

INVESTING IN PEACE

An Interim
Programme for
Reconstruction

LETS WORK
TOGETHER

■ The ending of a reputation internationally as a trouble spot

Peace lifts economic recovery

■ Can peace lead to new job creation?

Investors delighted

■ Business chiefs hope for jobs progress

■ Doom hopes must be grasped as report

Workers Will Benefit From Peace.

End of fear opens the door to business.

A time to rebuild our community.

1894-1994



CONGRESS

WORKING FOR PROGRESS

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

FOREWORD

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has consistently presented policies for peace, employment and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. ICTU welcomes the new situation created by the two ceasefires announced in August and October. Ending violence is only part, though an essential part, of the process of creating a new peaceful and stabilised society in Northern Ireland in which economic prosperity, full employment and equality of opportunity could become the norm. Much work now needs to be done on economic, community and justice issues.

Congress believes there is a need for an Interim Programme for Reconstruction based on proposals to tackle these three key areas:

- **economic issues**
- **community and social issues**
- **justice issues**

All these issues are very closely inter-linked, and it is essential that this inter-linking forms an integral part of developing a programme for reconstruction.

This Programme is being put forward for discussion with a variety of organisations, including the two Governments, the European Union, political bodies, trade union organisations, community and voluntary bodies, and we look forward to hearing their response to these proposals.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1

The social and economic problems in Northern Ireland are clear:

- the levels of long-term unemployment and poverty are unacceptably high
- there is a disproportionately weak private manufacturing sector
- many remote rural areas are characterised by a vulnerable social and economic infrastructure
- high levels of multiple deprivation are common in a number of urban and district town areas
- in demographic terms, there is a youthful population which is facing a lack of nursery education and a coherent programme to provide for development in the early years up to and including the start of primary school education. In addition, the primary and post-primary education system is sharply divided by the continuation of a selective system at age 11, with its inherent threat of the marginalisation of many of those who are branded as failures at that age
- the post ceasefire scenario highlights the need for community reconciliation, both across interface zones and areas, as well as in relation to those who were involved and/or suffered in the Troubles
- the public service sector has been undermined in recent years, thus adversely affecting the provision of housing, community care and other essential services.

1.2

In addition to the structural issues listed above, it also has to be recognised that there will be transitional problems in the Northern Ireland economy in the development of the peace process. Groups of workers face the prospect of either significant cuts in their earnings, or redundancy, whilst others will require re-training, either to equip them to undertake new tasks, or to adjust their present job to the changed situation. While the obvious groups which fall into this category are security force members, there are also important implications for civilian support staff, construction companies and their workers, who have been involved in undertaking security force work, and a wide range of suppliers. Hopefully, however, these problems will be no more than transitional and the overall benefits of a violence-free society, in economic terms, will compensate for these down-side effects of the changed situation.

1.3 In addressing these issues, there has to be a recognition by Government that, effectively, there has been a democratic deficit of very significant proportions in Northern Ireland, and it will be vitally important to address issues of community involvement in the regeneration process. This will also mean trying to secure political involvement, as early as possible, in the process, and giving a voice to community, voluntary and women's groups, trade unions, employers, political and other organisations, in helping to shape the regeneration programme.

1.4 It almost goes without saying that ICTU strongly favours "a bottom-up" approach. In the new circumstances, it is important that a process of involvement is developed which:

- a. convinces communities which have been most affected by violence that they **do** have a part to play in restructuring society; and
- b. ensures that the agenda for reconstruction is not simply that as laid down in Brussels, Washington, London or Dublin, but includes the agenda of people who live and, too often, do not work in Northern Ireland.

We believe that co-operation and commitment are the basis of an effective economic strategy and this approach will ensure the most efficient use of resources.

1.5 Central to any reconstruction programme is the need to recognise that it is essential to invest public resources in building on the new possibilities of creating a peaceful, prosperous and just society.

