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ACHIEVEMENTS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

A Paper by the British and Irish Governments

This paper summarises the progress that has been made in implementing the Good Friday Agreement. The progress is due to the collective work of all the parties and the two Governments. Although there have been difficulties, delays, and disputes about progress the Governments think it is important for the parties to reflect on the progress already made.

Constitutional Issues

- Constitutional principles of Agreement decisively endorsed in referendums, North and South, 22 May 1998.
- Principles given effect in British legislation in the Northern Ireland Act, 1998.
- British-Irish Agreement entered into force on 2 December 1999 causing amendments to Articles 2 and 3 to take effect in the South.

Strand One

- Elections in Northern Ireland 25 June 1998. Assembly met for the first time in shadow form on 1 July 1998, appointing David Trimble and Seamus Mallon as First and Deputy First Ministers Designate, respectively.
- 18 December 1998, agreement reached between parties on arrangements for the Northern Ireland Executive, including on the ten departments to oversee Agriculture and Rural Development; Environment; Regional Development; Social Development; Education; Higher and Further Education; Enterprises Trade and Investment; Culture, Arts and Leisure; Health, Social Services and Public Safety; and Finance and Personnel.
- These arrangements approved in the Assembly, 16 February. The same meeting also approved arrangements for the Civic Forum.
- 29 November 1999, the Assembly appointed the ten Ministers, embracing UUP, SDLP, Sinn Fein and the DUP.
- 2 December 1999, the Devolution Order transferring power to the Assembly and Executive came into effect. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland exchanged notifications bringing the British-Irish Agreement into force.
- In the period since, the Assembly has approved the Executive's first Programme for Government and has passed its first budget.
- Five Executive Programme Funds were established to provide resources for strategic investments and to assist co-operative programmes across Departments.

- In addition, new agreed policies have been developed such as in the area of student Support.

Strand Two

- 18 December 1998, in keeping with the Agreement's requirement for a programme on at least 12 matters, agreement was reached on six areas which North-south Implementation Bodies were to be established and six areas where North-South cooperation was to be through existing agencies. Implementation Bodies: Inland Waterways; Food Safety; Trade Business Development; Special EU Programmes: Language (Irish and Ulster Scots and Aquaculture and Marine Matters. The areas identified for cooperation through existing agencies: Aspects of Transport; Agriculture; Education; Health; Environment; and Tourism (Publicly owned company to be established to promote marketing of island as single tourist destination).

- 8 March 1999, the two Governments signed Supplementary Agreements on the North/South Ministerial Council and Implementation Bodies Legislation was enacted in the Oireachtas and in Westminster to provide for the Bodies. NSMC and Implementation Bodies came into being when the British-Irish Agreement entered into force on 2 December 1999.

- 13 December 1999, inaugural Plenary Meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council took place in Armagh. On 24- January, 2000, the first meeting of the Ministerial Council in sectoral format in Newry took place dealing primarily with issues relating to the Trade and Business Development Implementation Body.

- In the period since, the Council has met in sectoral format a total of 35 times. The Implementation Bodies have been established and are fully up and running with a budget for 2001 of £64M. The North/South Tourism Company has been established.

- 26 September 2000, second Plenary Meeting of NSMC took place in Dublin.

Strand Three

- 8 March 1999, the two Governments signed **Supplementary Agreements** providing for the establishment of the British Irish Council and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. These entered into force with the British-Irish Agreement 2 December 1999.

- 17 December 1999, Inaugural Summit level meeting of the British-Irish Council took place in London and agreed a memorandum on working procedures and initial list of issues for early discussion including drugs, the environment, social inclusion, transport and the knowledge economy. Work is being advanced across all of these areas of work, including through Ministerial level meetings. The Irish Government opened Consulates in Edinburgh and Cardiff and the Taoiseach has paid official visits to Scotland and Wales.

- February 2001, the Plenary Meeting of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body unanimously agreed to invite representatives of all members of the BIC to join as full members.

- 17 December 1999, the inaugural meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference took place in London.

Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity

- European Convention on Human Rights was incorporated into British Law through the Human Rights Act which entered into force on 2 October 2000.

- Statutory obligation on public authorities in Northern Ireland to carry out all functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity was enacted the Northern Ireland Act, 1998.

