



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AN ROINN GNÓTHAI EACHTRACHA

**Department of Foreign Affairs**  
**Annual Report**  
**2007**



## **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs is to advance Ireland's political and economic interests in the European Union and in the wider world, to promote Ireland's contribution to international peace, security and development both through the European Union and through active participation in international organisations, in particular the United Nations, to protect our citizens abroad, and to pursue reconciliation and partnership on the island of Ireland.



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## Foreword by the Minister for Foreign Affairs

I am delighted to accept the Annual Report for 2007, which has been prepared in line with the provisions of the Public Service Management Act, 1997.

2007 was a momentous year for the island of Ireland. It was marked in particular by the restoration of the Assembly and the Executive in Northern Ireland and by the convening of a plenary meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council in Armagh, the first in 5 years. These developments were vividly symbolised by the meeting between the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern T.D., and the First Minister Dr. Ian Paisley in Farmleigh, by the former Taoiseach's address to the Joint Houses of Parliament at Westminster and by Dr. Paisley's visit to the Battle of the Boyne site. As we move forward with the final implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, we must also ensure that we address the difficult legacy issues arising from over thirty years of conflict.

In the international arena, the Department of Foreign Affairs continued to work to ensure that Ireland contributed to addressing the difficult political, humanitarian and human rights challenges in the Middle East, Darfur, Burma and elsewhere. The Department worked closely with the Minister for Defence and his Department to help bring about a major Irish role in the EU mission to Chad. This mission will underpin efforts to protect refugees from Darfur and other displaced persons.

In line with the commitment in the Programme for Government, the Department has developed a work programme for the new Conflict Resolution Unit. During 2007, Ireland was also at the heart of international efforts to ban cluster munitions. At the recent Diplomatic Conference in Croke Park, which was hosted and chaired by Ireland, a new Convention prohibiting the use, manufacture and acquisition of cluster munitions was adopted by consensus. It will be signed in Oslo on 3 December 2008 and will enter into force once ratified by 30 states. I look forward to advancing this important work.

In Europe, the Reform Treaty was signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007 and preparations began immediately afterwards on legislation to enable the Irish people to endorse the Treaty by way of a referendum. At the beginning of 2007, the Irish language became an official and working language of the Union, and last year also saw the enactment by the Oireachtas of legislation to streamline the way we transpose EC law in this jurisdiction.

In my previous Ministerial roles, I have seen at first-hand the economic work of Irish Embassies. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, I will support the continued development of this aspect of the Department's work, encouraging ongoing efforts to promote trade and business opportunities for Irish companies. The Department has prepared guidelines for our Embassies to further focus their work in promoting trade and investment opportunities. In addition, specialised training on trade issues was also provided during 2007 to equip our diplomats with the necessary knowledge and skills for this important work.

The Department's Development Cooperation Directorate, Irish Aid, drove significant progress on a wide range of fronts as part of Ireland's efforts to reduce poverty and promote sustainable growth in developing countries. As an indicator of our leadership



on the development agenda, Ireland was the sixth highest contributor in the world to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funding in 2007.

We also established a Hunger Task Force to examine the particular contribution Ireland can make to tackle the root causes of food insecurity, particularly in Africa. The Task Force, which comprises some eminent leaders in this area, met twice last year and is to report later in 2008

Work was concluded on the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre, which was opened in January 2008. A new Irish Embassy was opened in Malawi and a bilateral aid programme for that country was established, bringing our priority countries to nine. In addition, new Country Strategy Papers, which set out Irish Aid's strategy for development cooperation in specific countries, were agreed for Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia and South Africa. We also concluded multi-annual programmes with a number of Irish NGOs under which €326M will be provided to this important sector over the next four years.

In 2007, the Department opened a purpose-built Crisis Centre in Dublin, which can be operationalised at short notice in response to emergencies overseas. Emergency consular assistance teams have been established from amongst volunteers in the Department and training has been provided. Since last year, the Department also provides consular assistance to the public from its offices in Cork and new passport legislation which will add to the security of Irish passports was introduced in 2007 and enacted earlier this year.

I believe we can look back on 2007 as a year of considerable achievement across the range of activities of the Department of Foreign Affairs. I wish to record my thanks to my predecessor, Minister Dermot Ahern for his work and commitment in the period covered by this Report. I look forward to working closely with my colleagues Minister of State Dick Roche and Minister of State Peter Power, in the areas of European Affairs and Overseas Aid, respectively.

I also wish to acknowledge the work of the staff of the Department in support of its strategic goals. I am confident that the work done in 2007 will serve as a platform for the further development of Ireland's role in the world in pursuance of its interests and values.

Micheál Martin T.D.  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



## Introduction

### Introduction by the Secretary General

I am delighted to present this Annual Report for 2007 to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Micheál Martin T.D.

The restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive in May 2007 was one of the defining moments of the year for the Department of Foreign Affairs and, indeed, the country as a whole. It was the culmination of many years of work by many people, but the staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs, working under the direction of the Minister, can rightly be proud of their contribution to this enormous achievement. Of course, challenges remain but the nature of those challenges has changed, and we are adapting to meet those changed circumstances.

The Department also contributed to the drafting of the EU Reform Treaty, which was signed by the Taoiseach and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Lisbon in December. In 2007, we gave greater clarity and focus to the economic work of the Department, with the publication of a new guide to assist our Missions in promoting trade and business opportunities for Irish companies

2007 saw the Irish Aid budget once again reach record levels. The effective and efficient management of the aid programme, to deliver real change, is a key challenge for the Department. Last year's establishment of a high-level Inter-Departmental Committee on Development is just one reflection of the changes being brought about to meet this challenge and maintain the highest quality programme. A management review of the structures needed for the programme as it continues to grow, undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Finance, got underway in 2007 and will complete its work in 2008.

The Department made very significant progress in meeting its commitments under the Government's programme of decentralisation. An advance party of over 50 people is now working in Limerick and the remainder of those being decentralised will transfer once the new offices are completed later this year.

In the area of Conflict Resolution, in many respects a new priority for the Department, the work done in 2007 has laid a firm foundation for more visible work in 2008 and beyond, drawing on a wide range of resources from within and without the Department.

Building on the experience of the successful Lebanon evacuation in 2006, and that of a number of structured exercises, the Department upgraded its capacity to respond, at short notice, to emergency situations abroad which threaten the security of Irish citizens. This is just one example of our ongoing efforts to improve the level of service we offer to Irish people travelling and living abroad.



This report is presented in the context of the Statement of Strategy for 2005-2007. In reporting on the last of the years covered by that Statement, I feel we can confidently say that the Department has made enormous progress in meeting the challenges we set for ourselves over that period. I again wish to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the Department's staff, both at Headquarters and across our network of Missions, for continuing to provide a first class service to the Irish people, the Minister and the Government.

Dermot Gallagher  
Secretary General

## Our Strategy

Ireland's foreign policy is shaped by our values and by the external environment to which we relate them. The Department of Foreign Affairs' Strategy Statement 2005-2007 defined the Department's priorities for the period covered by this report.

Documents referenced in this Annual Report such as the Strategy Statement for 2005-2007, the White Paper on Irish Aid and the St. Andrews Agreement are all available on the Department's website: [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie).

## Structure of the Department

Under the political direction of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Department is managed by the Secretary General, who is also the Accounting Officer for its two Votes – Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) and Vote 29 (International Cooperation). The Secretary General is supported by a Management Advisory Committee (MAC) comprising the Heads of the main Divisions in the Department.

The work of the Department is divided between eleven divisions at headquarters (HQ) and a total of 76 diplomatic and consular offices abroad (referred to as "Missions"), as well as the British-Irish Intergovernmental Secretariat in Belfast and the North-South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat in Armagh.

### HQ DIVISIONS:

Anglo-Irish Division  
Bilateral Economic Relations Division (BERD)  
Corporate Services Division  
Cultural Division  
Development Cooperation Directorate  
European Union Division  
Inspection Unit  
Legal Division  
Passport and Consular Division  
Political Division  
Protocol Division

## External Environment

The Department of Foreign Affairs operates in a complex and ever-changing environment shaped by European and wider international influences. The realisation of objectives depends, therefore, not just on the efforts of the Department but also on the behaviour of other States and entities.

Because of the complexity of the external environment, it is essential that the resources available to the Department are deployed to the optimum effect. We cannot and do not work in isolation. The Department acts in close cooperation with other Government Departments that have external responsibilities, in order to



contribute effectively to the attainment of the goals set down in the Programme for Government and in successive Partnership Agreements.

