

MEDIA RELEASE

CLAIMING OUR FUTURE

Thursday 25th November 2010 – for immediate release

New citizens' forum demands immediate general election

'Claiming Our Future' has today (Thursday) called for an immediate general election and denounced the Government's plan to push through a budget as "unacceptable and undemocratic." The new movement, which agreed a radical policy agenda at Ireland's first 'citizens forum' last month, said the Irish people had a democratic right to give a mandate to a new government before social and economic decisions were taken that would shape the long term future for Ireland.

Claiming Our Future spokesperson Niall Crowley said: "It is not in any supposed 'national interest' for our long term future to be decided without any input from the people. It is both undemocratic and unacceptable that a four-year plan, a draconian budget and long-term arrangements with the IMF and European Union are being foisted on society by a discredited and unpopular Government."

Mr Crowley said the decisions now being made would shape the future for generations. "It is not correct to say that there is no alternative. We do have choices. Claiming Our Future is calling on any new Government to commit to the principles of equality and environmental sustainability in defining new policies to shape our response to this crisis" he said.

Last month's inaugural Claiming Our Future event called for greater citizen engagement in public governance. It prioritised policies to achieve greater income equality, universal access to health services and equality in access to education. Over 1,000 participants called for a stimulus package to maximise job creation in the social and green economy, and expressed overwhelming support for a radical new emphasis on economic security and social and environmental sustainability. The four year plan and the manner in which it is to be advanced through the budget runs directly counter to all of these aspirations.

The massively oversubscribed event attracted over 2,000 requests for 1,000 available places. Since then thousands more have signed up to support Claiming Our Future and participated in local events and social media networking since the initiative began last month.

The movement was initially organised by civil society groups including Is Feidir Linn, the Community Platform, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Environmental Pillar of social partnership, the TASC think tank and Social Justice Ireland.