



BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
TIONÓL PARLAIMINTEACH NA BREATAINE AGUS NA HÉIREANN

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FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Introduction

1. This is the fourteenth annual report of the Assembly since it was decided at the Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. This Report summarises the work of the Assembly during 2009.

Membership of the Assembly

2. Among other changes to the membership of the Assembly, the spring saw the return of the British Co-Chair, the Rt Hon Peter Hain, MP, to the UK Cabinet as Secretary of State for Wales and the return of his successor in that post, the Rt Hon Paul Murphy, to the position of Co-Chair of the Assembly.

Political developments

General Overview

3. The period since the restoration of devolved power to the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly in 2007 has seen progress in the consolidation of the inclusive, power-sharing Institutions. In 2009, continuing work on the devolution of policing and justice, the publication of the Eames Bradley report on Dealing with the Past, the political responses to the dissident attacks, loyalist decommissioning and the European elections dominated the Northern Ireland political scene.

4. Towards the end of 2009, divisions arose between the DUP and Sinn Féin on finalising the arrangements for the devolution of policing and justice. An intensive series of engagements between the Irish and British Governments and the Northern Ireland parties led to the convening of all party talks at Hillsborough on 25 January 2010. Agreement on devolution and several other outstanding issues was reached on 5 February.

5. During 2009 work within the North South Ministerial Council intensified. Three NSMC Plenary Meetings and 27 Ministerial meetings in sectoral format took place. The British-Irish Council met twice in 2009, in Cardiff in February and in Jersey in November.

Hillsborough Agreement, 5 February 2010

6. In the latter half of 2009, the two Governments was involved in intensive efforts to assist and encourage the Northern Ireland parties to complete the devolution of policing and justice and to address other outstanding aspects of the St. Andrews Agreement that still require implementation. Towards the end of January, it became clear that the

Northern Ireland parties themselves were unable to agree on how to move ahead. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister met in London on 25 January and decided to travel directly to Hillsborough where they convened all party talks.

7. Following ten days of intensive negotiations, the DUP and Sinn Féin finalised a comprehensive agreement on 5 February which will ensure that policing and justice powers will be devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly by 12 April of this year. The agreement also includes provisions to identify a Justice Minister, who will be a full member of the Executive, and to expand the Programme for Government to take account of the work of the new Department of Justice. The agreement reached will complete the process of devolution as envisaged in the Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements.

8. The parties also agreed to develop an improved framework to regulate and adjudicate on public assemblies and parades. A working group, set up by the First and deputy First Ministers, will bring forward agreed outcomes on parading issues. These will feed into the preparation of draft legislation on parading for consideration in the Assembly. Following a period of public consultation on a proposed Bill, it is intended that legislation will be in place by the end of 2010. The Parades Commission will continue to operate until new arrangements are agreed and in place.

9. During the talks, agreement was also reached on improving the functioning of the Executive and on clearing outstanding Executive business. The First and deputy First Minister are also tasked with looking at all areas from the St. Andrews Agreement which are yet to be implemented. This includes the protection and promotion of the Irish language and implementing the other outstanding North/South commitments from St. Andrews.

Dissident Attacks

10. On 8 January, a bomb exploded beneath the car of Constable Peadar Heffron as he travelled to work in Belfast. Constable Heffron, who is an Irish language speaker and the captain of the PSNI GAA team, sustained life threatening injuries in the attack, although his condition subsequently stabilised. This followed a series of attempted attacks on PSNI officers throughout the previous year. Dissident republicans have been blamed for the attacks. In 2009, dissident republicans also claimed responsibility for the murder of two British soldiers, Patrick Azimkar and Mark Quinsey, at Massareene Barracks in Antrim, as well as the murder of Constable Stephen Carroll in Craigavon. The Gardai and the PSNI continue to cooperate very closely to combat dissident activity on both sides of the border.

SDLP Leadership

11. In September 2009 Mark Durkan announced that he would step down as leader of the SDLP. At the Annual SDLP Conference between 5-7 February, Margaret Ritchie was elected as the new party leader.

Decommissioning

12. In October 2009, the INLA announced an end to its armed campaign in favour of an ‘exclusively peaceful political struggle’. The group has been on official ceasefire since 1998. On 8 February 2010, the INLA officially announced that they had decommissioned their weapons. The act of decommissioning was confirmed by the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD). The IICD also confirmed that the South East Antrim UDA and the Official IRA had completed decommissioning.

13. On 27 June 2009, a spokesman for the UVF read a statement which confirmed that the UVF and the Red Hand Commando had “*completed the process of rendering ordnance totally, and irreversibly, beyond use.*” On the same day, the UDA announced that that organisation had begun its “disarmament process”. An IICD report to the two Governments was published on 4 September, confirming that the UVF and Red Hand Commando had completed decommissioning their weapons. In early January 2010, the UDA also confirmed that they had completed decommissioning. The IICD has now reached the end of its mandate.

European Elections Results

14. Polling for Northern Ireland’s 3 European Parliament seats took place on 4 June 2009. Sinn Féin’s Bairbre de Brún was elected on the first count, with 26% of the first preference vote. After the third count, the second seat went to Jim Nicholson (UUP) with 17.1% first preference votes combined with a large proportion of transfers from the TUV candidate. The DUP’s Diane Dodds - who had 18.2% of first preference votes - took the third seat without reaching the quota. Of the unsuccessful candidates, Alban Maginness of the SDLP took 16.2% of the first preference vote while Jim Allister of the Traditional Unionist Voice took 13.7%. Ian Parsley of the Alliance Party polled 5.5 % and Stephen Agnew of the Green Party 3.3%.

Dealing with the Past

15. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland established the *Consultative Group on the Past* (chaired by Robin Eames and Denis Bradley), to consult widely and make recommendations which would help deal with the legacy of the past. The group published their final report on 28 January 2009. In June 2009, Secretary of State Woodward launched a formal consultation process on the Eames Bradley report, which concluded on 2 October. The British Government response is expected in the coming months.

16. Lord Saville has now indicated that his findings into the events of Bloody Sunday in Derry should be presented to the British government in the week beginning 22 March. The relatives of the Bloody Sunday victims have expressed disappointment at the continued delay in publication.

The Bill of Rights

17. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission presented its completed advice on the Bill of Rights to the Secretary of State on 10 December 2008. The NIHRC was mandated by the Good Friday Agreement to provide advice to the British Government on the scope for defining, in Westminster legislation, rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Office published its public consultation document on a Bill of Rights on 30 November 2009. The Consultation period will end on 1 March 2010.

North / South Co-operation and the North South Ministerial Council

18. The 9th Plenary meeting of the NSMC took place in Limavady on 14th December 2009. Discussions covered the current economic crisis, in particular measures to stimulate growth and employment. 27 Sectoral meetings of the NSMC took place in 2009. Each of these Ministerial meetings deals with North/South cooperation in sectoral areas like transport, education and environment, while Ministers also oversee the work of North/South Bodies like InterTrade Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Waterways Ireland.

