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Mr Adam Ingram MP
Minister for Economic Development Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
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Dear Minister

Belated congratulations on your appointment to Northern Ireland. I suspect that the economic and political aspects of the job will bring some of the most rewarding, frustrating and mystifying challenges in government.

Having been in post some time now I am writing to ask if you would meet with our Party's Economy Team. We would like to introduce ourselves and highlight what we consider to be some of the key and pressing issues at the moment for the local economy.

I have enclosed a copy of our Economy Policy Paper which was very well received when first produced in 1995. The Secretary of State herself made some kind remarks at our Party Conference of that year.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Peter Osborne
Economy Spokesman

Enc.

Building the Northern Ireland Economy

Challenges and Opportunities

February 1995

FOREWORD

We hope you enjoy reading the Alliance Economy Document "Building the Northern Ireland Economy". We hope it provides food for thought and stimulates ideas for development.

This is a particularly critical time for our economy. The political process provides an opportunity to leave behind the wasted years since 1970 and to build a new Northern Ireland within Europe. A new generation of political, business and community leaders have ideas, energy and dynamism. They have not caused the 'troubles' but have suffered from them. We believe it is now time for the new generation to assert itself.

Economic progress in the Province will not be easy. It will be a long-term consequence of having a more peaceful society. However, we must create the conditions for growth. That means emphasising enterprise not dependancy, inclusion not exclusion, confidence not insecurity and an external focus rather than insularity. We can become a real European region with the benefits that will ensue and the change of attitude that is required.

We would appreciate feedback on the ideas in this paper.

We hope you will support our vision.

Cllr Peter Osborne
Economy Spokesperson
Alliance Party of
Northern Ireland

Building the Northern Ireland Economy

Challenges and Opportunities

CONTENTS

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Introduction | Page 4 |
| 2. | Enterprise Culture | Page 6 |
| 3. | Trade & Business Support | Page 8 |
| 4. | Education & Training | Page 11 |
| 5. | Unemployment & The Social Economy | Page 13 |
| 6. | Competitive Infrastructure | Page 16 |
| 7. | Cross-Border Co-Operation | Page 18 |
| 8. | Equality | Page 20 |
| 9. | Action Points | Page 22 |

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since late 1994, the republican and loyalist ceasefires have created conditions for a rekindling of optimism and a realisation of the potential economic benefits of a prolonged period of peace. Understanding and utilising real peace, if that is what we are to enjoy, will take some time. While the onus for prolonging real peace continues to rest with the war-makers, the onus on utilising the peace for general good, wealth generation and job creation rests with the whole community. Indeed, economic development leading to employment and prosperity is itself a motivation to continue the peace.

The 'troubles' have had severe detrimental effects on the Northern Ireland economy. These have included:

- * deterrence of inward investment
- * creation of a bad international image
- * increased costs to domestic businesses
- * alienation of talented business people from the political process

For a generation Northern Ireland politicians have made little contribution to the Northern Ireland economy. The constitutional question has dictated the manner and content of political debate. That has had other repercussions. In other walks of life in Northern Ireland, normal social and economic interaction has been disturbed with negative effects on the concept of community.

However, while peace is a prerequisite to optimum economic development, the economy is central to the stability of the political process. In the future even implementing far-reaching reconciliation measures depends upon having adequate resources available and a local community with a positive outlook on job prospects.

Northern Ireland currently suffers from, amongst other things, a comparative lack of indigenous industry, low rates of business start-up, high unemployment (and particularly long-term unemployment) and a skills mismatch between employer needs and what unemployed people can offer. As such, creating jobs is only one element of the economic development equation. The unemployment problem is a separate issue requiring investment in ensuring equality of opportunity for long-term unemployed people looking for work, and a building up of the social economy. The social economy is a means of empowering local communities to undertake business and development initiatives for themselves, leading to the creation of local jobs.

However, with the development of a strong economy, good and sustainable jobs will be created and wealth generated that will better support initiatives to solve the unemployment problem. There are no simple solutions to encourage a strong economy and the timescale for real and noticeable economic development will almost inevitably be long. However, a true peace dividend is economic growth and job creation in the medium to long-term.