- Legislative provision for Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission was made in Northern Ireland Act, 1998. Commission began its work 1 March 1999

- Autumn 2000 onwards, the Commission engaged in extensive consultation on the scope for defining rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights, to reflect the particular

circumstances of Northern Ireland. These additional rights - taken together with the ECHR - constitute a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

- Legislative provision for an Equality Commission in Northern Ireland was made in the Northern Ireland Act, 1993. On 1 October 1999, the Equality Commission was established.

- June 2001 legislation introduced in the Dáil to give effect to the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights in Irish Law.

- 31 May 2000, the Human Rights Commission Act, providing for a Human Rights Commission in the South, was signed into law.

- 7 May 1999, the Irish Government ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention on National Minorities.

- The Irish Government has enacted an enhanced Employment Equality Act. and the Equal Status Act.

- The Irish Government is continuing to demonstrate its respect for the different traditions in the island of Ireland, including the development of the site of the Battle of the Boyne and by contributing to the Messines memorial to commemorate the Irish soldiers who died in World War One.

- The Irish Government has increased by eightfold, the funding available through its Reconciliation Fund. Since the Agreement over £6m has been provided to groups working in the area.

- May 1998, the report of the Bloomfield Commission - established to 'examine the feasibility of providing greater recognition for those who have become victims' - was published. The recommendations of the Report - We Will Remember Them - were accepted in full by the British Government.

- June 1998, the British Government established the Victims Liaison Unit to take forward the Report's recommendations and the British Government made an initial allocation of £1.5 million for the implementation of support measures for victims. To date the British Government has committed over £18.25 million to support measures for victims of the Troubles.

- In June 1998, Irish Government appointed the former Tánaiste, Mr John Wilson to identify what further measures were needed to be taken to acknowledge and address the suffering and concerns of victims of violence. The Commission made its report - A Place and a Name - in August 1999

- On 28 May 1999, both Governments established an Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains to assist in locating the whereabouts of nine missing persons killed by the IRA in the 1970s.

Economic, Social and Cultural Issues

- Progress has been made on the development of an economic development strategy for Northern Ireland. The report commissioned by the British Government's "Strategy 2010" was published in March 1999 and has since been accepted by the Assembly.

- 24/25 March 1999, the European Union Council agreed a new Peace Programme for Northern Ireland and the border counties involving EU funding of 500 million euro over five year period from 2000 A further three years of funding of the IFI was also confirmed.

- Enhanced employment equality legislation in Northern Ireland, which, inter alia, for the first time makes it unlawful to discriminate on religious grounds in the provision of goods and services, was enacted by the British Government in the Fair Employment and Equal Treatment Order, 1998.

- A statutory duty has been placed on the Department of Education in Northern Ireland to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education.

- The Irish Language station TG4, (formally Telefís na Gaeilge) has achieved more widespread availability in Northern Ireland.

Decommissioning

- June 1998, both Governments put in place regulations and schemes to enable the International Independent Commission on Decommission to carry out its work. On 18 December 1998, the LVF decommissioned a small number of weapons but beyond that no further actual decommissioning has taken place.
- 2 December 1999, IRA announced that it has appointed a representative to enter into discussions with the IICD. Both the UVF and UFF have also appointed representatives.
- In their statement of 5 May 2000, the two Governments also invited the Commission to consider whether there were any proposals for decommissioning schemes which offered the Commission greater scope to proceed in more effective and satisfactory ways with the discharge of its basic mandate. The most recent report from the Commission states that it remains ready to consider such proposals.
- 6 May 2000, responding to the statement made by the Governments at Hillsborough on 5 May 2000, an IRA statement announced that it would resume contact with the IICD; undertook, within a context they identified, to put IRA weapons completely and verifiably beyond use; and announced that, as confidence building measure it would allow the inspection of some of its arms dumps. The Governments appointed Cyril Ramaphosa and Marti Ahtisaari to undertake the inspections.
- 25 June 2000, the IICD reported that the first inspections had taken place. The International Inspectors reported that the substantial amount of weapons seen were secure and could not be used without detection. Two further inspections have since successfully taken place.
- March 2001, the IRA announced that, having broken off contact with the IICD in October 2000 because of lack of progress in other areas, it was re-entering discussions with the Commission.
- The IICD report at the end of June outlined the current position.

