

BRIEFING NOTE B

NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S COALITION POSITION ON STRANDS 1, 2, AND 3.

1. *Principles and Requirements of Process.*
 - 1.1. Acceptance of consent should mean the widest possible consent, not simple majority.
 - a) A commitment to work to win consent inside the Talks through sufficient consent of all parties, not two trading blocks.
 - b) A commitment to collective responsibility for the outcome and for being honest about the compromise, so there is a shared project to put to people.
 - c) A commitment to collective leadership to winning the greatest possible majority among the people through education, information and promotion of the agreed outcome on a common platform not on an adversarial basis.
 - 1.2. There must be a willingness to examine the need for change and the radicalisation of democracy at all levels of society as well as in the course of dealing with the constitutional issue.
 - 1.3. There should be inclusion of people as far as possible in the dialogue in order to assist us to shape the outcome and prepare for change.
 - 1.4. Any agreement, including the institutions and arrangements which are part of it, must be based on principles of inclusion, equity and human rights.
 - 1.5. It must broaden and deepen democracy and draw on the best lessons of partnership, co-operation and collaboration. It should address the concept of participatory democracy and find ways of engaging people with politicians, recognising them as active citizens, informing, influencing and taking part in decisions which affect their lives.
 - 1.6. It must go beyond the confines of the two main traditions in Northern Ireland and must specifically include measures to ensure an equal outcome for women with men.
 - 1.7. It should be characterised by openness and be capable of flexibility and development, while offering people the stability of a solid framework based on a shared commitment by political structures.

2 *Principles and Requirements of Institutions and Arrangements*

- 2.1 Any institutions and arrangements must be capable of interfacing with, and developing a constructive and developmental relationship with the regions of the United Kingdom, Ireland and the European Union.
- 2.2 The agreed institutions and arrangements must be inclusive in nature, ensuring the representation of all traditions on the island.
- 2.3 North/South institutional arrangements should specifically address the need to establish common principles of civil, religious and human rights, rooted in the concepts of equity and pluralism.
- 2.4 Any new arrangements must ensure that gender equality is secured through new electoral arrangements and appropriate support for equity in representation.
- 2.5 Any new arrangements should entail decision-making structures that are closer to people and local communities.
- 2.6 North/South bodies should have appropriate decision-making powers to enable them effectively to develop strategic frameworks for economic and social development; joint action on shared natural and physical assets, and the implementation of EU policy on inter-regional development and harmonisation.
- 2.7 There must be compliance with E.U. and other international obligations and protection for civic, political, social and cultural rights. The British and Irish governments should have joint responsibility for citizenship, and for protection of individual and collective rights.
- 2.8 Structures and arrangements should be developed to facilitate the weaving of a web of relationships on an East/West basis as well as North/South. A Council of the Regions of Britain and Ireland might be considered.
- 2.9 Within Northern Ireland, the Coalition envisages the establishment of a Northern Ireland Assembly comprising of

a) an elected chamber of directly elected politicians;

b) a civic chamber comprised of business, trade union, community and voluntary sector interests indirectly elected through electoral colleges.

The electoral system chosen should deliver 50/50 gender balanced arrangements in both chambers.

2.10 The Inter-Governmental Conference should continue in existence and should help to manage a recognised transition period which will include

- i) immediate change arising out of the agreement;
- ii) management of potential further development and change

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