

# **Nordic Diplomatic Cooperation**

Declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Nordic Countries

Helsinki, 31 October 2012

In an effort to improve the cost-efficiency and increase the profile of their diplomatic networks, the Nordic countries are committed to further develop their diplomatic cooperation in third countries through sharing premises of diplomatic and consular missions.

The Nordic Ministers welcome a number of co-location projects involving two or more Nordic countries that have already been established over the years. They stress the importance of further strengthening such cooperation in a flexible and pragmatic manner.

The Nordic Ministers express their satisfaction with preparatory work done at the senior officials' level to identify viable further projects for sharing premises in third countries. At their meeting in Helsinki the Nordic Ministers of Foreign Affairs have decided to:

- Welcome the opening of a joint office in Rangoon, Burma in November 2012. Denmark, Norway and Sweden (Sida) will share premises in the new representation. Finland is considering way of participation. Norway is lead on the project.
- Advance the establishment of a joint embassy complex in Islamabad, Pakistan, with the participation of Norway and Denmark. Norway will lead the project, which should be finalised by 2014.
- Further develop plans to expand an existing Swedish embassy compound in Hanoi, Vietnam, to co-locate Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish diplomats by 2016. Sweden will lead the project.
- Proceed with plans for a future co-location of Danish, Swedish and Norwegian embassies in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Denmark will lead the project, which should be finalised by 2015.

In some cases existing agreements and commitments preclude decision to cooperate in the short run. The ministers remain committed, however, to continuously explore possibilities for long term co-operation based on assessment of value-added and economic viability of proposals as well as the actual gains of diplomatic cooperation.

Foreign Ministers will discuss a number of priority projects for co-location in third countries in the long term at their next meeting.

The ministers recognise that effective joint solutions require that a number of administrative, technical and legal issues be addressed by the parties involved. The issues have been discussed in a variety of Nordic cooperation forums. In this context The Foreign Ministers, have tasked their senior officials responsible for issues pertaining to IT, Security and Real Estate to address these challenges and meet on a yearly basis to advance projects in a coordinated manner. At the Foreign Ministers meeting in the spring 2013 ministers will discuss a status report prepared by officials.

The Nordic countries are also cooperating with other European countries and have recently formalised their cooperation with the Baltic States in a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Ministers stress the importance of strengthening diplomatic cooperation not only in third countries but also in the Nordic area itself. They agree that a joint complex in Reykjavik, where the individual embassies of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden can be co-located holds significant potential. It is an important step that will allow Nordic countries to maintain strong and active diplomatic networks in Iceland more efficiently.