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ANNEX

**BRIEFING FOR PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR TRIMBLE
(8 OCTOBER)****CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES**

1. Good progress has been made across the range of Confidence-Building Measures to follow-up the list originally handed-over by David Trimble at a meeting on 31 July.
2. An early priority for Mr Trimble was school funding and the Government's response to the recent Coopers & Lybrand report. Tony Worthington issued a Press Release on 10 September announcing that the Government has accepted the central thrust of the recommendations of the Coopers & Lybrand report on formula funding in schools. Mr Trimble has welcomed this commitment.
3. Another early priority related to local government. On 11 September Lord Dubs issued a Press Release announcing that the Government is considering how District Councils in Northern Ireland might be given an enhanced role in promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. In particular, this confirmed that the Government sees a need to promote legislation which would clarify District Councils' power to manage and develop their own property in pursuit of their local economic development objectives.
4. Another priority for Mr Trimble is the Northern Ireland Forum. Here, the Secretary of State has given a commitment that she will visit the

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Forum later this year. This will underscore the Secretary of State's commitment that she and her Ministerial team will give full co-operation to the Forum in carrying out its allotted task. Mr Trimble would also like to change the balance of work within the Forum away from Plenary meetings and toward more committee work. The Forum Secretariat will be able to discuss with the UUP how this could be achieved - although it is, in the final analysis, a matter for the Forum to set in train.

5. Mr Trimble has recently been calling for a review of funding for community and cultural development with particular reference to access from, and fair treatment of, the Protestant community. We can announce good progress on this as well. The Secretary of State has been giving urgent consideration to this work and the Prime Minister will be able to confirm that work to review this important issue will be taken forward as a priority. This will involve an examination of the extent to which community and cultural development funding is equitably accessed by both communities and, if this examination reveals discrepancies between the known need for such funding and uptake (either generally or in terms of particular programmes) what measures might be taken to facilitate equitable access to programmes by both communities.
6. In relation to Quangos and public appointments, Mr Trimble's main concern here seems to be to secure the appointment of more public representatives. Officials are working to introduce more open and transparent appointments procedures and have been asked to consider the feasibility of more appointments of public representatives.

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7. In relation to SACHR's review of Northern Ireland's fair employment legislation, Mr Trimble has called for greater openness and fairness in this review. Mr Trimble has already been given an assurance (in Paul Murphy's letter of 2 September) that the Secretary of State will give full and proper weight to UUP member, Dermot Nesbitt's, dissenting contribution to the SACHR report. The next step will be for the Government to publish a paper this Winter explaining its views on SACHR's recommendations and setting out the proposed way forward.
8. Mr Trimble has recently added to the list of Confidence-Building Measures the need for mark the sacrifices made by the victims of terrorism. In his 'News Letter' article published on 13 September, the Prime Minister said that the Government is looking with some urgency at how best to mark these sacrifices and help those left behind. This work is likely to require input from several areas of Ministerial/Departmental responsibility. One practical and tangible step under consideration is the proposal to create a Thanksgiving Square at Laganside in Belfast so as to provide a permanent memorial for those who have suffered in "the Troubles". The Secretary of State met the promoters of this initiative on 19 August. Although the UUP have previously floated the idea of a "Commission" to look further into the question of the victims of violence, it seems that they are not necessarily wedded to this approach - the important thing, they have stressed, is that Government should recognise that something should be done for the victims. It would be helpful if the UUP could put forward more

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developed thinking in this area. Ministers would be very willing to discuss their ideas further.

Anglo-Irish Secretariat

9. An ongoing concern of the UUP is that Anglo-Irish Secretariat. The Secretary of State has announced that we will publish a regular list of briefings provided through the Secretariat (the first quarterly list has been placed in the House of Commons Library). However, any changes of substance to the workings of the Anglo-Irish Agreement must be agreed with the Irish Government; the Irish side of the Secretariat are aware that the Secretary of State intends to put the issue on the agenda of an early meeting of the IGC. As Paul Murphy's letter of 2 September made clear, the Secretary of State is currently considering proposals from officials as to how the Secretariat and the IGC could be made more transparent. Once she has done this, she would be happy to discuss with Mr Trimble any ideas he may have.

Firearms

10. The Prime Minister's article in the Newsletter should have reassured the UUP on its most immediate worries about personal protection weapons. Mr Ingram intends to meet Trimble at some stage to brief him on our firearms reform proposals; clarify the misunderstandings on the Straw letter (Trimble had claimed that Jack Straw, while in opposition, had promised that the handgun ban would not be extended to NI; what it in fact that was "we believe that Firearms Legislation for Northern Ireland

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should be kept separate from that for Britain and we accept entirely the importance of licences for PPWs."); and address any other concerns which might be irritating the UUP. Hopefully this will clear the way for publication of HMG's consultation paper sometime after the House resumes.

Decommissioning

11. Now that the talks Plenary has launched the three strands, we have been able to establish the Independent Commission which can begin its work on decommissioning alongside the substantive negotiations. We expect the participants in the negotiations to co-operate fully with the Commission in accordance with their commitments to the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence. Both we and the Irish Government have made clear that we want to see some decommissioning of illegal weapons during the negotiations, as progress is made on the political talks, and we recognise the potential that this would have as a confidence building measure.

Policing legislation

12. The Prime Minister said in his Newsletter article that the Government would introduce the policing reform legislation by Bill rather than by Order in Council. This remains under consideration by FLG.

Parades

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13. The UUP are anxious to see the remit of the Parades Commission extended. This is being taken forward separately.

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