

The Lord Hannay of Chiswick GCMG
House of Lords
London
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Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
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14th
December 13

Dear David,

During the debate on the Government's policy towards countries responsible for violations of human rights on 21 November you asked, "We need to do what we can to strengthen the hand of the admirable High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Pillay, who visited London recently. In that context, I hope that the Minister will say what response the Government gave to Ms Pillay's plea for an increase in our voluntary contribution to her office's work to help reverse the recent reduction in resources at her disposal?" As I did not have time to answer, I am now writing to you with my response.

The UK Government values the work of the UN High Commissioner, Navi Pillay, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). We understand the demands placed upon the OHCHR in terms of the proliferation of mandates in the Human Rights Council and the constraints they and other parts of the UN are facing in the current economic climate.

This is why the UK Government are pleased to continue to give (GBP) £2.5m a year to OHCHR and this year will give an additional voluntary contribution to support them in their work. We also support the OHCHR in urging other UN states to make contributions to the OHCHR. A broad donor base is important as it helps them maintain their independence and increase stability.

However, it is also important that UN organisations deliver efficiently and effectively within their budgets. The UK is one of many countries who are pressing for a leaner, more cost-effective and flexible UN which includes the work of the OHCHR.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Best wishes

Sayeeda

THE RT. HON. BARONESS WARSI PC
SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE