



# HOUSE OF LORDS

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The Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign,  
Commonwealth and Development Affairs

25 November 2020

Dear Dominic,

Following our conversation this afternoon, I write to express the opposition of the International Relations and Defence Committee (IRDC) to the Government's intention to break the UK's commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA) from 2021.

We remind the Government that the commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on ODA is based on a UN resolution. This target is enshrined in UK law as a legal duty, and we are opposed to the introduction of any legislation to remove this 0.7% commitment. We also note that in your most recent letter to me on ODA, dated 22 July, you stated that: "we will ensure we continue to meet our 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI) spending commitment for Official Development Assistance (ODA)".<sup>1</sup>

We regard ODA spending to be an essential component of the UK's international engagement, which also complements the UK's defence and diplomatic activity. Cutting the 0.7% commitment would undermine the UK's ability to tackle major long-term global challenges, such as climate change and mass migration, damage the UK's international influence and soft power, and further disadvantage some of the world's poorest people. As you yourself said in your July letter, UK ODA contributes to vital UK interests including "poverty reduction for the 'bottom billion' ... tackling climate change and reversing biodiversity loss, championing girls education, UK leadership in the global response to Covid-19, and campaigning on issues such as media freedom and freedom of religious belief, thereby ensuring that the UK is a global force for good."<sup>2</sup>

We also note that the UK's ODA budget this year has already been reduced by £2.9 billion, as a result of the decrease in GNI resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, an economic situation that is likely to continue for some time. A further cut from 0.7% to 0.5% of GNI from 2021 would result in a significant further decrease in ODA at a time when this budget is already strained.

The IRDC has consistently supported the UK's legal commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on ODA. Most recently, in our report *The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa—prosperity, peace and*

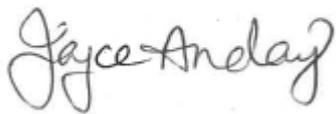
<sup>1</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3656/documents/35590/default/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3656/documents/35590/default/>

*development co-operation*, we concluded that “The UK’s commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on international development should be maintained” (Paragraph 313) and that it is “part of the UK’s international influence” (Paragraph 310).<sup>3</sup> We remain strongly of this view.

We are unclear what the policy rationale is for this decision, and would welcome further information on this point, and what cost-benefit analysis of the decision has been undertaken by the Government.

Yours, as ever

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jayce Anelay".

Baroness Anelay of St Johns  
Chair, International Relations and Defence Committee

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<sup>3</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5801/ldselect/ldintrel/88/88.pdf>