

‘One-off measures just a sticking-plaster on a deep wound’ - Sustainable Development Coalition

Ireland’s leading sustainable development coalition has today criticised the one-off and universal nature of many of the measures announced today compared to the long-term, targeted measures that are required to make a real difference to those most in need. Overall, this Budget is a ‘sticking-plaster on a deep wound’ which will only temporarily ease the situation of those struggling the most.

Meaghan Carmody, Coordinator of Coalition 2030, a network of over 70 civil society groups promoting sustainable development noted that although there are positive measures, the types of policies in the budget won’t address income inadequacy and inequality in the long run.

“It’s good to see targeted support for carers, children with special educational needs, and older people who we know suffer extremely high levels of deprivation. Unfortunately though, so many of the measures are one-off, so once they’re gone, they’re gone. We also saw more universal - not targeted - payments and tax cuts, both of which we know benefit the better off. We have consistently been calling for long-term targeted policies that reach those most in need, for example a recurring cost of disability payment, and today we didn’t see measures of that ilk.”

Michelle Murphy, Research and Policy Analyst at Social Justice Ireland, pointed out that the increase to social welfare does not go far enough and that the once-off measures are a temporary relief to complex problems.

“The social welfare increase isn’t enough to catch up with inflation, which means the real value of the social protection system has not been restored. An extra €12 a week is simply inadequate to guarantee a minimum essential standard of living, a life of dignity. Those on low and fixed incomes spend a greater proportion of their income on necessities such as energy, housing costs and food than higher-income households and so are more exposed to price volatility. In future we need to see a commitment to giving all across Ireland an adequate income and standard of living that is benchmarked to inflation. A one-off payment is not a response to a continuous crisis of income inadequacy.”

Oisín Coghlan, Chief Executive of Friends of the Earth, a Coalition 2030 member, had the following to say on the Budget's environmental credentials.

“We welcome the €3.15 billion fund for climate and nature projects which will help to lower our carbon emissions, address the biodiversity crisis to the benefit of all, and ensure that Ireland is at the leading edge in creating a clean, green, carbon-efficient society and economy. It will also save the country billions in EU fines in coming years that we’ll have to pay if we fail to take action on climate action now.”

Coalition 2030 cautiously welcomes the focus on future generations in today’s budget via the creation of the ‘Future Ireland Fund’ and ‘Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund’. These they say will help cease the stop-start approach to public infrastructure caused by downturns in the economy, address future climate and environmental needs, and protect future generations. On this, Ms. Carmody said,

“It is welcome to see the kind of thinking ahead that puts corporation tax receipts to good use to address the needs of present and future generations via the Future Ireland Fund. Although at the same time we must ask, at whose expense are we receiving this windfall? We know countries in the

global south are being deprived of crucial tax revenues due to our practices in Ireland, therefore these funds and their fruits may always be tinged with an air of injustice.”

Members of Coalition 2030 include Social Justice Ireland, Friends of the Earth, the Environmental Pillar, the National Women’s Council, Disability Federation Ireland, Dóchas, and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Civil society groups have been calling for a wide range of budgetary policies including welfare increases to be benchmarked to inflation, a recurring cost of disability payment, a publicly funded model of childcare, an increase to the Fuel Allowance, increased Official Development Assistance, more funding to retrofit social housing, refundable tax credits, financial and practical assistance to farmers for nature restoration, and the creation an €8bn Climate and Nature Restoration Fund.

In September An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar made a statement to the UN General Assembly stating that he was proud to reaffirm Ireland’s commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 interlinked goals agreed in September 2015 by all 193 UN Member States. They aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all [1]. Ireland had a significant role in their development and adoption as co-facilitator of the Goals and this year co-facilitated a Political Declaration for renewing SDG ambition across the world which was agreed to last month [2]. In May of this year Coalition 2030 published a scathing treatise highlighting Ireland’s failure to reach the swathes of Ireland society ahead of Ireland’s official SDGs review to the UN in July [3].

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About Coalition 2030:

Coalition 2030 is an alliance of 70 civil society organisations from the international development, environmental, anti-poverty and trade union sectors working together to ensure Ireland keeps its promise to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both in Ireland, and abroad.

Notes to the editor:

1. In September 2015 all 193 UN Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ‘end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all’ as part of the new agenda — Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This framework is made up of 17 SDGs and 169 targets. Ireland had a significant role in its development and adoption, as co-facilitator, together with Kenya, of the intergovernmental negotiations in September 2015.
2. [Political Declaration adopted at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\) under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023](#)
3. [REPORT: Furthest Behind First, or Falling Behind Further? The human stories that challenge Ireland’s claims to be leaving no one behind](#)

Coalition 2030 members:

80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World, Action Aid, Aidlink, Airfield, Akidwa, Alcohol Forum, All Together in Dignity, An Taisce, AONTAS, ASTI Association of, Secondary Teachers of Ireland, Baby Feeding Law Group Ireland, Carrig Conservation, Childfund Ireland, Children’s Rights Alliance, Christian Aid, Christian Blind Mission (CBM), Comhlámh, Community Work Ireland, Concern, Cork Environmental Forum, Cultivate (Sustainable Ireland Cooperative), DCU Centre for Climate and Society, Development Perspectives, Disability Federation of Ireland, Dóchas (membership of 60 Members and Associate member organisations), ECO-UNESCO, Environmental Pillar (membership of 29 member organisations), European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland, FAIRTRADE Ireland, Forest Friends Ireland, Fórsa, Friends Of The Earth Ireland, Global Action Plan, Global Citizenship School, GOAL, Good Energies Alliance Ireland, Green Foundation Ireland, ICTU Irish Congress of Trade Unions (consisting of 44 unions affiliated to Congress and representing over 800,000

workers), IDEA - Irish Development Education Association, Independent Living Movement Ireland, International Presentation Association, Irish Family Planning Association, Irish Forum for Global Education, Irish Forum for Global Health, Irish Rural Link, Irish Wildlife Trust, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Mísean Cara, National Adult Literacy Agency, National Women's Council (membership of over 160 member organisations), National Youth Council of Ireland (membership of over 50 member organisations), Outhouse LGBT+ Centre, Pavee Point, Traveller & Roma Centre, Rediscovery Centre, Roscommon Environmental Network, Self Help Africa, Sightsavers Ireland, SIPTU Services Industrial Professional Technical Union, Social Justice Ireland, SpunOut, Suas (& its STAND programme), TASC (Think Tank for Action on Social Change), The Ladder, The Simon Communities, The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, The Wheel (membership of over 2,235 member organisations), Trócaire, UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Recreation and Fitness MTU - Munster, Technological University, UNICEF Ireland, University of Galway (formerly NUIG), VOICE Ireland, World Vision Ireland, Zero Waste Alliance Ireland.