

**Minutes from meeting in the Council for Development Policy**  
**on 27 November 2025**

- Members: Professor Anne Mette Kjær, University of Aarhus (Chair)  
Deputy CEO and International Director Jarl Krausing, CONCITO (Deputy Chair)  
Secretary General Charlotte Slente, Danish Refugee Council (DFC)  
Director Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, Danish Foreign Policy Society  
Chief Advisor Mattias Söderberg, DanChurchAid  
Head of Secretariat Lone Ilum Christiansen, The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA)  
Senior Researcher Adam Moe Fejerskov, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)  
Director for Nutrition Line Damsgaard, The Danish Agriculture & Food Council  
Senior Vice President for Global Development and Sustainability Marie Gad Hansen, Confederation of Danish Industries (DI)  
Political Director Jonas Manthey Olsen, Danish Youth Council (DUF)
- Regrets from: Political Consultant and Project Officer of DAPP Lucas Højbjerg, The Danish Chamber of Commerce
- MFA: State Secretary for Development Policy Elsebeth Søndergaard Krone (Agenda item 6)  
Head of Department Tove Degnbol, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING  
Deputy Head of Department Mette Bech Pilgaard, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING  
Head of Section Lotte Blom Salmonsén, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING  
Head of Section Lea Ambra Klein Skovbjerg, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING  
Student Assistant Anton Hannibal Fischer Kirknæs, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING
- Agenda item 1: Ambassador Jesper Kammersgaard, the Embassy of Denmark in Dar es Salaam  
Head of Department Ketil Karlsen, Department for Africa, Development Policy and Financing, AFRPOL

- Agenda item 2: Deputy Head of Department Mads-Emil Stærk, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA  
Chief Adviser Merete Villum Pedersen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA  
Head of Section Lucca Harbo Pedersen-Ulrich, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA  
Deputy Director Henrik Silkjær Nielsen, International Affairs, Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities, KEFM  
Head of Section Nikolaj Heldt Rønnow, International Affairs, Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities, KEFM  
Head of Section Andreas Møller Iversen, International Affairs, Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities, KEFM
- Agenda item 3: Head of Department Peter Lassen, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO  
Team Leader Anne Kahl, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO  
Chief Technical Advisor Mogens Blom, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO  
Special Advisor Karin Nielsen, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO
- Agenda item 4: Head of Department Peter Lassen, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO  
Team Leader Anne Kahl, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO  
Chief Technical Advisor Mogens Blom, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO  
Special Advisor Karin Nielsen, Department of European Neighbourhood, EUNABO
- Agenda item 5: Professor Anne Mette Kjær, University of Aarhus (Chair)  
Deputy CEO and International Director Jarl Krausing, CONCITO (Deputy Chair)  
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Agenda item 6: Deputy Head of Department Mads-Emil Stærk, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA  
Head of Section Eva Marie Wüst Vestergaard, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA

### **Agenda Item No. 1: Announcements**

The Ambassador of Denmark to Tanzania gave an orientation about the recent extensive violence in Tanzania following national elections. He described the implications for Danish development cooperation in the form of a moratorium on new grants to the Tanzanian government.

The Head of AFRPOL informed about the EU-AU summit in Luanda, Angola on the 24-25 November. An impressive 22 state leaders from African countries and 14 representatives from EU member states incl. António Costa and Ursula von der Leyen participated. Peace and security were among the key themes discussed during the summit.

Members of the Council, Jarl Krausing, CONCITO and Mattias Söderberg, DanChurchAid briefed about COP30. They highlighted the difficult context and disappointing overall result, but underlined the commitment to the climate agenda from the private sector in cities at country level.

The Head of LEARNING briefed the Council on the crisis in Sudan and described the Danish efforts to keep Sudan on the international agenda with focus on securing humanitarian access, protection of civilians, and promoting a political solution to the conflict - both through the UN Security Council and the EU. Denmark had provided DKK 180 million in humanitarian support to the crisis in Sudan, through UN partners, among others the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Sudan Development Fund and Danish civil society organisations (CSO) in order to address the extensive humanitarian need across all sectors.