19. The Irish Government continues to give strong priority to all aspects of North/South Co-operation, with key objectives including joint initiatives to strengthen the all-island economy, a shared approach to infrastructure and spatial planning (including for the North-West), and improved co-operation on cross-border public services such as health and education. The Government is, in addition, contributing significant funding to cross-border research and innovation.

20. Progress has also been made towards the establishment of the North South Parliamentary Forum, which is mandated under the Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements. Two working groups have been formed to develop proposals for such a body, one in the Assembly to be chaired by the Speaker, and one in the Oireachtas to be chaired by the Ceann Comhairle, and there are ongoing contacts between the two groups to take forward this commitment.

Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

21. The most recent meeting of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, which involved a presentation from the Minister for Education and Science, Batt O’Keeffe T.D., and his Northern counterpart, Caitriona Ruane MLA, took place in Leinster House on 4 February 2010. The Committee is tasked with examining issues arising from Ireland’s role as a signatory to the Good Friday Agreement, ongoing developments in its implementation, any proposals relating to its implementation and related matters referred to it by Dáil Éireann. MPs from Northern Ireland are invited to attend meetings of the Committee. The Committee met regularly throughout 2009.

Visit of US Secretary of State

22. US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton visited Dublin and Belfast on 11 and 12 October 2009. In Dublin Secretary Clinton met the President, the Taoiseach, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In Belfast, Secretary Clinton met with the First and deputy First Ministers and delivered an address to the Assembly. She also officially re-opened City Hall and spoke at a business focussed event at Queen's University. In her speech to the Assembly, Secretary Clinton urged the parties to move forward with the devolution process. She reminded the Assembly of its duty to lead Northern Ireland responsibly. She drew particular attention to the link between peaceful stability and economic development and reiterated the commitment of the US administration to Northern Ireland.

23. Following the agreement at Hillsborough Castle on 5 February, Secretary of State Clinton announced that she and the US Economic Envoy Declan Kelly would organise an investment conference for Northern Ireland.

British-Irish Relations and British-Irish Council

24. The 13th Summit of the *British-Irish Council* was held on the 13th November 2009 in Jersey. The main items for discussion were the economic situation, swine flu and languages issues.

25. The 12th Summit of the British-Irish Council was hosted by Mr. Rhodri Morgan AM, First Minister for Wales, in Cardiff on 20 February 2009. The main topics for discussion included the global economic crisis, social inclusion and an update on the Strategic Review.

Northern Ireland Assembly & Executive

Current Ministerial Assignments: Northern Ireland Executive

26. The current disposition of ministerial posts in the Northern Ireland Executive is as follows:

Department	Minister
Finance and Personnel	Sammy Wilson, DUP
Education	Caitriona Ruane, SF
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Arlene Foster, DUP
Health, Social Services & Public Safety	Michael McGimpsey, UUP
Social Development	Margaret Ritchie, SDLP
Regional Development	Conor Murphy, SF
Environment	Edwin Poots, DUP
Agriculture and Rural Development	Michelle Gildernew, SF
Culture, Arts and Leisure	Nelson McCausland, DUP

The work of the Assembly*Thirty-Eighth Plenary*

27. The Thirty-Eighth Plenary session was held at the Solis Lough Castle Hotel, County Donegal on 30th and 31st March 2009.

28. The plenary began with a motion proposed by Peter Hain MP, Co-Chair, condemning the murders of Sappers Azimkar and Quinsey and of Constable Carroll. The motion was agreed to unanimously without debate.

29. This was followed by an address by Paul Murphy MP, Secretary of State for Wales and Minister for the British-Irish Council. He began by describing the origins and work of the Council. He explained that it had no executive powers, which continue to rest with the individual governments. It has eleven different “work streams” each of which is headed by one of the devolved or Sovereign Governments. But, as yet, it had no permanent secretariat, the work being done part-time by staff with other responsibilities. A permanent secretariat had been agreed in principle but the next decision would be where it should be based.

30. Mr Murphy then spoke about the relationship between the Assembly and BIC. He agreed that this relationship needed strengthening and suggested that the Assembly should always be addressed by a minister with responsibility for BIC whether from London, Dublin or one of the other administrations. He believed that there was a considerable argument in favour of the Assembly’s Committee reports being forwarded to the BIC so that there would be some harmony in what BIC and the Assembly were doing. But he accepted that was not the only way in which the Assembly’s views should be communicated. He also suggested that the Co-Chairs might be granted observer status at the BIC. Finally he suggested that a group of officials from the Assembly and BIC should be asked to draw up a protocol on the working relationship of the two for approval by BIC.

31. Mr Murphy was followed by Ms Mary Coughlan TD, Tanaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. She expressed the outrage of the Irish government at the recent murders in Northern Ireland and promised that nothing would be allowed to drag the Province back to the dark days of the 1970s and 1980s. As a Deputy from Donegal she spoke of the close economic links between her county and Derry which had not been possible during the troubles. Co-operation across the border was essential for economic growth on both sides. She added that interaction between the British-Irish Council and the Assembly was vitally important and said that she would be happy to work with an Assembly Committee in the areas covered by her own portfolio.

32. Paul Murphy MP and Mary Coughlan TD replied to many questions from the floor on the work of the British-Irish Council and both promised that BIC would be interested to receive Assembly Committee reports.

33. The Assembly then took note of the Thirteenth Annual Report on its work over the previous twelve months. Lord Dubs and Baroness O’Cathain took the opportunity to stress the importance of proper Government responses to Committee reports, otherwise the work done would be largely wasted.

34. The afternoon session was largely devoted to the Consultative Group on the Past. The Assembly had first heard from the two Co-Chairmen of the Consultative Group on the Past, Lord Eames and Denis Bradley, when it had met in Newcastle, but on that occasion the session had been held in private. Now that the Report had been published, the Assembly was able to consider the issues in public and question the two Co-Chairmen. Lord Eames began by sketching out the origins of the Consultative Group and how it had gone about its work. He explained that they had had many calls for justice and truth and had decided that these should be met by the creation of a Legacy Commission to bring about a situation where those who had lost loved ones would learn what had happened to them and those responsible could be prosecuted. The Commission would work with those working for reconciliation within communities. Denis Bradley expressed concern at what he termed the “Ulsterisation” of the problems of Northern Ireland with ex-RUC and ex-UDR people sensing that they were being blamed for mistakes made by political masters elsewhere. The other problem he alluded to was the work being shouldered by the Historic Enquiries Team which, unless the Group’s report is implemented, could last for fifteen years during which time matters would continue to fester and be divisive. The cost of implementing their report would be £300 million but the cost of not doing so could be £1 billion.. Finally he hoped that the proposal for a “victim recognition payment”, although controversial, would not be rejected altogether.

35. The joint chairmen then replied to a wide range of issues raised by Assembly members. All members agreed that the Consultative Group had been handed an extraordinarily difficult task but there were many different views on what the Group had recommended; the victim recognition payment proposal was strongly opposed by Unionist members but it was pointed out that such payments had been made in the Republic of Ireland and that the agreement between Libya and the United States for compensation for those who had suffered as a result of Libyan sponsored terrorism supported the idea of victims receiving some payments. Lord Eames and Denis Bradley said that they were anxious that their report should be seen as a whole and that the focus should not be on one or two of its recommendations---what the people of Northern Ireland wanted above all was the “truth”.

