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NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

INLAND WATERWAYS SECTORAL FORMAT

BELFAST

2 DECEMBER 2009

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The tenth North South Ministerial Council meeting in Inland Waterways sectoral format was held in Belfast on 2 December 2009.
2. The meeting was attended by Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Conor Murphy MP MLA, Minister for Regional Development and Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Minister McCausland chaired the meeting.

Progress Report

3. The Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland, Mr John Martin, presented a report on progress which included the provision of 99 metres of additional moorings this year so far and the construction of the remaining bridge to reconnect the Royal Canal to the Shannon. Waterways Ireland also continued its marketing activities with the provision of new publications to promote and support the use of the waterways and the sponsoring of key events on the waterways in 2009.

Waterways Ireland Business Plan and Budget 2009

4. The Council noted that Waterways Ireland has applied efficiency savings to the 2009 budget in accordance with guidance issued by the two Finance Departments.
5. The Council noted the revised 2009 Business Plan and budget provision which will be brought to a future NSMC meeting for approval.

Waterways Ireland Business Plan 2010

6. The Council noted that the Waterways Ireland draft Business Plan 2010 is subject to budgetary considerations and will be brought to a future NSMC meeting for approval.

Restoration of the Clones-Upper Lough Erne Section of the Ulster Canal

7. The Council received a progress report on the restoration work for the Clones to Upper Lough Erne section of the Ulster Canal. The Council noted that work on the Strategic Environmental Assessment is due to be completed by the end of 2009 and work on the Environmental Impact Assessment is due for completion in July 2010. It also noted that possible routes and options are being reviewed.

The Shannon Waterway

8. The Council received a presentation on Waterways Ireland's activities on the Shannon waterway. The Council noted that since 2000, Waterways Ireland has increased the number of moorings by over 50% and increased the number of vessels on the Shannon by over 120%.
9. The Council discussed the severe flooding currently being experienced, particularly along the Shannon where unprecedented levels of water have been recorded.

Property Disposals

10. The Council agreed proposals for a number of property disposals in the context of a range of development projects on the waterways.

Next Meeting

11. The Council agreed to meet again in Inland Waterways sectoral format at a date to be agreed in the second quarter of 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
2 December 2009**