Finally, the Head of LEARNING informed the Council that the Act to Amend the Act on International Development Cooperation was being debated in Parliament simultaneously to the meeting in the Council for Development Policy. The outcome of the deliberations in Parliament would only be known later in the day.

*With reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Council for Development Policy, the Chair of the Council asked if members had any conflict of interest related to the agenda items. No member announced potential conflict of interest.*

## **Agenda Item No. 2: Orientation about the NDC Partnership Grant**

*For information and discussion*

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (KLIMA)

### *Summary:*

*At the UPR meeting in October 2023, when the appropriation was presented, UPR requested to get an orientation of the NDC Partnership (NDCP) in 2025, when the New Work Programme (NWP) 2026-2030 of NDCP would be finalised. The report provides an overview of Denmark's priorities and commitments to improving the response to NDCP country requests and summarises responses to five key recommendations from the 2023 Mid-Term-Review (MTR) concerning 1) Improve monitoring and reporting, 2) Gain political traction, 3) Widen and deepen partner engagement, 4) Strengthen access to finance for NDC implementation, and 5) Strengthen the Steering Committee's governance.*

### **Key observations and recommendations from the Council:**

- The Council commended the Danish co-chairmanship and the strategic opportunities the grant provided for linking with other Danish initiatives and facilitating valuable information sharing amongst stakeholders that could assist developing countries in achieving their NDC. It was noted that Denmark had been successful in attracting further attention to climate financing. Members also commended that Denmark worked to follow up on the mid-term review.
- Members of the Council expressed concerns regarding development partners' withdrawing from the NDCP and requested clarification on how this might affect the NDCP's financial outlook, as well as how the Partnership was preparing to handle potential budget cuts.
- Members of the Council underscored that developing countries consistently called for increased climate financing for implementation and asked about the NDCP role in securing such financing. They also inquired whether different approaches were applied when engaging with the Least Developed Countries (LDC) versus middle-income countries given their varying capacities to prepare and implement NDCs.

- Members of the Council referred to the ambitious implementation targets outlined in the appropriation documentation, noting that these had not yet been met. The Council requested information on how the potential risks of non-achievement would be mitigated going forward.
- The Council asked if there were indications of the Partnership gaining increased political traction, as also referred to in the Mid-Term Review.
- Members welcomed the forthcoming Danish secondment and enquired about further information on its placement and thematic focus.

**Response to key issues from KLIMA and KEFM:**

- Deputy Head of KLIMA explained that the reduced contributions to the Partnership should be understood in the context of globally shrinking ODA budgets due to competing urgent priorities. Some partners – such as the US – had withdrawn, while others had reduced their contributions. Discussions on potential new pledges were ongoing with UK, Germany and Norway. The Partnership anticipated lower contribution levels for the New Work Programme (2026-30). For 2026, the Partnership’s Support Unit had forecasted a 10-20% budget reduction and would increasingly focus on efficiency gains.
- Denmark had pledged an additional DKK 63.7 million top-up contribution to the Partnership. The additional funds placed stronger emphasis on reinforcing the NDCP’s “leave no one behind” model by allocation 40% of the funds to the Partnership Action Fund (PAF), which served as a last-resort mechanism for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs) and 60% to the Secretariat (compared to the 30/70 allocation in the current grant).
- Concerning the role of NDCP in ensuring access to finance for NDC implementation, it was emphasised that the NDCP primarily supported countries in developing their NDC and the policy framework that facilitate implementation. The NDCP did not provide direct financial support for investment needs but instead played a supportive role in facilitating access to financial intermediates and resources, for example through country platforms, linking to other initiatives or through Calls to Actions for NDC implementation, such as the initiative launched at COP30.
- The NDCP was gaining increased political traction, the growing number of developing countries participating in the partnership demonstrated that it was viewed as an efficient and effective platform for countries to accessing tailored, demand-driven climate-related support from multiple partners. The UNCCC Synthesis Report on NDC 3.0 noted improvements in the quality and coverage of the NDCs, which were linked to the NDCPs’ support. The NDCP was also increasingly facilitated links to complementary initiatives such as the Coalition of Finance Ministers.
- The Danish secondment would represent a new form of engagement, clarification was still underway regarding its placement and thematic area.

