



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **The Second Ministerial meeting of the British Irish Council's
Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages Group
(IMLG)**

DATE **22 November 2011**

BY **Leighton Andrews, Minister for Education and Skills**

On Friday 11 November I chaired the second Ministerial meeting held by the British Irish Council's Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages Group in the Gweedore Court Hotel, Gaith Dobhair, Ireland.

The IMLG work stream was established in 2002 by the British Irish Council.

The meeting considered and endorsed 2 papers:

- Promoting Language and Culture within Minority Language Communities
- An update on activities and suggestions for a forward work programme

Promoting the use of indigenous and minority and lesser used languages (IMLs) within communities was recognised as a vital part of promoting IMLs and safeguarding their future. Ministers endorsed the findings of the conference held in Belfast in October 2010 that considered and shared good practice in the field of promoting language and culture within minority language communities. Ministers agreed that projects to support the use of IMLs by young people, within families, and within the wider community should be supported by governments. Ministers also noted the importance of adopting a government led strategy to promote the use of IMLs, and agreed to share best practice within BIC when developing such strategies.

Ministers reviewed the achievements of the work stream since the first Ministerial meeting in 2006, and noted its positive contribution in ensuring that best practice is shared amongst Member Administrations. Ministers also considered and approved proposals for the future work programme of the IML Group. The group will continue with its work in the areas of education, young people, broadcasting, legislation and the economic impact of IMLs. The group will also focus on two new areas, namely marketing, and ICT (social networking in particular). Ministers tasked the group with identifying further synergies with the Network for the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) to gain maximum leverage from public resources in this area. The NPLD is a pan-European network which encompasses constitutional, regional and smaller-state languages to promote linguistic diversity in the context of a multilingual Europe.

Ministers also commended the proceedings of a seminar for practitioners working in the field of promoting the use of IMLs amongst young people. The seminar was arranged in partnership between the British Irish Council's IML Group and the NPLD. Ministers welcomed the opportunity for practitioners from BIC Member Administrations to share experiences with European partners through the involvement of the NPLD. The seminar, which was held in Gweedore on 9 and 10 November, offered an opportunity for administrations to share best practice in the field.

The Irish Government was represented by the Minister for State for Gaeltacht Affairs, Dinny McGinley TD, who welcomed the delegates to the meeting. The Scottish Government was represented by Minister for Learning and Skills, Alasdair Allan MSP. Northern Ireland was represented by Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA. Guernsey was represented by Deputy Michael O' Hara, Minister, Culture and Leisure Department, Jersey by Mario Lundy, Director of Education, and the Isle of Man by Chief Executive Officer, Department of Education and Children, Stuart Dobson. The UK Government is represented on the BIC Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages Group by Rt. Hon. Hugo Swire MP, Minister of State for Northern Ireland.