

Plan to end poverty will be retained - Hanafin

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Sat, Feb 20, 2010

GOVERNMENT TARGETS to eliminate consistent poverty by 2016 will be retained despite economic difficulties, Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin has said.

Speaking at the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) international conference in Dublin yesterday, Ms Hanafin also said the social partners needed to look at the progress they have already made and work together again.

The conference, Building a Social Europe: From Boom to Bust, was held in Croke Park. Delegates from 26 countries attended to discuss proposals for building a social Europe as part of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

She said the rate of consistent poverty, defined as the percentage of people who are deprived of two or more essential goods or services, had halved in Ireland since 2003. The Government aimed to eliminate it by 2016.

“We will continue to keep those targets despite the economic difficulties we have at the moment,” she said. Ms Hanafin also said Ireland’s social partnership model was experiencing difficulties, but she hoped that would change.

“I would hope that when all the social partners stop to look at the progress we have made in the last few years working together, they will all realise that the best progress, in the interests of the wider community, can be gained by working together,” she said.

Opening the conference, Anne Visser, the network’s director in Ireland, said the EU needed to learn from its mistakes and adapt policies to serve society.

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