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NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SECTORAL FORMAT

ARMAGH

30 OCTOBER 2009

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The ninth meeting of the North South Ministerial Council in Environment sectoral format was held in Armagh on Friday, 30 October 2009.
2. The meeting was attended by Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of the Environment, Margaret Ritchie MLA, Minister for Social Development and John Gormley TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Minister Poots chaired the meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

3. The Council agreed proposals from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) for the development and publication of a common set of environmental indicators. It is intended that publication would enable elected representatives, policy makers and others to track progress on changes to the environment within each jurisdiction. Ministers agreed that the publication of the common indicators will be in 2011, as part of the North South Statistical Profile, or alternatively via appropriate environmental indicators reports of the relevant Agencies.

4. Ministers noted that the NIEA and the EPA are developing a joint paper on environmental research. This will be brought to the next NSMC in Environment sectoral format. They also noted that opportunities to maximise access to EU funding for environmental research, including the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and Interreg, will be explored.
5. Ministers further agreed that the environmental research information which was available on the aNSwer website (a North South Website of Environmental Research) will in future be made available through the websites of the NIEA and the EPA.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

6. The Council welcomed the continuing progress on implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in relation to shared waters and noted that River Basin Management Plans are due to be finalised by the end of this year. The focus will then move from the planning phase to implementing the programmes of measures which will be required in order to achieve the objectives of the Directive. There will continue to be a co-ordinated effort between jurisdictions towards implementing the Directive.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

7. The Council noted that the North South Market Development Steering Group is working to exploit economies of scale in the market for recycled materials in both jurisdictions. The Chair of the Group will provide a presentation at the next Council meeting.
8. Ministers also had an opportunity to share views on policy developments on plastic bags and chewing gum.

CROSS BORDER MOVEMENTS OF WASTE

9. The Council noted that a Framework Agreement was endorsed by the Environment Ministers in June 2009 relating in the first instance to the removal of illegally dumped waste at the two priority sites, at Slattinagh, Co. Fermanagh and near Trillick, Co. Tyrone. This will form the basis for action on the remaining 18 sites. Ministers noted that it is expected that work on the two sites could commence shortly after the award of a contract - likely to be in early 2010. The NIEA will prioritise the order in which the remaining 18 sites will be dealt with based on the risk of environmental pollution, harm to human health and other factors.
10. Ministers welcomed the joint concerted enforcement actions that are continuing to target shipments of waste and note that future action is planned.

NEXT MEETING

11. The Council agreed to meet again in Environment sectoral format in March 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
30 October 2009**