- The gender pay gap persists, with men still paid significantly more than women for the same work.
- Nationalists are still more than twice as likely to be unemployed as their unionist counterparts.
- Nationalists and people living West of the Bann are more likely to suffer from ill-health and to be 'economically inactive'.
- People with disabilities generally are twice as likely to be unemployed as those without disabilities.
- The social and economic consequences of discrimination on the grounds of race/ethnicity and sexual orientation still need to be fully acknowledged and addressed.

Changing this situation requires decisive action. Sinn Féin is committed to building not just a strong economy, but an equal economy that delivers for all people in the Six Counties and redresses decades of systematic discrimination against the nationalist community and others.

A Plan to Redress Regional Economic Inequality

There is no shortage of evidence that inward and other investment and consequently economic development and access to employment and services have been concentrated to

the east and in parts of Belfast in particular. Communities in the Border Corridor and West of the Bann continue to face an extent of unbalanced regional development that amounts to economic discrimination. Sinn Féin would change this situation by introducing a policy based on objective need which would reverse regional economic inequality. Accomplishing this requires political will and a strategic, planned approach.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Tackle discrimination, patterns of disadvantage and the legacy of under investment particularly West of the Bann, in border areas and North and West Belfast through the effective implementation of anti-poverty strategies and equality obligations.
- Develop an agreed a Balanced Regional Development Strategy, based on objective need criteria, to end the imbalance in financial support for economic development and underinvestment in infrastructure West of the Bann and in border areas.
- Challenge the imbalance in economic investment by ensuring that government departments and agencies, including Invest NI, deliver investment on an equal basis particularly West of the Bann and in border areas with a historic lack of investment in economic development.
- Create new incentives for investment and implement an investment programme in areas of high unemployment or social deprivation, for example, West of the Bann, the border areas and North and West Belfast.
- Decentralise government departments to communities West of the Bann and in the border counties.
- Introduce a Social Investment Obligation in all public procurement contracts (similar to the Value for Money Requirement), aimed at extracting commitments from the private sector to contribute to the alleviation of long-term unemployment and the skills deficit in disadvantaged areas.

- Review and amend the Regional Transportation Strategy, which proposes to leave Fermanagh, Tyrone and South Armagh with negligible access to public transport.
- Ensure substantial investment in cross border transportation routes including designation of the main N14, A5, N2 North West to Dublin route and the Derry-Belfast railway line as a key strategic transport corridor.
- Continually assess all economic policies and public spending to ensure that they are contributing to the elimination of poverty, social disadvantage, economic discrimination and the imbalance in urban-rural development.

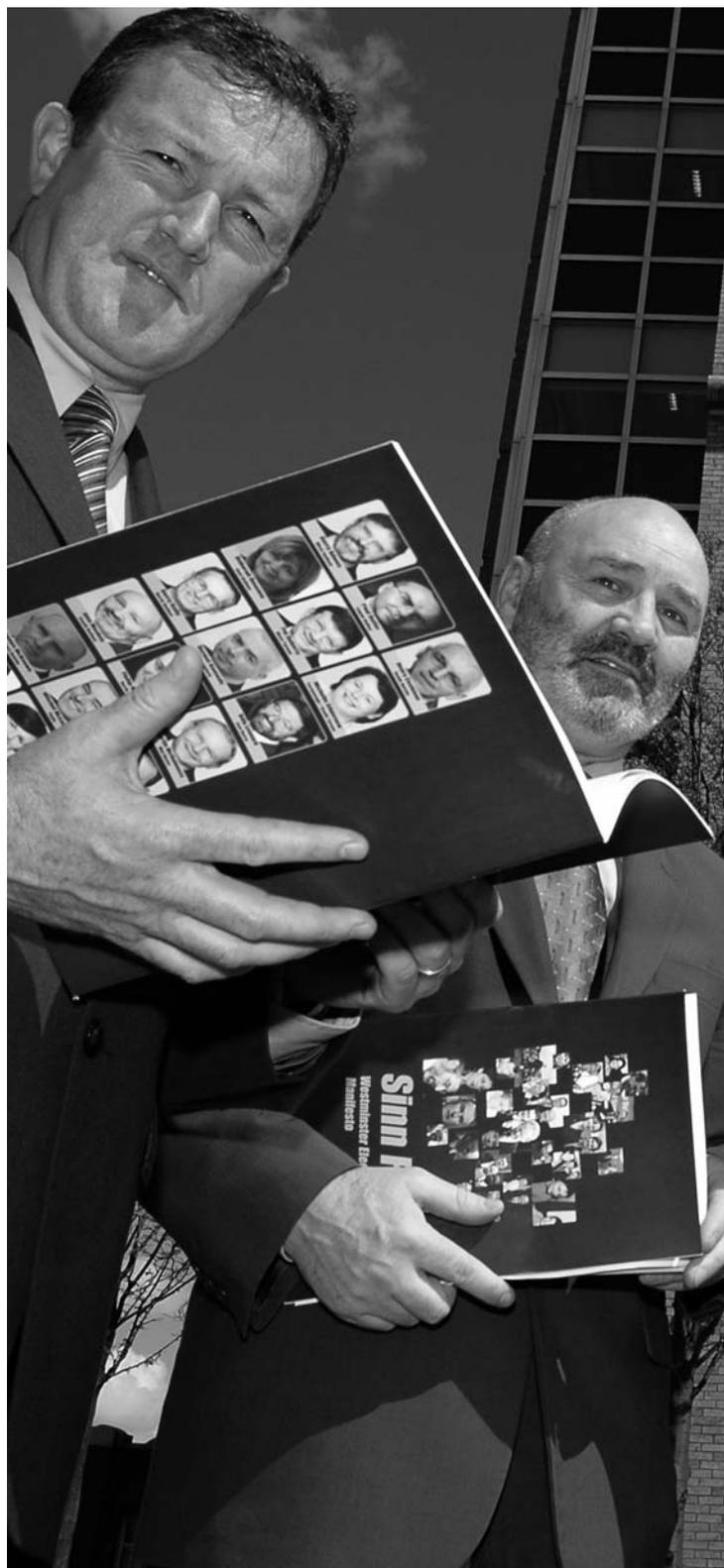
A Plan for Eliminating Poverty

Poverty continues to affect nationalist, unionist and new communities alike, but poverty also remains concentrated in some sections of society – among women, older people, people with disabilities, refugees and migrant workers, and lone parents. Poverty continues in nationalist communities as the backbone of economic discrimination has yet to be fully broken.

Eliminating poverty is Sinn Féin's highest overarching economic and social priority. All of our economic and social policies are formulated to contribute towards this key objective. Anti-poverty measures were central to Sinn Féin's negotiating demands in relation to the Good Friday Agreement that extracted commitments regarding objective need criteria and in relation to our achievement of an objective need-based Anti-Poverty Strategy arising from the St. Andrew's talks. We will continue to harness the necessary political will to make poverty history in Ireland generally, and in the Six Counties in particular.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Ringfence a meaningful proportion of the annual budget for programmes aimed at tackling economic inequality and poverty.