36. At the conclusion of the debate, the Assembly agreed to appoint an *ad hoc* Committee to consider how the recommendations made in the report of the Consultative Group might be implemented.

37. The Assembly then briefly turned its attention to its “Evolving Role” based on a paper which was circulated at the Newcastle plenary in October 2008 by the Irish delegation. Alasdair Morgan MSP spoke of the desirability of the Assembly having its own permanent secretariat and that the Committees should be able to shadow the work of the British-Irish Council. Andrew Mackinlay MP expressed his thanks to the clerks for their help in getting a last minute motion on the Omagh bombing on to the Order Paper but suggested that in future any motion proposed by a Member of the Assembly should be circulated by the various secretariats in order to see whether there would be sufficient signatures for it to be debated. At the end of a short discussion, the Assembly resolved:-

That the document entitled ‘The Evolving Role of the Assembly’, prepared by the Irish delegation, comprising the amended article put forward, be agreed’.

38. At the Tuesday morning session, Jim O’Keeffe TD presented the report of Committee A on Cross-Border Policing. He told the Assembly about the difficulties which existed at an operational level where the police in one jurisdiction may not pursue suspects into the other jurisdiction and how this leads to offenders evading arrest. He also referred to the difficulties which arise with regard to the admissibility of evidence obtained in one jurisdiction being used in the other. While policing and justice remain non-devolved, the process involves the transmission of evidence and exhibits via London. The Committee suggested that the list of offences which could be charged in either jurisdiction, whether or not the offence had been committed in that jurisdiction, should be extended beyond those concerned with terrorism. Another issue which the Committee had taken evidence on was “secondments” which had been recommended in the Patten Report. The Committee had heard that these were not being taken up and recommended some incentives. Generally, the Committee had been pleased with co-operation between the two forces. At the conclusion of the presentation the Assembly approved the following Resolution:-

That The Assembly takes note of the report of Committee A on cross-border policing, and of the conclusions and recommendations of the report, which should be forwarded to both Governments, the devolved Administrations and the British-Irish Council for their comments.

39. The Assembly next considered an interim report from Committee B on a Common Defence and Foreign Policy. Robert Walter MP, Chairman, said that the Committee had set out to address misconceptions about the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). He explained that ESDP is about peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions emanating from United Nations’ requests. The Lisbon Treaty changed nothing. He referred to the three roles ESDP were currently undertaking in Chad and the Central African Republic (where the commander was an Irish general) and two others (commanded by senior British officers), in Bosnia and against piracy of the coast of Somalia. Mr Walters ended by saying that Committee B hoped to be able to bring a final report to the Swansea plenary. Mr Noel Treacy TD added a few words in support and Baroness O’Cathain expressed concern that the House of Lords seemed to share the

misconceptions about the role of the ESDP and asked that the report should be sent to the relevant committee of the House.

40. The Assembly then turned its attention to the responses of the two Governments to resolutions passed at the Newcastle Plenary. The first concerned the Omagh bombing. Andrew Mackinlay MP moved:-

That the Assembly takes note of the response of the Irish Government and the United Kingdom Government to the resolution adopted at the Thirty-Seventh Plenary Conference on Intelligence Relating to the Omagh Bombing.

41. Mr Mackinlay said that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had written to the Co-Chairs on 4th March, a letter which he had seen. While the situation remained frustrating for the Omagh families, he doubted whether the matter could be taken any further at that time.

42. The Assembly took note of the responses to the following Committee reports:-

ID Cards and the Common Travel Area (Committee A)

Integration of Recently Arrived Migrants into Northern Ireland, Ireland and Wales
(Committee D)

Renewable Energy except Nuclear (Committee C).

43. The only one of these reports which was debated at any length was that on ID Cards and the Common Travel Area. Michael Mates MP introduced the motion to take note by recounting the history of Committee A's enquiry which had begun when the British Government had said it would be introducing ID cards. These would have implications for Irish citizens wishing to travel in the Common Travel Area. The British Government had now replied to the Co-Chairs that they would use the opportunity of legislation before Parliament to define their new powers in the CTA. Committee A would therefore widen its enquiry to consider the implications which these new powers might have on immigration. Andrew Mackinlay MP, Jim O'Keefe TD, Robert Walter MP and Stephen Rodan SHK all raised concerns about what had been said in the British Government's letter. It seemed that the CTA was not working under the present arrangements. The Schengen agreement should be studied with a view to creating something similar for the CTA.

44. The final agenda item for the plenary was an address by representatives of the Democratic Unionist Party, Lord Browne of Belmont and Danny Kennedy MLA. Lord Browne spoke of the great progress which had been made in Northern Ireland, politically, economically and socially. But he drew attention to the recent murders of Constable Carroll and Sappers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar as a reminder of the darkest days. The Northern Ireland Executive had prioritized the economy from the outset of the re-established devolved Government. Danny Kennedy MLA spoke about the value of

parliamentary government, a tradition shared in all parts of the British Isles, as the alternative way to sectarian hatred and violence.. The full participation of Unionists in the BIPA was a testament to the changed nature of the body and to changing relationships in the islands.

45. In a question and answer session, the matter discussed earlier in the day about police co-operation across the border was raised by several members. Lord Browne and Danny Kennedy said they supported the devolution of policing and justice but only when they were certain that such a move would have the full confidence of the Loyalist community. The recent outbreak of violence showed that there were still elements of Republicanism which refused to accept the political settlement.

Thirty-Ninth Plenary

46. The Thirty-Ninth plenary session was held at the Marriott Hotel, Swansea on 20th and 21st October 2009.

47. The plenary began with an address by Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Wales and British Minister responsible for the British-Irish Council. Peter Hain informed the Assembly that both the British and Irish governments had raised the Assembly's concerns, as discussed in Donegal in April, with their colleagues on the BIC and had asked them to accede to the Assembly's request for closer co-operation. He also gave an account of the recent work of BIC and informed the Assembly that when the Council next meets in Jersey, discussions would be held on the global recession and the 'flu pandemic'. During questions to Mr Hain, the concerns raised in Donegal were reiterated and he promised to restate them to the Council. He also agreed to raise a number of specific matters with the BIC, among them the Common Travel Area, Penalty Points, better use of cross-border public services, greater cross-border police co-operation, the rationalisation of digital broadcasting and co-operation over alternative energy sources. He also promised that he and other ministerial colleagues would consider the suggestion made by Andrew Mackinlay that a minister from one or other sovereign jurisdiction should attend the Assembly throughout its sessions so that the BIC is better informed about its concerns.

48. The Co-Chairs welcomed the support of the two sovereign governments for a closer relationship between BIPA and the BIC and thanked the Secretary of State for Wales for his efforts to improve matters further.

