

**Joint letter from the Development Ministers of Denmark, Finland,
Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden**

To the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, Catherine Ashton

4 October 2012

Dear Lady Ashton

We are pleased to see the European External Action Service (EEAS) now in place, with the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness and coherence of external action, particularly from a development perspective. We very much appreciate your efforts in this regard, and you can certainly count on our strong support in the future. We also look forward to enhanced cooperation between the EEAS and the Commission, both in Brussels and in the delegations. Indeed we see this as crucial to fully utilising the potential of the EEAS and coherent European external action.

We are writing now in relation to two issues that we believe are of importance to the European Union in addressing global challenges.

Firstly, we feel that it is important that the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), in all its various formations, can effectively contribute to assuring that the EU is able to play a strong global role. From our perspective, the biannual FAC Development meetings are of crucial importance. To fully tap their potential, and support the EEAS in fulfilling its mandate, it is necessary that sufficient time is allocated to these meetings and their preparation. We therefore suggest that the FAC Development meetings are held on a separate day from the FAC Foreign Ministers' meetings. This issue is intimately linked to whether our meeting arrangements best serve our requirements to support the strengthening of the EU's global role.

Secondly, we are keen to see effective progress on the European Union's internal work on a new global development framework post-2015. In this regard, we naturally look forward to the European Commission Communication due in early 2013. Clearly, it is necessary to ensure the right level of interaction, coordination and coherence when developing the SDGs and reviewing the MDGs. This is, of course, a complex undertaking spanning several external action policy areas. The preparatory process for the post-2015 global development framework has already begun and it is important that the EU quickly assumes an active role in this process. To that end, we need to agree on how best to organize ourselves. We encourage you, as the High Representative of EU foreign policy, and your service to work closely with the Commission in forwarding this process at EU level. The EU should strive for an open and transparent process while considering that the members of the high-level panel on the post-2015 development agenda are members in personal capacity. We look forward to our first post-2015 discussion in October and, as ever, remain committed to supporting your work in the future.

Yours sincerely,



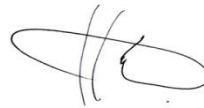
Mr Christian Friis Bach
Minister for Development Cooperation
Denmark



Ms Heidi Hautala
Minister for International Development
Finland



Mr Dirk Niebel
Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and
Development
Germany



Mr Ben Knapen
Minister for European Affairs and International
Cooperation
The Netherlands



Ms Katarzyna Pełczyńska-Nałęcz
Undersecretary of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Poland



Ms Gunilla Carlsson
Minister for International Development
Cooperation
Sweden

Cc: Commissioner Piebalgs; Commissioner Georgieva