

Secretariat Revision 21.1.96

Principles

- 15. Mutual understanding and contact between individuals, groups, communities, organisations and institutions have an important role in the elimination of barriers of suspicion, in the creation of mutual trust and in the building of confidence and should be further promoted and supported including financially. Education will have a particularly significant function in this regard. The choice of schools must remain a matter for parents and their choices, including the choices of those who prefer integrated and Irish-medium education should be respected and facilitated equally. There is a need to extend and strengthen programmes that increase contact between pupils and teachers within Northern Ireland; between schools North and South and schools in Britain. In addition, greater emphasis must be devoted to exchange and mutual understanding programmes and to making the history and full cultural heritage of the people of the island in all their strands and its relationship with Britain and with the rest of Europe available in all schools throughout Ireland.

In the matter of schooling, financial choice should be respected, and facilitated, including the wishes of those parents who would prefer integrated or Irish medium education for their children.

**Revised Conclusion**

26.1.96

**Conclusion**

The Forum parties believe that the opportunity that now exists [to address the causes of conflict,] for the healing of historic divisions, the creation of a lasting peace and the establishment of an honourable and enduring settlement acceptable to all is unprecedentedly favourable. But they acknowledge also that much difficult work lies ahead if the obstacles that remain are to be overcome and if the potential that currently exists is to be realised to the full. It is essential that democratic solutions negotiated on this basis not be undermined by violence or the threat of violence. This requires a total commitment to dialogue, to seeking to understand the fears, concerns and aspirations of the others engaged in the process, and to a spirit of compromise and reconciliation.

For their part, the Forum parties pledge their own commitment to these Principles and Realities and earnestly ask all others involved to do the same. They look forward to a constructive dialogue on this document on as wide and comprehensive a basis as possible.



**Rev 26.1**

7. Agreement on an overall settlement will require, inter alia, a balanced accommodation of the differing views of the two main traditions, which takes full account of the conflict of identities and allegiances. In terms of specific constitutional legislation, the two Governments must, on a balanced and even-handed basis, discharge the commitments they have undertaken respectively in this regard in paragraphs 20 and 21 of "A New Framework for Agreement". In particular, they must ensure that, in regard to the people of Northern Ireland, the constitutional changes proposed should be such as not to diminish in any way their existing citizenship rights and their birthright to be accepted as being British or Irish - or both - as appropriate and desired.