

FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Co-ordination Committee, 9 December, 1994

Record of Decisions and Issues Raised

1. Attendance at Meeting

It was agreed that a representative of the Independent Senators be invited to participate in the meeting. Senator David Norris then joined the meeting.

2. Record of Decisions and Issues Raised at Meeting of Co-ordination Committee on 2 December, 1994 (F052/CC)

This was approved.

3. The Social and Economic Consequences of Peace and Economic Reconstruction (F001/Rev 3/CC)

It was pointed out by the Secretariat that the proposals on this matter having been approved at the Committee's meeting on 2 December, 1994, the revision of the document simply reflected points raised at that meeting.

One delegation queried the reference, in paragraph 5, to "the re-integration of released prisoners and their families, and of those who have been involved in military activity.. " Other delegations considered that this addressed a real issue and favoured retention of the reference, even if differently worded. It was agreed that the Secretariat would have bilateral contacts with delegations concerned, with a view to reaching a generally acceptable formulation of this paragraph.

4. Topical Issues (F054/CC)

There was agreement on the five points in the Secretariat paper. It was also agreed that an item "Confirmation of Agenda for Plenary Meeting" would be normally included on the agenda of the weekly meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee preceding plenary meetings, thus affording an opportunity but not imposing an obligation, to consider whether and how any topical issues might be handled, at the plenary meeting the same day or otherwise, including through the procedures set out in the five points of the Secretariat paper.

5. Representation in Forum (F057/CC)

It was agreed

- (1) to allow speaking rights to substitutes who are taking the place of alternate members, subject to the number of a delegation's speakers at any session not exceeding their number of full members, and to the Chair being informed in advance, if at all possible, as to the intention to have named substitutes exercise this right at any particular session;
- (2) that the substitute facility would henceforth be extended, including the facility to speak in the circumstances at (1), to all delegations, including The Workers Party and Senator Gordon Wilson;
- (3) that delegations may notify changes in their nominations as full and alternate members but with due regard to reasonable stability in participation in the Forum, observance of this desideratum of continuity being left to the discretion of delegations; and
- (4) that henceforth the Independent Senators be given 1 full member and 1 alternate member, with the Independent Deputies also having 1 full member and 1 alternate member, these arrangements to replace the earlier arrangement where all the Independents from both Houses of the Oireachtas were assigned 1 full member and 3 alternates on a rotating basis.

6. Public Session on 16 December, 1994 (F032/Rev2/CC)

The Chairperson and Secretariat reported on the arrangements for this, including speakers, panels, audience and media arrangements. Committee members requested guidance on speaking time allocations and also that presenters' papers be made available in advance, if at all possible. It was noted that women were poorly represented among the panels of presenters. The Secretariat noted that this was the responsibility of the presenters but that gender balance should be respected when the two general public sessions, on 16 December and 20 January were considered together.

7. Parity of Esteem (F003/Rev 1/CC)

A number of delegations suggested that the ambit for consideration proposed in F003/Rev 1/CC was too narrow and that this concept had wider application and was central to the Forum's work. The Chairperson and Secretariat, while accepting that the concept had indeed a wide application, agreed that the Forum must and would address all dimensions of the concept, noted that the proposal in question was deliberately related to a limited span and pointed out that other dimensions would be dealt with under other headings of the programme of work, including Nature of the Problem etc., Social and Economic Consequences of Peace, Human Rights, Reconciliation and Policing.

It was agreed

- (1) that the study-proposed in the first indent of para. 5 of F003/Rev1/CC - of the treatment of communal identities and traditions and their expression in selected other divided or multi-cultural societies, could proceed; and
- (2) that, by way of the envisaged assistance to the Secretariat from Forum members on other issues mentioned in para 5 of F003/Rev1/CC, the plenary Forum might hold a full discussion on parity of esteem

8. International Support for Development and Reconstruction (F056/CC)

The Chairperson noted that F056/CC was an information paper, that there now appeared to be less urgency than previously thought about the Forum submitting views as to the arrangements for administration of prospective aid packages, since these remained at an early stage of consideration, that the Secretariat would maintain contact with the relevant authorities, that Forum members would have formal and informal opportunities at the public session on 16 December, to put forward views on the arrangements and that, in the light of the information and exchanges on that occasion, it would remain open to the Forum to consider putting forward views on any aspect it wished.

9. Fixing of Agenda for meeting of the Forum on 16 December, 1994

It was agreed that the meeting would be fully devoted to the public session already discussed.

10. Arrangements for Plenary Forum meeting on 9 December, 1994

It was accepted that because no party had supplied papers sufficiently far in advance for other delegations to give them adequate consideration as a basis for formulating questions, the plenary meeting on 9 December would conclude following lunch.

Forum Secretariat
15 December 1994