We must combine business growth and a recognition of the value and desirability of wealth creation with the sort of practice in other spheres such as health and education that build a caring and community orientated society. Northern Ireland needs more entrepreneurs. Business people need to be encouraged to lead from the front in practicing economic development. Elected representatives need to facilitate business growth and expansion and take the lead themselves.

In so doing it would be reasonable to hope that business people may be encouraged to re-enter political life and play a positive and constructive role in politics too. The forced out-migration of some of the most talented younger people may be reversed. Indeed, a special programme, building on previous efforts, should be operated on an ongoing basis, to bring the talent from the Province living outside back to Northern Ireland to play their part in economic development efforts.

In the short-term Northern Ireland will necessarily have a preparatory interim period. To facilitate partnership, exploitation of all talents and views, and to encourage responsibility from elected representatives, an Economic Forum of Key Players should be created. It should consist of representatives from the private, public, community and voluntary sectors as well as elected representatives from the main political parties. Its role should be to provide ideas for economic development, to monitor current economic development practice, and to help co-ordinate implementation of programmes. It should deliberate in public sessions.

2. ENTERPRISE CULTURE

In many respects, Northern Ireland society needs to change its attitude to business. Entrepreneurial spirit should be identified, nurtured and supported. Going into business to make profit is positive and is necessary to generate wealth and create jobs. Innovation needs to be encouraged while progress and change should be regarded as opportunities rather than portrayed or accepted as threats. An enterprise culture rather than a dependency culture should best epitomise the outlook of Northern Ireland people.

In fact, if Northern Ireland is to fully utilise current opportunities for economic development, Northern Ireland people need to progressively display a positive attitude that allows us to do things for ourselves. While attracting inward investment is important Northern Ireland still needs to expand its own indigenous business base. A large part of the responsibility for stimulating an enterprise culture will rest with the relevant economic development agencies.

The business and enterprise support agencies are doing a reasonable job in, to date, difficult circumstances. However, in meeting the new challenges and opportunities, these agencies - LEDU, IDB, T & EA, NITB, IRTU - should be more enterprising in themselves. While the perception of the agencies as bureaucratic may often be misplaced, they are not enterprising organisations. They cannot ask Northern Ireland people to become more enterprising without being enterprising themselves. We believe the economic development agencies, and the other agencies they support, should be subject to an innovation and enterprise challenge that would:

- * encourage temporary secondments from the private sector
- * set regular performance targets
- * make private-sector business experience compulsory for all staff
- * encourage innovation and measured risk-taking
- * provide a more open and accessible public complaints procedure
- * change the way Agencies relate to government
- * build up enterprise skills and knowledge across all the Agencies

In addition, a new and enhanced Enterprising Northern Ireland campaign should be undertaken to generate enterprise thought, ideas and activity. The new campaign should be integrated with existing relevant schemes and pursue a twin-track approach targeting

- * economic growth areas
- * deprived groups and areas

Northern Ireland needs good leaders in all walks of public and business life. A widespread and high profile leadership development initiative should be particularly targeted at the community and private sectors.

To further encourage identification with and acceptance of enterprising activity relevant successful business role models should be rewarded and promoted. The concept of recognising and respecting business success needs to be even more thoroughly accepted.

Developing an enterprise culture starts with young people in school. The need for a co-ordinated Enterprise in Education programme is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

Finally, people in Northern Ireland are not good at recognising their own skills and talents. Much good practice here is not recognised for what it is. Local good practice in business and enterprise could be successfully exported. Northern Ireland people need to build up their confidence to the appropriate high level, which in itself will help people become more ambitious and enterprising. Calculated risk-taking should be part of the culture.

3. TRADE & BUSINESS SUPPORT

At present, public expenditure in Northern Ireland over and above that raised in taxation amounts to approximately £3 billion. Given the troubles the subvention is reasonable and needs no justification from Northern Ireland, particularly when other parts of the United Kingdom also receive substantial subventions. However, the realisation of a peace dividend is partly dependant on the subvention being withdrawn from security-related use but kept within Northern Ireland for use on economic development.

It is not prudent to tamper with in wholesale fashion the responsibilities of the various economic development agencies although, as already stated, they need to be more responsive and more enterprising. Generally the agencies - LEDU, IDB, NITB, T & E A & IRTU - should be commended for doing a reasonable job to date in difficult circumstances. However

- * the proliferation of agencies can cause confusion to the public
- * co-ordination and co-operation between the Agencies and even between various Government Departments needs to be a higher priority

If these departments and agencies are set to demand partnership from the community and private sectors, they need to be able to operate on similar lines themselves.