50. The Assembly then turned its attention to Human Rights with invited speakers, Professor Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Dr Maurice Manning, President of the Irish Human Rights Commission. Professor Williams began by reminding members that both Commissions were part of the Good Friday Agreement. She described the work which her Commission undertook, in particular the responsibility handed to them to advise the Government on a proposed bill of rights for Northern Ireland. The Commission was required to consult

widely and their work was complicated by the fact that the European Convention on Human Rights had not then been incorporated into law. She went into much detail about the political differences which exist at Westminster about the future of the Human Rights Act and the complications which this gave rise to in her Commission's deliberations. In their report the Commission had addressed all the issues relevant to the present situation but despite their report having been delivered in December 2008, nothing had yet been done to implement it.

51. Dr Maurice Manning spoke about the work of the Irish Human Rights Commission. He urged the appointment of a Human Rights Joint Committee in the Dail as there is in the UK. He found it incongruous that his Commission should be answerable to a Government Department. He mentioned the possibility of a charter of rights and said that the law school at University College, Dublin, would be holding a conference to explore the different options.

52. Both speakers then answered questions from the floor.

53. Mark Durkan MP MLA addressed the plenary as Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party. He spoke about the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement. He said that while much that was positive had been achieved, the Assembly was not working as well as it should. He cited the example of the Executive ignoring the law requiring the Assembly to discuss and approve the Budget. Furthermore the Assembly was being used to rubber-stamp matters which should be fully discussed such as local government boundaries. It was presented with a deal done between Sinn Fein and the DUP. The matter of a victims' commissioner was similarly done in a deal between Sinn Fein and the DUP; instead of there being one commissioner, there were to be four and the deal was pushed through the Assembly under accelerated procedure with no scrutiny possible in Committee. Mark Durkan claimed that the changes to the local government boundaries were made for party political reasons rather than for the separate communities and that the result was no protection for decision making at council level. However he said that one of the positive sides of the Good Friday Agreement was that all parties in the Executive are fully engaged.

54. Mr Durkan then spoke about the devolution of policing and justice, a step which the SDLP wants to happen as soon as possible. The Assembly would not be worthy of the name of a legislature for as long as it cannot legislate for the criminal law. And while policing and justice remained un-devolved, dissidents could claim to be attacking "British police officers". He continued by saying that the SDLP had a problem with the form of devolution advocated by Sinn Fein and the DUP which removed the protection of proportional representation in the area of the appointment of the Minister of Justice. He would oppose these proposals if they affected any other party just as he opposed them because they affected the SDLP.

55. He was particularly critical of the apparent way in which policies were being pursued by the DUP and Sinn Fein without regard to the general interests of the population. The Executive stitched things up and prevented some issues from ever reaching the

Assembly, a tactic which Mr Durkan claimed made nonsense in the education system where policy had not been legislated but was at the whim of whichever party held the education portfolio. He called for a better way of doing things and suggested that a competent, coherent bill of rights was one way of bringing about improvement.

56. Mr Durkan then answered questions from Assembly members. Cecilia Keaveney TD and Seymour Crawford TD both supported his call for the devolution of policing, while Jim Wells MLA sounded a note of caution and said that Unionists would move at their own pace on this issue. Mark Durkan responded that the devolution of policing would bring increased certainty and that dealing with policing within a North/South Ministerial Council would enhance security and transparency. Hugh Henry MSP said that Mark Durkan had raised some very important issues about democracy which had relevance for all the devolved administrations and on which the Assembly and the British-Irish Council should reflect. In reply Mr Durkan said it was important that the institutions should be part of the process and not ignored as they were by the DUP and Sinn Fein. He was worried that the DUP would wreck the whole process by making demands on the British Government which it would find hard to resist and then the whole structure could collapse.

57. The main debate at the plenary was on the recession and the ways in which the different administrations within the islands were attempting to mitigate its effects. John Griffiths AM, Deputy Minister for Skills in the Welsh Assembly (and a former member of the British-Irish Assembly) spoke of the measures with which the Welsh Government was tackling the problem. He emphasised the priority which the Government was giving to young people and in particular in developing the skills base. He described the various schemes which existed and told the plenary about the Pro-Act scheme which provides a combination of training support and short-time working compensation. This had been positively received and the benefits had exceeded the Government's expectations. He then described another scheme which had been introduced to help those who had been made redundant, the ReAct programme. And finally Mr Griffiths explained that higher education and apprenticeship places had received additional funding to ensure that more people could be helped to develop their skills. Mr Griffiths, like a number of other delegates, took advantage of the translation facilities provided by the National Assembly for Wales to speak, in part, in Welsh.

58. Mr Griffiths then answered questions from the floor before Margaret Conlon TD opened the debate on the recession and moved the following motion:-

That the Assembly takes note that the current recession affects all its members' jurisdictions and urges them to learn from one another, and to work together to identify its causes, to mitigate its effects and to minimise the risk of a recurrence.

59. Ms Conlon spoke about the importance of education and training and the need to become more competitive. She added that the recession did not recognise any national border, all countries were affected. Jeff Ennis MP spoke of the failure of market forces and the need for government intervention to support communities blighted by

unemployment. He referred to the UK Government's Future jobs fund which he believed would be extremely successful in giving employment to those who had never had a job before. Mark Durkan MP MLA spoke of the huge potential of renewable energy policies in the creation of jobs. He also referred to the banking bail-out by both the Irish and UK governments and the subsequent failure of banks to invest in business and thus create jobs. Brian Adam MSP also spoke about the banks, asking whether perhaps there are too few banks since the current arrangements are almost certainly anti-competitive. He agreed with Jeff Ennis on the need for government intervention at local and regional levels. Michael German AM was another speaker who spoke about disaffected young people and the need to find them jobs. He added that the opportunity of a low pound should be taken to prepare for the export market when the recession ends. He was concerned about the role of extremist parties like the British National Party in attracting disaffected skilled workers who had expected to have jobs for life but who were now unemployed.

60. Deputy Alan Breckon said that Jersey had not been immune from the recession and that capital projects had been maintained. The construction industry had been helped by bringing forward property maintenance projects. Senator Leyden expressed the hope that infrastructure projects, such as new roads, should not be dropped at this time, although it would be easy to do so. Charlie O'Connor TD said that everyone present faced the problems whether they were from different parties or from different parts of the British Isles. He wanted to be a member of the Assembly precisely because he believed in representatives from all parts working together to solve problems like unemployment. Alex Atwood MLA suggested that public procurement should be used to ensure that the unemployed received work. He also suggested that greater cooperation on the provision of health services would save money which could be spent on improved health care. Joyce Watson AM brought up the particular problem of women who do not receive the same opportunities as men and are, as she put it, in an eternal state of recession. Because women are the home-makers, they are often the poorest in society and have a poverty stricken old age. She referred, as something positive, to a scheme in Carmarthenshire which encourages women to enter the construction industry. Alasdair Morgan MSP felt that there should be more regulation with regard to the banks. He expressed his worry that the banking crisis could return.

61. Dr Dai Lloyd AM wound up the debate by referring to all that had been said and emphasising the importance of learning from each other of different experiences and the ways in which the impact of the recession was being tackled.

