

Alliance

The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

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We are extremely concerned that time wasting and irrelevant procedural issues are once again being raised. This is a negotiating body, not a legislature. The rules of procedure which we adopted after such minute scrutiny provide (Rules 30 and 32) that the negotiations will work on the basis of consensus unless the Chairman initiates certain alternative methods, ie the mechanisms set out in Rule 30 (a) (b) and (c) and in Rule 32. There is no scope for tabling or voting on motions or amendments, which are irrelevant and inappropriate in a body of this kind. Any papers tabled are a contribution to the discussion, which continues - whether in plenary, committee or in informal formats - until either consensus emerges or the Chairman deems it appropriate to implement another mechanism from the list provided by the rules.

We note also that the adopted Rules provide that the agenda for each meeting shall be settled by the participants on the basis of proposals put forward by the Chairman in accordance with the overall agenda in the relevant format... (Rule 19); that the relevant Chairman will have responsibility for convening, re-scheduling and adjourning meetings... (Rule 20), and that the Chairman's ruling on individual procedural matters shall be binding (Rule 25).