

FIANNA FAÍL - THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

THE SIX-POINT
PLAN FOR
NATIONAL PROGRESS



WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN.



A MESSAGE FROM AN TAOISEACH

"Turn this election to our national advantage"



Voters can use this chance to give a strong mandate for effective government in the difficult times ahead.

There are grave problems, at home and abroad. To address those problems, the country needs a strong, stable government with a clear vision along with the capability and the united determination to bring the vision to reality.

Fianna Fáil has that vision, that capability, that determination.

Fianna Fáil's 6-point plan for national progress will:

- 1 MAKE JOBS THE FIRST PRIORITY**
— with a package of new jobs initiatives
- 2 INVEST FOR THE FUTURE**
— in education, roads and transport
- 3 EXTEND SOCIAL PROGRESS**
— protecting the weakest and reforming our laws
- 4 REFORM THE TAX SYSTEM**
— cutting tax rates, broadening tax bands
- 5 IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES**
— preserving and enhancing the fabric of our nation
- 6 WORK FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**
— in Ireland, Europe and the Third World

Voting for Fianna Fáil is supporting that plan and turning this unnecessary election to our national advantage.

Albert Reynolds

1. MAKING JOBS THE FIRST PRIORITY

Fianna Fáil's first and over-riding aim is to create a substantial number of new jobs, building on our existing policies. The elements of our strategy to achieve this, in addition to our present policies, are:

- **Creating the right conditions for job-creation**
Fianna Fáil are creating and will continue to create the economic conditions essential to attract investment and create sustainable jobs. We will hold inflation down and maintain the value of the Irish pound, so that over a longer period interest rates are lower. We will keep Government borrowing at or below present levels – and maintain as an over-riding objective the strict disciplines required to ensure that we can take full part in Economic and Monetary Union and the European Single Currency from the outset. We will go on reducing the relative size of the national debt.

- **Strengthening social consensus**
Fianna Fáil will build on the consensus approach that we pioneered – bringing together employers, trade unions and farmers in an effective partnership to tackle unemployment. As part of this, we will honour the pay commitments in the PESP. We will continue to co-operate with all willing parties in the Dáil on unemployment. We agree with the trade unions and employers that we should take steps to convert excessive over-time into jobs.

- **Radical restructuring of Government**
Fianna Fáil will radically restructure the Government so that our *new team* can implement with maximum effectiveness a *fresh approach*. We will set up a new Department of Employment, to create new jobs and to ensure that present jobs are maintained – with a job protection unit to provide an early-warning system about firms that may need help. The Departments of Marine and Transport will also be amalga-

mated. There will be a new Department of Tourism. All Departments will evaluate their proposals in the light of their impact on jobs.

• **A new £750 million Fund for job creation**

As an exciting new radical concept, Fianna Fáil will set up by immediate legislation, through the National Treasury Management Agency, a new holding company to acquire funds to invest in job-creation by accelerating public investment in major planned projects over three years. The holdings in Irish Life, Greencore, ICC and ACC will be transferred to this new company, which will advance £375 million on the strength of the collateral. This will be matched by an equivalent amount of new EC Cohesion funds, negotiated by Fianna Fáil, and other structural funds. Consequently, there will be no increase in State borrowing. The fund will be used to speed up major infrastructure projects such as light rail in Dublin and modernisation of the national rail network, the modernisation of our ports, cleaning up Dublin Bay, and the building of a national convention centre and a national sports stadium, as well as other projects.

- **Strengthening our industrial base**

Fianna Fáil, in line with the Culliton Report, will strengthen Ireland's industrial, scientific and exporting base — developing the skills of our workforce, and putting new emphasis on small industry and indigenous resources. We will seek new investment in environmentally-friendly industries, and make maximum use of new technology. We will widen industrial strategy to take in the key factors across all areas of public policy that affect output and productivity.

