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Gaza: Clear requirements by donors

'The Gaza war this summer shows that the cycle of violence must be broken. Fundamental steps are needed to open up Gaza and generate growth and development for the people there. That will require new policies from both Israel and the Palestinians,' said Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende.

Nearly 90 countries and international organisations are meeting today in Cairo to mobilise support for Palestine and the reconstruction of Gaza. The [Cairo conference](#) on Gaza and Palestine is arranged jointly by Egypt and Norway in association with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The 51-day war over the summer cost the lives of more than 2 200 people and caused enormous destruction and suffering. Ahead of the conference, the Palestinian Government held its first cabinet meeting in Gaza and promised to begin the process of reform and to take responsibility for rebuilding.

Materials must be brought in and the wheels of economic life must begin turning again in both Gaza and the West Bank, so people can work. For this to happen, Israel must lift the blockade. Gaza and the West Bank must be merged into a single economy whose participants can trade freely within Palestine and with the outside world. Also required is a responsible authority across all of Palestine that favours a lasting ceasefire and can create sound policy frameworks and security for all civilians.

'Such a vision for Gaza's reconstruction will not become reality until the occupation can be lifted and Palestine becomes a state that can live in peace with Israel. International efforts on Gaza's behalf must pave the way to credible negotiations that resolve the conflict between the two peoples,' said Mr Brende.

Goods and materials must enter Gaza for reconstruction to occur. The destruction of homes and infrastructure has been extensive. According to the UN, around 80 000 houses were completely or partially destroyed, and many families now face a difficult winter. Clean water, functioning sewers and electricity are all in short supply.

'It's urgent that goods begin entering Gaza on such a large scale that private entrepreneurs and civil society can be put into motion. Norway therefore supports the establishment of an indispensable control system for the import of construction materials, as agreed by the UN, Israel and the Palestinians. Eventually this will clear the way for importing producer goods and exporting products from Gaza, activities that are crucial to getting Gaza's local economy moving,' said Mr Brende.

In his introductory remark to the conference, Mr Brende announced that Norway will increase assistance to Palestine by NOK 95 million for 2014 to help meet the challenges of reconstruction in Gaza. That will bring Norway's assistance to Palestine to NOK 885 million in 2014. Mr Brende added that Norway plans to keep its level of assistance high during the years to come.

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokument/press/news/2014/Gaza-Clear-requirements-by-donors.html?id=771227>