

From the Rt Hon. Tony Blair

18 November 2010

The Rt Honorable Andrew Mitchell MP
Secretary of State
Department for International Development
1 Palace Street
SW1E 5HE

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 21 December and for the additional details on your Department's planned assistance to the Occupied Palestinian Territories following our phone call shortly before Christmas. I very much welcome the opportunity you've given me to comment on DFID's plans.

I do think that by focusing on state-building, the private sector, and on the poorest, you are prioritising exactly the right areas. Your programme will continue to support the key political and developmental needs in the West Bank and Gaza.

It is crucial that the international community do as much as they can to help build the institutions of the future Palestinian state and promote effective governance and security. Predictable budget support to Salam Fayyad's PA is crucial, and the UK has been exemplary in giving the PA the predictability it needs. It is also important that the international community continue to help the PA develop its ability to deliver services. Palestinians need to see the PA acting as a state so far as possible.

Likewise your focus on the private sector is very welcome. I firmly believe that, if we can remove the impediments to doing business, the PA will be viable and self-sustaining, even before we have a state. So this is important. I know our teams are working closely together on supporting the private sector in Gaza. The continued viability of the Gazan private sector is not only important for Gaza but for the entire future Palestinian state.

In addition, your focus on ensuring that the poorest Palestinians receive support is crucial for the stability of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as important in its own right. UNWRA's continued viability in Gaza is absolutely necessary and they perform essential services for much of the population there.

I would like to update you on what we are doing to get exports out of Gaza. I continue to discuss with the Israeli Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence the need to implement the Cabinet decision of 8 December to allow commercial exports out of Gaza. It looks like one further agricultural product has now been allowed out, but I am still waiting for a detailed plan on how the measure will be implemented. There are

logistical issues that need to be tackled, but notwithstanding this I do believe we will start to see progress in the coming months.

I know our teams will continue to work very closely together. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for the continued secondment of Daniel Arghiros, my Deputy Head of Mission in Jerusalem. Your Department has just agreed to extend his secondment for a further year which is extremely helpful.

I would like to share my office's plans for 2011 and attach eight papers setting our strategies in our key areas. Please do let me know if you have any comments.

With very best wishes,

Yours ever,

Tony

Rt Hon. Tony Blair

cc:

Gary Grappo, Head of OQR mission in Jerusalem

Daniel Arghiros, Deputy Head of OQR mission in Jerusalem

Nicolas Harrocks, Head of OQR London office