
Foreword

by the Prime Minister



Even in the most difficult times, this government will never retreat from the promises it has made to the poorest. Securing global justice remains one of my top priorities, and the publication of this White Paper comes at a critical juncture in the fight to eliminate poverty.

There are new challenges to face. The global recession has left no continent untouched and threatens to drive millions of people further into deprivation. Climate change, a danger to us all, poses the greatest risk to people in the poorest countries – whether on the flooded shores of Bangladesh or the arid plains of Mozambique. And the same fragile states that provide a safe haven for drug runners and terrorists trap more than a third of the world's poorest people in a web of violence and lawlessness.

This White Paper deals with each of the new issues in turn and reaffirms that as the development challenges change, so too will the British response so that every pound we spend will deliver the maximum impact in changing and saving lives.

Some argue that in these difficult times the rich world should turn our backs on the Millennium Development Goals and retreat from the promises we have made to the poor. But I believe that amidst these challenges of

globalisation we must not lose sight of our vision of a world freed from poverty.

While others might be tempted to shy away from their development responsibilities, the United Kingdom will keep the promises we have made. We will do so because it is morally right. But also because our prosperity, security and health are increasingly inseparable from events far beyond our borders.

The early years of this century have underlined this interdependence. They have also shown that with dedication and determination, we can help people lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

Aid increases and debt cancellation have helped to get some 40 million more children into school. Polio is on the verge of being eradicated. The proportion of the world's population living in poverty has fallen from a third to a quarter.

Many of these achievements are permanent, but others are under threat. This White Paper sets out how the United Kingdom intends to work with others to safeguard and build on the progress we have made. I am grateful to Douglas Alexander and his team at DFID for the effort that has gone into it. We do not under-estimate the challenges. But we will continue to act with confidence and determination to protect the world's poorest and to deliver real global justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Gordon Brown'.

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP

Prime Minister

July 2009

Preface

by the Secretary of State for International Development

Building a better world together



We live in an increasingly interdependent world. We have made great strides over the past decade in tackling global poverty and suffering, but much remains to be done. At the same time, our world has been shaken by recent economic turmoil, thousands still suffer in conflict, and we are all facing up to the consequences of climate change.

There is a real risk that the progress the world has made in tackling global poverty, in which the UK has played a key part, could be reversed, with all that means for the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world, particularly women, and also for the well-being and security of people living in the UK.

We must together overcome these challenges. There is a critical need for reaffirming past commitments, and fresh thinking. Business as usual is no longer adequate. This White Paper demonstrates that we have the commitment, tools and drive to begin our response.

Our commitment to international development

Since 1997, this government has provided international leadership which has helped transform the lives and development prospects of millions. British people can be rightly proud that our collective effort has contributed to over 250 million people being lifted out of poverty, 40 million more children going to primary school and that 3 million people in developing countries are now able to access life-preserving drugs for HIV and AIDS.

This is no accident.

We have re-focused development on poverty and made it law that aid should be used only to tackle poverty, not for narrow self-interest and back-handed commercial deals.

We played a key role in the design of the UN Millennium Development Goals. We led the G8 through the Gleneagles process in 2005, at the time of Make Poverty History and Live 8, cementing international commitments to aid, debt relief and development. At the London G20 summit, we made sure the poor were at the heart of the global response to the economic crisis.

We have kept our promises on aid. We are on track to reach the historic UN target of 0.7% of national income by 2013. And we have helped deliver new international initiatives on aid effectiveness – to ensure aid has the maximum effect. Britain is now

regarded as the leader on aid effectiveness in the G7.

We have provided leadership on climate change, making the case for supporting the world's poorest who will be hit worst and first.

We have contributed to peace, security and prosperity in places once marked by fear and violence, such as Sierra Leone.

We have worked together with others in pursuit of these goals – from developing country governments, to international organisations and global civil society.

Above all, we have put ordinary women, men and children first.

Working together as one

Our government will work together as one. We created the Department for International Development in 1997, not to confine development, but rather to make sure it had enough influence across all our choices – whether in diplomacy, trade or security strategies.

We have benefited hugely from the personal commitment and leadership of our Prime Ministers, Chancellors of the Exchequer, and other members of the government.

