

FORUM FOR PEACE
AND RECONCILIATION



FÓRAM UM SHÍOCHÁIN
AGUS ÁTHMHUINTEARAS

FAX COVER SHEET

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To: Members of Co-ordinating Fax No. _____
Committee / Delegation SECRETARIES

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To: Members of the Co-ordinating Committee/Delegation Secretaries

Re: Visit of Senator George Mitchell to Forum on 17 February/Washington Conference on Trade and Investment in Ireland, May 1995.

Forum Secretariat document F112/CC is attached for your consideration as:

- 1) a draft submission from the Forum to the President's Conference on Trade and Investment for Ireland to be held in Washington in May;
- 2) the basis for the Forum's dialogue with Senator Mitchell, Special Adviser to President Clinton on Economic Initiatives in Ireland, on the occasion of his visit to the Forum on 17 February. [For the purposes of debate with Mitchell delegations may wish to "share out" the principles topics set out in F112/CC among themselves so that each delegation can ask questions on a distinct theme].

This proposed approach and the draft itself will be considered at the meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee on 10 February at 9.00 a.m.

7 February 1995

F112/CC

Forum for Peace and ReconciliationSubmission in preparation for President's Conference on Trade and Investment for Ireland

1. The Forum for Peace and Reconciliation is glad of the opportunity to participate in dialogue on the preparations for the United States President's Conference on Trade and Investment for Ireland, to be held in Washington D.C. in May 1995.
2. The Forum would like to place on record its deep appreciation of the committed and even-handed support which the administration of the United States, in particular President Clinton himself, together with the Congress, has generously and consistently given the achievement and consolidation of peace in Ireland, and is continuing to offer to efforts to work towards a just, lasting and balanced accommodation on our island.
3. The Forum has taken a particular interest in the assistance which the United States has pledged for the work of economic and social development and reconstruction, which it believes has an important role to play in underpinning the peace process and in creating a stable, productive, and fair society. It found Assistant Secretary Meissner's remarks at its session on 16 December 1994 to be stimulating and encouraging, and looks forward to its dialogue with Senator Mitchell on 17 February next.
4. The Forum also acknowledges the crucial and generous funding which the United States has since its inception given to the International Fund for Ireland, which has played a central role in promoting economic development and reconciliation in Ireland, and appreciates the continuing and enhanced support which is envisaged for it.
5. The Forum for Peace and Reconciliation was established by the Irish Government in October 1994 to consult on and examine ways in which lasting peace, stability and reconciliation can be established by agreement among all the people of Ireland, and on the steps required to remove barriers of distrust. It was also charged with exploring ways in which new approaches can be developed to serve economic interests common to both parts of Ireland.
6. The Forum is, therefore, a consultative and advisory body, and does not exercise executive powers. It is conscious that the Irish and British Governments bear primary responsibility for the planning and implementation of economic policy in the two parts of the island. Both will be participating in the Washington conference, as will representatives of many other political, economic and social interests. It would not in this context be appropriate for the Forum to seek to make detailed operational recommendations, but it wishes nonetheless, on the basis both of its own internal discussions and on the submissions it has received from a wide range of representative bodies, groups and individuals, to set out principles which it believes should inform, and would optimise the use of, international support for economic reconstruction and development.

7. As well as matters directly related to the delivery of such international support, these principles also concern relevant aspects of the broad policy framework which is ultimately a responsibility, separately or collectively, of the British and Irish governments.

Principles

- 8 The key principles identified by the Forum in this regard are:

- (i) International support must have as its fundamental objective the fostering of sustainable and productive economic activity in a fair and cohesive society. It must not be regarded as a hand-out, nor should it promote a culture of dependency.
- (ii) While there is an understandable public focus on financial assistance and on directly measurable inward investment, the Forum also acknowledges the very great importance of access to international expertise and experience, which forms an important part of the measures announced by President Clinton.
- (iii) International support, invaluable as it is, should above all be seen as complementary to the roles of government, the private sector, trade unions and the community/voluntary sector in both parts of Ireland. It should not be regarded as justifying or permitting the weakening of efforts by any of these to achieve economic and social reconstruction; international support should be treated as genuinely additional. Initiatives arising out of international support should not simply duplicate existing programmes.
- (iv) It is important that there be the closest possible co-ordination of all cognate programmes and policies, new and continuing, whatever their sources of funding, in the interests of efficiency, effectiveness and public confidence. The Forum is aware of some degree of public anxiety lest a multiplicity of programmes should lead to confusion, contradiction, or to excessive bureaucracy. The Forum strongly recommends to both the British and Irish Governments that they should urgently examine this question, as it relates both to activity within their own separate jurisdictions and to cross-border co-operation.
- (v) To the greatest degree possible, support must bring real and measurable benefits to the most deprived individuals and communities, which in many cases are those most affected by the conflict of the past 25 years and by a history of discrimination and marginalisation. There is a particular need for technical assistance programmes enabling those individuals and communities to benefit from the new opportunities now emerging. While it is appreciated that it is impossible to guarantee that new investment from the private sector will directly benefit those most in need, and while all overseas investment in any part of Ireland is warmly welcomed, it is imperative that both Governments be ambitious

and innovative in their efforts to attract investment to marginalised communities, and should review their industrial, taxation, training and other relevant policies in this light.

