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NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES SECTORAL FORMAT

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, DUBLIN

17 FEBRUARY 2010

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The tenth North South Ministerial Council meeting in Special EU Programmes sectoral format was held in Government Buildings, Dublin on 17 February 2010.
2. The meeting was attended by Brian Lenihan TD, Minister for Finance, Sammy Wilson MP, MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel, and Margaret Ritchie, MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister Lenihan chaired the meeting.

SEUPB PROGRESS REPORT

3. The Council received a detailed progress report from the Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), Mr Pat Colgan, who reported on the various activities within the Body.
4. The closure of the PEACE II and INTERREG IIIA Programmes is a key priority for the SEUPB and both programmes are now in the final stages of closure.

5. Ministers noted that implementation of the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes is generally progressing well in terms of the assessment of applications and approval of projects with 139 projects approved as at December 2009 at a value of €266.7m. The SEUPB achieved its expenditure targets of €19.8m and €14m for and PEACE III and INTERREG IVA respectively.
6. Ministers noted that the following issues are being satisfactorily addressed: assisting projects in the North West (PEACE III and INTERREG IVA); assisting victims and survivors (PEACE III); encouraging participation by underrepresented groups including the Protestant community (PEACE III); and involving Scotland (INTERREG IVA). These issues will continue to be addressed in 2010.
7. The Council noted that concerns raised by the five Local Authority Based Groups regarding the approval of their Multi-Annual Plans (MAPs) for INTERREG IVA are being addressed.
8. Ministers also noted that the SEUPB continues to facilitate North South participation in the INTERREG IV transnational and interregional programmes. To date 32 project partners have been secured across the relevant programmes.
9. The SEUPB has continued to develop the PEACE Network in 2009 thereby communicating the experience of managing and evaluating the PEACE funding in Northern Ireland to all interested parties.

SEUPB BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2010

10. Ministers noted the following key activities/priorities for the SEUPB in 2010:
 - the management and delivery of the 2007-13 PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes ensuring all targets are achieved;
 - ensuring that SEUPB services are delivered efficiently;
 - supporting North South engagement with the EU funded Transnational and Interregional Programmes;
 - ensuring a successful closure of the PEACE II and INTERREG IIIA Programmes.
11. The Council noted that the SEUPB has applied efficiency savings of £0.262m to the 2010 budget. In addition to these the SEUPB will reduce EU Programme running cost (Technical Assistance) amounts of €2.4m for 2009 and 2010 and €3.1m for 2011-15. These savings will enable higher expenditure on projects.

12. The Council approved the 2010 Business Plan of the SEUPB and recommend the budget provision of:

Administration Costs: £2,254m (€2,533m)

EU Programme Expenditure £67,659m (€76,021m)

NEXT MEETING

13. The Council agreed to meet again in the Special EU Programmes sectoral format in October 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
17 February 2010**