



Press Release



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LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS VISITS MALAYSIA

Baroness Amos, Leader of the House of Lords and Lord President of the Council, is in Kuala Lumpur from 27-29 December 2006 on a private trip.

During her trip, Baroness Amos will attend a lunch reception on 28 December 2006, jointly organised by the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) and the British High Commission. Guests at the luncheon include Chairman of the WIEF, Tun Musa Hitam as well as other leading figures from the government and corporate sectors and developmental organisations in Malaysia.

Baroness Amos will also pay a courtesy call to Deputy Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak on 29 December 2006.

Baroness Amos has a deep interest in development issues especially in areas of equality and social justice. In 2003 she joined the Cabinet as International Development Secretary before being appointed as Leader of the House of Lords and Lord President of the Council.

Note to editors

- 1) Attached please find:
 - Baroness Amos' CV
 - A copy of her speaking notes at the lunch on 28 December 2006, jointly organised by the World Islamic Economic Forum and the British High Commission.

- 2) For more information on the World Islamic Economic Forum, please visit <http://www.wief.org.my>



Baroness Amos

Leader of the House of Lords and Lord President of the Council

Date of Birth: 13 March 1954

Parents: Daughter of Michael and Eunice Amos

Education: Townley Grammar School for Girls

Further Education: Warwick University (BA sociology 1976)
Birmingham University (MA cultural studies 1977)
University of East Anglia (doctoral research)

Career: With London Boroughs:

Lambeth 1981-82,
Camden 1983-85, Hackney 1985-89, Head of Training, Head of
Management Services;
Chief Executive, Equal Opportunities Commission 1989-94;
Director, Amos Fraser Bernard 1995-98

Other Organisations:

Council Member, Institute of Employment Studies 1993-98;
Chair, Board of Governors,
Royal College of Nursing Institute 1994-98;
Director, Hampstead Theatre 1995-98

Honours and Decorations:

PC 2003

Honorary Academic Degrees:

Honorary professorship;
Three honorary doctorates



Trusts:
Deputy Chair, Runnymede Trust 1990-98;
Trustee, Institute of Public Policy Research 1994-98;
Non-Executive Director, UCLH Trust;
Chair, Afiya Trust 1996-98;
Trustee:
VSO 1997-98,
Project Hope 1997-98

Baroness Amos was born in Guyana and studied at the Universities of Warwick, Birmingham and East Anglia. She was awarded an Honorary Professorship at Thames Valley University in 1995 in recognition of her work on equality and social justice.

After working in Equal Opportunities, Training and Management Services in local government in the London boroughs of Lambeth, Camden and Hackney, she became Chief Executive of the Equal Opportunities Commission 1989-94.

In the House of Lords, Baroness Amos was a co-opted member of the Select Committee on European Communities Sub-Committee F (Social Affairs, Education and Home Affairs) 1997-98.

Valerie Amos was appointed a Government Whip in the House of Lords in July 1998. In addition to her role as a Spokesperson on International Development, she also spoke on Social Security and Women's Issues. She was created a life peer in August 1997.

Baroness Amos was made Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2001. She joined the Cabinet as International Development Secretary in May 2003 before becoming Leader of the House of Lords and President of the Council in October 2003

She has also been Deputy Chair of the Runnymede Trust 1990-98, a Trustee of the Institute of Public Policy Research, a non-executive Director of the University College London Hospitals Trust, a Trustee of Voluntary Services Overseas, Chair of the Afiya Trust, a director of Hampstead Theatre and Chair of the Board of Governors of the Royal College of Nursing Institute.



BARONESS AMOS' SPEAKING POINTS AT WORLD ISLAMIC ECONOMIC FORUM AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION LUNCH, 28 DECEMBER 2006

Thank you very much Tun, High Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen. I only arrived in Malaysia yesterday and so I am eager to learn about your country and hear your views more broadly on development challenges in Muslim countries, so I won't speak for long.

Before moving to my present job I was the UK's Development Minister. I have a deep interest in development issues, and in particular in ensuring that the full potential of women is realised through providing equal opportunity to women. I strongly welcome initiatives such as the World Islamic Economic Forum, and was pleased to learn that one of your first initiatives was the establishment of a Muslim Businesswomen's network.

THE ISSUE: DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

Despite the success of Malaysia over the last 50 years – may I congratulate you on your forthcoming anniversary – you know very well the disheartening picture of development in many Muslim countries:

The collective GDP of the 57 OIC member countries is less than 5% of the world's total. And that share appears to be declining, in 1980 it was 7.5%. India's GDP - in terms of the purchasing power parity - is more than the aggregate GDP of the entire Muslim world.

