

European & External Affairs Committee

Date: 11 November 2004
Time: 09:00 – 12.10am
Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay
Title: Wales, A World Nation – A Strategic Framework

Purpose

The attached paper sets out the approach the Assembly Government proposes to take in achieving its goal of making Wales a recognised World Nation, and the strategic framework within which it will pursue its international-related activities.

Summary

This strategic framework sets out the principles which will guide the Assembly Government's activities and priorities through the following key, inter-linked and complementary areas:

- International Relationships;
- The Image and Branding of Wales;
- Promotion and Marketing;
- Events and visits – internal and external;
- Working with and through others.

Action

The Assembly Government would welcome the Committee's comments on the document.

Lead contact : Ifona Deeley

Wales, A World Nation - A Strategic Framework

The Vision

Our vision for the future is that Wales will become a recognised World Nation with all the economic,

social and political benefits that brings as:

- a location of choice for people to live, work, study, visit and do business;
- a strong international trading nation;
- a key player able to influence national and international policies and proposals which impact on the daily lives of the people of Wales;
- a valued partner in the sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise.

1. This document outlines what progress has been made by the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners towards achieving this vision and sets out a strategic framework within which we intend to proceed.

Background

2. For all sorts of historical reasons, Wales does not have the same kind of international profile and recognition in its own right as Scotland or Ireland. Since Devolution and the establishment of our own Assembly and Government in 1999 we have begun to address that issue, capitalising on the once in a lifetime opportunities to raise it offers, the profile of Wales overseas and to stamp our unique identity on the world.

3. We began from a low base in many respects. We have had to learn the trade of developing international relationships, promotion and marketing both as regards trade and more generally. We have had to build our knowledge and experience and to develop the tools and vehicles to make our mark. This has been achieved by a partnership of the Welsh Assembly Government and its agencies with their specialised expertise in inward investment and tourism.

4. Some examples of the progress we have made include:

- Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government are active members of European networks such as the Committee of the Regions, Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions; EARLALL; Teleregions Network; the WHO Regions for Health Network (RHN).
- The Welsh Assembly Government is a leading member of NRG4SD, the organisation seeking to promote sustainable development at the regional level and share best practice, and hosted the 4th conference in Cardiff
- Since Devolution, we have welcomed many VIP visitors to Wales of President and Premier rank, many of whom have addressed Assembly Members in the Chamber. (See Annexes 1 & 2)
- Formal government agreements have been signed or reaffirmed at Ministerial level between Wales and the Province of Chubut, Catalunya, New South Wales, Silesia, Brittany, and Latvia, with the latter being the first formal relationship with a full member state of the European Union.
- We have increased and strengthened our representation overseas through a network of international centres and offices
- We have worked with other others – academia, local government, ASPBs – to develop a more

integrated approach to international activities.

- We have developed Wales World Nation - a high quality, integrated marketing and communication package to promote the corporate image of Wales.

5. Five years on from Devolution, Wales is developing in confidence on the international stage and is respected among our peers and partners in Europe and the wider world. We have developed considerable knowledge and experience in international matters. We have begun to take seriously the business of promotion and profile on a scale that is unprecedented. While we still have a long way to go to achieve our vision, we have a clear view of how we intend to achieve it. The forthcoming reform of public services and the merger of key players in this field - the Welsh Development Agency and the Wales Tourist Board – with the Welsh Assembly Government will significantly strengthen our capacity and ability to do so.

6. Now is the right time to refocus our efforts and to set out the strategic framework within which the Welsh Assembly Government, with our partners and the wider Wales, will work to achieve our vision of making Wales a more widely recognised World Nation.

Economic, social and political benefits

7. In many ways it is artificial to try to define economic, social and political benefits separately. They are interdependent with advances in each area impacting on the others.

