



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AN ROINN GNÓTHAI EACHTRACHA

Department of Foreign Affairs
Annual Report
2008



Mission Statement

The Mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs is

- to advance Ireland's values and interests within Europe and in a changing world;
- to promote peace, human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development internationally;
- to protect our citizens abroad; and
- to support lasting reconciliation on this island.



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Foreword by the Minister for Foreign Affairs

I am delighted to accept the Annual Report for 2008, which has been prepared in line with the provisions of the Public Service Management Act 1997.

2008 was a momentous year for Ireland and the world. The major changes that have taken place in the national and global economic landscape have presented many challenges. As the world's leaders attempt to find solutions to the global economic crisis and as we, in Ireland, confront our own significant challenges at home, the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs will be crucial in seeking out opportunities to support Ireland's economic recovery and in re-affirming our reputation on the world stage.

As economic diplomacy and the promotion of Irish foreign earnings are increasingly at the heart of Irish foreign policy, my Department has placed an ever-greater priority on the promotion of Ireland abroad. During 2008, we successfully combined our Bilateral Economic Relations Division with our Cultural and Information Section to create the Promoting Ireland Abroad Division. In so doing, we aim to harness our unique cultural heritage to raise awareness of Ireland and to promote trade and investment. All officers going abroad on posting received specialised training to ensure that economic and trade issues are to the fore in our bilateral relations. The Department plays an important role in securing market access for Irish goods and services; an example of the importance of this role can be seen in the work undertaken, together with other Departments, in response to the 2008 pig meat crisis, which attempted to minimise its negative impact on our overseas markets.

Looking North, 2008 saw the further consolidation of the power-sharing institutions and the deepening of our relationships with the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Executive. It is a reflection of the enduring power of the Peace Process and the Northern Ireland Institutions that, notwithstanding the difficulties involved, the parties were able in late 2008 to reach agreement on a way forward for the devolution of policing and justice powers. Against a background of heartening progress on the political front, the Government have also actively promoted closer cooperation in the economic area, including participation by the Taoiseach and myself in the US Investment Conference in Belfast last May. Recognising the need to build community support for the new arrangements, initiatives such as the Anti-Sectarianism Fund, which was launched in 2008, will be vital in strengthening reconciliation at grass-roots level.

The recent murderous attacks in Antrim and in Craigavon brought in to sharp relief the remarkable progress made in the Northern Ireland peace process in recent years. The united response of the Northern Ireland Assembly in condemning the murders is a testament to the strength of the North's political institutions.

In international affairs, Ireland continued to support efforts to resolve the difficult humanitarian, human rights and political situations in Sudan, Chad, Burma and Zimbabwe. Ireland engaged robustly in international discussions on the Middle East, and I undertook a fruitful visit to Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in July. I also travelled to Georgia in the aftermath of last autumn's conflict to underscore Ireland's financial support for reconstruction and humanitarian work there. One of the undoubted highlights of the year, in which Ireland can justly take pride, was the agreement reached on a Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dublin in



May 2008. Like the 1968 Treaty on Non-Proliferation – which Ireland proposed – it is a fine example of the capacity of small countries to effect meaningful change.

The work of the Conflict Resolution Unit is also gathering pace, with the appointment of Ms. Nuala O’Loan as Ireland’s Special Envoy for Conflict Resolution in Timor-Leste, and the development of a cross-learning initiative between Ireland, North and South, Timor-Leste and Liberia on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

The Treaty of Lisbon ratification process presented an undoubted challenge for the Department in 2008. On the basis of independent research commissioned by the Department, and drawing on the findings of an all-party Oireachtas Sub-Committee on Ireland’s Future in the European Union, the Government was able to chart a way forward that fully respected the opinion expressed by the people in the referendum of 12 June. I am confident that the package of measures secured by the Taoiseach at the December 2008 EU Council will serve the best interests of Ireland and the EU.

The EU achieved a landmark deal on Climate Change in 2008, one in which I am satisfied that Ireland’s interests were successfully accommodated. As the global financial crisis deepened in 2008, our close cooperation with EU partners was a welcome bulwark in difficult times.

In 2008, Ireland’s Official Development Assistance amounted to €918 million, or 0.58% of GNP, placing Ireland as the sixth largest aid donor in the world in per capita terms. Ireland has built up an effective and internationally recognised aid programme, which is firmly focused on helping the world’s most vulnerable people. While we have had to take difficult decisions to reduce funding to the programme, these steps are vital to ensure our long-term economic sustainability, and the growth and sustainability of the Irish Aid programme in the longer term.

In the meantime, the Department is committed to enhancing the effectiveness of Ireland’s aid. We will make every cent count; my colleague, Minister of State Peter Power, played an active role in the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana in September 2008. The Report of the Hunger Task Force, launched by the Taoiseach in September, places the eradication of hunger at the heart of our aid policy, and Ireland will continue to take a leadership role internationally on tackling the root causes of hunger.

The Consular and Passport Service provided by my Department is the service with which the public will be most familiar. As the number of Irish people travelling overseas continues to rise, our new *Cabhair* database, installed in 2008, will allow us to better manage the increasing number of consular cases and crisis situations with which we are faced. In 2008, we continued to provide support to Irish communities’ abroad, distributing grants of more than €15 million through our Emigrant Support Programme. In addition, I was delighted to sign a reciprocal Working Holiday Agreement with the US, which will enable thousands of young Irish people to gain valuable work experience and to travel in the US for up to 12 months.

2008 was a year of considerable achievement for the Department of Foreign Affairs, in spite of the significant challenges presented such as the Lisbon Treaty ratification process and the operation of tighter financial constraints. Ireland’s leadership on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, our assistance to the world’s most vulnerable people, and our principled position on the situations in Zimbabwe and Burma are just



some examples of the Department's work in advancing Ireland's values and interests in the world.

I would like to express my thanks to my colleagues, Minister of State Dick Roche and Minister of State Peter Power, for their hard work in their respective areas of European Affairs and Overseas Development. I also wish to acknowledge the work of the staff of the Department and, in particular, the dedication of Mr. Dermot Gallagher, who retired in January 2009, having served as Secretary General, in this Department and the Department of the Taoiseach, for almost nine years.

Micheál Martin T.D.
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Introduction

Introduction by the Secretary General

I am delighted to present this Annual Report for 2008 to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Micheál Martin T.D.

As the Minister has emphasised, the Department intensified its focus on the promotion of trade and investment during the course of 2008. We used the opportunity provided by high-level visits, both inward and outward, to promote Irish business abroad, and to attract inward investment to Ireland. As well as supporting visits by President McAleese to Britain, France, Romania, Norway and the USA, the Department ensured that the Taoiseach's visits to China, South Africa and Saudi Arabia, as well as the 36 St. Patrick's Day Ministerial visits, were used to promote Ireland's economic interests.

Our Embassies and Consulates in the field, often the public face of Ireland overseas, are also continuing to prioritise economic objectives, working in close cooperation with the various State Agencies. Resources are also being reallocated as part of the priority attached to the economic work of overseas missions. For example, at the beginning of 2009 the Government decided to open a resident Embassy in the United Arab Emirates, in particular to support the engagement of Irish business with the Gulf Region.

The adoption by 100 States of an international convention banning the use of cluster munitions at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference in Croke Park in May 2008 was a landmark achievement for the Department. It was the culmination of many years of behind-the-scenes work by its staff, and places Ireland in a strong position to continue to exercise leadership on disarmament issues in the run-up to the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

2008 was a year for strengthening and developing relationships on this island. Building on important progress in terms of the political institutions, there was recognition of the need to tackle divisions at community level. The Department's Reconciliation Fund supported projects and organisations engaged in vital work to break down old barriers and attitudes. Meanwhile North/South cooperation in areas such as health, infrastructure and energy benefited people across the island, particularly those in the border regions.

2008 was also a year of progress and consolidation for Ireland's overseas aid programme. New country strategy papers, with a strong focus on aid effectiveness and results-based management, were put in place for Ethiopia and Lesotho, as well as an interim country strategy for Timor-Leste to support the vulnerable population of this fragile state. We also increased the number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who will receive multi-annual block grant funding from 6 to 24. This will enhance the ability of NGOs to plan for the future. We have placed greater emphasis on the role of the private sector in encouraging development by initiating a programme of support to the private sector in Mozambique, and through our new programme of funding to the Irish Fairtrade Network, which supports East African farmers in accessing Irish and global markets.



The Department successfully completed the decentralisation of the Development Cooperation Directorate in 2008 when some 130 staff took up their posts in the new Irish Aid headquarters in Limerick City.

While our achievements in foreign policy have been substantial, our commitment to providing a quality consular and passport service to the Irish public is equally important. In 2008, over 570,000 passports were issued to Irish citizens. Our new online Travel Registration facility will provide an added sense of security to Irish people travelling overseas. We continue to enhance our capacity to respond rapidly to emergency situations abroad in which Irish citizens are at risk, as demonstrated recently by the activation of our established crisis centre in response to terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

The Department is also constructively engaged in providing a variety of other services. These include the work of Protocol Division in arranging outward and inward State and other high-level visits and in supporting and managing relations with the growing number of foreign missions accredited to Ireland; the Press Office which provides an effective media service to the Department at headquarters and abroad; our Legal Division which offers valuable advice on many key legal issues; and our Corporate Services Division which ensures effective management of the Department's human and financial resources.

