

DRAFT

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach noted with pleasure the many areas of bilateral cooperation which had been developed and strengthened over the past year, since they had agreed a programme of cooperation in Dublin in December 1995. The British Government were delighted to welcome President Robinson to Britain in June. Visits by senior British and Irish Ministers are now a normal feature of the developing relationship across a wide range of Government business. Opportunities for practical cooperation have been identified on many matters, including the administration of justice, financial services, transport, the processing of social security payments and measures to combat fraud, health and medical issues, education, employment and culture. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach expressed their determination that friendly and constructive relations should be maintained and further developed in 1997.

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach attach particular importance to a sustained improvement in cooperation in the youth sector. They took note of specific proposals now under discussion between officials and instructed the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council Working Group on Education and Culture to address these, with a view to early implementation of an agreed scheme.

They also instructed officials to explore what scope there might be for enhanced links in the non-governmental field, including between academic institutions, towns and other communities, and cultural and other interest groups, and how such links might be promoted.