

Statement by Secretary of State, Dr Marjorie Mowlam MP,
at the conclusion of the London meetings of the Multi-
Party Talks

Coming to London has given us a valuable opportunity to re-focus on the importance of these Talks.

On Monday the two Governments acted in the interests of the integrity of the Talks, and to uphold the principles on which these Talks are based. The principles of peace and democracy.

Yesterday attention was turned to the substance of the Talks. The two Governments presented the parties with a series of questions: the key issues that have to be addressed in Strand Two - that is North/South relations: and in Strand Three - wider relationships within these islands.

It is not for the two Governments but for the parties to come forward with the answers to those questions. We will continue to provide all the help and encouragement we can. But if we are serious about wanting local ownership and commitment to a new settlement then it is up to the parties themselves to offer their ideas and suggestions for where agreement can be found

After making initial responses to the questions posed, in both Strands Two and Three, the parties are now preparing more detailed answers. Strand One resumes next week.

There is no doubt that the Talks are now biting on the key issues that confront us - across all the areas of concern.

London has provided a new forum for positive engagement between the parties. It has helped to concentrate our minds on these Talks, and the centrality of these Talks to the search for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Next week we will be back in Belfast. I hope that the momentum and focus we have gained here will be maintained there - and in Dublin in three weeks time.

Out of the despair of the last few weeks I hope we can take back to the people of Northern Ireland a little more hope and a lot more energy to find a settlement that all sides can live with.