The proposed Economic Forum for Key Players may itself facilitate inter-Agency co-ordination and co-operation. Yet, such co-ordination and co-operation is required at all levels within Agencies & Departments. The Department of Economic Development clearly needs to liaise better with and co-ordinate activities with those Departments responsible for:

- * land use planning
- * public transport
- * education in primary and secondary schools and at the third level
- * social security
- * finance

Formal co-operation needs to be actual and effective through Departments and involving relevant Agencies. This requires direct intervention from the highest political level.

Regeneration of the Northern Ireland economy will be led by the private sector. Leadership from the business community is vital. Where possible the private sector should be involved in funding or part-funding major development programmes, particularly as outlined in Chapter Six. The Government should review joint-financing and venture capital arrangements with the private sector.

However, where the private sector will not get involved the Government must be prepared to intervene. Regeneration is required for the rural economy in Northern

Ireland as well as the urban economy. Frequently, too little attention has been paid to development west of the Bann. This is particularly true for infrastructural provision such as adequate public transport, comprehensive road networks or satisfactory rail networks.

The provision of wider measures of assistance to small and medium sized enterprises and to inward investment companies is an essential part of economic development. Grants are especially important in encouraging domestic business start-up, domestic business growth and domestic business exporting and marketing. In addition, there should be a review of extra provision of loans and loan guarantees from economic support agencies.

The over-riding purpose for grant or loan assistance should be increased competitiveness within the companies concerned or to fund research and development with a view to innovation. Grant/loan assistance directed at competitiveness and innovation may not always equate to maximum short-term job creation.

Businesses themselves should be approached to identify additional required support mechanisms and should be key determinants in providing continuous feedback on the effectiveness of support. However, two specific initiatives urgently required are:

a. Small Business Charter

The prompt payment of bills would be highly significant for small business survival rates. The Charter would seek to encourage this and other activities, particularly in the public sector.

b. Made in Northern Ireland Campaign

The Product of Northern Ireland (PONI) campaign has lacked vigour and has not succeeded in adequately promoting locally made Northern Ireland goods. It should be abolished and replaced by a new vibrant local sourcing campaign adequately funded by the private sector as well as public finance.

The economic support agencies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland should remain separate and distinct. Politically and logistically there are too many obstacles to joint efforts within Ireland itself. However, there is considerable scope and potential economic benefits to develop joint marketing efforts outside Ireland. This may include:

- * sharing of staff
- * sharing of office space
- * joint promotional literature

Any such development must be business-led rather than done primarily for social or political reasons.

The Industrial Development Board has done a reasonable job in particularly difficult circumstances. It has a critically important role at this time given the

benefits to be gained from a significant increase in inward investment. Benefits include:

- * more jobs
- * new technology and new management techniques
- * skills enhancement
- * challenges to the sub-supply structure
- * improved image and reputation of Northern Ireland

More resources are required for the IDB and a more strategic and targeted approach to attracting investment is needed. Other issues include:

- * an element of fiscal autonomy for Northern Ireland from the UK Exchequer to allow for changes in tax incentives for potential investors to help Northern Ireland compete against tax incentives offered in the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland needs a 10% corporation tax incentive or its equivalent to inward investing manufacturing companies.
- * exploration of the extension of Enterprise Zones in Northern Ireland
- * permanent public reviews of IDB performances with ongoing benchmarking comparisons made with the IDA in the Republic of Ireland.
- * increased travel-to-work transport planning for employees travelling to investment sites.

Other recommendations relevant to inward investment are included in other chapters.

4. EDUCATION & TRAINING

Getting the right education and training provision in Northern Ireland is of utmost importance. Developing an enterprise culture and a positive 'can do' mentality begins in schools. Remotivating the population is linked to education provision and appropriate training. There are external pressures making it imperative to get education and training provision right if Northern Ireland business is to be competitive. These include:

- * expansion of the EU single market
- * competition infiltrating more aggressively from the Republic of Ireland
- * technical advance and high skill levels in industrial areas elsewhere
- * low cost competition from Eastern Europe

Changing attitudes starts first in schools. Therefore, teacher training needs to contain an appropriate degree of enterprise and industry awareness. Teachers should be comfortable about teaching basic business skills and how to stimulate enterprising behaviour. Ideally teachers should also undertake a short placement in the private sector as part of their training.