• **Harnessing the spirit of enterprise**

Fianna Fáil will harness the spirit of enterprise at national, local and community level, in both private and public sectors. We will put in place quickly the County Enterprise Partnership Boards (complemented by Regional Enterprise Boards in Cork and Dublin), to assist start-ups in small business. The new

boards will empower local communities to get funding to develop their own areas, and this will include community-based upgrading of the environment. Many people now unemployed, especially the long-term unemployed, will be involved. We will encourage State companies to grow on a commercial basis, on their own account or in joint ventures.

• **Concentrating on indigenous industry**

Fianna Fáil will give priority to building a solid base of Irish companies with a viable future in world markets. We will set up a jobs and competitiveness project, under the auspices of the social partners, to disseminate to Irish companies the best practices of high-employment countries – Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Japan – which enable them to be both good employers and highly competitive at the same time.

• **Focusing on key opportunities**

Fianna Fáil will maximise job-creation in the areas that offer the most potential: tourism; consumer food-processing, financial services, the arts, horticulture, the marine, forestry, development of mineral and hydrocarbon resources.

Energy: Fianna Fáil will implement an imaginative *energy* policy. On the basis of a viable proposal being prepared, we will build a new modern peat-fired station in the Midlands. We will promote energy conservation and environmentally-friendly renewable energy resources, including crops grown for energy production.

Tourism: Having increased tourism earnings by 50% since 1987, creating 23,500 extra jobs, we will put in place a new programme to achieve over the next five years a further increase of 50% and an equivalent number of further new jobs.

Marine: We will develop our marine resources and environment, and create extra jobs especially in sea fishing, inland fisheries, aquaculture, value-added processing and marine recreation. We regard the improvement of Ireland's position under

the Common Fisheries Policy as a *high national priority*. Fianna Fáil will support a major programme of investment in Ireland's ports and harbours at national and regional levels, including key Dublin Bay and Shannon projects.

Culture: We will complete the cultural quarter at *Dublin's Temple Bar*, creating 5,000 construction jobs over five years and 2,000 permanent jobs. We will act quickly on the recommendations of the film industry working group, where 1,000 jobs can be created. We will set up a similar group for music, theatre, and multi-media. We will create a new regulatory framework for broadcasting, which will free up opportunities for the independent production sector.

Education: We will also create jobs by developing international training and consultancy services, targeted particularly at opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Russian Federation.

Business incentives

The Business Expansion Scheme, which assists the raising of capital by smaller companies in high-risk sectors with the potential to create sustainable jobs, will be renewed. In that context, provisions that may exclude certain investors will be relaxed.

So as to ensure that the availability of equity finance for Irish businesses is not adversely affected by the forthcoming 10% DIRT rate for certain deposit interest, tax treatment on a broadly similar basis will be extended to investments with a sufficiently high component of Irish equities, including smaller companies. These arrangements will also include a specific incentive for investment through institutions in "venture capital".

Agriculture

Fianna Fáil will ensure that the new CAP will be implemented so as to maintain the maximum number of farm families on the land and create more jobs in agri-Industry. We will guarantee to protect fully the benefits of CAP reform for Irish farmers in any GATT agreement. Priority categories, including new entrants to farming, will receive priority under the Production Regulations of the CAP.

In order to encourage the early transfer of farms, we will bring forward the scheme of installation aid for young farmers to the date of legal transfer. We will ensure that the new Farm Retirement Scheme is geared towards maximising farm transfers and land mobility.

Food

Fianna Fáil will ensure that the employment and wealth-creating capacity of the food industry is maximised. We will ensure that, in the re-organisation of the investment aid agencies, maximum support will be given to an integrated programme for the food industry. To this end we will adopt at an early stage a new national food development programme. As part of this programme Fianna Fáil will ensure that the contribution of all EC Structural Funds to the food industry will be used to the full and applied in the most co-ordinated way.