8. The economic benefits are often the more tangible and easily measured. They can be seen in increased levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and profitable trade links. The work of the Welsh Development Agency and Wales Trade International is fundamental to strengthening our position in these areas. They have had separate chains of command. They will have jointly an even higher profile and profile-raising capacity. Tourism is also a major economic factor for Wales - while the majority of tourism activity in Wales currently emanates from the UK market, this is changing thanks to the international marketing skills of the Wales Tourist Board. Less immediately obvious perhaps are the economic and longer-term benefits of encouraging overseas students to study in Wales, an area again where there has been significant development and achievement with the recent formation of the Wales International Consortium, with all the Welsh universities and colleges represented on it and by it.

9. Social benefits can be seen as the improved quality of life for individuals and will be one of the natural outcomes of greater economic prosperity. However, greater involvement in international relations will also boost our opportunities to improve the quality of life for the people of Wales. Through interaction and collaboration with other countries, we can learn and develop knowledge and experience to inform our own policy development in areas such as the environment, health, social care and education. But such relationships are two-way and we have much to offer the world. Our reputation as leaders in areas such as Sustainable Development, Language development and Environmental Technologies will, in turn, open the doors to greater international recognition and influence.

10. The opportunities to promote Wales politically, economically and culturally post-devolution are enormous. The position of Wales, our experiences and aspirations, are sometimes distinct from the UK as a whole. That can be used to our advantage. We have already seen the interest that Wales attracts from countries wishing to learn more about devolved government and to engage with Wales specifically where they might not necessarily have seen a sufficient connection between themselves and the UK as a whole. Devolution allows us to participate in networks which will increase Wales' influence as a country in our own right and to foster links of potential long-term benefit with other countries or regions.

The Way Forward

11. Achieving better recognition as a World Nation is in the economic, educational and political interests of all aspects of Welsh society and of all of the people of Wales. It is ambitious and will not be achieved without the involvement and commitment of all those interests. The Welsh Assembly Government recognises its responsibility in providing the lead and developing and shaping the framework to achieve the vision. It also recognises the significant role that can be played by others, and its reliance on their full participation. The Welsh Assembly Government will therefore continue to look to work with others who can contribute – public and private sectors, business, civil society, academia are some examples – within and outside Wales. In doing so, a key principle must be to capitalise on and play to our strengths. Another is to be realistic in terms of resources, priorities and value for money. Above all, we must avoid mixed messages and disparate branding.

12. Our activities and priorities will be channelled through a number of key areas :

- International relationships;
- The Image and Branding of Wales;
- Promotion and Marketing;
- Events and visits – internal and external;
- Working with and through others.

13. These areas of activity are inter-linked and complementary and need to be undertaken in a concerted and integrated overall framework to realise the full potential. We must avoid a silo mentality and approach to realise that potential. Wales is a small country: if we pull together we can punch above our weight. Our objective is to put Wales on the world map, not any individual organisation or brand labels. Wales is the brand.

International Relationships

14. Bilateral and multi-lateral relationships, and involvement in international relations generally, provide profile and the opportunity to influence. Strategic alliances with like-minded countries and regions offer significant potential benefits to both parties in that respect, as well as practical economic, social and political benefits.

15. Such alliances and relationships need not always be enshrined in a formal Memorandum of Understanding or similar document (as Wales has with Catalunya, Baden-Wurttemberg, Chubut, New South Wales, Brittany, Silesia and Latvia) but can be equally meaningful and effective if based on sound working relationships and practical benefits (as in the case of Wales' relationship with Emilia Romagna, Flanders, Finland and Lesotho for example).

16. We will continue to develop links with key countries and regions, but tempered by the limits of our resources. Our growing confidence and maturity enables us to take a more pragmatic approach than in the past in developing relationships. To be meaningful and beneficial to both parties, the relationship must be based on mutual respect, openness and pragmatism, and deliver real and measurable benefits. Those are the principles we will apply in keeping our existing relationships under review, in exploring the potential of others and in determining the extent of the resources we commit to them. We must be focused in pro-actively seeking alliances based on the potential benefits to Wales - identifying priorities and concentrating on them in a co-ordinated manner to maximise our impact - while remaining agile and flexible enough to take full advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

17. Our relationship with, approach to and attitude towards countries and regions falling outside our identified priorities will always be based on courtesy, friendship and respect, but will not attract the commitment of resources required of a more developed relationship.