### High Level Goals, 2005-2007

The Department's high level goals for the period 2005-2007, on which this report is largely based, are:

<b>Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations</b>	Work to achieve the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the sustained operation of all its institutions, promoting co-operation, mutual understanding and respect between both traditions on the island, between North and South in Ireland and between these islands.
<b>Ireland's Role in the World</b>	Pursue Ireland's foreign policy in accordance with the ideals enshrined in the Constitution and in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter, through the development of our bilateral relations with other States, our participation in the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy, and our active and principled participation in international organisations.
<b>The European Union</b>	Promote and protect Ireland's interests at the heart of the European Union as it continues to evolve and enlarge, including through the further development of our relations with our current and future EU partners.
<b>Advancing Ireland's Economic and Cultural Interests</b>	Promote Ireland's trade, investment and other interests, including its culture, in close co-operation with other Departments, State Agencies and the private sector, ensuring that the State's network of diplomatic and consular missions adds real value to this task.
<b>Irish Aid</b>	Make a substantive and effective contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to poverty reduction and sustainable growth in developing countries, through the policy and programmes of Development Cooperation Ireland, and by working for a just and stable international economic system.
<b>Consular and Passport Services</b>	Protect and support the interests of Irish citizens abroad, maintain and strengthen links with people of Irish ancestry, and provide a modern and efficient passport and consular service.



## 2007: Summary of Developments and Achievements

<b>Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly.</li><li>• Securing of all-party support for policing and criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.</li><li>• Restoration of Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive.</li><li>• North/South Ministerial Council Plenary in Armagh, followed by 13 NSMC meetings at Ministerial level.</li><li>• All-island co-operation is a key horizontal theme of the National Development Plan 2007-2013.</li><li>• British-Irish Council Summit in Belfast chaired by First &amp; Deputy First Ministers.</li><li>• Minister Ahern hosted the second Reconciliation Networking Forum.</li><li>• Completion of British Army Security Normalisation programme in Northern Ireland.</li><li>• Address by the Taoiseach to the Joint Houses of Parliament at Westminster.</li><li>• Meetings between Taoiseach and First Minister Paisley at Farmleigh and at the Battle of the Boyne site.</li></ul>
<b>Ireland's Role in the World</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ireland remained active in working for a strong and balanced EU approach to the continuing crisis in the Middle East, as well as in relation to the situations in Burma, Iran and Zimbabwe which provoked international concern throughout the year.</li><li>• Successful visits were made by Minister Ahern to the Middle East (Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon) in January, and to Sudan/Chad and Bosnia/Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo in November.</li><li>• The visit to Sudan/Chad demonstrated Ireland's continuing strong engagement in efforts to resolve the serious humanitarian crisis in Darfur, including through financial support for UN and African Union-mediated peace talks and the Government's decision to deploy up to 450 troops to the ESDP EUFOR mission in Chad/CAR.</li><li>• Increased Irish commitment to conflict resolution, through continuing progress in development of a dedicated unit for Conflict Resolution within the Department of Foreign Affairs, the decision to establish an Academic Centre for Conflict Resolution, and substantially increased funding for conflict resolution efforts in the developing world.</li><li>• Continuing strong commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, including through lead role in efforts to negotiate the first specific international legal instrument on cluster munitions, hopefully to be concluded at a major diplomatic conference in Dublin in May 2008.</li></ul>



<b>The European Union</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Reform Treaty was agreed and signed at Lisbon on 13 December 2007.</li><li>• The European Communities Act 2007 was enacted to improve and modernise the way EU legislation is transposed into Irish law.</li><li>• The Spring European Council put climate change and the development of a new energy policy at the top of the EU agenda.</li><li>• Irish became an Official and Working language of the EU.</li></ul>
<b>Advancing Ireland's Economic and Cultural Interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supported Taoiseach's visit to Saudi Arabia and the UAE in January and followed-up throughout the year.</li><li>• Prepared policy guidelines on the economic work of missions, following consultations with heads of missions, state agencies and business bodies.</li><li>• Arranged for substantive training on trade issues for officers going abroad on posting in 2007.</li><li>• Supported the Government's Asia Strategy through participation in High Level Group, and facilitation of increased economic linkages.</li><li>• Used opportunity provided by 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations to enhance economic, trade and cultural links with Japan.</li><li>• Facilitated the promotion abroad of Ireland's diverse cultural heritage.</li></ul>
<b>Irish Aid</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An Inter-Departmental Committee for Development was established and held three meetings.</li><li>• Ireland gave 0.075% of its GDP as humanitarian funding, the third highest level in the world.</li><li>• Ireland's stockpiles of humanitarian supplies were put in place at the UN's humanitarian response base in Brindisi, Italy and at the Curragh Camp in Ireland.</li><li>• Recruitment to the Rapid Response Corps began in February and deployments of individual volunteers began in September.</li><li>• The Hunger Task Force was established and held two meetings.</li><li>• There was significantly increased engagement in two Fragile States, Sierra Leone and Liberia.</li><li>• Significant progress was made in decentralising the Development Cooperation Directorate to Limerick. By the end of 2007, an advance party of over fifty staff was in place in Limerick and 83% of the Directorate staff to be decentralised had been designated.</li><li>• Work on the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre was completed, allowing the Centre to be officially opened in January 2008.</li><li>• Irish Aid launched its five year strategy plan for</li></ul>



<b>Irish Aid (Contd.)</b>	<p>development education in November 2007.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) were put in place for Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia and South Africa.</li><li>• A new Embassy was opened in Malawi and the establishment of a bilateral aid programme for that country was well advanced.</li><li>• Significant progress was achieved in restructuring Irish Aid's relationship with the UN Funds Programmes.</li><li>• Irish Aid continued to prioritise the reform of the UN development system and actively engaged with country-level UN reform programmes in Vietnam and Tanzania.</li><li>• Multi-annual programme agreements for the period 2007-2011 concluded with Concern, Trócaire, Goal and Christian Aid.</li></ul>
<b>Consular and Passport Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dedicated Crisis Centre opened.</li><li>• Emergency Consular Assistance Teams established.</li><li>• Provision of comprehensive consular support for major sporting fixtures abroad.</li><li>• Effective response to large volume of consular cases including over 130 deaths abroad.</li><li>• Renewed contact with our partners in the travel, health, insurance industries, the Defence Forces and Garda Síochána to further develop services to assist citizens abroad.</li><li>• New Passport Bill Published.</li><li>• Some 600,000 e-passports issued.</li><li>• Additional range of Consular Services provided to the public from the Department's offices in Cork.</li><li>• Emigrant funding expanded to include capital, cultural and heritage projects.</li><li>• Comprehensive Value for Money and Policy Review completed on support programme for Irish emigrants.</li></ul>

## Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations

### High Level Goal, 2005-2007:

**Work to achieve the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the sustained operation of all its institutions, promoting co-operation, mutual understanding and respect between both traditions on the island, between North and South in Ireland and between these islands.**

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### 2007 in Review

2007 was a year of unparalleled progress for the peace process on this island. The combined efforts of the two Governments and the Northern Ireland political parties had culminated in the St Andrews Agreement in October 2006. The first quarter of 2007 saw the implementation of key elements of that agreement, including all party support for policing and the holding of the Assembly elections in March, with strong support expressed for pro-Agreement parties and candidates.

These developments paved the way for agreement to restore the power-sharing Institutions of the Good Friday Agreement. On 8 May, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive were restored, in the presence of the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair. This was followed by the North/South Ministerial Council Plenary in Armagh last July, the first in 5 years. Following that meeting the NSMC met at Ministerial level on 13 occasions in 2007 to discuss a variety of issues of mutual concern in areas such as health, education, agriculture and the environment. Also in July, the British-Irish Council Summit was held in Belfast for the first time, jointly chaired by the First and Deputy First Ministers and attended by the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Brown.

In keeping with these developments, the past year also witnessed significant events which demonstrated the improved relations between the two traditions on this island, and between Ireland and Britain, with very positive meetings between the Taoiseach and First Minister Paisley at Farmleigh and at the Battle of the Boyne site, and the Taoiseach's historic address to the Joint Houses of Parliament at Westminster.

2007 also saw the completion of the British Government's Security Normalisation Programme, which had provided for comprehensive reductions in the number of military installations and troops deployed in Northern Ireland, in keeping with the hugely improved security situation there.

