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### Baroness Morris visits Palestinian Territories to boost British- Palestinian business links

05 February 2013

Baroness Morris of Bolton, the British Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Palestinian Territories, visited Jerusalem and Ramallah accompanied by the British Consul General in Jerusalem Sir Vincent Fearn.

The aim of the Baroness's visit is to boost Palestinian/British trade and investment links and to explore new areas of cooperation between the Palestinian and British business communities.



In Ramallah, Baroness Morris met Palestinian Minister of National Economy Dr Jawad Najji. The two discussed the Palestinian economic situation including the strengths of the Palestinian work force, key economic sectors and opportunities for foreign investors.

The Baroness then toured the City of Rawabi, the biggest Palestinian housing project in the West Bank, and met with the founder of the new city Mr Bashar Al Masri.

After her tour Baroness Morris said:

"I have learned so much during this, my seventh visit to Palestine and my first as the British Prime Minister's personal representative for trade and investment. The Palestinian business community and HE the Minister for National Economy, Dr Jawad Najji, have made me feel most welcome. In the United Kingdom, I shall work closely with Lord Green, our Minister for Trade and Investment, and with British businesses to strengthen and develop our bilateral commercial and investment ties to the mutual benefit of our two peoples. There are many opportunities to do too, taking advantage of the expertise, resilience and skills of the well-motivated and entrepreneurial Palestinian business and academic community, which has a supportive friend in the UK. I was particularly impressed by the great progress being made in the development of Rawabi City, under Bashar Masri's dynamic leadership. There are big opportunities here for British investment in retail and other sectors."

Baroness Morris met the Chairwoman of Palestinian Businesswomen Forum Ms Amal Masri and a number of its

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members. She also met with pioneering Palestinian businessmen and women including Mr Mazen Sinokrot, now Chairman of the Palestine Britain Business Council, and agreed to reactivate the Council in both countries- to strengthen the economic and business links between the Palestinian and British peoples.

The Baroness ended her two day visit with a working dinner with heads of Palestinian universities and President Abbas' Adviser for ICT Dr Sabri Saidam.

Baroness Morris of Bolton, was appointed by Prime Minister David Cameron, as his Trade Envoy to Jordan, Kuwait and the Palestinian Territories. This new initiative will promote two-way trade between Britain and selected high-growth and developing markets around the world.

#### Further information

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**Baroness (Patricia) Morris of Bolton** is a Conservative peer. She is the Deputy Speaker in the House of Lords and Deputy Chairman of Committees. She has also been an opposition spokesperson on Health, Education and Skills, Children Schools and Families, Women, and Work and Pensions.

#### Country fact file for Jordan, Kuwait, Palestinian Territories:

- › In 2011 UK exports of goods to Jordan were £255 million (an increase of 14% year on year), with imports from Jordan of £32 million.
- › Jordan needs to invest heavily in alternative and renewable energy including wind and solar, the renewable energy market for equipment and services is around US\$40 million.
- › The energy sector, particularly power generation, municipal gas systems, and oil shale development are key sectors of growth. The estimated investment required for projects in the energy sector by 2020 is between US\$14-18 billion, an average of US\$1.2 billion per annum.
- › The ICT sector is the fastest growing sector in Jordan's economy with 25% growth and contributing 15% of GDP. There are 400 companies in Telecom, IT, Online and mobile content, outsourcing and games development.
- › Regionally, Jordan is a haven of stability for business and the recent Arab Spring has made Jordan even more attractive as place for investment and a hub for business.
- › Kuwait is the 5th richest country in the world per capita. Considerable disposable income and strong historic ties to the UK mean there is a wealth of opportunities for UK companies.
- › The Kuwait government is keen to reduce the dependence on crude oil revenue. It plans to increase investment in the downstream industries of the oil sector and also promote the role of the private sector and privatisation.
- › In Palestine, there are good opportunities for the UK in financial and legal sector, education, construction and ICT.