Young people should acquire practical business experience while at school. There are several examples of practical business learning programmes currently operating in many schools at both primary and secondary level. Within a reasonable period such programmes should be introduced at a particular year level in all primary and secondary schools in Northern Ireland to give every pupil at each level access to a real enterprise experience. This will:

- * enhance enterprising behaviour
- * increase business knowledge and experience
- * increase the perceived career value of business, particularly in grammar schools

As industry type changes in Northern Ireland so too must the quality and relevance of career guidance in schools. Young people must be motivated and directed appropriately or alienation will continue to be a feature of their attitude to employment and employment support. In addition, more emphasis needs to be placed on fields of study relevant to business.

The new Training & Employment Agency Jobskills Programme is to be generally welcomed for seeking to improve the quality of employment-related training and for seeking to make training - through the acquisition of National Vocational Qualifications - more relevant to industry needs. These will be very valuable first-step improvements to Government Training Schemes. However, financial provision to training organisations for training less able or less motivated young people appears inadequate. More resources should be made available, therefore, to Jobskills Access.

Apart from the lack of relevance of Government Training Schemes, the other major criticism from participants is the lack of financial incentive for taking part in the Schemes. The Government needs to be more flexible in relating social security benefits to training allowances or low wage jobs - the concept is explored further in Chapter Five.

Special training programmes should be explored for those people who may cease to be employed in security related industries if the cessation of violence lasts. Those people who have served in the Security Forces have provided a vital service to the Province and must not become unemployed without proper preparation for alternative employment or self-employment.

The availability and provision of management development training and export/growth training for senior business people should be reviewed and expanded. There should also be competition in provision of higher level business training/education. In addition, companies should be provided with incentives to release managers for development training.

5 UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

New and imaginative ways of tackling unemployment needs to be incorporated into policy and practice. The Social Economy involves developing means to empower local people to help themselves by undertaking community economic activities that will meet local needs, create local jobs, provide relevant local training and generate wealth locally. A principal element of this is the creation of community businesses.

The unemployment problem will not be solved simply by the creation of jobs. The unemployment problem is affected by:

- * high rates of long-term unemployment
- * lack of appropriate skills amongst unemployed people
- * low wage jobs
- * spread of part-time employment
- * lack of flexibility in social security provision.

There are severe repercussions for the wider community due to the massive unemployment problem. Repercussions do not just affect the economic well-being and self-worth of unemployed individuals and their families but they also:

- * affect budgets in other Departments as benefits, housing subsidy and health problems are increased
- * make family dislocation more likely
- * increase theft and other anti-social behaviour
- * stifle a sense of community and local pride
- * attract some people to paramilitarism and general anti-community behaviour

These are undesirable consequences of high and long-term unemployment that will undoubtedly detrimentally affect the development of the political process.

The effects of large-scale unemployment must be particularly avoided when dealing with three categories of people, for various reasons, within the context of current political activity. These are:

- * security and security-related personnel
- * families of the victims of violence
- * ex prisoners and ex offenders

Special employment programmes may be required for each category group.

Several indicators exist to define an area as disadvantaged. One of the measures is the ratio of unemployment in the areas compared to the Northern Ireland average. The additional aid currently coming to the Province needs to be genuinely additional in its funding of initiatives and should be specifically targeted at disadvantaged areas for regeneration and reconciliation projects.

There are large numbers of non economically active people who, while they may be registered as unemployed, are not actually looking for work. Part of the reason for their reluctance to look for work is reflected in other problems felt by unemployed people. Wages on offer in jobs are often too low to justify taking them at the expense of benefit loss. The 'benefits trap' is a major concern in the community and a major barrier to employment take-up. Options to encourage more people to apply for jobs need to be developed.

