

1 September 2015

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Rt. Hon. Sir Tony Baldry  
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Foreign &  
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King Charles Street  
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Minister of State

Dear Sir Tony,

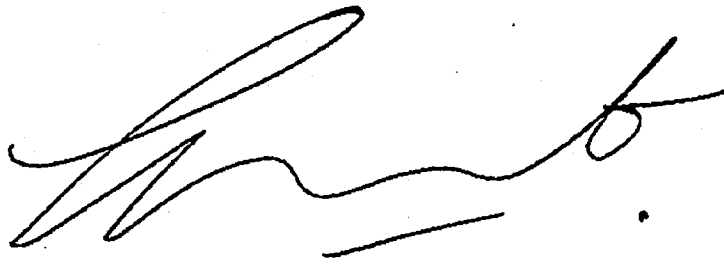
Thank you for your letter of 7 August on the UN Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) which I have considered. As you know, the UK and Somaliland have a strong and long-standing relationship and we are helping Somaliland address the constraints to investment and economic development. The UK's support to the Somaliland Development Fund, which totals £20 million, is funding the building of much needed infrastructure, such as roads and improved water supply, helping improve service delivery, and also supporting reform and capacity-building in the areas of public financial management, civil service and local government. I am replying as Acting Minister for Africa.

Recognising that Somaliland has worked hard to attract inward investment, the UK Government is also helping Somaliland to create the right business environment. In October 2014, London hosted a very successful UK-Somaliland Trade & Investment Forum. The Minister for Africa and the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development both spoke at the event, which was attended by the President of Somaliland, Somaliland Ministers, and members of the business community.

The SEMG is an independent panel of experts mandated by the UN Security Council to monitor the Somalia sanctions regime. Part of their role includes investigating potential acts "that threaten the peace, security and stability of Somalia". Such acts may include, but are not limited to, violating the arms and charcoal embargoes, misappropriating financial resources or obstructing humanitarian assistance. This may require them to pose questions to a broad range of actors including in the private sector. We are not privy to the SEMG's investigations until they are presented as a report to the UN Security Council so cannot comment on individual cases.

Somaliland clearly faces a series of challenges in the fisheries sector. There are significant knowledge gaps (such as the nature and viability of fish stocks) and a dire need for capacity building in the Somaliland government to manage the sector sustainably and monitor illegal fishing. There is also legal uncertainty as Somalia has declared an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which means legally the fishing rights belong to Somalia and an agreement needs to be worked out between Hargeisa and Mogadishu.

I am sure you are aware of these issues and are discussing them with the Somaliland government.



The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP  
Minister of State

Last month I visited Somaliland and met with the President & his cabinet, as well as signing a Memorandum of Understanding with them. We will continue our close co-operation and support.