This report is the first to be presented in the context of the Strategy Statement for 2008-2010. I am confident that the Department is making real progress towards achieving the high-level goals as set out in the Strategy. Our achievements are largely due to the outstanding dedication and commitment of staff, both on the front line in Embassies and Consulates overseas and in Headquarters, operating under the political leadership of the Minister and Ministers of State. Having taken up the post of Secretary General in January 2009, I look forward to building on this Department's strong record of achievement in foreign policy and in the provision of quality services to Irish citizens.

The years ahead will be challenging ones for the Department, as they will be for the country, as we work towards economic renewal. The Department's budget has been significantly reduced over the last twelve months and further budgetary challenges lie ahead. This Department will play its part in improving efficiency and maximising value for money to operate within the reduced allocations, while protecting the important frontline services we provide to citizens and to businesses overseas. I am grateful to all colleagues for their cooperation with these efforts.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Minister and Ministers of State for their political leadership and commitment throughout 2008. Finally, I would like to thank my predecessor as Secretary General of the Department, Mr. Dermot Gallagher, for his many years of distinguished public service.

David Cooney
Secretary General

Our Strategy

The Department of Foreign Affairs' Statement of Strategy 2008-10 defined the Department's priorities for the period covered by this report. The Statement of Strategy 2008-10, together with other documents referred to below, such as the White Paper on Irish Aid and the St. Andrews Agreement, are available on the Department's website: 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 Divisions in the Department.

The Department currently comprises ten Divisions at headquarters (HQ) and a total of 75 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
Corporate Services Division
Development Cooperation Division
European Union Division
Inspection Unit
Legal Division
Passport and Consular Division
Political Division
Promoting Ireland Abroad Division (PIAD)
Protocol Division

External Environment

The environment in which the Department of Foreign Affairs operates is by nature complex and ever-changing, liable to sudden transformation by unexpected events, and constantly shaped by factors beyond the control of national governments. The realisation of objectives depends, therefore, not just on the efforts of the Department but also on the behaviour of other States and entities.

Given the unpredictable nature of our external environment, it is vital that the Department's resources are used to optimum effect. We cannot and do not work in isolation. The Department cooperates closely with other Government Departments that have external responsibilities, in order to work towards the attainment of the goals arising from the Programme for Government and other strategic priorities.



High Level Goals, 2008-2010

The Department's high level goals for the period 2008-2010, as identified in the Strategy Statement, are:

Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations	Promote the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement by supporting the effective operation of its institutions, strengthening North/South cooperation and working for lasting reconciliation.
Ireland's Role in the World	Contribute to international peace and security, promote conflict resolution, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and support effective common strategies to address global challenges.
The European Union	Secure Ireland's interests in the EU and contribute fully to the Union's future development.
Promoting Ireland Abroad	Promote Ireland, its bilateral relations with other countries, advance our economic interests and enhance our cultural profile overseas.
Irish Aid	Deliver on the commitments in the White Paper on Irish Aid through reducing poverty, supporting sustainable development and promoting development cooperation as an integral part of Ireland's foreign policy.
Consular and Passport Services	Provide a high quality passport and consular service to all Irish citizens and actively engage with our Diaspora.



2008: Summary of Developments and Achievements

Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations

- Consolidation of the power-sharing Institutions.
- Strengthening of our relationship with N.I. Executive and Assembly. (including through regular contact with the parties and party leaders).
- Achievement of agreement on way forward for devolution of policing and justice.
- North/South Ministerial Council Plenary Meeting in Dundalk and 12 meetings of the NSMC in sectoral format.
- All island cooperation on areas including infrastructure, health and energy.
- Meetings of the British Irish Council in Dublin (February) and Edinburgh (September).
- Plenary Sessions of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly held in Wexford (April) and in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (October).
- Establishment of the Anti Sectarianism Fund.
- Reconciliation Networking Forum hosted by Minister for Foreign Affairs in April.
- Meetings between the Taoiseach and First Minister, including at the opening of the Battle of the Boyne Heritage Site.
- Address by the Taoiseach to US Joint Houses of Congress.

Ireland's Role in the World

- Continued leading role in disarmament and non-proliferation, including successful negotiation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which was agreed at a diplomatic conference in Dublin in May 2008 under an Irish Presidency.
- Assumed the Chairmanship of the Human Security Network and adopted 'Gender-Based Violence' as the priority theme.
- Engaged closely in efforts to bring about peaceful political resolutions to international crises, including in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Georgia and Burma, making a strong contribution to the development of effective EU policies.
- Supported Irish participation in international civilian and military peace-keeping and crisis management operations, of which the deployments to EUFOR Chad and KFOR in Kosovo were the most significant.
- Worked to ensure a strong, balanced EU approach in its efforts to promote a peace agreement in the Middle East. Ireland's efforts included a joint initiative with Cyprus aimed at strengthening EU relations with the Palestinian Authority.
- Strong engagement with international partners in 2008 included the Taoiseach's visits to South Africa, Tanzania, Kosovo and China and Ministerial visits to Kenya, Argentina, the UN, Georgia, Timor-Leste, Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- Ireland's commitment to Conflict Resolution was advanced through engagement in Timor-Leste, the appointment of Nuala O'Loan as Ireland's first roving Ambassador for conflict resolution, initiatives promoting the role of women in conflict resolution and peacemaking, and the awarding of scholarships for doctoral study in conflict resolution.
- Continuation of strong Irish engagement with international partners in 2008 included the President's visits to Germany, Britain, France, Romania, Norway and the United States and the Taoiseach's visits to South Africa, Tanzania, Kosovo, the United States and China. The Minister for Foreign Affairs also undertook a number of high level visits overseas.



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| The European Union | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the December European Council, the Taoiseach set out the concerns of the Irish people concerning the Lisbon Treaty as reflected in the outcome of the June referendum. The Council agreed a package of measures to meet Irish concerns, including retention of a Commissioner, and a series of legal guarantees on taxation, neutrality and the provisions of the Irish Constitution in relation to the right to life, education and the family.• The Climate change Package was agreed at the European Council in December 2008.• The European Economic Recovery Plan agreed in December provides a coherent framework for action to be taken by the Union. |
| Promoting Ireland Abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported Taoiseach's visits to South Africa and China, and co-ordinated a range of incoming trade visits.• Ensured St Patrick's Day visits were used to promote Ireland's key economic interests (co-ordinated 36 visits in 2008).• Continued support for the Government's Asia Strategy by facilitating economic linkages and administering the Asia Strategy Funds through liaison with missions in the region.• Participated in efforts to re-open markets to Irish goods and Services, including beef (markets in Saudi Arabia and South Africa were re-opened to Irish beef in October and November 2008, respectively).• Worked closely with missions abroad, Government Departments and State Agencies to resolve the impact of the December pig meat crisis overseas and ensure markets would continue to be open to pigmeat products.• Facilitated the promotion of Ireland's diverse cultural heritage.• Effectively merged Bilateral Economic Relations Division, Cultural Division and Information Section, forming Promoting Ireland Abroad Division (PIAD). |
| Irish Aid | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in 2008 amounted to €918 million, or 0.58% of GNP.• The decentralisation of the Development Cooperation Directorate to Limerick was successfully completed in 2008.• The Inter-Departmental Committee for Development presented its first Annual Report to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in June 2008.• The Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre was opened by the Taoiseach in January 2008.• Continued to provide timely and effective funding to humanitarian emergencies through established UN, Red Cross and NGO partners.• 27 deployments from the Rapid Response Corps to humanitarian emergencies in 14 countries, and Ireland's stockpiles of humanitarian supplies were dispatched on 9 occasions from stores in Brindisi and the Curragh to emergencies worldwide.• The Report of the Hunger Task Force was submitted to the Taoiseach at UN Headquarters, New York, in the presence of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon.• Ireland successfully co-hosted the 4th Global Partners Forum on Children affected by HIV and AIDS and negotiated agreement on key policy priorities for children.• The target of spending €100 million on HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases across the Irish Aid programme was met, with 20% of additional resources spent on programmes to benefit children.• Ireland played an active role in the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana in September 2008 and contributed to the drafting of |



**Irish Aid
(cont'd)**

the Accra Agenda for Action.

- New Country Strategy Papers were put in place for Ethiopia and Lesotho, as well as an interim country strategy for Timor-Leste to support basic needs in this fragile post-conflict state.
- Irish Aid continued to prioritise the reform of the UN development system and led discussions among UN Member States on the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on System Wide Coherence.
- Engaged actively, through financial support and policy input, with the country-level UN reform programmes in Vietnam, Tanzania and Malawi.
- Approved an agreement for funding of €15 Million over the period 2008-2012 for the Irish Fairtrade Network (IFTN) to support over 435,000 East African coffee farmers in accessing Irish, EU and global markets.
- In line with the commitment in the White Paper to further develop the funding mechanisms for NGOs, the number of organisations who receive multi-annual block grant funding has been increased from 6 in 2007 to 24 at the end of 2008.