- Subject government policy to poverty-proofing and ensure that all resources are targeted on the basis of objective need in line with the Section 75 equality duty.
- Fully integrate the new Anti-Poverty Strategy for the Six Counties with the 26 Counties Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- Make gender equality budgeting for women a central part of the economic planning process, to recognise that women are at greater risk of poverty and continue to earn less than men.
- Implement the recommendations of the West Belfast Task Force report.
- Tackle ongoing employment-related discrimination against nationalists through a time-framed strategy to eliminate the unemployment differential.
- Introduce meaningful employment targets, delivered through effective programmes, for people with disabilities in the public and private sectors.
- Support the right of asylum seekers to work while their cases are processed.
- Adopt a set of measures to comprehensively address higher levels of poverty among lone parent families particularly in relation to training and work opportunities and housing provision.

Enhancing Workers' Rights for an Ireland of Equals

Just as Sinn Féin has actively defended trade union rights and the rights of nationalist workers to be free of harassment and discrimination for nearly a century, Sinn Féin is equally committed to respect, protect and promote workers' rights more generally. Everyone has the right to freedom from exploitation and discrimination in the workplace; the right to safe working conditions and fair remuneration for their work; and the right to equal pay for work of equal value. Sinn Féin believes that the state has an obligation to ensure that workers' rights are upheld and enforced. Sinn Féin also commits to working to end worker

exploitation internationally, particularly in developing countries, through the promotion of ethical consumption and trade policies.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Promote the right to fair pay, and to work in safe conditions that are not harmful to health and well-being.
- Promote the right to protection from redundancy and to access life-long learning opportunities and vocational training and re-training.
- Promote the right to form, join and be represented by trade unions, to negotiate contracts of employment, to picket and to withhold labour.
- Promote the right of workers to be consulted and heard on workplace decisions which affect them.
- Promote the right of workers to a fair work-life balance which takes into account family responsibility, community involvement and leisure time.
- Promote the right of workers to retire with sufficient income.
- Establish an effective inspection and enforcement system to protect all workers, particularly young apprentices and migrant workers, against exploitation and abuse.
- Launch a multilingual public education campaign on workers' rights and employers' responsibilities and actively encourage trade union recognition, membership and representation.
- Effectively enforce the existing minimum wage and argue for its increase.
- Ensure that public spending does not encourage exploitation of workers, locally or internationally.

Rural Regeneration to Empower Rural Communities

The decline of farming has not only rendered many rural families more dependent on off-farm employment or on EU transfer payments than farming itself as the primary source of income, it has also eroded other cornerstones of rural communities, such as schools and post offices. Sinn Féin is committed to keeping farming families on the land and ensuring a good quality of life for everyone living in rural communities. We believe that agriculture and fishing in Ireland can be made sustainable within the context of an all-Ireland agricultural and fisheries policy. We want to encourage viable rural communities with a strong community infrastructure and equal access to all public services. We support agricultural diversification in mixed and organic farming as well as off-farm employment. We believe that coastal communities deserve a sustainable future. The full potential of rural communities in alternative, renewable energy production has not been properly realised. New rural regeneration strategies are essential to halt the decline and to empower rural communities. Sinn Féin has put the need for an integrated and coherent rural regeneration strategy – developed on a cross-departmental and all-Ireland basis – high on the political agenda.

Rural communities do not deserve the second class treatment they get. Sinn Féin has been working for a new deal for rural Ireland. We have always articulated the ways in which British agricultural policy is detrimental to Irish farming. We led the way in arguing that full decoupling is the best way to provide a future for Irish farming in the context of major CAP reform. We led the campaign to have the beef export ban in the Six Counties removed, and opposed plans to concentrate dairy production. We set out proposals to reduce the impact of the EU Nitrates Directive, and campaigned against the introduction of GM foods and crops. At every level we have pursued the spending of rural development money in rural areas and lobbied intensively to have Peace II money spent. We have consistently challenged the inefficiencies within DARD, including its failure to properly

eradicate both TB and Brucellosis. We campaigned against the PPS14 proposals on rural planning and warned that the policy would aggravate the rural housing crisis.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Commission an all-Ireland Rural White Paper that will take into account the needs of all those living and working in rural areas.
- Agree a comprehensive, fully integrated, properly resourced Rural Regeneration Strategy – in consultation with farmers and fishermen, rural businesses, rural communities and their representative organisations – that links agriculture, fisheries, enterprise, environment, culture, health, education, transportation, communications and social services.
- Remove 'UK' status from our food exports, and integrate the agri-food industry and agricultural services on an all-Ireland basis, including an All-Ireland Food Promotion Agency.
- Develop an island-wide animal health strategy, and keep Ireland as a whole GM crop-free.
- Actively promote and assist farm diversification into new areas, such as renewable energy, and establish Rural Advice Centres to provide assistance to rural communities and farmers in maximising farm incomes.
- Increase the quota allocation for Irish fishing fleets.
- Radically reform the planning service to protect the right of rural people to live within their own community and ensure adequate consultation, transparency, accountability and consistency in all planning decisions.
- End cutbacks in the provision of public services to rural communities and provide long-term funding for development of rural community infrastructure and capacity.
- Support the role of women in rural development, including increased provision of proper childcare in rural areas to enable rural women to access training and employment opportunities.

Defending **Public Services**

Delivering **Rights-Based Governance**

Sinn Féin Priorities for 2007-2012:

- No Privatisation, No Double Taxation, No Water Charges
- Promote the Equal Right to Healthcare
- Promote the Equal Right to Education
- Promote the Equal Right to Housing
- Respect the Right to a Clean Environment and Accessible Public Transport
- Enhance the Quality of Life Through Support for Arts and Culture

No Privatisation, No Double Taxation, No Water Charges

Sinn Féin is opposed to the commercialisation of essential services such as healthcare and education. We believe that the State should provide equal access to public services and these should be funded from general progressive taxation. Privatising services not only prevents equal access on the basis of need alone, it frequently imposes double-taxation in the form of user fees. On this basis – and because Public-Private Partnerships and Private Finance Initiatives (PPP-PFI) have not proven economically efficient but instead often take longer and cost more – Sinn Féin is opposed to privatisation of public services.

Water charges are another such form of double-taxation that has become the trademark of the British Labour Party. They are regressive taxes. Those least able to pay – the working poor,

older people, lone parents, people with disabilities and health needs, small businesses – will be hit the hardest. Water charges will therefore create and reinforce existing patterns of poverty, including child poverty and fuel poverty. Indeed, as a result we will be faced before long with a new situation in Ireland: water poverty.

