

TALKS, 9 MARCH 1992 - AGREED STATEMENT

The first plenary meetings of the first strand of the new political talks took place at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, today. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the rt hon Peter Brooke MP, chaired the meetings, supported by the Minister of State, Dr Brian Mawhinney MP. The rt hon James Molyneux MP, Mr John Hume MP MEP, the Reverend Dr Ian Paisley MP MEP and Dr John Alderdice led delegations from the Ulster Unionist Party, the Social, Democratic and Labour Party, the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party and the Alliance Party respectively.

The Secretary of State reported the Prime Minister's good wishes, conveyed this morning, which the participants noted with appreciation.

All the participants warmly welcomed the start of the new talks and looked forward to frank and constructive exchanges in the months ahead. They emphasised their determination to work together within the framework set out in the Secretary of State's statement to the House of Commons on 26 March 1991.

The parties confirmed that the talks would continue up to the point when the UK general election was called and that they would then resume after a post-election meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.

The participants agreed on the need for arrangements to ensure swift and effective progress. To this end, a Business Committee was established to plan for the efficient conduct of business at future meetings. The Committee will comprise representatives of each delegation and be chaired by the Minister of State. It was agreed that the Committee would meet immediately in preparation for the next plenary meeting.