- Denmark would continue to monitor how the Partnership delivered on its ambitions, including through strengthened monitoring and evaluation.

### **Agenda Item No. 3: Annual Stocktaking: Eastern Neighbourhood Programme**

*For information and discussion*

Department of European Neighbourhood (EUNABO)

*Summary:*

*The Annual Stocktaking of the Eastern Neighbourhood Programme 2024 encompasses projects and programmes under the initial Neighbourhood Programme 2022-2026 as well as the “Revised Strategic Framework: Denmark’s partnership with the Eastern Neighbourhood Countries 2023-26” (approved ultimo 2023). Overall, the Stocktaking presents positive progress, except for Georgia where cooperation involving government authorities has been suspended due to the political development. It highlights the programme’s relevance and adaptability as also found by the Mid-Term Review from spring 2025.*

#### **Key observations and recommendations from the Council:**

- While commending the adaptability and flexibility of the Neighbourhood Programme, Members of the Council asked how EUNABO would follow up on the recommendations by the Mid-term Review conducted in the spring of 2025. Among others, Council Members asked how EUNABO intended to reduce the number of grants in the currently extensive portfolio and also enquired about a comprehensive overview of the portfolio; had it been prepared as recommended by the review, and if so, how had this contributed to EUNABO’s work and reflections? Members of the Council recommended that project approvals should be aligned with the annual cycle of the Danish Finance Act similar to other grants approved by the MFA. This would be more in line with the Aid Management Guidelines and ease management of the grants and improve transparency.
- The Council underlined the importance of a strong focus on anti-corruption. Curbing corruption was decisive to the future of the countries in the region and it was considered *the* most important factor for the interest of Danish companies in investing in Ukraine. The Council asked how this was ensured in Danish-funded activities and if process on the anti-corruption agenda was experienced.
- Members of the Council found that the development impact of the Danish support and poverty-oriented efforts were not reflected in the Stocktaking and asked for a status. The Council drew attention to the importance of supporting Ukrainian civil society, in particular in light of an increasing war fatigue – and inquired how this was adequately secured when engaging with multilateral partners. It was noted that the capacity among Ukrainians was considerable and that far from all national organisations had corruption problems. It was recommended to include national civil society in projects to align initiatives better with Ukrainians’ needs. Would civil society organisations be a way to

improve localisation? A continued and substantial support to the Ukrainian civil society was also seen as crucial to uphold the resilience and engagement in a war situation.

- The Council inquired information about the Ukrainian-Danish Youth House and asked whether the Embassy followed the recommendations from the Mid-Term Review to phase out the house as a physical space and instead prepare for a consolidated youth engagement project? Was the Youth House relevant, considering other youth initiatives in the country? Attention was called to the large share of fixed costs such as rent in the total budget.
- As for the political situation in Georgia, the Council expressed concern about the current development and inquired about the status of cooperation. Was it at all possible to conduct development cooperation in the country? If not, should more focus be directed to Moldova and potentially Armenia?

*Other issues mentioned by the Council* included results of the decentralisation support, status of the Democracy Fund, reasons for providing energy support thorough UNDP in Moldova, and the need for better connecting the Export and Investment Fund of Denmark's (EIFO), Impact Fund Denmark's (IFDK) instruments and the Neighbourhood Programme.

