
Supporting the Middle East Peace Process through economic development

On 21 September 2005 the Chancellor of the Exchequer commissioned a report into the opportunities to support economic development to accompany and enhance the peace process. The report is being led by Jon Cunliffe (the UK's G7 finance deputy and chairman of the IMFC Deputies Committee) and Ed Balls (MP for Normanton and former chairman of the IMFC Deputies and Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury). Since September work has consisted of the following:

- Information gathering
- Detailed analysis of some of the key issues
- A regional visit to Israel, Gaza and Ramallah in the West Bank to gain first-hand understanding of the situation
- Meetings with representatives from the Government of Israel and Palestinian Authority
- Seminars and meetings with some key groups and academics working in the area
- Site visits and discussions with the Israeli and Palestinian private sector

A short interim progress report has been prepared that summarises some of the key areas of work so far and sets out a general approach the final, more detailed report will take. It is available to download below. Given political developments in the region, including events during the Palestinian and Israeli election campaigns, it has been decided that the publication of the final report should take place after the Palestinian elections.

Ed Balls and Jon Cunliffe are clear that the report should build on existing efforts to analyse and promote the conditions for Palestinian economic regeneration and should, where possible, highlight current initiatives, including the work of the Quartet's Special Envoy James D. Wolfensohn. We are keen to receive further evidence from interested parties with experience of these issues. Please email any views or evidence to BCReport@hm-treasury.gov.uk by 17 February 2006.