Sinn Féin is opposed to the imposition of water charges and is opposed to the privatisation of water services. We believe that water services should remain within public ownership and should be funded through the general taxation system. It should not be down to people here to pay for the investment that successive British Governments have failed to deliver for the Six Counties.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Oppose the privatisation of public services.
- Oppose the imposition of water charges and the privatisation of the water service, and any other forms of regressive double-taxation.
- Ensure the water charges legislation is deferred to the incoming Assembly and Executive to allow for an open debate and consultation around the issue of water reform.
- Ensure that the legacy costs of the failure to invest in water and sewerage are covered by the British Government.

Promoting the Equal Right to Healthcare

No public service has suffered more under British Direct Rule and Unionist misrule than the health service. Despite the dedication and skill of its workforce, major structural problems and under-resourcing have generated a healthcare crisis involving lengthening waiting lists and unequal access particularly in rural and border areas. The health service is critically in need of a radical reorganisation and a massive injection of finance. Instead, British Direct Rule Ministers have slashed funding further and used the Review of Public Administration to introduce failed neo-conservative policies into the Six Counties, paving the way for privatisation of healthcare and rewarding those with vested interests. Sinn Féin would seek to reverse this, to ensure that no further steps are taken to privatise the health service. We must protect our most valuable asset – our committed health service staff.

Sinn Féin is determined to create a society where inequalities in health are eradicated and where everyone has equal access to the highest quality healthcare services on the basis of need alone. To this end we want to target services and resources to those most in need – particularly those on low incomes, in deprived urban communities, rural areas and the border region. In our health policy Healthcare in an Ireland of Equals Sinn Féin outlines our vision for a future all-Ireland health service that is accountable to the communities it serves. We also advocate meaningful interim changes that will lead to the delivery of higher quality, more timely services that are also more responsive to individual and local community needs, by putting a greater emphasis on prevention, primary care and the mental health service.

Sinn Féin believes that healthcare is a right and must be a priority for the incoming Assembly and Executive. Despite budgetary strangulation by the British Government, in her short

time in office our previous Minister for Health Bairbre de Brún delivered major investment initiatives in primary care, cancer services, the ambulance service, diagnostic equipment and children's health, including the Sure Start programme. By systematically evaluating every aspect of the service she laid the foundations for transforming the health service in the future. In the coming period Sinn Féin will again rise to meet the challenge and bring health to the centre of public policy.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Include the right to healthcare in the Bill of Rights for the Six Counties and in a future All-Ireland Charter of Rights, ensure equal access to health services on the basis of need regardless of socio-economic status or place of residence, gender, age, physical or mental disability, ethnicity or nationality, religion, political opinion or sexual orientation, and achieve greater equality in health outcomes.
- Fully resource and implement the 'Investing for Health' Strategy, a public health strategy developed by the former Sinn Féin Minister for Health Bairbre de Brún, to tackle the socioeconomic and cultural determinants of ill-health.
- Bring primary care including prevention, health promotion, public health and community-based health services to the centre of the healthcare system.
- Remove the barrier to proper GP access in border areas through enhanced all-Ireland cooperation in GP Out of Hours Services.
- Implement the findings of the All-Ireland Ministerial Council's 2002 Report into Cross-Border Mobility regarding access to the nearest service regardless of jurisdiction and mutual recognition of qualifications.
- Establish a Rural Health Task Force that brings together political leadership, healthcare workers and the community and voluntary sectors to develop solutions to address the issues of unequal access to healthcare in rural areas, and border areas in particular.

- Dramatically reduce or eliminate treatment waiting lists, and ensure that all waiting lists are managed on the basis of clinical need alone.
- Oppose privatisation of healthcare services and staff.
- In keeping with our belief that all health services, including access to prescription medication, should be free at the point of delivery, introduce enabling legislation to abolish prescription charges.
- Fully implement the recommendations of the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability initiated by Sinn Féin Health Minister Bairbre de Brún.
- Fully implement the regional Suicide Prevention Strategy and promote a coordinated all-Ireland approach.
- Support the introduction of legislation to protect workers and the public from tobacco smoke in the workplace like that introduced in the 26 Counties, and to raise the minimum age for the purchase of tobacco products from 16 to 18 years of age.

Promoting the Equal Right to Education

Every person has an equal right to education. Equality of opportunity, of access and of provision are basic entitlements. Sinn Féin believes in a rights-based and child-centred education system. Education should be free, accessible, quality-assured and based on equality regardless of class, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or community background. It should be a fundamental right for children to be enabled to achieve their full potential by having free access to the levels of curriculum, institutions and type of teaching best suited to their needs. People should also be able to avail of education at any age and stage of their lives. Children and young people with disabilities or other additional educational needs are entitled to additional resources to ensure equality of opportunity. This is their right and Sinn Féin is therefore committed to substantially increased, dedicated resources for children with additional educational needs. Sinn Féin advocates effective programmes including targeted financial supports and incentives to attract under-represented groups – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds – into university education. We are fundamentally committed to develop concerted literacy and numeracy strategies, including targeted timeframes to achieve the total eradication of illiteracy and innumeracy.

Education is an essential instrument for building an Ireland of Equals and Sinn Féin alone have the political will to deliver full equality in education. During his brief time as Minister for Education Martin McGuinness was a champion for education equality. He delivered on his commitment to eliminate the discriminatory 11 Plus. He increased investment in services for children with additional educational needs. He supported the further development of integrated and Irish Medium education and he led a massive, unprecedented school building programme. Sinn Féin will again bring this focused and determined approach to education policy in a new Assembly and Executive.



To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Invest sufficiently in Early Years Learning, to positively affect the life chances of the most disadvantaged children.
- Finally end academic selection – using parental preference and a Pupil Profile to inform parents of children transferring to all ability (11-18) post-primary education.
- Oppose cuts in vital front-line education services, and ensure additional investment in schools and children where the measured social and educational need of the school population is high.
- Provide appropriate supports within mainstream classrooms for children with additional needs.
- Introduce legislation to guarantee the rights of those on the autistic spectrum, agree an Autism Strategy and prioritise the development of the All-Ireland Centre of Excellence for Autism at Middletown, County Armagh, as initiated during the previous Executive by Minister Martin McGuinness and since delayed as a result of Direct Rule.
- Properly resource integrated and Irish Medium education.
- Remove barriers and generate incentives for everyone hoping to enter third level education, irrespective of age, gender, marital status, disability or income.
- Agree a focused community-based adult literacy campaign with the objective of eliminating adult illiteracy by 2012.