1.6 It must also be accepted that simply relying on existing mechanisms for delivery of a reconstruction programme is fraught with a number of dangers:

- existing mechanisms will not directly engage disadvantaged groups or local communities which have suffered most from violence
- using existing structures will tend to reinforce the status quo and will not impact, therefore, on the areas of greatest disadvantage - these must be firmly addressed if the peace process is to be meaningful to those who need to see tangible benefits
- equality of opportunity needs to be moved centre-stage in any new programme if a reconstruction programme is to directly address disadvantage in the community.

1.7

Sectarianism has been with us before the start of the century and will remain with us into the next century. Over the past 25 years, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Trade Union Movement in general, has been to the fore in tackling sectarianism in the workplace, with various campaigns and the development of extensive training programmes dealing with sectarianism in the workplace, and through our anti-sectarian unit, *COUNTERACT*.

This work should now take on a new significance in light of the present cessation of violence, since this must be the best opportunity in our recent history to address this issue. Although ICTU supports the work of the Fair Employment Commission and the Fair Employment Tribunals in addressing discrimination in the workplace, this in itself is not enough. Sectarian attitudes and prejudices should also be addressed through the provision of training, awareness-raising and prejudice reduction to union representatives, management and staff within industries.

In the main, sectarianism has been dealt with by organisations as an equality issue, but nevertheless it impinges upon the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of industry and is an issue that must be integrated into economic development.

SECTION 2

ECONOMIC ISSUES

- 2.1 Congress recognises that both the UK and Irish Governments have invested many political resources in the peace process. We called for such an investment in our Declaration for the *Community Day for Unifying Peace* in November 1993. Other organisations, political and otherwise, have also responded to the new political situation. However, investment in the political process needs to be firmly underpinned by financial investments.
- 2.2 Such financial investments need to be firmly directed towards investment in people, especially the long-term unemployed, and in job creation for the deprived areas which have never enjoyed meaningful economic development, or which have suffered economic decline due to violence.
- 2.3 It is fashionable in current economic thinking to concentrate on the issues of growth, competitiveness and productivity. These are important, but they should not be regarded as primary or free-standing objectives, but rather as part of a strategy to create jobs. The real challenge, therefore, is to devise a strategy which is primarily centred on the creation of jobs.
- That strategy must address the issues of job creation, tackling unemployment and must be firmly rooted in promoting equality of opportunity. Unless economic regeneration gives jobs and hope to the unemployed, the long-term unemployed, and those in areas of high unemployment, such people will not inter-connect with the peace process. There is a grave danger that a cynicism would grow based on the question "So what has changed?". The peace process must be about bringing change to those disaffected by a quarter of a century of violence. Otherwise there is a danger that it will run into the sand.
- 2.4 Such a "people-based" strategy is not only socially justifiable but also makes sound economic sense in that it harnesses the energies of all our people.
- 2.5 Tackling economic deprivation with built-in mechanisms for ensuring the advancement of equality of opportunity for all those who live in deprived communities makes good sense, both in economic and social justice terms. The overriding question, therefore, should not be "What does it cost to implement this programme?" but instead "How can we afford not to do it?" The blunt message must be **"PEACE CANNOT BE BOUGHT CHEAPLY. IT WILL DEMAND MUCH ENERGY AND HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES"**
- 2.6 Against the background of what needs to be done, it is important to reflect on the state of the Northern Ireland economy. Like many peripheral regions in Europe, there are fundamental difficulties in the Northern Ireland economy.

Whilst, as many commentators claim, Northern Ireland has not suffered as badly in the most recent recession as other regions of the UK, the main reason for that is the fact that Northern Ireland did not enjoy the pre-recession boom which occurred in Britain, especially in South-east England. Recent outcomes serve mainly to mask the fundamental flaws in its economic structure, the most notable of which is the inherent weakness of our manufacturing sector. The **causes** of these weaknesses need to be addressed as well as the **symptoms**.

2.7

The programme for reconstruction will require a major re-ordering of current public expenditure priorities in Northern Ireland which are, in order of priority: *combatting terrorism, strengthening the economy, and targeting social need (TSN)*. In the new situation, this requires to be radically re-defined, with TSN becoming the top priority and more closely integrated with strengthening the economy.

