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Ireland and International Law 2018

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THE FAR-REACHING EFFECTS of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union continued to dominate political and public discourse in Ireland during 2018. Countless meetings, discussions and analyses were undertaken to prepare for the expected exit of the UK, and the impact of Brexit lurked as a shadow over much of the day-to-day work in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. For example, the new policy on foreign affairs, *Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025*,[1] published in June, explicitly flagged the need for Ireland to expand its range of international partners across Europe and globally. Equally, the government's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2021–22 reflected the core policy of multilateralism, as well as recognition of the need to maintain influence at the highest levels of international politics.

However, Brexit did not dominate all activities during 2018. The changing dynamics of Irish emigration, with an increasing number of returning emigrants and broader geographic spread of destination countries prompted a review of the 2015 *Global Irish – Ireland's Diaspora Policy*.[2] Likewise, following a review of the Irish Aid programme by the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence in February, the government launched a public consultation to identify priority areas for future international development assistance.

As in previous years, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade set out the government's position on key aspects of international law, from statements made at the UN General Assembly Sixth Committee regarding the work of the International Law Commission, to statements condemning violations of international humanitarian law and breaches of international human rights law. Reflecting the changing geopolitical situation, 2018 saw tit-for-tat expulsions of Russian and Irish diplomats and an increasingly strained relationship with the Russian Federation. Yet traditional allies, such as the US, also provided challenges, with the government issuing strong statements on both the US decision to withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council and the cancelation of funding for the UN Relief Works Agency for Palestine.

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[1] Government of Ireland, *Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025* (June 2018).

[2] For discussion, see: 'Ireland and International Law 2015' (2017) 10 *Irish Yearbook of International Law* 251–52.

In congratulating Mary Robinson on her appointment as the Chair of the Elders,[3] the Tánaiste stressed:

> Her appointment to succeed the late Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the UN, is recognition of her long and courageous engagement in the causes of international peace, justice and human rights. She takes up this position at a time when the world needs to hear strong voices, such as Mary Robinson's, advocating for multilateralism and international cooperation …
>
> In congratulating her, I also wish to pay tribute to her predecessor, Kofi Annan, an exceptional international statesman who worked tirelessly for a more peaceful and equal world.[4]

I. BREXIT

The ongoing lack of clarity from the British Government and opposition political parties regarding the likely outcome and format of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union ('Brexit') overshadowed many of the events which took place during 2018, not just in Ireland but across the continent. Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney TD, commenced the year by highlighting that Irish officials undertook 738 Brexit-related high level engagements and 433 stakeholder consultations during 2017. He continued by paying tribute to the work of colleagues in other EU Member States, and noted that:

> We can be proud of what we accomplished in phase one on the negotiations – we achieved the goals we set out, including maintenance of the Common Travel Area, protection of the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and the gains of the peace process, including guarantees on avoiding a hard border. As we move into phase two where we will be consolidating these gains while also seeking agreement on transitional arrangements and the framework for the future EU-UK relationship, we will be reliant on our resourcefulness, vigour and dynamism as well as the solidarity of our partners to achieve the best possible outcome for the island of Ireland, our citizens and our economy.[5]

Irish politicians and diplomats continued these extensive bilateral discussions and contacts with partners in the EU throughout 2018. Key events included:

— The North-South Joint Committee meeting in January to discuss human rights under the Good Friday Agreement and Brexit.[6]
— Meetings with the National Civil Aviation Development Forum (NCADF) to discuss the implications of Brexit for the aviation sector in March.[7]

[3] The Elders are a group of former world leaders founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007. For more information, see www.theelders.org last accessed 29 May 2019.
[4] DFAT, 'Tánaiste welcomes the appointment of Mary Robinson as Chair of The Elders', Press Release (1 November 2018).
[5] DFAT, 'Tánaiste highlights Brexit activity for 2017' (1 January 2018).
[6] DFAT, 'North-South Joint Committee to discuss Human Rights under the Good Friday Agreement & Brexit', Press Release (23 January 2018).
[7] DFAT, 'Tánaiste and Minister Ross meet Irish Aviation sector to discuss the implications of Brexit' (8 March 2018).

— An All-Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit in April with over 500 participants, including the EU Lead Negotiator, Michel Barnier.[8]
— The launch of the 'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready' public information campaign in September.[9]

A series of bilateral meetings with EU partners also occurred, with EU partners visiting Ireland and Irish Ministers undertaking official trips to multiple EU partners over the course of the year. For example, the French Minister for European Affairs, Nathalie Loiseau, visited Ireland in February for bilateral discussions with Helen McEntee TD, Minister of State for European Affairs in advance of an informal summit in Brussels of the EU's Heads of State and Government to discuss institutional issues and the future financing of the European Union. Then in July, Minister McEntee held a bilateral meeting with the Romanian Minister for European Affairs, Victor Negrescu at the start of Romania's Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers.[10] Of note, a joint plan of action for enhanced bilateral and EU cooperation between Ireland and Germany was launched on 26 November following a series of bilateral meetings in Dublin and Berlin.[11] Speaking at the launch, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas, stated:

> The Joint Action Plan which we agreed today shows how close relations are between Ireland and Germany. We do not just want to cooperate more closely at bilateral level – on research and innovation, as well as on finance issues or agricultural policy. We also want together to help to make Europe more able to act and to strengthen the United Nations and the rules based multilateral order as a whole.[12]

As further evidence of an increasing pivot from the UK to promoting connections between Ireland and other European and global partnerships, Ireland was granted Observer Status at the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in October.[13] Addressing the 17th Summit of the Francophonie in Yerevan, Armenia, Minister McEntee noted that achieving observer status to the OIF was one of the steps set out in 'Global Ireland', the government's initiative to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint in the period to 2025.[14]

[8] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Coveney, welcomes Michel Barnier & 500 participants to All-Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit', Press Release (30 April 2018).
[9] DFAT, 'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready', Press Release (20 September 2018).
[10] DFAT, 'Minister Helen McEntee TD, meets Romanian Minister for European Affairs', Press Release (18 July 2018).
[11] *Germany–Ireland Joint Plan of Action for Enhanced Bilateral and EU Cooperation* (15 November 2018), available at www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/newsmedia/181115_DEU-IRL_Joint-Plan-of-Action_final.pdf last accessed 29 May 2019.
[12] DFAT, 'Agreement with Germany on a Joint Plan of Action for Enhanced Cooperation', Press release (26 November 2018).
[13] DFAT, 'Ireland granted Observer Status at the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie', Press Release (11 October 2018).
[14] Government of Ireland, *Global Ireland* (n 1). For more information on the 'Global Ireland' initiative, see 'Foreign Policy' below.

II. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Arms control and nuclear disarmament remained a key issue for Ireland during 2018. Of note, the disarmament delegation of Ireland was jointly awarded the 2017 Arms Control Person(s) of the Year, alongside Austria, Brazil, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez of Costa Rica, for their leadership during the negotiations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).[15] Following the announcement, the Tánaiste and Minster for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney TD noted:

> Ireland has begun working towards ratification of the Treaty and we urge other States to do likewise. We have a deep sense of the risks and catastrophic consequences of any use of nuclear weapons; risks and consequences which, considering the current security environment in the DPRK [North Korea], remain at the forefront of our minds and serve to heighten our ambition to prohibit these weapons.[16]

Also in the field of arms control, the Tánaiste marked the 10th anniversary of the UN Cluster Munitions Convention, which was adopted in Dublin in May 2008. Noting that Ireland was one of the first countries to sign the Convention, the Tánaiste stressed that 'Ireland continues to take every opportunity to encourage States not party to the Convention to join as soon as possible'.[17]

Meanwhile, in November, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade called for submissions to Ireland's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for the period 2019–24.[18] Based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the domestic National Action Plan (NAP) is intended to operationalise the international commitments States have signed up to under the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda. For example, Ireland's Second National Action Plan (2015–18)[19] was structured around the four pillars of UNSC Resolution 1325, namely: (i) prevention; (ii) participation; (iii) protection; and (iv) relief and recovery, alongside the promotion of the agenda. The results of the public consultation process, and resultant NAP will be available in early 2019.

A. List of Multilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2017

The following is a list of the multilateral agreements that entered into force for Ireland during 2017.[20]

[15] See 'Ireland and International Law 2016 & 2017' (2018) 11–12 *Irish Yearbook of International Law* 221–22.

[16] DFAT, 'Ireland wins Arms Control Person of the Year', News (10 January 2018).

[17] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney TD marks 10th anniversary of Convention on Cluster Munitions', Press Release (30 May 2018).

[18] DFAT, 'Tánaiste welcomes call for submissions to 3rd National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security', Press Release (16 November 2018).

[19] Government of Ireland, *Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015–2018)*, www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/ourwork/empoweringwomenpeaceandsecurity/Irelands-second-National-Action-Plan-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf last accessed 29 May 2019.

[20] Details of multilateral agreements that entered into force in 2018 are not yet available.

Table 1: List of Multilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2017

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 1 of 2017	Protocol to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons, regarding the participation of the Republic of Croatia as a Contracting Party, following its accession to the European Union, done at Brussels on 4 March 2016 *Concluded on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 8 November 2016 and the Swiss Confederation on 16 December 2016, entered into force on 1 January 2017*
No 2 of 2017	Protocol to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 18 July 2014 *Approved by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 31 March 2016 and on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 31 January 2017, entered into force on 1 February 2017*
No 3 of 2017	Protocol to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 25 June 2014 *Approved by the Republic of Serbia on 10 November 2014 and on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 31 January 2017, entered into force on 1 February 2017*
No 4 of 2017	Protocol to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 20 February 2014 *Approved by the Republic of Albania on 30 June 2015 and on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 31 January 2017, entered into force on 1 February 2017*
No 5 of 2017	Agreement amending for the second time the Partnership Agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 as first revised in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005, done at Ouagadougou on 22 June 2010 *Ireland's Instrument of Ratification deposited on 15 November 2012, entered into force on 1 April 2017*

(continued)

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 7 of 2017	Third Protocol to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe, done at Strasbourg on 6 March 1959 *Ireland's Instrument of Accession deposited on 18 April 2017, entered into force with respect to Ireland on 18 April 2017*
No 8 of 2017	Additional Protocol to the Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Colombia and Peru, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 30 June 2015 *Approved on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 4 July 2016 and by Peru on 11 April 2017, entered into force between the European Union and its Member States and Peru on 1 May 2017*
No 12 of 2017	Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part, together with the decision of the Heads of State or Government of the 28 Member States of the European Union, meeting within the European Council, done at Brussels on 27 June 2014 *Ireland's Instrument of Ratification deposited 17 April 2015. Decision of the Heads of State or Government of the 28 Member States of the European Union, meeting within the European Council done on 15 December 2016. Entered into force on 1 September 2017*
No 13 of 2017	Protocol to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 15 December 2016 *Approved on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 20 June 2017 and by Bosnia and Herzegovina on 7 September 2017, entered into force on 1 October 2017*
No 14 of 2017	Articles of Agreement of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, done at Beijing, People's Republic of China on 29 June 2015 *Ireland's Instrument of Acceptance deposited on 12 October 2017, entered into force with respect to Ireland on 12 October 2017*
No 15 of 2017	Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Mongolia, of the other part, done at Ulaanbaatar on 30 April 2013 *Ireland's notification of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement deposited on 30 May 2017, entered into force on 1 November 2017*

(continued)

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 18 of 2017	Protocol to the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 19 November 2014 *Approved on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 16 December 2016 and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on 6 November 2017, entered into force on 1 December 2017*
No 19 of 2017	Multilateral Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Iceland, the Republic of Montenegro, the Kingdom of Norway, Romania, the Republic of Serbia and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on the establishment of a European Common Aviation Area (ECAA), done at Luxembourg and Brussels on 9 June 2006 *Ireland's Instrument of Ratification deposited on 14 June 2012, entered into force 1 December 2017*
No 20 of 2017	(Treaty Action) Declaration to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, on the Effective Date for Exchanges of Information under the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information *Ireland's declaration deposited on 22 December 2017, entered into force on 22 December 2017*
No 21 of 2017	Declaration to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, on the Effective Date for Exchanges of Information under the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on the exchange of Country-by-Country Reports *Ireland's declaration deposited on 22 December 2017, entered into force on 22 December 2017*

B. Statements on the Work of the International Law Commission

Over the course of 2018, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provided written statements in the UN General Assembly Sixth Committee (Legal) on a variety of topics under consideration by the International Law Commission (ILC). These statements are included in full in the Documents section of this Yearbook.[21] The three statements covered the following topics:

— Statement to UNGA 73, 23 October 2018 on Part 1 of the ILC Report relating to Subsequent Agreements and Subsequent Practice, Identification of

[21] See Documents section.

Customary International Law, Commemoration, and Other Decisions and Conclusions of the Commission.[22]

— Statement to UNGA 73, 26 October 2018 on Part 2 of the ILC Report relating to Protection of the Atmosphere, Provisional Application of Treaties, and Peremptory Norms of General International Law (*jus cogens*).[23]

— Statement to UNGA 73, 31 October 2018 on Part 3 of the ILC Report relating to Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts, Succession of States in Respect of State responsibility, and Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction.[24]

III. DIPLOMATIC MATTERS

During 2018, the President of Ireland Michael D Higgins received credentials from ambassadors representing: the Slovak Republic, Peru, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg,[25] the Italian Republic, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republic of Albania,[26] the United Arab Emirates, the Czech Republic, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,[27] the Republic of Burkina Faso, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of the Philippines,[28] the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Jamaica,[29] the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Republic of Korea, Iceland, the Democratic Republic of Congo,[30] the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Seychelles, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Ghana,[31] the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Estonia, the Kingdom of Denmark,[32] Switzerland, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Tunisia,[33] Israel, New Zealand, the Republic of Paraguay,[34] the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Burundi,[35] the Kingdom of Spain, India, and the Republic of Uganda.[36]

[22] *Statement by Mr. James Kingston, Legal Advisor, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the Sixth Committee United Nations General Assembly 73rd Session, Agenda Item 82: The Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its 70th Session* (23 October 2018).

[23] *Statement by Mr. James Kingston, Legal Advisor, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the Sixth Committee United Nations General Assembly 73rd Session, Agenda Item 82: The Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its 70th Session* (26 October 2018).

[24] *Statement by Ms. Anne-Marie O'Sullivan, Assistant Legal Advisor, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the Sixth Committee United Nations General Assembly 73rd Session, Agenda Item 82: The Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its 70th Session* (31 October 2018).

[25] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (18 January 2018).

[26] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (9 February 2018).