All people - whether economically active or not - should be fully facilitated into employment. It is disappointing that, partly due to lack of inter-Departmental co-operation, there has been so little flexibility in adjusting benefits in relation to various employment related schemes. There should be positive 'can do' co-operation between the DFP, DED & DHSS to allow initiatives that

- * make up benefit/salary ratios
- * protect benefits for categories of people seeking employment including long-term unemployed people and people with disabilities.
- * allow full benefit resumption for people who have not succeeded in employment, especially disabled people

The effective tackling of long-term unemployment, however, is closely tied to the development of a real social economy in Northern Ireland. A real social economy will:

- * develop community leadership and individual skills
- * establish community businesses meeting local needs
- * create jobs for local and long-term unemployed people
- * create employment training opportunities for local and long-term unemployed people
- * develop community confidence and pride
- * create a community enterprise culture

The development of a real social economy should be tied to existing initiatives but is so important that it deserves the provision of a separate unit operating within LEDU. The Social Economy Development Unit (SEDU) operating within LEDU should have a distinct budget, staffing and objectives.

Due to the length of time without work, long-term unemployed people are less likely to be able to effectively compete for newly created jobs than other people

looking for work. As such, unemployment can be self-perpetuating for long-term unemployed people. Training or retraining, through the social economy agenda and various training initiatives, will help considerably. However, employers should also, at least for a limited period, be provided with monetary incentives to employ people previously unemployed for at least two years. Two suggestions that have already been made are interesting and workable:

- * a one year national insurance holiday per employee
- * a tax rebate per employee

Finally, the availability of reasonably priced and good quality childcare is absolutely critical to opening work opportunities to many women and men. Such childcare is often not currently available. There needs to be urgent action taken involving the private, public and community sectors in providing comprehensive childcare throughout Northern Ireland.

6. COMPETITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Provision of good transport infrastructure and development of energy options are central prerequisites to making Northern Ireland business more competitive. They are also areas requiring island-wide co-operation. Broad cross-border co-operation is discussed in Chapter Seven.

The main areas where improvement is required in the road network include:

- * upgrading of the Larne-Belfast-Dublin-Cork main road to dual carriageway status
- * upgrading of the east-west road networks to facilitate the dispersal of industry

There are three main improvements required to the Larne-Newry road directly under the control of the Northern Ireland administration. These are:

1. building the Newry by-pass
2. improving traffic flow on the Belfast Westlink
3. upgrading the Belfast-Larne road.

Action on all three has been delayed too long already. To quicken development and secure additional investment the private sector should be actively involved.

Other transport improvements required include:

- * upgrading of rail links within the island of Ireland
- * co-ordination of overall transport links between Ireland and Great Britain, particularly in linking Northern Ireland to England and the subsequent road and rail links between British ports and the main cities.
- * air links from Belfast directly to other parts of Ireland, Europe and North America

The main energy-related issue is to ensure the provision of the cheapest possible energy for Northern Ireland business and domestic customers. Many companies have high energy overheads and the cost of energy is directly related to their overall competitiveness. The North-South Interconnector should be made operational as soon as possible, but should not stop exploration for alternative cheaper energy sources in the long term.

Within the limits of existing energy provision, however, Northern Ireland could be made more energy efficient. A new and more vigorous energy saving campaign should be launched and directed at SME's in the Province. It should be co-ordinated through the Department of Economic Development and employers representatives.

An integrated transport strategy for Northern Ireland is required that links and co-ordinates the Area Plans already in existence in all parts of the Province. This

should take cognisance of the impact of transportation issues in Great Britain and Europe. As such Northern Ireland requires:

- * alleviation of road bottlenecks in Great Britain
- * an inter-modal transport centre suitably located in Great Britain
- * a strategy for full utilisation of the Channel tunnel
- * upgrading of transport networks in western Great Britain

7. CROSS BORDER CO-OPERATION

The 'troubles' have affected all parts of Ireland for the last quarter of a century and more. The economy in the Republic of Ireland has been detrimentally affected as well as that of Northern Ireland. However, the Northern Ireland economy has been comparatively much more badly hit by the various terrorist campaigns, as well as the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

Economic development is a core element in cementing a political process that should create working relationships between the North & South, and increase mutual understanding and respect between both parts of the island and the community within Northern Ireland. To optimise the opportunities of an extended period of peace and the international attention and goodwill to Northern Ireland, tangible co-operation between both parts of Ireland is essential.