With regard to TSN, there needs to be a much more focused definition of what is meant by TSN, and the criteria by which programmes will be examined to ensure that they contribute towards achieving this objective.

As regards strengthening the economy, this should not be interpreted narrowly. As experience in the Republic of Ireland has shown, it is possible to generate growth which may strengthen the economy, but which does not generate additional employment. Furthermore, there is evidence that those in employment “recycle” jobs among themselves and that there are minimal flows between those “out of employment” and those “in employment”. The emphasis must be on creating extra jobs and giving those “out of employment” a realistic opportunity of competing for them. This will almost certainly require the introduction of outreach programmes designed to increase the opportunities for previously disadvantaged people in the competition for jobs.

Principles to be applied to the Programme for Reconstruction

2.8

In addition to the reordering of public expenditure priorities, there are prospective additional funds from the USA, EU and elsewhere. The EU is currently in the process of drawing up its programme of additional aid for Northern Ireland over and above the second round of Community Support Framework (now known as the *Single Programming Document*). ICTU wishes to see the funds available applied in Northern Ireland in line with some fundamental principles.

In the case of EU and USA funds, they must be **additional** to the current public expenditure programme in Northern Ireland. This will require a transparency in the operation of programmes under the funding.

Principles to be applied to the Programme for Reconstruction (contd.)

There will need to be some independent supervision of the expenditure of these funds by mechanisms distinct from those for existing programmes which would include trade unions, employers, women's groups, the community and voluntary sector, and local political representatives. This requires a co-ordinated Community Regeneration Core Strategy which should provide resources to existing organisations based and working in the most deprived urban and rural areas. The aims of the programme would be to:

- enable these groups to engage in strategic planning based on the needs expressed in those areas;
- seek to involve the long-term unemployed in proactive community action;
- develop participative models of community action;
- identify and plan actions to address the social and economic needs of the communities, with their full involvement;

This would demonstrate the contribution which community development programmes can make to the reconstruction of Northern Ireland.

In summary therefore the Programme will require clear criteria, including:

- **active community involvement**
- **priority for areas of highest deprivation based on the identification of such areas from the statistical bases currently available from Government research**
- **cross-border and border region projects**
- **new programmes for community development**
- **a major programme to tackle the issue of long-term unemployment**
- **special programmes aimed at those who have suffered directly from violence**
- **programmes arising out of our proposals on community and social issues**
- **legislative amendments to the Fair Employment legislation to ensure that a full range of affirmative action measures can be legally deployed in the implementation of this programme**

2.9

Against this background, ICTU proposes a programme based along the following lines:

- a. It should seek to attract new industrial investment to Ireland, North and South, and to concentrate new industrial projects in the most deprived areas.
- b. The new inward investment programme should:-
 - i. be targeted at expanding sectors of manufacturing and tradable services;
 - ii. market these on an all-Ireland basis - this will be especially relevant in seeking US investment as it is already clear that many US investors would wish to treat the whole of Ireland as a single economic unit; and
 - iii. recognise that the major need for economic reconstruction is in the Northern Ireland economy. The reconstruction needs of parts of the economy of the Republic, especially the Border regions, and the effects of the change of priority from security expenditure will have on these regions, must be addressed.
- c. As part of the inward investment programme in 'a' & 'b' above and the R&D initiative in 'd' below, there needs to be developed urgently a grant package which matches in Northern Ireland the 10% Corporate Tax Rate available in the Republic. This tax relief incentive should be targeted at activities which are clearly identifiable as export activities. Congress is not unaware of the difficulties in achieving this, but if an all-Ireland inward investment package is to be meaningful, the corporate tax differential issue must be addressed.
- d. One of the aims should be to develop programmes to underpin a new industrial research and development strategy. A new Industrial Development Programme should identify key sectors which would be the primary targets for such R&D activity, such as aerospace, food processing, automotive components and electronics. This new R&D strategy should serve these and other sectors on an all-Ireland basis.