Promoting the Equal Right to Housing

Access to affordable, adequate and appropriate housing is a basic human right. That right is being denied to thousands of people in the Six Counties. There is now a housing crisis and a major shortage of social and affordable housing in urban and rural communities. Property speculators and private landlords are buying up land and houses, out-bidding families and first-time buyers and effectively excluding them from the housing market. As a result, people on low or average incomes are

increasingly unable to afford a home. The unregulated private rented sector has ballooned, and homelessness has more than doubled. In 2005, around 30,000 households were on the housing waiting list. The disastrous PPS14 rural planning policy will severely restrict new-builds within rural communities, further increasing demand for housing in rural towns and urban centres, and inflating house prices. In addition, concerns remain that political and sectarian considerations continue to unduly influence housing allocation. Overall, nationalists are on housing waiting lists an average of one and a half times longer than unionists, and the rate of increase for nationalists on waiting lists is double that of unionists. Travellers and people with disabilities continue to experience systematic underhousing. The related problem of fuel poverty persists, affecting an estimated one third of all homes (200,000 households) and there are also pockets of extreme fuel poverty. For example, almost half the population in North Belfast still lack adequate heating.

Housing rights were a key demand of the Civil Rights struggle, and they remain a priority for Sinn Féin. We want to see the establishment of an equitable, balanced and fairly regulated housing market which provides for the needs of all our people. The decline of the social sector must be addressed as a matter of priority with responsibility for the building and provision of social housing returned to the Housing Executive. Strong action is needed to deter harmful forms of speculation, such as the practice of buying up housing, renting or leaving them vacant for a period before selling them on at a huge profit. Within the private rented sector, Sinn Féin supports a more robust tenant protection regime to regulate housing standards, ensure reasonable levels of rent and protect against forced eviction. Increased stability in this sector would be of benefit to all – landlords, local authorities and tenants alike. Sinn Féin will continue to campaign against all forms of housing

discrimination and calls for housing allocation to be made on the basis of objective need alone. Sinn Féin also supports specific housing rights, such as the right of the Traveller community to adequate and appropriate accommodation and the right of people with disabilities to independent living. In addition, the right to housing includes the right to adequate warmth and we are therefore also committed to the eradication of fuel poverty within a specific timeframe.

Sinn Féin is the only party to treat housing as a fully enforceable social right. Our public representatives and other activists are well-known for providing the most robust housing advocacy at local level. This is the campaigning approach to housing we would bring to the new Assembly and Executive.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Include the right to housing in the Bill of Rights for the Six Counties and in a future All-Ireland Charter of Rights, and review all existing housing legislation to amend or repeal if necessary to ensure full conformity with a rights-based approach.
- Fully implement, within specific timeframes, all recommendations in the Homelessness Strategy and agree a more ambitious plan aiming to eliminate street homelessness by 2010.
- Eliminate the housing waiting list by launching a major renewed investment in a comprehensive social housing programme, resulting in an annual new build of 5,000 units and 70,000 new homes by 2025.
- Introduce a radical approach to maximise development of social and affordable housing by using: available land banks, starting with former British Army and former RUC and PSNI barracks and brownfield sites in government ownership; Compulsory Purchase Orders on derelict properties vacant for more than 12 months; and a

legislative requirement that at least 30% of all private development sites are earmarked for social and affordable housing.

- Introduce legislation to ensure that housing units designated as 'affordable' are priced at cost-price, meaning a price equal to the cost of the construction of that house.
- Introduce a comprehensive and robust tenant protection regime involving mandatory registration of all private landlords, inspections, and a system of rent control.
- Ensure all social housing in the Six Counties is built and allocated on the basis of objective need, and establish targets and timetables to reduce and eradicate the community differential in housing need and allocation.
- Respect, protect and promote the rights of Travellers to adequate and appropriate housing and ensure genuine engagement and consultation on a basis of equality between the Housing Executive, local authorities, Travellers and the settled community.
- Establish a Cross-Departmental Ministerial Task Force on Fuel Poverty, charged with allocating additional resources to support energy efficiency solutions for fuel poor homes in keeping with the targets set out in the Fuel Poverty Strategy, so as to eradicate fuel poverty within a set timeframe; and putting renewable energy at the centre of the fuel poverty solution given its potential to reduce CO2 emissions.



Respecting the Right to a Clean Environment and Accessible Public Transport

Everyone in Ireland has the right to a safe and clean environment. Sinn Féin is committed to sustainable development and robust environmental protection. This necessarily involves the use of legislation that challenges the attitudes and practices of businesses and consumers alike and promotes behavioural change. However, it is important to strike an appropriate balance between incentives and disincentives, and to apply the polluter pays principle in a manner that does not disproportionately penalise those on lower incomes. All environmental protection measures will necessarily be most effective if pursued on an integrated all-Ireland basis.

We fully recognise that global warming is one of the most serious challenges facing us all. There is much that can and must be done at local, regional and national level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Government failure to respond to protect the environment and to develop waste management solutions and alternative renewable energy is completely unacceptable. Sinn Féin is committed to the promotion of a zero waste strategy and environmental policies that reject incineration and landfill and promote waste reduction, re-use and recycling. We are also committed to vigorously promoting energy efficiency and alternative renewable energy. We firmly oppose nuclear energy and do not agree that it is a sustainable alternative.

In view of the above, we know that delivery on our commitment to accessible public transportation as a transport policy priority is more crucial than ever. We believe that accessible and affordable public transport is a right, and in the new Assembly and Executive our intention is to reverse the entrenched pattern of underinvestment in this sector.

Sinn Féin has actively campaigned against incineration and landfill in Newry and Mourne, Dungannon, Armagh, Omagh and elsewhere. We have long campaigned against Sellafield. But we have always also vigorously promoted viable sustainable alternatives to waste management and energy production, such as our proposal to convert the Irish sugar beet industry to bio-fuel production. We will continue this constructive approach in our advocacy of the right to a clean environment and the right to accessible public transport.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Support an all-Ireland campaign of public, political, legal and diplomatic pressure to force the complete closure of Sellafield.
- Establish an all-Ireland Environmental Protection Agency to drive forward a strong programme of enforcement.
- Establish an All-Ireland Renewable Energy Commission with a specific brief of aggressively accelerating the development of the sector and centrally involving the social economy in energy production.
- Develop an All-Ireland Waste Management Strategy involving reduction, reuse and recycling and mechanical-biological treatment as an alternative to incineration and landfill.
- Ban the development of municipal incinerators in Ireland and close landfill sites that have not been properly engineered to minimise the danger of contamination.
- Regulate to enforce minimum standards of waste reduction at the point of production, to significantly reduce packaging, and to ban products that are non-recyclable where there is a recyclable alternative.
- Extend the plastic bag levy on an all-Ireland basis.
- Build major national recycling facilities and support government intervention to create markets for recyclables.
- Mandate and support all councils to produce waste

strategies including a minimum target of 50% recycling and a total ban on disposal of compostable waste in landfills by 2010.