18. We will take a similar pragmatic approach, based on the same principles, to our multi-lateral relationships and involvement in multi-national or regional networks and groups such as CPMR, RegLeg, EARLALL, Four Motors and NRG4SD.

19. We will encourage and be supportive of the development of links and relationships by Welsh interests outside the Government's own initiatives.

The Image and Branding of Wales

20. The key agencies involved in overseas activities on behalf of Wales – the WDA and WTB – have naturally focussed on promoting Wales as a location for FDI or as a tourist destination. Sector specific promotion is not intended to raise the general awareness and profile of Wales.

21. The Assembly Government's Wales World Nation communication initiative launched in 2001 was the first serious measure to develop and promote a corporate image of Wales to underpin the overall objective of making Wales a location of choice for people to live, work, study, visit and do business. We intend to develop that initiative still further in promoting a consistent and positive image of Wales in the round, but one which is capable of being adapted to meet different market and sectoral requirements.

22. Work by the Assembly Government and the key ASPBs has identified the concept of "focused excellence" as one which should underpin the image of Wales in whichever form it is applied, and in

whichever sector-specific market. We must identify our Unique Selling Points. Wales has some very good 'world class' stories to tell in promoting that "focused excellence" image at a global level– these symbols of Wales at its best could include the manufacture of all Airbus wings at Broughton, Flintshire; Super Fast Ulysses Ferry on Holyhead to Dublin; Nobel Prize winning academics; world class sports personalities; internationally renowned Welsh names in performing arts and culture; the very top level of University Research on Stem Cells, home of the Ryder Cup 2010; Artes Mundi; the Dylan Thomas Literary prize; the Technium concept. We are recognised and appreciated for, amongst other things, outstanding landscape, our commitment to sustainable development, culture, tradition, skilled workforce, good business environment, friendly people and quality food and drink.

23. We must raise our game internationally by capitalising on examples like these and by concentrating on telling the world what Wales is good at and iconic figures from Wales, that the world audience might not associate with Wales. We will make greatest progress when we play to our strengths. That is what underpins the concept of "focused excellence". The merger of WDA and WTB with the Assembly Government, and its international trading arm, Wales Trade International, will facilitate the process.

Promotion and Marketing

24. There are a number of players currently engaged in the promotion and marketing of Wales overseas. There has been little or no attempt to do so on a corporate basis or to explore the potential to do so outside the Assembly Government's own promotional activities and initiatives, such as those centred around a global celebration of St David's Day and specific "Wales in the Round" showcase events such as that linked to the Rugby World Cup in Sydney in 2003.

25. Wherever appropriate and practicable, the Assembly Government intends to pursue a corporate Welsh approach to promotion and marketing in priority markets, including the development of generic, corporate material, PR and marketing initiatives. Again the merger of the key agencies will facilitate that process.

26. The Assembly Government also intends to make fuller use of the substantial overseas Welsh representation network established either by the ASPBs or the Assembly Government itself, which includes a presence of one kind or another in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Ontario, Paris, Amsterdam, Milan, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, Dubai, Singapore and Sydney. The level of representation will vary from one person working from home, a shared office, a one-room office to a bigger Wales International centre representative office. Although different markets will require different approaches, we will move towards ensuring that all Welsh Assembly Government/ASPB representation will contribute to the wider promotion of Wales and take their work beyond the narrow sector-specific function, using consistent, progressive and relevant branding and images of Wales.

Events and Visits – internal and external

27. Visibility is important. We have with partner organisations established a pattern of showcase events

overseas to promote Wales in the round, based on sound business rationale and tailored and adapted to fit the circumstances. Recent examples include the China International Fair for Investment and Trade in Xiamen, the Rugby World Cup in Sydney, the Venice Biennale, featured nation status at the InterCeltique festival in Lorient and Wales Weekend in New York, all of which have been very successful. We will continue to showcase Wales overseas where the business case for doing so merits the investment. More generally, we will use St David's Day as the prime vehicle for raising Wales' profile overseas.

