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MINISTER'S OFFICE**

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FROM: **PS/THE RT HON ADAM INGRAM JP MP (DFP)**

DATE: *15/10/99.*

RE: *MOC meeting 18/10*

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MESSAGE:

Copy of minustees speaking notes for Mon.

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SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER'S PRESENTATION ON THE NI MILLENNIUM OPERATION REGIME (MOR)

In presenting the paper the Minister may wish to highlight the following:

- the very different government arrangements in Northern Ireland and the pivotal role which central, rather than local, government departments play in the delivery of a wide range of services to the public.
- the NI Infrastructure is largely independent of that in GB (although major exceptions to this are the supply of oil and natural gas. These industries have plans to deal with interruptions to supply either before or after it comes onshore, although as far as gas is concerned the major customer at the moment is the Ballylumford power station which is dual fired).
- the NI MOR is an over-arching MOR. **All NI Departments have their own MOR** to cover those areas for which it has policy or regulatory responsibility. Departments who will test their MORs during Exercise Herald on 26 October are as follows;- Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Economic Development, Department of Agriculture for NI, Department of the Environment for NI, Northern Ireland Office and the Department of Education for NI. The MOR should not distract from the usual arrangements which departments have in place to deal with emergencies.
- in the event of a major disaster the NI Crisis Management Group could be convened to enable resources to be shared and used to the best possible effect. This is an ad hoc arrangement under the chairmanship of the Head of the NICS, although it could operate at Ministerial level, if necessary. The decision on whether or not a major crisis has developed would be for the officer in charge of the NIIMC to decide in consultation with the Duty Minister. It should be stressed that this group would only be called in a major disaster situation.

- the Northern Ireland Information Management Centre (NIIMC) will operate over the Millennium date change period in line with the Cabinet Office's arrangements for the operation of the Central Information Management Centre.
- the main function of the NIIMC will be to monitor activities throughout Northern Ireland using well tried and tested contacts with NI Departments/Departmental Operations rooms and others such as BTNI and HM Coastguard.
- the NIIMC will provide information to, and gather information from, the Central Information Management Centre in London and will provide regular briefings for the Duty Minister and Departments.
- the Emergency Planning Unit has already established links with its emergency planning contacts in the ROI. Firm communication links will be established with these contacts when the ROI's arrangements for monitoring events over the Millennium have been finalised.
- the Cabinet Office has organised an exercise ("Exercise Herald") on 26 October to test communication flows and the ability of departments to analyse and disseminate information. It will also be an opportunity to test MORs and the working of the NIIMC. Northern Ireland will be playing a full part in this exercise.