- Support legislation for clear guidelines on best practice environmental standards for new homes, and work towards the target of zero carbon homes by 2015.
- Ensure priority investment in public transport, with a clear focus on fully integrated all-Ireland and multi-mode systems; public ownership; environmentally sustainable modes; and extending accessibility schemes for rural people, low income people including pensioners, and people with disabilities.

Enhancing the Quality of Life Through Support for the Arts and Culture

Arts and culture generally enhance our quality of life. Community arts in particular promote development, social inclusion and foster local identity. Sinn Féin believes that arts and culture are essential, not an optional extra. Apart from their intrinsic social value, they also have the capacity to significantly enhance the Six Counties economy, driving local economic regeneration and the tourism sector in particular. Arts and culture therefore provide both a social and an economic return on public investment. Yet currently there is a crisis in the arts as a result of systematic under-funding. It is estimated that public funding of the arts in the Six Counties is the lowest of any comparable region in these islands. Current per capita spend on the arts is £6.13 – under half the spend in the 26 Counties which stands at £12.46 and in itself is not nearly high enough. While we recognise that there is much that needs to be done to better support arts and culture in the Six Counties, in our view the matter of greatest urgency in arts policy at present is the need to end the funding deficit and restructure the arts budget. Sinn Féin is committed to this.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- End the funding crisis in arts and culture and reach a minimum investment target of 1% total budgetary spend.
- Devote significant support to cooperatively-run and community arts projects including community festivals, and particularly those that innovate to actively promote social inclusion and oppose sectarianism and racism.
- Ensure that funding allocation is not discriminatory but fully inclusive, actively and equally promoting not only Irish culture including Irish language arts, but also participation by new communities and a comprehensive disability arts programme.
- Actively promote the Six Counties as a cultural visitor destination within an all-Ireland framework.
- Establish a Gaeltacht Quarter in Belfast.



Justice and Community Safety

Making Acceptable Policing a Reality

All of us are entitled to a society in which we feel safe and secure, and in which our civil and political rights are respected and protected. Sinn Féin is for accountable civic policing free from partisan political control and a fair, impartial and effective legal and judicial system which is transparent and accountable. This is not the experience of nationalists and republicans for whom partisan political policing resulted in harassment, torture, assassination, collusion with unionist death squads, plastic bullets and shoot-to-kill. The resulting chasm of mistrust for many republicans and nationalists for the police and courts must be bridged.

Huge progress has been made since the Good Friday Agreement. More needs to be done. The changes to policing secured by Sinn Féin in legislation need to be implemented fully. The PSNI needs to make strenuous efforts to earn the trust and confidence of nationalists and republicans. We do not yet have the truth about collusion. We do not yet have justice for all victims and survivors. Sinn Féin will not rest until all this has been fully and finally achieved – nor indeed until we have secured fully accountable all-Ireland policing structures. More change is essential and Sinn Féin remains the driving force for this change.

Achieve Fully Democratically Accountable Civic Policing

The responsibility of the police is to defend and uphold the rights of citizens. In order to fulfil this role, they require critical support. Therefore, in the context of re-establishment of the

Sinn Féin Priorities for 2007-2012:

- **Achieve Fully Democratically Accountable Civic Policing**
- **Repatriate Policing and Justice Powers to the Assembly**
- **Secure Truth, Justice and Equal Treatment for All Victims and Survivors**
- **Expose and Dismantle the Apparatus of Collusion**
- **Enhance Community Safety Measures**

power-sharing institutions or failing this, when acceptable new partnership arrangements to implement the Good Friday Agreement are in place, Sinn Féin will play our part on the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships. Our objectives in doing so will be to ensure that a civic policing service that is free from partisan political control, and representative of the community it serves is delivered as quickly as possible; to hold the PSNI legally and democratically to account; to resolutely oppose the use of lethal weapons in public order situations, including plastic bullets; and to ensure that political policing and collusion are exposed, thoroughly investigated and made a thing of the past.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Use every mechanism available to us as a consequence of our participation in the police accountability structures to hold the PSNI to account.

Repatriate Policing and Justice Powers to the Assembly

It is unreasonable to expect politicians or citizens to take

responsibility for policing and justice and yet have no real authority over these matters. The Assembly and Executive should have the same rights in respect of these matters as for health and education, the environment, our economy and so on.

Full democratic and legal accountability is the keystone of acceptable civic policing. The partisan control of British securocrats in London and the NIO is unacceptable. Policing and justice powers must be transferred to local, democratically accountable representatives in a restored Assembly and Executive and all-Ireland arrangements.

Sinn Féin negotiators have secured British Government agreement to transfer policing and justice powers away from Westminster; legislation setting out the departmental model by which authority over policing and justice will lie with Irish elected representatives; and a commitment to a transfer timeframe of no later than May 2008.



To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Ensure the transfer of powers on policing and justice to the power-sharing Executive and All-Ireland Ministerial Council by May 2008 as set out in the St. Andrews Agreement.
- Hold the British Government to their commitment to separate MI5 from civic policing structures in the Six Counties.

Secure Truth, Justice and Equal Treatment for All Victims and Survivors

All victims and survivors of the recent conflict – without exception – have a right to truth and acknowledgement. There can be no hierarchy of victims; all must be treated equally.

Sinn Féin supports a totally independent Truth Recovery Process to deal with issues of the past. Sinn Féin believes that victims, survivors, their families and support groups must be central to any process of truth recovery, especially when dealing with collusion or state murder. Sinn Féin will continue to be guided by the wishes of the families in campaigning around the need for individual inquiries into collusion or the shoot-to-kill policy.

Sinn Féin will work to:

- Develop a balanced and comprehensive strategy to acknowledge and address the suffering of victims and survivors.
- Ensure adequate resourcing and funding to enable victims' groups to pursue their remits.
- Demand and promote equality of treatment for all victims and survivors and an end to practices that discriminate or perpetuate discrimination against victims of state violence and collusion.

Expose and Dismantle the Apparatus of Collusion

The families of victims and the wider community need truth and justice in respect of the collusion between British forces and the very highest echelons of the British state with unionist death squads. This has been at the core of Britain's war in Ireland. There can be no excuses and no further delay. The apparatus of collusion must be exposed and dismantled.

Sinn Féin pledges to continue to highlight collusion and state murder so that the British Government :

- Acknowledges its role in the conflict, particularly around collusion and shoot-to-kill.
- Abandons its long-held policy of collusion and state murder.
- Discloses to the families all the information it has on collusion and state murder.
- Dismantles the structures of collusion and state murder inside the PSNI, Military Intelligence and MI5.
- Exposes and challenge s any human rights abusers who remain in the PSNI.

