

**Speech by Mr. Paul Kehoe, T.D.,
Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach,
at the launch of the 2011 Census of Population
in Government Buildings
on Thursday 10th March 2011 at 13.00**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today to the launch of the field campaign for Census 2011.

The census is an important milestone for the country.

In the census on the 10th April, each and every one of us have the opportunity to record important information about our lives in Ireland today.

As we all know, Ireland faces enormous economic and social challenges over the next few years. We are faced with crucial decisions about our future and that of our children.

It is essential that we have accurate and objective information on which to base those decisions – that is why census is so important.

We need to make sure that everyone in the State on Census Night is included to give an accurate up-to-date picture of Ireland – a country which has changed greatly in the last five years.

The census is unique. It is the largest operation that takes place in the State. It includes everyone, it is about everyone and the results can be used by everyone.

The census provides data which is vital for Government and for policy makers, and for many other organisations and individuals.

The Government needs clear and comprehensive knowledge about who the people of Ireland are: men and women; children and the elderly; the employed, unemployed and those not in the labour force; urban and rural; their education, their skills and the languages they speak; their health; carers and those in receipt of care.

We need this information to make informed decisions about policy and public services.

Of course, the results of the census are available for everyone to use: small businesses and multinationals, local authorities, the media, students, academics, local communities and schools. Everyone can access the results.

The census is a major undertaking for the Central Statistics Office. Its important to emphasise that it is completed in a totally independent and confidential manner.

I know that the CSO takes very seriously its legal responsibility to protect the data that people provide - and they have an unblemished record in this regard.

It is very important that every household in the country takes part on the 10th April.

This includes everyone in the State on Census night, no matter where they are from. And there is plenty of help available to those who need it.

Translations of the census form are available in 21 different languages, in addition to Irish and English.

A large print version of the form is available, along with Braille and audio versions to assist those with sight difficulties.

A practical Step-by-Step Guide to filling in the census form, developed in association with the National Adult Literacy Agency, is available.

And, of course, census enumerators will be happy to assist people with their questions and queries when they call to deliver and collect the census form.

In the coming weeks, the census enumerators will call at every home in Ireland to deliver 1.8 million census forms. They will brave the elements - as well as household pets - to ensure that the census form reaches every home.

This is no small task, and I would like to pay tribute to the dedication of all those who are working hard to make sure that the census is a success.

Finally, I would like to encourage the people of Ireland to play their role in this national effort, and to make their mark by completing the census form on census night 10th April.

Thank you.