

Iceland in the Security Council 2009-2010: A shared vision

The Nordic countries have a solid track record in advocating and safeguarding the central UN values of democracy, human rights, equality, peaceful resolution of conflicts and development.

As one of the smaller members of the UN, Iceland is keenly aware of the importance of transparent and inclusive working methods, a vital issue for all stakeholders, but not least for the smaller member states of the UN.

If elected to a seat on the Security Council, Iceland will continue in the strong tradition of Nordic commitment to multilateral cooperation.

In particular Iceland will be guided by:

- **respect for the principles of international law**
- **respect for human rights and democratic values**
- **the need to protect civilians in conflict, particularly women and children**
- **mutual respect and tolerance in relations among states**
- **an integrated vision of today's security threats, combining human security and development concerns with proactive and coordinated peace building**

The UN: the Nordic Experience

Iceland in the UN Security Council –
Continuing a Long History of Nordic Engagement



Norwegian doctor tending to a patient in Afghanistan. Photo: Torbjørn Kjosetu/Forsvarets mediesenter.



The Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, Ulla Tørnæs, addresses the Security Council. Photo: UN/Ryan Brown.



More than 40% of the members of the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) are women. Photo: ICRU.



Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, addresses the High-Level Event on Climate Change in New York. Photo: UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras.



The Swede Dag Hammarskjöld succeeded the Norwegian Trygve Lie as Secretary-General of the UN in 1953. Photo: UN/DPI.



A Finnish UNPREDEP peacekeeper in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Photo: FINCENT.

The UN: the Nordic Experience

Iceland in the UN Security Council – Continuing a Long History of Nordic Engagement

Iceland, one of the five Nordic countries, is standing for election to the UN Security Council. The Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - have a long history of active engagement in the work of the United Nations, including the Security Council, in humanitarian and development aid, in conflict resolution and in peacekeeping operations.

The Nordic countries are committed to international cooperation and the further development, promotion and strengthening of an international order based on the rule of law. Since 1948, more than 220 000 Nordic women and men have served in more than 30 UN peacekeeping operations around the globe. A deep commitment to the UN forms the cornerstone of the Nordic countries' foreign policies. The Nordic countries are among the top 10 voluntary contributors to the UN, in terms of both the total amount of money contributed and the proportion of their Gross National Income (GNI). From 2007 to 2009 they will contribute 3.1% of the UN's regular budget.

Long-standing advocates of key UN values

Following World War II, the Nordic countries were actively involved in the establishment of the UN. Denmark and Norway are founding members, and joined the organization in 1945. Sweden and Iceland followed suit in 1946, and Finland joined in 1955.

Norway was the first of the Nordic countries to become an elected member of the Security Council, serving its first term from 1949 to 1950, followed by Denmark, from 1953 to 1954. Sweden's first term on the Security Council was from 1957 to 1958, and Finland's from 1969 to 1970. **Iceland is now a first-time candidate to the Security Council, for the period 2009-2010.**

A long-term commitment

Individuals from the Nordic countries have from the earliest days of the UN, served the organization with distinction. The Norwegian **Trygve Lie** was the UN's first Secretary-General, from 1946 to 1952. He was succeeded by the Swede **Dag Hammarskjöld**, who took the lead in establishing and developing UN peacekeeping operations. Dag Hammarskjöld was posthumously awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Nordic citizens who have filled other important positions include **Martti Ahtisaari** (Finland), Special Representative of the Secretary General for Namibia (1978-1990) and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Kosovo (2005 - 2008), **Hans Blix** (Sweden), Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency for the period 1981 - 97, **Gro Harlem Brundtland** (Norway) who served as Director-General of the World Health Organization from 1998 to 2003 and is now Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Climate Change, and **Peter Hansen** (Denmark), Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (1996 - 2005).

Former President of Iceland, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the first woman in the world to be elected a constitutional Head of State, was the first Chair of UNESCO's World Commission on Ethics in Scientific Knowledge and Technology (1997-2001). She was appointed Goodwill-Ambassador of Languages at UNESCO (1988) and UN Goodwill-Ambassador in the fight against Racism and Xenophobia (2000).

The Nordic countries and UN peacekeeping operations

The Nordic countries have contributed to UN peacekeeping operations from the beginning. Denmark, Norway and Sweden participated in the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine in 1948, and in the UN Operation in the Congo (UNUC) from 1960 to 1964. Iceland contributed by deploying police officers to Palestine in the 1950s, and Finland participated in the First UN Emergency Force (UNEF I) during the Suez crisis in 1956, a year after joining the UN. Today, one or more Nordic country has peacekeepers in almost every UN peacekeeping operation.