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17th Sept. 1996.

Dear Ms. Mc.Cann,

RE: INVITATION TO MEETING ON 19TH. OCTOBER.

We thank you for your invitation received today which will be considered at our next meeting. Unfortunately the 19th is quite a busy day for us, Friends of the Earth A.G.M. and a prior invitation from Labour in Northern Ireland. We will however try to ensure that we have representation at your meeting and will advise in due course.

With regards issues that would build confidence; one that immediately springs to mind is the formation of a substantial commission to investigate policing standards and consistency. The understandable difficulties that the police have should be investigated independently and solutions found. Equally the principle that a Government should indeed govern and Ministers should resign when the Departments for which they hold responsibility are found lacking should apply. This is particularly important in N.I. for if a government fails to govern then it is the young family forced out of their house in Torrens (or similar) that pay.

It is probable that our views and that of your own organisation are substantially similar on a wide range of issues and there may be areas where co-operation may be of mutual benefit. We for example have close contacts with the Green Group in the European Parliament and a number of our M.E.P.s are actively promoting a feminist/humanitarian agenda at the European level.

Locally consideration is required as to what is achievable in the council elections next May. It is worth noting that the Unionists have a very slim majority in a number of Councils, particularly Belfast, and in many areas there will be two additional Unionist Parties vying for votes. It is my personal opinion that a number of the smaller parties and groupings really should discuss this issue as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully,

ALAN WARREN