

19 March 1998

Ms Bronagh Hinds  
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition  
52 Elmwood Avenue  
BELFAST BT9 6AZ

Dear Bronagh

**A CIVIC FORUM**

I received your outline in relation to the above.

My recollection from recent news coverage is that there is little support for the concept from other parties. Nevertheless, I myself believe it would be a valuable structure in the new political climate for which we are all hoping.

The comments I would make are briefly as follows:-

1. The most cogent reason for the Forum is the opportunity it would provide for representation that would not reflect the established political divisions. These will inevitably be reflected in most of the representation at the Assembly.
2. The electorate should be those registered under the Panel rather than universal suffrage.
3. Under clause 4.8 (ii) all proposed legislation should be referred to the Forum.
4. The enabling legislation to be passed in Parliament and/or the Dail should allow for flexible development of the Forum.
5. Essential that the Forum's vision is focused as an enabling structure for the Assembly. Important that it would establish a positive working relationship.

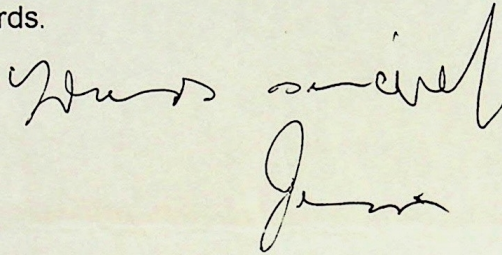
2.

Ms Bronagh Hinds

These are simply preliminary thoughts. I would be happy to discuss with the Editor in what way we could help to develop debate and public opinion in relation to the Forum.

I would suspect that you should have a sympathetic ear with the Prime Minister but obviously you are going to have to lobby strongly in London and Dublin.

Kind regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J J Fitzpatrick', written in a cursive style.

J J FITZPATRICK  
Chairman/Chief Executive