**Consular
and
Passport
Services**

- Effectively responded to a large volume of consular cases including over 200 deaths abroad and provided comprehensive consular support for major sporting fixtures abroad.
- Published a Consular Services Charter, Travel Safely-Slán Abhaile.
- Launched the (voluntary) On-line Travel Registration.
- Installed a new computerised database (Cabhair) to more efficiently manage consular cases.
- Renewed contact with partners in the travel, health, insurance industries, Defence Forces, Garda Síochána, HSE and Department of Social & Family Affairs to further develop services to assist citizens abroad.
- Took measures to implement the recommendations of the Report on Irish Prisoners Abroad.
- New visa system (AVATS) rolled out to 54 Missions, applicants in 175 countries can now use on-line application form.
- Information systems in standing Crisis Centre upgraded to improve Department's response to Consular Emergency abroad.
- Passports Act 2008 enacted and commenced. Associated regulations on periods of validity and appeals were also finalised.
- Issued more than 570,000 passports and published a comprehensive value for money review of the passport service.
- Emigrant Support Programme grants totalling €15,183 million allocated to projects supporting Irish Emigrants abroad through 189 organisations and projects across nine countries.
- Working Holiday Agreement agreed and signed with the United States.

Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations

High Level Goal, 2008-2010:

To promote the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement by supporting the effective operation of its institutions, strengthening North/South cooperation and working for lasting reconciliation.

2008 in Review

2008 was a year of consolidation for the Peace Process in Northern Ireland following the restoration of devolved government in May 2007.

In January, the Executive reached agreement on, and the Assembly passed, the Budget, Programme for Government, and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. The resignation of Dr. Ian Paisley as DUP party leader and First Minister in May 2008 prompted a re-shuffle of DUP members of the Executive. Peter Robinson was appointed First Minister, and Martin McGuinness re-appointed deputy First Minister, in June.

The past year was also one in which the power-sharing Institutions were tested, when policy disagreements between the two larger parties resulted in the Executive failing to meet for five months between May and November. This disrupted its work and that of other institutions of the Good Friday Agreement, including the North South Ministerial Council.

Meetings of the Executive resumed in November following agreement between the DUP and Sinn Féin on a way forward for the devolution of policing and justice powers to the NI Assembly. Throughout negotiations, the two Governments provided support and assistance to the parties to find a sustainable solution. This agreement represents a key milestone in achieving full implementation of the Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements.

The Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs attended the US Investment Conference in Belfast in May, in support of the Executive's objective of attracting US investment to Northern Ireland.

The sixth plenary meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was hosted by the Government at the Dundalk Institute of Technology in February 2008, as well as twelve meetings in sectoral format.

The Taoiseach hosted a summit meeting of the British Irish Council in Dublin in February, followed by the 11th BIC summit in Edinburgh in September.

In February, the Minister for Foreign Affairs launched the Anti-Sectarianism Fund to assist projects in interface areas designed specifically to address the root cause of sectarianism and to diffuse tension.



2008: Developments and Achievements

Consolidation of the Institutions

The Department continued to support the work of the Executive and the Assembly in the first full year of devolved government since the restoration of power to the Assembly in 2007. A Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, along with the Budget, were passed by the Assembly in January. During 2008, the Executive also addressed a number of key policy areas, including higher education, planning policies and the impact on Northern Ireland of the growing global economic crisis.

However, the Executive faced a number of challenging issues in its work programme and failed to meet for five months between May and November. This disrupted its work and that of other institutions of the Good Friday Agreement, particularly the North South Ministerial Council. The Government offered support and assistance to the parties as they worked to find a solution to their difficulties and remained in close contact with the British government throughout the period. A deal on the devolution of policing and justice was reached between the largest parties in November and the Executive then resumed work. This was a significant development in terms of completing the process of devolution and offered renewed assurance for the sustainability of the power-sharing arrangements at Stormont.

In May, on the first anniversary of the restoration of power-sharing, the Executive hosted the US Investment Conference in Belfast, in support of its objective of attracting major US investment to Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs attended this event, together with the British Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. In June, US President Bush visited Northern Ireland. Towards the end of the year, and following the resumption of Executive meetings, the First Minister and deputy First Minister visited the United States in a bid to attract foreign direct investment to Northern Ireland.

Devolution of Policing and Justice

In November, the First and Deputy First Ministers announced that they had reached agreement on a process leading to the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Assembly. This agreement sets out a series of steps to be taken by the Assembly and Westminster leading up to the transfer of policing and justice powers. It also includes a methodology for the election of a Justice Minister, by a majority of designated nationalist and unionists in the Assembly. These arrangements will last until May 2012. The Government will continue to support progress in this area.

Security Environment

The 2008 Parades Season passed off relatively peacefully. The Department continued to consult with key stakeholders on this issue, including in the context of the **Strategic Review of Parading**. The Chair of the Review, Paddy Ashdown, published an interim consultation report in April, and publication of the full report is expected take place later in 2009.

The **Independent Monitoring Commission** published three reports in 2008. In its September report, the IMC confirmed the Provisional IRA was fully committed to the political path, that its 'Army Council' was no longer operational or functional, and that the organisation was being allowed wither away. In its November report, the IMC drew attention to increased levels of dissident paramilitary activity.



North-South Ministerial Council and North/South Cooperation

The sixth plenary meeting of the North-South Ministerial Council was hosted by the Government at the Dundalk Institute of Technology on 7 February 2008, with Government and Executive Ministers discussing progress in developing North/South cooperation. During 2008, twelve sectoral Meetings of the NSMC took place, taking forward work to develop and promote cooperation in areas such as health and education, agriculture, tourism and transport.

2008 saw ongoing cooperation between Government Departments and their Northern Ireland counterparts on the achievement of priorities in the National Development Plan (2007-2013) and the Comprehensive Study on an All Island Economy. Key achievements in 2008 include:

- Preliminary route corridor assessment for A5 road upgrade completed
- €4.3million of Funding for upgrading works at Derry City Airport
- Technical study for bridge at Narrow Water completed
- Interreg funding of €30m secured for Project Kelvin (designed to improve broadband services in the North West)
- Spatial Planning Framework for North-West finalised
- Ongoing programmes to allow access to GP and radiotherapy services on a cross border basis
- Cross border banking information on charges now available on the cross-border mobility website www.borderpeople.info.

Work was also taken forward in 2008 on the St. Andrew's Review of the North/South Implementation Bodies and Areas for Co-operation.

British-Irish Council and British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The Department continues to pursue the effective operation of the British Irish Council. The Taoiseach hosted the 10th BIC Summit in Dublin in February. At this meeting, a range of issues, including drugs misuse and the future effectiveness of the Council, was discussed. The 11th Summit, addressing such issues as demography and energy, was held in Edinburgh in September.

The Department continued to assist in the development and strengthening of East/West parliamentary relations through the British Irish Inter Parliamentary Body. The Body – which was re-named the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly in 2008 – met twice during the year, in Wexford and in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party and Democratic Unionist Party attended the October meeting in Newcastle for the first time as full members of the body.

Promoting Reconciliation and targeting Sectarianism

The **Anti-Sectarianism Fund** was launched by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs during a visit to Belfast in February. The aim of this fund, which will be administered by the Department alongside the **Reconciliation Fund**, is to support projects which seek to combat sectarianism and its causes and to help ease tensions at contentious interfaces across Northern Ireland. In 2008, the two Funds distributed funding of €3million to 109 groups working actively to promote reconciliation and address sectarianism. The third annual Reconciliation Networking Forum was held in Dublin Castle in April. The Forum brought together groups working on reconciliation issues from across the island and provided a unique opportunity for reflection on lessons learnt and an opportunity to meet other groups working on similar issues.



The **International Fund for Ireland**, whose administration is supported by the Department, provided funding of €47.15 million for projects aimed at fostering reconciliation and encouraging economic and social development within the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties. This was made possible by the generous support of the European Union and the governments of the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Addressing the legacy of the conflict

The Department works closely with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, established by Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in 2008, including raising welfare issues arising from the conflict. Throughout the year, the Department continued to liaise closely with the Consultative Group on the Past, established by the British Government in June 2007 and which published its report in January 2009. The Department also continues to support and monitor the work of public inquiries underway in the North and to promote the full implementation of the recommendations agreed at Weston Park.

Ireland's Role in the World

High Level Goal, 2008-2010:

To contribute to international peace and security, promote conflict resolution, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and support effective common strategies to address global challenges.

2008 in Review

Throughout 2008, the Department engaged in activities in furtherance of this high level goal. As an active participant in all facets of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, through our high profile at the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international organisations, and in our relations with other States we continued to make a strong contribution to international peace and security.