- e. The structures of the industrial development agencies in Northern Ireland should be examined and re-organised where appropriate with a view to:
- i. establishing much greater co-ordination and integration between the agencies, third level research centres and business;
 - ii. establishing autonomous industrial R&D / product development centres for the industries mentioned above through such linkages, similar to the Eolas sponsored BioResearch project in the Republic; and
 - iii. establishing a closer relationship between the IDB and other agencies in Northern Ireland with the industrial development and marketing agencies in the Republic aimed at maximising inward investment to the island as a whole and exploiting the potential benefits of joint marketing abroad.
- f. Tourism can be important in terms of its immediate impact on job creation and can also impact in many local areas throughout the Province. A development programme should be drawn up, based not on low-paid part-time jobs, but on quality jobs with fully developed skills which are rewarded accordingly. While grants for extra accommodation will undoubtedly form part of a new package, the priority should be on developing new programmes for visitors which would provide the quality jobs referred to above. The tourism development plan should specifically take account of North/South issues and we therefore welcome the recent announcement of a £6 million scheme to market the whole of Ireland together. Within this marketing strategy, there should be a sub-regional strategy aimed at the Border counties. This tourism initiative should, inter alia, be designed to ensure that there are facilities 'on the ground' in the Border regions to allow them to take advantage of the new tourism opportunities.
- g. The economic programme should include a major new initiative to develop North/South economic co-operation, and the guiding principles should include:
- a greater element of co-operation between North and South in various sectors, which would at least help to eliminate unnecessary competition, which drives up the costs to public funds
 - seeking to double North/South and South/North trade within a five-year programme

- developing cross-border programmes, especially by encouraging the development of local economic councils in border areas, involving local authorities, business and trade union and community bodies, to develop projects of mutual benefit and reverse the long-term economic decline of many border areas
- developing linkages at further and higher education levels
- developing a joint energy strategy, the most obvious and immediately achievable element being the reinstatement of the North-South electricity interconnector. We welcome the recent joint announcement that the interconnector is to be re-instated. The overall energy strategy should also include a complete assessment of the island's energy connections
- examining the potential of joint co-operation in agri-business ventures
- ensuring that grants are related to the actual creation of new jobs rather than to the cost of plant and machinery
- providing additional training resources to upgrade the skills of Northern Ireland's workforce, with particular emphasis on unskilled and semi-skilled workers, whether employed or unemployed
- investing in North/South infrastructural projects which can enhance the competitiveness and productive capacity of both economies - at the very least, there should be a requirement that all such programmes should be jointly discussed to ensure that programmes on either side of the Border are as complementary as possible
- a recognition of the problems of the peripherality of the whole of the island of Ireland in relation to its connections to Europe with a view to redressing the adverse affects of that peripherality
- developing a joint labour market between the two economies, North and South
- exploring the potential for job creation in the development of cultural and arts activities, especially those rooted in local community efforts
- as part of the programme, obstacles to trade and mobility in border regions should be removed as soon as possible.

2.10

The long-term Unemployed

ICTU proposes the following measures for the long-term unemployed:

- a. Within the new public expenditure priorities a high priority should be given to measures to help the long-term unemployed. It is widely recognised that the persistence of long-term unemployment is a destabilising influence. For that reason the Governments, both North and South, have acknowledged that special efforts may be necessary. This needs to be translated into firm commitments to address the needs of this group.
- b. The programme for the long-term unemployed needs to be ambitious and we recommend that it should provide for employment and training placements for at least three years for 20,000 of the long-term unemployed. The basis for proposing this figure is a recognition of the fact that most job creation measures, including the attraction of inward investment recommended earlier, do not reach the long-term unemployed. The objective of the programme should be to enhance their skills and their longer-term employment prospects. These jobs must have a recognised training element and be of sufficient duration to allow new, or enhanced, skills to be acquired. Conditions should approximate as near as possible those in the normal marketplace. Payment therefore should be at the rate for the job.
- c. The programme for the long-term unemployed should be delivered by a variety of agencies, including District Councils, Health and Education Boards, and a re-vamped Enterprise Ulster scheme. The programme should include a diversity of programmes in the social economy, including community work, child-care provision, community development programmes, local economic initiatives etc.
- d. Job subsidies are controversial and their effectiveness is disputed, but there should be a scheme for purchasing temporary placements in the private and public sectors for the long-term unemployed.
- e. Special measures will also be necessary to enable the long-term unemployed to gain access to the new schemes, or existing training schemes. Counselling and guidance services should be provided and tailored to meet their needs. The delivery of such services is critical. To ensure that these are effective in assisting the transition of the unemployed to more formal schemes, they should be delivered at local level. Furthermore, renewed consideration should be given to the delivery of schemes themselves, or modules of them, at local level.

