

A PROPOSAL FOR A TRANSITIONAL EXECUTIVE

This proposal is consistent with the Agreement signed on the 10th April 1998.

By Friday, April 2nd 1999, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will trigger the d'Hondt procedure to set up a Transitional Executive following the rules laid out in item 16 of Strand One of the Agreement. These Ministers would not convene in Executive Committee until after the summer period.

As outlined in sections 22 and 23 of Strand One of the Agreement, all Northern Ireland Departments would be headed by a Minister and all Ministers would affirm the terms of the Pledge of Office contained in Annex A.

Ministers would have full executive authority in their respective areas of responsibility. However, instead of reporting to the Assembly or to each other in an Executive, their work would be overseen by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who would have veto power over any decision in this period. In the months of transition, the Ministers would prepare a work programme for their Ministries and a budget to be presented to the Assembly.

In this period, Ministers could only be removed for failure to meet their responsibilities. They would be removed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

During the period of transition, Ministers would be able to avail themselves of expertise from business and academia on public sector management. Orientation programmes by Ministers holding similar portfolios in the United Kingdom and Ireland or other countries, if justified would be provided. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would set up a fund for travel, training and exchanges.

In addition, Ministers would be expected to submit a written report to the Assembly on the work accomplished during their transitional

mandates. An audited statement of accounts will be provided to each Minister by the Secretary of State, before the Minister takes responsibility for the Ministry.

During this same period, the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister will continue their responsibilities, including :

*further elaboration of the work outlined NNIA Report No. 7 (Report from First and Deputy First Minister Designate, 15th February).

* further elaboration of the work on the British-Irish Council to meet for the first time.

The Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) would continue to report to the government.

In a parallel process, with identical deadline, September 15th, 1999, the British Government would present the Assembly with its blueprint to assure that normal security arrangements will be in place by May 2000. These provisions are laid out in the Agreement in the section on Security. This would be the responsibility of the British Government.

In a third parallel process, drawing on the report of the Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland and the Report on Criminal Justice, the Assembly would produce by September 1999, an agreed-upon blueprint and timeline for the devolution of responsibility. Devolution must take place by May 2000. This would be the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.