

## Declaration on inflation target and a change in the exchange rate policy

On March 27, 2001 the Prime Minister and the Governors of the Central Bank of Iceland signed a declaration on changes in the framework of monetary policy in Iceland. The declaration is as follows:

The Government of Iceland and the Central Bank of Iceland have decided the following changes in the framework of monetary policy in Iceland, effective March 28, 2001:

- (1) The main target of monetary policy will be price stability as defined below. The Central Bank shall also promote financial stability and the main objectives of the economic policy of the Government as long as it does not deem it inconsistent with the Bank's main objective of price stability.
- (2) Rather than basing monetary policy on keeping the exchange rate within a fluctuation band, the Central Bank will aim at keeping inflation within defined limits as specified below.
- (3) The change described above implies that the fluctuation limits for the króna are abolished. Nevertheless, the exchange rate will continue to be an important indicator in the conduct of monetary policy.
- (4) The Government grants full authority to the Central Bank to use its instruments in order to attain the inflation target.
- (5) Later this week, the Government will submit to Parliament a bill on a new Central Bank Act

which, once enacted, will legally confirm the decisions described above on making price stability the main objective of monetary policy and on the independence of the Central Bank to use its instruments.

- (6) The inflation target of the Central Bank will be based on 12-month changes in the consumer price index as calculated by Statistics Iceland. Statistics Iceland will also be asked to calculate one or more indices which may be used to assess the underlying rate of inflation, as will be further agreed between the Central Bank and Statistics Iceland. The Central Bank will take note of such indices in its assessment of inflation and in the implementation of monetary policy.
- (7) The Central Bank will aim at an annual inflation rate of about 2½ per cent.
- (8) If inflation deviates by more than 1½ percentage point from the target, the Central Bank shall bring it inside that range as quickly as possible. In such circumstances, the Bank will be obliged to submit a report to the Government explaining the reasons for the deviations from the target, how the Bank intends to react and how long it will take to reach the inflation target again in the Bank's assessment. The report of the Bank shall be made public.
- (9) The Central Bank shall aim at attaining the inflation target of 2½ percent not later than by the end of 2003. In the year 2001, the upper

limit for inflation shall be 3½ percentage points above the inflation target but 2 percentage points above it in the year 2002. The lower limit for inflation will always be 1½ percentage point below the inflation target. Should inflation move outside the target range in 2001 and 2002, the Bank shall respond as set out in item 8 above.

- (10) Despite the elimination of the fluctuation limits for the króna, the Central Bank will intervene in the foreign exchange market if it deems such action necessary in order to promote the inflation objective described above or if it thinks that exchange rate fluctuations might undermine financial stability.

- (11) The Central Bank shall publish an inflation forecast on a quarterly basis, projecting inflation two years into the future. The forecast shall be published in the quarterly bulletin of the Bank. It shall also contain the assessment of the Bank of the main uncertainties pertaining to the inflation forecast. The Bank shall also publish its assessment of the current economic situation and outlook.

- (12) The Central Bank shall in its publications explain how successful it is in implementing the inflation target policy. The Governors will also report to the Minister, the Government and committees of the Parliament on the policy of the Bank and its assessment of current economic trends and prospects.