[27] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (13 March 2018).

[28] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (19 April 2018).

[29] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (18 May 2018).

[30] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (3 July 2018).

[31] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (13 July 2018).

[32] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (4 September 2018).

[33] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (20 September 2018).

[34] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (16 October 2018).

[35] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (28 November 2018).

[36] DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials', Press Release (6 December 2018).

2018 also marked a series of anniversaries since the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, commencing with an official visit by the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Kazuyuki Nakane, in January to celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. At the closing ceremony, Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ciarán Cannon TD, noted:

> 60 years is a very significant landmark in the Japanese calendar, denoting the completion of one cycle of life and the starting of another. There is much to celebrate in the strong relationship between Ireland and Japan, from culture and sport to trade. Japan is a crucial partner for Ireland as both our largest source of investment from Asia and the largest export market in Asia for Irish goods. The development of a new Ireland House in Tokyo by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is further evidence of Ireland's commitment to this important partner.[37]

Next, in July, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, TD, celebrated the 25th anniversary of bilateral relations with South Africa at the opening of an exhibition at Kilmainham Gaol commemorating the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth.[38] The Tánaiste, who was joined by Trevor Manuel, Economic Envoy of the South African President, highlighted that:

> The people of Ireland showed great solidarity with South Africa during the struggle against apartheid. It was only after the end of that regime that Ireland established diplomatic relations with South Africa … President Ramaphosa has himself been a great friend of Ireland: we owe him a continuing debt of gratitude for his important contribution to our peace process.[39]

Reflecting a more strained relationship with Russia following the 'regrettable' expulsion of an Irish diplomat from the Irish Embassy in Moscow in March,[40] in October the Tánaiste exchanged letters with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, to mark the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In a terse and short statement, the Tánaiste noted the importance of continued cooperation and dialogue, including through the Council of Europe, the EU, the OSCE, and the UN in particular.[41]

Meanwhile, as part of the continuing release of historical foreign policy documents, Volume XI of the Documents on Irish Foreign Policy series was launched

[37] DFAT, 'Closing ceremony for 60th anniversary of diplomatic affairs between Ireland and Japan', Press Release (19 January 2019). The event also saw the launch of a report commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade mapping the development of Ireland and Japan's relationship over the past 60 years: M Kennedy and E Kinsella, *Ireland and Japan, 1957–2017: Diplomatic, Economic and Cultural Relations* (Royal Irish Academy, 2018).

[38] DFAT, '25 years of relations with South Africa celebrated with Mandela exhibition in Kilmainham Gaol', Press Release (12 July 2018). In November, a former inmate of Robbin Island, Thulani Mabaso, visited the exhibition and met with Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon TD See DFAT, 'Former inmate of Robben Island to visit Ireland', Press Release (1 November 2018).

[39] ibid.

[40] DFAT, 'Statement on the expulsion of an Irish diplomat from Russia' (30 March 2018). See also discussion of the 4 March 2018 chemical nerve agent attacks in Salisbury in the UK in the section on Foreign Conflicts and International Terrorism below.

[41] DFAT, 'Statement on 45th anniversary of Ireland and Russian diplomatic relations', Press Release (1 October 2018).

in November.[42] The period covered, April 1957 to March 1961, includes the first missions by the Irish Defence Forces as UN Peacekeepers, in particular the mission to Katanga Province in the Congo. Consequently, the volume contains documents relating to both the Niemba Ambush in November 1960 which led to the deaths of 9 Irish peacekeepers, and the fighting at Jadotville and Elisabethville in September 1961, as well as Iveagh House's reactions to these attacks. The volume also covers a key period at the height of the Cold War, and Ireland's role at the UN General Assembly on issues including nuclear disarmament, apartheid, and the admission of Communist China.

IV. FOREIGN POLICY, BILATERAL RELATIONS, CONSULAR SERVICES AND THE DIASPORA

A. Foreign Policy

Ireland continued its traditional support for the UN and multilateral institutions over the course of 2018. For example, during the visit of UN Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed, to Dublin in September, the Tánaiste stated:

> In my meeting with the UN Deputy Secretary General Mohammed today, I will be stressing Ireland's support for a more effective, efficient and results-focused UN approach, given the key role the UN is playing in making the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for everyone, everywhere. This is in keeping with Ireland's consistent support for the United Nations and our core belief that small countries can and should take a leadership role in the organisation.[43]

Of particular note, in July the government launched a bid for a seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2021–22.[44] The Tánaiste's speech noted Ireland's commitment to multilateralism, and role in negotiating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in 2015, facilitation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, and ongoing role as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women. In particular, the Tánaiste argued that:

> We stand for the centrality of multilateralism to international relations, and the importance of a rules based system of laws and responsibilities.
>
> We stand for sustaining peace and protecting the most vulnerable globally.
>
> We stand for sustainable development, disarmament, humanitarian assistance, the realisation of human rights for all, and the empowerment of women and girls.[45]

[42] M Kennedy, E O'Halpin, K O'Malley, B Whelan and D Keogh (eds), *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Volume XI, 1957–1961* (Royal Irish Academy, November 2018).

[43] DFAT, 'Tánaiste & Minister Cannon confirm support for UN reform as UN Deputy Sec. General visits Ireland', News (7 September 2018).

[44] The campaign document produced by the Government of Ireland is available at www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/ourrolepolicies/unitednations/Campaign-Brochure-July-2018.pdf (last accessed 29 May 2019). See also 'The Irish Times view on Ireland's UN Security Council bid: A campaign that needs a message', *The Irish Times* (4 July 2018).

[45] DFAT, 'Tánaiste's remarks at UN Security Council campaign launch', Speech (3 July 2018).

In addition to the campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council, Ireland launched a key policy on foreign policy in June. The core objective of the *Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025*[46] document is to double Ireland's global impact by 2025. In practice, as set out by the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD, this will entail:

— opening up new embassies and consulates in important locations around the world;
— expanding some of the missions we already have;
— investing more in our agencies, such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and Tourism Ireland;
— sharing our culture more widely around the world and deepening links to our global family;
— building new air and sea connections; and
— welcoming more international students to Ireland.[47]

The policy notes that Ireland's international relations today are conducted in an environment characterised by increasing global interdependence and growing unpredictability, not least that caused by Brexit, which will force Ireland to identify new markets and opportunities, and to 'deepen and renew relationships and alliances in Europe and beyond'.[48] *Global Ireland 2025* is intended to provide an international counterpart to the domestic *Project Ireland 2040* policy. It also transects several other policy documents produced in recent years, including the *Global Irish* diaspora policy and *Global Island* foreign policy documents launched in 2015,[49] and the new international development policy, which will be launched in early 2019.

B. Bilateral Relations

As acknowledged in the *Global Ireland 2025* policy, one of the impacts of Brexit has been the need for Ireland to increase its bilateral contacts with EU partners, as well as expanding its impact at the global level. Some key bilateral relationships, such as with Germany, were strengthened during 2018, while others such as with Russia and, to a certain extent, the US were more strained.

