

BRIEFING

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Key Message: Engagement with representatives of overseas governments offers the opportunity not just to boost the economy at home, but also to improve human rights abroad. The Assembly should support the Executive in adopting similar approaches to that already adopted by the Scottish and Welsh governments and integrate human rights into a wider strategy governing all international links.

WHY?

- Northern Ireland Government's engagement on the international stage is an opportunity for Northern Ireland to play a positive role in international affairs;
- Northern Ireland has an international responsibility to ensure that its international relations and activities do not contravene international human rights standards but this is the least that should be asked of us and Northern Ireland can go beyond that and play a positive role in the world; and
- Northern Ireland should adopt the responsible approach of raising human rights in all its overseas engagements as is done by other devolved administrations. E.g. Scotland's 'China Engagement Plan'.

QUESTION TO ASK CANDIDATES:

Around the world people face human rights abuses every day. Would you / your party ensure that human rights are at the forefront of Northern Ireland's international relations?

Will you / your party support the Executive in adopting similar approaches to that already adopted by the Scottish and Welsh governments and integrate human rights into a wider strategy governing all international links?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Northern Ireland Executive currently has no formal policy about raising human rights issues with countries it engages with. Amnesty International believe that the Assembly should call on the Executive to adopt similar guidelines to governing international links as is done in other devolved administrations e.g.

Section 14 of the Scottish Government's China Engagement Plan states: *'Scottish Ministers will take the opportunity to raise with appropriate senior Chinese figures concerns about Human Rights in China. We will encourage Scottish organisations to engage in programmes in China which are designed to have positive impact on human rights.'*