

## Ards Intercultural Forum Marks Community Relations Week 2012

18 May 2012

**Newtownards, NORTHERN IRELAND:** To commemorate Community Relations Week 2012 the Ards Intercultural Forum (AIF) organised an event at Kiltonga Hall with the theme: “Embracing the Changing Face of Diversity”.

The Ards Intercultural Forum is an umbrella body of 17 statutory bodies and groups from the community and voluntary sector focused on Good Relations and ensuring representation and access to services for ethnic minority communities in Ards Borough.



**Front Row: Cllr. Mervyn Oswald – The Mayor of Ards with Dr Christopher Stange - AIF Chair and Jonathan Bell MLA – OFMdfM Jnr. Minister**

**Back Row (L-R): Sandra Henderson – AIF Secretary; Des McAuley - AIF Vice-Chair; Mike Nesbitt MLA; Jim Shannon MP; Jim Murdock - Good Relations Officer, Ards Borough Council; Cllr. Deborah Girvan**

The event was well attended by elected representatives (Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Councillors (Cllrs), statutory and government bodies, community leaders and distinguished guests.

Master of Ceremony was Des McAuley - AIF Vice-Chair with the welcome address provided by Cllr. Mervyn Oswald - The Mayor of Ards, followed by presentations by Jim Murdock - Good Relations Officer, Ards Borough Council on AIF and Dr Christopher Stange - AIF Chair and Secretariat of the Consular Association of Northern Ireland on Diplomacy and Multiculturalism.

The keynote speaker was Jonathan Bell MLA, Jnr. Minister at the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM). Minister Bell said: "Ards Intercultural Forum is to be applauded for its ongoing work in championing the needs of the community and combating the causes and manifestations of racial mistrust."

**ENDS**