- (vi) With regard to (v) above, the Forum appreciates that while within Northern Ireland disadvantage is most prevalent in the nationalist community, serious levels of deprivation also affect certain Unionist areas. All must benefit on an equitable basis.
- (vii) Likewise, while self-evidently Northern Ireland has suffered most acutely from the conflict, the South, notably its border counties, has also been seriously affected by conflict and by division, and should receive proportionate attention.
- (viii) International support must be delivered and used in ways which promote equality in employment both between men and women and between members of the two main communities in Northern Ireland. The principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity should be fully adhered to and the scope for affirmative action fully exploited.
- (ix) In addition to the promotion of inward investment, international support should encourage the development of the indigenous business sector, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, through assisting in the development of export capacity, use of R & D, management skills, innovative approaches to financing, and business linkages between SMEs and foreign-owned companies. The prospect of benefiting from the great reservoir of US know-how in certain of these areas is exciting.
- (x) Tourism has particular potential for employment-generating economic growth throughout all of Ireland. The development of this sector, both through infrastructural development and through enhanced marketing, must be a priority area for support. The United States market, in particular among those who identify themselves as Irish or Scotch-Irish, is already of great importance to both parts of the island and could be developed still further.
- (xi) All programmes for economic and social development, including those which receive international support, must be developed, implemented and assessed on the basis of meaningful partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors. The real needs and requirements of communities are best understood and articulated by those communities themselves and they must play a major role in working with state agencies and the private sector, including new investors, in developing strategies for their own development.
- (xii) Economic reconstruction must be accompanied and underpinned by educational, health, training and childcare programmes and by social inclusion, bringing into the consultative process women, longterm unemployed, the disadvantaged, people with a disability, the elderly, young people and children. US experience in some of these areas is especially relevant. In the context of over 25 years of

conflict, particular attention must also be paid to the needs of victims of violence and in ensuring that a properly-resourced and comprehensive support structure is put in place. It would also be important that the process of economic reconstruction include the reintegration, as necessary and requested, of former prisoners, their families and those previously involved in paramilitary activity.

- (xiii) To an overwhelming degree, the economic characteristics and interests of North and South, and the opportunities and challenges confronting them, are common to both. It is widely acknowledged that there is substantial scope both for enhanced cooperation in the policies and programmes of government and for increased trade and economic interaction between them. While considerable headway has in recent times been made in exploiting these possibilities, in particular in the business sector, international support should have as a prime objective the encouragement in whatever ways possible - for example through assisting joint marketing programmes - the further development of North/South linkages in the interest of all the people of Ireland.

- (xiv) The development of North/South economic integration and co-operation must pay particular attention to the specific needs of border communities, which have for too long been inhibited from developing the partnerships and common approaches which would naturally arise from their close proximity and many shared interests, and have tended to develop "back-to-back" rather than "face-to-face".

Forum Secretariat
7 February 1995

F/107/CC Rev 1

Forum for Peace and Reconciliation
Oral Submissions: Timescale and Procedure Aspects

1. The range of criteria to be applied in selecting submissions for oral presentation was approved by the Forum on 3 February 1995 as set out in document F/103/CCRev 1. The approach proposed for dealing with timescale and procedural aspects of oral submissions has been recast on the basis of discussion in the Coordinating Committee meeting of 3 February. Members of the Co-ordinating Committee are asked to agree the approach outlined below and to recommend its approval to the Plenary.
2. **Background**
Not all submissions are of equal weight - representative bodies, such as the Churches, warrant more attention and time than individuals. Some individuals and organisations warrant more time than others. The Forum is on record as saying it hopes to follow up perhaps 10% of the written submissions by oral presentations (340 to date). So far, from analysis of the first 200 submissions received a rolling shortlist of 23 potential oral submissions has been drawn up by the secretariat, with the assistance of Delegation secretaries. The Forum will make a decision on the selection of oral submissions on the basis of a final shortlist drawn from **all** submissions received. Given the fact that submissions are still being actively sought, e.g. representative of mainstream Unionism, and from such influential players as the Catholic Church, the Forum is likely to find itself with a final shortlist of 40 plus potential oral submissions.
3. **Time commitment**
This shortlist does not entail 40 separate presentations before the Forum. For the purpose of debate with the Forum a number of those making submissions (particularly individuals) can be grouped together for panel discussion, where they can reinforce or counterpoint each other's views. Even taking this into account it is still the case that an estimated **25 to 30 hours** of Forum time will be required to hear and discuss the oral presentations.
4. **Additional Meetings**
That is a very significant time and business commitment for the Forum. The secretariat proposed that a proportion of the presentations could be made in committee, but this did not find favour with delegations, even when an open-ended committee was proposed. By and large there was a consensus in favour either of a number of two-day meetings or of holding a series of additional meetings on Thursday evenings as necessary to process the oral submissions. A two-day meeting has been tentatively entered in the work programme for 23-24 March. Because of the time and travel constraints applying to members Thursday evening meetings, beginning at 17.00 hours, may be a more realistic option and it was agreed to hold one such meeting as a pilot exercise. This can be arranged on agreement of the final list of oral submissions. These proposed additional meetings could also offer scope for the direct participation of more Forum members in its business.

5. **Work Programme - General Considerations**

Leaving aside the possibility of additional meetings, the general intention is that, in the Forum's work programme for the future, oral presentations should take up part of each plenary session, with the remainder of each plenary session focusing on the discussion of subthemes, or such other business as may be determined by the Forum.

Forum Secretariat
7 February 1995