



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon
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Sarah Champion MP
Chair, International Development Committee
House of Commons
London
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12 May 2021

Dear Sarah,

I am writing to welcome the forthcoming sub-inquiry undertaken by the International Development Committee into exploring racism in the aid sector. Racism anywhere in the aid sector contravenes and undermines what we all aim to achieve through our work.

Since the creation of the FCDO in September 2020, we have committed to putting inclusion at the heart of the organisation. Our aspiration to be a truly inclusive organisation is driven not only by the moral case - our workplace should reflect the values we are projecting internationally - but because an inclusive organisation, in which the potential of our diverse workforce is fully harnessed, will enhance the FCDO's creativity and innovation. This, in turn, increases the UK's impact internationally as a force for good in the world.

To this end, we have appointed Sir Tim Barrow as the FCDO's Board Sponsor for Race and signed up the FCDO to Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter. We are also running a number of talent programmes for under-represented groups, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues, in order to help remove barriers to progression and create the right support for a diverse workforce to thrive.

Localisation - the process of shifting greater funding and decision making within the aid sector to local people - is an important aspect of the broader question of race and diversity in the aid sector. The UK government recognises that local people should be involved in setting aid priorities and delivering it effectively and efficiently wherever possible. For instance, the UK's Humanitarian Reform Policy recognises the importance of national and local organisations and communities as first responders to disasters - a fact that has been underlined during the COVID-19 pandemic. The FCDO is making progress in localising its approach. In October 2020 the UK launched its new humanitarian response funding guidelines for NGOs to be used in its Rapid Response Facility. These guidelines improve the tracking of FCDO funds going to local and national actors and ensure that their indirect costs are being covered by our funding. The FCDO has protected funding to a new 10-year, £60 million co-funded partnership with Comic Relief that will test innovative approaches to building the capacity and sustainability of civil society organisations in Ghana, Zambia and Malawi. Such inclusive approaches to delivery and local capacity

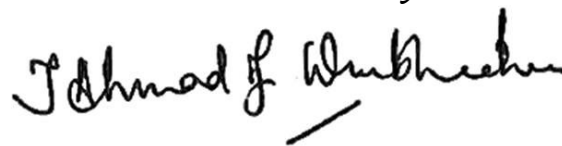
building create joint and diverse teams that make it harder for racism to take root, as well as delivering better results.

Inclusion is a cornerstone of effective development and humanitarian response. For the FCDO, inclusion extends across gender, socioeconomic status, age, disability and race and ethnicity, and racism and ethnic division can be a key driver of exclusion, conflict and inequity. These issues are therefore key priorities for the FCDO as we design our programmes and seek to shape development policy. As well as the expertise of our people, especially our governance, social development, humanitarian, and conflict advisers, the FCDO has a range of tools that support staff in effective analysis and design of programmes so that they tackle exclusion. The FCDO has also signed up to the Inclusive Data Charter that will strive for improved data disaggregation (including by race) in order to improve evidence-based decision making so that initiatives reach all people.

Finally, our due diligence requirements for procurement include a clear principle to avoid doing harm, with a responsibility to protect all people involved in our programmes, including those with protected characteristics, including race. This is a collective responsibility of all FCDO staff and our partners. We expect prompt reporting of any concerns as a means of mitigating the risk of harm and have well-published avenues for staff and members of the public to report concerns.

I note that this inquiry is focussed on the aid sector as a whole, which we welcome. We look forward to reading the findings of the review and considering them in the context of the FCDO's work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON
Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth
Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict