

News Release

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Lord Adair Turner inaugurates *EMF's Policy Seminar Series 2007* by discussing the Challenges facing Minority Ethnic Pensioners in Britain Today

The Ethnic Minority Foundation (EMF) launched its Policy Seminar Series 2007 with a roundtable discussion on *Pensions and Ethnic Minorities – Challenges and Opportunities* at the House of Lords on Monday 30 April 2007. Presided by Lord Amir Bhatia OBE, Chair of EMF, the event featured Dr Krishna Sarda (Hon) FRSA, Chief Executive of EMF and Lord Adair Turner, Chair of the UK Pensions Commission and keynote speaker. Other guests included senior executives from the Department of Work and Pensions, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the British Muslim Research Centre and the New Economics Foundation.

Following the publication of the Pensions Commission's final report '*Implementing an integrated package of pension reforms*', Lord Turner reflected on the proposed reforms to the country's pension system, the difficulties inherent in such undertaking and the implications for employers, stakeholders and pensioners.

Lord Turner explained:

'British pension provision has historically been poor for many employees of small firms, for the self-employed and for women with interrupted work records, and it is differences in income levels, employment status and employment rates which drive differences in pension provision by ethnic group. The pensions reform now being introduced will have a disproportionately beneficial effect on several ethnic minorities, but only if the people understand the new opportunities that will be created'.

Dr Sarda, in turn, considered the particular barriers faced by minority ethnic communities and marginalised groups when planning for retirement and accessing pensions services.

Pointing to the way ahead for Britain's pensions provision, Dr Sarda said:

'Against a background of an increasingly diverse and aging population, our biggest challenge remains the provision of accessible, affordable and low-cost pensions savings for all. Given the link between pensions and earnings, attention must be paid to the specific needs of minority ethnic women of pensionable age, as they face disproportionate levels of hardship in retirement. With less than 50 per cent of women pensioners having entitlement to a full State Pension and minority ethnic women, in particular, being over-represented among the long-term unemployed and the economically inactive; this population group continues to be largely excluded from current provision'.

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Notes to Editors

The Ethnic Minority Foundation (EMF) is a national registered charity established in 1999 (Charity Number 1077002).

- EMF is committed to building a secure base for Britain's minority ethnic communities and the voluntary sector.
- In order to identify and address the needs of minority ethnic communities, EMF carries out a variety of activities and programmes, including:
 - Building community assets
 - Providing grants to minority ethnic individuals and groups
 - Conducting evidence-based research
 - Lobbying, campaigning and influencing government policy

Further details can be obtained from EMF's website: www.ethnicminorityfund.org.uk