

# Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

## PRESS RELEASE

### *SUCCESS AT LAST*

The Ulster Unionist Party has succeeded in one of our principal objectives by getting a new single set of procedural rules adopted for the multi-party Talks at Stormont. We have been comprehensively vindicated. Claims were made that the Procedural Guidelines document produced by the British and Irish Governments on June 6 would be imposed upon the parties.

In fact, of the 44 paragraphs that now constitute the new agreed Rules of Procedure, only 4 are the same as originally set out in the June 6 paper, and these deal with matters that are agreed and uncontroversial such as minute-taking, and the Strand 3 outcomes (Paras. 31, 42, 43 and 44). Thus, 40 of the 44 paragraphs are new or involve changes. Many of the new Rules are our proposals.

The effect of the changes has been to put the control of the process back where it belongs, in the hands of the elected participants. All decisions are now to be made by the agreement of the participants. There is no fall-back position to impose a decision as had been envisaged by the June 6 document. The means of achieving agreement is clearly and precisely defined so that no decision can in fact be imposed under a fraudulent pretext of agreement. The power of the British and Irish Governments to effectively force through agreement (Para 2 of June 6 using Ground Rule 15) is gone. Agreement of the participants is also required both for the adoption of the Agenda and to amend the Rules of Procedures themselves.

We have frustrated the attempt of the British and Irish Governments in their Ground Rules document to effectively confine the negotiations to a nationalist agenda. The strait-jacket designed for the process has been removed, and now "no negotiated outcome is either pre-determined or excluded in advance or limited by anything other than the need for agreement".

We have been able to limit the role of the Chairman to his proper function in this process. He is bound completely by the Rules of Procedure, and no longer has the power to effectively force through agreement or has discretion to determine what constitutes sufficient consensus for agreement. He has to have due regard to the views of a strengthened Business Committee on the timing and duration of meetings, the arrangement of business, and the exercise of his functions. He will also be required to convene plenary sessions at the request of the Business Committee and may only bring forward proposals if he has established it will be regarded as helpful by the parties. The Business Committee will co-ordinate the progress and procedures of the negotiations. The effect of these changes are to remove any role as a political supremo, and instead produce a Chairman who can facilitate the participants' view of the process.

We have also succeeded in altering the arrangements for Strand 3, which had proved so unsatisfactory during the Brooke-Mayhew Talks, and have produced a mechanism that will give us a better input into this vital phase of the negotiations.

The net effect of the Ulster Unionist Party's efforts has been to put the sovereignty of the process back into the hands of the participants with a fair system of procedures that can guide parties to a satisfactory outcome. Our courage on June 12 in opening up the Rules of Procedure for agreement between the participants - in the teeth of opposition from others - has been rewarded. Despite bitter personal and political assaults on David Trimble, it is clear that his far-sighted and determined leadership has saved the Ulster people from yet another Anglo-Irish fiat which had potentially lethal consequences for the Union.

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3 glengall street  
belfast 12  
**tel** 01232 324601  
**fax** 01232 246738

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