

Secret and PersonalIrish Draft (30 March 1998)Introductory Declaration by Participants

1. We, the participants in the multi-party negotiations, believe that the agreement we have negotiated between us offers a truly historic opportunity for a new beginning.
2. The failures of the past have left a deep, and profoundly regrettable, legacy of suffering. We must never forget those who have died, or who have been bereaved or injured. But we can best honour them through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.
3. We are committed to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between these islands.
4. We reaffirm our total and absolute commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues, and our opposition to any use or threat of force by others for any political purpose, whether in regard to this agreement or otherwise.
5. We acknowledge the substantial differences between our continuing, and equally legitimate, political aspirations, and we recognise that no change in or development of the arrangements now agreed is excluded, if it is pursued and achieved through exclusively democratic and peaceful means. At the same time, we pledge that we will, in good faith, work to ensure the success of each and every one of the arrangements to be established under this agreement. ✓
6. Accordingly, in a spirit of concord, we strongly commend this agreement to the people North and South, for their approval.