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## Written answers

Tuesday, 27 April 2010

Department of An Taoiseach  
Residential Institutions Redress Scheme

12:00 pm



**Michael Kennedy** (Dublin North, Fianna Fail)

*Question 106:* To ask the Taoiseach in view of the fact that Justice For Magdalenes has demonstrated the State's complicity in referring women to the Magdalene laundries, will he enter into discussions with a person (details supplied) who recently asserted their intent to find a just solution for survivors of the laundries; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [16748/10]



**Michael Kennedy** (Dublin North, Fianna Fail)

*Question 107:* To ask the Taoiseach, further to reports in a newspaper (details supplied) that he has promised to look into the situation of women who had been in Magdalene laundries, if he will clarify the position with respect to issuing a formal apology and establishing a distinct redress scheme for survivors of the laundries; if the Magdalene laundries was discussed at the recent meeting with representatives of the religious congregations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [16749/10]



**Brian Cowen** (Taoiseach; Laois-Offaly, Fianna Fail)

I propose to take Questions Nos. 106 and 107 together.

Along with the Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Science, the Ministers for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Health and Children and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and following on from the publication last year of the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (the Ryan Report), I met separately on 15 April 2010 with representatives of religious congregations and representatives from organisations of victims of abuse in residential institutions. The context of the meetings was the Report of the Panel set up by the Government last year to report on the adequacy of the statements of resources to be submitted by the congregations to the Panel as a basis for assessing the responses to be made by the congregations to the call made to them last year by the Dail and the Government for additional contributions by way of reparation for the abuse suffered by children in residential institutions. The Government published the Panel Report and the congregations' responses later on 15 April, along with a statement on the matter.

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The position of women who had been in Magdalene Laundries was raised by representatives of some victims' groups. While the matter was outside the focus of the meeting, the Government side indicated in response that the position of women in such laundries was not analogous with that of children in the residential institutions that were the subject of the Ryan Report. It was noted that the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Education and Science and Health and Children had each already held meetings with Magdalene women and their representatives and I made it clear that those Departments would be ready to help them with further enquiries as far as possible. The Government is also conscious that the Magdalene laundries were run by a small number of religious congregations with whom it is understood Magdalene women and their representatives are in contact; it is also understood that they are in contact with the person referred to by the Deputy.

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