

## **Immigrant Council of Ireland tribute to migrant women on International Women's Day event**

*Friday March 6, 2009*

Migrant women are making enormous contributions to Irish society at all levels, economically, socially and culturally and those contributions are worthy of special celebration on International Women's Day (March 8), Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) chief executive **Denise Charlton** said today.

Ms Charlton was speaking at an International Women's Day celebration breakfast the ICI hosted for female ambassadors to Ireland this morning.

In attendance were: Australian Ambassador, Her Excellency **Anne Plunkett**; Ambassador for Chile, Her Excellency **Cecilia MacKenna**; Ambassador for Kenya, Her Excellency **Catherine Muigai Mwangi**; Ambassador for Lesotho, Her Excellency **Mannete Ramaili**; Ambassador for Mexico, Her Excellency **Cecilia Jaber**; Ambassador for Nigeria, Her Excellency **Kemafo Nonyerem Chikwe**; Ambassador for Pakistan, Her Excellency **Naghmana A. Hasmi**; South African Ambassador, Her Excellency **Priscilla Jana** and Argentinian Charge d'Affaires, Ms **Anna Pisano**.

Ms Charlton said research into the feminisation of migration found while many migrant women in Ireland found their experiences here were overwhelmingly positive, others experienced racism, discrimination and exploitation.

*"While there are migrant women in senior and professional positions in Ireland, running major corporations for example, it remains true that female migrants are over-represented in low-skilled employment and that recognition of skills and qualifications is an issue for many," she said.*

*"For me, the overwhelming feature that shone through research was the strength of character of these women who made the decision to start new lives in Ireland.*

*"But migrant women have identified the need for more information about their rights, in the workplace and in the community, which could help address some of the more serious problems of social exclusion and marginalisation and that is a need that the ICI, along with others, particularly in the NGO sector, tries to address."*

Ms Charlton said International Women's Day was a time to celebrate the contributions of migrant women to Irish society and a time to reflect on the challenges and obstacles that they can face.

*"We need to also recognise that migrant women can face unique challenges due to their immigration status and to continue to advocate for reforms to remove any obstacles which can prevent women from realising their full potential, whether they relate to recognition of qualifications and experience gained overseas or issues relating to their immigration status or ability to live with family members in Ireland," she said.*

For further information, please contact **Ruth Evans** on **087 067 3676**.