The strengthening relationship with China is evident from the doubling of trade between 2013 and 2017 to an estimated €15 billion per annum, led mainly by increases in Irish goods exports. Moreover, Ireland is one of only three EU countries with a trade surplus with China, in both goods and services. The importance of this relationship was highlighted by the fact that the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, TD, travelled to China for the St Patrick's Day celebrations in March. As he noted prior to his departure:

> China is an increasingly prominent actor in global affairs, and increasing our mutual understanding on key bilateral and international issues, including Brexit, will feature prominently

[46] Government of Ireland, *Global Ireland* (n 1).
[47] ibid p 8.
[48] ibid p 10.
[49] For discussion, see 'Ireland and International Law 2015' (2015) 10 *Irish Yearbook of International Law* 241, 246–48, 251–52.

> in my visit. The opportunities for increased trade and investment between Ireland and China are immense, and will be further transformed with the establishment of direct flights from Hong Kong to Dublin from June 2018. I hope to build on this increasingly strong connection between Ireland and China and am optimistic that we will make visible progress during this visit.[50]

The bilateral relationship was further promoted with a three-day visit to Ireland by Cai Qi, Beijing Party Secretary and member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, in May 2018. Dublin and Beijing have been twinned cities since 2011, and Cork and Shanghai since 2005. Reflecting on these links, the Tánaiste stated:

> During my visit to China in March, I saw first-hand that the opportunities for trade and investment between our two countries are immense. There is also huge potential for partnership in the fields of education, research, culture and tourism … Senior political visits, such as this visit by Party Secretary Cai, represent an important opportunity to further our goals and also to increase our mutual understanding on key bilateral and regional issues, such as Brexit.[51]

In the Middle East, reflecting both bilateral ties and foreign policy objectives, the Tánaiste undertook several visits to Israel and Palestine during late 2017 and early 2018. Following a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in January the Tánaiste stated:

> Helping to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict in the Middle East has been a priority for me since I took office. This issue is of deep interest to many people in Ireland, and in the course of our conversation I told the Prime Minister that I believe it is counterproductive to exclude from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory groups which have a deep interest in this situation. This does not help to build a better mutual understanding.[52]

During the same trip, the Tánaiste travelled to Ramallah and met with the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Foreign Minister Malki, where he reaffirmed 'Ireland's commitment and support to the two-state solution, as well as the final resolution of the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both Palestine and Israel'.[53] The Tánaiste also announced dedicated funding for Palestinians to undertake Masters level education in Ireland via the Irish Aid Fellowship Training programme, with the intention to further expand the programme in Palestine over the next five years.[54] The Tánaiste subsequently returned to Israel and Palestine for further discussions in June, his third visit to the region in less than a year.[55]

[50] DFAT, 'Visit by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D. to China', Press Release (12 March 2018).

[51] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney TD welcomes Beijing Party Secretary Cai Qi to Ireland', News (9 May 2018).

[52] DFAT, 'Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Simon Coveney T.D. meets Prime Minister Netanyahu', News (10 January 2018). See also: DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on settlements', Press Release (12 January 2018).

[53] DFAT, 'Visit by Tánaiste to Ramallah', News (10 January 2018).

[54] DFAT, 'Tánaiste announces new scholarships for Palestinian students', Press Release (11 January 2018).

[55] See: DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney meets with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel', News (8 June 2018); DFAT, 'Visit by Tánaiste Simon Coveney to Ramallah', Press Release (7 June 2018);

C. List of Bilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2017

The following is a list of the bilateral agreements that entered into force for Ireland during 2017.[56]

Table 2: List of Bilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2017

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 6 of 2017	Agreement between Ireland and Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts) and Nevis for the Exchange of Information relating to Tax Matters, done at London on 20 July 2015 *Notifications of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement exchanged on 23 December 2015 and 15 March 2017, entered into force on 14 April 2017*
No 9 of 2017	Exchange of Notes amending the Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the Argentine Republic on a Working Holiday Programme *Notes exchanged on 7 July 2017, entered into force on 7 July 2017*
No 10 of 2017	Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Driving Disqualifications between Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, done at Dublin on 30 October 2015 *Exchange of notes in relation to correction exchanged on 21 January 2016 and notifications of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement exchanged on 1 August 2017, entered into force on 1 August 2017*
No 11 of 2017	Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland establishing the Independent Reporting Commission, done at Dublin on 13 September 2016 *Notifications of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement exchanged on 8 August 2017, entered into force on 8 August 2017*
No 16 of 2017	Air Transport Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, done at Addis Ababa on 3 November 2014. Notification of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement exchanged on 22 March 2016 and 20 November 2017, entered into force on 20 November 2017

(continued)

DFAT, 'Tánaiste begins visit to Jordan, Israel, Palestine and Cyprus', Press Release (5 June 2018); and DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on the threat of demolition to a Palestinian community', Press Release (31 May 2018).

[56] Details of bilateral agreements that entered into force in 2018 are not yet available.

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 17 of 2017	Agreement for Cooperation in the Field of Education between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil, done at Dublin on 24 November 2010 *Notification of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement exchanged on 1 December 2010 and 29 November 2017, entered into force on 29 November 2017*
No 22 of 2017	Convention between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income, done at Astana on 26 April 2017 *Notifications of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement exchanged on 27 December 2017 and 29 December 2017, entered into force on 29 December 2017*

D. Consular Services

Over 822,000 Irish passports were issued during 2018, and during peak periods over 6,500 applications were being submitted per day.[57] Applications from Northern Ireland (84,855) and Great Britain (98,544) increased by 2 per cent and 22 per cent respectively over 2017 figures, reflecting the continued influence of Brexit. The increase in applications was facilitated by the expansion of the Online Passport Renewal Service which was originally launched in March 2017, to include the renewal of children's passports, introduction of a Passport Card for children, and an expansion of the cohort of adults eligible to renew online. The value of an Irish passport was acknowledged internationally, with Irish passports ranked in the top five passports globally for visa-free travel by both the Henley Passport Index and Arton's global passport index.[58]

Meanwhile, over 7,000 passports were reported lost or stolen in 2018, and over 2,300 Irish citizens in distress received consular assistance.[59] Between January and November 2018, Irish Embassies, Consulates-General and Honorary Consuls provided assistance to, inter alia, 344 Irish citizens who were arrested abroad, 71 cases of deportation, 15 cases of child abduction, and 271 deaths of Irish citizens abroad.[60] Reflecting the growing international focus set out in the Global Ireland strategy published in June 2018, the government committed to maintaining an Irish Embassy in each EU Member State, as well as opening seven new

[57] DFAT, 'Tánaiste statement on 2018 passport figures' Press Release (31 December 2018). All figures from this statement, unless otherwise noted.

[58] DFAT, 'Tánaiste welcomes announcement of Irish passport global ranking', Press Release (12 January 2018).

[59] DFAT, 'DFAT supports high number of citizens in distress abroad in 2018', Press release (31 December 2018).

[60] ibid.

Embassies or Consulates in Cardiff, Frankfurt, Kiev, Manila, Rabat, Monrovia and Los Angeles.[61]

E. The Diaspora

The government's *Global Irish – Ireland's Diaspora Policy*, launched in March 2015,[62] set out five policy goals (namely to support, connect, facilitate, recognise and evolve), while also establishing an Inter-Departmental Committee on the Irish Abroad. In June 2018, the government published the first review of the implementation of the diaspora policy, which noted that changing migration patterns had led to an increase in returning Irish emigrants.[63] In addition to reviewing the progress and activities undertaken towards achieving the goals set out in the policy, the review identified five further priority areas:

1. More accessible support.
2. More targeted/prioritised support.
3. More accountable support.
4. More joined up/comprehensive support.
5. More strategic support/next generation.