In the course of 2008, Ireland has been to the fore on a range of issues including:

- Supporting efforts to stabilise the situation in Sudan and in Chad;
- Developing the EU's strategic relationship with Latin America, including implementation of EU strategic partnerships with Brazil and Mexico;
- Playing a leading role in efforts to improve the UN's internal coherence and its delivery of development assistance;
- Contributing to the EU's successful role in halting the conflict in Georgia by contributing personnel to the EU monitoring mission deployed there;
- Calling for an end to the isolation of the people of Gaza and the reopening of the territory's border crossings;
- Continuing strong commitment to address human rights concerns including in Burma and Zimbabwe;
- Recognising Kosovo's independence.

A major achievement in 2008 was the successful conclusion of a Convention banning the use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention and transfer of cluster munitions. Ireland was a member of the core group of countries driving this "Oslo Process". Our efforts culminated in the hosting of a conference in Dublin in May 2008 at which agreement was reached on a Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Events in the Middle East continued to be prominent in the international agenda in 2008 and Ireland played an active role including through Minister Martin's successful visit to Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in July. Elsewhere, Ireland provided funding for the reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in Georgia and Minister Martin visited the country in November and met with political leaders.



2008: Developments and Achievements

Africa

Ireland continued its strong engagement to support the resolution of political and humanitarian crises in Africa, according particular priority to the situations in the eastern DRC, Somalia, Sudan and Chad, where members of the Irish Defence Forces are deployed as part of the EU's EUFOR Chad mission. The then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D., visited Kenya in April and Ireland provided financial support for the successful mediation efforts of the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in Kenya which led to the formation of a government of national unity.

Ireland urged Zimbabwe's neighbours to exert pressure on the Mugabe regime to respect human rights and the rule of law. Ireland also worked to shape an appropriate EU response to the worsening situation in the country.

Political relationships with African countries were enhanced by the visits of the Taoiseach to South Africa and Tanzania in January. Minister of State Power's visit to Malawi in June cemented the strong relationship initiated by the opening of a new Irish Embassy in Lilongwe in late 2007, and provided an opportunity to underline the importance Ireland attaches to good political governance in a development context.

Middle East

2008 saw some positive political developments in the Middle East Peace Process. Direct Israeli - Palestinian Authority talks under the Annapolis Process made some progress in discussing final status issues, although the target of an overall settlement by year's end was not reached. It was also revealed that Israel and Syria were engaged in proximity talks hosted by Turkey, renewing a negotiating track that had been stalled since 2000. However, increasing Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and the continued isolation of Gaza remained serious obstacles to peace. The outbreak of the conflict in Gaza at the very end of the year threatened to undo the progress made.

Ireland was to the fore in shaping the EU response to developments in the region. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Micheál Martin T.D., met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Israeli Foreign Tzipi Livni, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, and Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki. In these meetings the Minister outlined the role the Government is playing, directly and in cooperation with our EU partners, in promoting a lasting and just settlement to the conflict. The Minister also made a successful visit to the region in July. Ireland was to the fore in calling for the reopening of border crossings in Gaza.

Asia

The situation in Burma continued to be a cause of serious concern. Ireland upheld a forward position on the serious human rights situation there and Minister Martin outlined Ireland's concerns in his address to the UN General Assembly in September, renewing in particular the call for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and her fellow political prisoners and regretting that the ruling military junta had not engaged seriously with the Good Offices Mission of the UN Secretary General. Ireland also actively engaged in the renewal of the EU Common Position comprising a range of sanctions and restrictive measures on Burma.



Ireland continued to develop its political relations with Asian countries and regional organisations. In October 2008, the Taoiseach met with Asian leaders at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Beijing and undertook an important bilateral visit to China.

Americas

2008 saw the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States. In addition to regular visits to the US by Government Ministers, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Argentina in March and Minister Power travelled to the EU-LAC Summit in May. Ireland pursued the Human Rights agenda in Latin America, including through active participation in the Universal Peer Review process at the Human Rights Council.

Europe

In addition to supporting the EU monitoring mission in Georgia, Ireland advanced €2 million towards the cost of reconstruction and humanitarian aid. Ireland also concluded a bilateral international agreement with Belarus in December which enabled holiday visits to Ireland by children from Chernobyl to continue. Ireland recognised Kosovo's independence and contributed to the successful international donor conference for Kosovo. Over 230 members of the Defence Forces continued to serve with KFOR and members of An Garda Síochána were appointed to the ESDP Mission there. The Taoiseach and Minister for Defence visited Kosovo on 22 December and met with Irish KFOR and ESDP personnel and the President and Prime Minister of Kosovo.

Human Rights

At the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Ireland worked with EU partners to ensure strong and consensus outcomes including the convening of special sessions on the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Ireland led negotiations on behalf of the EU for the successful renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and at the UN General Assembly Ireland led negotiations on behalf of the EU for the resolution on the Right to Food.

Reflecting the high regard in which Ireland is held internationally, Ireland's nominee, Professor Michael O'Flaherty, was successfully re-elected to the UN Human Rights Committee, receiving the highest number of votes of any candidate. The UN Human Rights Committee examined Ireland's Third Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in July.

United Nations

Ireland engaged closely with the full range of UN issues and maintained our strong engagement on the UN Reform agenda. This included a leading role in efforts to improve the UN's internal coherence and its delivery of development assistance. Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York completed his appointment as Co-Chair of the General Assembly Working Group on System-wide Coherence, submitting a report to the President of the General Assembly in July. In September, the General Assembly welcomed the report and agreed to move forward on the four priority areas identified in it.

Disarmament and Non-proliferation

In addition to the leading role Ireland played in securing an international ban on cluster munitions, Ireland also continued to actively participate in the preparatory work aimed at securing a positive outcome to the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In March 2008, the Government hosted the fifth meeting of the Article VI Forum of the Middle Powers Initiative entitled *NPT*:



Pathfinder to a Nuclear-Free World, which brought together prominent Government and NGO representatives.

Conflict Resolution

The then Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Dermot Ahern visited Timor-Leste in February and announced the appointment of Ms. Nuala O'Loan as Ireland's first Roving Ambassador with the role of Special Envoy for Conflict Resolution in Timor-Leste. Ms. O'Loan visited Timor-Leste twice in 2008, meeting the President, Prime Minister and other senior political figures and UN representatives. Projects supported in Timor-Leste include a programme of Peace, Remembrance and Reconciliation activities coordinated by Trócaire, the development of an early-warning and response system and support for high-level dialogue on the part of Timorese leaders.

A number of initiatives have been advanced in support of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and a cross learning process involving Ireland, North and South, Liberia and Timor-Leste was launched. Relationships have been developed with key international organisations including the UN and EU, and NGOs. A scheme of fourth-level scholarships in the area of conflict resolution was established in conjunction with the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the first two scholarships were awarded.

International Security and Defence

The deployment of over 400 troops to the UN mandated EU military mission EUFOR Tchad/RCA, under the operational command of Lt. General Pat Nash, represented a significant commitment of resources for Ireland. Members of the Defence Forces, along with troops from Finland, Norway, Estonia and Sweden, took part in the Nordic Battlegroup which was on standby for deployment in the first half of 2008.

2008 also saw a significant increase in Ireland's participation in civilian ESDP missions. Nine personnel, including eight members of An Garda Síochána, were deployed to EULEX Kosovo, the EU's rule of law mission in Kosovo. In September 2008 in response to the crisis in Georgia, a national contingent of four monitors, funded by Irish Aid, were deployed to take part in the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia).

The European Union

High Level Goal, 2008-2010:

Secure Ireland's interests in the EU and contribute fully to the Union's future development

2008 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 interests at EU level.

Following the people's decision on 12 June not to permit the State to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon, the Government commissioned an independent research project designed to identify the concerns underpinning this decision. These concerns were further examined by an Oireachtas Sub-Committee on Ireland's Future in the European Union, which reported at the end of November.

In December, the European Council offered to provide Ireland with a package of legal guarantees covering the key areas of identified concern, namely taxation, neutrality and the provisions of the Irish Constitution in relation to the right to life, education and the family. In addition, it was agreed to maintain the principle of one Commissioner per Member State in the case that the Treaty of Lisbon enters force. The Government agreed to arrange a second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 provided that the guarantees were satisfactorily forthcoming from the European Council.

Negotiations on EU accession continued with Croatia and Turkey in 2008, while Montenegro applied for membership of the EU.

The Climate Change Package was agreed at the European Council in December 2008. Ireland was satisfied that its concerns were taken into account and several new elements relevant to Ireland were included in the package put forward in January 2008.

The financial crisis which developed in the latter half of 2008 highlighted the importance for EU countries of working together and brought home the benefits of eurozone membership. Following close contact with Irish officials, in October 2008, the European Commission approved the Irish scheme designed to stabilise the financial markets by providing guarantees on deposits and debt to eligible banks in the Irish market.

The European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP) agreed in December provides a coherent framework for action to be taken by the Union.

The current round of global trade negotiations being conducted under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation continued in 2008. While progress was achieved in some areas covered, no breakthrough proved possible in the important areas of modalities in agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA).



2008: Developments and Achievements

The Lisbon Treaty

On 12 June, the Treaty of Lisbon was submitted to the people in a referendum. Ratification of the Treaty was defeated by 53.2% to 46.4%. While fully respecting the outcome of the referendum, the Government undertook a detailed analysis aimed at identifying the concerns underlying the vote, and the means by which they could be addressed.

