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Statement issued by Gerry Adams on 30 March, 1994

Sinn Féin welcomes tonight's development. It represents an important initiative and has created the opportunity to break the stalemate in the peace process. This stalemate was created and is sustained by the British government's repeated refusal to provide clarification to Sinn Féin about the Downing Street Declaration and the processes envisaged in it.

Such clarification has been provided to all the other parties. It should now be provided to Sinn Féin as a matter of urgency. Direct dialogue is the obvious and most effective method of doing this. I call upon John Major to authorise direct and immediate talks between our party and his government representatives so that the peace process can be moved forward.

Just as importantly, direct dialogue would also indicate a genuine interest on the part of the British government, in developing a real peace process through the essential recognition of Sinn Féin's rights as a political party, the validity of our mandate and the democratic integrity of our electorate.

Sinn Féin has no great concern to be engaged in bilateral discussions on constitutional matters with the London government. I have publicly outlined my position in this regard on a number of occasions. This is properly the business of future talks involving the two governments and representatives of all the Irish people, including Sinn Féin.

This, however, is not the point of our reasonable calls for clarification. Clarification clearly is not negotiation. Clarification is required so that Sinn Féin and everyone else can properly and fully explore how the peace process can be moved forward at this time and specifically, how the Downing Street Declaration fits into this.

I understand that Mr. Major faces many difficulties. Tonight's announcement clearly eases some of these. It should be built upon. The search for peace requires imagination and determination.