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Dear Messrs. Atwood and Lyons:

The International Fund for Ireland (the "Fund") has been a significant force in promoting investment and jobs in Northern Ireland and adjacent areas of the Republic of Ireland. It has actively promoted reconciliation and has established an excellent record on equal opportunity and fair employment issues, which are of such critical importance for economic vitality in Northern Ireland and the border region.

In the 1996 Foreign Affairs Authorization Act (HR 1561) as passed by Congress, Section 1615 stated that U.S. contributions to the Fund "should be used in a manner that effectively increases employment opportunities in communities with rates of unemployment higher than the local or urban average of unemployment in Northern Ireland. In addition, such contributions should be used to benefit individuals residing in such communities." The Act also stated that such contributions "should be provided to individuals or entities which employ practices consistent with the principles of economic justice" defined in the Act.

I vetoed HR 1561 for reasons entirely unrelated to the language in Section 1615. I am committed to equal opportunity and fair employment as necessary foundations for a just, peaceful and prosperous future for all the people of both jurisdictions in Ireland. I therefore ask you, in discharging your duties under the Anglo-Irish Agreement Support Act of 1986, to ensure that the intent of Section 1615 of HR 1561 is carried out to the greatest extent possible.

It must be clearly understood that the principle of equal opportunity and non-discrimination in employment must apply to everyone, regardless of religious tradition. To this end, and consistent with applicable United States law, I direct the United States Observer to the International Fund for Ireland to urge Fund support for those projects within disadvantaged wards and sub-wards of both communities which embody the principles of economic justice and the charter of the Fund. The United States contribution to the Fund shall not be used to require or mandate quotas or reverse discrimination by individuals or entities assisted with such contributions.