



Department  
for International  
Development



Nigel Phillips

Email: [enquiry@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@dfid.gov.uk)

Via email:

26 June 2018

Dear Nigel,

Thank you for your email of 5 June to the Department for International Development (DFID) about UK aid, and Visit Rwanda's sponsorship deal with Arsenal Football Club. I have been asked to reply as the Deputy Head of Office for DFID in Rwanda.

I would like to reassure you that no UK Aid money was used for the deal. The Government of Rwanda has made clear, both publicly and to DFID, that the arrangement is financed from Rwanda's own tourism revenue. All UK aid to Rwanda is earmarked for specific programmes such as education and agriculture. We closely track outcomes to ensure aid is achieving life-changing results for the country's poorest people, and providing value for money for the UK taxpayer.

Over the past two decades UK aid has helped Rwanda deliver some of the most impressive development results in the world: 2 million people have been lifted out of poverty since 2005 and the economy has grown at an average of 8% per year since 2000. This progress means that Rwanda is now less dependent on aid. Grant financing from donors now makes up only 16% of the country's budget, a considerable decrease compared to ten years ago. UK aid to Rwanda has reduced by a third over the last 4 years.

As aid to Rwanda decreases, Rwanda is investing its own resources to boost growth and transform the economy. This includes seeking to increase tourism. Whilst the precise details of the sponsorship deal with Arsenal are commercially confidential, the Rwandan Development Board has explained how it fits with the Government of Rwanda's strategy to diversify economic growth into job-intensive sectors such as manufacturing and tourism, and to self-finance an exit from aid. Sponsorship has the potential to increase the visibility of the country as a tourist destination and therefore increase revenues, boosting growth and investment. Tourism is already Rwanda's

highest earner of foreign exchange, ahead of tea, coffee and minerals combined, and an important source of employment. In 2017, the overall contribution of travel and tourism to Rwanda's GDP was estimated to be 12.7%, and the sector has significant potential to make an even bigger contribution to Rwanda's economy in the future. The Government of Rwanda has a clear strategy to develop its economy and exit from aid, which includes a target to double direct revenue from tourism by 2024.

Despite the remarkable progress achieved in recent decades, Rwanda remains one of the poorest countries in the world. This is why the UK continues to support its transition and growth, to ensure Rwanda can succeed in the long term. A peaceful and prosperous Rwanda is essential for stability in Africa and is in the UK's national interest.

Yours sincerely,

Kenny Osborne  
Deputy Head, DFID Rwanda