Examples of the support provided to Irish emigrants and diaspora communities during 2018 included: a collaboration between the Irish Immigrant Centre of Philadelphia and the Youth development organisation Foróige to engage Irish American youth and provide an opportunity for young people to connect with their Irish heritage in a contemporary way;[64] over £5.2 million in funding to 108 organisations in Great Britain under the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP);[65] the publication of a series of children's activity books by Conradh na Gaeilge's international Cultúr Club activity books;[66] and the launch of a 'Back for Business' entrepreneur mentoring programme for returning emigrants.[67] However, reflecting the global nature and increasing diversity of Irish emigration, a survey of 785 Irish emigrants living in Asia found that a mere 16 per cent were aware of the government's diaspora policy and only 12 per cent were aware of the ESP.[68] The high education level

[61] DFAT, 'Tánaiste announces 7 new Missions in next phase of Global Ireland', Press Release (11 June 2018). See also: Government of Ireland, 'Taoiseach launches Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025', Press Release (11 June 2018).

[62] For discussion, see: 'Ireland and International Law 21015' (2017) 10 *Irish Yearbook of International Law* 251–52.

[63] DFAT, *Review of Implementation of Global Irish – Ireland's Diaspora Policy* (June 2018) 5.

[64] DFAT, 'Minister Cannon launches first international Foróige Club in Philadelphia', Press release (12 February 2018).

[65] DFAT, 'Minister Ciarán Cannon announces over £5.2 Million in ESP Funding to the Irish Community in Britain', Press Release (23 October 2018).

[66] DFAT, 'Conradh na Gaeilge launches Irish-language & culture resources for diaspora children', Press Release (3 October 2018).

[67] DFAT, 'Minister Cannon launches 'Back for Business' a programme to support returning emigrants', Press Release (17 December 2018)

[68] DFAT (Irish Abroad Unit), *Report of Irish in Asia Diaspora Survey* (July 2018) p 4. See also: DFAT, 'Survey of the Irish Diaspora in Asia', Press Release (23 July 2018).

of the respondents was clear with 88 per cent holding a university degree, and 46 per cent holding at least a Master's degree. In terms of employment, 'education' and 'finance' were the top two sectors, with those working in 'finance' generally having lived in Asia for longer, being more likely to have children, and being less likely to return to Ireland in the next five years.[69] Overall, the future plans of the respondents were fairly evenly split, with 30 per cent considering returning to Ireland in the next 5 years, 32 per cent who did not, and 38 per cent who did not know.[70] The results of the survey were echoed in an independent *Report on Addressing Challenges Faced by Returning Irish Emigrants*, which was published in March 2018.[71] Speaking at the launch, the Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon TD, noted:

> In a world of increased international mobility and an increasingly global labour market, it is imperative that the Government facilitates the mobility of our citizens; that we enable them to travel abroad, continue engagement with them while they are living abroad, and most importantly, make it as easy as possible for them to return home.[72]

In addition to the annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations,[73] a series of events for the Irish diaspora took place during 2018, including the launch of a Global Irish Festival Series to encourage members of the diaspora to visit Ireland,[74] and the 'Blazing a Trail' exhibition which celebrated the lives and legacies of 21 pioneering Irish diaspora women of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[75] Led by Dr Angela Byrne, the DFAT historian-in-residence, the exhibition was launched in Dublin, and subsequently travelled to various Irish Embassies and Consulates to commemorate the achievements of Irish women in the fields of arts, sciences, sport and humanitarian work worldwide.

V. FOREIGN CONFLICTS AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

As the war in Syria entered its eighth year, and the conflict in Yemen entered its fourth year, the Middle East continued to be a focus for Irish foreign policy. The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney TD, commenced 2018 with a visit to Egypt, Israel and Palestine to discuss bilateral and regional issues. Speaking at the start of the visit, the Tánaiste noted:

> This is my second trip to Israel and Palestine as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. This reflects the importance I attach to the Middle East Peace Process, and the high priority

[69] ibid p.2.
[70] ibid pp 4–5.
[71] Indecon International Economic Consultants, *Economic Report on Addressing Challenges Faced by Returning Irish Emigrants* (27 February 2018) www.dfa.ie/media/dfa-2017/globalirish/Report-on-Returning-Emigrants-2018.pdf last accessed 29 May 2019.
[72] DFAT, 'Minister publishes Economic Report on Addressing Challenges Faced by Returning Irish Emigrants', Press Release (7 March 2018).
[73] See: DFAT, 'Tánaiste announces 2018 St. Patrick's Day "Promote Ireland" Programmes', Press Release (16 January 2018); and DFAT, 'Visit by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D. to China', Press Release (12 March 2018).
[74] DFAT, 'New Global Irish Festival Series to Celebrate Diaspora', Press Release (21 August 2018).
[75] DFAT, 'Minister Cannon welcomes launch of Blazing a Trail: Lives and Legacies of Irish Diaspora Women', Press Release (20 November 2018).

> given to this issue by the Government, the Oireachtas and the Irish people. I will meet with a range of interlocutors from the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as well as from other international and non-governmental organisations. I will use the opportunity of this visit to express Ireland's concerns about the impact of the continuing occupation.[76]

The ongoing instability in Libya was also on the agenda of the EU's Foreign Affairs Council in January, following which the Tánaiste noted:

> Ireland fully supports [*UN Special Representative for Libya*] Salamé's efforts to implement the UN Action Plan for Libya. We support the formation of a functioning government under the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement. A political solution, that is Libyan owned and led, remains the only way forward for the people of Libya.[77]

Meanwhile, the use of the chemical nerve agent, Novichok, in Salisbury, UK to attack a former Russian military official, Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, on 4 March 2018 shocked officials and the public.[78] The Tánaiste stressed:

> Ireland condemns this cowardly attack which has taken place on our neighbour's soil. The use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic weapons, is unacceptable and abhorrent. The incident in Salisbury represents a disturbing violation of international law and goes against norms which have long been established. We join many states in supporting the UK's efforts to ensure a thorough investigation so that the perpetrators of this crime can be held accountable. We offer our full support and solidarity to the UK and to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in their efforts to seek answers and take appropriate action for this indiscriminate and reckless act.[79]

As more details emerged, Ireland supported the joint EU position focusing on the Russian Federation as the source of the attacks, and reiterated that: 'The attack in Salisbury was not just an attack against the United Kingdom, but an affront to the international rules-based system on which we all depend for our security and wellbeing'.[80] Consequently, the Irish Government terminated the diplomatic status of a member of staff in the Russian Embassy, who was required to leave the State; a move reciprocated by the Russian authorities a few days later with the expulsion of an Irish diplomat from Russia.[81]

The role of Russia in the attack on Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 on 17 July 2014 was highlighted with the issuance of the findings of the Joint Investigation Team.[82] The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney TD,

[76] DFAT, 'Tánaiste begins visit to Middle East', Press Release (8 January 2018). See also: DFAT, 'Tánaiste meets with Egyptian Foreign Minister and Secretary General of the Arab League', Press Release (8 January 2018); and DFAT, 'Statement from the Tánaiste on developments in Gaza', Press Release (31 March 2018).

[77] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Coveney attends EU Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels to discuss the post-Cotonou framework', Press Release (22 January 2018).

[78] See eg 'Russian spy: What happened to Sergei and Yulia Skripal?' (*BBC News Online*, 27 September 2018) www.bbc.com/news/uk-43643025 last accessed 29 May 2019.

