

North South Ministerial Council  
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuaidh Theas  
An Chomhrúnaíocht

# **NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

## **TWELFTH PLENARY MEETING**

### **FARMLEIGH HOUSE, DUBLIN**

**10 JUNE 2011**

## **JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The twelfth Plenary meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was held at Farmleigh House, Dublin on 10 June 2011.
2. The Irish Government was led by the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny 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. The meeting provided the new Irish Government and new Northern Ireland Executive with the opportunity to meet for the first time and exchange views on a range of issues of mutual interest and concern. In their opening discussion Ministers discussed a variety of common challenges and they shared views on the economy, fiscal issues, the banks and NAMA. With constraints on budgets in both jurisdictions the advantages of practical co-operation and the need to identify potential cost savings through working together were recognised. . Ongoing discussions on this between Finance Ministers will continue and they will report to the next Plenary Meeting in November 2011.

4. Ministers welcomed increasing collaboration in the field of innovation within the European Union and noted that a Conference on Innovation aimed at increasing collaboration in the European Framework Programmes will be held in Belfast on 30 June 2011, with attendance by Ministers from both jurisdictions, and noted that such collaboration can lead to tangible mutual benefits.
5. The Council welcomed the confirmation of support in both jurisdictions for the development of a satellite radiotherapy service at Altnagelvin.

### **JOINT SECRETARIES' PROGRESS REPORT**

6. Ministers noted the Progress Report on the NSMC meetings held since May 2007.
7. Ministers also noted the mutually beneficial co-operation that is being taken forward by the North South Implementation Bodies, Tourism Ireland and in the other NSMC areas for co-operation including that:
  - During 2010, over 150 companies initiated InterTradelreland Trade or Innovation projects of which 22 companies are first-time exporters and 12 companies are first-time innovators. InterTradelreland's average Return on Investment across its portfolio of Trade and Innovation Programmes was on target for 2010 at 8:1 and through InterTradelreland's activities, 94 new jobs had been reported in 2010 by companies participating in the programmes.
  - Waterways Ireland will host a meeting in Enniskillen from 13-16 September 2011 for its 17 partners from 13 countries in an INTERREGIVc project entitled 'Waterways Forward'.
  - Tourism Ireland's aim in 2011 is to return to growth in overseas visitors to the island from all markets with particular focus on the GB market which remains the most important overseas tourist market for the island of Ireland.
  - Cooperation in the implementation of Rural Development programmes and EU programmes has been a high priority. There has been increasing success in supporting access to EU funding for cross border and cross community rural development projects such as the £1.3m /€1.5m INTERREG IVA project between Newry and Mourne District Council and Monaghan County Council and Monaghan County Enterprise Board to develop tourism and enterprise infrastructure across the Monaghan and South Armagh region.
  - An all island Freight Forum has been established. The work of the Forum is industry led and issue based, and is being taken forward by working groups focusing on competitiveness and sustainability, safe,

compliant and eco-efficient road freight transport, rail freight and other alternatives, international connectivity, and data and network management.

- An additional stop on the Enterprise Train service at Lisburn and a new Newry to Dublin early morning direct service has been introduced. The two railway companies are planning a number of measures, to be taken forward over the coming eighteen months, which align with suggestions made in the Enterprise Rail Seminar report.
8. Ministers noted that the Boards of the North South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland are due for renewal in December 2011 and that nominations for appointment will be brought forward for approval at the NSMC Plenary meeting in November 2011.

#### **PROGRESS ON A5 and A8 PROJECTS**

9. Ministers noted the progress to date on the A5 (North West Gateway to Aughnacloy) and A8 (Belfast to Larne) projects and agreed that payment of £11m will be made by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to the N.I. Consolidated Fund. The Council welcomed the continued commitment by the Irish Government to the funding of these projects, and agreed to consider a further progress report at the next NSMC Plenary meeting.

#### **ST. ANDREWS AGREEMENT REVIEW**

10. Ministers noted proposals relating to Terms of Reference 1 and prepared by the St Andrews Agreement Review Group arising from consultation on recommendations in a report prepared by experts/advisers to the Review Group. They agreed that these will be forwarded, along with a copy of the report, for consideration by Ministers in the new Executive and Irish Government with responsibilities for North South Bodies and Finance Ministers and that, taking account of these considerations, the NSMC Joint Secretariat will make recommendations to finalise this element of the Review at the NSMC Plenary meeting in November 2011. They further agreed that Terms of Reference 2 and 3 of the St Andrews Review will be discussed also at that meeting.

## **NORTH SOUTH CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

11. Ministers noted the background and recent developments on the North South Consultative Forum and agreed to finalise deliberations on this issue at its plenary meeting in November 2011.

## **NORTH SOUTH PARLIAMENTARY FORUM**

12. Ministers noted that following a North South Parliamentary Forum conference held in Newcastle on 7/8 October 2010, the Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann and the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly asked the Working Groups established in each institution to take forward discussions on the potential of the North South Parliamentary Forum. They also asked the Working Groups to discuss a further conference, an inaugural meeting, and other ideas suggested at the conference and to work jointly, taking into account the valuable contribution which the conference has made to a better understanding of key issues of interest and concern to members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas. Ministers further noted the intention of the Ceann Comhairle and the Speaker to hold a joint meeting of the Working Groups in Dublin on 23 June 2011.

## **CROSS BORDER MOBILITY ISSUES**

13. Ministers noted that the NSMC Joint Secretariat has taken forward further work on a range of cross-border mobility issues and that a bid for further funding will be made to INTERREG IVA for the Border People website. This bid which has support in principle from the Social Security Agency, the Department of Social Protection and the NSMC Joint Secretariat will include a bid for funding for a network of advisors, from within existing organisations, to deal with complex cross-border welfare and taxation issues.

## **FUTURE NSMC MEETINGS**

14. Ministers approved a schedule of NSMC meetings proposed by the Joint Secretariat, noting that the NSMC Joint Secretariat, in consultation with relevant Departments, will make arrangements for specific dates for each of these meetings. They noted that future NSMC Plenary meetings will be held on the second week of June and the third week in November.

**Joint Secretariat  
10 June 2011**

## ANNEX A

### MEETING OF THE NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL FARMLEIGH, DUBLIN – 10 JUNE 2011

<b>Irish Government</b>	<b>Northern Ireland Executive</b>
Enda Kenny TD Taoiseach	The Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA First Minister
Michael Noonan TD Minister for Finance	Martin McGuinness MP MLA deputy First Minister
Ruairí Quinn TD Minister for Education and Skills	Alex Attwood MLA Minister of the Environment
Brendan Howlin TD Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform	Stephen Farry MLA Minister for Employment and Learning
Richard Bruton TD Minister for Jobs Enterprise and Innovation	Danny Kennedy MLA Minister for Regional Development
Joan Burton TD Minister for Social Protection	Nelson McCausland MLA Minister for Social Development
Jimmy Deenihan TD Minister for Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht	Carál Ní Chuilín MLA Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Pat Rabbitte TD Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	John O'Dowd MLA Minister for Education
Phil Hogan TD Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government	Michelle O'Neill MLA Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Simon Coveney TD Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food	Sammy Wilson MP MLA Minister for Finance and Personnel
Frances Fitzgerald TD Minister for Children and Youth Affairs	Martina Anderson MLA Junior Minister OFMDFM
James Reilly TD Minister for Health	Jonathan Bell MLA Junior Minister OFMDFM
Leo Varadkar Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport	