



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

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Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter of 6 July to the Foreign Secretary regarding your inquiry into extreme poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I am responding on behalf of the Foreign Secretary as the Minister responsible for International Development. Before responding to your questions, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to the SDGs. The International Development Strategy brings all of our levers, including diplomatic, trade, defence, intelligence and business to our development partnerships, to meet their evolving needs and to support the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

Strategies

- 1. In evidence to the Committee on 18 May 2022, you told us that the International Development Strategy (IDS) represented a “direction of travel” and that there would be more to come, including a women and girls strategy, a Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative strategy, and more information about the proposed G7 investment offer.**

Can you indicate to us any other relevant strategies you plan to publish, and any timescales on those named above?

The Women and Girls Strategy and the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative will be published in due course, along with the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

A new International Climate Finance (ICF) strategy will also be published in due course, setting out priorities for the UK’s support to developing countries to tackle climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

The G7’s Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) aims to mobilise \$600bn in funding over the next five years for infrastructure projects in low-income and middle-income countries. British Investment Partnerships (BIP) represents the UK’s contribution to the PGII.

- 2. The disability inclusion and rights strategy 2022 to 2030 was launched only months before the IDS, but no reference was made to it in the latter. The Strategy is about improving lives and the unleashing the power of people, so that all people can take control of and determine their own future.**

How will you ensure that these supplementary strategies are integrated with the IDS and do not become siloed workstreams?

We work closely across FCDO and across government to ensure that the IDS dovetails with other FCDO and XHMG strategies. In addition, we are currently refreshing our cross-government development governance framework to ensure a coherent approach XHMG to implementing the IDS, as well as wider development policy governance.

Our disability inclusion and rights strategy is coherent with the aims of the IDS and captured where the IDS refers to inclusion. We work hand in hand with the teams working on disability.

SDGs

- 3. When will the Government next submit a Voluntary National Review on the SDGs?**

The UK's first Voluntary National Review (VNR, 2019) provided a comprehensive account of actions being taken across the UK by government and other actors. No decision has been made about a follow-up to the 2019 VNR, however we regularly engage stakeholders on implementation of the SDGs. As you may be aware, the BOND SDG Group and UN Global Compact UK will this year be publishing reviews on the UK's SDG progress.

- 4. You referred in your written evidence to the [Outcome Delivery Plans](#) as showing how departments support the delivery of the SDGs. However, these show which SDG targets align with the department's priority outcomes, rather than vice versa.**

Why was this method chosen (rather than showing how the department is addressing each SDG)?

The format of the Outcome Delivery Plans was set by the Cabinet Office. The government is committed to ensuring spending decisions maximise value for taxpayers. Spending Review 2021 (SR21) placed a strong emphasis on securing real-world, tangible outcomes for citizens. Since 2020, the government has planned the delivery of its priority outcomes through Outcome Delivery Plans, as set out in its Planning and Performance Framework. The SDGs were therefore embedded within last year's ODPs alongside other public commitments, with Departments specifically required to show what work they are doing that contributes to the SDG Global Targets at home and abroad. These contributions are also summarised on a dedicated webpage; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals--2>

How will you evaluate the department's impact upon extreme poverty (target 1.1), as this does not feature in the FCDO Outcome Delivery Plan 2021-22?

The FCDO is establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework to keep track of the implementation and impact of the International Development Strategy. Current plans for the M&E framework are a set of indicators that will measure the output of our work across the four main priorities of the IDS, the outcome of this work, which will be closely aligned with the Outcome Delivery Plan, and the real world impact we are having. All four of the priorities will contribute to the alleviation of extreme poverty individually and collectively.

Leave No One Behind

- 5. In 2019, the Government pledged to Leave No One Behind, specifically that "people who are furthest behind, who have least opportunity and who are the most excluded will be prioritised".**

Are you still committed to this pledge?

Yes. We know what works. People and governments being able to determine their future, adopt good policies and work together to tackle the root causes of problems and leave no one behind. We will use our work on development to support the prosperity, freedom and security of people. Our focus on Women and Girls and humanitarian work will help us meet the needs of some of the most at risk people in the world.

- 6. You told us that the new strategy "will address poverty by supporting lasting development in and through democratic, free-enterprise economies."**

What does this mean for those living in extreme poverty in countries that do not fit this description? Will ODA be limited to humanitarian assistance in these cases?

No. We will spend ODA where it is needed and where it is effective, but with an open eye to political risk and human rights. The geopolitical contest for influence, the challenges of climate change and COVID-19 show that we need to be assertive and build on a network of strong partnerships. We will ensure that our international development work furthers UK ideals, standing up for freedom around the world and supporting countries to plan for their own sustained, long-term progress and resilience. The Strategy gives direction to this, outlining a distinct UK offer to support countries to make progress, secure investment, build resilient economies and institutions, and unleash their populations' potential.

Poverty Targeting

- 7. In your written evidence you mentioned the use of Programme Operating Framework (PrOF) to ensure compliance with the International Development Act and effective poverty targeting.**

Does this system make any distinction between different levels of poverty (e.g. extreme poverty), and if so which thresholds does it use?

The Programme Operating Framework provides the rules, guidance and advice for the delivery of programmes in FCDO. Rule #1 requires Heads of Mission and Directors to ensure that their programmes comply with legislation including the International Development Act. Each individual programme must then demonstrate compliance with the International Development Act through a Concept Note and as part of the Business Case approval process. This process does not make a distinction between different levels of poverty, but the appraisal in the Business Case will look at the focus of the programme, including through an equity lens.

How will you ensure trade and investment in countries with high levels of extreme poverty reaches those most in need, rather than perpetuating inequality?

The primary objective of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) is to support sustainable development and improve the welfare of populations of ODA-eligible developing countries. FCDO's Programme Operating Framework requires consideration of the likely impact of ODA spend on reducing poverty, and the extent to which programme benefits will contribute to reducing inequality between persons of a different gender. Business cases assess how programmes benefit poor and marginalised groups.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Amanda Milling', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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