



Department
for International
Development



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Sarah Champion MP
Chair
International Development Committee

Our ref

203967

25 June 2020

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letters of 5 June, about a review of UK aid spending priorities and of 17 June, regarding the merger of the Department of International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

As you know, the Government's 0.7 per cent Gross National Income (GNI) target is directly linked to the performance of the UK economy. Our review of UK aid spending priorities follows the Chancellor's assessment of the risk that the UK economy will face a significant recession this year. All government departments are working through how their plans will need to change in the light of this.

To prepare for any likely drop in GNI, we are assessing across the board how we will manage the 0.7 target in the coming year. We are working across government to make sure we do that as effectively as possible.

No decisions have been taken, but we are considering the full range of our work. We want to take these decisions carefully, without unnecessary delay, and in a coordinated way across HMG. Once decisions have been made about how to best deliver ODA priorities this year, the Government will inform Parliament.

The merger of the FCO and DFID, creating the FCDO, will place our world-class aid programme at the heart of our foreign policy decision making. We will integrate the development expertise of DFID with the diplomatic reach and clout of the Foreign Office, ensuring that our impact abroad is bigger than the sum of its parts. Through closer integration we will maximise the impact of our aid budget in helping the very poorest in the world, while making sure we get the very best value for taxpayers' money.

The FCDO will bring the best of our development expertise and world-leading diplomacy together in a new department, creating new opportunities for staff. We can assure you that all the issues you raise about staff welfare, retention, morale and productivity are being carefully considered during the transition. That goes for both locally engaged staff and UK Civil Servants. A new transformation team has been set up under the Cabinet Secretary's chairmanship which will report regularly to the Foreign Secretary, and we will both be driving the new vision into the new department's DNA.

Thank you for sight of the outline standing order. As we set out in our letter of 16 June, the Government's position is Select Committees should generally mirror government departments. The structure and remit of Select Committees and their sub-committees is a matter for Parliament.

Anne-Marie looks forward to the hearing on 6 July where these issues can be discussed further.



Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State
Department for International Development



Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



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