

# Minute of Bill Of Rights Forum Working Group on Criminal Justice and Victims

10 August 2007, Interpoint Centre, Belfast

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Attendance: Dr. Samuel Hutchinson (Convenor), Barry Fitzpatrick (CoSO), Éilis Haughey (SDLP), Gillian Clifford (Alliance Party NI), Stephen McIlveen (DUP), Annie Campbell (Women's Sector), Edel Quinn (Children & Young People's Sector)

Apologies: Alex Maskey (Sinn Féin)

Observers: Elliot Milton (Department of Foreign Affairs), Darren McStravick (CAJ), Louise McNicholl (Human Rights Consortium)

## Minutes

1. It was agreed that the draft note of the previous meeting was accurate.

## Matters Arising

2. Agreed that is essential for Working Group to have administrative support and that it was not appropriate for members to rotate this function, as members minute-taking precluded their ability to fully participate in meetings. Dr. Hutchinson, A. Campbell and E. Quinn agreed to speak to Gillian Preece immediately after meeting to secure necessary administrative support. In the interim, E. Quinn offered to take a note of the second meeting and email the draft report to Dr. Hutchinson for amendment and circulation. G. Clifford and S. Mc Ilveen offered to take a note of subsequent meetings, in the event that secretarial support was not forthcoming.

3. There was a discussion on whether in accordance with the Rules of Procedure the group was quorate, given that 7 out of the 9 members who have taken up their places on the Working Group were in attendance; with 2 places yet to be filled. It was agreed that The Chair should seek clarification on this matter with C. Sidoti.  
Action: The Chair should seek clarification on this matter with C. Sidoti.
4. Dr. Hutchinson informed the group that only Forum members will be invited to attend the residential meeting in October.
5. It was agreed that members of the WG who do not sit on the Forum, should be privy to Forum Plenary session information; it was agreed that the Forum Secretariat would be asked to circulate Minutes and Agenda of Forum meetings, together with all documents being sent to Forum members.
6. In relation to overlapping of issues in Working Groups, it was suggested that the Chairs of WGs should meet regularly to liaise and ensure co-ordination of discussions within groups.

#### Input from experts on Criminal Justice and Victims Rights

7. It was agreed that the Group should invite Chairs of NIHRC Working Groups on Criminal Justice and Victims to provide input to next meeting, on order to inform our work. If they were unavailable, it was agreed to ask other experts in the field. The group agreed to ask NIHRC for guidance regarding names of Chairs and experts in respect of Victims WG. Professor Kieran McEvoy chaired Criminal Justice WG, and Professor Sean Doran was identified as another expert in this area.  
Action: Edel Quinn agreed to make contact with Prof. Mc Evoy and Chair of Victims WG – and invite to attend next meeting on either 7<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> September.
8. There was a discussion on devising a Workplan and agreed to have meetings in September and October which focus on CJ issues, but

which have Victims issues raised as an Agenda item at each meeting. The first November meeting would address Victims issues, and there would be an assessment after this meeting about the agendas for future meetings.

9. It was agreed that supplementary sub-group meetings might be required in the autumn to draft our advices. Members agreed to try to keep Friday afternoons free in order to accommodate these supplementary meetings should they prove necessary.
10. There was a discussion on what the purpose of the group was – i.e. should draft advice take the form of a commentary on differing views in relation to CJ and Victims issues or be more akin to draft text for a Bill of Rights, with divergent views noted.

#### External Evidence

11. G. Clifford proposed that the Working Group should listen to external evidence in order to inform decision-making. It was agreed that it would be very useful to invite organisations in to give evidence, and that members would be more comfortable hearing this, before making decisions/taking action. The Chair asked each member of the group to identify organisations which they believed would meaningfully contribute to the debate, and bring names to next meeting for discussion.

Action: All WG members to identify external organisations which could be invited to provide evidence to group.

#### AOB

12. E. Quinn asked that the NIHRC Working Group Submission on Children and Young People should be circulated to members of the Group.
13. A. Campbell agreed to ask the NIHRC to provide the Working Group with any additional information which might be of use.

### Date of Next Meetings

14.7<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm at Interpoint Centre, subject to availability of  
Chairs of NIHRC Working Groups / Experts.

15. October 19<sup>th</sup> at Parliament Buildings, Stormont – room to be agreed at  
next meeting.