Rural development

We will give major priority to rural enterprise and development. We will accelerate the implementation of schemes geared towards rural renewal and rural job creation (Leader, Small and Community-Based Enterprise Scheme, Operational Programme for Rural Development). On and off farm alternative enterprises will be encouraged and promoted, and increased funding will be provided for the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme. We will ensure that particular emphasis is placed on marginalised rural areas.

2. INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

Fianna Fáil will maintain a high level of capital investment, both in the productive sectors of the economy and in creating the basic framework for a prosperous Ireland in the 21st century.

To finance this, we are negotiating for a further doubling of EC funds for cohesion.

Education for a Changing World

Fianna Fáil is fully committed to improving the quality, availability and funding of education.

- *We will examine during 1993 the viability of extending free education to all 3rd level students from September 1994. This examination will entail an assessment of the present level of covenants and of future EC funding.*
- *We will allocate an increased amount in each of the next five years to implement a planned programme of replacing or refurbishing sub-standard school buildings.*
- *We will review sympathetically the level of capital grants to our hard-pressed primary schools.*
- *A special programme to tackle disadvantage will be launched, and the current spending level of £120 million will be progressively increased.*

Fianna Fáil will radically restructure the education system, following the current Green Paper consultations, to achieve better and more equitable access to the benefits of education for all; more democracy and openness, with a genuine role for all the partners in education, including parents; better training, both initially and during their careers, for our teaching professionals. There will be a new emphasis on developing fluency in European languages.

Fianna Fáil will set up immediately a National Education and Training Certification Board whose awards will be recognised internationally. This will help progression between courses in the education and training system, and help Irish workers abroad obtain jobs that are consistent with their qualifications.

Fianna Fáil will finalise a programme to increase the skill levels of those in employment so as to improve competitiveness. Employers' spending on this training will be helped by EC contributions. We will also rationalise the programmes provided by FÁS and the education system, so as to respond better to the needs of local employers, workers and job seekers. The County Enterprise Partnership Boards will have a major role in this.

We agree with the social partners on the principle of a national apprenticeship scheme, which will give 2/3 years of certified apprentice training to all leaving secondary education but not going on to 3rd level. This means increasing the number of occupations where statutory apprenticeship applies. This will double the inflow to apprenticeships over the next five years.

• Roads

Fianna Fáil will accelerate the modernisation of the national road network, with more emphasis on the routes connecting the regions.

We will expand the mileage of motorways and dual carriageways, complete the Dublin and Cork ring-roads, and provide an environmentally-friendly and efficient access route to Dublin Port – either by tunnel or dedicated truckway, together with a marshalling yard on the ring-road for containers to be sent by rail to and from the port. There will be no Eastern By-Pass. We will put more resources into upgrading national secondary and county roads, with priority for routes that are used heavily by agriculture, industry or tourists.

Public transport

Fianna Fáil will start building a modern environmentally-clean public transport system in Dublin, serving the suburbs on the North, West and South of the city— including Ballymun and Tallaght and the old Harcourt Street line. Included in the plan will be DART extensions to the airport, Greystones and Malahide, with new stations at intermediate points like Fairview and Grand Canal Street.

We will upgrade the mainline rail network with the help of EC funds. This will include modern commuter services around Dublin and Cork. Fianna Fáil will provide better inter-city connections outside of Dublin. We also aim to run economical railbus passenger services on rural lines.

International transport links

Fianna Fáil will further develop modern, efficient transport links with Britain and Europe. We will rebuild the port terminal at Dun Laoghaire and continue modernising the country's main ports — including Dublin, Rosslare, Waterford and Cork.

Fianna Fáil will continue to support the national airline as part of its overall transport policy. We will ensure that decisions on its future will protect employment and the company's strategic role. We have asked Aer Rianta to assess the feasibility of taking a stake in Aer Lingus.

We propose to establish a new role for Shannon as a trading bridgehead between Ireland, Europe, America and other third countries for passengers, freight and other commercial traffic — including data-based and other knowledge-based operations. We will develop the deep-water harbour alongside the airport.

