



**Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office**

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Sarah Champion MP
Chair, International Development Committee

The Rt Hon. Emily Thornberry MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

07 April 2025

Dear Sarah and Emily,

Spending Review Submission

Thank you for your letter of the 4th February requesting that the FCDO shares its initial Spending Review submission with both the International Development Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee, to which I am responding on the Foreign Secretary's behalf. Given the important scrutiny role that the Committees play, I welcome your interest in the FCDO Spending Review negotiations to ensure it delivers for the UK's diplomatic and development objectives.

The Spending Review is a whole of government exercise to match the Government's resources to its Plan for Change. The final outcomes of the Spending Review will be collectively agreed by Cabinet and then presented to Parliament as government policy upon its conclusion.

Departmental Spending Review submissions are part of a much wider policy making process. Given that the information in Departments' submissions relate to the development of government policy across HMG as part of the Spending Review process, its disclosure may inhibit free and frank advice and discussion on policy. As such, the FCDO is not able to disclose the content of its submission to the International Development Committee or the Foreign Affairs Committee, in case it prejudices the outcome of the Spending Review.

The final Spending Review settlements will be presented to Parliament in the usual way on 11th June 2025, and these will represent agreed government policy. The Committees will then be able to scrutinise the impacts of this policy at this stage. The Committee will also have opportunities to discuss and scrutinise the FCDO's spending in advance of the final settlements through continued engagement and appearances, including on the decision to cut ODA to 0.3% by 2027.

I am copying this letter to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine West". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Catherine" and the last name "West" clearly legible.

CATHERINE WEST MP
Minister for the Indo-Pacific



**International
Development
Committee**



**Foreign Affairs
Committee**

4 February 2025

Rt Hon David Lammy
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
By email

Spending Review submission

Dear David

In its Autumn 2024 Budget, the Government announced the commencement of a multi-year Spending Review (SR25), to be published in Spring 2025. Alongside this, the Chancellor has committed to improved standards of fiscal transparency to Parliament and is involving a wider group of stakeholders in the process. It has stated in the draft Charter for Budget Responsibility that the Treasury shall refer the Spending Review and associated documents to the House of Commons Treasury Committee.

The Foreign Affairs Committee and the International Development Committee welcome this commitment to fiscal transparency. It is critical that Parliament can engage at an early stage to understand, scrutinise and inform the House of those spending decisions and their wider consequences. This is true of government as a whole, but also at a detailed departmental level. To conduct scrutiny effectively – and hold the Accounting Officer to account – we need good information to understand the issues facing your department and the plans you have for spending public money in the future.

We are therefore requesting that the department shares its initial Spending Review submission with the Committee, to help us better understand your department's funding pressures and spending aspirations, and thus facilitate constructive scrutiny. The Liaison Committee has agreed that all Committees should request this information to form the evidence base for scrutiny at both departmental and cross-government level.



International Development Committee



Foreign Affairs Committee

We understand that elements of the submission are sensitive, and that this is an ongoing part of spending policy development. As such we would understand that some redactions may be required.

If the department is unwilling to release its SR25 submission, then we are seeking the below information, in relation to your department and any associated arms-length bodies. Please provide the following, for both official development assistance (ODA) and non-ODA departmental funding separately:

1. at a minimum, the Resource and Capital DEL figures requested, and their key components, in line with your SR submission;
2. the requested level of ODA funding;
3. your policy priorities are for the Spending Review period, including those commitments made by the government during the election;
4. details of spending commitments already made for the Spending Review period (for example, DHSC's commitment to the NHS Long-term Workforce Plan), by year, and by amount;
5. details of how you engage those outside the department (such as service users, business, academia and other key stakeholders), in formulating ideas for priorities and areas of saving;
6. the policy areas you have identified that require collaboration with other departments, and how you have co-ordinated with them;
7. the policy commitments (including those in legislation) which may have a significant spending impact (for example, reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050) over the Spending Review period, with likely costs;
8. details of investment/capital spending priorities and likely costs of projects, and any consequences of delays to investment spending on future capital spend, maintenance spend, or policy provision; and
9. your plans for efficiencies, including information on how they might be achieved and details of the amounts of savings they are expected to generate. This should explain areas of policy or provision you regard as being efficient or where further



**International
Development
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savings can be made; where further cuts may mean loss of service provision or affect policy; and any areas where additional spending is required to achieve efficiency gains.

Please supply this information as soon as your initial submissions have been shared with Treasury.

We will be sharing your response with the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, Treasury Committee and the Liaison Committee to enable Committees to work together to scrutinise the Government's overall plans.

Sarah Champion MP
Chair, International Development Committee

Dame Emily Thornberry MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee