

**NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S COALITION - RESPONSE
STRAND 3**

We accept the need for a standing Intergovernmental Conference.

We also believe that it is important that there should be clear lines of reporting between the Intergovernmental Conference, the new institutions in Northern Ireland, the Dail/Seanad in the Republic of Ireland and the Westminster Parliament.

The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition recognises the potential for dynamic development of regional governance within the United Kingdom. It believes that a Council of the Regions should be set up as led out in our paper.

We support the governments suggestion that any new Agreement will need to incorporate a new framework establishing the comprehensive protection and guarantee of fundamental human rights.

We also would favour the development of parallel procedures for the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights, and other relevant international conventions. A sub-committee of the proposed Council of the Regions might be given specific powers to investigate and report on general issues of concern in this sphere.

Because of the differences in Northern Ireland we need mechanisms for the monitoring and enforcement of human and communal rights. For this reason both Governments should have power through the Intergovernmental Conference to make appointments to a Human Rights Commission which would also allow for external representation - possibly from the European Union and/or the United Nations.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSENT

The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition re-iterates its belief that the concept of consent must mean the achievement of the widest possible consent of the people of Northern Ireland, and not simple majority.

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