#### **Response to key issues from EUNABO:**

- The Head of EUNABO informed that reducing the number of programmes and projects was an ongoing effort, and the project portfolio was slowly being reduced due to old projects being closed. However, due to the rapidly developing situation in the region, new asks and requirements kept appearing. This also made it difficult to ensure alignment of project approval with the annual cycle of the Finance Act. EUNABO acknowledged the importance of normalising the management of development cooperation and its willingness to find solutions, but emphasised the challenges because of a rapidly changing context. The Chief Adviser added, that a comprehensive overview of the portfolio was currently being developed.
- Head of EUNABO informed the Council that there was a direct dialogue with Ukrainian authorities on anti-corruption, not least through the EU/Danish anti-corruption programme (EUACI). There seemed to be less tolerance toward the phenomenon in the general population, especially among young people. Ukraine was very keen on the EU accession, and genuine anti-corruption action was key in this process.
- The Head of EUNABO found there was still resilience and involvement among citizens and civil society in Ukraine alongside the increasing fatigue following the war. This was not least the case in Mykolaiv. The Team Leader added that a strong focus on support to and involvement of civil society was crucial and an ongoing effort.
- As for Georgia, the Head of EUNABO confirmed the increasing negative political development during the past two years. A delicate balance should be found when working

with Georgian civil society partners. The Team Leader added that some of the UN organisations had maintained their presence and work – now with a stronger focus on civil society. EUNABO acknowledged the potential for increased cooperation with Armenia and Moldova now that cooperation with Georgian authorities was suspended. However, at the moment focus was on streamlining programmes by prioritising among projects before initiating new ones.

- The Ukrainian-Danish Youth House had been more difficult to establish than anticipated without compromising already existing initiatives. Youth houses were part of Ukrainian culture. Now Denmark had found a model that worked, in particular in Mykolaiv. Denmark cooperated with existing youth houses and provided IT and space for civil society to convene.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4: Orientation of the Ukraine Transition Programme**

*For information and discussion*

Department of European Neighbourhood (EUNABO)

##### *Summary:*

*The orientation of the Ukraine Transition Programme (UTP) outlines how the UTP 2025-2028 has been designed incl. processes for choice of partners. The programme was approved in July 2025 and launched in September. It aligns with the New Strategic Framework for Denmark's Partnership with Ukraine, 2025-2028. During a nine months inception report, some outstanding elements would be finalised, followed by an inception review in spring 2026. The UTP continues the Danish support to reconstruction, energy security and green transition, as well as supporting reforms and the process of EU accession through three focus areas.*

##### **Key observations and recommendations from the Council:**

- Members of the Council wanted an elaboration of the overall reflections behind the support to emergency efforts versus long-term efforts.
- The Council inquired about the level of dialogue with the Ukrainian Government and authorities and asked how priorities in the Danish-supported programmes were agreed. A large share of the Danish support was concentrated on Mykolaiv and Council Members asked if this could result in an uneven support to the various regions in Ukraine. It was also asked why other donors had not followed a similar approach.
- Concerns regarding ownership by Ukraine were raised by the Council. What did the Danish-supported programme do to ensure national ownership of the activities? Would it be possible to work closer with Ukrainian partners, and could Denmark do more to encourage UN organisations and other implementing actors to involve Ukrainian partners? While Members of the Council encouraged a continued strong anti-corruption focus, they also asked how ownership could be developed in a situation where Ukrainian partners were worried about being accused of corruption if they became involved in

implementation. Even in a context with high levels of corruption, Members of the Council found that it should be possible to identify relevant Ukrainian partners, including Ukrainian civil society organisations.

- Members of the Council pointed out that the strong focus on a Whole-of-Government approach could impede reform implementation locally. There was a need for a Whole-of-society approach to allow others than government actors to drive the processes. The importance of adhering to the Lugano Principles (e.g. on partnership, gender equality and inclusion, and democratic participation) was mentioned in relation to the inclusion of civil society in the reconstruction process in Mykolaiv.
- Members of the Council asked if there were signs of donor fatigue and wanted to know how the Danish support complemented the support provided by other countries.
- The role of the Danish Embassy in following the implementation of UTP on the ground was raised by the Council. Members asked if the current capacity of the Embassy allowed it to undertake the many complex tasks. It was suggested that further responsibilities could be delegated from Copenhagen to the Embassy to encourage localisation by being closer to the Ukrainian partners.

