

Forum for Peace and Reconciliation

Co-ordinating Committee - Meeting 11 November 1994

Decisions Taken

Procedures of the Forum

1. With regard to the functioning of the Co-ordinating Committee (paras 1 & 2 of the Chairperson's Note - doc. F/001 Rev.2)), the Chairperson proposed that normally full members of the Forum should speak; where they were absent, Delegation Secretaries could intervene.
2. It was agreed that the Secretariat would redraft paragraph 5 of the Chairperson's Note (Regulation of Debates) to make clear that speakers would not be obliged to give way to those making points of information/clarification.
3. With regard to paragraph 11 (Substitutes) the Chairperson made clear that she would not permit delegations to abuse this facility - and the provision for alternates - to allow an excessive number of interventions from one delegation on one item.
4. The intention of the Forum to review its procedures at an early point, already noted in the Record of Decisions of the meeting on 3 November, is to be described in a new paragraph 12 of the Chairperson's Note.
5. Following a discussion of the proposed Fine Gael amendment (doc. F/011) concerning the institution of a system of questions, it was agreed that if delegations sought to make urgent statements regarding topical issues, the Chairperson could at her absolute discretion agree to make available a short period of time for such statements, and responses others might wish to make, at a convenient point in the Forum's business. The Chairperson requested that as much notice as possible be given wherever possible.
6. The proposed Fine Gael amendment (doc. F/011) regarding links the Forum might arrange with other bodies was agreed in a slightly modified form and will be taken account of in a revised paragraph 10 of the Chairperson's Note. A wide range of views was expressed as to the feasibility and desirability of the Sinn Fein proposal (doc. F/009) that the Forum be held in local centres throughout the 32 counties. The Chairperson concluded that the Forum would not wish at this point to close off possibilities for outreach and that the Committee could return to the matter after Christmas, when the volume and pattern of public submissions would be clearer. The costs to any individual or group of attending the Forum would not be a limiting factor, as they could be borne by the Forum where warranted. The Secretariat indicated that public submissions would be supplied to all delegation secretaries for further circulation, but that papers by Forum members or delegations would be circulated to all Forum members.

Programme of Work

7. The Committee endorsed the Secretariat's paper on a possible programme of work to end-February (doc. F/005), with the expansion of the proposed examination of the Economic Consequences of Peace and Economic Reconstruction to include social consequences, with particular reference to the reintegration of released prisoners and those involved in paramilitary activity. The PD and Green Party /An Comhaontas Glas representatives expressed satisfaction that their proposals (docs. F/008 and F/010 respectively) had been incorporated into the Secretariat paper. Nevertheless, it was agreed that flexibility would be necessary and that the Forum might well have to revise the programme in the light of development and following consultation within the Co-ordinating Committee..

Pattern/Schedule of meetings of Forum

8. It was agreed that the Forum should in principle meet weekly, and that at the invitation of the Forum it could be addressed by invited expert bodies or individuals, distinguished visitors and observers.

Meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee

9. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would on an experimental basis be held at 9.30 on Friday 25 November, with the plenary session of the Forum on that day to commence at 11.00; the timing of further meetings of the Committee would be considered subsequently.

Agenda for Forum session on 18 November

10. The draft agenda set out in doc. F/007 was agreed, subject to the removal of item 1 (adoption of agenda), clarification that item 4 could begin before the coffee break, and amendment of item 5 (Economic Consequences of Peace...) as agreed in the discussion on the programme of Work (see para. 7 above).

Deputy Chairpersons

11. The Chairperson's proposal that in the event of her unavoidable absence the Forum be chaired successively by nominees of the delegations in line with their place in the speaking order was agreed.

Terms of Reference/Follow-up to first three themes

12. Discussion centred on how best to handle consideration of the nature of the problem and the principles underlying its resolution (doc. F/002 Rev.1). It was decided that in the Forum's early meetings the bulk of the time available would be allotted to this item, with briefer consideration of sectoral themes. It was agreed that to allow for genuine debate the best course would be for delegations in turn over the course of at least four meetings to submit written analyses which might be introduced by a brief oral presentation, following which they could take questions. At the meeting on 18 November the SDLP and, subject to further consideration, Fianna Fail would make presentations on this topic. The phasing of subsequent presentations remained to be decided.