- f. Given the ultra-fragile nature of the new socio-political and economic situations, it is important that the Northern Ireland Office give a public undertaking that any current privatisation proposals for existing public services in Northern Ireland are put on hold. Efforts to establish the fullest possible role for local politicians in the day-to-day social and economic life of our communities, suggest that any further privatisations here should not proceed unless or until a majority of Northern Ireland MPs vote in favour of those privatisations. Handing power to Northern Ireland MPs on the issue of privatisation of public services and publicly owned assets here would be a meaningful devolution of political power which would send a very positive signal that Government is confident of the new situation maturing fully.

Privatisation programmes therefore should be halted since:

- i. Government would not be justified in further re-shaping the public services in advance of a potential political settlement; and
 - ii. further divergence of the structures of the public services, North and South, would create additional and unnecessary obstacles to the development of mutually beneficial co-operation.
- g. It has to be recognised that, to date, privatisation programmes have reinforced inequalities, especially gender inequalities. In developing a new economic scenario, the equality dimension must be an integral part of the preparation and development of programmes. If privatisation proceeds, however, both the spirit and the letter of European Directives on the Transfer of Undertakings must be applied.
 - h. Programmes for the long-term unemployed must be designed in such a way that they do not rely on the creation of part-time, low-quality jobs which would do little more than disguise female unemployment.

SECTION 3

COMMUNITY and SOCIAL ISSUES

3.1

If the development of the long-term political process is to be sustained, it must begin with short-term investments which will produce an immediate and positive impact on the most deprived communities.

3.2

As part of the Programme for Reconstruction, there are a number of short-term measures which ICTU would support and which would facilitate community regeneration and improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged areas:

- i. Early years development work is required to redress the poor child-care infrastructure in Northern Ireland. Not only would investment in this area create jobs in the social economy, but it could also be used as a proactive approach to developing multi-functional school and early years provision. A range of provisions should be funded in disadvantaged areas across Northern Ireland.
- ii. Work with marginalised young people is accepted by many organisations in the community and voluntary sector as a priority. In particular, programmes need to be developed outside mainstream youth leisure and training provision for those young people who do not readily identify with the formal Youth Service, or with provisions such as youth clubs. Without an investment in this area there will be the danger of a growth in anti-social and criminal activities among young people.
- iii. There is a need to address the issues of hostile interface communities if long-term integrated living is ever to be envisaged. This not only includes "peace wall" communities - which require sensitive handling - but also fragmented territories and townlands. A number of action/research projects should be funded with the aim of providing the policy framework for dealing with both the intermediate tensions and long-term opportunities.
- iv. The role that community-based women's organisations have played in maintaining contact and normality in a fractured Northern Ireland must be recognised. To date such groups exist on a hand-to-mouth basis. Congress recommends the establishment of a global fund to support the initial core costs of such organisations and their support networks, and in support of the processes and programmes in and between their communities. Again it would be essential that there is full consultation with women's organisations in developing these programmes.