*Other issues mentioned by the Council* included efforts to address the needs of the estimated 3.5-4.5 internally displaced people (IDPs), support to agriculture as a long-term effort and not just an emergency activity, twinning between civil society organisations in the environment area, the link between UTP and activities by Impact Fund Denmark, communication in Denmark, and the possible overlap between development efforts and humanitarian assistance.

#### **Response to key issues from EUNABO:**

- Head of EUNABO found that the programme was well balanced between emergency interventions and support to reform. It had the necessary flexibility and could adjust to both a peace and a continued war scenario.
- The pace of the EU accession was linked to the reform process and could influence conditions for support to reform initiatives in UTP. A Steering Committee had been established between Ukraine and Denmark at national level where overall decisions and coordination took place. The Chief Advisor added that the Mykolaiv model had turned out to work well with concrete interventions and results. Other donors inquired about the approach but few had applied it so far.
- The Team Leader informed the Council that most UTP implementing partners worked with Ukrainian partners and had strong emphasis on the involvement of Ukrainian civil society organisations. Responsibilities were divided among the international partners, e.g. Germany and France cooperated with the Ministry in charge of reconstruction while Denmark and others cooperated with local agencies. The wish was to gradually let local partners and Ukrainian authorities take over more overall responsibility. This was also

why it was a transition programme and not labelled a ‘traditional’ country programme as such. The European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI) led by Denmark was also part of the UTP.

- While the Danish support to Ukraine was upheld, there were signs of donor fatigue that also affected the anti-corruption agenda in Ukraine – USAID had been leading on this and had left a vacuum after its withdrawal. Mitigating the financial and corruption risks were integrated in the design of all Danish-supported interventions. The transfer of overall implementation responsibility to local partners had to be gradual, and this should also be the case with financial management. Together with UNDP, the programme was looking into how to develop test transfers to the agency responsible for reconstruction, and integrating control mechanisms when transferring funds. Currently this was not possible, and neither was the wish of Ukrainian authorities to handle foreign funds.
- As for the cooperation between Copenhagen and Kyiv, the Head of EUNABO informed that further decentralisation of the development cooperation was being explored. Costs of running a large embassy in Kyiv in a war situation was a concern. It was being considered to gradually decentralise one sector (or thematic area) every year.

## **Agenda Item No. 5: Collection of experience from the Council for Development Policy**

*For information and discussion*

The Council for Development Policy

*Summary:*

*The three-years term for the Members of the Council for Development Policy is coming to an end by December 2025 cf. [the rules of procedure for the Council for Development Policy](#). Since a change of the Law on International Development Cooperation is ongoing and it is expected that the Council for Development Policy will be replaced by other bodies in a new architecture, Members shared their experience of the work in the Council with a view to inspire those taking over the tasks.*

### **Key observations from the Council:**

- Members of the Council appreciated the professional approach to the dialogue within the Council and between its members and MFA staff. The importance of the composition of the Council was stressed. It was found to be of utmost importance that members represented different parts of the Danish development community and had complementary expertise.
- Members of the Council highlighted the impact of their dialogue with MFA which had been particularly evident concerning themes such as equal partnerships, poverty-orientation, bilateral country programmes, the need to focus development efforts on fewer programmes and organisations (especially in environment and climate), climate adaptation, job creation, and the Strategic Sector Cooperation.

- Members stressed the need to combine the role of technical quality assurance with ongoing dialogue about strategies and approaches of the MFA. It was considered a condition for providing useful advice on new grants that Members had an understanding of the overall political, strategic and institutional context for the work of MFA.
- Related to the above, the Council highly appreciated the annual seminars and the visits to some of the Danish partner countries. Visiting actors in development programmes, which Members had previously recommended for approval by the Minister, had helped to build a collective understanding of how best to pursue the visions of the overall strategic priorities. Dialogue with embassy staff both online during Council meetings and particularly during visits had provided a much better understanding of the conditions under which the practical implementation of development programmes was taking place.
- Council Members underlined the importance of communication and transparency both concerning the work of the Council and concerning general development cooperation efforts. It was strongly recommended to maintain public consultations of new programmes and to make minutes of meetings available to the public.
- Finally, Members of the Council appreciated the insight they had gained as individuals both into Danish development cooperation at large but also into the activities and approaches of other Members' organisations and institutions. The Council had been a micro cosmos of the Danish development community and had sometimes helped bridge the views of civil society, business organisations, trade unions and academia.

