

JOINT TALKS STATEMENT

The Talks participants have agreed the following statement:

Talks delegations today held a plenary session at the end of a process that began in Strand 1 on 9 March, continued in Strand 2 from 6 July and in Strand 3, which opened on 28 July. The last four weeks of the process were spent in informal bilateral consultations among delegations and between individual delegations and the Chairman. The Talks covered fundamental aspects of the internal, North/South and East/West relationships.

The Talks were based on the statement of the then Secretary of State, Peter Brooke, of 26 March 1991. This statement recorded that all parties accepted that nothing would be finally agreed in any of the three strands of the Talks until everything was agreed in the Talks as a whole. The Talks have not resulted in a comprehensive accommodation in relation to the deep seated and long standing problems they have been addressing.

The Talks have been held, as the statement of 26 March 1991 envisaged, during a period between meetings of the Anglo-Irish Conference arranged for that purpose. Since the next meeting of the Conference has been set by the two Governments for 16 November the present Talks now come to an end.

The Chairman expressed the view that this should not mean that discussions would be brought permanently to an end. All concerned had set themselves ambitious objectives on entering the 3-strand process. Those objectives had not yet been achieved, despite the good will and intense effort all parties had put into the negotiations. However those objectives continued to be valid and, in the view of the Chairman, achievable.

The Talks participants noted that, while at this time there was no basis to agree a settlement, they had identified and

discussed most, if not all, of the elements which would comprise an eventual settlement; they had developed a clear understanding of each other's positions and established constructive dialogue on ways in which an accommodation might be reached on some of the key issues which divide them.

All parties recognise the value of the dialogue, but unsurprisingly, point to different areas of the process as being the most beneficial and identify different issues as being key obstacles. Participants have been acutely aware of the unprecedented - some might say historic - nature of the process in which they have engaged. All regret that their efforts have not been blessed with greater agreement. The two Governments are of the view that further dialogue is both necessary and desirable. The four Northern Ireland parties agree and, accordingly, will enter into informal consultations with a view to seeking a way forward.

The Strand 2 Talks participants wish to record their deep gratitude to Sir Ninian Stephen for his dedicated role in chairing this Strand of the process. They also thank the Australian Government for agreeing to make Sir Ninian available for this task and providing a senior official, Mr George Thompson, to support him in this role. The Strand 1 Talks participants also wish to extend their appreciation and thanks to Sir Patrick Mayhew MP for his chairmanship of the Strand 1 plenary meetings and to Jeremy Hanley MP for his commitment while chairing extensive Strand 1 committee sessions.

Participants also wish to put on record their gratitude to the administrative staff and all others who provided support services throughout the Talks process.

10 NOVEMBER 1992