Independent research suggested that retention of an Irish Commissioner at all times, tax, defence/neutrality, and ethical issues, including abortion, were key issues for voters. This was confirmed by an all-party Oireachtas Sub-Committee on Ireland's Future in the European Union. The Sub-Committee's report, published at the end of November, also stated clearly that 'Ireland's best interest is served by being at the heart of Europe'.

Believing that it is very much in Ireland's interest to remain an active and engaged Member State of the EU, and that the Treaty of Lisbon is important to the Union's future development, the Government then sought to find an agreed basis on which to move forward with its EU partners.

Following intensive negotiations, agreement was reached at the December meeting of the European Council that Ireland would receive a package of legal guarantees covering the areas of concern to the Irish people, as identified above, and that, if Lisbon enters into force, each Member State will retain the right to nominate a Commissioner.

It was agreed that the guarantees should be finalised by mid-2009. The Government said that if it was satisfied with the outcome of this work, it was prepared to seek ratification by the end of October 2009. By the end of 2008, Ireland was one of only four Member States not to have ratified the Treaty, the others being the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland.

Visits

2008 saw a number of important incoming and outgoing visits which enhanced Ireland's relations with key EU partners. The Taoiseach undertook a visit to Slovenia, Austria and Poland where he met the Presidents and Prime Ministers of the three Member States. In advance of the December European Council, he visited Paris, Berlin, Brussels, London, Luxembourg, Stockholm and Helsinki for discussions with his colleagues there.

In July, President Sarkozy visited Ireland to have discussions with the Taoiseach, which reaffirmed our close partnership with France on issues of vital interest, particularly in defence of Irish agriculture. The Taoiseach also had meetings in Dublin with the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and President Barroso of the European Commission.

During the period covered by this report, the Taoiseach, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of State for European Affairs engaged in extensive consultations with European partners and the European Institutions to ensure the broadest possible support for Ireland's position and to identify a way forward following the Referendum result.



The Minister for Foreign Affairs met with several of his EU colleagues as well as the President of the European Parliament, Mr Hans-Gert Pottering, and the Secretary General of the Commission, Ms Catherine Day, following the outcome of the Lisbon Treaty.

In February, President McAleese paid a State Visit to Germany where she held talks with President Köhler and Chancellor Merkel. In September, the President paid a State Visit to Romania and met with President Basescu and Prime Minister Tariceanu. There were also State Visits to Ireland during the year by the Presidents of Estonia and the Czech Republic.

Climate Change/Renewable Energy and European Economic Recovery Plan

The European Council in December 2008 agreed the climate change package put forward earlier that year. The Department of Foreign Affairs worked closely with other Government Departments to secure the inclusion of new elements in the package to take account of our national interests. These new elements include a range of flexibilities in the effort-sharing proposal that will reduce the cost of reaching Ireland's -20% target. Ireland will also benefit from the inclusion of forestry activities in Ireland's effort-sharing target under, or in the absence of, a future international climate agreement.

The European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP) agreed in December 2008 now includes Ireland's East West electricity Inter-connector with Wales, with EU funding of €110 million subsequently granted in 2009.

WTO

This Department continued to work in close cooperation with the Departments of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to advance and protect Ireland's interests in the current round of global trade negotiations, the Doha Development Agenda. A WTO ministerial meeting was held in Geneva in July. While progress was achieved in some areas, the meeting ended inconclusively. WTO Director General Pascal Lamy had hoped to convene a further ministerial meeting before the end of 2008 but, in circumstances where it appeared that no breakthrough could be made, it was decided not to hold the meeting.

Enlargement

During the course of 2008, negotiations on accession continued with Croatia and Turkey. Six further negotiating chapters were opened with Croatia, and five closed in 2008. Four negotiating chapters were opened with Turkey. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remained a candidate for membership, but no date was set for the opening of negotiations. An application for membership was submitted by the government of Montenegro to the Presidency on 15 December.

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

European Neighbourhood Policy

The ENP deepened its southern dimension in 2008 with the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The UfM formally replaced the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, formerly known as the Barcelona Process, at the Marseille Ministerial in November.



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.

Communicating Europe

The Communicating Europe Initiative (CEI) supported, among other activities, a programme of events to mark Europe Day on 9 May. Following publication in September of the IMS Millward Brown research into the outcome of the Lisbon Treaty Referendum, a project was undertaken aimed at refocusing the Department's priorities in relation to Communicating Europe.

Promoting Ireland Abroad

High Level Goal, 2008-2010:

To promote Ireland, its bilateral relations with other countries, advance our economic interests and enhance our cultural profile overseas.

2008 in Review

The Department's Promoting Ireland Abroad Division (PIAD) worked closely with missions abroad, State agencies and the private sector to increase awareness of opportunities for Irish companies in emerging markets, and to attract foreign direct investment into Ireland. This work involved the coordination of high level official visits, the facilitation of trade missions, and advancing bilateral agreements. For example, PIAD coordinated the Taoiseach's trade visit to China in October.

Work continued on implementing the guidelines outlined in the policy document on the economic work of missions (2007) and missions also focussed on economic and cultural objectives. A detailed training programme on economic and trade issues was held in May/June for officers going abroad on postings in 2008: areas covered included foreign direct investment, exports, competitiveness, the role of state agencies, and sectors of particular importance to the Irish economy.

The Department continued its support for the Government's Asia Strategy through facilitating economic linkages, participating in High Level Group meetings, engaging in follow-up activities, and administering the Asia Strategy Funds through liaison with missions in the region. Also, during 2008, the Department reviewed the effectiveness of expenditure under the Asia Strategy funding in 2006 and 2007.

Promoting Ireland Abroad Division continued to provide support to cultural events promoting Ireland's cultural heritage abroad through our network of missions. These mission initiatives also provide our missions with opportunities for public and media access to address the promotion of business interests. The Division also maintained close cooperation with the Department of Art, Sport and Tourism and other cultural bodies such as Culture Ireland and the Irish Film Institute.

2008: Developments and Achievements

As well as a range of incoming trade visits, the Department (Protocol Division, in collaboration with the relevant 'Lead Unit' Division and other stakeholders) organised several visits abroad by the President and a number of inward high level visits to Ireland by Heads of State (details of these visits are on page 34).

The Department also coordinated 36 St Patrick's Day visits and ensured that they were used to promote Ireland's key economic interests.

During 2008 the Department's Bilateral Economic Relations Division, Cultural Division and Information Section of the Department were brought together to form the Promoting Ireland Abroad Division. This amalgamation takes advantage of the Department's position, including through Missions abroad, to promote trade and investment both directly and through cultural activities and the raising of awareness of Ireland in other countries. This is in line with an increasing Government emphasis on the importance of developing and deepening Ireland's economic links with other countries. A detailed and specialised training programme on economic and trade issues was developed for officers going abroad on posting in 2008.

The Department participated in efforts to re-open markets to Irish goods and services, including beef (markets in Saudi Arabia and South Africa were re-opened to Irish beef in October and November 2008, respectively), and worked closely with relevant missions, Government Departments and State agencies, to resolve the impact of the December pig meat crisis overseas.

Missions produced cultural plans for the year to project a high cultural profile, centred on artistic innovation, for the country abroad. Missions were provided with small, dedicated budgets to allow them plan and implement cultural activities.

As part of our role to provide accurate and relevant information on Ireland, the *Ireland in Brief* booklet was revised and updated in 2008, and translated into 13 languages, for circulation by our network of Embassies and Consulates overseas.

Irish Aid

High Level Goal, 2008-2010:

Deliver on the commitments in the White Paper on Irish Aid through reducing poverty, supporting sustainable development and promoting development cooperation as an integral part of Ireland's foreign policy.

2008 in Review

Total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in 2008 amounted to €918 million, or 0.58% of GNP.

The decentralisation of the Development Cooperation Division was successfully completed in 2008 when staff moved into new headquarters in Limerick City and the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre was opened in Dublin in January 2008.

The Report of the Hunger Task Force was submitted to the Taoiseach at UN Headquarters, New York, in the presence of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban ki-Moon and the UN Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Holmes.

The Rapid Response Initiative – enabling the rapid dispatch humanitarian relief supplies and deployment of members of a Rapid Response Corps to emergency situations – became an increasingly important element in Ireland's humanitarian response.

Ireland, represented by Minister of State for Overseas Aid, Mr Peter Power T.D., played an active role in the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana in September 2008 and contributed to the drafting of the Accra Agenda for Action.

Ireland successfully co-hosted the 4th Global Partners Forum on Children affected by HIV and AIDS and negotiated agreement on key policy priorities for children.

New Country Strategy Papers were put in place for Ethiopia and Lesotho, along with an interim country strategy for Timor-Leste, a fragile post-conflict state.

Irish Aid continued to prioritise the reform of the UN development system and engaged actively, through financial support and policy input, with the country-level UN reform programmes in Vietnam, Tanzania and Malawi.

In line with the commitment in the White Paper to further develop the funding mechanisms for NGOs, Irish Aid increased the number of organisations which receive multi-annual block grant funding from 6 in 2007 to 24 at the end of 2008.

