



Media Release

28 April 2008

MPs meet Hungarian President

Members of the Speaker's delegation today met László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary.

The Speaker, Hon Margaret Wilson, said the delegation was honoured that today's meetings at Parliament in Budapest went according to schedule as the Hungarian Government today became a minority government.

'Hungary, like New Zealand, does not have an Upper House,' she said. 'There was much interest and discussion about how New Zealand operates with a minority government and I noted that various New Zealand governments had successfully pursued their legislative programme for the last nine years with minority governments.'

President Sólyom said New Zealand and Hungary shared many of the same values and interests in sustainable development, climate change and green initiatives.

These themes were raised again when the delegation met the Speaker, Dr Katalin Szili, and the Deputy Speaker, László Mandur.

'As one of the few other women to hold the position of Speaker, Dr Szili was also keen to discuss the position of women in parliament, as well as different electoral systems.'

Earlier in the day, the delegation was briefed on Hungary's history and political developments over the last 900 years by Associate Professor Miklos Lojko.

In the evening the delegation attended a reception hosted by New Zealand's Ambassador to Hungary, HE Alan Cook. About 60 members of the diplomatic community, the business sector and local New Zealanders attended.

Tuesday 29 April

Members of the delegation will travel to Várpalota, an industrial town about two hours drive from Budapest for a ground breaking ceremony for a new roofing plant to be built by New Zealand companies AHI Roofing and its parent company Fletcher Building.

The investment by Fletcher Building through its subsidiary AHI Roofing is the largest New Zealand investment of its kind in Hungary and is also New Zealand's largest investment in a manufacturing facility in Europe for many years.

Ms Wilson said the plant will initially provide 100 jobs. The companies will use the skills and innovation of the Hungarian workforce to further develop their product range. They will also work with the municipality to develop further workforce skills.

'When looking for a plant site, Hungary stood out as the favoured location based on the technical knowledge and skills of the local workforce and Várpalota's excellent infrastructure and links to the rest of Europe,' she said.

'This is just the sort of project to take advantage of the growing relationship between New Zealand and Hungary.'

After the ceremony, members of the delegation will meet with the Mayor of Várpalota and local officials to discuss further opportunities for investment in the region.

Wednesday 30 April 2008

Members of the delegation will meet:

- Mrs Kinga Göncz, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Mr Pál Filló, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Employment and Labour
- Fraction leaders for the leading opposition party, FIDESZ
- Mr Dezső Avarkeszi, Chairman of the Constitutional, Judicial and Standing Orders Committee
- Fraction leaders for the governing Socialist Party

Wednesday evening depart for New Zealand.

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