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## 2007: Developments and Achievements

### Restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive

Building on the progress of the Good Friday and St Andrews Agreements and following the Assembly elections on March 2007, restoration of devolution took place on May 8<sup>th</sup> with the new Assembly appointing a power-sharing Executive led by First Minister Paisley and Deputy First Minister McGuinness. Since restoration, the Executive has begun to address a number of key policy challenges, including the drafting of a Budget, Programme for Government and Investment Strategy. The close of the year saw the First and Deputy First Minister undertaking a successful visit to New York and Washington, culminating in a meeting with US President Bush.

### Improved Security Environment

2007 saw important achievements, including all-party support for the institutions of policing and criminal justice and all-party representation on the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships. Reflecting the transformed security environment, the British Government's Security Normalisation programme in Northern Ireland was completed, culminating in the end of British military operations in Northern Ireland on 31 July 2007.

Building on the continuing improvement in the security situation over recent years, 2007 saw a largely peaceful Parading Season. The collective efforts of the Parades Commission and political and community representatives were important factors in this.

Both the UVF and UDA issued statements signalling a movement away from paramilitary activity. The International Monitoring Commission continued to confirm the decisive shift to a political path by the IRA.

### North-South Ministerial Council and North/South Cooperation

The fifth plenary meeting of the North-South Ministerial Council took place in Armagh in July 2007, with Government and Executive Ministers contributing to a free-flowing and wide-ranging discussion. Since that date, there have been eleven Sectoral Meetings of the NSMC, advancing policy cooperation in areas such as transport and education, agriculture and tourism. The NSMC has also met twice in Institutional Format, launching a website on cross-border mobility, and approving new appointments to the boards of North/South bodies.

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 laid the basis for all-island infrastructural investment in 2007, shaping the following key decisions taken in NSMC meetings and between Departments North and South:

- A contribution of €580 million towards upgrading the A5 road to Derry/Letterkenny was agreed at the Plenary meeting in July and work is being taken forward through Transport Sectoral Meetings.
- Government contribution of €35 million towards restoring the Ulster Canal from Clones to Lough Erne also agreed at July Plenary meeting, with work to be advanced through NSMC Waterways Sectoral Meetings.
- A Single Electricity Market for the island was introduced with effect from November 1st 2007 and launched jointly by Minister Ryan and Minister Dodds in Belfast.



- Agreement on new EU PEACE III Programme, with focus on reconciling communities and contributing to a shared society, was welcomed by the Tánaiste and Minister Robinson in November 2007. Total PEACE III funding of €333 million to accompany INTERREG IVA programme for territorial cooperation with budget of €256 million.
- Work was also taken forward on the North/South Consultative Forum and the North/South Parliamentary Forum, in line with the mandate given at the NSMC Plenary meeting in July.
- Work also commenced on the Review of the North/South Implementation Bodies and Areas of Co-Operation as provided for in the St Andrews Agreement.

### **British-Irish Council and British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference**

The Department continued to support and develop the work of the **British-Irish Council** (BIC) throughout 2007. A meeting at Summit level on 16 July 2007 in Belfast (the first since devolved government was restored) discussed the strategic direction of the BIC itself, as well as progress in the work areas of Transport, Misuse of Drugs, Environment, e-Health, Tourism, Knowledge Economy, Indigenous/Minority and Lesser Used Languages, Social Inclusion and Demography.

A meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (BIIGC) took place in February 2007. Jointly chaired by Minister Ahern and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the meeting reviewed progress on the implementation of the St Andrews Agreement and assessed the political and security situation in Northern Ireland.

### **Promoting Reconciliation**

The Department continued to support the valuable reconciliation work of cross-community groups and organisations. In 2007, funding of over €2.7 million was awarded to 103 groups engaged in reconciliation initiatives across the island of Ireland.

The second annual Reconciliation Networking Forum was held in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham on 19 April 2007, offering various organisations, including those that have previously received funding from the Reconciliation Fund, the opportunity to interact and share experiences of working in this field.

The **International Fund for Ireland (IFI)** continued to provide much needed financial support to reconciliation activities throughout Northern Ireland and the six border counties. Thanks to the continuing support of the European Union, the US Administration and the governments of Canada, Australia and New Zealand the IFI was able to commit (approx) €23m under its “Sharing this Space” strategy to a diverse range of projects.

### **Addressing the legacy of the conflict**

In June 2007, the Government welcomed the announcement by the British Government of the formation of an independent consultative group to seek a consensus across the community in Northern Ireland on the best way to deal with the legacy of the past.

The Department continued to encourage, and cooperate with, the work of the various inquiries recommended by Judge Cory.

## Ireland's Role in the World

### High Level Goal, 2005-2007:

**Pursue Ireland's foreign policy in accordance with the ideals enshrined in the Constitution and in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter, through the development of our bilateral relations with other States, our participation in the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy, and our active and principled participation in international organisations.**

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### 2007 in Review

The Department continued to work in support of the Government's efforts to achieve the above goal, through active participation in all aspects of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), our committed membership of the United Nations and other international organisations, and through the development of our bilateral political relations with other States.

This work provided the basis for active Irish input on a range of international issues throughout the year, including:

- Support for a strengthened and reformed UN, capable of maintaining international peace and security, addressing humanitarian crises, and responding to new global challenges such as climate change;
- the question of final status for Kosovo;
- the Iranian nuclear question;
- strengthening the partnership between the EU and Africa;
- developing the EU's relations with important strategic partners such as Russia, China, India and Latin America;
- promoting the early adoption of the strongest possible international agreement for a ban on cluster munitions; and,
- efforts to promote human rights and democracy internationally, including in such states as Burma, Zimbabwe and Belarus.

Considerable international attention in 2007 continued to be focussed on the interlinked crises in the Middle East and the complex political and humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Ireland continued its active engagement on both of these issues, including through a successful visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Middle East in January, increased financial support for reconstruction in Lebanon and, following the Annapolis peace conference in November, significantly increased multi-annual financial assistance from Ireland to the Palestinian institutions. Minister Ahern also visited Chad and Sudan, where he announced increased funding for the Darfur Peace Process and briefed the governments of both countries on Ireland's decision to participate in the EU mission to Chad/CAR, in recognition of the growing regional dimension to the Darfur crisis.

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## 2007: Developments and Achievements

### Africa

Ireland continued to be actively engaged in the most pressing political and humanitarian crises on the continent, paying particular attention to those in Darfur and Zimbabwe. Minister Ahern visited Sudan and Chad in November 2007 when he delivered clear messages to the Government of Sudan on the need for its full cooperation in facilitating both humanitarian access and the deployment of the UNAMID mission (UN-African Union Mission in Darfur). Minister Ahern also met with Chadian leaders in N'Djamena and visited refugee camps in eastern Chad.

In recognition of the growing regional dimension to the Darfur crisis, the Government decided in November 2007 that up to 450 Irish troops would participate in the EU mission being deployed to Chad/Central African Republic. Lieutenant General Patrick Nash of the Permanent Defence Forces is the Operational Commander of EUFOR Chad/CAR.

The Taoiseach and Minister of State for Development Assistance represented Ireland at the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December at which a Joint EU-Africa Action Plan and Strategy was adopted. The Summit also provided an opportunity for the EU to express its clear concern to African leaders, and in the presence of President Mugabe, regarding the serious political and humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.

### Middle East

While the situation in the Occupied Territories remained difficult, particularly following the takeover by Hamas of Gaza in June, significant political progress was registered in 2007, with the agreement at Annapolis to launch negotiations on the final status issues with the aim of conclusion by the end of 2008.

Ireland actively responded to these events in a constructive and practical manner by:

- 1) Holding political discussions with leaders in Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon. During his visit to the region in January, Minister Ahern outlined the role which the Government is playing, directly and in cooperation with our EU partners, to promote a lasting and just peace in the region.
- 2) Working to ensure that the EU maintained its financial support for the Palestinian people. At the Paris Donors' Conference on 17 December, Ireland made a significant multi-annual pledge of €40 million.
- 3) Supporting democracy and national unity within Lebanon and reinforcing its sovereignty within the region. Ireland pledged €2 million to support reconstruction efforts, bringing total Irish humanitarian funding for Lebanon to €5 million. Ireland also maintained its 150 strong contingent in the strengthened UNIFIL mission in Lebanon in the period up to September 2007.

