

STOPAIDS. UNITING UK VOICES ON THE GLOBAL RESPONSE

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The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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Dear Prime Minister,
CC. Rt Hon Anne Marie Trevelyan MP, Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP

I am writing on behalf of STOPAIDS, a UK based network of over 70 organisations working on the global HIV response. We would like to express our views on how the newly created Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) can best deliver for the world's poorest and most marginalised, capitalise on the opportunities that the merger offers and uphold the values and vision of 'Global Britain'.

This letter sets out what should be retained and established in the new Department in order to build upon the UK's proud legacy of development partnership. It focuses firstly on the **global HIV response**, secondly on **global health** more broadly, and finally on the wider development arena with respect to **aid quality and effectiveness**, and **aid governance and accountability**.

Given STOPAIDS' mandate and our collective experience, we know first hand how important and how transformational UK Aid has been in delivering progress for the **global HIV response**. To maintain progress, FCDO must show a continued commitment to leaving no one behind. To achieve this there must be an inclusive response that prioritises the most marginalised and vulnerable populations. We should proudly maintain and continue to invest in the three diseases (HIV, TB and malaria) in line with global need, retaining technical expertise and the UK's strong governance role in the global health and HIV response space. Solutions that uphold feminist, community-led responses to the HIV pandemic, and interventions focused on key populations should continue to be prioritised, especially as the UK adapts to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 globally.

Regarding the UK's **global health** footprint more broadly, STOPAIDS supports the policy positions of Action for Global Health and would like to see the following prioritised. Firstly, a cross government approach to global health which maintains and strengthens the

Global Health Oversight Group, creates and implements a cross-government Global Health Strategy and assigns a Minister responsible for delivering the Conservative commitment of Ending Preventable Deaths. Secondly, an approach which solidifies the Department for International Development's (DFID) strengths in terms of global health by protecting DFID's technical expertise and staff, maintaining Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to health and protecting DFID's role in global health institutions.. Finally, a commitment to build upon the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's strengths to ensure even greater impact and influence on global health. These include political leadership in international fora and a strong level of diplomatic engagement on global health issues, including the rights of key populations (such as LGBTIQ individuals, people who use drugs and sex workers), and sexual and reproductive rights. This could be operationalised through the Government appointment of a Special Envoy to champion the UK's role in global health on the international stage and to oversee the implementation of manifesto commitments related to HIV and global health.

In this period of transition and looking forward, vital consideration must be given to how and where UK Aid is spent in order to continue unlocking **aid effectiveness**. The UK has a welcome legal obligation to commit 0.7% of Gross National Income to UK Aid and expressed that UK Aid will be given new prominence within FCDO. This must be done in a way that focuses aid on poverty alleviation and sustainable development. It is paramount that current DFID programmes that demonstrate positive tangible impacts based on clear and measurable key performance indicators, are sustained. Programmes should continue to be administered by people experienced in development and working directly with local communities ensuring meaningful engagement. FCDO priority countries should be chosen based on development needs, and addressing poverty and inequality wherever it exists. Finally, we must ensure that the UK's development aims and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals are not undermined by contradictory policy in the new architecture. For example, using aid to finance and promote private healthcare that does not reach those most in need and in fact contributes to exacerbating inequality.

Effective **governance mechanisms** must be in place to ensure the best value for money for British taxpayers' investment in UK Aid. By ensuring there is a Cabinet-level Minister in the new Department with an aid and development portfolio, the UK would strengthen its approach to and oversight of a cross-government approach to development.. This would be further secured by enabling this Minister to have a seat on the National Security Council.

Finally, the Government must ensure that all UK Aid is fully **accountable** and transparent. This has been previously achieved through parliamentary and independent scrutiny and may be continued by ensuring there is a specific select committee for UK Aid and a bolstered Independent Commission for Aid Impact. Adhering to the internationally agreed rules (OECD DAC rules) and standards governing UK Aid spending and implementation will also be critical.

We would be pleased to continue conversations with you and colleagues working to deliver the new Department.

Yours Sincerely,



Mike Podmore
Director
STOPAIDS

With support from:

