



Foreign, Commonwealth
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Theo Clarke MP
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Dear Theo,

Thank you for your letter of 16 September.

You raise a number of very important questions, some of which relate to the current Spending Review and Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

Below, I have provided answers where I can at this point and will respond on the remaining questions once both the Spending Review and Integrated Review have concluded.

1. a) *Following the merger, will the FCDO embrace and commit to the 'leave no one behind agenda' across its work?*

With the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the UK along with other UN member states pledged to ensure “no-one will be left behind” and to “endeavour to reach the furthest behind first”. We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the aid portfolio to make sure we continue to support the most vulnerable around the world. We have ensured a strong focus on poverty reduction for the ‘bottom billion’, tackling climate change and reversing biodiversity loss, championing girls’ education and the global response to Covid-19. These priority areas are closely aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which we remain committed to.

2. a) *Following the merger, will the FCDO take on the role previously undertaken by DFID to support other departments with their aid expenditure and learning on best aid management practice?*

DFID’s role consulting and advising other departments on their capability and proposals is being taken forward by the new FCDO.

b) *Will the FCDO be given additional resources and formal powers to oversee other departments' performance against good practice standards?*

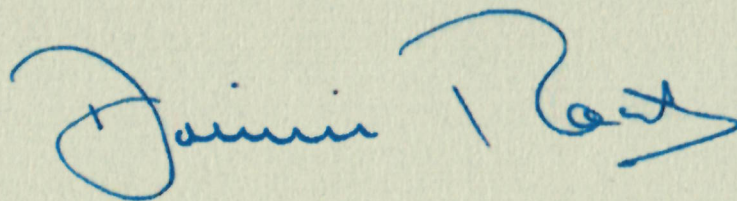
Any additional resource and/or formal powers will be determined in the Integrated Review and Spending Review.

c) *What steps will be taken to ensure that the newly merged Department maintains the level of performance that is needed for this standard-setting, and exemplary, role?*

Our reputation as a world leader on development issues comes from three things: our thought leadership; the scale and quality of UK development programmes; and the excellence of our analysis, long term perspective and staff. None of these have changed with the creation of the FCDO, but our development work will now be better aligned with foreign policy and the broad UK national interest. It should make our development work even more effective, carried out by a department with the size, reach and expertise to project us effectively internationally and make sure that we spend our development money in the best possible way.

The FCDO is also committed to improving aid transparency, maintaining high standards for overseas spending and promoting this across HMG. We will build on DFID's leadership role, supporting other departments to produce quality and accessible information on their aid spending, and progressing the HMG Transparency Community of Practice. We will also work with other departments on their progress against the recommendations made in the UK Aid Transparency Review earlier this year and continue publishing to the International Aid Transparency Initiative open data standard. FCDO will champion transparency in all its forms and will engage fully in the HMG Transparency Champions Network.

The world-class expertise that DFID amassed has helped transform hundreds of millions of lives around the world. This ambition, vision and expertise sits at the heart of the FCDO, as the work of UK aid remains central to its mission.



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