December 2011

PATHFINDER MINERALS PLC

I write in response to your letter of 24 November to the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of ................................................................. registering a complaint against the British High Commissioner in Maputo, ................................................................., in respect of his role in a dispute between your clients and Pathfinder Minerals plc.

................................................................., as all British Heads of Mission overseas, has been instructed by this Government to work to build Britain’s prosperity by increasing exports and investment, opening markets, ensuring access to resources, and promoting sustainable global growth. The FCO’s Charter for Business commits our diplomats, inter alia, “to help UK businesses identify and pursue new opportunities, manage risk and build relationships with the right foreign decision-makers, individual companies and potential investors,” and “lobby tirelessly on behalf of UK business interests overseas.” I am satisfied that .................................................................’s actions have been entirely proper and in accordance with those commitments.

In particular, I dispute the account you give of the meeting between................................................................. and your client. ................................................................., met with ................................................................. expressly to understand better the nature of the dispute, and in particular to understand the legal process by which ownership of a licence may have been transferred. ................................................................. at no point “accused .................................................................” and made clear his interest in ensuring that proper legal processes were seen to be being followed, and the importance of this in upholding investor confidence in Mozambique.


HENRY BELLINGHAM MP
Minister for Africa, the UN, Overseas Territories and Conflict Issues
April 2012

Our reference: MIN/30390/2012

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 3 April. As I set out in my letters of 18 January 2012 and 7 December 2011, I remain satisfied that the actions of our High Commissioner in Maputo are consistent with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) commitment to lobby on behalf of British interests overseas.

I do not accept that the FCO has interfered in this commercial dispute. The role of the FCO in this case has been to encourage both parties to follow the correct legal process, and through our High Commission to remind the Government of Mozambique that a transparent business environment is vital to continued investor confidence in the country.

Unfortunately I will be overseas during the visit to the UK of [redacted] May 2012, but if the FCO was approached through the normal channels by [redacted] in advance of the next time he is in the UK, then I or a senior official dealing with this issue, would of course consider a meeting.

HENRY BELLINGHAM MP
Minister for Africa, the UN, Overseas Territories and the Caribbean
June 2012

I note your letter of 29 May 2012. As the Minister for Africa, Henry Bellingham MP set out in his letters of 29 April, 18 January 2012 and 7 December 2011, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office remains satisfied that the actions of our High Commissioner in Maputo are consistent with the FCO commitment to lobby on behalf of British interests overseas.

I do not accept that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has interfered in this commercial dispute. We have raised the issue with the Mozambican authorities including at the highest level to emphasise that this dispute should be resolved in accordance with appropriate legal procedures.

WILLIAM HAGUE
September 2012

Our reference: MIN/36761/2012

Thank you for your letter of 15 August asking for a further meeting to discuss the case of Pathfinder Minerals in Mozambique.

Naturally, I appreciate the reasons behind your request for a meeting, but until there has been a significant change in the status of the dispute, I do not think that a meeting would be helpful. I understand that as well as the English High Court hearing on 17 September, applications for proceedings have also been filed in the Maputo Court. Notwithstanding the immediate judicial decision of the High Court hearing, there is a need to give the Mozambican judicial process time to respond to the result of the hearing.

However, I do want to assure you that I continue to pay close interest in this case. By declining a meeting, I am not signifying a diminishment of HMG's commitment to lobby on behalf of British business interests abroad, or casting doubt on the merits of the case. We will continue to emphasise to all parties and the Mozambican authorities the need for this dispute to be resolved in accordance with appropriate processes and procedures. I am copying this letter to [redacted] who I know continues to work hard on this issue.

Sincerely,

HENRY BELLINGHAM MP
Minister for Africa, the UN, Overseas Territories and the Caribbean