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ANNEX C

SPEAKING NOTE FOR RECEPTION

- Welcome you on behalf of the British government to Lancaster House and to this evening's reception;
- pleased to have had the opportunity to meet the parties today briefly;
- the talks are taking place at a very serious time in Northern Ireland;
- many of you here tonight will know those who have suffered recently;
- this is a crucial time for all of us and for this process;
- our task is to keep our efforts focused on the talks process and to concentrate of moving forward rapidly to an agreed outcome;
- tabled the Propositions on Heads of Agreement jointly with the Irish government on 12 January;
- welcome the broadly positive response to it; know that some of you have concerns about some parts of it. But our aim is to assist discussion on the details - nothing is pre-determined;
- I firmly believe that the future of Northern Ireland lies with the people in this room today: we must all now re-double our efforts to achieve the peaceful outcome which the vast majority of people want.

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