



40,000 MORE CONSTRUCTION JOBS EXPECTED TO GO IN 2010

SCS CALLS FOR 'CONSTRUCTION CHIEF' TO LEAD THE SECTOR

CHARTERED SURVEYORS SUPPORT INTRODUCTION OF PROPERTY TAX

EMBARGO 6PM Thursday 4th February 2010. The Society of Chartered Surveyors has predicted that 40,000 more jobs will be lost in the property and construction sector throughout 2010.

This means that the number employed in the sector will fall to under 100,000 having been as high as 267,000 as recently as 2007.

The President of the Society of Chartered Surveyors, Ken Cribbin has described the Government's failure to tackle the unemployment crisis in the sector as 'totally unacceptable'.

In his speech at the SCS's annual dinner Cribbin pointed out that while the Government had taken action to tackle the banking crisis and to stabilize the public finances it had failed dismally to provide leadership to the property and construction industry and the wider economy had suffered as a result.

'As a matter of urgency the Government needs to tackle this unemployment crisis. That involves real political leadership and engagement and we need it now' Cribbin said.

In that context the SCS has called on the Government to appoint a Chief Adviser to head a new Construction Industry Consultative Council. This body would be tasked with promoting a sustainable industry over the medium to long term.

'At present responsibility for the Public Capital Programme is dispersed across nearly all government departments. A 'Construction Chief' would oversee the delivery of the

Public Capital Programme and take advantage of the lowest tender prices in a decade to get this sector and the country's economy working again' he said.

Cribbin pointed out that at an optimum level of output, the sector could support direct employment for 150,000 people.

In his speech, Cribbin also reiterated the SCS's support for an annual property tax. He said that as long as the tax was introduced in a fair manner with the money raised, ring fenced to fund local authorities, the Society would support it.

'While the introduction of a property tax would be controversial and deeply unpopular, recent events showed that local authorities needed proper funding. Recently we have seen local authorities all over the country struggle to deal with issues such as flooding, road maintenance and water supply. This tax is badly needed to ensure local authorities can meet their obligations and provide a professional service' he concluded.

The guest of honour at the annual dinner was the **President of Ireland Mary McAleese**, who was accompanied by her husband Martin. Over 800 guests from all over the country attended the event.