2008: Developments and Achievements

Total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in 2008 amounted to €918 million, or 0.58% of GNP.

The decentralisation of the Development Cooperation Division, which operates externally as Irish Aid, was successfully completed in 2008 when staff moved into new headquarters in Limerick City.

The Inter-Departmental Committee for Development, established in 2007, met four times in 2008. The Committee presented its first Annual Report to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in June. The Report outlines the role and activities of the Committee since its establishment and makes recommendations seeking to promote a coherent approach to development across Government Departments.

The **Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre** was opened by the then Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern T.D., on 22 January 2008. The Centre has a dual purpose: to provide information on the work of Irish Aid and on development issues more generally; and to provide an information service to individuals and organisations wishing to volunteer for development work. During its first year, the Centre hosted 179 development related events, including volunteering functions, ran an education programme for 144 schools and hosted 18 temporary exhibitions.

In 2008, Ireland continued to provide timely and effective funding to international humanitarian emergencies through established UN, Red Cross and NGO partners. Ireland provided funding to the UN-managed Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF). A two year funding partnership for 2008/09 was agreed with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Ireland was also invited to become a member of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Advisory Commission in 2008. In addition, Irish Aid began a new partnership with its main NGO partners in the area of humanitarian funding for protracted emergencies.

The **Rapid Response Initiative** has become an increasingly important element of Ireland's international humanitarian response efforts. In 2008, there were 27 deployments from the Rapid Response Corps to 14 countries, including Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Somalia. With the addition of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) the number of UN standby partners was increased from three to four. The size of the Rapid Response Corps volunteer roster rose to almost 100 trained members. Essential relief supplies were dispatched in 9 consignments from Ireland's pre-positioned stores in Brindisi, Italy and at the Curragh Camp to emergencies in Mozambique, DRC, Kenya, Burma/Myanmar, China, Iraq, Togo and Zimbabwe.

The **Report of the Hunger Task Force** was submitted to the Taoiseach in September 2008 at UN Headquarters, New York in the presence of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon and the UN Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Holmes. The report, which has received considerable international attention, focuses on three thematic areas to address the food security crisis: increasing smallholder agricultural productivity in Africa; targeting maternal and infant under-nutrition; and prioritising hunger at the national and international levels to ensure that donor and recipient governments fulfil their commitments to its eradication. The report provides a framework which will guide our response to global



hunger and food insecurity into the future. Ireland will take a strong leadership and advocacy role internationally in order to tackle the root causes of hunger.

In February 2008, Irish Aid launched its **Education Policy**, *Building Sustainable Education Systems for Poverty Reduction*. The policy highlights the important contribution of education to Irish Aid's overall goals and builds on Ireland's long-standing commitment to promote and support education in developing countries.

In October 2008, Ireland successfully co-hosted the 4th Global Partners Forum on Children affected by HIV and AIDS and negotiated agreement on key policy priorities for children. The target of spending €100 million on HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases across the Irish Aid programme was met, with 20% of additional resources being spent on programmes to benefit children. Ireland became the first bilateral donor to develop a three-year strategy for funding and engagement with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. There was a significant increase in numbers of people accessing HIV prevention, treatment and care services as a result of Irish Aid investment in country, global and regional initiatives.

Ireland, represented by Minister of State for Overseas Aid, Mr Peter Power T.D., played an active role in the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008. Ireland contributed to the drafting of the Accra Agenda for Action, promoting in particular actions on mutual accountability, gender equality and country ownership.

Irish Aid has maintained its strong focus on gender mainstreaming during 2008 and has been active in promoting it in its programme countries, particularly in Mozambique and Uganda. In Mozambique, as president of the donor troika, Irish Aid has sought to raise awareness of gender equality. In Uganda, we supported the Ministry of Finance to conduct two gender studies which will inform dialogue and policy making.

New Country Strategy Papers were put in place for Ethiopia and Lesotho in 2008, during the development of which new guidelines for the preparation of Country Strategies were piloted. These new guidelines have a strong focus on aid effectiveness and include modules on strategic planning and results-based management.

These Strategy Papers provide the framework for Irish Aid support, and detail how assistance is to be targeted. In the case of Ethiopia, Irish Aid bilateral support has been in place since 1994. Bilateral aid to Ethiopia amounted to €36m in 2008, marking the start of a new Country Strategy Programme that will continue until 2012. The new programme deepens Ireland's focus on extreme hunger, poverty and vulnerability and supports the Ethiopian Government's own plans for poverty reduction.

More than €13.5million was provided to Lesotho in 2008 under the new Irish Aid bilateral programme, including €4 million from Irish Aid HIV/AIDS funding for a partnership with the Clinton Foundation and Ministry of Health.

Malawi is Ireland's ninth programme country and a new Irish Embassy was established in Lilongwe at the end of 2007. During the course of 2008, the Embassy successfully managed and implemented an interim bilateral aid programme which focused on the areas of governance and food security. A five-year country strategy



paper will now be prepared which will deepen the focus on food security consistent with the needs of the country and the recommendations of the Hunger Task Force.

In 2008, the implementation of the Country Strategies for Tanzania, Vietnam, Uganda, Zambia and Mozambique continued. These strategies are focussed on the reduction of poverty and support national poverty reduction plans. The impact of this development support is evidenced by the reduction in poverty in Tanzania, where poverty has reduced from 40.8% in 1991 to 33.3% in 2008.

An interim country strategy for Timor-Leste was put in place to support basic needs in this fragile post-conflict state. Work has begun in developing a longer-term strategy of support which will be aligned with and provide support to the national poverty reduction plan scheduled for 2010.

In recognition of the role of the **private sector** in economic growth and poverty reduction, we launched a programme of support to the private sector in Mozambique in 2008 and we worked on developing similar initiatives for Tanzania and Uganda.

In 2008, Irish Aid approved a five year agreement for funding of €15 Million over the period 2008-2012 for the Irish Fairtrade Network (IFTN) to support over 435,000 poor East African coffee farmers in accessing Irish, EU and global markets. This programme supports fair and ethical trading systems, focussing on four countries in East Africa – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

Irish Aid continued to build its relationship with the UN Funds and Programmes, in particular with those designated as Priority Partners: the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Irish Aid also continued to prioritise the reform of the UN development system. Between January and August 2008, Ireland and Tanzania led discussions among UN Member States on the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on System Wide Coherence (SWC), which seek to improve the UN's ability to deliver development assistance at country level in an efficient manner. Irish Aid engaged actively, through financial support and policy input, with the country-level UN reform programmes in Vietnam, Tanzania and Malawi.

Irish Aid's Civil Society Policy was launched in 2008 and commits Irish Aid to: i) creating an enabling environment for NGOs to organise and engage with their own broader constituencies; and ii) supporting the role of NGOs in promoting participation and good governance, pro-poor service delivery and growth and building a constituency for development, human rights, and social justice.

In line with the White Paper commitment to further develop the funding mechanisms for NGOs, Irish Aid has increased the number of organisations who receive multi-annual block grant funding from 6 in 2007 to 24 at the end of 2008. The decision to approve funding followed a comprehensive assessment of each of the organisations to assess the scale of the agencies' capacity to operate within the multi-annual block grant. The process has resulted in a more informed and strategic relationship with the NGOs concerned.



Consular and Passport Services

High Level Goal, 2008-2010:

Provide a high quality passport and consular service to all Irish citizens and actively engage with our Diaspora.

2008 in Review

In 2008, 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. These situations have included deaths, arrests, repatriation, hospitalisations and the rapid response to international crises where Irish citizens were involved. 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.

The Department's Consular Services Charter and an on-line Travel Registration facility was launched by the then Minister in January 2008. The Charter has been distributed widely to Travel Agents, libraries, Garda Stations, and citizen's information centres. The on-line Travel Registration is available to citizens who wish to register their contact details with the Department before they travel, should it be necessary to contact them the event of an emergency or a family crisis.

The new Cabhair computerised database has been installed to manage more effectively our response to consular cases and crisis situations, and the roll-out to all Missions will continue in 2009. In addition, we continue with measures to implement the recommendations of The Report on Irish Prisoners Overseas by Mr. Chris Flood.

The new Automated Visa Application and Tracking System (AVATS) has been successfully rolled out to 54 Missions abroad, with visa applicants in 175 countries now able to fill in their visa application forms on-line.

The Passport Offices issued more than 570,000 passports in 2008, reflecting a small decline (4%) in demand on 2007. The Passports Act completed its passage through the Oireachtas and came into effect in November 2008. The Act provides a comprehensive legislative basis for the issuing and regulation of passports. A value for money review of the passport service was published in 2008. The review makes a number of recommendations designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Work has already been undertaken on some of these recommendations and this will continue in 2009.

In 2008, Emigrant Support Programme grants totalling €15.183 million were allocated to support Irish communities abroad and to strengthen links between these communities and home. In addition, further progress was made in the Government's ongoing efforts to reform existing visa and immigration arrangements with the US, notably with the reciprocal Working Holiday Agreement, which was signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in September. The importance of finding a solution for the undocumented Irish also continued to receive priority attention in Government contact with the US Administration and Congress.



