

SUMMARY RECORD OF OPENING PLENARY SESSION -
WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 1997 (16.10)

Those present:

INDEPENDENT CHAIRMEN

Mr Holkeri
General de Chastelain

GOVERNMENT TEAMS

British Government
Irish Government

PARTIES

Alliance
Labour
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Progressive Unionist Party
Sinn Féin
Social Democratic & Labour Party
Ulster Democratic Party
Ulster Unionist Party

1. The Chairman (Mr Holkeri) convened the meeting at 16.10 and stated that, as agreed at the previous Plenary session on Tuesday 23 September, approval of the outstanding records from the meetings on 16 and 17 September would now be sought. There were six records in all distributed by the staff in two sets. The Chairman asked the participants to confirm that each had had sufficient time to review the texts. This was given. The Chairman then asked for approval. On hearing no comments all six records were approved as circulated.

2. Moving on to the day's business, the Chairman said he would invite the British Government to comment first. The British Government said it wished to apologise to delegates and thank them for their patience since many had been sitting around for lengthy periods during the day. This was unavoidable but the current situation was that the Governments were now at the point of drawing up a final version of the procedural motion. The British Government said it was only going to allow a fairly short time following the plenary for this to be completed, but a further period of technical time was needed to ensure copying and

distribution of the text to allow participants to study it. The British Government said it therefore wished to propose an adjournment now with a proposal to reconvene at 17.30 when the procedural motion would be tabled. The British Government said that hopefully, with participants having the opportunity to study the text beforehand, all could put their agreement to it at that Plenary and the process could move on into substantive negotiations.

3. The Chairman asked for any comments on the British Government's request for an adjournment under rule 20 before he took a decision. The British Government added that it would propose circulating the Governments' determination on the UUP indictment of Sinn Féin at the same time as the procedural motion. The participants signalled their agreement to this and the proposal for an adjournment. The Chairman, on hearing no further comments, adjourned the session at 16.19 until 17.30.

Independent Chairmen Notetakers
29 September 1997

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