### Asia

Ireland upheld a forward position on the serious human rights situation in **Burma**, particularly following the brutal suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations in September, and was successful in pressing for the adoption of strong EU measures. Ireland's concerns were outlined by Minister Ahern in his address to the UN General



Assembly in October. The issue was also raised bilaterally at Ministerial and official level with China, India and ASEAN member states.

Ireland urged intensified efforts to strengthen democracy and the transition to civilian rule in **Pakistan**, following President Musharraf's imposition of a State of Emergency in November, and the assassination of Pakistani opposition leader, Benazir Bhutto in December.

### Western Balkans

The difficult and sensitive issue of Kosovo's final status remained high on the international agenda throughout 2007. Ireland welcomed the Comprehensive Proposal submitted by UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Martti Ahtisaari, to the UN Secretary General in March. However, intensive efforts within the UN Security Council to agree a new Resolution on the basis of the Ahtisaari proposals were not successful. It was agreed in July that a further four months of talks between the two sides would be facilitated by an international Troika. Ireland strongly supported the Troika initiative but regrettably these talks concluded without success in December.

During the Minister's visit to the Balkans in November, he met with political leaders in both Serbia and Kosovo and urged both sides to refrain from any activities or statements which might destabilise the security situation in the region.

Ireland, with its partners in the European Union and the international community, remains committed to playing its full part in the efforts to resolve this important European issue. In August 2007, Ireland strengthened its contribution to KFOR, the UN-mandated international military presence in Kosovo, assuming the role of Framework (Lead) Nation in the Multinational Task Force in Kosovo. In addition, it was confirmed that we would contribute members of the Garda Síochána to the planned ESDP Mission in Kosovo in 2008.

### Human Rights

Ireland continued to be active in the defence of human rights within the UN and the Council of Europe. Activities in 2007 included facilitating reports on Ireland by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the Committee on the Prevention of Torture.

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammerberg, visited Ireland in November to review the implementation of Ireland's human rights commitments. The Commissioner met with the Taoiseach, the Minister as well as several other members of the Cabinet. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, also visited Ireland in November.

Ireland continued to play an active role in the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, in particular in working with EU partners to ensure consensus outcomes on Darfur and the convening of a Special Session on Burma.

Following the agreement on a UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, Ireland was one of 22 EU Member States to sign the Convention on the day it opened for signature. Ireland also signed the Convention on Enforced Disappearances and the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture in 2007, as well as submitting Ireland's Third Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In June 2007 the Department also organised a highly successful NGO Forum on Human Rights, at which the keynote speaker was former US President Jimmy Carter.

### United Nations

Ireland engaged closely with the full range of UN issues in 2007 and continued to pursue our commitment to UN reform. This commitment to UN reform was further acknowledged when the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Srgian Kerim, appointed Paul Kavanagh, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, as Co-Chair for System-wide Coherence in the UN General Assembly.

### Disarmament and Non-proliferation

Ireland played a leading role in the core group of countries driving the “Oslo Process”, which was launched in early 2007, with the aim of negotiating the first specific international legal instrument on cluster munitions. Preparations began for the Dublin Diplomatic Conference for a Convention on Cluster Munitions, which will take place in May 2008.

Meanwhile, preparatory work aimed at achieving a positive outcome to the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty continued. Ireland chaired the New Agenda Coalition during the first half of the year, including during the NPT Preparatory Committee meeting in Vienna.

Ireland was one of almost 100 countries which made submissions to the UN Secretary General on the need for an Arms Trade Treaty.

### Conflict Resolution

Progress was made in developing a work programme for the Conflict Resolution Unit (CRU) established within the Department and in developing a wide range of valuable international contacts. A first field mission was held to Timor Leste. In line with Programme for Government commitments, the CRU has been developing plans for the establishment of an Academic Centre for Conflict Resolution and the creation of a Stability Fund, to support increased Irish engagement in conflict resolution activities in the developing world.

### International Security and Defence

The Department continued to play an active and constructive role in the development of policy on international security and defence matters, in close coordination with the Department of Defence. This work included coordination of Irish participation in, and support for, missions in the framework of the **European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)**.

The EU Battlegroups, which provide the EU with a rapid response capability for emergency crisis management missions, reached full operational capability as of 1 January 2007. In April, the Dáil passed a motion approving Ireland's participation in the Nordic EU Battlegroup. Preparations continued throughout the year for our involvement with the Battlegroup, which is scheduled to be on standby in the first half of 2008.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs continued to make clear Ireland's total opposition to the practice of Extraordinary Rendition, including in response to reports by the European Parliament and the Irish Human Rights Commission. The Minister also made clear that the Government seeks to fully engage with EU and other partners to ensure that this practice does not occur, including by calling for a review of aspects of international civil aviation.

## The European Union

### High Level Goal, 2005-2007:

**Promote and protect Ireland's interests at the heart of the European Union as it continues to evolve and enlarge, including through the further development of our relations with our current and future EU partners.**

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### 2007 in Review

The Department's European Union (EU) Division continued to work closely with other Government Departments to ensure a strategic and coordinated response across a wide range of EU issues in pursuit of Ireland's objectives.

Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union on 1 January 2007. Accession negotiations continued with Croatia and Turkey.

EU Heads of State and Government signed the Reform Treaty at a ceremony in Lisbon on 13 December 2007. The Taoiseach and the Minister for Foreign Affairs signed on behalf of Ireland.

EU leaders agreed on EU-wide targets for emissions, and renewable energy at the Spring European Council in March 2007. These targets, set for 2020, commit the EU to cutting emissions by at least 20% of 1990 levels and to sourcing 20% of energy from renewable sources.

The European Communities Act 2007 was enacted to improve and modernise the way EU legislation is transposed into Irish law as a result of the findings of the Supreme Court in the Browne and Kennedy cases.

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## 2007: Developments and Achievements

### The Reform Treaty

Twenty-Seven EU Heads of State and Government signed the Reform Treaty at a ceremony in Lisbon on 13 December 2007. The Taoiseach and the Minister for Foreign Affairs signed on behalf of Ireland. The Minister for European Affairs also attended the signing ceremony.

The Reform Treaty is designed to make the European Union function more effectively and democratically so that it can better serve the interests of the people of Europe. It responds to the needs of today's European Union with its increased membership. The negotiations on the Reform Treaty took place against the background of the failure to ratify the European Constitution which had been agreed in 2004. The Reform Treaty draws much of its substance from the European Constitution, negotiated under Ireland's 2004 EU Presidency, but it takes the form of a series of amendments to the existing European Treaties.

### Visits

2007 saw a number of important incoming and outgoing visits which strengthened and enhanced Ireland's relations with key EU partners.

The Taoiseach visited France for talks with the new President, Nicolas Sarkozy, which reaffirmed our close partnership with France on issues of vital interest, particularly in defence of Irish agriculture.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs met with the new British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, for a substantive discussion on EU policy areas of mutual interest to Ireland and the UK.

### Irish in the EU

Irish became an Official and Working language of the EU on 1 January 2007.

The Department, in close cooperation with the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, has worked closely with the European Institutions to enable them to build Irish language translation and interpretation capacity in key personnel areas.

### The European Communities Act 2007

The European Communities Act 2007 was enacted to improve and modernise the way in which EU legislation is transposed into Irish law, as a result of the findings of the Supreme Court in the Browne and Kennedy cases. Those cases related to the use by the State of secondary legislation as a mechanism for giving effect to EC law and policy in domestic law.

The Supreme Court found that a statutory instrument to give effect to EC law can only be validly made where the Oireachtas has specifically provided for this in the relevant primary legislation. The effect of the judgments was that the State had to revise the manner in which EC law is implemented into domestic law by secondary legislation.

### Climate change and Renewable energy

The 2007 Spring European Council committed the EU to unilateral targets for emissions and renewable energy, which are to be met by 2020. The EU set itself a minimum unilateral target of a 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 from



1990 levels, with a negotiating offer of up to 30% by the same period in the context of parallel commitments by other developed nations, as well as a commitment to source 20% of energy consumed from renewable sources and a 10% target for biofuels by the 2020 deadline.

### **Enlargement**

On 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union. During the course of 2007, negotiations on accession continued with Croatia and Turkey. Eleven further negotiating chapters were opened with Croatia, and five with Turkey.

The Department continued to provide training and assistance to the new Member States of the EU and to Candidate countries through its Bilateral Assistance Programme.

### **Regular Briefings to Oireachtas**

Throughout the year, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of State for European Affairs briefed the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs prior to meetings of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) and submitted regular reports on EU business.

