



## **NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

### **TENTH PLENARY MEETING**

### **FARMLEIGH HOUSE, DUBLIN**

**5 JULY 2010**

### **JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The tenth Plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was held at Farmleigh House, Dublin on 5 July 2010.
2. The Irish Government was led by the Taoiseach, Brian Cowen TD. The Northern Ireland Executive was led by First Minister, Peter Robinson MLA and the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP MLA. A full list of the members of both delegations is attached as an Annex. The Taoiseach chaired the meeting.
3. Ministers had a comprehensive discussion of the fiscal challenges facing each jurisdiction and the measures they are taking to consolidate their budgets and to prepare for economic recovery. In the current difficult economic environment, Ministers emphasised the need to secure value for money across the full range of public sector expenditure. In this context they welcomed the ongoing discussions between the two Finance Ministers to identify potential cost savings through co-operation and sharing.
4. Ministers also discussed the significant level of co-operation underway to promote innovation to underpin economic growth and create employment, including the introduction of innovation vouchers on an all island basis, funding provided through the Programme for Research in Third level

Institutions, cancer research, increased cooperation in securing research funding under the EU Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and the success of the US/Ireland/Northern Ireland Research and Development Partnership.

They welcomed potential co-operation in the international promotion of joint capacity for Research and Development and encouraged work in the NSMC Trade and Business Development sector, on innovation, research and development and on an all island ecosystem for innovation. It was agreed that EU Innovation Commissioner Geoghegan Quinn would be invited to attend a future meeting of NSMC in Trade and Business Development sectoral format.

The Executive raised concerns about restructuring of the banking sector and issues related to the insurance sector.

The Executive also raised the issue of country of origin food labelling. Ministers recognised the importance of cross-border trade for the food industries and noted that relevant Ministers are discussing these issues.

## **JOINT SECRETARIES' PROGRESS REPORT**

5. Ministers noted the Progress Report on the thirteen NSMC meetings which have been held since the last Plenary meeting in December 2009 and welcomed the mutually beneficial co-operation taken forward including;
  - that work is progressing well on the A5 (Aughnacloy to North West Gateway) and A8 (Belfast-Larne) projects to meet the next key milestones – Publication of Draft Orders – in late 2010/early 2011. The A1 road works to complete the Dublin Belfast link, are nearing completion and it is anticipated that the new carriageway will be open to traffic in mid 2010.
  - further progress towards the approval of the business case for a new radiotherapy centre at Altnagelvin Hospital, towards which the Irish Government has agreed, in principle, to provide a capital contribution and to fund the provision of cancer services for patients from Donegal
  - progress on a range of child protection issues including the establishment of the innovative North-South Child Protection website;
  - continuing exploration of a coordinated approach to reducing blood alcohol levels in both jurisdictions;

- the introduction of the mutual recognition of driver disqualifications between the UK and Ireland on 28 January 2010 and continuing work on the longer term objective of the mutual recognition of penalty points;
- the agreement of an All Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy;
- the steps taken to date to ensure the removal of waste from the sites at Slattinagh, Co Fermanagh and near Trillick, Co Tyrone. Work on the site is expected to start this summer and joint enforcement actions to target shipments of waste are continuing;
- progress on the implementation of the EU PEACE III and INTERREG IVA programmes. Projects already approved under PEACE III have a total budget of €171.8 million (£156.2 m) and under INTERREG IVA of €103.7 million (£94.3 m);
- the new NSMC Joint Secretariat accommodation in Armagh has been fully operational since 19 April 2010 and six NSMC meetings have been held there to date;
- the Board of the Middletown Centre for Autism has been reconstituted for a further 3 year term. The Centre is rolling out further training packages involving around 4,000 individuals and progress continues in the provision of advice and guidance to schools and research and information services. A multi annual plan for the future development of the Centre is being developed.
- the Teacher Qualifications Working Group has been reconstituted and progress has been made in taking forward cooperation in teacher education issues generally and in relation to Irish-Medium Education (IME) in particular. Additional measures are now in place to strengthen coordination and cooperation in relation to tackling education under-achievement, school leadership and Irish-Medium Education (IME), including a commitment to share where feasible, materials and resources in order to avoid duplication.

## **ST. ANDREWS AGREEMENT REVIEW**

6. The Council agreed that recommendations in a report prepared for the Review Group by an advisory panel of experts/advisors, would be forwarded for views to Ministers who have responsibility for the North South Bodies. They noted consultation that is underway within Executive departments on the second and third terms of reference of the St Andrews Agreement Review and anticipated that the Review Group would move

rapidly to conclude its work when this is complete. Ministers agreed to consider the outcome of consultation that is underway in both jurisdictions at a future NSMC meeting.

#### **NORTH SOUTH CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

7. The Council noted that the Irish Government had facilitated a second consultative conference with the participation of social partners and other civil society groups from across the island.

#### **NORTH SOUTH PARLIAMENTARY FORUM**

8. The Council noted that a joint meeting of the North-South Parliamentary Forum Working Groups was held on 21 June 2010 to discuss the proposed joint Conference in early October. The Working Groups agreed that officials from both Legislatures, will continue to meet to refine aspects of the draft Conference programme and report back to their respective Working Groups with a view to finalising the Conference Programme.
9. The Council noted that the establishment of a Forum is a matter for the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

#### **FUTURE NSMC MEETINGS**

10. The Council approved a schedule of NSMC meetings to take place over the coming months and agreed that the Joint Secretariat, in consultation with relevant Departments, will arrange specific dates for each of these meetings before 31 August 2010.

**Joint Secretariat  
5 July 2010**

## ANNEX A

### MEETING OF THE NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL FARMLEIGH, DUBLIN – 5 JULY 2010

<b>Irish Government</b>	<b>Northern Ireland Executive</b>
Brian Cowen TD Taoiseach	The Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA First Minister
Brian Lenihan TD Minister for Finance	Martin McGuinness MP MLA deputy First Minister
Noel Dempsey TD Minister for Transport	Sammy Wilson MP MLA Minister for Finance and Personnel
Micheál Martin TD Minister for Foreign Affairs	Michelle Gildernew MP MLA Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Éamon Ó Cuív TD Minister for Social Protection	Nelson McCausland MLA Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure
Mary Hanafin TD Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport	Caitriona Ruane MLA Minister for Education
John Gormley TD Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government	Sir Reg Empey MLA Minister for Employment and Learning
Eamon Ryan TD Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	Arlene Foster MLA Minister of Enterprise Trade and Investment
Brendan Smith TD Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	Edwin Poots MLA Minister of the Environment
Batt O’Keeffe TD Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation	Conor Murphy MP MLA Minister for Regional Development
Dermot Ahern TD Minister for Justice and Law Reform	Alex Attwood MLA Minister for Social Development
Pat Carey TD Minister for Community Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs	Robin Newton MLA OFMDFM Junior Minister
Barry Andrews TD Minister of State Department of Health and Children	