



Minister of State

Copy to Kate / Jane
& return -
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FAXED

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
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LONDON
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Professor Monica McWilliams
NI Women's Coalition
NI Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
Belfast

26 January 1999

Dear Monica,

LEGISLATION ON NORTH/SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION BODIES

1. As you know we are working towards having all the necessary legislation in place for devolution by 10 March 1999. We are also pushing forward on the wide range of other issues which need to be resolved in advance of devolution, including arrangements for setting up new Departments.
2. The main stages in the process in relation to the legislation for the North/South Implementation Bodies are as follows:
 - **Week commencing 8 February 1999:**
Draft Orders in Council on North/South Implementation Bodies to be circulated to parties in NI Assembly for comment.
 - **Week commencing 8 and 22 February:**
Detailed discussions with parties on draft Orders in Council.
 - **Week commencing 25 February:**
Orders in Council laid in Parliament.
 - **10 March 1999 Orders:**
Orders in Council made.



3. The main consultation on the draft Implementation Bodies legislation will take place in the two weeks following 8 February 1999. During that period I, and my officials, would be available for meetings, briefing etc to discuss any issues which you may wish to raise, or to clarify any technical points. However, it might also be helpful to you to discuss the detailed timetable before then and, if you would want to do so, I should be happy to meet party representatives before the finalisation of the draft legislation. Perhaps you could telephone my office to make the necessary arrangements.

*You ever,
Paul*

THE RT HON PAUL MURPHY MP
Minister of State

**OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER (DESIGNATE) AND
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER (DESIGNATE)**

STATEMENT - 18 DECEMBER 1998

1. On 1 July 1998, the New Northern Ireland Assembly asked us to report on progress towards implementing the Belfast Agreement reached on Good Friday this year.
2. Since our election, most of the parties in the Assembly have been working with us on detailed questions. Papers on Strands One, Two and Three have been considered in a series of round tables and other meetings.
3. Following intensive negotiations and consultations involving other Assembly parties, and as appropriate the Irish and British Governments, we have reached agreement tonight on matters for North/South co-operation and implementation, and on Departments.
4. We wish to express our satisfaction with the outcome, which represents a major step in the implementation of the Agreement.
5. As regards Departments (Annex 1), the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will have an Economic Policy Unit and special responsibility for equality. There will be ten Departments:
 - Agriculture and Rural Development
 - Environment
 - Regional Development
 - Social Development
 - Education
 - Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment
 - Enterprise, Trade and Investment
 - Culture, Arts and Leisure
 - Health, Social Services and Public Safety
 - Finance and Personnel

6. The Agreement required a 'work programme' on at least 12 matters, six being new implementation bodies, and six being matters for co-operation. The six implementation bodies (Annex 2) are:

- Inland Waterways
- Food Safety
- Trade and Business Development
- Special EU Programmes
- Language (Irish and Ulster Scots)
- Aquaculture and Marine Matters

7. The six areas for co-operation (Annex 3) include some aspects of:

- Transport
- Agriculture
- Education
- Health
- Environment
- Tourism

8. We will be making a detailed report to the Assembly early in January, and will bring forward proposals on the British-Irish Council and the Civic Forum.