

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF OPENING PLENARY SESSION -
TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 1996 (10.08)

Those present:

Independent Chairmen	Government Teams	Parties
Senator Mitchell	British Government	Alliance Party
General de Chastelain	Irish Government	Labour
Mr Holkeri		Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
		Progressive Unionist Party
		Social Democratic and Labour Party
		Ulster Democratic Party
		Ulster Democratic Unionist Party
		United Kingdom Unionist Party
		Ulster Unionist Party

1. The Chairman convened the meeting at 10.08 and reminded participants of the contents of Rule 28. He asked that each party should undertake to act within this rule; namely to ensure that only elected delegates were represented at the front table and could speak in debates.

2. The Chairman then reflected on what procedures had been agreed following the allegations raised by the DUP against the PUP/UDP and confirmed that the business before the Plenary this morning would focus on that specific issue. He also confirmed that a written response had been received from the PUP/UDP the previous evening, but this unfortunately had not been circulated in time to catch other participants before their departure. He understood that DUP delegates had just arrived at 9.30am and were therefore seeking more time to consider the PUP/UDP response.

3. The Chairman stated that he would grant additional time but before doing so wished to propose the following format for the debate. The DUP would begin with their response to the PUP/UDP paper which would last 30 minutes. The PUP/UDP would then also have 30 minutes in which to present further points in response to the DUP. Following this exchange, the Chairman proposed a further period of time to be set aside for other participants to question, through the chair, the three principal political parties involved in the issue, before moving on to a general discussion. The Chairman proposed that the entire process should have a duration of three hours with the proviso that those who, by the completion of that time, hadn't had the opportunity to speak, could still do so using additional time.

4. The Chairman then indicated that he had spoken briefly to the DUP who had sought an additional 60 minutes to review the PUP/UDP response. The Chairman sought participants' views on this and the proposal to continue uninterrupted with a three hour debate when the session reconvened. The PUP indicated their agreement with this approach. There were no comments from the remaining participants. Following this the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 10.14, asking participants to return at 11.15 and go through until 14.15.

Independent Chairmen Notetakers
10 September 1996

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