



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

April 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for your email about a potential new international treaty for pandemic preparedness.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been one of the greatest challenges to the established international order since the Second World War; a global threat that has required global solutions borne out of global cooperation. I pay tribute to people and nations across the world in confronting such a threat. International collaboration was immensely heartening to witness in the darkest of times.

As in the late 1940s, where, to avert a repeat of the cataclysm of total war, world leaders united to establish the multilateral system we have today, I think it is reasonably fair to argue that a similar effort is required on the part of world leaders to strengthen preparedness for potential future pandemics.

As such, I welcome the suggestion of the former Prime Minister, writing with other world leaders in 2021, that the international community should commit to producing a new international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response. I understand that such a treaty would aim to foster greatly enhanced cooperation in order to better protect the UK from the health, social and economic impacts of pandemics.

Discussions are ongoing at the World Health Organisation to this end. The UK Government wants to reach an agreement on its priority areas such as improving transparency, timely data sharing and supporting equitable access to vaccines and treatments. I appreciate your concerns about this; however, the Government will not support any treaty which compromises the UK's sovereignty. There is nothing in the proposed treaty that would impact our ability to take decisions about national lockdowns or associated measures at the national level. I would certainly not support one which gave the WHO powers to make such decisions, which are rightly the preserve of national governments.

Once adopted, international treaties only become binding in the UK when ratified by Parliament in accordance with our constitutional process. No international treaty can by itself change UK law. If changes to the law are necessary, then a treaty could not be ratified until domestic legislation, agreed upon by Parliament, was put in place. As I have said, I will not support any treaty that is not in our interest or which compromises the UK's sovereignty.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again. If you would like to keep up to date with my activities as your Member of Parliament then please subscribe to my Darlington Matters newsletter using this link: www.petergibson.org/signup

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