70. The motion was adopted.

71. The Assembly then debated a motion in the following terms which was introduced by Hon Stephen Rodan SHK:-

“That the BIPA notes the UK Government policy on E-Borders; further notes the commercial and cultural advantages of the Common travel Area to the different jurisdictions within it; and is of the opinion that no legislative changes in the current

arrangement should be made without a full consultation by the UK Government of all jurisdictions within the Common Travel Area; and refers the matter of E-Borders policy of the UK and its impact on the Common Travel Area to Committee A for it to enquire into this matter; and to report to the Assembly.”

72. Mr Rodan drew attention to proposals by the United Kingdom’s Home Office to strengthen security at borders by introducing new curbs on travel within the Common Travel Area which would affect travel between the UK, the Irish Republic and the Crown Dependencies. Although the proposal had currently been dropped following opposition in both Houses of Parliament, Mr Rodan said it was likely that the proposal would be re-introduced in the 2009-2010 session of Parliament. He suggested that controls should be exercised at the borders of the Common Travel Area and he asked that Committee A should examine the proposal as a matter of urgency. He received strong support for the motion from Andrew Mackinlay MP who accused the British Government of arrogance in their dealings with the Crown Dependencies. Lord Cope said that Committee A had already looked at the problem. Robert Walter MP referred to problems yachtsmen might face under the provisions. A yachtsman would be required to give 24 hours notice of arrival at a port in Jersey only to find that the wind had changed and he would arrive in Guernsey instead and would, thereby, have committed a criminal offence. Cecilia Keaveney TD drew attention to inconsistencies in checks both at the airports and the ferries. Baroness Harris said that the case for the new legislation was not made because many immigration offenders were being detained already. Deputy Guille supported the arguments put forward by Stephen Rodan SHK and Mark Durkan MP MLA expressed his concern that the Home Office were determined to bring in these curbs but without a proven case for doing so.

73. Jim O’Keefe TD, Chairman of Committee A, assured the Assembly that the Committee had already begun to investigate the whole issue and had held meetings with UK Border Agency and the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service. He expressed the hope that a report would be ready in time for the next plenary in Cavan.

74. The motion was adopted.

75. Tuesday’s proceedings began with Business Reports from Committees. Jim O’Keefe TD reported that Committee A was looking at cross-Border policing and the secondment and lateral exchanges between the PSNI and the Gardai. They were also engaged, as he had reported the previous day, in looking at the common travel area and e-borders. Robert Walter MP, Chairman of Committee B, reported that the Committee was just concluding a report on European security and defence policy---this had been held up because of the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. The Committee was now examining the effect on EU migrant labour of the recession and also at the European Union’s initiative on regional economic spaces. The Committee had met the day before to look at its working practices and had agreed ways in which it could speed up reports by making individual members responsible for driving them on. Margaret Conlon TD, Chairman of Committee C, reported that the Committee had concluded its enquiry into apprenticeships and told the Assembly about the wide range of those consulted. The

Committee's conclusion was that apprenticeships needed to be supported as a valid and serious career option. Lord Dubs, Chairman of Committee D, reported that it would shortly begin an enquiry into getting the unemployed back to work.

76. The Assembly then turned its attention to those reports which were ready for approval. That on Apprenticeships from Committee C was agreed to formally but Committee D's report on Climate Change was fully debated with contributions from Lord Dubs, who introduced the report, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Alasdair Morgan MSP, Senator Dan Boyle, Cecilia Keaveney TD, Sean Neeson MLA, Paul Flynn MP and Johnny Brady TD who wound up the debate.

77. The Assembly received the Government Responses to the Reports of Committee A on Barriers to Trade and Cross-Border Co-operation between Police Forces. The Responses to the second report were briefly debated. Finally the Assembly took note of the Report of the Steering Committee on the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past.

78. The final item of business to which members eagerly looked forward to was an address by Gerry Adams MP MLA, President of Sinn Fein. Mr Adams spoke about the importance of the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrew's Agreement which put in place mechanisms for resolving the issue of the partition of Ireland in an all-Ireland context. He spoke of the constitutional issue between Ireland and Britain and of the Good Friday Agreement's recognition that it is for the people of Ireland to determine their own future---when a majority of the people in the North prefer a sovereign united Ireland, the British Government will legislate for this. He pointed out that Unionists are fewer than 2% of the population of Britain but within Ireland they would represent 20% of the population thus carrying much greater influence. He saw the future of Ireland as an integrated country where Unionists would have the same rights as everyone else but on the basis of co-operation and respect.

79. He believed that the economic and political dynamics in Ireland made Irish reunification a realistic goal within a reasonable period. The economy of the North was too small to exist in isolation and it was silly that that Ireland had two arts councils, two sports councils and three tourists' boards. The business community already recognised that the needs of Ireland could best be met by treating it as one island. He ended by saying that the work of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly shows the benefits which would result from the establishment of an All-Ireland Parliamentary Forum, something proposed in the Good Friday Agreement but not yet established.

80. In reply to Paul Flynn MP, who asked whether there was some way in which he could take the oath to enable him to sit in the Westminster Parliament, he said that Sinn Fein members are elected "not to go there". He added that he regretted that Sinn Fein members elected in the North had no institution which they could attend in the Republic. A commitment that they could attend the Dail had been given by the Taoisigh, Bertie Ahern, but never fulfilled. In answer to a question by Lord Dubs, Mr Adams said that he believed that the British Government had a responsibility to argue for a united Ireland, the matter could not just be left to the people of Ireland. He was not certain what help

Sinn Fein could be in helping other nationalist parties in Britain but he was encouraged by the increasing dual signage he had seen in Wales and wished that an Irish Language Act was likely in the near future. He said that when Peter Hain had been Secretary of State for Northern Ireland he had manfully resisted coming forward with such legislation.

81. Hugh Henry MSP asked whether the impact of the recession was attracting young people towards paramilitary activities. Gerry Adams firmly rejected the option of armed response but agreed that there were many young people who felt left behind and that in one Unionist constituency only 3% of young people had passed any O levels, meaning that there was a 97% failure rate. In answer to Lord Bew, he denied that he was anti-British but he agreed that it was a huge challenge to listen to Unionists but he felt it could be very rewarding for each side to learn from the other. In reply to Jeff Ennis MP who asked about the role of the voluntary sector in improving community cohesion, Mr Adams said he was a strong supporter of the voluntary sector and that investment in communities was good economics.

The Steering Committee

82. The most important change in membership was that Paul Murphy MP resumed the British Co-Chairmanship in place of Peter Hain MP who was recalled to the Cabinet in June 2009. Peter Hain had succeeded Paul Murphy in this post only seventeen months previously.

83. The Committee met on the occasion of the two plenary sessions and it also met in Dublin in November 2009. The Committee has continued its consideration of what role the Assembly should play in future, reflecting the wish of the Assembly that Northern Ireland should no longer be the main focus of its deliberations.

84. It delegated to the two Co-chairs the task of interviewing candidates for the post of Media Adviser in succession to Mike Burns who retired at the conclusion of the Solis Lough plenary in April 2009. Interviews were held in Dublin at the end of July 2009 when six applicants for the post were seen. The Co-Chairs were assisted in the interviews by Sir Michael Davies from Westminster and Mark Mulqueen, Head of Communications at the Dail. The interview panel recommended that Ronan Farren should be appointed and this was subsequently endorsed by the Steering Committee. Mr Farren has been asked to increase publicity for the Assembly's work and modernise the Assembly's website. He has undertaken to ensure that those journalists who attend the plenaries reflect the wider and more varied scope of the Assembly's deliberations.

Committees

85. The work of the Committees during the year can be found in Appendix 3.

The Steering Committee

86. The most important change in membership was that Paul Murphy MP resumed the British Co-Chairmanship in place of Peter Hain MP who was recalled to the Cabinet in June 2009. Peter Hain had succeeded Paul Murphy in this post only seventeen months previously.

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Staffing

88. The year saw a number of staff changes. The Irish Joint Clerk and the long-serving Media Adviser Mike Burns, retired, and were replaced by Paul Kelly and Ronan Farren respectively. Liam Caniffe was replaced as Policy Adviser to the Irish side by Emer Deane. The UK Clerks to Committees A, B and D also changed.

Prospects for 2010

89. The next year is bound to bring some changes, as the forthcoming UK general election will see the retirement of a number of long-standing Members, including Michael Mates, who has been a Member of the Assembly throughout its twenty years of history. The Assembly, with both Ulster Unionist parties now included in its membership, and with the prospect of closer relations with the British-Irish Council, the Assembly can expect a secure and interesting future.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

Members of the Body

Ireland January 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Mr Niall Blaney TD
Mr Seymour Crawford TD
Ms Margaret Conlon TD
Senator Dan Boyle
Mr Johnny Brady TD
Ms Joan Burton TD
Senator John Carty
Senator Donie Cassidy
Senator John Ellis
Mr Pat Gallagher TD
Senator Dominic Hannigan
Senator Eoghan Harris
Mr Brian Hayes TD
Mr Michael D Higgins TD
Mr Seamus Kirk TD
Mr Dinny McGinley TD
Mr Joe McHugh TD
Mr Arthur Morgan TD
Senator Francie O'Brien
Mr Charlie O'Connor TD
Mr Fergus O'Dowd TD
Dr Rory O'Hanlon TD
Mr Jim O'Keefe TD
Mr Michael Ring TD
Mr Noel Treacy TD

ASSOCIATES

Mr Chris Andrews TD
Ms Aine Brady TD
Senator Martin Brady
Mr Dara Calleary TD
Senator Ivor Callely
Mr Joe Carey TD
Mr Sean Connick TD
Mr Michael D'Arcy TD
Senator Geraldine Feeney
Mr Frank Feighan TD
Senator John Hanafin
Senator Cecilia Keaveney
Senator Alan Kelly
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Joe O'Reilly
Senator John Paul Phelan
Senator Phil Prendergast
Senator Eugene Regan
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Ireland- December 2009

Mr Niall Blaney, TD
Mr Seymour Crawford, TD
Ms Margaret Conlon, TD
Senator Dan Boyle
Senator Donie Cassidy
Senator John Ellis, TD
Senator Dominic Hannigan

Mr Chris Andrews, TD
Senator Martin Brady
Senator Ivor Callely
Mr Joe Carey, TD
Mr Sean Connick, TD
Mr Michael D'Arcy, TD
Senator Geraldine Feeney

Senator Eoghan Harris
Mr Brian Hayes, TD
Mr Michael D Higgins, TD
Senator Terry Leyden
Mr Dinny McGinley, TD
Mr Joe McHugh, TD
Mr Arthur Morgan, TD
Senator Francie O'Brien
Mr Charlie O'Connor, TD
Mr Fergus O'Dowd, TD
Dr Rory O'Hanlon, TD
Mr Jim O'Keeffe, TD
Mr Michael Ring, TD
Mr Noel Treacy, TD
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Mr Frank Feighan, TD
Senator John Hanafin
Senator Cecilia Keaveney
Senator Joe O'Reilly
Senator John Paul Phelan
Senator Phil Prendergast
Senator Eugene Regan
Senator Shane Ross
Senator Brendan Ryan

The UK Parliament- January 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Rt Hon Peter Hain MP
Lord Dubs
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Mr John Austin MP
Mr Henry Bellingham MP
Mr Joe Benton MP
Baroness Blood
Mr Alastair Carmichael MP
Rt Hon Lord Cope of Berkeley
Mr Jeff Ennis MP
Mr Paul Flynn MP
Lord Glentoran
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP
Mr Eddie McGrady MP
Mrs Rosemary McKenna MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Mr Andrew Mackinlay MP
Lord Maginnis of Glassdrum
Baroness O'Cathain
Mr John Robertson MP
Mr Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Robert Walter MP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Dave Anderson MP
Mr Tony Baldry MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Lord Desai
Mr Jim Devine MP
Mr Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Donoghue
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Mr Mark Durkan MP
Mr Roger Godsiff MP
Mr John Grogan MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Ms Julie Kirkbride MP
Mr John McFall MP
Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney
Mr Stephen O'Brien MP
Mr Albert Owen MP
Mr David Ruffley MP
Mr Alex Salmond MP MSP
Mr Jim Sheridan MP

The UK Parliament—December 2009

Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Rt Hon Michael Mates MP
Lord Dubs
John Austin MP
Henry Bellingham MP
Joe Benton MP
Baroness Blood MBE
Alistair Carmichael MP
Rt Hon Lord Cope of Berkeley
Jeff Ennis MP
Paul Flynn MP
Lord Glentoran CBE DL
Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Elfyn Llwyd MP
Eddie McGrady MP
Rosemary McKenna CBE MP
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP
Andrew Mackinlay MP
Lord Maginnis of Drumglass
Baroness O’Cathain OBE
John Robertson MP
Chris Ruane MP
Lord Smith of Clifton
Robert Walter MP

Dave Anderson MP
Tony Baldry MP
Sir Patrick Cormack MP
Jim Devine MP
Jim Dobbin MP
Lord Donoghue
Mark Durkan MP
Roger Godsiff MP
John Grogan MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Julie Kirkbride MP
John McFall MP
Rt Hon Lord Mawhinney
Stephen O’Brien MP
Albert Owen MP
David Ruffley MP
Alex Salmond MP
Jim Sheridan MP

The Scottish Parliament – January 2009

Mr Alasdair Morgan MSP
Mr Brian Adam MSP
Mr Hugh Henry MSP

Mr David McLetchie MSP

Mr Alasdair Allen MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP
Ms Shirley-Anne Somerville
MSP
One vacancy

The Scottish Parliament – December 2009

Mr Alasdair Morgan MSP
Mr Brian Adam MSP
Mr Hugh Henry MSP

Mr David McLetchie MSP
Mr Iain Smith MSP

Mr Alasdair Allen MSP
Mr Michael McMahon MSP
Ms Shirley-Anne Somerville
MSP
One vacancy

National Assembly for Wales – January 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Ms Rosemary Butler AM
Ms Joyce Watson AM
Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Mr Alun Cairns AM
Mr Michael German AM OBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Alun Davies AM
Ms Bethan Jenkins AM
Mr Darren Millar AM
Ms Jenny Randerson AM