However, while there may be a significant role for cross-border economic-related bodies i.e. in EU matters, improving competitiveness, improving infrastructure, generating trade and co-ordinating joint marketing campaigns, the economies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have developed in separate ways and should be allowed to continue to develop appropriately. The two economies have different weaknesses and strengths. Northern Ireland is still closely tied to the UK exchequer and economy, while the Republic of Ireland has become more independent economically within the European Union. As such, the cross-border links that should be created need to be created in the context of different policies and objectives without interfering in the most effective economic development for both parts of Ireland. In addition, the accountability of any cross-border links and bodies must be to the people of the Republic of Ireland and the people of Northern Ireland through respective local parliaments.

The idea of a Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor has been muted in recent years. The Economic Corridor idea is interesting and may bring many economic benefits to the island. The Corridor area contains about half the total population of the island. Industry based in the Corridor is therefore strategically well placed for internal distribution and for exporting. However, the concept of the Economic Corridor needs to be redefined and refocussed to create a genuine understanding of it by people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It has not yet been sold effectively.

Before being truly effective the Economic Corridor needs to be supported by infrastructural changes and improvements outlined in Chapter Six. This will facilitate North-South trade and co-operation, but will also encourage dispersal of spin-off business and profits of trade to the west.

A properly developed North-South Economic Corridor with targeted business sectors concentrated in the area will help to:

- * increase manufacturing business in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- * provide easier access for local sourcing projects to benefit businesses in the Corridor
- * increase competitiveness

- * bring inward investment
- * internationalise local standards and skills
- * help the more efficient use of public funds

However, an Economic Corridor need not be confined to the Belfast-Dublin area. Smaller Corridors or links should be explored between Armagh-Monaghan, Derry-Letterkenny, Enniskillen-Sligo etc. It is important to spread the benefits of economic development to the West.

One of the principal reasons to increase cross-border co-operation is to increase inter-Ireland trade. There are several constraints to trade including:

- * lack of market information
- * attitudinal negativeness
- * poor infrastructure
- * lack of awareness of opportunities
- * lack of local sourcing initiatives

Overcoming these barriers and encouraging inter-Ireland trade, particularly where products substitute for non-Ireland imports, should be encouraged by various pro-business programmes.

8. EQUALITY

Equality of opportunity is a fundamental human right. There are four main areas that continue to need attention regarding the promotion of equality. These are:

- * religion
- * gender
- * disability
- * age

Obviously everyone is entitled to free and equal access to all education, training, employment and other programmes or initiatives. Much has been achieved in ensuring equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland, although there is noticeably less attention paid to ensuring equality for people with disabilities and older people.

Unemployment is a major social problem in both Catholic and Protestant areas. Creating jobs and matching regeneration aid to disadvantaged areas is important regardless of religion. However, there is still an unemployment imbalance between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Part of the reason is structural i.e. demography, but discrimination still exists on both sides of the community. The Fair Employment Commission is continuing to do a good job for the long-term good of the local economy and employment equality. However:

- * recognition should be increased for religious opinion other than 'Protestant' and 'Catholic'. This includes non-believers as well as other religions.
- * more free advice should be made available on fair employment practice from an independent agency other than the FEC.

Women need to be provided with more support to free entry into the labour market. This includes:

- * provision of an adequate network of childcare provision
- * guaranteed payment of equal wages for equal work
- * adequate provision of public transport to major employment areas
- * review of social security benefits to encourage people into employment
- * provision of proper career development advice, training & back up

People with disabilities also need to be provided with more support to free entry into the labour market. This includes all of the factors identified above.

Older people, even people of pensionable age, should have their experience and skills fairly and fully utilised in business. Employers should not be permitted to allow age to be a determining factor in allocation of employment. Ageism is wrong and counter-productive.

9. ACTION POINTS

Alliance has set the following agenda for action to challenge all relevant to economic development to make the most of present opportunities. We want to see:

A. Structure and Practice

- 1 An overall political settlement that will create political stability and, hopefully, a long-term peace.
- 2 The creation of an interim Forum of Key Influencers drawn from the private, public, community and voluntary sectors as well as the main political parties.
- 3 A leadership development programme for the private, public and community sectors.
- 4 The re-channeling of resources saved by the cessation of violence into economic development.

B. Enterprise Culture

5. An innovative enterprise practice challenge to the DED agencies themselves to be enterprising in practice.
6. A new invigorated and redirected Enterprising Northern Ireland campaign.
7. The identification and dissemination of successful business role models.
8. An ongoing programme to encourage the return of our migrated talent particularly for business purposes.
9. A comprehensive Enterprise in Education programme.

