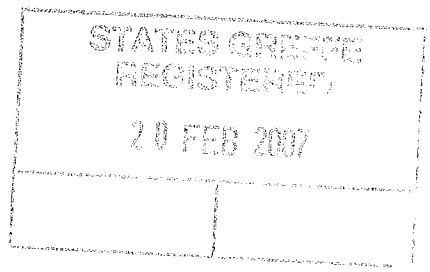
17th February, 2007



Senator James Perchard,
Chairman,
Sub Panel reviewing Jersey's Overseas Aid,
Scrutiny Office,
States of Jersey,
States Greffe,
Morier House,
ST Helier,
JE1 1DD

Dear Senator Perchard,

I was greatly saddened to read the "Response of Submissions of evidence received" made by the Chairman of the Overseas Aid Commission.

Whilst it is not for me to defend any of the individuals and organisations of which the Chairman was critical, nevertheless it cannot be acceptable for such comments to be allowed to go unchallenged. It would appear that many of the allegations are based on hearsay and are without hard evidence. Such statements can be very damaging (and hurtful) to volunteers and organisations that devote considerable time and energy and to thousands of Jersey people who contribute financially to the relief of suffering in many parts of the world. I am certain that serious allegations made by someone in such a position should either be proven or withdrawn.

In any event, I believe that the poor relationships which appear to exist between the Commission and a significant number of local organisations should not be allowed to continue. Greater effort on the part of the Commission is surely required to understand and encourage local volunteers.

I was equally surprised that the Chairman should respond in such an aggressive and personal way to what I considered to be reasonable suggestions contained in my submission. Indeed, I was careful to ensure that no personal criticism was implied to the Commission or the Commissioners.

The Chairman refers to the occasion when I lost the Presidency of the Overseas Aid Committee. This is clearly a personal matter which happened over sixteen years ago and is totally irrelevant. Having served the Island for a total of eighteen years (twelve years as President) on the Overseas Aid Committee, I felt I could look back with great satisfaction and pride. It is totally untrue that I have always had certain issues with the Committee, but perhaps the Chairman might care to be more specific and explain what these issues might be?

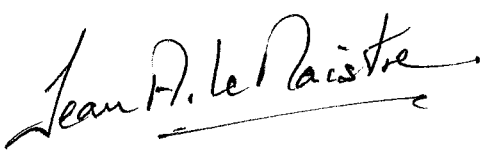
My suggestions that projects could be carried out over a longer period, possibly including elements of income generation and that there should be a greater understanding by organisations of the criteria used when assessing projects and the high level of funding spent in a particular area of the world, must surely be valid proposals and questions. As indeed is the suggestion that there are greater opportunities for partnerships to be established between the Commission and local fund-raising groups.

The allegation that an agency approached the Committee to fund flights undertaken in Africa by myself and my wife is totally preposterous. Firstly, this was a private visit undertaken whilst I was attending a CPA (World Executive Committee Meeting, not CPA Jersey Branch) EXCO meeting in Kampala. I was grateful to MAF for the opportunity to visit a Leprosy Hospital and other projects in the area in which friends had been involved. The arrangement with the organisation (which was confirmed in correspondence) was quite clear that this was a private visit and privately funded. I find it difficult to believe that the organisation would have approached the Committee without first referring such a matter to me, as they were well aware that I was neither travelling on behalf of the States of Jersey nor the Overseas Aid Committee. I hope that the Panel will seek evidence in support of this and other allegations or, alternatively, that the allegations be withdrawn with an appropriate apology. Should neither be forthcoming, I invite the Panel to contact the organisation concerned to seek clarification on this important matter.

I am quite sure that in my submission I was not critical of any member of the Overseas Aid Commission, but I thought that it was a reasonable and constructive comment to suggest that the publicity and job specification when recruiting Commissioners should refer to the important aspect of overseas experience and a good knowledge of development issues. This is a view which has been expressed to me by a number of local volunteers and the correspondence with the Appointments Commission was simply to enquire about the process and whether or not these important aspects were included. The Chairman uses this seeking of information and subsequent comment to question my motives, which I find quite deplorable.

Finally, may I express my appreciation for the opportunity to respond to the various allegations and criticisms and, of course, I would be very happy to answer any further questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,



Jean A. Le Maistre