The Head of LEARNING thanked the Council for constructive and much appreciated reflections. Thorough minutes including the many specific recommendations would be shared with relevant recipients within the MFA.

### **Agenda Item No. 6: Danish Support to the ENACT Partnership 2025-2030**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 50 million

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (KLIMA)

#### *Summary:*

*Danish support to the initiative Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for Accelerated Climate Transformation (ENACT) under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) will contribute to generating data and insights for programmes and to delivering Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for climate change adaptation in alignment with National Plans, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plan (NAPs). With a whole-of-society approach, it provides advisory services, tools, knowledge products, workshops, advocacy, and support to implementation on the ground. Danish support will target 2-4 African countries, to be identified during a one-year inception phase, during which the ENACT results framework and roadmap will also be reviewed.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended Danish Support to the ENACT Partnership 2025-2030 for approval by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.*

### **Key observations and recommendations from the Council:**

- Members of the Council raised questions regarding additionality and the rationale for the support not being included within the core support to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The importance of ensuring synergy with existing engagements was highlighted as well as the need to clearly articulate the added value of this grant in relation to other adaptation activities – both in terms of how the engagements complemented one another and how they differ.
- Members of the Council emphasised the importance of ensuring a clear link to concrete implementation on the ground, specifically the delivery of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) aligned with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plan (NAPs). They further suggested including financial leverage within the monitoring framework.
- With regard to poverty-orientation, Council Members noted the need to consider potential trade-offs between poverty reduction and NbS and how human rights considerations were integrated when working with NbS.
- On the question of ownership, Members of the Council asked whether the identification of the two to four African countries would be driven by national demand and whether the countries in question shared a strong commitment to nature conservation. Would LDCs be prioritised? Equal partnerships were mentioned in the project document and Council Members inquired on how this would be operationalised. It was noted that local ownership, particularly in LDCs, would be essential to ensure a NbS focus in the selected countries to enable them to retain control during implementation of the NbS.

*Other issues mentioned by the Council* included the relatively small size of the contribution, and the reasons behind the narrow donor base where Germany was currently the only other donor.

### **Response to key issues from KLIMA:**

- The Deputy Head of KLIMA explained that the project support was provided in addition to the IUCN core contribution in order to respond to a specific need for strengthened assistance on NbS. There was an increasing interest in NbS and IUCN had experienced substantial demand for its toolkits. NbS featured in almost all African NDCs and support was required across the full spectrum - from knowledge generation to concrete planning as part of both NAPs and NDCs. Further, the additional support aimed to strengthen synergies with existing engagements.
- It was explained that ENACT had an advantage of applying a system-wide approach to NbS. One pillar of ENACT would be closely linked to implementation through decision-

making support. ENACT would also disseminate knowledge on NbS solutions that guide further actions on NbS. The system-wide approach would also enable ENACT to engage locally.

- The Deputy Head confirmed that during the inception phase, the monitoring framework would be reviewed, including setting soft targets for measuring the leveraging factor of the activities and thereby increasing chances of accessing financing.
- It was acknowledged that trade-offs exist between poverty reduction and NbS and that addressing these trade-offs was a core element of IUCN's approach to working with NbS. Mangrove forests were highlighted as an example as they supported biodiversity, increased resilience and contributed to livelihoods.
- It was noted that in the identification of the two to four countries during the inception phase, African countries and LDC would be prioritised. Local ownership would be key, including identifying countries that were both committed to NbS and in need of the toolkit, IUCN could provide.

The Chair of the Council concluded that the Council recommended Danish Support to the ENACT Partnership 2025-2030 for approval by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.