

F028

Expert Hearings on the Social and Economic Consequences of Peace
Dublin Castle, 16 December 1994

Information Note for Co-ordinating Committee

1. At its plenary meeting on 18 November 1994, the Forum agreed a Programme of Work until the end of February 1995 (Forum Document F005/Rev1). The Programme envisages a day-long session of expert hearings on the social and economic consequences of peace on 16 December. This note sets out for the consideration of the Co-ordinating Committee some initial ideas on how those hearings might be structured.

Background

2. The Co-ordinating Committee is currently considering terms of reference for its overall examination of the social and economic consequences of peace. It is envisaged that part of that process will involve consultancy studies on aspects of the issue. It was felt that a session of expert hearings, held in public, would serve as a useful complement to this work, and make a positive contribution to the overall debate on the issue. The focus of the hearings would be on the broad overview picture, with the emphasis on the close interconnection between the consolidation of the peace process and the development of an imaginative and dynamic programme of economic and social reconstruction.

Suggested Speakers

3. It is suggested that invitations to make presentations at these hearings be extended to the following bodies:
 - The Confederation of Irish Industry (Northern Ireland) and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (joint paper);
 - The Irish Congress of Trade Unions;
 - The European Union;
 - The US Administration and the Ireland-America Economic Advisory Board (combined papers);
 - Experts in the social sector (possibly a combined presentation by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action and the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust);
 - Experts in the trade promotion and tourism sectors (eg joint presentations by Irish Trade Board/Industrial Development Board and Bord Fáilte/NITB)

Modalities

4. It is envisaged that we would devote 60/90 minute slots to each area, with short (10 minute) presentations by the speakers at the beginning of each session, followed by a

am, break for lunch from 1-2pm and continue until 4.30/5pm. The hearings would take place in the Conference Centre in Dublin Castle. It would be open to the public. We would also envisage inviting a number of special guests from the relevant fields. We understand that the event will be covered by RTE television and that some of the proceedings may be carried live.

5. We are at present in a position to sketch the outline of the day in only a preliminary way. Clearly many of the details remain to be finalised. One of the issues to be addressed, for instance, is how the interchange between speakers and the Forum membership is structured. Clearly it will not be feasible in the time available to have all 12 Delegations question each speaker. It will probably be necessary to devise an arrangement whereby designated Delegations will question particular speakers etc. The precise topic to be addressed by each speaker also remains to be finalised - these will, of course, relate closely to the area of expertise in question. In respect of the US involvement, for instance, we envisaged for the contribution of the US Administration representative the working title "Social and Economic Reconstruction - the role of Washington" and for the representative of the Ireland-America Economic Advisory Board "Peace in Northern Ireland and US Investment - a Win-win situation".
6. A fuller oral presentation on the proposed arrangements of the hearings will be made to the Co-ordinating Committee meeting on 25 November.

Forum Secretariat
23 November 1994