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Comptroller Harrison J. Goldin today proposed that the City's five employee pension systems adopt a comprehensive program to decrease discrimination in Northern Ireland.

The centerpiece of Mr. Goldin's plan is support of the "MacBride Principles," nine equal employment and affirmative action guidelines. Among them are: adequate security to prevent the intimidation of minority group workers, the banning of provocative religious or political emblems from the workplace, public advertisement of job opportunities and non-discrimination in promotion, layoff, apprenticeship and hiring policies. The principles apply equally to discrimination against Protestants and Catholics, although Catholics have more often been the targets of discrimination in Ulster.

"Catholics in Northern Ireland have been subject to systematic discrimination for over sixty years," Mr. Goldin wrote to his fellow pension system trustees. "One of its most destructive forms has been the denial of fair employment opportunity. We have the power to help ameliorate this problem."

The City's pension systems own stock worth some \$250 million in 15 firms that do business in Northern Ireland.

"A peaceful solution to the troubles in Northern Ireland depends on the ending of discrimination," Mr. Goldin said in proposing his four-part plan to the pension trustees.

First, Comptroller Goldin would have the pension systems sponsor shareholder resolutions forcing corporations to obey the MacBride Principles.

Second, the pension systems should publicly urge the British government to commit more resources to the fight for equal employment in Ulster. Specifically, Mr. Goldin called for the

expansion of British law to allow formal programs to redress past discrimination and to encompass the recommendations in the Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development's "Guide to Manpower Policy and Practice." The Department is a British government agency.

Third, the pension systems should solicit information about their employment practices from U.S. corporations that operate in Northern Ireland.

Finally, the Comptroller urged that the City pension systems encourage other major institutional investors to act similarly.

Mr. Goldin noted that he has already begun to survey U.S. companies that do business in Northern Ireland on their employment practices there. The Comptroller said that many U.S. firms bought companies in Northern Ireland as investments and often say they are unaware of any discrimination at their subsidiaries.

"The pension systems can focus the attention of American home offices on the employment practices of their subsidiaries in Ireland, in many cases for the first time," Mr. Goldin noted.

The Comptroller's recommendations are contained in his 42-page "Report on Northern Ireland," which notes allegations that some American companies doing business in Northern Ireland discriminate on the basis of religion in hiring and promotion. Unemployment in some Catholic areas is as high as 41%. The British government itself has reported that the unemployment rate among Catholics is more than twice that of Protestants.

Mr. Goldin's report raises serious questions about the British government's commitment to ending employment discrimination against Ulster's Catholics.

Anti-Catholic discrimination in Ulster takes many forms, the report reveals, including: rejection of Catholic job applicants out of hand; nepotism, which perpetuates the disproportionate representation of Protestants in the workforce; Catholics being given menial jobs, while Protestants are made managers; tokenism;

and harassment at job interviews. Plant location can also cause de facto discrimination, as it is dangerous for Catholics to work in predominately Protestant areas. The MacBride Principles call for secure transportation to and from the workplace.

The Principles are credited to Sean MacBride, founder of Amnesty International and Nobel Peace Prize laureate in 1974 for his work for human rights; Dr. John Robb, a prominent Protestant surgeon from Northern Ireland and at-large member of the Irish Senate; Inez McCormick, former member of the British government's Fair Employment Agency; and Fr. Brian Brady, an Irish civil rights advocate and former Professor at St. Joseph's College in Belfast.

The Comptroller, who assisted in the development of the MacBride Principles, said he has conferred with numerous Irish leaders both here and in Ireland in formulating his program.

"All the parties involved in the struggle for peace and justice in Ireland -- Catholics, Protestants, radicals, moderates and conservatives -- agree that economic leverage is an important tool in the fight to improve living conditions for all in Northern Ireland."

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