3.3

Education

- i. Education has a hard economic edge because it represents an investment in the future, but it is also crucial to the development of a fairer society. It is well known that the education systems in Northern Ireland (and we use the plural deliberately) produce some of the best and some of the worst exam results in the UK. The problem of under achievement must be tackled, as it is both socially divisive and economically damaging.
- ii. The genesis of under-achievement in Northern Ireland - the extent of which has been highlighted in research by both the Department of Education NI and the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights - lies in the pre-school and primary school sectors. It is pointless trying to develop high quality education and training programmes unless under-achievement, including basic literacy and numeracy, is addressed. The development of a programme of universal nursery education for all 3 to 4 year-old children whose parents desire it is an urgent priority. It should be targeted initially in areas of social and economic deprivation.
- iii. The shambles of the 1994 so-called "Transfer Procedure Tests" serves only to further highlight the cruelty and injustice of this discredited 11+ selection procedure. As a matter of urgency, the development of a new system of inclusive education should be developed based in part on the Craigavon model of the "Dixon Plan".
- iv. The buildings in which many children are taught need to be upgraded or replaced and better provision of books and equipment is clearly needed.
- v. At the other end of the spectrum, we demand more investment in further education, because it provides the vocational education which matches the aptitudes which tend to be more prevalent in deprived areas, and because it helps to produce the technicians who will be essential to the development of a more advanced economy.
- vi. There is also a necessity for homework centres / learning areas in schools to be developed. Parenting programmes have a valuable role to play in fostering attitudes which are positive to education and the acquisition of learning.
- vii. Particular support and encouragement should be given to cross-community, multi-denominational and non-denominational educational projects, especially at pre-school and primary level.

3.4

Public Sector Housing

With the expected rise in unemployment in the construction industry mentioned earlier, and to cater for the demand for better housing, particularly in rural areas, the public housing authority should be provided with additional funds to increase substantially their new-build programmes. Community representatives should be consulted on the location, design and refurbishment of public sector housing, with a view to reducing the level of ghettoisation in the housing market and maximising community inter-action.

3.5

Health Care

There is a clearly understood correlation between low standards of health and economic and social inequality. Health and Social Services resources must be targeted to tackle this fundamental obstacle to economic and social participation. Criteria must be weighted to tackle the consequences of this deprivation. Transparent and participative decision-making processes are required for an effective strategy, together with regular evaluation to monitor the impact on achieving change.

SECTION 4

JUSTICE ISSUES

4.1

On many occasions ICTU has addressed issues which can be broadly referred to as "justice issues". The post-ceasefire scenario highlights the need for some of these issues to be re-examined. Others are totally unrelated to the ceasefires recently announced. Nevertheless, the latter issues are the subject of current debate and, therefore, in our view, it is appropriate to include them in this Interim Programme.

4.2

Bill of Rights

Whilst there is not universal agreement as to the contents of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, there is widespread agreement on the need for such a Bill. This issue should feature prominently in the discussions on any new political framework. To assist in those discussions, it would be useful for the Northern Ireland Office to issue for general consultation a draft Bill, with the results of the consultation then being considered in the eventual inter-party talks.

The Bill of Rights should be based on the European Convention on Human Rights and should be enforceable in the domestic courts. While the European Convention should be the main framework for such a Bill of Rights, there is a major deficiency in the Convention in that it does not deal with issues such as community rights or parity of esteem or equality of treatment. It is very obvious that these issues must be addressed in the Northern Ireland context. Difficult though the detail may be, it would be important that a declaration in principle be made at an early date.

The Bill of Rights should also encompass statutory rights for workers, especially since these have been strongly eroded by the UK Government over the last fifteen years.

Associated with this should be a new Human Rights Commission tasked to ensure that fundamental rights are promoted and not abused and to review the need for improvements in the legislation.

4.3

Administration of Justice

The introduction of a Bill of Rights will have major implications for a number of aspects of the administration of justice. It will require a new "mind-set", especially for the judiciary and for all of those involved in the administration of justice. Judges, barristers and solicitors in the criminal legal system will all require training in the concepts which are inherent in such a Bill.

Administration of Justice (contd.)

