Operating since 2008 as a non-governmental, non-profit and non-political organization that manages to serve as a central body for the development and enhancement of the business and economic relations between the Israeli and the Palestinian private sector has been accomplishing its goals beyond the targets initially proposed and despite, keeps its ambitions growing towards building a real path for peace.

Trust is to be the essential base of the Chamber's efforts and activities.
Cordially to the British Parliament Committee, hereafter is a detailed description and explanation of who we are, what our purpose is and how we achieve it. Pleased of your recent interest on the Israeli-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and in the hope to match your ideas and requests for the receipt of your kind support, we will assess what are the essential conceptual bases which drive all our efforts in the commercial relations with our closest neighbors.

We are the Israeli-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, an association of business people from the private sector that has established as its central objective the enhancement of bilateral trade and investment relations between Israelis and Palestinians. As a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit body this organization was created in 2008 by a group of around 30 Israeli business people and organizations, in collaboration with the Peres Center for Peace, The Portland Trust and the Bilateral Chamber of Commerce Union in Israel. For over five years we have worked to serve as the operational platform for the creation of a strong cooperation between the Israeli and the Palestinian business communities. For it, we support both the development of commercial relations and the creation of the necessary civil infrastructure that enable the realization of the planned cross-border activities of the Chamber.

The conceptual supporting base that drives our whole activity lies essentially upon the belief in the development of mutual TRUST between the two communities, and of a stable and flourishing Palestinian economy and private sector, as a means to lead the efforts towards the so awaited path to peace. A sentiment of trust that has always been blurred due to the numerous misconceptions that each side has of each other must be woven through the elimination of the ignorance of each side on the other. The IPCC brings together Israeli and Palestinian business people and provides the opportunity for each side to visit the other sides’ territory and witness the reality and people of the other side. Furthermore the IPCC provides its members with current information about the Palestinian economy and business opportunities in the Palestinian Territory and assists in making joint ventures.

For this above-all purpose, our varied activities consist of the following: analyzing the market opportunities to go along with, organizing and participating in a variety of meeting, dialogues, forums and events on bilateral economic issues, hosting joint events for entrepreneurs of all fields of commerce, developing the needed infrastructure to facilitate the access of all businesses and to smoothen the transactions amongst them, lobbying to promote mutual business activities and ultimately creating long lasting partnership. All of it, of course, conducted in mostly every commercial sector.

Our accomplishments until present are to be drawn by the several most important meetings and events that have allowed the commencement of a long and continuing process of joint work. Namely, bringing Palestinian business people to meet relevant Israeli partners, taking Israeli business people to the West Bank to meet relevant Palestinian partners, conducting breakfast clubs, facilitating B2B meetings, participating in conferences to boost trade between Israel and the Arab world and forging strong relationships with the Israeli and Palestinian political leadership and business communities, as well as with the donor countries. The IPCC would like to expand and extend its activities in all these areas and as well, would want to implement this approach in most of the regions of the West Bank, notably Nablus, Jericho, Hebron and Bethlehem – and in Gaza if conditions allow.

Specific results expected in the near future will include the expansion of the IPCC membership and network, business deals, Palestinian job creation and economic development, greater use of the internet for sharing information and developing business links, communication of the benefits of cross-border business interaction to influencing agents, an action plan to develop a fund for feasibility studies and technical work for business ventures. Several concrete projects include hosting joint events like the Breakfast Club for Israeli business people to meet leading Palestinian entrepreneurs, developing a virtual web portal—or ‘Virtual Marketplace’— with information on both Israeli and Palestinian businesses and opportunities and pursuing measures to enable the movement of goods between Israel and the Palestinian Territory, including supporting the development of the Israeli-Palestinian Arbitration Court when launched.
The IPCC is the only initiative of its kind currently in operation. It was established in Israel primarily to assist the Israeli business community to trade with Palestinians, however there is no equivalent yet on the Palestinian side. The IPCC therefore increasingly finds itself acting also on behalf of the Palestinian business community who wish to trade with Israelis and attempts to resolve the logistical and procedural problems that cross-border interactions face (including permits, passages etc). For this, the IPCC has developed a strong partnership with the PIEC (Palestinian Importer and Exporter Council), a membership of over 300 Palestinian businesses with whom we closely work.

There is growing recognition that a lasting and sustainable solution to conflict and the achievement of a quality peace requires more than just political negotiations and necessitates the involvement of the full range of actors in society. Politics and security are clearly an essential part of the process but so too is economics. Therefore, we work hard mainly on the promotion of economic inter-dependence as a means to create stable and mutual relations among Israel and the Palestinian community. Our mission is to widen and deepen at the same time the economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to promote opportunities for the private businesses and to create strong social networks and commercial ties.

We in the Chamber of Commerce believe that there is great willingness from both the Israeli and Palestinian sides to get to know each other and expand their business opportunities, despite the political state of affairs between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Therefore, we see it as our duty to preserve this willingness and try to draw the sides closer, using the platform of economics and business.

Respectfully yours,
The Israeli-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.