

**Women's Coalition Meeting with Ambassador Richard Haass
12 September 2002**

Our agenda:

♦ **Sectarianism: co-ordination of initiatives against sectarianism**

We told the delegation about the many good initiatives, Des Browne's series of meetings, phone networks, agreed principles for politicians at interface areas (we had been calling for a code of conduct). Haass welcomed principles and Des Browne's work.

The gap, as far as we could see it, was in co-ordination and in developing a long-term strategy. Also in areas which haven't boiled over. The work in the voluntary sector, community level, in education, in the churches, between politicians etc was almost totally unconnected. Concern about whether the CRC another body was already doing this or would be the right body to do this, but we felt it wasn't happening anywhere else. Haass was very supportive, asked what practical help could be provided – said he would 'give it his blessing' once more steam had developed for the proposal. If financial support was needed, this might be the type of project that an American foundation may fund. We wanted to gather political will and support from other sectors. He asked us if there was something specific he could do on his next visit.

♦ **Policing** (District Policing Partnerships, representation on them etc.)

On Policing Board, we wanted to make sure if Sinn Fein weren't going to join the Board (which looks unlikely before the next election) that they do not undermine attempts to move policing forward. Haass said that is the message he would be giving them. Sinn Fein may be left out of the DPPs for 4 years if they don't join now.

We raised the issue about representation on the DPPs, of loyalists and women.

♦ **Current Political Situation** (stability of the institutions, Unionism etc.)

We gave our analysis of the current situation, instability of no one knowing what action the Unionists will take on 21st September.

Other issues

♦ **Ceasefire monitor/auditor**

Haass was particular interested to gage opinion on this proposal, before stating whether he thinks it's a good or bad idea. Questions of substance as well as the politics of it. Haass sees it as monitoring the incidents of paramilitary activity, not giving an opinion. Full range of activities – beatings, information-gathering, drugs etc. Are there other examples of where its been used? And worked?

We raised concerns about how the monitor's report would be received, consequences of their report – what action would be taken/called for? confidence in the monitor, gathering of information, etc. There are a lot of things that have to be worked out.

♦ **Our Iraq Motion**

We informed Haass of our motion expressing concern at the threat of war against Iraq. He was disappointed, and we rehearsed the debate about how to respond to the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the role of the UN and the international community etc. Haass had a hand in writing Bush's speech, which he was simultaneously giving at the UN.

♦ **Haass' support for integrated education**

We warmly thanked Haass for his support for integrated education, especially at the recent US-Ireland business conference.