No Role for MI5

For decades people across this island have suffered enormously as a result of the activities of MI5, which has been responsible for collusion and state sponsored killings. In intense and detailed negotiations with the British government Sinn Féin secured the reversal of the British government's proposal to integrate the PSNI and MI5. Our objective in all of this has been to secure accountable and representative policing and to firewall local policing from the malign and corruptive influence and control of MI5. We remain adamantly opposed to a force within a force.

Sinn Féin has ensured that:

- All PSNI members will be accountable to the Policing Board and other Patten mechanisms and upon transfer to the Justice Minister/s.
- There will be no secondment of PSNI members to MI5.
- No PSNI members will be under the control of MI5.
- MI5 will have no role in civic policing.
- There will be all-party representation on the Policing Board Special Purposes Committee.
- The Police Ombudsman will have statutory access to all information held by the PSNI and statutory powers to hold PSNI members to account. Arrangements will be made so that she will have access to information held by MI5 where this is necessary to the discharge of her duties.
- There will be an Annual Review involving consultation with the First and Deputy First Ministers and future Justice Ministers.

End the Use of Plastic Bullets

There should be a total ban on Plastic Bullets. Between 1970 and 2005 almost 126,000 rubber and plastic bullets were fired. This weapon has killed 17 people, including 9 children. Thousands more were injured. They were deliberately used against peaceful protestors and mourners attending funerals. In 1981 alone almost 30,000 plastic bullets were fired killing seven people, three of them children. The purchase of Plastic Bullets by the Policing Board in recent years is an explicit approval of their use. For decades Sinn Féin has worked with victims and human rights groups to see an end to their use on our streets. We will continue to do so. Sinn Féin welcomes the recent commitment not to use these weapons in crowd control or public order situations. We also welcome the acknowledgement of the hurt resulting from injuries and the deaths of innocent people. These weapons should never be used again. Tasers which can also be lethal are not an acceptable alternative.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Use every mechanism available to us as a consequence of our participation in the police accountability structures to hold the PSNI to account.
- End the use of plastic bullets.
- Oppose the use of tasers.
- Develop the process to achieve a routinely unarmed policing service.

Enhance Community Safety Measures

As Sinn Féin continues to strive for representative and democratically accountable policing, we also recognise that our communities must be protected from criminality and other anti-social behaviour. Republicans and nationalists are against criminality. We support non-violent, community-based approaches to resolving disputes and creating safer communities such as Community Restorative Justice, Neighbourhood Watch programmes and safer neighbourhood projects. These are complementary to accountable civic and community policing. We will also pursue economic and social

policies that reduce the deprivation and hopelessness that are the root causes of much crime and other anti-social activity.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Ensure that policing with the community becomes the principal function of the police.
- Ensure effective responses to sectarian, racist and homophobic attacks and violence against women and children.
- Support the development of and increase funding for Community Restorative Justice Schemes.
- Promote Safer Streets projects and Neighbourhood Watches.
- Increase support for home security improvements particularly for the elderly and the otherwise vulnerable.
- Expand refuge, housing and other support facilities for the victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Develop in partnership with the Irish Government an all-Ireland register of sex offenders to contribute to child protection.



Diversity. Equality. Respect.

Building an Ireland of Equals is one of Sinn Féin's core objectives. Sinn Féin negotiators fought for and delivered the significantly enhanced equality and human rights architecture in the Good Friday Agreement. But we still aren't satisfied. We now have good basic tools with which to continue to challenge ongoing discrimination and persistent inequality, but we need to go further to make equality real for all those sections of society that continue to experience exclusion on a daily basis. What we need now is to ensure the Equality Commission and Human Rights Commissions actually use to the fullest extent the powers they have. We also need concrete, comprehensive, timetabled and fully resourced plans to end all forms of discrimination. Sinn Féin in Government will bring equality and human rights to the centre of public policy and decision making.

End Sectarianism and Promote a Shared and Equal Future

Sinn Féin wants to build a New Ireland that is not based on the division of the people, which has in the past been 'carefully fostered by an alien government'. We recognise that all our people have suffered greatly because of the divisions between our communities and that this has stood in the way of improving the lives of all of the people who live here. We know that much hurt exists within our society. We acknowledge that we have all contributed to this hurt. Consequently, we all share a responsibility to advance reconciliation on this island. Sinn Féin seeks to build a society in which tolerance and equal treatment are standards governing all institutions and everyday life. We want to make a start on advancing that vision now by engaging with all groups on the basis of equality and mutual respect. Republicans recognise that we have a journey to travel in

Sinn Féin Priorities for 2007-2012:

- End Sectarianism and Promote a Shared and Equal Future
- Work for the Introduction of an Irish Language Act
- Support Women's Equal Right to Work and to Equal Pay
- Eliminate Child Poverty
- Establish a Commissioner for Older People
- Promote Stringent Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Promote Equality for New Communities and Oppose Racism
- Equal Rights for All Regardless of Sexual Orientation

developing our own understanding of unionism. To that end Sinn Féin has been involved in a series of intensive engagements with unionists. We will continue this engagement, and seek to promote dialogue with unionists at every possible opportunity. Our objective has been to build understanding of each other, and to build consensus based on respect for each other's differences. We hope that by these means we will be able to transcend the differences that have divided us in the past. A genuinely shared future can only be built on equality.

Sectarianism remains an unacceptable characteristic of our society and must be eradicated. Sectarian attacks are wholly unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. Sinn Féin pledges to confront sectarianism, racism, intolerance and bigotry wherever they arise and to promote instead tolerance, inclusivity and a pluralist society in which difference is celebrated and cultural diversity is encouraged.

To advance this objective, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Continue a constructive engagement with unionism, and promote a shared future based on equality 'cherishing all of the people equally'.
- Develop and fund anti-sectarianism strategies using a multi-agency approach.
- Promote anti-sectarianism programmes
- Develop a programme for removing sectarian symbols in public offices and institutions.
- Support substantial penalties or disbarment on elected representatives or public officials who use sectarian language, engage in sectarian behaviour or incite bigotry.
- Ensure that sectarian attacks are confronted and eradicated.

Energetically Promoting the Irish Language

The Irish language is a central part of our culture, which belongs to all of us irrespective of creed or political outlook. It enriches all our lives. Sinn Féin believes strongly in the need to protect and promote the Irish language and above all other political parties we have acted as its champion. We are determined to create a bilingual society in the Six Counties, where people have the right to learn and use Irish if they wish to do so.