28. Attendance at and participation in international meetings/conferences, overseas visits and missions, can be equally productive in achieving wider profile and influence if properly targeted. We will continue to exploit the opportunities that present themselves, and encourage and support others to do likewise where practicable.

29. Major events in Wales with international audience and appeal not only contribute directly to the local economy but offer golden opportunities to promote Wales and raise our profile, which we have not fully exploited to date because of the fragmented nature of our organisational arrangements. Our proposed more corporate approach to PR and marketing will enable us to exploit much more profitably such events as the Wales Rally GB, the Ryder Cup 2010 and its lead-in events, events at the Millennium Stadium and those at the Wales Millennium Centre, the Llangollen International Eisteddfod, Artes Mundi, the Royal Welsh Show, the Hay Literature Festival and the Brecon Jazz Festival.

30. The progress made in raising Wales' profile can to some extent be judged by the increasing number of visits we receive by VIPs and delegations. Such visitors rarely fail to be impressed by what they see, in the sense of the reality being better than their relatively moderate expectations. We will continue to seek to attract influential visitors to Wales, particularly those who can further our cause in particular markets or areas.

Working with and through Others

31. We will achieve maximum impact by working with and through others, within and outside Wales, and it is important that we actively engage with them in a co-ordinated and structured way if we are to make the most of the opportunities available to us internationally and get the best deal for Wales.

UK Bodies

32. UK bodies such as the British Council, Visit Britain, UKTI, have a remit to work for the whole of the UK. We must work with them to ensure that they too are presenting a consistent and relevant image of Wales that matches our own. We must ensure that we benefit fully from the resources that such organisations deploy overseas, and that they have the material and means to promote our cause.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

33. Wales' profile and activity overseas, particularly in areas where we have no direct representation, can be helped significantly through the efforts of FCO posts, which have been of considerable assistance across the range of our overseas activities – international trade, FDI, developing relationships with partner regions, publicity and profile. We have already successfully built St David's Day into the calendar of many overseas posts. We will continue to pursue that initiative and seek to mainstream Welsh interests still further.

34. We will continue to work closely with the FCO to achieve our objectives, particularly to ensure that our interests are reflected and safeguarded insofar as is practicable, within the FCO's developing strategic priorities. We will work similarly with other UK Government Departments, including the Wales Office, and other Devolved Administrations, where appropriate.

The Diplomatic Corps

35. We have increasingly engaged with the foreign Diplomatic Corps based in London, and will continue to do so in pursuit and support of our objectives and wider activities. We will also work with the more than 20- strong Consular Group in Wales, and continue to press for the establishment of further consular representation in Wales.

The Public and Voluntary Sectors

36. Throughout the public sector in Wales international activity flourishes at many different levels - from town twinning and exchanges to sharing experience and best practice in health and local government circles. The international academic network too is very active with highly productive links between academics and institutions. The voluntary sector is increasingly engaged in overseas links and activities. We want to enlist the support of and be supportive of such links and activities to develop a more concerted effort to promote Wales.

The Private Sector

37. The private sector has its part to play in promoting Wales on the international stage, and we will seek to work with the sector – on an individual company basis where appropriate, and corporately – capitalising on the strengths we have across the wide range of business and commerce.

The Welsh Diaspora

38. The Welsh diaspora throughout the world - can be powerful allies with diverse opportunities through their daily lives to champion Wales and to make a continuing positive contribution in many different fields.

39. There are many individuals who want to help to present today's Wales to the wider world and are

well placed to do so. We want to support them and to work with them in a way which will benefit us all.

40. We want to engage with Alumni of Welsh Universities and to work with the Wales International Consortium and Higher Education Institutions to establish productive links with Alumni associations.

41. Not only is there a great hiraeth among the Welsh living away from home, but a high level of willingness to help promote Wales in their countries. In addition to the large number of Welsh-born people living outside Wales there are many more, spanning generations, committed to Wales through their parentage and ancestry. This is the basis for so many Welsh Societies around the globe which can provide an essential network of enthusiastic champions for Wales. We will look to engage more fully with Welsh Societies to ensure that they can assist us in presenting the image of modern Wales that we are keen to promote.