National Assembly for Wales – December 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Ms Rosemary Butler AM
Ms Joyce Watson AM
Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Mr Alun Cairns AM
Mr Michael German AM OBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Alun Davies AM
Ms Bethan Jenkins AM
Mr Darren Millar AM
Ms Jenny Randerson AM

Northern Ireland Assembly- January 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Mr David McClarty MLA
Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Sean Neeson MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA

ASSOCIATES

Mr Alex Atwood MLA
Mr Willie Clarke MLA

Northern Ireland Assembly- December 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Mr David McClarty MLA
Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Sean Neeson MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA

ASSOCIATES

Mr Alex Atwood MLA
Mr Willie Clarke MLA
Rev Robert Coulter MLA

States of Jersey- January 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Alan Breckon

ASSOCIATES

Connetable Daniel Murphy

States of Jersey- December 2009

States of Guernsey – January 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Deputy Graham Guille

ASSOCIATES

Deputy Jack Honeybill

States of Guernsey – December 2009

Deputy Graham Guille

Deputy Jack Honeybill

Tynwald – January 2009

FULL MEMBERS

Hon Steve Rodan, SHK

ASSOCIATES

Mr Eddie Lowie MLC

Tynwald – December 2009

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other Documents approved by the Body

Thirty-eighth plenary, Donegal, 30 and 31 March 2009

RECENT MURDERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, appalled by the deaths of Sapper Patrick Azimkar, Sapper Mark Quinsey and Constable Stephen Carroll, unreservedly condemns the recent murderous attacks in Antrim and Craigavon, intended to undermine the peace settlement endorsed in referenda by the people of the island, north and south; expresses its condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of those killed in the attacks; and reiterates its full support for the democratic institutions and all those who work to build a better society in Northern Ireland.

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the Assembly takes note of the Thirteenth Annual Report (Document No 142).

THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON THE PAST

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the Assembly set up a working group on the work of the Consultative Group on the past.

EVOLVING ROLE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That Document 137 as amended, on the future role of the Body, be approved.

CROSS-BORDER POLICING

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee A on Cross-Border Policing (Document No 149) and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

COMMON DEFENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY INTERIM REPORT

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the Assembly takes note of the Interim Report from Committee B on Common Defence and Foreign Policy (Document No 153) and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

RESPONSES TO THE RESOLUTION ON INTELLIGENCE

RELATING TO THE OMAGH BOMBING

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, -That the Assembly takes note of the responses of the Irish Government and the United Kingdom Government to the resolution adopted at the Thirty-Seventh Plenary Conference on Intelligence *Relating to the Omagh Bombing* (Document No 143)

GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO REPORTS

ID Cards and the Common Travel Area

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the Body takes note of the response of the Irish government to the Report of Committee A (Document No 119) entitled "ID Cards and the Common Travel Area" (Document 135).

The integration of recently-arrived migrants

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the Assembly takes note of the responses of the Irish Government, the United Kingdom Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Isle of Man Government to the Report by Committee D on the Integration of Recently Arrived Migrants into Northern Ireland, Ireland and Wales (Docs Nos 145, 146, 147, 150 & 152).

Renewable energy except nuclear

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

Resolved, That the Assembly takes note of the responses of the United Kingdom Government, Northern Ireland Executive and the Isle of Man Government to the Report by Committee C on Renewable Energy except Nuclear (Doc Nos 148, 151 & 154)

Thirty-ninth plenary, Swansea, 19 and 20 October 2009

THE RECESSION

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

That the Assembly notes that the current recession affects all its member jurisdictions; and urges them to learn from one another and to work together identify its causes, to mitigate its effects, and to minimise the risk of a recurrence.

E-BORDERS

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution.

That the Body notes the British Government's policy on e-borders, further notes the commercial and cultural advantages of the common travel area to the different jurisdictions within it, is of the opinion that no legislative changes to the current arrangements should be made without a full consultation by the UK Government of all jurisdictions within the common travel area and refers the matter of e-borders policy of the UK and its impact on the common travel area to Committee A for it to inquire into this matter and to report to the Assembly.

APPRENTICESHIPS

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution

That the Assembly takes note of the report of Committee C on Apprenticeships, and the conclusions and recommendations, which should be forwarded to both Governments and devolved Administrations for their observations (Doc No 154).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution.

That the Assembly takes note of the report of Committee D on Climate Change and Renewable Energy, and the conclusions and recommendations, which should be forwarded to both Governments and devolved Administrations for their observations (Doc No 162).

GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO REPORTS

Barriers to trade

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolution.

That the Assembly takes note of the response of the Northern Ireland Executive to the Report of Committee A on Barriers to Trade (Doc No 155).

Co-operation between police forces

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions.

That the Assembly takes note of the response of the Northern Ireland Executive to the Report of Committee A on Cross-Border Co-Operation between Police Forces (Doc No 156).

That the Assembly takes note of the response of the UK Government to the Report of Committee A on Cross-Border Co-Operation between Police Forces (Doc No 157).

That the Assembly takes note of the response of the Welsh Assembly Government to the Report of Committee A on Cross-Border Co-operation between Police Forces (Doc No 158).

That the Assembly takes note of the response of the Isle of Man Government to the Report of Committee A on Cross-Border Co-Operation between Police Forces (Doc No 159).

THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON THE PAST

That the Assembly takes note of the Report of the Steering Committee on the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past (Doc No 160).

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Committee A Committee on Sovereign Matters

1. The Committee met formally on 6 occasions during the year, twice during plenary sessions, and four times on working visits.
2. The Committee began the year by concluding its inquiry into cross border policing. The report, which the Committee agreed at the March plenary session in Donegal, welcomed the high level of cooperation between the An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). However, the Committee highlighted a number of concerns including: the delays commonly experienced in serving of summons and transfer of evidence; the potential for evasion of arrest by crossing the border; and the delay in the introduction of the new procedural manual to avoid inter-jurisdictional difficulties of investigations and trials.
3. The Committee began two further inquiries during the year. A follow-up inquiry into the Common Travel Area (CTA) involved the Committee requesting information from the UK and Irish Governments on the implications for the Common Travel Area and the e-borders scheme. In connection with this inquiry, the Committee met UK Border Agency officials in London and Immigration Service officials in Dublin. In addition, the Committee was very pleased to meet colleagues from the Crown Dependencies of Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Jersey to hear their views on how proposed changes to the CTA might affect their territories.
4. In addition, the Committee continued to monitor a number of important issues that it had identified in its inquiry into cross border policing. In January 2010, the Committee held meetings in Dublin with the Justice Minister and the Garda Commissioner, Fachtna Murphy; and in Belfast with the UK Minister of State for Northern Ireland and the new Chief Constable of the PSNI, Matt Baggott.
5. The Committee continued to keep a watching brief on progress on matters connected with its report on the mutual recognition of penalty points. Lord Dubs, a rapporteur on this matter, received an update from an official from the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland, on the mutual recognition of driving disqualifications and penalty points. Lord Dubs updated the Body on behalf of the Committee during its Business Report at the Donegal plenary session.
6. At the plenary meeting in Cavan, the Committee intends to present reports on (1) its inquiry into the CTA and (2) on the progress of the recommendations outlined

in its report on Cross Border Policing.

