

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF OPENING PLENARY SESSION -
TUESDAY 22 JULY 1997 (13.11)

Those present:

INDEPENDENT CHAIRMEN	GOVERNMENT TEAMS	PARTIES
Senator Mitchell	British Government	Alliance
Mr Holkeri	Irish Government	Labour
General de Chastelain		Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
		Progressive Unionist Party
		Social Democratic & Labour Party
		Ulster Democratic Party

1. The Chairman convened the meeting at 13.11. Noting the absence of the UDP the Chairman reminded everyone that that party had indicated it would be attending another meeting around this time and had yesterday, as a result, requested a delay in the start of the plenary until 13.00. The Chairman said he wished to be accommodating but neither he nor his staff knew how long it would be before the UDP arrived. In these circumstances, the Chairman proposed that it was better to proceed as he was sure that the UDP would be content with this approach if they were present.

2. Moving on to the minutes of 16 July, the Chairman asked for approval of these as circulated. The British Government pointed out that while the record in paragraph 6, line 14 correctly reflected what was said by the UKUP, the statement made by the party with regard to the minutes of 10 June and the use of the word "exploratory" by the British Government at that meeting was incorrect. The record should reflect that the word used was "explanatory". The Chairman noted this point. There was no further comments on the minutes and these were subsequently approved.

3. The Chairman continued saying that it had been agreed that a plenary would be scheduled for today on the basis that the UUP would be in attendance and a discussion and debate could then take place on the proposals and amendments tabled. The Chairman said that he had been informed that the UUP would not be in attendance and since there appeared to be no desire on the part of any other participant to enter into debate or raise issues of any kind, it was his suggestion, in the absence of contrary views, that the plenary be adjourned until 14.00 hours on Wednesday.

4. The PUP informed the Chair that the UDP were now approaching the Castle Buildings gate and would be in the conference room within a few minutes. The Chairman thanked the PUP for this and stated that, if there were no objection, it would be common courtesy to await the UDP's arrival in the room to enable them to be informed of the decisions taken. In the interim and for the purposes of confirmation, the Chairman asked the participants whether an adjournment to 14.00 hours on Wednesday was acceptable. No objections were raised. The Chairman said he wished to call a brief adjournment, allowing everyone to remain in their seats, until the arrival of the UDP. An adjournment was called at 13.16.

5. At 13.17 the Chairman noted the presence of the UDP in the room. He outlined to the party that the minutes of 16 July had been agreed and that the participants had agreed to adjourn the plenary until 14.00 hours tomorrow. The Chairman informed the UDP that there had been no wish on the part of any of the other participants to hold a debate or discussion today. The Chairman asked the UDP whether it was in agreement with this position.

6. The UDP apologised for the delay in attendance and stated that it was content with what the Chairman had outlined. The Chairman, noting that there was no further business, adjourned the session at 13.18 until 14.00 hours on Wednesday.

Independent Chairman Notetakers
23 July 1997

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