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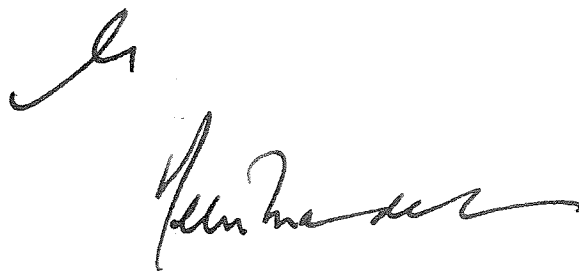
Mr Ferid Tounsi  
Executive Director  
Agadir Technical Unit  
Amman, Jordan

*Dear Mr Tounsi,*

First of all let me thank you for your invitation for the First Agadir Member States Investment Forum that will take place in Brussels on 8 April 2008. I will be very pleased to open the Forum and chair its first morning session.

As you know, the European Commission attaches great importance to the South-South integration as a complement to the North-South integration that we pursue under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Barcelona process. The Agadir Agreement on free trade between Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco that was signed in 2004 and entered into force more than a year ago is very important in this context and as you know I have been a firm supporter of it. It is now time to show that it can deliver results. I very much hope that the Forum will raise awareness among the business community in the EU and the four Agadir member states about the opportunities for economic cooperation, investment and trade resulting from the cumulation of origin provided by the Agreement.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my strong support for the activities of the Agadir Technical Unit in enhancing regional integration, which of course go beyond the organisation of the Forum.



Peter Mandelson