## Advancing Ireland's Economic and Cultural Interests

### High Level Goal, 2005-2007:

**Promote Ireland's trade, investment and other interests, including its culture, in close co-operation with other Departments, State Agencies and the private sector, ensuring that the State's network of diplomatic and consular missions adds real value to this task.**

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### 2007 in Review

The Department's Bilateral Economic Relations Division (BERD) worked closely with other Government Departments and State Agencies to promote Ireland's economic interests abroad including through developing the trade potential of visits overseas by the President, Taoiseach, Minister for Foreign Affairs and other Ministers, and of high-level inward visits.

The Department enhanced the capacity of our Embassies and Consulates to add real value in the area of foreign earnings by preparing a set of policy guidelines on the economic work of missions. A series of meetings with heads of missions, state agencies and business bodies fed into this work. The Department also arranged for specialised training on economic and trade issues to be provided for officers going abroad in 2007.

The Department continued to focus on the Government's Asia Strategy, including by participating in High Level Group meetings, and coordinating high-level visits to and from the region. The Department used the opportunity of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations to enhance bilateral economic and trade relations with Japan, including by arranging the Minister's visit to Tokyo in November. The Department continued to develop economic relations with the Gulf States in a strategic manner and engaged in concrete follow-up to the Taoiseach's January visit to the Gulf region, including through facilitating 9 inward visits from the region.

The Department's Cultural Division worked closely with the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, Culture Ireland and other Government Departments and agencies to optimise the enhancement of Ireland's image abroad through the organization of a range of cultural events.

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## 2007: Developments and Achievements

### Visits

The Department worked closely with other government departments, state agencies and other relevant stakeholders to promote Ireland's economic interests abroad. This included maximising the economic and trade potential of visits abroad by the President, Taoiseach, Minister for Foreign Affairs and other Ministers, and of high-level inward visits. The 34 St. Patrick's Day visits overseas by Government Ministers, which were coordinated by the Department, provided a major opportunity to promote Ireland and advance our economic interests.

### Mission Guidelines and Training

With a view to ensuring that Embassies and Consulates add real value to the economic objectives of the Department, policy guidelines on the economic work of missions were produced and distributed. This followed a series of consultations with a high-level group of heads of missions, as well as state agencies and business bodies. To give practical expression to the approach outlined in the guidelines, a series of sub-regional meetings was held in Scandinavia, South-East Asia, Benelux, US and China.

The Department also arranged for training on trade-related matters to be provided to officers going abroad in 2007. The training, which was provided by IMI/TCD, included seminars on foreign direct investment, increasing exports, competitiveness, the role of state agencies, and sectors of economic importance to Ireland. In addition, the quality of promotional material and briefing supplied to missions abroad was enhanced.

### Asia Strategy

The Department continued to focus on the Government's Asia Strategy, which seeks to intensify political, business and other forms of interaction with priority Asian countries. The Department coordinated several high-level visits to Asia including the President's visit to New Zealand in October, and facilitated a significant number of high-level inward visits.

The Department used the opportunity of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations to enhance economic and trade links with Japan, including by holding bilateral economic consultations in July, and arranging the Minister's visit to Tokyo in November. The Anniversary was also marked by an extensive bilateral cultural programme.

### Gulf States

The Department finalised a strategic review of economic relations with the Gulf States. It coordinated the Taoiseach's January visit to Saudi Arabia and the UAE and, as follow-up, facilitated 9 inward visits from the region, participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Economic Commission with Saudi Arabia and progressed work on agreements in a number of areas.

### Irish Beef

The Department, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and missions abroad, continued its efforts to re-open international markets to Irish beef: in the autumn, markets in Saudi Arabia and South Africa were re-opened to beef from Ireland.

## Irish Aid

### High Level Goal, 2005-2007:

**Make a substantive and effective contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to poverty reduction and sustainable growth in developing countries, through the policy and programmes of Development Cooperation Ireland, and by working for a just and stable international economic system.**

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### 2007 in Review

2007 saw the establishment of an Inter-Departmental Committee for Development, to strengthen coherence in the Government's approach to development, and of the Hunger Task Force, as outlined in the 2006 White Paper on Development.

In 2007, Ireland gave 0.075% of its GDP as humanitarian funding, the third highest level in the world.

New Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) were put in place for Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia and South Africa. These strategy papers provide the framework for Irish Aid support and detail how this assistance is to be targeted.

Following the commitment in the White Paper that Malawi was to become Ireland's ninth partner country, the Irish Government approved the opening of a new Embassy and the establishment of a bilateral aid programme in 2007. The Embassy of Ireland in Lilongwe opened in November 2007.

Significant progress was achieved in restructuring Irish Aid's relationship with the UN Funds Programmes.

Irish Aid continued to prioritise the reform of the UN development system and actively engaged with country-level UN reform programmes in Vietnam and Tanzania.

Multi-annual programme agreements for the period 2007 to 2011 concluded with Concern (€148m), Trócaire (€116m), Goal (€100m) and Christian Aid (€17m).

Work on the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre was completed, allowing the Centre to be officially opened in January 2008.

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## 2007: Developments and Achievements

In 2007, Ireland gave 0.075% of its GDP as humanitarian funding, the third highest level in the world. Ireland's humanitarian supplies, comprising essential shelter and housing, and water and sanitation equipment, were pre-positioned at the UN Humanitarian Response Depot in Brindisi, Italy, and at the Curragh Camp in Ireland by mid-2007. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Overseas Development made an inspection visit to the Brindisi base in July. The supplies provided by Ireland to the Brindisi depot were used in response to humanitarian emergencies in Sudan, Pakistan, Peru, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Mali.

### RAPID RESPONSE CORPS

A campaign to recruit members to the Rapid Response Corps - a roster of skilled and experienced volunteers willing to be deployed to work with Ireland's key partners in responding to humanitarian emergencies worldwide – was launched in February. In 2007, formal standby partnership agreements were signed with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). During 2007, Corps members were deployed to work with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) office for Somalia, and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Sri Lanka and Mozambique.

The **Inter-Departmental Committee for Development**, established in 2007, met three times. Terms of reference for the Committee were agreed, as was the establishment of two Sub-Groups on (i) Multilateral Organisations and (ii) Skills Sets. Presentations were received from experts in the field of policy coherence for development.

### HUNGER TASK FORCE

2007 also saw the establishment of the Hunger Task Force which is examining the particular contribution Ireland can make in addressing the root causes of food insecurity, particularly in Africa. The Task Force held two meetings in 2007 and is expected to produce its report by the middle of 2008.

In line with the White Paper's commitment to increasing the focus on working in fragile states, significant advances were made in our involvement in **Sierra Leone** and **Liberia**. Of particular note was the substantial support to the National Election Commission to ensure a free and fair Presidential election in Sierra Leone.

### Bilateral Programme Countries

In 2007 new **Country Strategy Papers** (CSP) were put in place for Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia and South Africa. These strategy papers provide the framework for Irish Aid support and detail how this assistance is to be targeted.

In line with the increasing overall budget, as official development assistance approaches the target figure of 0.7% of GNP, these bilateral programmes have grown significantly. The Ugandan programme has grown from €96.5million over the



previous three year period to €112 million for the period 2007-2009. The budget allocation for Mozambique was €116 million from 2004-2006. For 2007-2010 it increases to €207.8 million (including funding to the health sector on foot of the Irish Aid agreement with the Clinton Foundation). Tanzania's budget increases to some €170 million for 2007-2010, from €81 million in the previous CSP period.

In recognition of the multidimensional nature of poverty, the country strategies for **Uganda, Mozambique** and **Tanzania** utilise a programmatic approach, focussing on areas which are in line with national poverty reduction plans and making the greatest impact on the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable members of these communities.

The **Irish Aid programme in Vietnam** was established in 2005 and 2007 saw its first CSP being completed. It raised the Vietnam programme to full scale country programme level and involved a significantly increased budget allocation. The focus of the CSP for Vietnam is on poverty reduction and reducing inequality.

Irish Aid finalised a five year programme to provide bilateral assistance of over €65 million to **South Africa** from 2008 to 2012. Ireland has been providing bilateral aid to South Africa since the transition from apartheid to a democratic, non-racial Government in 1994. The programme will focus on the areas of HIV and AIDS; pro-poor service delivery in Limpopo Province; supporting the response to Gender Based Violence and promoting economic growth through skills development.