The Secretary of State should also publicly announce that the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Provisions Act is being suspended and, furthermore, that the legislation will be either repealed, or allowed to lapse, at the time of its scheduled renewal in the Spring of 1995.

This will further involve the ending of the use of the Diplock Courts and the return to jury trials.

Congress welcomes the recent announcement of the establishment of the Criminal Cases Review Authority which will have the right to investigate cases where there are allegations of a miscarriage of justice. Congress will scrutinise the Authority's terms of reference when these are published, in the Bill, in due course.

4.4

ICTU's Equality Policies

There is a strong case for comprehensive equality legislation on the four key areas of equality, namely:

- **gender**
- **religion/politics**
- **disability**
- **race**

The legislative framework in these areas needs to be urgently reviewed and, in particular:

- Women will have a key role in ensuring that peace takes root. Consequently, gender equality programmes are important, both in the context of equality and peace. The legislation on equality of opportunity for women and Sex Discrimination/Equal Pay legislation should be improved, taking into account the views expressed by the Equal Opportunities Commissions in GB and Northern Ireland
- In relation to religion/politics, see the section on Employment Equality Review below
- On disability, Congress notes the recent support in Northern Ireland for legislation in the field of discrimination of disability, from the Employers Forum on Disability, in addition to all disability organisations, and recommends that legislation be brought forward at an early date

- On racial discrimination, in its submission to the Consultative Document, ICTU in common with other organisations, recommended separate Race legislation and a separate enforcement mechanism. We reiterate this policy.
- Cultural equality is crucial to achieving parity of esteem for all traditions in Northern Ireland. Full official recognition and adequate funding for Irish language activities is essential, including education through the Irish language at pre-school, primary and second level, as well as support for community initiatives in promoting and developing the Irish language. The Irish language is not the exclusive property of any tradition and we welcome the growing interest within both communities in the language as a positive element in the reconciliation process.

4.5

Employment Equality Review

In line with a commitment won by ICTU and the Opposition Frontbench at the time of the processing of the Fair Employment Bill, the Northern Ireland Office has announced a Review of the issue of Equality of Opportunity (in respect of community affiliation/religion only). This will include a review of the Fair Employment Act and the procedures for implementation of employment equality measures.

We have expressed the following views to both the Secretary of State and to the Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU):

- a. The Review must be both thorough and broad-based and must not be restricted solely to the legislation.
- b. The Review must be seen to be independent. In that regard, ICTU does not view CCRU as a suitable vehicle to take primary responsibility for the outcome of the Review as CCRU itself should be subject to review.
- c. The inter-relationship between, CCRU, the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) and the Fair Employment Commission (FEC) (and their respective consultants) needs to be clarified.

Amongst the key areas which the Review will need to address are:-

- the success or failure of existing measures in tackling discrimination
- the identification of additional measures and programmes to achieve targeted and quantifiable change

Key areas which the Review will need to address (contd.)

- the steps necessary to ensure that equality policy statements in employing organisations are translated into reality
- a major examination of the Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) Guidelines, both in respect of the issues surrounding their introduction and in terms of the commitment of resources to their implementation.

The recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that responsibility for the Review is now being given to SACHR is to be welcomed, and we will be seeking a meeting with the Commission to discuss terms of reference, methodology, timescale and research requirements for the Review.

4.6

Policing Issues

An issue which calls for early action is policing. Early agreement in policing of local communities is fundamental to the whole process of reconstruction. In its submission on the Consultative Paper on "Policing in the Community", ICTU expressed two major concerns.

Firstly, the issue of accountability of the police and, in particular, the relationship between the Police Authority (PANI) and the Chief Constable.

Secondly, the attempt in the document to draw a distinction between "security policing" and "community policing". Presumably, in the new situation in the Province, the thinking in respect of the latter issue will need to be revised.

In respect of the former issue, Congress, and many other interested organisations, remain dissatisfied with the present situation and particularly with the attitude of the present Chief Constable in relation to the key area of accountability. Even systems which have inherent flaws can be made to work reasonably well if there is a will on the part of the key players to do so. This is clearly not the case at present, with the result that an already flawed situation is made even worse.

