

Professor Robert Souhami CBE FMedSci
Foreign Secretary

21 December 2011

Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS
Government's Chief Scientific Advisor
Government Office for Science
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Dear John,

Science and engineering assurance review of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I am writing as Foreign Secretary of the Academy of Medical Sciences in response to your inquiry about the science and engineering assurance review of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The Academy welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this review and our expert Fellowship is well placed to provide advice on medical science in the international context.

The Academy interacts with the FCO in two main ways:

- Through direct meetings with the FCO's Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA).
- Through the Global Science and Innovation Network (SIN) that the FCO runs jointly with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

We commend the decision to appoint a CSA within the FCO in 2009, which rightly recognises science as an issue that cuts across government and has an important role to play in tackling international challenges such as climate change, pandemic infectious disease and bioterrorism. The impact of the FCO's CSA would be strengthened if the CSA sat on the FCO management board and was supported by a scientific advisory committee in a manner similar to CSAs in some other departments. We also think that the FCO CSA should be given significantly more staff support and consideration should be given to an FCO R&D budget.

The Academy has had a positive experience of working with SIN. Examples of collaboration include a workshop on tropical medicine and parasitology in Sao Paulo, Brazil earlier this year and one of the Academy's Fellows will be speaking with SIN staff at their biennial meeting in London early next year. Our Fellows have had particularly positive experience working with the SIN offices in Singapore and South Africa. While recognising that SIN has

recently undergone a review and resources are limited, we think that the FCO and BIS should consider ensuring SIN covers additional countries and regions, particularly in the developing world.

If you do have any queries please contact me via Laurie Smith at the Academy of Medical Sciences who leads on international affairs for the office (tel. +44 (0)20 3176 2167, laurie.smith@acmedsci.ac.uk).

Kind regards,

