



# Northern Ireland Office

## Press Notice

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### MINISTER ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF THE LAUNCH OF POLITICAL TALKS

"Formal political talks will begin on Tuesday, 30 April", Dr Brian Mawhinney MP, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, announced today.

He said: "The meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental conference arranged for 26 April will be the last to take place before political talks begin. These will start, as the Secretary of State announced on 26 March, with bilateral meetings with each of the main constitutional political parties. Plenary sessions are expected to begin as soon as possible thereafter and will be held in a conference room in Parliament Buildings at Stormont."

Dr Mawhinney added: "To allow an opportunity for the talks to take place the British and Irish Governments agreed that no further meetings of the Intergovernmental Conference would be held for a specified period. It is understood between the two Governments and the main Northern Ireland political parties that this period should be not less than 10 weeks. It is envisaged that, after 26 April, no further meetings of the conference will take place until a date yet to be decided."

#### Note for Editors

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Peter Brooke MP, announced to Parliament on 26 March that a basis for political talks involving the British Government, the main Northern Ireland political parties and the Irish Government now existed. He also announced that substantive talks would begin as soon as possible under his chairmanship and that these would begin with a series of bilateral meetings before plenary sessions began. The two Governments have agreed not to hold a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference for a specified period to allow an opportunity for talks to take place.