

Senator James Perchard
Chairman
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
States Greffe
Morier House
St. Helier
JE1 1DD

12th. January 2007

Dear Senator Perchard,

Thank you for the kind invitation to submit the views of our group to the Scrutiny Panel on Overseas Aid.

Submission to the Scrutiny Panel on Overseas Aid

Jersey Fairtrade Island Group

The Jersey Fairtrade Island Group supports the view that the Overseas Aid budget should be increased in line with international standards that have been established by the rich nations of the developed world. The island's success as a small and independent jurisdiction is based on its expertise in wealth management, and the financial industry is firmly established as the primary generator of income for the island. New records for deposits are proudly proclaimed each year and it is incongruous that our low ranking in the global league table for overseas aid is so robustly defended as being appropriate and the best that can be afforded.

The Island has a well-deserved reputation for private and corporate generosity towards developing countries, especially in response to disaster situations, and the community has a high level of awareness and commitment to issues of global poverty. With such a well-informed electorate, it is quite probable that any political initiative to progress more rapidly towards the target level of 0.7% for overseas aid would be welcomed and supported.

This was clearly indicated at the Imagine Jersey seminars a few years ago, when the group investigating international issues presented a strong case for improving the image of Jersey to the global community through a number of actions, but particularly by increasing aid to the developing world. This proposal was enthusiastically endorsed by the delegates to the event and it achieved a high level of support.

This response was further demonstrated in 2005, when the Make Poverty History Campaign in Jersey was particularly successful in its endeavours. Bob Geldof delivered a clear message to the G8 Meeting at Gleneagles that global poverty could only be ended by more and better aid, relief of debt and, most important of all, through trade justice. The Jersey Fairtrade Island Group is committed to the concept of fair trade, not free trade, and it supports any initiatives that enable poor communities in the developing world to work their own way out of poverty. We particularly encourage projects that deliver self-sufficiency and sustainable development, and ultimately liberating people from their dependence on

charity.

We also believe that aid may sometimes need to be sustained over long periods and that some projects are worthy of funding on a recurring basis. Gerald Durrell taught us that his most spectacular and successful wildlife conservation projects were those that were supported over the longterm, in some cases over several decades. Constant monitoring and evaluation ensured that money was spent effectively and withdrawal of funding would have had disastrous effects. The same is true of many humanitarian projects that require more than first-aid. Poverty is malignant and the treatment is of necessity protracted if there is to be any hope of resolution.

The Overseas Aid Commission can be justly proud of its record of achievements in recent years and its auditing and reporting systems are excellent. But the divide between the rich and the poor in the world is increasing and the Commission should have more ambition and more impatience to secure the resources that will enable it to deliver a proportionate response to the overwhelming pressures of poverty, hunger and sickness in the developing world. The responses posted on the Scrutiny Panel website should encourage the Commission to ask for more.

We welcome the Scrutiny Panel Review and hope for open discussion, innovative thinking and a recognition of our opportunities and responsibilities to share our wealth more equitably with the developing countries of the world.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Allchurch,
Chairman of the Jersey Fairtrade Island Group.