

From: Independent Chairmen Notetakers  
18 June 1996

**SUMMARY RECORD OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES AND  
AGENDA FOR PLENARY SESSION - TUESDAY 18 JUNE 1996 (16.05)**

Those present:

Independent Chairmen	Government Teams	Parties
Senator Mitchell	British Government	Alliance Party
General de Chastelain	Irish Government	Labour Party
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. At 16.05 the Chairman reconvened the discussion and thanked participants for their patience and presence. He then repeated what had been agreed prior to the recess and suggested that the discussion now focus on reviewing the latest version of procedural guidelines. He hoped that everyone had had an opportunity to review it and emphasised that this was not an occasion where decisions needed to be taken but rather a further opportunity to discuss the contents. The Chairman also indicated that at this stage no-one was precluded from stating any previous or new position which they wanted to outline. It was also important to realise that in compiling the new document, which had been recently circulated, it had proved impossible to try and represent all the views on some of the major issues in a single version. The Chairman then provided the participants with a practical example of

this and referred to page 4, para 27 of the revised document which now contained several proposed amendments to the "sufficient consensus" conditions. The Chairman continued saying that he now wanted to go through this new draft on the same basis as previous, ie, in alphabetical order.

2. Mr Mallon sought clarification as to what stage the meeting should be seeking to make decisions. The Chairman indicated his intention to get to a decision-making stage sooner rather than later, but ostensibly this decision was for the participants. The Chairman also reminded those present that there was still a discussion on proposals for the agenda to complete and the resolution of both items was very much in the hands of participants. Mr Mallon commented that he had not yet got through the full document but had only reached para 22. He stated that a little more time would be helpful to him and his colleagues to enable an assessment to be made of paras 23 to the end.

3. The Chairman indicated that the overall purpose of the exercise was a difficult one because it was attempting to satisfy two conflicting objectives - on the one hand the meeting was attempting to reach agreement; on the other, one needed to give everyone a full opportunity to review, consider and be in a position to debate the document. The Chairman added that no-one would be hurried into a decision.

4. Mr Robinson confessed that he also had been unable to get through the entire document and he and his colleagues therefore needed more time. He was keen to look at it from the viewpoint of which DUP proposals were now not in it and which had been emasculated. Mr Robinson was however pleased to see a much easier format. He believed that the best analysis of the document from

his party's perspective, and he suspected others might view it in a similar manner, was to see which proposals they were content with; those which they would be content with some amendment; those which had been excluded and those which required insertion.

5. The Chairman commented that a premature discussion was not desirable. It was better to allow more time and hence flexibility to facilitate progress.

6. Mr Trimble indicated that the UUP was ready to proceed and he praised the Chairman's staff for a most helpful layout to the revised document. He stated, however, that allowing more time wouldn't do any harm. The Chairman having noted Mr Robinson's and Mr Mallon's comments suggested that perhaps a further 45 minutes should be allowed. He didn't want to be appearing to rush anyone along.

7. Mr Mallon stated that the only reason why his party wanted more time was to reach a position whereby decisions could be taken on the content rather than continuing with a prolonged debate. Mr Robinson asked the Chairman whether he could give an indication as to when, in terms of time, the other document on proposals for the Agenda would be available.

8. The Chairman indicated that it had not yet been started simply because of the work which had gone into the first document. He believed it was unlikely that the second document would be available to allow a parallel discussion on both to take place. He continued saying that he hoped the second document would be available when the discussions on the first document were completed.

9. Mr Robinson referred to another and separate problem which he had with attendance at another committee meeting connected to the wider process. He indicated that he would ensure that someone of authority would replace him. Noting this comment the Chairman indicated that given the earlier comments it would be prudent to adjourn until 17.00 at which point he would go round the table and seek comment from each party. The Chairman then adjourned the meeting at 16.20.

[Signed]

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