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Joint Statement by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach

As the joint guarantors of the Good Friday and St Andrews Agreements which provide the essential framework for peace and stability, we welcome the agreement that has been reached by the parties to complete devolution.

The two governments were happy to work together with the parties to reach this successful outcome. The agreement they have reached will lead within a few months to the devolution of policing and justice powers, and the further consolidation of the process begun in the Good Friday Agreement and continued at St Andrews.

The stable and efficient operation of the Executive and Assembly is clearly what the people of Northern Ireland want.

It is the essential underpinning to social stability and economic advance.

It is critical to securing overseas investment.

It provides confidence that the Executive and Assembly will continue to discharge its responsibilities on behalf of all the people of Northern Ireland.

And it sends a clear message to those few who still want to undermine peace that they cannot and will not succeed.

The successful outcome of these negotiations is the result of the political parties in Northern Ireland demonstrating leadership, mutual respect and political will to act in the interests of the whole community.

The two Governments fully support and stand over this agreement. We are committed to working, as appropriate, to ensure its faithful implementation.

Today is a good day for the people of Northern Ireland and for the people of these islands.