

text of letter from FCO 7/4/2014

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 13 April 2014 13:38 -

7th April 2014

Thank you for your letter of 21 February to the Prime Minister regarding ministerial attendance at the recent EU / Africa Summit in Brussels. It has been passed to me to respond on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Southern and Central Africa Department. In your letter you encouraged the Prime Minister not to attend the Summit on grounds of President Mugabe's invitation and asked him to follow the example set by Gordon Brown in Lisbon in 2007.

As you will be aware, the fourth EU / Africa Summit entitled '*Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace*' took place in Brussels last week. The UK was represented by the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for Africa, Mark Simmonds. Their aim at the Summit was to promote a full range of interests in Africa, including: international support to Somalia; promoting development, trade and growth across Africa; and the conflicts in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The Prime Minister did not attend the Summit.

We share your concerns about the levels of corruption in Zimbabwe. As made clear on numerous occasions by the Foreign Secretary and Mr Simmonds, we remain seriously concerned about the significant weaknesses identified during the 2013 elections and the lack of transparency identified by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), African Union (AU), and domestic observation missions, which call into doubt the credibility of the elections. We believe that significant improvements in the electoral process are required along the lines proposed by international and domestic observers, if future elections are to be both credible and transparent.

The Foreign Secretary has made clear that the international community must continue to support the people of Zimbabwe to exercise their democratic rights and to build a free, peaceful and prosperous future. Delivering critical assistance and services to empower poor Zimbabweans is central to this support.

You may be interested to know that we are supporting efforts to tackle corruption through a number of initiatives run by DFID, including:

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Improving financial and human resource management of the public sector, supporting improved access to and quality of independent media to facilitate public demand for transparency, accountability and integrity in Zimbabwean society;

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Supporting Zimbabweans to monitor and provide feedback on service delivery, for example through community scorecards in the health sector; and

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Strengthening DFID's analysis of the risks of corruption in Zimbabwe and opportunities to address it.

More broadly, during the UK financial year 2012/13 DFID provided £83m to support the most vulnerable Zimbabweans. It is anticipated that the programme will spend £91m (plus £15m separately as humanitarian aid) in the financial year 2013/14, on existing programmes.

DFID's funding policy in Zimbabwe is to not put any funds directly through Government of Zimbabwe systems due to a lack of commitment to a range of partnership principles, including on public financial management, human rights, anti-corruption and domestic accountability. Work is therefore implemented primarily through multilateral organisations, notably United Nations agencies, international and non-governmental organisations and the private sector to deliver projects in a co-ordinated way with the rest of the international system. We expect all our implementing partners to meet high standards of financial management and accounting to achieve strong expected results, at best value for money.

Please be assured the UK Government has, and will continue to support the aspirations of the Zimbabwean people for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic country.

Yours sincerely

Richard Croker
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Africa Department (Central and Southern)
Foreign and Commonwealth Office