C. Trade and Business Support

10. Increased actual co-operation between the DED agencies and various relevant Government Departments.
11. Increased resource allocation to the IDB, LEDU & NITB.
12. Onngoing benchmarking performance comparisons of the IDB with the IDA.
13. Provision of a degree of fiscal autonomy to the Department of Finance and Personnel that allows for differences to Great Britain in offering tax and other incentives to investors, including 10% corporation tax for manufacturing companies even with a 25% reduction in Selective Financial Assistance.

14. Private sector lead in economic development, job creation and increasing business competitiveness.
15. Review of the provision of loans and loan guarantees from economic support agencies to existing businesses and new business start-ups.
16. Emphasis placed on stimulating competitiveness in Northern Ireland industry in all areas of support.
17. Government intervention where necessary and where the private sector may not find involvement profitable, particularly west of the Bann.
18. Ongoing consultation with Northern Ireland businesses to evaluate the effectiveness of business support programmes and to shape improvements in them.
19. Publication of a Small Business Charter to stimulate better trading conditions for small business especially in encouraging rapid payments from the public sector and large private sector companies.
20. Replacement of the PONI campaign with a newly invigorated Made in Northern Ireland campaign.
21. Continued separate operation of economic development agencies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, but exploration of joint efforts outside Ireland such as a combined marketing campaign.
22. Exploration of the extension of Enterprise Zones in Northern Ireland.
23. Better planning of public transport provision for employees needing to travel to work.

D. Education & Training

24. Increased recognition of enterprise and business within teacher training programmes.
25. Compulsory placements in industry for teachers undergoing teacher training.
26. Compulsory provision of practical business operation programmes in all primary and secondary schools for P7 and 5th Form pupils.
27. Improvement in career guidance for young people at schools, relevant to modern industrial demands.
28. Increase in resources for the Jobskills Access Programme.
29. More and better management development training within existing SME's.
30. Competition in the provision of third level and university business courses.

E. Unemployment and the Social Economy

31. The targeting of genuinely additional aid to Northern Ireland on areas specified as disadvantaged.
32. Review of the use of social security benefits to more flexibly break down the 'benefits trap', including salary/benefit sliding scales and the guaranteed protection of benefits and benefit levels for people with disabilities who cannot continue in employment.
33. Establishment of a Social Economy Development Unit within LEDU.
34. Planning for potential security-related redundancies including a career option programme for security services and employment/self-employment programmes for people who may leave security-related jobs.
35. The provision of financial incentives to employers to employ long-term unemployed people.
36. The provision of comprehensive, Province-wide, quality and reasonably priced childcare provision through a public, private, community and voluntary partnership.

F. Competitive Infrastructure

37. Adoption of an integrated transport strategy for Northern Ireland.
38. Considerable upgrading of the roads infrastructure both North/South and East/West with particular emphasis on the Larne-Dublin route.
39. Upgrading of the overall rail network in Ireland and development of an East/West rail network in Northern Ireland.
40. An improvement in passenger and freight sea travel provision between Northern Ireland and England.
41. The provision of more direct airlinks between Northern Ireland and Europe, North America and the rest of Ireland.
42. An intermodal transport centre in Great Britain.
43. Improvement in transportation networks in Great Britain, especially in the west of Great Britain.
44. Urgent operation of the North/South electricity interconnector.
45. Identification of the cheapest energy provision for the Province in the long term.
46. The launch of a new Northern Ireland-wide energy efficiency campaign.

G. Cross Border Co-Operation

- 47. Creation of cross border economic related bodies to facilitate economic development where relevant and mutually beneficial, and wholly accountable to a new Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 48. Support for the idea of a Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor.
- 49. Support for similar, smaller Economic Corridors in the South & West of Northern Ireland.
- 50. The identification of trade barriers between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and implementation of programmes to break down those barriers.

H. Equality

- 51. The formal recognition in fair employment of religious views other than Protestant and Catholic, including non-believing and other religions.
- 52. The provision of more free advice on fair employment to employers from an independent agency other than the FEC.
- 53. Provision of career development programmes for women and for people with disabilities.
- 54. Implementation of anti-ageism legislation and utilisation of the experience and skills of older people.