The issue of policing in a divided community, therefore, needs to be urgently addressed, as does the reconstruction and re-orientation of a police force which, until last month, was primarily organised to defeat terrorism. This will require:

- a public acceptance by the senior management of the police of the need for change based on greater accountability and active inter-action with the communities they seek to serve

- new, and possibly radically different, structures which would ensure that the police would be transparently accountable to the community, and which will adequately provide for the involvement of local communities in policing
- the examination of ways of winning community support and community involvement
- re-training of police officers

On an immediate practical level, audio and video taping facilities should be introduced in interrogation centres. Such facilities would help to protect police officers against unsubstantiated allegations of abuse, just as much as they do to protect suspects.

Another immediate issue which arises is the continuing use of intimidation by former paramilitary organisations and their associates, primarily against members of their own community, under the alleged guise of tackling "anti-social behaviour". There must be an end to such intimidation. There can only be one system for the administration of justice and it cannot be imposed on a community by baseball bats or hurling sticks.

4.7

Rehabilitation of Prisoners

The problems of ex-prisoners are closely allied to the problems of the unemployed, referred to in the economic section. Similar counselling provisions to that suggested earlier must be made available to facilitate them in finding a new role through retraining etc.

The correct balance on this issue will be one of the most painful issues to be addressed. A start could be made with the imaginative use of home-leave schemes and more flexible pre-release and compassionate leave schemes.

The Prison Service should also introduce a dedicated training unit to prepare prisoners for the world of work on the outside. Allocation of a place on such a unit should be an integral part of a pre-release programme incorporating the other measures proposed in this section.

Difficult though the decisions may be, this issue cannot be allowed to become a festering sore which could infect the whole process of reconstruction.

4.8

Victim Support Schemes

There have been many thousands of people scarred by the violence, and Congress is especially conscious of the families and friends of the more than 3000 who died, the 30,000+ who have been physically injured, and many more who have been traumatised by the loss of their homes, loss of their place of employment or by being close to the scene of an act of violence.

It has to be recognised that, whilst there have been many courageous and generous statements of forgiveness, pleas for no retaliation and very humane gestures of reconciliation, nevertheless there is a very deep tangible sense of hurt in many communities and in the hearts and minds of individuals who have suffered physically or psychologically.

Early release programmes for prisoners have an inherent danger of reactivating the past hurts or of increasing a feeling that there is a disproportionate sympathy with the perpetrators - a feature of every debate on law and order issues in these islands and beyond. Victim Support NI is appreciative of the support given to them in seeking to carry out their advice and counselling work. They have identified, however, the need for a major trauma treatment centre and ICTU supports this proposal.

In addition, it will be necessary also to review the numbers, training etc. of victim support counsellors, and this should be addressed urgently.

4.9

Retraining of Displaced Workers

As mentioned earlier in this Programme, there will also be the problem of those redeployed from the police, prisons etc. and the thousands of civilians who have been caught up in the provision of services to the security forces in catering, construction, telecommunications, clerical and typing, and many other trades and occupations. Again, redeployment, retraining and career counselling programmes need to be established for these groups of workers.

4.10

Political Vetting

ICTU demands the withdrawal of the statement by *Douglas Hurd*, the then Secretary of State, on political vetting. As an alternative, Congress believes that a Code of Practice should be developed, supported by the voluntary and community sector, which tackles issues such as proper auditing procedures and accountability. A number of groups in the community sector are already working on the framework of a Code and would support it, both for the protection of public funds and for the protection of their own work. This Code should be progressed at an early date.

SECTION 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1

As indicated earlier, this Interim Programme is being published for discussion with political parties, the two Governments and the European Union. We will also seek support for the Programme from a number of other Trade Union Centres with whom we have contact, and from the two International Trade Union Bodies to which the Irish Congress of Trade Unions is affiliated, viz the *European Trade Union Confederation* and the *International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, and we look forward to a constructive dialogue in pursuing the objectives outlined in this paper.

NOTES

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