Security

- The following security normalisation steps, have been taken since the Good Friday Agreement:
 - **Reduction of numbers and role of armed forces:** the number of troops deployed has been reduced by 3,500 to less than 13,500; 5 of the 6 battalions on emergency tours of duty are now rear-based in Britain; military patrolling has been reduced by 50% since 1995, with routine patrolling now ended in many areas, including Belfast; a reduction of 21% in the number of Army helicopter flying hours: one of the six RIR regiments (5th RIR) has been disbanded.
 - **Removal of security installations:** 43 military installations have been closed, demolished or vacated, including 35 since the good Friday Agreement. These include Crossmaglen sangar, Fort George, Cookstown and Whiterock, observation posts at Cloghogue (Newry) and Broadway and Templar House (Belfast), and 6 Fermanagh border posts and the withdrawal of troops from RUC stations. Additionally 102 cross-border roads have been re-opened and requisitioned land has been returned to Crossmaglen Rangers GAA Club.
 - **The Emergency Provisions Act** has been replaced by a wide UK-new Terrorism Act 2000, with emergency powers reduced to reflect changes in the terrorist threat.
 - **Holding Centres:** Castlereagh and Strand Road holding have been closed.
- May 1999, the Irish Government established a Committee to Review Offences Against the State Acts under the chairmanship of former Supreme Court Justice Anthony Hederman. On 6 June, the Committee sent an interim report (dealing with the Special Criminal Court) to the Irish Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Policing

- The Good Friday Agreement committed the British Government to establishing an independent commission to make recommendations for future policing arrangements which would provide the

opportunity for a new beginning in policing in Northern Ireland with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole.

- The Independent Commission published its findings in the Patten Report in September 1999. The British Government is committed to delivering the new beginning in policing recommended by the Patten Commission and has undertaken the following;

- The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 became law on 23 November 2000.

- An Implementation Plan was published in June 2000 and is to be updated.

- The Office of the Ombudsman established under the 1998 Act, came into operation on 6 November 2000, its powers were reinforced, by the provisions of the Police Act;

- Tom Constantine was appointed in June 2000 as Oversight Commissioner and produced his first report, based on Patten, in January 2001; He will report on the changes outlined below.

- The Consensa recruitment agency was engaged and ran an extensive initial recruitment campaign.

- District Commanders have been appointed;

- Special and Crime branches were brought together under the same ACC on 1 April;

- Under the Police Act 2000 and the Implementation Plan, the British Government is committed to delivering the following in keeping with Patten:

- a new Policing Board representative of both communities with a majority of political representatives appointed under the d'Hondt procedure from the Assembly

- new accountability arrangements, striking an appropriate balance between the tripartite powers, with effective planning, best value, reporting and inquiry arrangements

- new district policing partnerships giving effective accountability at local level, with a majority of political representatives

- a new code of ethics, applying to all officers, enshrining the principles of human rights

- a new name

- a new badge and flag

- a new human rights oriented training and development programme to form part of the Board's policing plan

- a statutory requirement on the Board and Chief Constable to encourage lateral entry

- part-time recruitment targeted on areas of current low recruitment

- phasing out of the full-time reserve

- representativeness, with 50/50 recruitment to the new police service

- First in-take of recruits to the PSNI in October.

Criminal Justice

- The Good Friday Agreement committed the British Government to establishing a wide-ranging review of criminal justice through a mechanism with an independent element. The Agreement indicated that the criminal justice system should be fair and impartial, responsive to the community and encouraging of its

involvement, have the confidence of all parts of the community and deliver justice efficiently and effectively.

- The report of the Criminal Justice Review Group was published in March 2000, and was welcomed by the British Government and by the Irish Government, which considered that its early and effective implementation would make a positive contribution to the implementation of the GFA as a whole.

- The Secretary of State initiated a consultation process (which ended in September 2000) and on 26 October 2000 fully endorsed the general approach of the report.

- The British Government will be publishing detailed legislation and an implementation plan by the end of the summer and expects to introduce legislation in Parliament session.

Prisoners

- 444 qualifying prisoners released in the North and 57 in the South.