

NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S COALITION

DECOMMISSIONING - 13 NOVEMBER 1996

1. The Women's Coalition commits itself to work constructively to implement all aspects of the Report of the International Body, in the context of an inclusive and dynamic process in which mutual trust and confidence is built as progress is made on all the issues of concern to all participants.
2. The Women's Coalition reiterates its emphasis on paragraph 31 of the Report of the International Body that both Governments and all participants should offer reassurance "that a meaningful and inclusive process of negotiations is genuinely being offered to address the legitimate concerns of [all] traditions and the need for new political arrangements with which all can identify". The Women's Coalition believes that this should form part of the contextual agreement on decommissioning.
3. The Women's Coalition welcomes the approach taken by both governments to introduce enabling legislation to make decommissioning possible including legislating for an Independent Commission with appropriate legal status and immunity to allow the Commission to operate independently in both jurisdictions.
4. The Women's Coalition notes the discussions about whether or not there should be a Sub-committee to deal with decommissioning. It is our view that such a Sub-committee would be valuable and would add to the process. We note that the report of the International Body refers to the appointment of the Independent Commission "on the basis of consultations with the other parties to the negotiating process". We also note that the report also states that "the details of decommissioning, including supporting confidence-building measures, timing and sequencing have to be determined by the parties themselves". Papers from participants, for example the Governments, the UUP and the Alliance Party have all raised issues around these matters which require detailed consideration in a Sub-Committee or Working Group.

5. With due respect to our colleagues, papers and verbal inputs to date have been strong - and long - on rhetoric and weak on practicalities. There is a considerable amount of work to be done by participants, not just as single parties but collectively, and this would be enhanced with expert assistance to the process. This as with the points raised in No. 4 suggests the establishment of a Sub-committee or Working Group.

6. We draw attention to paragraph 30 of the Rules of Procedure which allows the chairman to invite participants to set up a broadly representative working group, and to refer matters to an agreed group of experts with the agreement of the parties. If some parties have difficulty with the idea of a Sub-committee, perhaps the concept of a Working Group would serve. The Women's Coalition notes that sufficient consensus is an issue around a Sub-committee on decommissioning; but we would draw attention to the fact that paragraph 30 which refers to a Working Group is a stage in decision-making in advance of the final decision-making mechanism. The Women's Coalition believes that the interactive combination of a Sub-committee or Working Group with experts would be helpful.

7. The Governments' suggestions on making expertise available to the Sub-committee and the same expertise available to the Independent Commission is one useful point of cross-over to establish continuity. But this does not negate a continuing and delicate role for a Sub-committee. The Women's Coalition would see the Sub-committee's role as one of liaison and of "accompanying" where parties are constructively accompanying the process of decommissioning. These are roles which have to be handled sensitively because an Independent Commission is an **Independent** Commission, but they would allow some interplay between political parties and the Independent Commission without stepping into the traps of constricting the Independence of the Commission. The Sub-committee could report to Plenary in a way the Independent Commission could not do so.

Para 34
Confidence Building → Principles of Devnm. / Failure to honour their commitment.

Interim Core Commission → Para 44 → 2 Govts play major role. (Agreement).
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Subcommittee → Talks liaison committee.
↓ schemes/legislatf.
Decisionmaking →

Para 36-50 → Plenary.

↳ not subcommittee.

* Terms of reference - for Core Commission.

Unlinked → { Decisionmaking
↳ Govts
↳ Indep