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From: Independent Chairmen Notetakers
19 June 1996

SUMMARY RECORD OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES AND
AGENDA FOR PLENARY SESSION - WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 1996 (12.08)

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 12.08 the Chairman reconvened the informal meeting. He indicated that prior to the adjournment of this gathering earlier in the morning, two participants had sought recognition from the chair. He now asked that these participants address the meeting, and also indicated that he felt that discussions were close to agreement on many of the present rules.

2. Mr Robinson proceeded to outline reasons why his party had arrived this morning with high hopes of progress being made on the rules of procedure. He had provided a suggestion on 18 June regarding certain aspects of the text which consequently was deemed to be helpful and he had therefore hoped that more progress would be made on the rules this morning. Unfortunately he had quite accidentally stumbled on an issue, while looking at those rules, which now needed to be dealt with. It was a vitally important

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matter to his party and a strong point of principle in terms of how the proceedings of the negotiations should be governed overall. Mr Robinson indicated that his party thought this informal process had been dealing at all times with "a blank piece of paper". That was the reason why the DUP had included, in their proposals for the rules, proposals from the Ground Rules document - thereby allowing the Ground Rules to be superseded with these new rules. If this was not the case, he stated, there was then a need to clearly establish the standing of the Ground Rules document and also the document dated 6 June, where there were issues which affected the role of the Independent Chairman.

3. Mr Robinson acknowledged that there were some points on the 6 June paper which might well be dealt with at a later stage under the full Agenda, but there were clearly others which could not wait for that. He continued saying that there was a need for a clear definition of "negotiations" in relation to several paragraphs in the Ground Rules document and the relationship, in a legal sense, that this document had with the entire process and with the new rules being drafted. In concluding his remarks, he restated an earlier point that the Ground Rules did not have any life in the present process although the legal standing of them, on their own was not being questioned. Mr Robinson referred back to remarks made earlier by Attorney General Gleeson, reinforcing the point, in his view, that the analogy of the Ground Rules to scaffolding erected around a building to either construct or repair it could also be viewed in the context of it being a temporary measure which can then be taken away once the building (ie, the new rules) was finished.

3. Mr Mallon commenced by saying that his party regarded the Ground Rules as a sound basis for the whole process to be built

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upon. The Ground Rules had formed the basis for negotiations on 10 June, and they had been carefully written following discussions between the Governments and the main political parties. In his view the Ground Rules were set out in clear terms and covered all the various aspects of the negotiations. Moving on, Mr Mallon commented that it was clear that participants wanted to look at the rules of procedure to enable those negotiations to be adopted in a proper and democratic manner. There was nothing wrong with this approach. He continued saying that the Ground Rules and changes or alterations to them were, in his view, not in the remit of this particular body. The document (ie, Ground Rules) represented an agreed position and therefore he viewed the comments made from the UUP and DUP as a calculated attempt to ambush plans for producing an Agenda for a Plenary today and for the drafting of rules currently under way. He reaffirmed his view that the SDLP accepted the standing of the Ground Rules. His party, he stated, might well disagree with many of the issues contained therein but they had buried some of these in the interests of moving forward.

5. Mr Mallon stated that the Ground Rules represented the framework as to why everyone was in the room. The rules of procedure and the contents therein were an entirely separate issue because they focused on how the business would be conducted. On a further point, Mr Mallon indicated that in his view, many of the parties around the table had made allowances towards the Unionists concerns and he admitted that this had resulted in progress. He hoped that progress would be continued. He considered, however, that attempting to change the Ground Rules only abused those parties who had made allowances up to now. He stated it was grossly unfair for anyone to be put in a position where either one made allowances towards continuing tactical points or alternatively one had to make a stand against this policy. In reference to the

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latter point, Mr Mallon stated that the SDLP were not moving on the Ground Rules document and would accept no change to it.

6. The Chairman at 12.21 adjourned the meeting, subject to the call of the chair and noted that when a further meeting was reconvened, both Mr McCartney and Mr Curran wished to address the chair.

[Signed]

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