


Meeting with Ms Thórdís Gylfadóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iceland

Thursday, 13 October 2022, 14:00 – 14:30

Points for discussion	[redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]
Why	[redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]
Who	<p>Ms Thórdís Gylfadóttir – Icelandic Minister for Foreign Affairs</p>  <p>A member of the centre-right Independence Party, she has been an MP since 2016. From 2017-2019, she served as Minister for Tourism, Industry and Innovation. In 2019, she also temporarily covered the Justice portfolio. She was appointed Foreign Secretary after last year's elections.</p> <p>Before joining politics, she was a lecturer in Constitutional and Administrative Law at the University of Reykjavik.</p> <p>[redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]</p>
Media	@thordiskolbrun @MFAIceland
Supporting officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• [redacted] – Arctic policy lead, Directorate for External Affairs• [redacted] – Deputy Private Secretary <p>[redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]</p>
Attached documents	Annex A – Background information Annex B – International Development core brief

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ANNEX A

[redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]

24/7 Carbon-free Energy Compact

- In 2021, the UN announced over 150 energy compacts to help accelerate progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7.
- The 24/7 Carbon-Free Energy Compact seeks to accelerate the decarbonisation of the world's electricity systems to ensure access to clean and affordable electricity for all.
- The compact comprises over 70 signatories including companies, investors, organization and governments. Scotland is the second country to sign up, following Iceland.

Other key examples of Scottish-Icelandic cooperation

Wellbeing Economy Government group (WEGo)

- WEGo seeks to promote sharing of expertise and transferable economic policy practices to deliver societal wellbeing.
- Launched in 2018, the initiative now includes the governments of Scotland, Wales, Iceland, Finland and New Zealand, with officials from Canada also participating in activities.
- In November 2022, SG WEGo team will be holding an in-person gathering of officials to discuss key issues in wellbeing agenda and WEGo plans going forward. [redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]
- [redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]

Barnahus

- Our PfG included a commitment to establishing Bairns' Hooses in Scotland by 2025.
- Learning from Iceland has been instrumental in our early work on Bairns' Hoose. The Scottish Government has had a relationship with Barnhus Iceland since 2017.
- Last year, the First Minister visited a Barnahus facility in Iceland as part of her visit to the Arctic Circle Assembly to learn more about the concept, its development and delivery.

[redacted – s.32(1)(a) – International relations]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORE BRIEF ANNEX B

- **International development is a key part of Scotland's global contribution** within the international community. It encompasses our core values, historical and contemporary, of fairness and equality. It is about **Scotland acting as a good global citizen**.
- **We have a distinctive development contribution to make**, through focusing Scotland's expertise, being innovative and employing our unique partnership approach, for global good.
- **Our Vision in our Strategy** is to contribute to sustainable development and the fight against poverty, injustice and inequality internationally.
- **Key theme of global citizenship is reflected throughout our Strategy**. To be a good global citizen and an outward looking nation is *why* we have an international development programme. It explains why we foster and encourage, through support for Scottish civil society, traditional core values in Scotland of fairness, equality and global solidarity.
- **Partnership and collaboration** will continue to be the foundation for our future development work as we build upon our existing bilateral partnerships with **Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda and Pakistan**, working across borders to address the **shared challenges** our world faces, in pursuit of the Global Goals.
- We **increased our International Development Fund to £10m** from 2017, along with a **new £1m Humanitarian Emergency Fund**.
- We recognise **COVID-19 is an unprecedented global crisis**, leaving no country or people unaffected, and emphasise the importance of our commitment to international solidarity, of working together on this shared challenge. **We remain fully committed to playing our part in tackling shared global challenges** including poverty, injustice and inequality.
- In light of the Covid-19 Pandemic we decided to **carry out a Review** of our approach to International Development in 2020, to focus our work on areas where we can make the **biggest contribution and difference in our partner countries** against the backdrop of the new reality of the **Pandemic, and the Black Lives Matter movement**
- In addition to Scotland's contribution to the UK aid budget, the **Scottish Government further contributes internationally through its own international development programmes, and efforts to reduce the impact of climate change on the world's poorest communities**.
- We have previously made clear **we believe the cutting of 0.7% by UKG to be a deplorable decision that will hit the world's poorest and most marginal communities at a time of great need** – we have made, and will continue to make, strong representations to UKG to reinstate International Development funding to at least 0.7% of UK GNI.

- In contrast to UKG, **we have committed to** not only maintain, but in fact **increasing our International Development budget by 50%, to £15 million**, which will help support COVID-19 responses and recovery in our partner countries.
- **Scotland can be a global leader** in international development - being a global leader is **not necessarily just about size in absolute monetary terms, but the impact that you can make** - across Government policy and wider involvement outwith Government. **Scotland can also be an ethical leader, internationally. We will continue to adopt progressive policies, including our commitment to a Feminist Foreign Policy.**