The new CSP agreed for **Zambia** will see over €123 million in bilateral assistance being channelled to that country between 2007 and 2010. The programme focuses primarily on education, good governance, supporting pro-poor service delivery in Northern Province and on addressing vulnerability and chronic poverty.

Following the commitment in the White Paper that **Malawi** was to become Ireland's ninth partner country, the Irish Government approved the opening of a new Embassy and the establishment of a bilateral aid programme in 2007. The Embassy of Ireland in Lilongwe opened in November 2007.

### UN Agencies & NGOs

Significant progress was achieved in restructuring Irish Aid's relationship with the **UN Funds Programmes**. The UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) were designated as Irish Aid's Priority Partners within the UN development system. Irish Aid concluded multi-annual Framework Agreements with UNICEF and UNHCR based on shared development objectives.

Irish Aid continued to prioritise the reform of the UN development system and actively engaged with country-level UN reform programmes in Vietnam and Tanzania. This was part of a broader effort, launched as part of the UN's System-wide Coherence programme, to improve the delivery of UN development assistance at country level, reduce overlap between UN bodies and ensure value for money. In recognition of its active role in this reform effort, Ireland was appointed, with Tanzania, as facilitator for the programme in the UN General Assembly in 2008.

Irish Aid continued to work in close partnership with **Irish NGOs** throughout 2007. Multi-annual programme agreements for the period 2007 to 2011 were concluded with Concern (to the value of €148 million), Trócaire (to the value of €116 million), Goal (to the value of €100 million) and Christian Aid (to the value of €17 million).



### Evaluation and Audit

In the context of lesson learning and of ensuring that Irish Aid resources are used to optimal effect, an enhanced programme of evaluation and audit was implemented by the Evaluation and Audit Unit. Key evaluation exercises completed included: a *Value for Money and Policy Review of the Mozambique Country Programme, 2001-2006* and a *Review of the Irish Missionary Resource Service*. A systematic programme of audit was undertaken of Irish Aid's programme in partner countries. The Department's independent Audit Committee maintained oversight of the implementation of the Evaluation and Audit Unit's work plan.

### VOLUNTEERING AND INFORMATION CENTRE

Work on the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre and its exhibition content was completed in 2007. The Centre, which promotes awareness and understanding of development issues, the role of Irish Aid and opportunities for the individual to engage, opened to the public in January 2008.

A summary version of the **White Paper on Irish Aid** was distributed to every house in Ireland in spring 2007. The document outlined the main recommendations of the White Paper and sources of further information on development.

Irish Aid launched its five year strategy plan for **development education** in November 2007. The key aim of the new strategy is to ensure the Irish public have the opportunity to be more deeply informed about development and global justice issues, the role of government and civil society, and to be more critically engaged with the Irish Aid programme.

2007 was the first year the **Programme of Strategic Cooperation** between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes was implemented. Grants totalling €7.3 million were awarded in the first round of funding in June 2007 to higher education institutions in Ireland.

In line with the commitment made in the White Paper, Irish Aid provided support for cultural and academic events around **Africa Day** (May 25) to promote a positive image of Africa in Ireland.



## Consular and Passport Services

### High Level Goal, 2005-2007:

**Protect and support the interests of Irish citizens abroad, maintain and strengthen links with people of Irish ancestry, and provide a modern and efficient passport and consular service.**

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### 2007 in Review

The Department's Consular Section in Dublin coordinates the actions of Irish missions abroad on behalf of Irish citizens and liaises with family members in Ireland. In 2007, there were 8 million trips abroad made by Irish residents.

While the majority of the ever-increasing numbers of Irish citizens travelling overseas do not encounter serious difficulties, there has been a significant increase in demand for consular assistance and in the complexity of the cases dealt with.

The Department's dedicated Crisis Centre was opened officially in 2007 to respond to major emergencies overseas involving Irish citizens.

Emergency Consular Assistance Teams, which can be deployed quickly to the scenes of disasters or terrorist attacks, were established and fully trained.

The Report on Irish Prisoners Overseas by Mr. Chris Flood was launched by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Some 600,000 Passports were issued in 2007. Use of the Northern Ireland Passport Express (NIPX) service increased.

In 2007, the Department's Irish Abroad Unit underwent comprehensive review, as part of the 'Value for Money and Policy Review' of emigrant services, which was published in July. Offering a thorough analysis of the programme, the Review also provided recommendations on how to improve the efficiency of the grant aid process. Many of these recommendations are currently being implemented.

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## 2007: Developments and Achievements

### Protecting and Supporting Irish citizens

Throughout 2007, the Department provided support in a wide range of areas, including comprehensive advice on travel to particular countries or regions, and assistance in situations of difficulty or distress. During the year, the Department dealt with the deaths of over 130 Irish people abroad and provided effective assistance to our citizens in other difficult and distressing situations, including repatriation, hospitalisation, victims of crime and detention abroad.

Consular facilities were also provided for Irish citizens attending major sporting events including qualifying games for the 2008 UEFA European Football Championships, the Rugby World Cup, the Cricket World Cup, and the Special Olympics.

The Department's website provides up to date and comprehensive travel advice for Irish citizens intending to travel abroad. This advice reflects a considered assessment of the risks involved for Irish citizens travelling to individual countries. It is based on the best information available to the Department and draws on reports from Irish Diplomatic and Consular Missions abroad and advice issued by other countries, including Member States of the European Union.

Contact was maintained with other Government Departments and various members of the travel industry to improve coordination, cooperation and best practice in responding to emergency issues effecting Irish citizens abroad.

### CRISIS CENTRE

The Department's Dedicated Crisis Centre was officially opened by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Dublin on 9 January 2007. The Crisis Centre is of international standard, and is fully equipped to provide a modern emergency response service to deal with large-scale emergencies, crises and disasters, whether natural or man made, involving Irish citizens abroad. The Centre, staffed by volunteers from throughout the Department, is capable of linking up with Crisis Centres in other EU capitals, to share information and risk assessments.

### EMERGENCY CONSULAR ASSISTANCE TEAMS

These dedicated teams, which were established and trained during 2007, will be ready to be deployed, with support from trained professionals if necessary, in the immediate aftermath of a disaster affecting Irish citizens anywhere in the world.

### Initiatives to Further Improve Consular services

During 2007, the Department advanced other practical initiatives which will further improve the quality of consular assistance provided to Irish citizens:

- Preparation of a user-friendly Consular Service Charter detailing the range of services and assistance available to Irish citizens overseas;



- Introduction of voluntary on-line Travel Registration for citizens travelling abroad for use in crisis situations;
- Since March 2007, a range of Consular Services has been provided to the public from the Department's offices in Cork, including authentication of Irish documents for use abroad; issuing civil letters of freedom to Irish citizens who intend to marry in other countries; and processing applications for Irish citizenship by Foreign Births Registration.

### **Passport Service**

Some 600,000 e-passports were issued in 2007. The level of demand from Northern Ireland continues to grow with applications from persons born there now accounting for more than 10% of all applications. As a result of the major investment in passport development in recent years, the Irish passport now contains a range of sophisticated anti-fraud elements and is widely regarded as among the best and most secure in the world.

A new Passports Bill was published in April 2007. The Bill will provide a comprehensive legislative basis for the regulation and issuance of Irish passports by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. It will supersede the more general administrative basis for the issuance of passports contained in the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924, under which the passport issuing system has operated to date.

Against the backdrop of heightened awareness about passport security, identity theft and fraudulent applications, there is a growing international emphasis on improving identity and passport security. The Passports Bill therefore introduces a range of offences and penalties relating to the fraudulent acquisition, misuse and abuse of passports, including a provision for the extra-territorial effect for those provisions. It will strengthen efforts to combat fraud and will complement the substantial investment made in recent years to improve the security of the passport book.

The Bill was approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee on 6 December 2007 and it is hoped that it will have passed through all stages in the Dáil in early 2008.

The Department will continue to focus on improving its service to the general public over the coming year and will take account of a Value for Money Review currently being undertaken. The Review, which is nearing completion, will evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the passport service and will propose recommendations to underpin the provision of a quality, cost-effective service in the coming years.

### **Irish Communities Abroad**

2007 saw the Irish Abroad Unit refine and advance its funding strategies by allocating additional resources to a broader range of emigrant services. Whilst increasing support for frontline information and welfare services for vulnerable Irish emigrants, the programme also expanded to include a number of capital projects, as well as projects which foster a greater sense of community abroad.

