



Foreign Affairs Committees of
Denmark, Finland, Iceland,
Norway and Sweden

Copenhagen, 5 February 2009

Dear Friends,

The Nordic Offices of UNDP, UNFPA and WFP and the Nordic National Committees of UNICEF kindly address the Foreign Affairs Committees of the five Nordic countries.

As you are well aware, it is an important objective for the Nordic UN liaison offices to enhance the relationship between the UN and the national Parliaments in the Nordics and - to this end – to increase the understanding among Nordic Parliamentarians of the impact of the work the UN undertakes.

In the period from 2004-2008 four joint UN field trips to developing countries have therefore been undertaken and participating parliamentarians have found the field visits to be a valuable way of gaining a first hand insight into the work of the UN in the field.

For January 2009 a joint field visit was being arranged to Liberia but in the end the trip was cancelled due to lack of participation from three of the five national Foreign Affairs Committees. On this background and because arranging such a trip on the part of the UN Country Team in the host country is quite resource consuming, we kindly approach the Foreign Affairs Committee on the issue of the future of such UN field trips.

The Nordic UN Liaison Offices would like to stress that we have found the four trips to be very valuable for the collaboration between the UN and the national Parliaments and that we have received much feed-back from participating parliamentarians on the positive outcome they have gained from the trips. We would therefore be very pleased to continue to arrange for such trips.

We would, however, be grateful to receive feedback from the Foreign Affairs Committees if this annual January trip continues to be an undertaking that the Committees will plan for and prioritize to take part in – in terms of allocating time and funds for the undertaking?

We would also be pleased to receive any ideas for improvements of the format for these trips, which could further increase the interest of Foreign Affairs Committee members in

participating; for instance ideas related to the selection of countries, timing and length of the trips or priorities for things to see during the trips.

To follow up, we will seek an opportunity to discuss this directly with the individual Foreign Affairs Committees in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



Jakob Simonsen
Director
UNDP Nordic Office



Erika Jørgensen
Director
WFP Nordic Office



Asger Ryhl
Chief
UNFPA Nordic Office



Steen Andersen
Secretary General
UNICEF (on behalf of the Nordic national
Committees)