3. EXTENDING SOCIAL PROGRESS

Social services

Fianna Fáil will at least maintain the value of social welfare payments.

We will continue to provide special increases for those on the lower levels of payments, in line with the recommendations of the Commission on Social Welfare. In particular, we will *protect the position of pensioners* and further improve the broad range of benefits which we have provided over the years. We will enhance the position of families, particularly those at work on low incomes, through the Child Benefit Scheme and the Family Income Supplement Scheme.

We will provide further incentives for unemployed people to take up opportunities for work and training. We will continue to *simplify* the social welfare system and make it more *accessible* to people, to promote greater *awareness* of their entitlements.

Social housing programme

Fianna Fáil will ensure a continued high level of housing output and further promote owner-occupation. Total housing output has progressively increased since 1988 and is set to reach 21,000 in 1992. We will extend the Stamp Duty exemption for new houses from 125 to 150 square metres.

We are meeting the needs of over 6,000 households through the social housing programme in 1992. In the next three years the programme will cater for over 23,000 households. We will provide a better social mix in housing areas, smaller and better-managed estates and more investment in upgrading local authority houses. We will bring in a new tenant purchase scheme, using the proceeds to finance up to 2,000 starts in local authority housing schemes in 1993.

• **Health**

We will provide more resources, above and beyond inflation, to improve our health services, with more emphasis on community care, the mentally handicapped, the mentally ill, the disabled and child health services. Reduction of waiting lists and the cutting of queues at out-patient departments will be a priority. There will be a special emphasis on programmes for women's health. Tallaght Hospital will begin building in April 1993.

• **National childcare facilities**

The Health Boards will be enabled to expand nationwide their day nurseries for children from disadvantaged families. The new County Enterprise Partnership Boards will help organise childcare facilities.

• **Social reforms**

Fianna Fáil will continue our programme of progressive social legislation and legal reform. We will hold a referendum on divorce, following legislation on shared ownership of the family home and other supportive legislation.

• **Equality for women**

We will act swiftly on the recommendations of the 2nd Commission on the Status of Women. There will be a campaign for gender equity in education. The number of women on State boards will be doubled within four years. There will be increased funding of the Rape Crisis Centre. We will reform existing equality legislation in accordance with EC law to reflect our changing labour market. We will introduce a code of practice on sexual harassment.

• **Law and order**

Fianna Fáil will provide the resources to fight crime and vandalism, and to modernise and humanise our legal system. We will ensure that the causes are tackled by a broadly-based approach. We will strengthen the law, to tackle street violence and intimidation, with *stiffer sentences*. We are putting *extra Gardai* on the beat in Dublin.

In a comprehensive programme of criminal law reform, we will:

- Implement our legislative proposals to allow for the review of unduly lenient sentences, and to give courts power to require offenders to pay compensation to victims.
- Legislate to confiscate gains made from criminal activity.
- Strengthen the law on serious fraud.
- Introduce a comprehensive modern code for juvenile offenders by amending the Children's Act.
- Bring in legislation to allow review of possible miscarriages of justice.
- Reform the prison system and make greater use, where possible, of community-based service as an alternative to custodial sentences.

4. REFORMING THE TAX SYSTEM

Fianna Fáil will accelerate the process of tax reform and reduce the burden of personal taxation — with the resources resulting from growth in the economy, prudent management of the economy, and broadening the tax base. The Taoiseach began the process in his 1989 Budget of reducing the standard rate of income tax from 35% to 27%, and the top rate from 58% to 48%.

- We will cut the standard rate of tax to 25%.
- We will also cut the single higher rate of tax, from its present 48%.
- Our main priority for the next Government will be to broaden the tax bands. Our objective is to move towards a position where a single person does not pay higher-rate tax on less than £20,000 a year and a married couple does not pay higher-rate tax on less than £40,000.
- We will continue to remove low-income families progres-

sively from the tax net altogether, so that there is a clear benefit from working.