Attendance at meetings of Committee A in 2009

Dublin 8 January 2009

Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chair), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Vice-Chair), Senator John Carty, Lord Cope, Brian Hayes TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, and Dr Rory O’Hanlon TD.

Plenary at Donegal 30 March 2009

Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chair), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Vice-Chair), Baroness Blood, Senator John Carty, Lord Cope, Lord Dubs, Brian Hayes TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Dinny McGinley TD and Dr Rory O’Hanlon TD .

London 20 July 2009

Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chair), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Vice-Chair), Baroness Blood, Senator John Carty, Lord Cope, Lord Dubs, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Lord Smith, and Noel Treacy TD.

Plenary at Swansea 19 October 2009

Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chair), Senator John Carty, Lord Cope, Lord Dubs, Brian Hayes TD, Dinny McGinley TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Dr Rory O’Hanlon TD, and Noel Treacy TD.

Dublin 5 October 2009

Jim O’Keeffe TD (Chair), Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (Vice-Chair), Senator John Carty, Lord Cope, Lord Dubs, Brian Hayes TD, Dinny McGinley TD, Andrew Mackinlay MP, Dr Rory O’Hanlon TD, and Noel Treacy TD.

Committee C

Economic Affairs

Committee C met formally four times during the year, twice during plenary sessions, and twice on a working visit.

In 2009 the Committee concluded its work on its report entitled “Apprenticeships in Ireland and Britain”. Following on from the Committee’s meeting with witnesses in Westminster in December 2008, the Committee held further sessions in Dublin and Edinburgh in 2009.

In Dublin the Committee met Professor Brian Norton, President of the Dublin Institute of Technology, as well as representatives from the Irish National Training and Employment Authority, and the Further Education and Training Awards Council. In Edinburgh the Committee held discussions with the Association of Scottish Colleges, the Scottish Training Federation, the Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust and Skills Development Scotland. The Committee agreed its Report at the Swansea plenary. The Committee is grateful to the wide range of witnesses who travelled to attend its meetings.

At the Swansea plenary the Committee agreed to commence an inquiry into the support mechanisms available to the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector, with a particular emphasis on the areas of innovation, green technologies and the role of public procurement policy. The Committee plans to agree terms of reference and commence its inquiry with a day of evidence taking in Westminster in February 2010.

Attendance at meetings of Committee C in 2009

Members visiting Dublin on 22-23 February 2009:

Margaret Conlon TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Brian Adam MSP, Seymour Crawford T.D., Seamus Kirk TD, Senator Terry Leyden, Senator Eugene Regan and Joyce Watson AM.

Members attending the meeting of the Committee at the Donegal plenary on 22 February 2009:

Margaret Conlon TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Brian Adam MSP, Seymour Crawford T.D., Senator Donie Cassidy, Seamus Kirk TD, Senator Terry Leyden, Mr Arthur Morgan TD, Baroness O’Cathain, Hugh Henry MSP and Joyce Watson AM.

Members visiting Edinburgh on 28-29 June 2009:

Margaret Conlon TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Seymour Crawford T.D., Lord Gordon of Strathblane, Hugh Henry MSP, Senator Terry Leyden, David McLetchie MSP, Arthur Morgan TD and Joyce Watson AM.

Members attending the meeting of the Committee at the Swansea plenary on 19 October 2009 and approving the report:

Margaret Conlon TD (Chairman), Paul Flynn MP (Shadow Chairman), Seymour Crawford T.D., Barry McElduff MLA, Hugh Henry MSP, Joyce Watson AM, Brian Adam MSP and Senator Terry Leyden.

Committee D

Committee on Environmental and Social Issues

Committee D met on six occasions in 2009; twice during plenary sessions and four times on two-day working visits.

The Committee's interest in 2009 was primarily on their inquiry into climate change and renewable energy. The Committee visited Edinburgh, London and Dublin in 2009 to take evidence. Evidence was received from businesses, academics, and ministers and officials from governments in the jurisdictions visited, as well as from MPs from Norway and Sweden and persons involved in the Nordic Council. The report on climate change and renewable energy was formally adopted at the plenary session in Swansea in October 2009. It was debated in the House of Lords on 20 January 2010¹.

At the Swansea plenary the Committee agreed to carry out an inquiry into returning the unemployed to work. The Committee took evidence in Rhyl, north Wales, from persons closely involved in the Rhyl City Strategy (which is aimed at tackling unemployment in the area) and from the Welsh Assembly Government. The Committee took further evidence in early 2010 in Dublin and Belfast, and will report to the plenary meeting in Cavan in February 2010.

The Committee thought it may be useful to return to the findings of the reports on the Irish community in Britain (published in 2007) and on climate change and renewable energy in due course after the general election in the United Kingdom.

The Chairman would like to thank the members of Committee D for their efforts in attending meetings and for their commitment to the work of the Committee.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2009

Edinburgh 18–19 January 2009

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Willie Clarke MLA, Senator Geraldine Feeney, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Chris Ruane MP and Iain Smith MSP.

London 8–9 March 2009

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Willie Clarke MLA, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Chris Ruane MP, Iain Smith MSP and Jim Wells MLA.

Donegal plenary 30 March 2009

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Willie Clarke MLA, Mark Durkan MLA, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Lord Glentoran, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Joe McHugh TD, Lord Maginnis of Drumglass, Chris Ruane MP, Iain Smith MSP and Jim Wells MLA.

Dublin 28–29 June 2009

¹ HL Deb, cols 1054–65.

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Willie Clarke MLA, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Chris Ruane MP, Iain Smith MSP and Jim Wells MLA.

Swansea plenary 19 October 2009

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Senator John Ellis, Jeff Ennis MP, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Chris Ruane MP, Jim Wells MLA.

Rhyl 22–23 November 2009

Lord Dubs (Chair), Jonny Brady TD (Co-Chair), Senator Dan Boyle, Senator John Ellis, Senator Francis O'Brien, Jeff Ennis MP, Chris Ruane MP.

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Assembly in 2009

Ireland:

Clerk: Mr Eoin Faherty /Mr Paul Kelly

Policy Adviser Adviser: Mr Liam Caniffe
Mr Emer Deane

Clerk, Committee A: Ms Sighle Doherty

Shadow Clerk, Committee B:
Ms Jillian O'Keefe

Clerk, Committee C: Ms Jillian O'Keefe

Shadow Clerk, Committee D:
Ms Jillian O'Keefe

Administrator: Ms Jullee
Clarke

United Kingdom

Clerk: Miss Alda Barry

British Consultant: Sir Michael
Davies

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:
Ms Nerys Welfoot/Mr
Adrian Jenner

Clerk, Committee B:
Ms Rhiannon Hollis/Mr Eliot
Wilson

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:
Ms Tracey Garratty

Clerk, Committee D; Ms Audrey
Nelson/Mr Nic Besley

Administrator: Mrs Amanda
Healy/Miss Priscilla Hungerford

Media Consultant: Mr Mike Burns/Mr Ronan Farren

