COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE - PARTY POLITICAL FINANCE INQUIRY

STATEMENT BY ASDA

- We have stores throughout the United Kingdom. We employ over 170,000 colleagues. Eighteen million customers visit our stores each week. Thousands of suppliers work with us.

- We operate a broad communications strategy involving dialogue with all our external stakeholders. We broadly define non-customer stakeholders as the media, government, NGOs, charities, our trades unions, Members of Parliament with an ASDA store in their constituency, Members of the European Parliament, MSPs, AMs and Members of the Legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland as well as other elected representatives in the local communities served by our stores and where we want to invest.

- Asda does not support any political party and we do not provide funding for individual politicians' election campaigns. We engage with all political parties and where we believe it is appropriate and a good opportunity to explain our work to a wider audience we will pay for events and services such as attendance at party conferences, receptions, exhibitions, speeches and occasionally advertise in a number of related publications, which enable us to communicate effectively with our stakeholders. We believe that transparency is vital and therefore we welcome the fact that any monies we supply to political parties for conferences or events are registered through the Electoral Commission.

- This engagement is an important part of maintaining our relationships with communities at local and national level, remaining responsive to the issues and concerns of all our stakeholders.

- Our overall objective is to ensure that stakeholders have an accurate and informed understanding of our business and how it operates. We meet elected officials who have local stores or where we may have intentions to invest. In common with many other organisations, we of course make representations directly to Government with our views and concerns.

Bernard Hughes
Head of Government & Public Affairs, ASDA

8TH December 2010