- We will maintain the basic reliefs, such as mortgage interest and VHI.

- We will increase substantially the thresholds on gift and inheritance tax (CAT) on family-owned businesses and family farms.

5. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES

- **Environment and rural life**

Fianna Fáil will speed up implementation of our 10-year Environment Action Programme. We will maintain high investment in water supplies and sewage disposal, step up heritage protection, and bring the Environmental Protection Agency into operation next year. We will build on the success of the urban renewal programme, with even more attention to housing. We will maintain the fabric of rural life, including post offices, transport and schools.

- **Decentralisation**

Fianna Fáil will continue our decentralisation programme, including the transfer of the Births, Marriages & Deaths Registry to Roscommon, the Land Registry to Waterford and the Environmental Protection Agency to Wexford. We will act to devolve more powers to local authorities.

- **Consumer protection**

Fianna Fáil will phase in the Small Claims Court procedure nationwide, to allow quick processing of consumer claims. A new law on consumer credit will tackle the problem of excessive loan charges and unlicensed money-lending. We will strengthen the law on food labelling, product safety and unfair contracts.

• **An Ghaeilge agus an Ghaeltacht**

Déanfaidh Fianna Fáil gach is féidir leo chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn mar theanga labhartha. Bunófar seirbhís teilifíse Gaeilge i nGaeltacht na Gaillimhe chun freastal ar an tír ar fad. Cuirfear i bhfeidhm na moltaí atá sa Pháipéar Glas faoin Oideachas faoi mharcanna breise do Ghaeilge labhartha sna scrúdálthe meánscoile. Cuirfear le forbairt na Gaeltachta agus leanfar leis an tacaíocht atá ar fáil d'imeachtaí Gaeilge. Chomh maith le tacaíocht a thabhairt don Ghaeilge féin, atá mar chuid lárnach dár n-oidhreacht Ghaelach, déanfaimid gach is féidir chun an cultúr dúchais, ar a n-airítear an ceol agus an drámaíocht Ghaeilge, a chur chun cinn. Déanfaidh Fianna Fáil deimhin de go mbeidh seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge ar fáil don phobal ón Stát.

• **Arts, heritage and sport**

Fianna Fáil will maintain and extend arts funding, with more emphasis on regional and local centres. We will improve support for sport and recreation. We are bringing in a scheme to assist amateur boxing clubs, and will build a national sports stadium and a national indoor Olympic swimming pool.

• **Open government**

Fianna Fáil will pursue further Dáil reform, including extension of sitting hours, more Bills in committee, a separate Taoiseach's Question Time, questions and answers on estimates, revision of the *sub judice* rule, a committee on foreign affairs and EC legislation, and a Register of Interests.

6. WORKING FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

• Northern Ireland

Fianna Fáil will continue the process of dialogue with the parties in Northern Ireland and with the British Government, building on progress already made – with the aim of achieving peace and reconciling the legitimate rights and aspirations of both communities.

Fianna Fáil remains fully committed to a united Ireland achieved by agreement and consent.

We will take further initiatives to step up the pace of North/South economic co-operation.

• The Third World

Fianna Fáil will increase Ireland's programme of Development Aid from £43 million to £52 million next year (from 0.17% of GNP to 0.2%). We will aim to increase it gradually thereafter to meet our commitment.

• European integration

Fianna Fáil is fully committed to European Union and to ensuring that Ireland has a strong voice in the new Europe as it evolves. We support the opening of negotiations on enlargement, when the future financing of the Community is agreed.

- European security

Fianna Fáil will maintain Ireland's stance on military neutrality, unless and until the Irish people decide otherwise in a referendum – while supporting the search for a framework of collective security in a Europe-wide context that covers the 52 CSCE countries.

• International peacekeeping

Fianna Fáil will continue to support UN peacekeeping operations. We will maintain and modernise the defence forces for that purpose, as well as for their duties at home.

