



United States Trade and Development Agency
Att: Mr. Carl B. Kress,
Director, Middle East and North Africa Region
1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1600
Arlington, VA 22209
USA

cc: Mr Paul Cecchini, USTDA

Chargé d’Affaires, Mr. Robert P. Jackson
Embassy of the United States of America
2 Avenue de Mohamed El Fassi
Rabat, Morocco

Melbourne/Washington, 26 October 2009

Regarding USTDA policy and practice on Western Sahara

Dear Mr. Kress

Thank you for your reply on 15 October 2009 to the letter we sent you on 4 June 2009.

Our deep concern, as we explained in our first letter, is that US development aid money could end up being used in supporting Moroccan industries on occupied land in Western Sahara, in violation of the USTDA’s and US administration’s own policy.

That is why we asked the question: “What measures is USTDA taking to make sure that the cold chain infrastructure projects that it will support are located in Morocco as it is internationally recognised, and not in Western Sahara?”

Your reply is that “The MCC’s Compact was developed, as are USTDA activities, in close cooperation with the Host Country to respond to their stated needs and objectives”. Since Western Sahara is not considered part of Morocco by the US administration, we interpret your letter to mean that projects are only taking place in Morocco proper. However, since the “Host Country” currently occupies a substantial portion of Western Sahara, we want assurance that no United States funds (which come from the U.S. taxpayers) are being utilized inside or along the coast of the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara.

Unfortunately, your letter did not answer our question. We are thus still looking forward to a reply as to what USTDA is doing to prevent US funds from being by the Moroccan government in Western Sahara.

In addition, we would appreciate a clarification as to what measures are taken to make sure that the MCC projects as such are carried out in accordance with US policy.

The Defense Forum Foundation and Western Sahara Resource Watch believe it is politically controversial, ethically wrong, as well as in violation of international law to support the continued Moroccan presence in Western Sahara. We are hopeful that the USTDA program is ensuring that U.S. funds to support “development efforts” for Morocco are clearly making this distinction and not aiding the Moroccan government in their exploitation of the resources of Western Sahara. For example, we are including a letter by former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick which was sent to Members of Congress regarding the Free Trade Agreement which clearly noted this distinction. Also, enclosed is a copy of the United Nations legal opinion stating that it is illegal to take part in the exploitation of the resources of a territory without the consent of its people.

Please assure us that there has not been any official change in policy so that American citizens can know that their tax dollars are not fostering an illegal occupation by Morocco of the Western Sahara and the exploitation of their resources.

Please note that we took the liberty to publish your reply to us, as well this letter on www.wsrw.org.

Yours sincerely,



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