



British Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA

28 February 2025

Dame Emily Thornberry MP, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee
Dame Caroline Dinenage MP, Chair of the Culture, Media & Sport Committee
Sarah Champion MP, Chair of the International Development Committee

House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Dame Emily, Dame Caroline and Ms Champion,

Following the publication of your letter to FCDO Minister Baroness Chapman and DCMS Minister Stephanie Peacock MP concerning the future of the World Service, we write to welcome the positive engagement and unprecedented decision of three select committees to work together on this issue.

We are grateful for the committees' recognition of the benefits the World Service brings to the UK in terms of its journalism and public service programming as well as wider benefits such as humanitarian support, fighting misinformation and disinformation and as a positive reflection of the UK's values to the world. We also welcome the call for longer-term funding arrangements and for the funding of the World Service to be less reliant on the Licence Fee.

We can confirm that constructive ongoing dialogue with the FCDO around the need for a long-term sustainable funding solution for the World Service will continue and that we are open to discussions with Government about various points made in the letter. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that the structures in place to ensure the World Service's editorial independence from Government are maintained.

As we said in our evidence to the committees, we are ambitious for the future of the World Service. The BBC is the most trusted news provider, and mainly through the World Service, the BBC reaches over 450 million people on average every week. We are eager to increase our impact and reach around the world and will continue to actively engage with the FCDO about our global potential.

With reference to the committees' concerns about the closure of HARDtalk, World Service English and our language services will continue to provide content that includes long form, in-depth journalism and interviews, and they are committed to doing so. We will keep the committees across developments.

cont/...2

In the last few days we have been asked to prepare for further engagement with the FCDO on the impact of the reduction in Overseas Development Spending. We will be happy to keep you posted if this results in any further financial implications on the World Service in 2026/27 and beyond.

Thank you once again for your committees' comprehensive consideration of the challenges the World Service faces and conclusions drawn which will be of great value as conversations about the long-term future of the World Service progress.

Best wishes,



Tim Davie
Director-General



Jonathan Munro
BBC News Global Director and
Deputy CEO, BBC News and Current Affairs