



EUROPEAN UNION

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Remarks made by High Representative Catherine Ashton during her visit to Gaza at UNRWA school and summer camp 18 July 2010

First of all I want to say what a pleasure it has been to come to Gaza again and have the opportunity to meet the children here at this UNRWA summer camp. They are clearly having a fantastic time, but also the opportunity to work together, to learn and to have fun together. I want to begin by paying tribute not only to UNRWA, but also to all the teachers and the support staff who so freely give their time to make this possible. Watching the children have these opportunities has been a great joy.

I want also to show the commitment of Europe to help these children have a brighter future. Today we have given an additional two million euros to support not only the schools, but also the organizations to make sure that this work will continue.

I wanted to come back to Gaza only a few months since I was here last to make sure that we are also supporting the economy of Gaza.

There are small signs of change in policy to allow goods into Gaza, but we continue to call for the opening of the crossings to enable people and goods to move around. In particular to allow the people of Gaza to run their businesses, to grow their own economy and in that sense to be able to offer a future to their children. Improving the economic situation in the Gaza Strip is not simply a matter of letting in aid - it is a matter of revitalizing the local economy with private sector development and commercial activity, including exports.

And so as I said, I am delighted to be back here in Gaza for one, I hope, of the many visits I will make while I am in office. I will continue to press for all support of the EU and to try and make sure that what I have asked for, which is the opening of the crossings for goods and people and the growth of the economy, happens.

Thank you.

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu

Darren Ennis +32 498 963 293 - +32 2 296 32 93 - Darren.Ennis@ec.europa.eu

COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu

www.eeas.europa.eu