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*All Members of Northern Ireland Assembly*

Dear Member

May I, as Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and on behalf of my colleagues, congratulate you on your election to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

As you know, the Agreement provides for a transitional period during which the Assembly may make preparations for its effective functioning. The Secretary of State has initiated the construction of a transition programme intended to assist Members and Civil Servants prepare together for the new responsibilities ahead. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the arrangements which have provisionally been made.

An outline programme has been prepared which is enclosed with this letter. The aim of the programme is to provide Members with a comprehensive background briefing on the responsibilities and issues which lie ahead. The programme will be fully participative, involving all Assembly members and appropriate Civil Service officials.

It is envisaged that the programme will now be worked up in detail, in consultation with the political parties represented in the Assembly. If you have views or suggestions with regard to it, please convey these to your Party office.

Yours sincerely

JOHN SEMPLE