

Social Democratic and Labour Party

-supplementary submission

Strands 1 & 2: Agenda Item Four

November, 1997

SDLP Supplementary Submission - Strands 1 & 2: Item 4

1. Given the paucity of some parties' submissions on previous agenda items and the limited nature of discussions to date, it would be inappropriate, if not impossible, to present a detailed paper on this agenda item in each strand. This brief paper is intended not to outline possible relationships between possible arrangements in different strands but to underline the requirement for all parties to recognise the importance of all three strands.
2. In our earlier discussions some parties have sought to place emphasis on the "totality of relationships" in terms which suggest to us that they want to relegate one particular strand. Parties can validly place emphasis on particular strands but not to the exclusion of others. The SDLP's commitment to significant developments in Strand Two is not pursued at the expense of our commitment to negotiate in good faith across all three strands. Unlike others, we have set no limits on what arrangements might be contemplated in each strand respectively in the search for a comprehensive agreement.
3. This approach is informed not only by our own analysis, but also by the Rules of Procedure that we and others agreed for these negotiations. We would refer those who want to take an à-la-carte approach to the negotiations, to certain provision in the Rules of Procedure.

"All participants in the negotiations will negotiate in good faith, seriously address all aspects of the agreed agenda, and make every effort to reach a comprehensive agreement." Par. 16.

"Without prejudice to any participant's negotiating position, each participant will be able to raise any issue of concern to them and receive a fair hearing for those concerns without their ability to do so being subject to the veto of any other party in the negotiations." Para. 17.

"No negotiated outcome is either pre-determined or excluded in advance, or limited by anything other than the need for agreement." Par. 18.

"It is common ground that any agreement, if it is to command widespread support, will need to give adequate expression to the totality of all three relationships." Par. 18

4. Attempts to foreclose negotiations in Strand Two, and make the scope of that Strand an annex to Strand Three, are not consistent with the Rules of Procedure. Giving "adequate expression to the totality of all three relationships" will involve giving adequate expression to each, by the nature and extent of arrangements to be agreed in their respective Strands, as well as by providing for effective and dynamic inter-relationships among such agreed arrangements.