

Forum for Peace and Reconciliation

Procedures of the Forum

Chairperson's Note

Co-ordinating Committee

1. The Forum needs to decide on the terms of reference of the Co-ordinating Committee. The Chair's view is that these should ideally be broad and flexible - perhaps along the lines "to assist the Plenary Forum in the efficient and effective discharge of its role and functions". The Co-ordinating Committee would be subordinate to, take its instructions from, and report to the Plenary Forum. As agreed, it will be chaired by the Forum Chairperson.
2. In practice, the Chair envisages the Co-ordinating Committee being responsible for drawing up the agendas for meetings of the Forum, facilitating the drawing up and implementation of the Forum's Programme of Work and other matters relating to the smooth running of the body.

Sub-committees

3. The Forum may establish Sub-committees to examine specific issues where it feels that such a course would facilitate its work. The decision on the establishment of specific Sub-committees will be taken on a case-by-case basis. The Delegation composition of Sub-committees will be settled by the Forum on a basis to be agreed. (This is an issue which could be examined in the first instance by the Co-ordinating Committee.) In practice, smaller Delegations may have difficulty participating in every Sub-committee.
4. The Chairpersons of the Sub-committees will be chosen by the Forum on a basis to be agreed. (This too is an issue which could be examined in the first instance in the Co-ordinating Committee.)

Regulation of Debates

5. The Chairperson proposes the following arrangements for the consideration of the Forum in respect of debates of the Plenary formation:
 - All interventions will be through the Chair;
 - Opening interventions by Delegations will follow the order of the Inaugural Meeting on 28 October;
 - Thereafter, Members may intervene - through the Chair - without reference to the order of the

Inaugural Meeting. In allowing interventions, however, the Chair will have regard to equity of treatment as between Delegations (eg. where a number of Members simultaneously indicate a wish to speak, priority will be given to Delegations/ Members who have not yet contributed, or done so less frequently);

- In regulating interventions, the Chair will endeavour to ensure equity of treatment between Members as well as between Delegations (in practice, this will mean that larger Delegations will tend to receive more speaking time, but with the breakdown between Forum Members approximating parity);
- To allow for the fullest exchange between the membership, the Chairperson would ask Members to seek to ensure that interventions are succinct and to the point;
- While the Chairperson will endeavour to resolve all matters relating to the regulation of debates by consensus, her ruling will be final.

Record of Debates

6. A verbatim record will be kept of all public Plenary sessions of the Forum. These will be published on an on-going basis. Private Plenary sessions will be taped - unless in particular cases the Forum decides otherwise - but it is not proposed to make a transcript of such tapes. However, should a Member request a transcript of a particular part of a private Plenary debate, this can be provided.
7. In respect of public and private Plenary sessions of the Forum, the Secretariat will prepare a note of agreed action or decision points.

Tabling of Papers

8. It is requested that papers being tabled by Members be given in the first instance to the Secretariat, who will arrange for distribution to Delegations.

Irish Interpretation

9. An Irish language simultaneous interpretation service will be available for all public Plenary sessions of the Forum.

Public or Private Sessions?

10. It will be for decision by the Forum itself, on a case by case basis, whether Plenary sessions, or parts thereof, should be held in public or private. The view of the

Chair is that a balance needs to be found between facilitating confidence and trust between the Members and ensuring a process that is as open and transparent as possible.

Public Submissions

11. In furtherance of the Forum's role as an inclusive exercise, it has been agreed that submissions will be invited from the public. These will in the first instance be in writing, but it will be open to the Forum to invite a number of those submitting papers to make oral presentations. It will be for decision by the Forum as to how such a process is regulated. It seems to the Chair that a crucial requirement in this regard will be balance as between the two major traditions.

Delegation Secretaries

12. To facilitate liaison between Delegations and the Secretariat, it is proposed that an informal Group be formed comprising the Delegation Secretaries and officials of the Secretariat.

Judge Catherine McGuinness SC
Chairperson
2 November 1994