DFID has managed large increases in aid spending which have delivered tangible results on the ground. DFID has also been a catalyst and co-ordinator of cutting edge thinking and action across government, in partnership with developing countries and with global civil society. DFID is now widely acknowledged, not just as the best

aid administration in the world, but as an outstanding development agency.

People in this country should be proud of the efforts of their campaigning and advocacy, which have maintained a strong focus on the challenges faced by the poorest and most vulnerable. Civil society organisations here in the UK and abroad play a critical role in both campaigning for change, and delivering both long-term and emergency support to millions worldwide.

New priorities in difficult times

In these difficult times, our values, and our shared and national interests lead us to re-affirm and reinforce our commitment to international development. We will not turn away in fear or isolationism.

Instead, we will support the poorest through the crisis, and help fashion a world economy which is better regulated, greener and fairer to all. We will also work rapidly to agree a deal on climate change at Copenhagen which both protects the planet we all depend on – and ensures the poorest and most vulnerable are supported. We will continue to push urgently for a pro-development global trade deal.

We will help tackle the conflict and insecurity which blight the lives of ordinary people, particularly women, and which in turn accentuate the risks to the UK.

Underpinning all of this, we will help maintain progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, reducing poverty, saving lives, tackling diseases like HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria, putting children into school and tackling the inequalities faced by women.

But we must do more. None of our goals can be reached by spending aid alone – although this remains essential. None can be reached by the UK alone – although our leadership will be key. None can be reached without global as well as local action. We must seek continued transformation.

We make the following pledges to the British public and to the world's poorest people:

People in poverty will remain our priority

We will maintain a firm focus on tackling poverty across government, in setting our objectives, deciding our policies and allocating both financial and other resources. We will continue in our commitment that the purpose of UK aid remains, and is rightly, poverty reduction. We will tackle the inequalities which mean that mothers in sub-Saharan Africa are one hundred times more likely to see their child die in the first five years of its life, than in the developed world.

We will work to ensure every pound of UK aid is spent well

We will work to ensure that every pound of UK aid spent contributes towards direct and tangible impacts, saving lives, putting children into school, creating economic opportunities for the poor, and preventing conflict. We will promote the highest levels of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in our aid programme. We will ensure robust and independent evaluation of our work. We will not tolerate waste in our aid programme and will expand our efforts to crack down on corruption. We will strive to lead the world in policy coherence.

We will work for sustained, fairer and greener growth

We will strive to support economic growth, without which developing countries will remain reliant on other countries for aid. But the current crisis also allows us the opportunity to address economic and environmental sustainability together. We will lead the world in 'green' development, ensuring that sustainable development and the fight against climate change and its effects are at the heart of what we do. We will promote job creation, and a responsible role for the private sector in supporting poor countries to improve their infrastructure, expand markets and trade with the rest of the world – with a new focus on environmental sustainability.

We will help make people safer

We will work with developing countries to reform their security forces, police and legal systems so that poor people, especially women, do not live in fear of persecution or violence. We will provide economic opportunities to cement secure and peaceful states and societies.

We are committed to global approaches and global leadership

We will respond to the global nature of current and future problems by scaling up our commitment to delivering resources and achieving agreements at the international level. The resources we invest in organisations like the UN, World Bank and EU must be matched by reforms. We will work with others on this agenda internationally.

We will reinforce partnerships with others to drive progress

We will strengthen our partnerships across the board, with developing countries, civil society organisations, faith groups, trade unions, philanthropic organisations and the private sector. We will be demanding of our partners and expect them to be demanding of us.

We will make our fair contribution

We will carry our fair share of the cost of global transformation, including meeting our aid commitments, providing the additional resources necessary to avert catastrophic climate change and helping the poorest countries adapt to change which is already occurring.

Charting a new course in international development

These pledges have a purpose. We are committing to play our part in reaching the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, respond to new challenges, and to build a platform for further action on poverty beyond that date. This White Paper charts new courses. It marks our renewed commitment to the ideals of international development, but also takes us in new and fresh directions. We will work across government and the international community to make our commitments a reality.

The crises we face demonstrate starkly just how interconnected and mutually interdependent the lives of the world's 6.6 billion people have become. They also continue to highlight the degree of global injustice.

Our response is not to turn away when things get tough – but instead to re-double our efforts to make a fair, safe and sustainable world for all people.



Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP

Secretary of State for International
Development
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