

**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Micheál Martin, T.D., on
the publication of the
Report on the Global Irish Economic Forum
13 October 2009**

The Global Irish Economic Forum took place in Farmleigh over the weekend of the 18 -20 September.

The Forum was convened with two broad objectives: to explore how the Irish at home and abroad, and those with a strong interest in Ireland, could work together and contribute to our overall efforts at economic recovery; and to examine ways in which Ireland and its global community could develop a more strategic relationship with each other, particularly in the economic sector.

In my closing address to the Forum, I made clear that the proposals put forward across a range of sectors would be followed up in detail by the Government and that they would feed directly into this year's economic policy and budget process.

I assured participants that the extraordinary release of energy, knowledge and determination that was the hallmark of the Forum would not be wasted.

I am pleased therefore to announce that the Government has moved quickly to take forward the work begun at Farmleigh. At our meeting this morning, the Government considered a comprehensive overall report of proceedings at the Forum prepared by my Department. We also received a second report prepared by the Irish Management Institute on the series of economic working groups held during the Forum. Both documents are now available to the public on www.dfa.ie and www.globalirishforum.ie .

The Government has also decided to establish a new inter-Departmental Committee of senior officials to consider and take forward the work of the Forum. This group will report to Government.

The publication of these reports and the establishment of new mechanisms for progressing the proposals made at Farmleigh are clear demonstrations of our

determination to build on the success of the Forum and to develop closer links between Ireland and the global Irish.

The overall report contains details of the main themes to emerge; the specific initiatives proposed; and the medium term objectives identified. These initiatives are not formally endorsed by Government, but instead reflect the opinions and suggestions advocated by those who participated at Farmleigh.

Some of the proposals contained in the report of the Forum may be progressed more effectively by the private sector, others will need to be led by Government and some may involve a public/private partnership.

I am encouraged by the fact that significant work has already been undertaken by some participants on the initiatives they advocated at Farmleigh. I welcome and fully support, for instance, the progress John McColgan has achieved so far in taking forward his 'Gateway Ireland' website initiative and the work being undertaken by organisations such as the Ireland Funds and the Irish Technology Leadership Group to develop other ideas which emerged. Many other participants have remained engaged in the intervening period and have reiterated their willingness to continue to assist in taking forward the work begun at Farmleigh.

As indicated at the Forum, I have also decided to establish a new Global Irish Network made up of those invited to Farmleigh and other leading business figures in our global community. This network will give greater strategic focus to our economic and cultural promotional work abroad. It will also help maintain the sense of enthusiasm and momentum generated at Farmleigh.

It is my intention to establish an Advisory Board made up of a representative group of those who attended the Forum to assist with the work of this Network and advise on other issues related to matters discussed at Farmleigh. Further details of this Network and how it will operate will be released shortly.

Finally, I would encourage as many members of the public to read these reports. Building closer links between Ireland and our communities abroad is not the sole preserve of Government or the business sector. Ireland and its community abroad have long been inextricably linked. As the Taoiseach noted in his address to the

Forum, we help define each other. As we embark on a new chapter in this relationship, it is important to recognise and embrace the collective effort of this enterprise.

ENDS