2008: Developments and Achievements

Protecting and Supporting Irish citizens

Throughout 2008, 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 including crisis situations. During the year, the Department dealt with the deaths of over 200 Irish people abroad and provided effective assistance to our citizens in other difficult and tragic situations, including repatriation, hospitalisation, victims of crime and detention abroad.

Consular facilities were also provided for Irish citizens attending major sporting events such as the Olympics Games in Beijing.

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 particular 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 renewed 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, which is of international standard and is fully equipped to provide a modern emergency response to a consular crisis abroad, remains on standby to deal with large-scale emergencies, crises and disasters, whether natural or man-made, involving Irish citizens abroad. The Centre, which would be staffed by trained volunteers from within the Department in the event of a crisis, is capable of linking up with Crisis Centres in other EU capitals to share information and risk assessments. 2008 saw the upgrading of the Crisis Database which would be used in the Crisis Centre to track the cases of individuals affected and cases of concern raised over the Crisis Hotline by members of the public. In 2008, the Crisis Centre was activated in response to the civil unrest in Bangkok, which affected large numbers of Irish holiday makers following the closure of the airports, and in response to the terrorist bombings in Mumbai.

Emergency Consular Assistance Teams

These dedicated teams, comprising specifically trained officers from the Department, remain ready to be deployed, with support from trained professionals if necessary, in the immediate aftermath of a consular crisis affecting Irish citizens anywhere in the world.

Passport Service

The Passport Offices issued more than 570,000 passports in 2008, reflecting a small decline (4%) in demand on 2007. The efficiency of the passport service improved greatly with less reliance on temporary staff and a substantial reduction in overtime.



The Passports Act 2008 completed its passage through the Oireachtas and came into force on 1 November 2008. The Act sets out for the first time a specific legislative basis for the regulation and issuing of passports

The Act provides a statutory right for an Irish citizen to apply for a passport, regulates the application process and outlines the limited circumstances in which a passport may be refused or cancelled. It outlines the procedure in relation to matters such as lost or stolen passports, emergency travel facilities, names in which passports may be issued and the issuing of passports to children.

The Act strengthens efforts to combat fraud by introducing a range of passport specific offences under Section 20. These include fraudulent applications, sale or attempted sale of a passport and making a false passport. Maximum penalties for the more serious offences are up to 10 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

A Value for Money Review of the passport service by independent consultants KPMG was published in 2008. The review found that the Department has provided a high level of customer service and compares very favourably with the other countries looked at for comparative purposes. It also noted that the Passport Office has been responding to international challenges and, in recent years, there have been major advances in the service such as the roll-out of the automated production system and the production of e-passports. It also makes a number of recommendations designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Work has already been undertaken on some of these recommendations and will continue in 2009.

Irish Abroad

In 2008, Emigrant Support Programme grants totalling €15.183 million were allocated to 190 organisations and projects for the support of Irish communities abroad, with over 90% of the overall allocation directed to Britain (€10.22 million) and the US (€3.52 million), where the vast majority of Irish people living overseas are located.

As in previous years, the focus of this funding was on supporting frontline welfare services, including outreach, counselling and advisory services, targeted at the most vulnerable members of our overseas communities, in particular the elderly. As part of the Government's approach to strengthening Ireland's relationship with the Diaspora, support was also extended to a range of community and heritage projects, including large scale community developments in the US, Britain and Canada.

The Irish Abroad Unit implemented key recommendations of the Goodbody Value for Money and Policy Review of the Emigrant Support Programme, most notably the development of an online grant application process. This initiative has enhanced the Unit's capacity to focus programme funding and monitoring, ensuring that the funding allocated continues to reach the most vulnerable Irish people abroad.

A Working Holiday Agreement with the US was signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Washington in September 2008. The Agreement was welcomed by the Irish community in the US, and will further strengthen the links between that community and Ireland, while also helping to foster the growth of new and lasting contacts between Ireland and the US. Its signing marks the first success in the Government's three pronged approach to reforming our overall immigration arrangements with the US, which also includes the negotiation of bilateral-long term working visas, and a solution for our undocumented.

Support Services

Building Internal Capability:

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

2008 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.

Protocol Services

Throughout 2008, 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 2008

Visits by the President to:

Germany	Britain (Liverpool)
France (Lourdes)	Britain (London)
Romania	Norway
United States of America (California, Oregon and Arizona)	

In January 2008 the Division co-ordinated the arrangements for the Taoiseach's visit to South Africa and Tanzania.

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

The President of Estonia	The President of the Palestinian Authority
The President of the Czech Republic	The President of the European Parliament
The President of Latvia	The Prime Minister of Vietnam
The President of France	The Deputy President of South Africa
The Prime Minister of Croatia	The British Foreign Secretary
The Finnish Foreign Minister	The Russian Foreign Minister
The Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	
The President of the European Commission	
The Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic	

The Division also assisted with the organisation of the British-Irish Council Summit in February and the Cluster Munitions Conference in May 2008



Protocol Division continued to manage the privileges and immunities of 59 resident and 68 non-resident missions accredited to Ireland. It arranged the presentation of credentials to the President by 33 Ambassadors in 2008, as well as a number of large-scale events at which the Diplomatic Corps participated. Protocol Division assisted in the timely accreditation of Irish Ambassadors and representatives of the State to 19 countries abroad.

The Division also facilitated permissions for overflights and landings by Irish (3,166) and foreign (584) Government aircraft and for visits abroad by Irish naval vessels (9) and foreign naval vessels (64) visiting Irish ports in 2008.

Press Office

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

During 2008, it dealt efficiently and effectively with an increased number of queries covering the entire range of issues handled by the Department, from national and local newspapers, from the broadcast and online media and from representatives of wire agencies based in Ireland and abroad.

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 several incoming high level visits in 2008, including two State Visits.

The Press Office also provided media and communications support at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions which was held in May in Croke Park.

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

Northern Ireland	Advised on implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement, including in relation to the North-South Implementation Bodies, NSMC procedures, devolution of policing and justice, the Consultative Group on the Past and the Strategic Review of Parading in Northern Ireland.
Foreign Policy	<p>Ensured an integrated legal and policy approach to foreign relations in accordance with the Constitution and the UN Charter. Advised on the enforcement of UN and EU sanctions and the concept of 'Responsibility to Protect'. Contributed to the negotiation and adoption of a new international instrument on cluster munitions at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference in May and prepared the necessary implementing legislation. Progressed the State's extended continental shelf claims.</p> <p>Ensured appropriate extradition arrangements. Enabled making of the Extradition Act 1965 (Application of Part II) (Amendment) Order 2009, to give effect to the extradition agreement made with Hong Kong and to update multilateral extradition arrangements.</p> <p>Participated in Council of Europe discussions on the reform of the European Court of Human Rights and acted as agent in cases before the Court.</p> <p>Laid all international agreements to which Ireland became a party in 2007 before the Dáil and published them in the Irish Treaty Series.</p>
European Union	Advised on EU legal matters, with particular emphasis on the ongoing process relating to the proposed ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon and matters relating to EU external relations.
Trade and culture	Advised on international agreements on bilateral economic and cultural matters.
Irish Aid	Advised Irish Aid on its work, including development of a Guide to Agreements and Contracts governing the transfer and use of Irish Aid funding to partner organisations.
Consular, Passport	Advised on Passports Act 2008 and its commencement, including development of passport appeals procedure. Advised on consular protection of the rights of Irish citizens abroad.



Inspection Unit

The Inspection Unit reviews the work of Missions abroad to support them in contributing as effectively as possible to the Department's High Level Goals and making the best use of their resources. Twelve Missions were inspected in 2008 as set out below.

Missions Inspected in 2008

Berlin (Embassy)	Lisbon (Embassy)
Berne (Embassy)	Lusaka (Embassy)
Cairo (Embassy)	Madrid (Embassy)
Dar es Salaam (Embassy)	Ottawa (Embassy)
Geneva (Permanent Mission to the UN)	Riyadh (Embassy)
Holy See (Embassy)	Rome (Embassy)

Corporate Services

Corporate Services Division is responsible for the overall management of the financial and human resources and infrastructure of the Department, ensuring coherent operation across its various Divisions at Headquarters and throughout its 75 Missions overseas.

As required under the Public Service Management Act 1997, the Department prepared, and submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach a new Statement of Strategy (2008-2010) in July 2008.

The Department recognises that the quality of its staff represents its biggest asset. With more than 1,500 staff at Headquarters and around the world, the Department's policies and practices are constantly reviewed in order to optimise the performance and professional fulfilment of its staff.

During 2008 the Department continued to work in partnership with staff and union representatives, both bilaterally and within the context of the Departmental Council, towards the achievement of mutual objectives. The Department complied with its obligations under successive Partnership Agreements, with commitments arising from the various initiatives under the Strategic Management Initiative and with best-practice employment standards in use throughout the Civil Service.

The Department met and exceeded the 3% target for employment of people with disabilities as set out in part 5 of the Disability Act 2005. At the end of 2008, people with disabilities accounted for 3.5% of the Department's staff.

