

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2020

Dear ConAvent

Thank you for your email.

The Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have a history of being merged and separated. Today we have several Government Ministers who serve across both Departments as it is vital that there is some degree of coordination between them.

Spending 0.7 percent of our national income on aid is enshrined in law and the UK continues to abide by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee rules for aid. I understand that Ministers anticipate that in the long term the merger may bring efficiency savings. However the primary focus of this merger is about uniting our international efforts so we can maximise the UK's influence around the world.

The UK has the third largest aid budget and diplomatic network in the world, and it makes little sense to separate aid from foreign policy. The new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will unite aid with diplomacy and bring them together in our international effort.

The Prime Minister said during his statement:

“On 4 June, I chaired a virtual summit of the global vaccine alliance, which raised enough money to immunise 300 million children. I doubt whether any other occasion will save more lives, avoid more suffering, or produce a better example of the good this country can do by its international engagement, in the true and broad sense, alongside our friends. Yet today, as anybody who has any experience of the matter will know, a dividing line between aid and foreign policy runs through our whole system, with our Department for International Development working independently from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and our aid budget parcelled out between different arms of Whitehall.”

Government policy is clear that, despite this administrative reorganisation, we will continue with the excellent work of the which has been done on International Development. Work can continue across Government in a joined-up way in trying to achieve the sustainable development goals and combat extreme poverty.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

Constituency Office: 34 Duke Street, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7AQ Telephone: 01325 711711

Email: peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk Website: www.petergibson.org



Next year, the UK takes up the chairmanship of the G7, and we have the COP26 climate change summit. Our voice in those proceedings will be greatly magnified by having a single, powerful voice for the projection of the UK view overseas. We are going to make sure that we do even more to tackle poverty and deprivation around the world and to tackle the undereducation of women and girls around the world, which is an absolute disgrace.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

PETER GIBSON MP