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# Written Ministerial Statement

**The content of this written ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Ministers. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.**

## Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

### **Memorandum of Understanding and Supplementary Agreements**

**Published at 9.30 am on Friday 26 March 2010**

#### **The First Minister and the deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness):**

We wish to draw attention of Members to the presentation to the Assembly today of a revised Memorandum of Understanding and supplementary agreements (MOU) between the United Kingdom Government, the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers, and the Northern Ireland Executive Committee

The revised MOU supersedes Command Paper, Cm 5240, published in December 2001 and is the principle agreement between the UK Government and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and sets out the principles which underlie relations between them. The MOU was most recently discussed at a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (Domestic) in London on 10 March 2010 and agreed by the Executive on 25 March 2010.

The MOU provides for a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), which is the subject of a separate agreement in the MOU. In addition to the JMC agreement, three separate overarching Concordats apply broadly uniform arrangements to the handling of the Co-ordination of EU Policy Issues, Financial Assistance to Industry and International Relations. The MOU includes new arrangements setting out how the administrations will seek to avoid disputes and, where this proves impossible, how they will be resolved. We are committed to further work to improve this process particularly in relation to the final stage of this process where a dispute remained

unresolved. This will include consideration of the role of an independent chairperson.

This Memorandum is a statement of political intent, and should not be interpreted as a binding agreement. It does not create legal obligations between the parties.

We have a responsibility for promoting the devolution settlement, for ensuring effective working relations and good communication between the devolved administrations, and for helping to resolve any disputes which may arise. In the context of the MOU we will take firm action to ensure its effective operation to further develop good relations between all four administrations and seek to deliver positive outcomes for our devolved administration.