Sinn Féin believes that the Irish language in the Six Counties needs strong legislative protection. The Sinn Féin leadership has honoured its pledges which it made in previous election manifestoes to support the Irish language. At the recent St Andrews negotiations we succeeded in securing a promise from the British Government that an Irish Language Act will be implemented in the Six Counties. Sinn Féin will be making a detailed response to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure consultation process and are actively supporting the demands of the Irish language group 'Acht' on this issue. Continuing the

progress already made in the Irish Medium Education sector and building on the work of our former Minister for Education Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féin will seek to ensure that appropriate and sufficient resources for Irish-medium schools are made available to guarantee that children attending these schools are not disadvantaged. We are also calling for an integrated policy aimed at meeting the needs of the younger members of the Irish language community including the provision of training and vocational studies through the medium of the Irish language. We are proposing that suitable and sufficient funding is made available, on a par with that which is available for English-speaking youth, to encourage the development and creation of services for young people in Irish.



To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Achieve the introduction of an Irish Language Act, as proposed in the St. Andrews Agreement, that will give Irish speakers in the Six Counties at least the same rights as those in the rest of Ireland.
- Ensure strong enactment of Part III of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.
- Ensure that the rights of Irish language speakers are recognised, protected and promoted in the Single Equality Bill, the future Bill of Rights and the All-Ireland Charter of Rights.
- Establish a Commissioner for the Irish Language in the north.
- Deliver on the promises to make TG4 readily accessible in all areas of the north; adequately resource the Irish language film and television production fund; and establish an Irish language television channel and at least one Irish language radio station within five years.
- Make extra provision for the Irish pre-school sector.
- Develop an all-embracing programme of Irish language classes as an integral part of the curriculum, involving increased access to Irish language courses from pre-primary right through higher and further education levels.
- Adopt a focused approach, involving both the education and health departments, to provide special needs education in the Irish Medium sector.
- Establish a third level Irish language college that will develop, deliver and regulate a range of courses through the medium of Irish, including part-time adult, degree and postgraduate courses and qualifications.

A Plan for Women's Equality

Women are still not treated equally in Irish society. While there are more women in work outside the home than ever before,

women workers are still concentrated in minimum wage jobs and in the part-time and services sector. Therefore women face a higher risk of being in low paid employment than men. Women still have less access to management and are often paid less than male counterparts for work of equal value. Women's unpaid caring work remains unrecognised, undervalued and unmeasured with the resulting denial of basic rights such as social insurance and pension credits. Not surprisingly, therefore, the gender pay gap remains and all of the groups at highest risk of poverty are composed predominantly of women. Women have an equal right to education, an equal right to work, and to equal pay. All these rights remain theoretical unless underpinned by a right to childcare. It is also essential to develop structures and work practices to allow the reconciliation and harmonisation of family life and work. If we want gender equality and equal participation in employment these are necessities. In addition to ongoing economic inequality, violence against women remains pervasive – it is one of the most common crimes committed in Irish society and it needs to stop. Sinn Féin supports a safety and sanctions approach and we believe that eliminating violence against women must become a much higher priority on any policing and justice policy agenda.

An Ireland of Equals can only be achieved in the context of full equality for women. Sinn Féin advocates the use of all possible mechanisms for advancing gender equality including equality and other legislation, funding for women's groups, affirmative action, gender-proofing and gender mainstreaming. We also recognise the vital need for the equal participation of women in politics and in the decision-making process. Historically Sinn Féin – and especially women in Sinn Féin – have been in the forefront of championing women's equality in Ireland. We will bring this priority into government and we will continue to work until it has been delivered.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Develop and fund a comprehensive Strategy for Women's Equality through the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, ensuring both coherence with the 26 Counties Plan for Women and that it meets the requirements of the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- Introduce specific measures that support women's equal right to work and to equal pay, including a plan for childcare and standards and supports for flexible, family-friendly working arrangements.
- Increase secure funding for local crisis and support services for women experiencing violence, enlarge the network of refuges and expand their capacity so that no woman in need will be turned away.
- Increase resources for family law courts to alleviate delays and ensure access to expert reports on custody and access issues in domestic violence cases.
- Ensure victims of domestic violence get priority access to legal advice and representation; ensure legal representation, state-funded if necessary, for victims in sexual assault cases; and fund an effective rehabilitation programme for offenders, available on request without delay.
- Ensure there is a coordinated, all-Ireland approach to the issue of women being trafficked and sexually exploited.
- Develop an active dialogue with women in all walks of life to encourage them to participate in a meaningful way in the decision-making processes of public and political life.

A Plan for Equality for Children and Youth

Children are unquestionably the most vulnerable in Irish society. They deserve not only protection but equality. Yet Irish children

continue to face discrimination and they lack sufficient protection from harms including poverty, neglect and violence. Some children experience multiple forms of discrimination based on their membership in particular social groups – girl children, nationalist children, children with disabilities, ethnic minority children including Traveller children and asylum-seeking children and LGBT youth. Children should never be subject to age or other discrimination and should be entitled to the same protections as adults in all aspects of their lives, but children also have specific rights in addition to this. Sinn Féin supports the standard established by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – that in all matters affecting children the state must be guided above all by the best interests of the child. For Sinn Féin, children's rights have primacy and we have been to the forefront in championing this cause. We are committed to ensure that the forthcoming Bill of Rights represents an overarching legislative mechanism for the promotion and protection of children's rights that reflects internationally recognised children's rights standards and provides the greatest possible protection for children and young people. It is equally crucial that funding and policy-making for children receives a high priority in the Executive and Assembly, and includes a mechanism to have children's and young people's views heard and taken into account. As we move forward it is crucial that we keep the rights and needs of children centre stage and ensure that all our children have the present and the future they deserve.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Ensure full compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in all areas of policy, and to this end agree all-Ireland indicators of child well-being resulting in bi-annual progress reports.
- Promote stringent compliance with the Section 75 equality duty.

- Use the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to develop a detailed and timeframed Strategy for the Elimination of Child Poverty.
- Establish an all-Ireland Child Protection Forum; introduce legislation that will give children the same legal protection from assault as adults; and ensure adequate support for child protection and family support services and services for victims of abuse.
- Initiate and implement a fully-funded Care Matters Strategy, and ensure children in care have access to independent advocacy and independent sources of advice.
- Fully implement the recommendations of the Bamford Review initiated by Sinn Féin Health Minister Bairbre de Brún so that all children who need access to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services can do so immediately.
- Develop common legislation, policy and approaches to the assessment and risk management of sex offenders on an all-Ireland basis; and ensure a co-ordinated and all-Ireland approach to children who are being trafficked and sexually exploited.
- Develop an all-Ireland policy to ensure the protection and welfare of refugee and asylum-seeking children.

