



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



Our Ref: DEPI/EO/0804/2009/PCoB/HS

Date: 1 July 2009

Dear Ms. de Groen,

I wish to refer to your letter dated 1 April 2009 regarding UNEP activities following the escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip in December 2008 and January 2009.

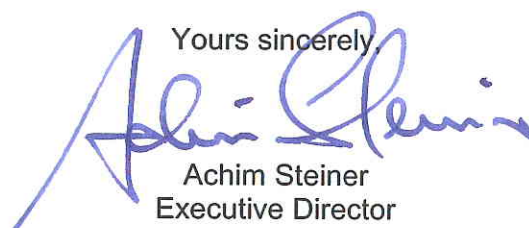
In February 2009, the UNEP Governing Council, in its Decision 25/12, mandated the organization to initiate a post-conflict environmental assessment to examine the environmental impacts of the hostilities on the Gaza Strip. UNEP was also requested to conduct an economic evaluation of the cost of environmental rehabilitation and restoration.

Consequently, a multi-disciplinary UNEP team of experts undertook fieldwork in the Gaza Strip from 10 to 19 May 2009. The team travelled extensively across Gaza, carrying out inspections of some 32 sites to assess environmental impacts and collect samples for laboratory analysis.

The main sectors under investigation were waste and waste water, coastal and marine environment, and solid and hazardous waste management, including asbestos. The team also collected data for an economic evaluation of the cost of restoration of the environmental damage in Gaza. The full report, including the economic evaluation, will be ready for publication during the second half of July.

With regard to the issue of depleted uranium (DU), you inform that several Arab states have petitioned the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with a request that IAEA undertake survey work to assess the situation on the ground in Gaza. If IAEA were to proceed with this fieldwork and expressed the need for other agencies expertise, such as UNEP or the World Health Organization, we would naturally consider their request.

Yours sincerely,



Achim Steiner
Executive Director

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