[79] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Coveney Condemns Chemical Weapons Nerve Agent Attack in UK', Press Release (13 March 2018).

[80] DFAT, 'Statement by Tánaiste on response to Salisbury nerve agent attack', News (27 March 2018).

[81] DFAT, 'Statement on the expulsion of an Irish diplomat from Russia' (30 March 2018).

[82] See 'Update in criminal investigation MH17 disaster' (*Openbaar Ministerie*, 24 May 2018) www.om.nl/onderwerpen/mh17-crash/@103196/update-criminal-0/ last accessed 29 May 2019.

underlined Ireland's continuing support for UN Security Council Resolution 2166 (2014) which called for those responsible to be held accountable, and he stressed that:

> Ireland is fully convinced of the independence, professionalism and impartiality of the Joint Investigation Team. We join the call on the Russian Federation, made this morning by the European Union, to accept its responsibility and to cooperate with all efforts to establish accountability. The families of those bereaved in this terrible incident deserve no less.[83]

Meanwhile, as part of the UN Pledging Conference for Yemen, which took place in Geneva in March 2018, the government pledged €4 million for humanitarian assistance to support civilians in Yemen. Speaking at the conference, the Tánaiste stressed:

> I remain deeply concerned by the level of violence in Yemen, and by reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. I condemn in the strongest terms all actions which endanger civilians, including the recent missile attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which killed one person, and the airstrike on the port city of Hodeida yesterday which killed fourteen people, many of them women and children. Ireland has repeatedly called on all parties to the conflict to take every necessary step to ensure the protection of civilians and to comply with international humanitarian law. I take this opportunity to reiterate my call for full and unimpeded humanitarian and commercial access to Yemen, in order to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people.[84]

Following an increase in violence and displacement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Tánaiste participated in a UN Pledging Conference in April, and announced at least €5 million in funding for humanitarian assistance in DRC for 2018. Speaking at the conference, the Tánaiste reiterated the need for all parties to respect international human rights and humanitarian law:

> I remain deeply concerned by the level of violence, including gender based violence, in the DRC, and by the grievous human rights abuses, and ongoing violations of international humanitarian law. In particular, I condemn the ongoing recruitment of child soldiers and recent attacks on hospitals and schools in the Kasai. In order to protect human life and reduce suffering, I call on the Government of the DRC to scrupulously respect human rights and International Humanitarian Law. The Government should also take urgent measures to give full and safe access to all humanitarian agencies and to allow effective implementation of humanitarian relief operations.[85]

The need to respect international humanitarian law was also central to the Tánaiste's statement following reports of another chemical weapons attack in Syria in early April:

> It is extremely distressing to see images of children choking and unable to breathe, as a result of a conflict they cannot understand … A UN investigation found extensive evidence

[83] DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on findings of the Joint Investigation Team on the downing of Flight MH 17', News (25 May 2018). See also: DFAT, 'Statement by Tánaiste on the fourth anniversary of the downing of flight MH17', News (17 July 2018).

[84] DFAT, 'Ireland to participate in UN Pledging Conference for Yemen', Press Release (3 April 2018).

[85] DFAT, 'Ireland pledges at least €5m to the Democratic Republic of Congo', News (13 April 2018).

> that the Assad regime was responsible for that attack. The continued use of chemical weapons in Syria highlights the urgent need for accountability, and it is deeply regrettable that Russia has vetoed previous UN Security Council efforts to investigate and identify the perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria … The protection of civilians is an obligation on all parties to this conflict.[86]

Responding to the apparent growing use of chemical weapons in various conflicts, in July 2018 Ireland joined the French-led International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.[87] The Tánaiste reiterated the international prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, and stressed the government's commitment to 'working with our partners to strengthen the resolve of the international community to end impunity for those responsible for the use of these weapons'.[88]

In Asia, the Tánaiste welcomed the inter-Korean summit between President Moon Jae-in of South Korea and Kim Jong-un of North Korea in April, the first such meeting to be held in 11 years, and used the opportunity to reiterate Ireland's stance on nuclear disarmament:

> The achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons has been and remains a driving force of Ireland's foreign policy. We support all genuine steps towards progress on nuclear disarmament. We continue to urge the DPRK to abide by its obligations under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. We urge it to abandon all nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner.[89]

Following the signing of the historic peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and FARC in 2016,[90] the Tánaiste warmly congratulated President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia on receiving the Tipperary International Peace Award in August 2018.[91] Noting Ireland's strong support for the peace process, the Tánaiste paid tribute to the ongoing work of former Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Eamonn Gilmore who is the EU Special Envoy to the Peace Process.

Finally, the Tánaiste responded to a number of terrorist attacks over the course of 2018, including an attack outside a mosque in Benghazi, Libya in January which killed at least 27 people,[92] and a suicide attack on an education centre in Kabul in August.[93] In all cases he reiterated Ireland's condemnation of terrorism and support for efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms.

[86] DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on apparent chemical weapons attack in Syria', Press release (9 April 2018).

[87] DFAT, 'Ireland joins International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons', News (12 July 2018).

[88] ibid.

[89] DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on inter-Korean summit', Press Release (26 April 2018).

[90] Government of Colombia and FARC, *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace* (24 November 2016). Text available in English at http://especiales.presidencia.gov.co/Documents/20170620-dejacion-armas/acuerdos/acuerdo-final-ingles.pdf last accessed 29 May 2019.

[91] DFAT, 'Tánaiste congratulates President Santos of Colombia on Tipperary International Peace Award', Press Release (1 August 2018).

[92] DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on the terrorist attack in Libya', Press Release (24 January 2018).

[93] DFAT, 'Tánaiste condemns suicide attack at education centre in Kabul', Press Release (15 August 2018).

VI. PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The Irish Defence Forces have the longest unbroken record of overseas service with the UN of any country in the world, and 2018 marked the 60th anniversary of the first Irish UN peacekeeping deployment in 1958.

It should be noted that at the time of writing neither of the 2017 nor 2018 Annual Reports for the Defence Forces are yet publicly available. However, in December 2018, the Defence Forces published provisional figures for 2018, which are subject to finalisation in the 2018 Annual Report.[94] These figures note that a total of 492 recruits (460 male/32 female) and 89 cadets (78 male/11 female) began their military training in 2018.

In regards to overseas operations undertaken during 2018, a total of 1,692 Defence Forces personnel served in overseas UN-mandated Peace Support and security operations in 14 countries and one sea, and as of 28 December 2018 there were over 650 Defence Forces personnel serving in 14 countries. The largest Defence Forces deployment was with UNIFIL in South Lebanon where 462 personnel were deployed, as well as 138 personnel deployed as a Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights (UNDOF). The Naval Service continued their participation with the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia as part of the EUs maritime mission to disrupt human smuggling and trafficking in the Mediterranean, with the LÉ Samuel Beckett and the LÉ James Joyce deployed to the Mediterranean during 2018. The Naval Service received its ninth ship in October, to be named the LÉ George Bernard Shaw, and a formal naming and commissioning ceremony will take place in 2019.

Separately, a Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) Mobile Training Team travelled to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in November to provide training support to the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in their delivery of C-IED Training for the Burkina Faso Armed Forces.

VII. HUMAN RIGHTS

Within the context of Brexit, the Joint Committee of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission met in January to discuss human rights and the Good Friday Agreement.[95] The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Simon Coveney, TD, stressed that the human rights and equality provisions of the Good Friday Agreement were central to

[94] Irish Defence Forces, 'Defence Forces Operations 2018', Press Release (28 December 2018). All information comes from this Press Release unless otherwise stated.

[95] See C Murray, A O'Donoghue and B Warwick, *Discussion Paper on Brexit* (IHREC, 2018) www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/03/Discussion-Paper-on-Brexit.pdf last accessed 29 May 2019; and Joint Committee of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, *Policy statement on the United Kingdom withdrawal from the European Union* (March 2018) www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/03/Joint-Committee-IHREC-NIHRC-Brexit-Policy-Statement_March-2018.pdf last accessed 29 May 2019.

the Peace Process, then in reference to the ongoing Article 50 EU–UK negotiations, he highlighted that:

> *In terms of fundamental rights and equality, the EU and the UK have acknowledged the contribution of EU law and practice as a supporting framework for the rights and equality provisions of the Good Friday Agreement, both in Northern Ireland and across the island of Ireland.*
>
> *The UK has committed to ensuring that no diminution of rights is caused by its departure, including in the area of protection against forms of discrimination in Union law. This is a significant and substantive commitment.*
>
> The UK has also committed to facilitating the work of the institutions and bodies of the Good Friday Agreement in upholding human rights and equality standards.[96]

At the global level, 2018 saw the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration, and 70 years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR). Reflecting on the core values set out in the UDHR in his address to the UN Human Rights Council in February, Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciaran Cannon, TD, highlighted the human rights situations in a number of countries including Yemen, Myanmar and the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as expressing strong support for human rights defenders and highlighting Ireland's work on the Council to protect civil society.[97]

The Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights, established in 2015 under *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World* to improve the coherence of the promotion and protection of human rights in our foreign policy, brings together senior officials from a number of government departments who coordinate on relevant issues including compliance with international human rights treaty obligations. The Inter-Department Committee had its first 2018 meeting in April and Minister Cannon noted a number of significant developments, including the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the launch of the National Plan on Business and Human Rights, and Ireland's chairing of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.[98]

However, from the humanitarian crises in Syria and Yemen to the expulsion of Rohingya from Myanmar[99] and ongoing detention and trial of human rights activists in Turkey,[100] 2018 saw a worrying trend globally against the core principles of international human rights. This was particularly evident with the decision by the

[96] DFAT, 'North-South Joint Committee to discuss Human Rights under the Good Friday Agreement & Brexit', Press Release (23 January 2018).

[97] DFAT, 'Minister Cannon addresses Human Rights Council and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva', Press Release (27 February 2018).

[98] DFAT, 'Minister Cannon convenes Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights', Press Release (18 April 2018).

[99] DFAT, 'Statement by Minister Ciarán Cannon, T.D., on Myanmar', Press Release (28 September 2018).

[100] DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on decision at pre-trial hearing of Chair of Amnesty International Turkey', News (22 June 2018). See also: DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on the release of Chair of Amnesty International Turkey', Press Release (15 August 2018).

US to withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council in June. Expressing his deep regret at the US decision, the Tánaiste highlighted the close working relationship between Ireland and the US on the Council between 2013–15 and, while acknowledging that the Council 'sometimes falls short of what Ireland would regard as the ideal', stated that:

> Nevertheless, I believe that it is imperative that countries such as the United States and Ireland, which have long championed human rights, continue to engage with countries which do not share our values and that we seek to effect positive change on human rights issues … At a time when human rights are increasingly under threat I would urge the United States to reconsider this step and decide to work from within the Council to improve its effectiveness.[101]

A key policy focus for Ireland's engagement with the Human Rights Council during 2018 was the importance of supporting a strong civil society in all countries so as to ensure the promotion of equality, accountability and the rule of law. Following the successful passing of an Irish-led resolution on civil society space at the 38th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva,[102] the Tánaiste noted:

> The promotion and protection of Civil Society Space is a foreign policy priority for Ireland. Across the world we are witnessing a retrenchment of civil society as it comes under increasing pressure through the stigmatisation, harassment and even criminalisation of civil society actors.[103]

Another key priority area for the Irish Government was supporting human rights defenders. Speaking at the announcement of the establishment of a memorial for human rights defenders in Dublin on 10 December, World Human Rights Day, Mary Lawlor, the founder of Front Line Defenders, stated:

> I am delighted to be working with the Tánaiste, Simon Coveney, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, on this exciting project. And it is fitting that this memorial will be situated in the grounds of Iveagh House, where the Irish government's international human rights policy is formed. It was also here that the decision to push for EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders was announced prior to Ireland's EU Presidency in 2004.
>
> The killing of non-violent human rights defenders for their legitimate work for the rights of others should be a red line for governments both in their domestic and foreign policy. On this the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Governments around the world should take stock and put in place systems to help prevent their murder by state and non-state actors.[104]

Also on World Human Rights Day, the Tánaiste announced an additional €650,000 in funding for the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

[101] DFAT, 'Statement by the Tánaiste on US withdrawal from the UN Human Rights Council', News (20 June 2018).

[102] UN Human Rights Council, Resolution 38/12, Civil society space: engagement with international and regional organizations (16 July 2018) UN Doc.: A/HRC/RES/38/12.

[103] DFAT, 'Ireland successfully leads on championing Civil Society Space at UN Human Rights Council', Press Release (6 July 2018).

[104] DFAT, 'Tánaiste announces Memorial to Human Rights Defenders', Press Release (10 December 2018).

for its work on civil society space and reprisals, and to the OHCHR country office for the occupied Palestinian territories. Speaking at the annual Civil Society Forum, the Tánaiste noted that: 'The allocation of this additional funding, on top of our core contribution of €1,865,000, reaffirms Ireland's commitment to the promotion and protection of civil society space as a foreign policy priority'.[105]

VIII. OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AID AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

There was modest growth of Irish Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in 2017[106] – from €725.78 million in 2016 to €743.42 million in 2017, representing a 2.4 per cent increase. However, as a percentage of Irish Gross National Product (GNP), the Irish ODA has stagnated for the past three years at 0.32 per cent. This remains less than the proportion given in 2001 (0.33 per cent) and is significantly lower than the high of 0.59 per cent in 2008,[107] despite the government's long-standing commitment to achieve the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI*)[108] on ODA. The breakdown of Irish ODA for the period 2012–17 is set out in the following table:

Table 3: Irish ODA 2012–2017

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total ODA Budget (€ millions)	628.90	637.10	614.86	647.56	725.78	743.42
% of GNP	0.47	0.46	0.39	0.32	0.32	0.32

Indeed, the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence called on the government to increase Irish ODA expenditure in their review of the Irish Aid programme in February 2018.[109] The review highlighted the Committee's strong support for a continued focus by Ireland on the needs of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, and commended Ireland's record on providing untied aid. As noted by the Chairperson of the Joint Committee, Brendan Smith, TD:

> It is understandable that concerns around Brexit, around health and homelessness, around employment and education, around security and justice and much more, dominate people's day to day concerns.

[105] DFAT, 'Tánaiste announces additional funding to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights', Press Release (10 December 2018).

[106] The equivalent figures for 2018 are not yet available.

[107] All figures come from the *Irish Aid Annual Report 2017* (published in October 2018), pp 61–62. Note that Irish Aid reports on the basis of GNP, not GNI*.

[108] As explained by the Central Statistics Office (CSO): 'Modified GNI (or GNI*) is defined as GNI less the effects of the profits of re-domiciled companies and the depreciation of intellectual property products and aircraft leasing companies. This new indicator of the level of the Irish economy will be a useful additional input to debt ratio analysis.' See: CSO, *Press Statement Macroeconomic Releases Year 2016 and Quarter 1 2017* (14 July 2017) www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementmacroeconomicreleasesyear2016andquarter12017/ last accessed 29 May 2019.

[109] DFAT, 'Launch of Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence report on Irish Aid programme', Press Release (22 February 2018).

> Despite this, I was greatly heartened at the results of a poll last year which showed that 80% of those surveyed believe we should increase our support to efforts to eradicate poverty. It is a clear demonstration of Ireland's commitment to global solidarity and a continued validation of Ireland's long standing, historic role in addressing the needs of others beyond our own borders.[110]

The key themes the Committee identified for future priority included: taking forward the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (with a specific focus on gender, education, climate change and agriculture); ensuring a 'whole of government' approach to overseas development; the balanced use of both bilateral and multilateral channels for disbursing aid; and how to ensure better development education and communication of the Irish Aid programme at home.[111] The review was followed by the commencement of a public consultation process on Ireland's international development policy in July 2018, with the new policy to be launched in early 2019.[112] Of note, it was announced in October that the overall government ODA would increase by €109.8 million in Budget 2019 compared to Budget 2018 – the largest year-on-year increase in ODA since 2006, with an estimated total ODA for 2019 of €816.9 million.[113]

In launching the Irish Aid Annual Report for 2017 in October, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Simon Coveney, TD, noted both the positive reputation which Ireland's aid programme enjoys worldwide, and how this fact would assist Ireland in its bid to secure a seat on the UN Security Council for 2021–22. The Tánaiste also highlighted Ireland's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

> The SDGs remind us that those furthest behind are not always to be found in places where Ireland has traditionally worked. It is therefore vital that as we look to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint, we also recommit to helping the world's most vulnerable and this is something which will remain as one of the key priorities of our new international development policy.[114]

At an EU level, the Tánaiste took part in discussions on the successor to the EU's Cotonou Framework for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in January 2018, and noted Ireland's strong support for the process. In particular, the Tánaiste highlighted a shared focus on 'eradicating poverty and hunger, promoting trade and political dialogue, and addressing issues such as climate change, conflict and inequality'.[115]

[110] Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence, *Review of the Irish Aid Programme* (February 2018), p 1 https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_foreign_affairs_and_trade_and_defence/reports/2018/2018-02-22_report-review-of-the-irish-aid-programme_en.pdf last accessed 29 May 2019.

[111] ibid p 3.

[112] DFAT, 'Tánaiste and Minister Cannon launch public consultation on new international development policy', Press Release (12 July 2018).

[113] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Welcomes Budget 2019 Allocations for Overseas Development Assistance', Press Release (9 October 2018).

[114] DFAT, 'Tánaiste to launch the 2017 Irish Aid Annual Report', Press Release (1 October 2018).

[115] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Coveney attends EU Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels to discuss the post-Cotonou framework', Press Release (22 January 2018).

Additionally, a series of funding announcements was made over the course of 2018. In February, the Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon TD, announced that Ireland would more than double its funding to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – bringing Ireland's contribution to €25 million over the next three years.[116] In the field of food security, an additional €250,000 was made available to support Irish agri-food companies develop partnerships with African companies via the Africa Agri-Food Development Programme;[117] while the Tánaiste announced the provision of €7.5 million for the period 2019–21 to the International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD), in support of its work eradicating rural poverty in developing countries.[118] To promote economic development in Africa, the 6th annual Africa Ireland Economic Forum was held in Dublin on 11 October 2018. As noted by Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD, 'The two themes of the Forum, "Agri-business" and "Women in Business" resonate strongly within my Department, not only underpinning the sustainable development of the agri-food sector in Ireland, but also as a cornerstone to Ireland's international development assistance strategy.'[119]

Meanwhile, the visit of the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Sir Mark Lowcock, to Dublin in March provided an opportunity for the announcement of €2.9 million additional funding for OCHA, as well as a further €8.5 million to relieve humanitarian crises in Yemen, Syria and Iraq.[120] Speaking in advance of the meeting, the Tánaiste reiterated Ireland's support for the UN:

> The United Nations is a cornerstone of Ireland's global engagement. I am pleased to announce almost €11.5 million in Irish Aid support to the UN's humanitarian relief work. This work helps alleviate the vulnerability of those most exposed to the effects of conflict, natural disaster and famine, in particular those most at risk due to the enduring crises in Yemen, Syria and Iraq. However, across the world, humanitarian need continues to outstrip the resources available. The Government is strongly committed to working with UN Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and the wider UN system to help put in place new solutions, including looking at innovative financing, and, most importantly, to find long-lasting solutions for peace.[121]

In addition to funding well-publicised conflicts, such as the ongoing civil war in Syria,[122] humanitarian funding was allocated for forgotten conflicts, such as in

[116] DFAT, 'Minister Cannon pledges €25 million to international education', News (2 February 2018).
[117] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Coveney and Minister Creed call for applications to Africa Agri-Food Development Programme', Press Release (8 February 2018).
[118] DFAT, 'Ireland announces €7.5m to support IFAD', News (12 February 2018).
[119] DFAT, 'Tánaiste to open the 6th Africa Ireland Economic Forum', Press Release (10 October 2018).
[120] DFAT, 'Ministers welcome UN humanitarian chief, Sir Mark Lowcock, to Dublin', News (22 March 2018).
[121] ibid.
[122] DFAT, 'Ireland's support to Syria crisis response exceeds €100 million', Press Release (25 April 2018).

Somalia,[123] the ongoing work of non-governmental organisations,[124] and the UN Relief Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA).[125] Indeed, following the decision by the US to withdraw all its funding for UNRWA in September, the Tánaiste issued a strongly worded statement:

> I believe this step is both heartless and dangerous, and will impact negatively on the Middle East region. And I have made my views on this absolutely clear in contacts with the US administration … Ireland is a longstanding supporter of UNRWA. We will continue that assistance and discuss with our EU and other partners what more can be done to support its work.[126]

This commitment was confirmed in December, with the announcement of a further €2 million in funding for UNRWA, bringing the total Irish funding provided to UNRWA in 2018 to €9 million. Noting the increased humanitarian needs in Palestine, and the impact of the US withdrawal of funding, the Tánaiste reiterated that: 'The services that UNRWA provides are necessary, and will remain necessary, until a durable solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict can be negotiated that meets the needs of both parties, ends the occupation that began in 1967 and resolves all final status issues'.[127]

[123] DFAT, 'Ireland provides €3m funding to Somalia humanitarian crisis', Press Release (11 May 2018).
[124] DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney and Minister Ciarán Cannon announce over €10 million in grants to NGOs', Press Release (6 June 2018); DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney announces over €2 million in grants to Cork-based organisations', News (6 June 2018).
[125] DFAT, 'Tánaiste announces humanitarian funding for UN Agency for Palestine Refugees', News (27 June 2018).
[126] DFAT, 'Statement on cut to UNRWA funding', Press Release (1 September 2018).
[127] DFAT, 'Tánaiste announces funding of €2 million for the Palestinian people', Press Release (22 December 2018).