A Plan for Equality for Older People

Older people have made a lifetime contribution to our society through their work, their taxes and voluntary work in their communities. Yet the standard of living of many of our older people does not meet their needs or reflect the contribution they make. Older people continue to be socially, politically and economically marginalised. This has very serious consequences. Not only are older people at greater risk of poverty, over 1,000 older people in the Six Counties die early each year from cold related illness as a result of fuel poverty. By the year 2020, more than half the Irish population will be over 60. This significant

section of the population needs to be empowered by government. Moreover, discrimination against older people affects us all, and promoting equality for older people is in the interest of all. Sinn Féin supports the right of older people to fully participate in the life of their community, to a decent standard of living and to full access to mainstream services and other specific supports.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Establish a Commissioner for Older People.
- Promote a stringent compliance with the Section 75 equality duty.
- Use the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to initiate a review of the standard of living of older people, including pension provision, cost of living, fuel poverty and disposable income, resulting in a comprehensive Strategy for Equality for Older People.
- Establish standards to ensure that all new social housing is designed to meet life long needs, and enhance the system of grant applications for home adaptation work.
- Introduce free personal care in the home, and commission a review of the provision of nursing care in residential accommodation.
- Extend resources available for home security provided through Health and Social Services.
- Introduce free telephone line rental, free TV licenses and examine the potential of free internet access for older people.

A Plan for Equality for People with Disabilities

Every person living with a disability has the right to have their whole person recognised, their capabilities valued and developed to full potential, and their dignity respected. Yet people with disabilities are still systematically excluded from

society. As a consequence, people with a disability are at greater risk of poverty and unemployment. People with disabilities therefore need not only access to appropriate services specific to their disability, but also affirmative action measures to ensure their equal access to education, employment, mainstream services and community life including decision making processes, as of right. Sinn Féin is committed to equal rights and



opportunities for people with disabilities, and we also recognise that people with disabilities have some specific additional rights, such as the right to independent living and the right to advocacy. We are committed to raise a greater awareness of the rights of people with disabilities, to take action to address the multiple barriers people with disabilities face, and particularly to respect the views and demands of people with disabilities themselves, as well as those of their families, allies and advocates.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Promote stringent compliance with all aspects of the Disability Discrimination Act and Section 75 equality duty.
- Introduce comprehensive rights-based policies to improve access for all people with disabilities to disability-specific services including advocacy, education, employment, transport and other mainstream services.
- Ensure that disability access is available in all public buildings and that universal design standards are met in the construction of new buildings.
- Ensure that people with disabilities themselves are directly consulted on policy decisions affecting their lives.

A Plan for Equality for New Communities

Ireland is no longer just a country of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter, of native Irish, planters, and an occupying colonial power, of Traveller and settled people. After more than a century and a half of net emigration and the creation of vast Irish diasporas and all that has entailed for us as a nation, not only is the emigration trend finally reversing itself, but Ireland is now becoming home to people from every region of the world. This new cultural diversification has huge potential to change our national dynamic for the better. It means that not only do

we have the opportunity to enrich the cultural life of our nation, but we also have the opportunity to harness the economic engine of immigration as so many other successful economies have done. This is a positive development, something to be welcomed, not feared. Yet racism is a significant and growing problem. Racist attacks and intimidation have steadily increased since 1996 and members of minority communities report relatively high incidence of harassment. Racism and sectarianism, including institutionalised racism and sectarianism, need to be systematically confronted and effectively addressed together. Sinn Féin is wholly committed to do so.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Promote stringent compliance with the Section 75 equality duty.
- Promote and fund anti-racism programmes.
- Support substantial penalties or disbarment on elected representatives or public officials who use racist language or engage in such behaviour.
- Ensure that racist attacks are confronted and eradicated.
- Secure a right of freedom of movement to all parts of the island for legally documented non-Irish nationals, and oppose the use of prisons as detention centres for undocumented migrants and other immigration deportees in contravention of international human rights law.

A Plan for Equality Regardless of Sexual Orientation

As we stated over a decade ago in our first policy on the rights of the lesbian/gay/bisexual/ transsexual-transgender (LGBT) community, in every community, in every locality and in every political party, there are people who are denied equality on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Sinn Féin has a responsibility to ensure that within our own ranks and the wider community

we represent that second-class citizenship is not acceptable, and that the rights of LGBT people are not negotiable. There is no room for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in our party, in our community nor in our country. The DUP in particular has actively used homophobia for political gain. This is never acceptable, but especially not in a society that has recently seen a 175% increase in homophobic attacks and where homophobia – including homophobic harassment and bullying – is so pervasive that it frequently prompts people to take their own lives in despair. Sinn Féin has challenged the DUP on this issue inside and outside the Assembly chamber, our party leadership have repeatedly publicly stated our unreserved support for the equal rights of same-sex couples to marry and found families, our opposition to homophobia and our general recognition of equal rights for the LGBT community. We fully supported the introduction of legislation to prohibit discrimination against LGBT people in the delivery of goods and services.

To advance this priority, Sinn Féin in Government will work to:

- Promote and fund anti-homophobia programmes.
- Impose substantial financial penalties or disbarment on elected representatives or public officials who use homophobic language or incite homophobia.
- Ensure that homophobic attacks are confronted and eradicated.
- Promote equal rights for same sex couples.

DEMILITARISATION AND SOLIDARITY

FOR A BETTER WORLD

Sinn Féin Priorities for 2007-2012:

- Continue to share our experience of conflict resolution
- Continue to work for the ending of all occupations, and to support the right to self-determination and peace processes in Palestine, the Basque Country and elsewhere.
- Continue to oppose the war in Iraq.
- Continue to campaign for Irish military neutrality and UN reform, and to promote our policy of positive neutrality in action.
- Continue to campaign for global social justice including debt cancellation and fair trade, and for the full realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Continue to work with others in Europe who believe that Another Europe is Possible, in favour of progressive pan-European cooperation in a Europe of Equals and against the further consolidation of an unequal militarised EU superstate.

Sinn Féin is an internationalist party. We are working to reestablish Irish sovereignty over international affairs in the context of a future United Ireland. Our principal aim is to play our part in making another world possible by campaigning for global social justice including demilitarisation, by opposing partition, occupation, imperialist war and other human rights violations, and by extending solidarity with other peoples in struggle who share our goals.

Sinn Féin representatives provide a critical and progressive voice on international relations in Leinster House and the European Parliament – where we have vigorously argued for Irish military neutrality and challenged Irish collusion in the war in Iraq, and argued for more robust action and financial commitments to Make Poverty History. We have also actively engaged at international level. The Sinn Féin leadership not only travel regularly to South Africa to benefit from the guidance and support provided by our friends in the ANC, but have in turn supported other peace processes by sharing our own experience. In 2006, Gerry Adams MP MLA traveled to Palestine, Martin McGuinness MP MLA traveled to Sri Lanka, and a Sinn Féin leadership delegation traveled to the Basque Country. In addition, Bairbre de Brún MEP has represented Sinn Féin at the World Social Forum in Brasil. Gerry Adams is the only Irish political leader to directly challenge US President George Bush over the war in Iraq.





www.sinnfein.ie

44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

Tel: +353 1 8726100

Email: sfadmin@eircom.net

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