

2007 January 18th

The Chairman and Members,
Corporate Services Scrutiny Sub-Panel on Overseas Aid
States Greffe,
Morier House,
Halkett Place,
St Helier, Jersey CI
JE1 1DD

Dear Sirs,

Scrutiny Review - Jersey's Overseas Aid

Much has been written on this subject since I was first elected to the States of Jersey and to the Overseas Aid Committee in December 1996. It was my privilege to be part of the team that enabled a full external review to be undertaken in the following year, as a result of which States Policies and the level of grants were significantly revised. I contributed to the return to increasing overall grants for development and disaster relief, particularly through the initial formula agreed with the Treasury and F&E Committee of the day.

But that was only a first stepping-stone to where we wanted to reach. It broke the crust of resistance that had previously resulted in a virtually static or, in real terms, reducing collective contribution from taxpayers.

Since then, there has rightfully been pressure applied to continue to increase the proportion of tax revenue to achieve more nearly the UN target of 0.7% GNI. However, I was astounded when, in my final year in the States, there was a move at the Decision Conference on Revenue expenditure to cut the real contribution. Unfortunately the increase was less than it might have been but at least a reduction did not occur.

I would like to add my contribution to others, in response to your Terms of Reference, that:

- (a) the States must, on moral grounds and for reasons put forward in the challenge made to us (among others) by F W de Klerk, whom I heard speak so passionately in Jersey recently, significantly revise the policy-line trend to achieve the UN target much sooner than the present rate of change would

permit;

- (b) the changes that were made during the period 1996 - 1999, when I had to leave the Committee through pressure of other work, were in response to the review that had been carried out; with the passage of time it is most appropriate that these once again come under review and I would urge you to ensure there is adequate consideration of the views today of the persons who then made excellent recommendations;
- (c) it was enlightening to participate in the CPA conference for small countries in Fiji in 2006 to hear and feel the expression of views of recipient countries within the Commonwealth; we must continually review the effectiveness and targeting of our grants, even though the Commission receives positive feedback most of the time.
- (d) In line with (a) above, it is vital that we can take pride in placing ourselves alongside, not behind, jurisdictions who are in the same league as ourselves when we compare with others in the offshore finance game we take part in; I firmly believe in the need to assess our contribution holistically and ensure that both governmental, or taxpayers' contributions, and charitable works are valued and integrated, be they financial or in real, personal effort terms.

May I add a final thought, at this stage, in your review: we are all experiencing climate change - we are all contributing to it, admittedly some more than others in this community, depending on our personal choices or means. The opportunities now exist and are growing for each of us to offset our environmental degradation of the atmosphere and pollution of land and waters, etc., by so-called carbon credits [please excuse me if I do not have the exact term].

I have been faced with making a donation when renting a car, for example. But how do I know that it will be used effectively in the manner suggested?

This week, there have been media discussions on this topic and the UK government has set out some standards or references against which individuals can assess how real and valuable such offsets truly are.

May I strongly recommend you investigate the possibility of Jersey, as a whole community, establishing such a *bona fide* arrangement, which is linked directly to our OAC programme of overseas aid, as a transparent and worthwhile additional contribution? It must not, however, be seen as a way of avoiding real reduction in Jersey's emissions but as a complementary way of offsetting otherwise unavoidable pollution.

Such a 'carbon fund' might be then seen to deliver real contribution to our recipient countries and/or charities, thus making meaningful improvement in the lives of people far less fortunate than ourselves so they, in turn, do not add to the air, land and marine burden.

I will give this idea some further thought, but urge you meanwhile to turn to someone knowledgeable, who might be able to advise, and hopefully direct, you in a positive way, if it does indeed have value.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice

Maurice Dubras