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Just a brief note to confirm that the Speaker, Lord Alderdice, will be able to participate in the conference next Thursday. I should have mentioned to you on the telephone that as he is bound by the conventions of "Speakers' Rules" he will avoid addressing party political questions and will deal – in as far as it is possible – with factual matters relating to the devolved institutions and Westminster.

We will arrive at Westminster shortly before 11.30am and will have to leave immediately after the session closes as he now has a meeting in the Northern Ireland Office before returning to Belfast.

I have enclosed biographical notes in case they are of any use.