The Department continued to take a proactive approach to ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment, both in its approach to customer service and through training and other human resources initiatives. In 2008, as in previous years, the Department operated a number of family-friendly policies such as term-time, work-sharing, flexi-time and e-working. The Department's promotions policy incorporates gender equality targets; at the end of 2008, the staff gender balance was 56% female employees to 44% male employees.

Under the Government's decentralisation programme, the Development Cooperation Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs, which is the Headquarters of Irish Aid, was transferred to Limerick. Irish Aid's new permanent offices in Limerick opened in



mid-November and, by the end of December 2008, 124 out of a total of 138 staff designated to move had already been relocated.

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 2008 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 2008.

The **Evaluation and Audit Unit** of the Department further expanded its role in 2008, carrying out evaluations of the Timor Leste Country Programme and of the International Partnership for Microbicides (a joint evaluation led by Ireland). A systematic programme of audit of Irish Aid's expenditure in partner countries was undertaken and was expanded to include NGO partners funded under the Multi Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS).

Other significant achievements and developments during 2008 included:

- The purchase of one Residence abroad in Pretoria and the completion in 2008 of refurbishment projects in Canberra, Edinburgh, Helsinki, London and New York. Having purchased a site in Addis Ababa, we have now initiated the process for inviting tenders for constructing a new Embassy building; and
- The continued implementation of the ICT Strategy 2007 – 2010 with particular focus on the following areas
 - launch of a new Departmental Intranet
 - development of a two year Knowledge Management Plan in consultation with colleagues across the Department
 - launch of Cabhair, the Consular Management System
 - roll out of Mission websites based on a standard template
 - the roll out of Video Conferencing facilities across the Department, at HQ and Missions abroad
- The Department has achieved significant reductions in administrative expenditure across many different areas of the Department while protecting frontline services to the public. These efforts will continue in 2009, in view of the continuing pressures on the public finances.



Appendices

Appendix 1

Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2008

Appendix 2

Vote 29 (International Cooperation) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2008

Appendix 3

Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997

Appendix 4

Status Report on Value for Money Reviews

Appendix 5

Report on Regulatory Impact Analysis and Legislative Programme 2008

Appendix 1

Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2008

Service		Estimate Provision €000	Provisional Outturn €000
ADMINISTRATION			
A.1.	SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES	104,237	98,599
A.2.	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	8,517	7,324
A.3.	INCIDENTAL EXPENSES	5,943	6,507
A.4.	POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	8,432	10,238
A.5.	OFFICE MACHINERY AND OTHER OFFICE SUPPLIES	29,573	25,739
A.6.	OFFICE PREMISES EXPENSES	35,863	34,555
A.7.	CONSULTANCY SERVICES	470	244
A.8.	VALUE FOR MONEY AND POLICY REVIEWS	100	36
OTHER SERVICES			
B.1.	REPATRIATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRESSED IRISH PERSONS ABROAD	79	36
C.1.	SUPPORT FOR IRISH IMMIGRANT GROUPS	15,183	15,183
D.1.	INFORMATION SERVICES	578	648
E.1.	CONTRIBUTIONS TO BODIES IN IRELAND FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (GRANTS-IN-AID)	320	307
F.1	NORTH-SOUTH AND ANGLO-IRISH COOPERATION	7,000	9,084
F.2.	INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND	195	195
G.1	CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES	891	854
H.1	IRISH-AMERICAN ECONOMIC ADVISORY BOARD	28	13
I.1	CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	44,480	38,103
J.1	TITLE V OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION	582	582
K.1	ASSISTANCE TO EU CANDIDATE COUNTRIES	1,715	1,193
L.1	ATLANTIC CORRIDOR PROJECT	250	250
M.1	ASIA STRATEGY	200	182
N.1.	SUPPORT FOR IRELAND FUNDS	2,000	0
O.1	REFERENDUM ON EU REFORM TREATY	5,800	5,738
Gross Total		272,436	255,609
<i>Deduct:-</i>			
P.1	APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID	-39,000	-38,166
Net Total		233,436	217,443

Appendix 2

Vote 29 (International Cooperation) Estimates and Provisional Outturn for 2008

Service		Estimate Provision €000	Provisional Outturn €000
ADMINISTRATION			
A.1.	SALARIES, WAGES AND ALLOWANCES	18,890	18,838
A.2.	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	3,050	2,966
A.3.	INCIDENTAL EXPENSES	2,292	2,347
A.4.	POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	3,205	2,129
A.5.	OFFICE MACHINERY AND OTHER OFFICE SUPPLIES	1,363	1,418
A.6.	OFFICE PREMISES EXPENSES	3,580	3,356
A.7.	CONSULTANCY SERVICES	3,120	3,839
A.8.	VALUE FOR MONEY AND POLICY REVIEWS	200	190
OTHER SERVICES			
B.	PAYMENT TO GRANT-IN-AID FUND FOR BILATERAL AID AND OTHER COOPERATION (GRANT-IN-AID)	559,100	529,150
C.	EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	90,000	87,000
D.	PAYMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL FUNDS FOR THE BENEFIT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	36,000	30,993
E.	CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES	93,400	86,349
Gross Total		814,200	768,574
<i>Deduct:-</i>			
F.	APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID	150	997
Net Total		814,050	767,578

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 2008 (Vote 28) was €392 in respect of 14 cases. In addition, a total of €2,022 was paid in penalty interest on late payments under Vote 29 (International Cooperation) in respect of 4 cases.

Appendix 4

Status Report on Value for Money Reviews

Vote 28 – Foreign Affairs

Value for Money Review	Purpose of Review	Target Date	Current Status
Support for Irish Emigrant Groups	To evaluate the value for money achieved with the Department's support for Irish Emigrant Groups Abroad	12/2006	Report completed and published
Automated Passport Project	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 completed and published

Vote 29 – International Cooperation

Value for Money Review	Purpose of Review	Target Date	Current Status
Development Cooperation Ireland's Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for a specific disaster (Tsunami)	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 completed and published
Development Aid to Mozambique	To evaluate the implementation of the Mozambique Country Programme, funded by Irish Aid	12/2007	Report completed and published
HIV/AIDS Budget Line	To (i) inform Irish Aid and the Irish Oireachtas on: the overall quality of Irish Aid's HIV/AIDS response; the management of Irish Aid's 2000-06 HIV/AIDS expenditure (in line with the Value for Money Initiative Guidelines) with regard to its overall strategy; its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability taking one country case study as a sample and (ii) inform future decision making and assist in the strategic prioritisation of HIV/AIDS expenditure	12/2008	Report due to be published by mid-2009



Appendix 5

Report on Regulatory Impact Assessment

Legislative Programme 2008

Passports Act 2008 – No. 4 of 2008

The new Passports Act completed its passage through the Houses of the Oireachtas and was enacted in March 2008. The Act, which came into operation on 1 November 2008, provides a comprehensive legislative basis for the regulation and issuance of Irish passports by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Two subsections of the Act (sections 14(8) and 14(9)) will come into effect in 2009. 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.

Cluster Munitions and Anti-Personnel Mines Act 2008 – No. 20 of 2008

The principal purpose of the Cluster Munitions and Anti-Personnel Mines Act 2008 is to make it a criminal offence – subject to certain exceptions - to use, develop, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile or transfer cluster munitions, explosive bomblets or anti-personnel mines, or to assist, encourage or induce any person to do so, and to provide for appropriate penalties, as required by the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted at a diplomatic conference hosted by the Government of Ireland in Dublin from 19 to 30 May 2008. The Act also makes provision in relation to the investment abroad of public monies in companies that produce cluster munitions or anti-personnel mines. As the purpose of the Act is to implement the two international conventions concerned, no Regulatory Impact Assessment was necessary.

Note on Lisbon Treaty legislation

The 28th Amendment of the Constitution Bill was published on 4 March 2008. The Bill contained the text of the proposed amendments to the Constitution to allow the State to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon. The Bill was initiated in the Dáil on 6 March 2008. It was debated between 6 March and 7 May and adopted by both houses of the Oireachtas. The referendum took place on 12 June when the proposed amendment was rejected, ending the legislative process. An RIA was not required for this Bill.

Statutory Instruments (SIs) prepared by the Department in 2008

No. 412 of 2008 The Passports Act 2008 (Commencement) Order 2008

No. 413 of 2008 The Passports (Appeals) Regulations 2008

No. 414 of 2008 The Passports (Periods of Validity) Regulations 2008

A regulatory impact assessment had previously been undertaken on the Passports Bill and the purpose of the associated regulations was to bring the legislation into effect and to address associated matters of minor detail and procedure. Accordingly, it was not necessary to undertake a further regulatory impact analysis on these statutory instruments.

No. 220 of 2008 Child Abduction and Enforcement of Custody Orders Act 1991 (Section 4) (Hague Convention) Order 2008

The statutory instrument related to the Hague Convention was not deemed to be significant for the purposes of triggering a regulatory impact assessment, as it does not involve any costs, and its purpose, is, in fact, to facilitate a more efficient application of the said Convention within Ireland.