

A Shared Vision for a Just Recovery

The coronavirus pandemic has turned the world upside down. It has exposed not only major weaknesses in Ireland's economy and health services but also deep-seated inequalities. The most vulnerable people are being hit the hardest, both in Ireland and abroad.

As the Government faces the challenges posed by the pandemic and begins to look towards long-term recovery, we have a chance to reset the clock and build back better. We cannot go back to the way things were before.

Our vision is for a just recovery in Ireland, the EU and internationally that results in open, fair, equal and healthy societies, flourishing within the ecological limits of our one planet. Societies that meet basic human needs and guarantee rights for all, where everyone regardless of their origin or identity can thrive.

As the Government leads the recovery from COVID-19, we urge them to prioritise the following actions:

1. Protect and invest in public services, prioritising public health and wellbeing

A Just Recovery must prioritise the health and wellbeing of everyone in Ireland now and into the future, by sustainably investing in better public services to reverse existing inequalities and secure the needs of all. Investment in essential services including healthcare, housing, childcare, youthwork, education and transport is vital to build long term prosperity and resilience.

2. Invest in people

A Just Recovery must begin with investing in those who have been left behind. Everyone should be guaranteed an adequate income to participate fully in society, whether they are in work or not. We need an end to poverty- including child poverty, an end to homelessness, and to prioritise decent work built on upholding the rights of workers.

3. Deliver faster and fairer climate action and restore and protect nature

A Just Recovery means focusing on climate justice, doing our fair share to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. It means eliminating climate-changing pollution in a way that tackles inequality and reduces poverty, and restoring and protecting nature and wildlife. Faster and fairer climate action can and should create thousands of new, well-paid, secure, unionised jobs across the country and support an economy that operates within ecological limits. It must include a Just Transition for the workers and communities most impacted by the move to a zero pollution future and must be fully equality and poverty proofed.

4. Build solidarity and community across borders

Covid-19 has highlighted how interconnected we are globally, and as the WHO reminds us 'no-one is safe until everyone is safe'. A Just Recovery for all means showing international solidarity by honouring our commitments on overseas aid. At home, it means working to create a society that treats everyone as equals and acknowledge the right of communities to collective action and autonomous community development. There is no place in Irish life for hate and discrimination against others, whether based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, citizenship status, immigration status, marital status, family status, age, religion, membership of the Traveller community or socio-economic status. All people should be treated with dignity, which includes bringing an end to Direct Provision.

5. Ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making

A Just Recovery must create a society in which we ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making, including workplace democracy and the right to collective bargaining. We will only advance equality, human rights, climate justice and sustainable development, globally, nationally and locally, by strengthening democracy, enabling community engagement, deliberative democracy and public participation in decision-making and prioritising underrepresented voices and those most marginalised.

6. Redefine progress through a focus on wellbeing and sustainable development

A Just Recovery must be based on broad measures of wellbeing not limited to economic growth. The UN Sustainable Development Goals should be an essential blueprint for a more sustainable and inclusive future and a framework to build back better both in Ireland and the EU. Government must prioritise delivery of the 17 Goals in policy-making, ensuring accountability across Departments through a new National SDG Implementation Plan. The Sustainable Development Goals should inform the development of the Wellbeing Index that the government has committed to introduce. This Wellbeing Index must include a broad range of indicators, such as quality of life, public health, action on climate change and the restoration of nature.

The above statement is supported by following 56 coalitions, networks and organisations

