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FAX COVER SHEET

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I think you will be interested in the attached Note which sets out the position of the Irish Government with regard to job discrimination in Northern Ireland and actions which might be undertaken to remedy the present unsatisfactory situation. The Irish Government shares the goal of those who wish to see an end to discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland and will continue to work to eliminate it. It believes that that goal can best be achieved through the framework of the Anglo/Irish Agreement.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Flavin
Consul General.

JF/mc
Encl.

JOB DISCRIMINATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

As is well known the minority (Nationalist) community in Northern Ireland has been discriminated against over the years in various cases and has borne and continues to bear a greater share of unemployment than the majority (Unionist) community does. The chronically high rates of unemployment in minority areas have been a significant factor in nationalist alienation from the institutions of government in Northern Ireland. The Irish Government has consistently drawn attention to and has worked to end discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland and will continue to do so.

There are, however, certain factors and circumstances unique to Northern Ireland, which militate against an easy resolution of the unsatisfactory job situation currently obtaining there.

- (i) The gravity of the job situation is dramatically illustrated when one refers to the decline which has taken place in the numbers engaged in manufacturing employment in Northern Ireland from 170,000 in 1974 to 100,000 now, 15,000 of whom are directly dependent on public subsidy.
- (ii) At least some enterprises located in exclusively Unionist or Nationalist areas are likely to

continue to attract workers from those communities only, for the foreseeable future.

- (iii) In addition, for so long as prospects for expanding existing employment are not encouraging, efforts to enforce affirmative action to benefit the minority at the expense of the majority would exacerbate bitterness between the communities rather than promote reconciliation, which is the aim of the Irish Government. ?

It is against this background, as well as because of the desire to create new employment opportunities through additional investment, that the Irish Government is looking to the implementation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement as the best means of, among other things, resolving the present unsatisfactory jobs situation. The Social Democratic and Labour Party of John Hume, which secured 65% of the Nationalist vote in the most recent Northern Ireland election, fully supports the Irish Government's position on the Agreement. The Agreement, which was signed by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Dr. Garret FitzGerald and the British Prime Minister on 15 November 1985, set up an Intergovernmental Conference which, among other matters, concerns itself with the avoidance of economic and social discrimination in Northern Ireland. Moreover, the Conference provides a framework within which the Irish Government may

put forward views and proposals on the role and composition of such bodies as the Fair Employment Agency and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It is our view that the scrupulous application of the existing fair employment legislation, and its review in the future, combined with the Irish Government's input into the Conference will have a beneficial effect in ensuring equality of treatment for both sections of the community which is one of the principal objectives of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

As to the specific economic needs of Northern Ireland, it is evident that increased employment on a non-discriminatory basis through increased investment is urgently required in the area. For this reason, among others, we believe that, while the philosophy underlying the MacBride Principles presents no difficulties for us, any action which, in the serious economic situation of Northern Ireland, might lead to disinvestment and to the discouragement of U.S. firms investing in Northern Ireland should be avoided. Were the investment climate there to be adversely affected at this time the purposes of the Anglo-Irish Agreement would be seriously undermined.

Under the Agreement measures are in train to create an international fund to which the U.S. and other governments would contribute to promote the economic and social development of those areas of both parts of Ireland which

have suffered most seriously from the consequences of instability there in recent years. The U.S. House of Representatives has already unanimously approved a proposal to provide \$250 million in aid to the fund. The Irish Government will ensure that disbursements from the fund will be applied on a non-discriminatory basis, with full respect for equality of opportunity and will address the needs of both communities in Northern Ireland.

Consulate General of Ireland
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