Heritage projects attracted 27% of the €14.185 million expenditure in 2007, as compared to 8.11% in 2006. As the demographic profile of our Diaspora continues to change, supporting such cultural and social projects is likely to be an increasing feature of the Unit's activities.



In order to maximize the impact of allocated monies, the Unit has continued to improve financial control of the grant scheme. The Value for Money and Policy Review, published in July 2007, provided an excellent – and extremely positive – analysis of the emigrant support programme. In line with recommendations made in the Review, the Ireland Abroad Unit has begun to develop increasingly formalised systems of monitoring and evaluation of awarded grants.

A restructuring and regionalisation of the Government-appointed Díon advisory committee on emigrant support in Britain was initiated in 2007 and will be completed in 2008.

The geographic spread of the grants scheme also continues to develop. In the course of 2007, projects were grant aided in eleven different countries, compared to eight in 2006.

The Unit also advanced the debate on our Diaspora, hosting a successful Diaspora Conference in Dublin in April, and engaging in regular dialogue with universities and the media. A follow-up conference is due to take place in Britain during the first half of 2008.



## Support Services

### Building Internal Capability:

**The Department of Foreign Affairs must ensure that it maintains and continues to develop the internal capability required to deliver on the foreign policy objectives of the Government.**

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### 2007 in Review

The work of the Department's officials at home and abroad towards achieving our high-level goals was further supported and facilitated by the Department's corporate and support services. These provide an essential platform upon which the Department's policy formulation and service delivery functions can be effectively discharged.

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### Protocol Services

Throughout 2007, the Department's Protocol Division organised State and Official Visits abroad by the President and the Taoiseach, and State and Official Visits to Ireland by Heads of State, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and other distinguished guests of the Government. In addition, it advised and assisted other Government bodies in relation to their official guests.

#### VISITS DURING 2007

Visits by the President to:

Belgium	Jersey
Canada	Latvia
England	Lithuania
Guernsey	New Zealand
Holy See	Scotland
Italy	USA (Atlanta, Syracuse, New York)

In January 2007, the Department co-ordinated the arrangements for the Taoiseach's visit to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Inward High Level Visits to Ireland organised by the Department included:

The President of Poland	The President of Slovakia
The King and Queen of the Belgians	The President of Finland
The Prime Minister of Iceland	The Prime Minister of Lithuania

The Department also worked with the resident and non-resident diplomatic corps accredited to Ireland, comprising 59 Missions in Dublin and 63 Missions accredited to Ireland on a non-resident basis. This involved the management of their privileges and immunities, organising the presentation of credentials to the President by 33 newly accredited Ambassadors in 2007 as well as other events attended by the Diplomatic Corps.

It also ensured the smooth functioning of procedures for foreign Government aircraft and vessels to over-fly, land or dock in Ireland, and for Irish Governmental flights and naval visits abroad.

### Press Office

The Press Office provides an effective media service to the Minister and the Department, including Divisions at HQ and Missions abroad.

During 2007, it dealt efficiently and effectively with an increased number of press queries covering the entire range of issues handled by the Department, from national and local newspapers, from the broadcast media, and from representatives of wire agencies based in Ireland.

The Department's Press Office also worked closely with other Government Departments, Missions abroad and State Agencies to organise visits to Ireland by members of the foreign media, and handled press arrangements for several incoming high-level visits in 2007, including four State Visits.



The Press Office monitored domestic and international media and published all speeches/press releases by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Ministers of State at the Department on the Departmental website, also distributing them directly to the media.

### Legal Services

Legal Division assisted and advised the Department on various issues relating to each of the Department's High Level Goals:

<b>Northern Ireland</b>	Advised on implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, including in relation to the St Andrews Agreement, restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the North-South Implementation Bodies.
<b>Foreign Policy</b>	<p>Ensured an integrated legal and policy approach to foreign relations in accordance with the Constitution and UN Charter. Advised on UN legal matters including the enforcement of UN and EU sanctions. Contributed to the continuing development of a new international instrument on cluster munitions. Progressed the State's extended continental shelf claims.</p> <p>Ensured appropriate working relationships with states seeking extradition of suspects from Ireland, including the signing of an extradition treaty with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.</p> <p>Participated in Council of Europe discussions on the reform of the European Court of Human Rights.</p> <p>Ensured appropriate processing and publication of all international agreements to which Ireland became a party in 2006; and successfully identified and eliminated the historical backlog of over 280 international agreements which had previously awaited processing.</p>
<b>European Union</b>	Advised on EU legal matters, including on the enactment of the European Communities Act 2007 and legal aspects of the negotiations on the Reform Treaty.
<b>Trade and culture</b>	Advised on international agreements on bilateral economic relations and cultural matters.
<b>Irish Aid</b>	Advised Irish Aid on its work, including on drafting Agreements and Contracts that govern the transfer and use of Irish Aid funding to partner organisations and 'Guidelines for dealing with Fraud in Partner Organisations'.
<b>Consular, Passport</b>	Advised on Passports Bill 2007 and development of a consular charter, and on consular protection of the rights of Irish citizens abroad (including children).

### Inspection Unit

The Inspection Unit continued to support the management of the Department in 2007 by carrying out inspection visits to Missions abroad. The purpose of these visits is to help Missions to maximise both their effectiveness, by ensuring that their activities are aligned as closely as possible with the Department's strategic goals, and their



efficiency, by promoting best practice in the management of their resources. The Inspection Unit conducted 14 visits to Missions abroad in 2007 as set out below.

Reports were prepared on each visit for discussion by the Department's Senior Management. Implementation of the Reports' recommendations was monitored by the Inspection Unit. A joint inspection and audit visit to the Embassy in New Delhi was organised with the Evaluation and Audit Unit in October 2007.

#### Missions Inspected in 2007

Brussels (Embassy)	London (Embassy)
Brussels (Delegation to the Partnership for Peace)	Luxembourg (Embassy)
Brussels (Permanent Representation to the EU)	Moscow (Embassy)
Bucharest (Embassy)	New Delhi (Embassy)
New York (Permanent Mission to the UN)	Riga (Embassy)
Paris (Delegation to the OECD and UNESCO)	Sofia (Embassy)
Valletta (Embassy)	Vilnius (Embassy)

#### Corporate Services

Corporate Services Division is responsible for the overall management of the financial and human resources of the Department, ensuring coherent operation across its various Divisions at Headquarters and its 78 Missions outside of the State.

As required under the Public Service Management Act 1997, the Department prepared, and submitted to the Taoiseach in December, a new Statement of Strategy (2008-2010). The Department committed itself in the Statement to carry out a review of structures exercise in 2008; this will focus on the organisation of Divisions at Headquarters, the distribution and resourcing of Missions abroad and overall management systems in the Department.

In discharging its human resource management responsibilities, the Department recognises that the quality of its staff represents a major asset. It seeks to fully comply with the obligations from successive Partnership Agreements, with the commitments arising from the various initiatives under the Strategic Management Initiative and with the best practice employment standards across the Civil Service.

With over 1,500 staff at Headquarters and distributed across the world, the Department constantly reviews its policies and practices to optimise the performance and professional fulfilment of its human resources. During 2007, a dedicated sub-group of the Management Advisory Committee was established to oversee Human Resource Management issues.

The Department remains committed to providing the highest standard of service to all our customers, at home and abroad, in accordance with the principles of Quality Customer Service approved by Government. Practical examples of our customer service commitments include our guarantee that a person using the Passport Express Service will receive his or her passport within ten working days, same day service for authentication of official documents, and the provision of an out of hours service at home and abroad for those who require passports on an emergency basis, both in the evening and at weekends.



Our Customer Service Action Plan underlines our practical commitment to fulfilling the obligations of the Department's Customer Charter, both of which are available on the Department's website.

The Department recognises the importance of ensuring that its financial resources are used efficiently and effectively. The details of the Department's expenditure in 2007 under both of its Votes and penalty interest on late payments are contained in Appendices 1, 2 and 3. The Department is also very conscious of the need to secure good value for money for the expenditure it incurs. Appendix 4 outlines the various reviews being undertaken by the Department under the Government's Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative. Appendix 5 reports on Regulatory Impact Analysis and Legislative Programme 2007.

