



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2016/22/2205
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	9 May 1985
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	1 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Response by Taoiseach to query on MacBride Principles  
New York date - 9/5/85

Jack Thornton, Irish Echo

What does the Irish Government want Irish-Americans to do about the MacBride Principles?

Taoiseach:

The thinking behind the Principles is something that I would have no difficulty in supporting. The placing of legitimate pressure on firms which discriminate in employment to end discrimination is obviously desirable and action has been taken by the New York City Comptroller dealing with this very point which may, I think, have beneficial effects in regard to it.

We are concerned, however, with a different point, and that is the suggestion that there should be disinvestment in Northern Ireland. Because the problem of unemployment in Northern Ireland is so enormous, with 21% unemployed, we would not want action that would withdraw investment and lead to disemployment. We wouldn't be in favour of disinvestment but we are very much in favour of and have ourselves taken up with the British Government on many occasions the question of ensuring the end of discrimination.

It has to be said that in Northern Ireland, unlike South Africa, the legal structure is there opposing discrimination but we don't feel that those laws have been adequately enforced. I recognise that no amount of laws will end it completely or quickly because there are risks for Catholics taking employment in Protestant areas. There are laws but we don't think that there are enough resources put into enforcing them. Some pressure along the lines of the MacBride Principles, to ensure that American firms live up to the standard they should be living up to, will certainly help. I have no criticism of that at all.

In Northern Ireland itself the Fair Employment Agency takes the view that, on the whole, American firms have a pretty good record.