

**Address by
Mr. Noel Treacy, T.D.
Minister for European Affairs
At the Euro African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development
10th and 11th July, 2006
Rabat, Morocco**

- Ireland would like to thank sincerely the Kingdom of Morocco, alongwith both France and Spain; for their collective initiative in organising this important Conference, as foreseen by the European Council, in its conclusions of December last, on the ‘Global Approach to Migration: Priority actions, focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean’.

- It is important to recognise the role that Migrants play, in promoting development and poverty reduction in their Countries of Origin and the contribution that they make towards the economic prosperity of their Destination Countries. It is also important for all of us to acknowledge that while there is the potential for positive outcomes from migration in the form of remittances and training, there are also negative development risks, on account of the “brain- drain” and “de-population”. Ireland was a serious victim of these situations for centuries, right until the 1980’s. There are many areas, where receiving Countries and Countries of Origin can work together, to maximise the benefits of International Migration and to minimize its adverse affects for these migrants.

- The European Council has recognised the importance of the Migration issue and this Regional initiative proposes concrete Measures, which reflect the importance of balanced actions dealing with both Co-operation for Development and Co-operation in managing Migratory Flows.
- Historically, Ireland has had the experience of being a Country of Origin with regard to Migration. Over the period of a few short years, we have moved to being a Country of Destination. It is generally accepted that Migration into Ireland will continue to be an important feature of Irish life, for the foreseeable future.
- Our experience leads us to take particular note of the Conclusions of the European Council of December last, which recognised the importance of tackling the root causes of Migration, for example through the creation of livelihood opportunities and the eradication of poverty, in Countries and Regions of Origin, the opening of Markets and promotion of Economic Growth, Good Governance and the Protection of Human Rights, for all Migrants.
- Recognising that each Country is primarily responsible for its own development, Ireland seeks to support our Partner Governments, in the Developing World, in working to reduce Poverty and to enable their People to meet their basic needs in Health, Education and Sustainable Livelihoods.

- This year, our Aid Spending is at its highest ever level, in terms of both volume (€734m) and as a percent of our GNP and is being used through Country Programmes, the UN and other International Bodies and through Non-Governmental Organisations, to these ends.
- In the last six years, over 100,000 Persons from outside of the European Economic Area have been admitted to the Irish State, for Employment purposes. This is in addition to substantial numbers of Nationals of the European Union or other European Economic Area Member States, who have also come to Ireland. In particular, substantial numbers have come from the 10 Accession States since May 2004, when Ireland provided full access to our Labour Market. In all, an estimated 8% of our Working Population is non-Irish and all of these Workers have arrived in Ireland, in very recent years.
- It is important to be mindful of the dilemma arising from balancing State Sovereignty, which allows each State to decide, who should be permitted to enter and reside in their Territory, with the need to cooperate Internationally on Migration. Irish Immigration Policy is focussed towards facilitating the orderly admission of Legal Migrants, who will contribute to the Economic and Social Development of our State. New Immigration and Residence Legislation will shortly be brought before Government, which will provide a comprehensive framework, for the development and implementation of Immigration Policies.

- In this context, we look forward to working with our fellow Delegates to produce an Action Plan and Declaration, which will strengthen our Regional co-operation, in the Migration field in a balanced way and provide a useful input to the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be held at the UN in September next. I wish this Conference every success.

Thank you Mr. President.