Significant achievements and developments during 2007 included:

- Continued implementation of the modernisation and flexibility changes mandated under *Sustaining Progress* and *Towards 2016* Partnership Agreements;
- Significant progress in decentralising the Development Cooperation Directorate to Limerick. By the end of 2007, an advance party of over 50 staff was in place in Limerick and 83% of the Directorate staff to be decentralised had been designated;
- The purchase of two Mission properties abroad – Mexico and Brasilia – and the completed purchase of a site for a new Chancery in Addis Ababa. 2007 also saw the completion of refurbishment projects in a number of Embassies owned by the State, including The Hague and Lisbon; and
- The completion of a new ICT Strategy (2007-2010) for the Department and a complete refresh of desk-top PCs at Headquarters in Dublin.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1

**Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2007**

### Appendix 2

**Vote 29 (International Cooperation) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2007**

### Appendix 3

**Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997**

### Appendix 4

**Status Report on Value for Money Reviews (2006-2008 Programme)**

### Appendix 5

**Report on Regulatory Impact Analysis and Legislative Programme 2007**

## Appendix 1

### Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2007

Service		Estimate Provision €000	Provisional Outturn €000
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>			
A.1.	SALARIES, WAGES AND ALLOWANCES	96,018	98,200
A.2.	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	8,600	8,000
A.3.	INCIDENTAL EXPENSES	6,750	6,800
A.4.	POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	8,600	8,300
A.5.	OFFICE MACHINERY AND OTHER OFFICE SUPPLIES	27,350	32,000
A.6.	OFFICE PREMISES EXPENSES	47,640	33,178
A.7.	CONSULTANCY SERVICES	900	275
A.8.	VALUE FOR MONEY AND POLICY REVIEWS	100	30
<b>OTHER SERVICES</b>			
B.1.	REPATRIATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRESSED IRISH PERSONS ABROAD	77	43
C.1.	SUPPORT FOR IRISH IMMIGRANT GROUPS	15,165	14,179
D.1.	INFORMATION SERVICES	566	415
E.1.	CONTRIBUTIONS TO BODIES IN IRELAND FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (GRANTS-IN-AID)	320	285
F.1	NORTH-SOUTH AND ANGLO-IRISH COOPERATION	3,000	2,759
F.2.	INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND	195	195
G.1	CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES	1,000	1,085
H.1	IRISH-AMERICAN ECONOMIC ADVISORY BOARD	28	4
I.1	CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	32,498	37,652
J.1	TITLE V OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION	582	582
K.1	ASSISTANCE TO EU CANDIDATE COUNTRIES	2,215	1,347
L.1	ATLANTIC CORRIDOR PROJECT	250	250
M.1	ASIA STRATEGY	200	168
N.1.	SUPPORT FOR IRELAND FUNDS	2,000	0
<b>Gross Total</b>		<b>254,054</b>	<b>245,747</b>
<i>Deduct:-</i>			
O.	APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID	39,000	38,300
<b>Net Total</b>		<b>215,054</b>	<b>207,447</b>

**Appendix 2**

**Vote 29 (International Cooperation) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2007**

Service		Estimate Provision €000	Provisional Outturn €000
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>			
A.1.	SALARIES, WAGES AND ALLOWANCES	15,744	14,899
A.2.	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	2,660	2,470
A.3.	INCIDENTAL EXPENSES	3,531	3,095
A.4.	POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	1,500	1,112
A.5.	OFFICE MACHINERY AND OTHER OFFICE SUPPLIES	1,020	959
A.6.	OFFICE PREMISES EXPENSES	2,099	2,352
A.7.	CONSULTANCY SERVICES	2,000	2,237
<b>OTHER SERVICES</b>			
B.	PAYMENT TO GRANT-IN-AID FUND FOR BILATERAL AID AND OTHER COOPERATION (GRANT-IN-AID)	426,510	426,510
C.	EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	60,000	60,000
D.	PAYMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL FUNDS FOR THE BENEFIT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	22,650	22,637
E.	CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES	62,900	62,900
<b>Gross Total</b>		600,614	599,171
<i>Deduct:-</i>			
F.	APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID	135	656
<b>Net Total</b>		<b>600,479</b>	<b>598,515</b>

## Appendix 3

### Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997

Payment of invoices by the Department is governed by the provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 as amended by the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations, 2002. The Department endeavours to pay all invoices as soon as possible after the satisfactory delivery of the goods and services.

The total amount of penalty interest on late payments on the Department's Vote in 2007 (Vote 28) was €1,805 in respect of 23 cases. In addition, a total of €402.88 was paid in penalty interest on late payments under Vote 29 (International Cooperation) in respect of 9 cases.

## Appendix 4

### Status Report on Value for Money Reviews (2006-2008 Programme)

#### Vote 28 – Foreign Affairs

Value for Money Review	Purpose of Review	Target Date	Current Status
<b>Support for Irish Emigrant Groups</b>	To evaluate the value for money achieved with the Department's support for Irish Emigrant Groups Abroad	12/2006	Report finalised July 2007.
<b>Automated Passport Project</b>	To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the passport service and provide appropriate recommendations to the Department that will underpin the provision of a cost effective, quality passport service in the coming years.	12/2007	Report to be finalised by mid-2008.

#### Vote 29 – International Cooperation

Value for Money Review	Purpose of Review	Target Date	Current Status
<b>Development Cooperation Ireland's Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for a specific disaster (Tsunami)</b>	To analyse what has been achieved with Irish Aid support for the Tsunami-affected countries.  To evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, attentiveness to cross-cutting issues and management of Irish Aid's Tsunami response programme.	12/2006	Report published October 2007.
<b>Development Aid to Mozambique</b>	To evaluate the implementation of the Mozambique Country Programme, funded by Irish Aid	12/2007	Report completed third quarter 2007 and published in February 2008.



Value for Money Review	Purpose of Review	Target Date	Current Status
<b>HIV/AIDS Budget Line</b>	<p>To (i) inform Irish Aid and the Irish Oireachtas on</p> <p>the overall quality of Irish Aid's HIV / AIDS response;</p> <p>the management of Irish Aid's HIV /AIDS 2000-06 expenditure (in line with the Value for Money Initiative Guidelines) with regard to its overall strategy;</p> <p>its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability taking one country case study as a sample and</p> <p>(ii) inform future decision making and assist in the strategic prioritisation of HIV/AIDS expenditure</p>	12/2008	Exercise currently underway. Final report expected end of August 2008.

## Appendix 5

### Report on Regulatory Impact Analysis

#### Legislative Programme 2007

##### European Communities Act 2007 – No. 18 of 2007

This Act was enacted to take account of two landmark Supreme Court judgements (Browne v AG and Kennedy v AG) which required changes to be made in the way Ireland transposes EU measures into our domestic law. The Act allows Ministers to use existing Acts of the Oireachtas to create Statutory Instruments to implement EU law, provided that the Act in question relates to the same policy area covered by the EU law. It also provides Ministers with a new power to create indictable offences for serious breaches of EU law. The maximum penalties have been capped at three years imprisonment and a fine of up to €500,000.

In cases where Ireland implements major policy changes on foot of EU measures, the Government intends to continue to introduce primary legislation, in line with the practice to date. As this Act amounted to a technical amendment of existing legislation, a Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) was not required.

#### Bills prepared by the Department in 2007

##### Passports Bill 2007 – No 30 of 2007

A new Passports Bill was published in April 2007. The Bill will provide a comprehensive legislative basis for the regulation and issuance of Irish passports by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. It will supersede the more general administrative basis for the issuance of passports contained in the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924, under which the passport issuing system has operated to date.

A screening RIA was prepared and accompanied the submission to Government of the Heads of the Bill, which were approved by Cabinet on 12 April 2006. The Bill was approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee on 6 December 2007 and it is hoped that it will have passed through all stages in the Dáil in early 2008.

#### Statutory Instruments (SIs) prepared by the Department in 2007

The following SI's were prepared by the Department in 2007. Each concerned the extension of privileges and/or immunities to additional bodies under existing legislation and, as a consequence, RIA's were not considered to be warranted.

No. 18 of 2007	European Arrest Warrant Act 2003 (Designated Member States) Order 2007
No. 38 of 2007	European Communities (Amendment) Act 2006 (Commencement) Order 2007
No. 39 of 2007	European Communities (Amendment) Act 2006 (Commencement) Regulations 2007
No. 59 of 2007	European Arrest Warrant Act 2003 (Designated Member States) (No. 2) Order 2007
No. 553 of 2007	Tampere Convention (Privileges and Immunities) Order 2007 ( <i>Government Order</i> )
No. 659 of 2007	Transfer of Execution of Sentences Act 2005 (Designated Countries) Order 2007