Measuring Success

42. Our success will build over time and will be evidenced through a changing perception of Wales internationally. It will be seen in increased levels of trade, foreign direct investment, visitors to Wales, international students, films made in Wales and how often Wales is seen as a partner of choice in eg scientific collaboration or political initiatives. But it will also be seen in other ways which are more difficult to measure - the general awareness of Wales internationally. We will explore cost effective means of market research, working with others to establish ways in which to evaluate developments in our profile overseas.

Conclusion

This document sets out our vision for the future and a framework of principles which we believe will help us to achieve that vision when we remain focussed and work together for Wales. To make Wales a recognised World Nation with all the economic, social and political benefits that brings will require co-ordinated action from the Welsh Assembly Government and all its partners. That is where we must now concentrate.

Annex 1

Some senior VIP visitors to Wales since 1999

08-12 October 1999	Premier Bob Carr	Premier of New South Wales
23 June 2000	His Excellency Mr Wen Jiabao	Chinese Vice Premier (now Premier)

15 September 2000	President Olusegun Obasanjo	President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
18 January 2001	His Royal Highness Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al Muhtadee Billah	Crown Prince of Brunei
1 st March 2001	An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern	Taoiseach (P.M) of the Irish Republic
6 April	President Jordi Pujol	President of Catalunya
16-17 October 2002	Jan Olbrycht	Marshal of Silesia
2-3 rd December 2002	Mary McAleese	President of Ireland
14 th March 2003	Monsieur Josselin De Rohan	President of the Regional Council of Brittany
9 th July 2003	Helen Clarke	Prime Minister of New Zealand
27 th July 2003	Dennis Hastert	Speaker US House of Representatives and delegation of congressmen and partners.
19 th November 2003	Herr Erwin Teufel	Minister –Präsident, Baden-Württemberg Germany
13 th May 2004	Vire Vike-Freiberga	President of the Republic of Latvia
3-5 June 2004	Michal Czarski	Marshal of Silesia
12-13 th October 2004	Monsieur Jean-Yves Le Drian	President of the Regional Council of Brittany

Note: This is just one aspect of the wide range of VIP visitors welcomed to Wales since 1999; some of the above have also visited more than once.

Annex 2

VIPs who have addressed Assembly Members

Visiting Speaker	Date	Time
HM Queen Elizabeth II	26 May 1999	Opening of First Assembly
Philip Lader, US Ambassador	6 July 1999	1.30-2.00
Bob Carr, NSW Premier	12 October 1999	1.30-2.00
Roy Maclaren, High Commissioner for Canada	30 November 1999	1.40-2.08
Sir David Steel, Presiding Officer of Scottish Parliament	27 June 2000	1.50-2.00
Tanni Grey-Thompson, Athlete	12 December 2000	1.45-2.00
Bertie Ahern, Taoiseach, Republic of Ireland	1 March 2001	12.05-12.30 (after morning plenary)
Tony Blair, Prime Minister, United Kingdom	30 October 2001	1.30 -2.00
Peter Caruana, Gibraltar First Minister	19 March 2002	1.50-2.00
Jan Olbrycht, Marshal of Silesia	9 May 2002	11.40-12.05 (Plenary adjourned)
HM Queen Elizabeth II	13 June 2002	
Mary McAleese, President of the Irish Republic	3 December 2002	1.45-2.00
Colin Jackson, Athlete	3 April 2003	1.45-2.00
HM Queen Elizabeth II	5 June 2003	Opening of Second Assembly
HRH Prince Charles	5 June 2003	Opening of Second Assembly

Minister-Präsident of Baden-Württemberg, Erwin Teufel	19 November 2003	1.45 - 2.00
Lord Chief Justice Woolf	6 July 2004	1.45 - 2.00
President of the Breton Regional Council, Monsieur Jean-Yves Le Drian	13 October 2004	1.45 - 2.00