

## PRESS RELEASE

10 September 2007

### **IN PLAIN ENGLISH AND OTHER LANGUAGES TOO - REGISTER TO VOTE!**

The Electoral Office has made registering to vote even easier with introduction of a new Electoral Registration Form. The English language version has been completely revised and simplified and has been awarded the Plain English language crystal mark. For the increasing number of people in Northern Ireland who are eligible to vote at certain elections but whose first language is not English, the forms are now available in eight other languages including Irish, Ulster-Scots, Mandarin, Polish and Latvian.

Douglas Bain, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, was joined at the launch in Parliament Buildings by Anna Lo, MLA, who was returned in Belfast South constituency representing the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland in the 2007 Assembly Election to become the first Chinese member of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Speaking at the event, Douglas Bain said:

**“It’s vitally important that everyone in our community has an equal opportunity to play a full part in our democratic process. Being on the Electoral Register allows individuals to have a say in who represents the political views of our increasingly diverse society.**

**“It’s now easier than ever to register and ensure that your vote counts. Irrespective of the increasing speculation of an Autumn General Election, I would encourage everyone to make sure that they are on the register so that they can have their say in our political future.”**

Anna Lo, MLA, added:

**“I welcome this initiative as a clear acknowledgement of the enormous change in cultural diversity in our community. I am delighted to support this work of the Electoral Office and would encourage everyone to embrace the many different cultures that make up our society. This will help us come together and move even closer towards our goal of true racial equality for all who live here.”**

The new forms in English and other languages can be obtained by phoning the Electoral Office Advice Line on 0800 4320 712 or by visiting [www.eoni.org.uk](http://www.eoni.org.uk)

#### Notes for Editors

As well as being available in English, Electoral Register Forms are now available in:

Cantonese  
Irish  
Latvian  
Lithuanian

Mandarin  
Polish  
Portuguese and  
Ulster-Scots

The total cost of making the forms available in all these other languages is less than £1500. Forms will be held electronically and printed only as required.

The Electoral Office has recently put in place translation facilities for those calling at or phoning its offices who would prefer to use their own language.