- Out of a global population of 1.2 billion Muslims, 650 million are living below the poverty line.
- The UN classifies 31 OIC members as "least developed low-income countries". Muslim world's share in world's stock market capitalisation is less than 2%.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE: THE UK CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT

The Department for International Development, or DFID, leads the British government's fight against world poverty. One in five people in the world today, over 1 billion people, live in poverty on less than one dollar a day. In an increasingly inter-dependent world, many problems - like conflict, crime, pollution, and diseases such as HIV and AIDS - are caused or made worse by poverty.

DFID works directly in over 150 countries worldwide, many of them of course Muslim. The UK's aid programme was £4.4 billion in 2005, that is over 30 billion Malaysian ringgit, making us the third largest OECD donor. Over the last five years over £5 billion of our assistance has gone to Muslim countries: 35 billion ringgit.

The focus of the DFID programme is to help tackle the underlying causes of poverty through supporting the delivery of the UN's eight 'Millennium Development Goals':



- halve the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger
- ensure that all children receive primary education
- promote sexual equality and give women a stronger voice
- reduce child death rates
- improve the health of mothers
- combat HIV & AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- make sure the environment is protected
- build a global partnership for those working in development.

THE ROLE OF BUSINESS

The businessmen among you will appreciate the fact that the Millennium Development Goal's have a deadline, 2015, and measurable targets.

Partnership is important, and itself one of the MDGs. DFID works with governments, multilateral institutions, civil society, the private sector and others. This kind of partnership seems to me to also be part of the ethos of the WIEF where I note that you are bringing together political, business and religious leaders and representatives of civil society, think tanks.

On the whole we in government work through and with other governments in our development programme. I think that it is important that we think more about the role of the private sector and I look forward to discussing this further over lunch.

Economic development, the building of sound businesses is at the heart of the success of those countries that have successfully developed. So it is worrying that the Muslim World's share of world **trade** is only around 6-7% (despite Malaysia's efforts!). And that I learnt from one of the WIEF's publications that the Muslim world's share in world's stock market capitalisation is less than 2%.

In this context it is essential that we do not give up on the Doha Development Round but keep working for an ambitious result that will support freer markets to the benefit of many in the developed world.

Not all business is necessarily good business though. And there are examples of business working against the development agenda. Corruption, fed by unscrupulous businesses, can prop up governments that do not serve their people. Over exploitation of natural resources or disregard for the environment can cause long-term problems for local communities due to the impact on their water supply, crops and health. So it does matter where, how and who you do business with.



DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

I don't want to suggest for a moment that business is solely responsible for these problems. Governments play the critical role in setting the context in which economic development can take place and be sustained. Our experience in Europe over the last 50 years shows that democracy is the best model for a stable and effective government. Democracy is most likely to deliver the foundation of good governance, transparency and accountability on which sound, long-term business decisions can be made and which enables continual growth.

If you look at the UN's Human Development Index – a lot of Muslim countries (including some of the richer Arab countries) consistently score poorly on areas of governance, education and gender empowerment.

The UK's foreign policy aims to encourage and support good governance internationally in its broadest sense. We have worked in Malaysia for example with your Securities Commission to promote Corporate Social Responsibility, sharing best practice between British and Malaysian firms.

I note also that the ASEAN Eminent Persons Group, Chaired by Tun of course, has recommended that an ASEAN Charter be created supporting the global principles of democracy and good governance.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

The UK and Malaysia share a strong educational links. You, as employers, know the importance of developing and training your staff and the emphasis of the Malaysian government on human capital development must be right. We need to develop the focus on education across the developing world though so that countries can fully exploit their potential. WIEF's statistics tell us that only 2% of the scientists and one percent of the technicians involved in research activities come from Muslim countries. And the Muslim world registers less than 1% of the patents globally.

And there is a massive failure to enable women to play their full role as economic citizens, enabling them to contribute to their country, community and family's development. Women are also most likely to make good decisions about investing in their children's education, helping secure a growth into the future.



CONCLUSION

These are some initial thoughts on how the UK, and others, should respond to the “development challenges” in many Muslim countries.

- We need to continue with our development programmes, aimed at achieving the basic needs of the Millennium Development Goals.
- We should encourage the right kind of business and create new opportunities through a successful conclusion at the WTO.
- We need democracy and good governance.
- Getting education and gender equality right are keys to success.

I shall stop there, and very much look forward to hearing your views over lunch.

Prepared by: British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur