

RECORD OF A SUB-PLenary MEETING HELD IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS ON
28 MAY

Government Team

Minister of State
Mr Thomas

Talks Secretariat

Mr D J R Hill

Party Delegates

Mr Close (APNI)
Mr Haughey (SDLP)
Mr Robinson (UDUP)
Mr Cunningham (UUP)

The meeting commenced at 1730 and concluded at 1820.

2. The Government Team recalled that the purpose of the meeting was to establish an agreed workplan - not a firm agenda - for the plenary sessions of strand one, building on the various suggestions for agenda items tabled by the parties in the respective bilateral meetings on 30 April and 3 May and on the agenda and aide memoire circulated by the Secretary of State on 3 May.

3. The UUP and UDUP delegates expressed the view that the proposed initial presentations should be in writing with an opportunity for subsequent questions intended to clarify the position of the party concerned; that the order of the items in the aide memoire might need to be reconsidered; and that arrangements for validating the outcome of the discussions should also be logged as an agenda item.

4. The Government Team tabled an exploratory draft workplan as a basis for discussion (copy at Annex).

5. In discussion it was agreed:

- (a) that it was inevitable and desirable that the talks should address the broad themes identified in the final sentence of paragraph 1;
- (b) that discussions should begin at the level of broad brush general principles and then focus down on detailed mechanisms;

- (c) that it was desirable to avoid setting too rigid a framework for discussion, in recognition of the fact that discussion might need to move backwards and forwards between issues and take account of new issues which might emerge;
 - (d) that nonetheless some specific headings were needed to provide a clear indication of the areas on which discussions might concentrate; and
 - (e) that it was open to any party in the early stages of the talks process to enter caveats to protect its position until it was possible, in the light of later discussions, to take a view on the emergent overall package; indeed it was likely that all parties would wish to enter such caveats.
6. It was further agreed that:
- (a) the last two sentences of paragraph 1 should become a new second paragraph;
 - (b) the first sentence of the next paragraph (now correctly numbered 3) should relate back to the outcome of the initial discussions, rather than to the Secretary of State's letter of 3 May;
 - (c) the phrase "at the forefront" should replace "prominent among" in the final sentence of paragraph 1;
 - (d) paragraph 3 should refer to "the remaining elements of the workplan" (to distinguish the items listed below from those referred to in (new) paragraph 2);
 - (e) the passages in brackets in sub-paragraphs 3(i), (ii) and (iii) should be deleted (on the grounds that they implied a particular outcome from the talks process);

- (f) there could be some conflation of the specific points listed in paragraph 3;
- (g) the revised paper should be added to the agenda suggested by the Secretary of State in his letter of 3 May, in place of items 6 and 7 of that agenda.

7. The Government Team undertook to circulate a second draft of the workplan by the following morning to enable the party delegates to discuss it with their colleagues before a further meeting arranged for 10.30 am on 29 May.

TALKS SECRETARIAT