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Press Release

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Minister to Review DEFRA's Response on Halal Slaughter and Stunning

A five member Muslim delegation led by Dr Ahmed Al Dubayan Director General of The London Central Mosque Trust and the Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC), and MCB Secretary-General Iqbal Sacranie, met Ben Bradshaw MP, Minister of State for the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), on Monday 28 June 2004, to present their views on the matter of religious slaughter of animals without stunning.

The delegation stressed to the Minister that they were concerned for both the welfare of animals and for the health of the nation. On both counts, stunning causes more problems than it solves. Since the Halal method of slaughter achieves bleeding and stunning in one step, a further post-cut stunning - as recommended in the FAWC report - is not necessary.

The issue of food labelling was also discussed. The delegation urged the Government that meat not slaughtered in the Islamic way or not fit for human consumption should not be sold as Halal.

Dr Ahmad al-Dubayan - Director General of ICC, said:

"That while the MCB and ICC were trying to review the whole issue of certification of Halal food and eliminate malpractices in the trade; they expected that the government too would use its regulatory powers to deal false certification under the trade description as unfit meat under food safety or other regulations."

Welcoming the Government's decision to retain the exemption from stunning for the Halal and (Jewish) Shechita methods of slaughtering animals, Iqbal Sacranie said:

"The Halal method is the least painful and most humane way forward. We are pleased that the

Minister has agreed to review his Department's draft response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council's report in light of other scientific evidence available."

The Department's draft response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council's report, which referring to the transverse incision across the throat without prior stunning, said, "We are persuaded that such a massive injury would result in very significant pain and distress in the period before the insensibility supervenes." Both Jewish and Muslim communities disagree on this matter, and point to the body of scientific evidence that suggests the contrary.

"I hope that the government will tackle the questions of meat crimes, and will encourage the local authorities to take appropriate enforcement action" said Dr Yunes Teinaz, Health Advisor for the ICC , and practising Senior Environmental Health Officer.

The Muslim Community delegation also included Dr Shuja Shafi, Chair of MCB's Health & Medical Committee, Dr Yunes Teinaz, Advisor to the Islamic Cultural Centre and Chowdhury Mueen Uddin, Deputy Director, Islamic Foundation, Leicester.

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Note for Editors:

1. In their proposed response to the FAWC Report, the Government -- while retaining the exemption conceded that on balance stunning was likely to be less painful than Halal or Shechita slaughter. Both Jewish and Muslim communities disagree on this matter, and point to the body of evidence that suggests the contrary.
2. For further information please contact: the London Central Mosque Trust & the Islamic Cultural Centre 146 Park Road, London NW8 7 RG.
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