

Response to UNICEF's End Violence against Children campaign

June 2015

I share your concerns about the millions of children across the world who are subjected to violence and abuse. The UK fully supports efforts to end all forms of violence against children through its humanitarian and development programmes.

Many of DFID's programmes directly help to protect children from violence. For example, DFID is supporting programming in conflict-affected countries to assist and protect children, working with mandated child protection agencies including UNICEF. In Syria, Iraq, and the wider region we have pledged more than £800m to help those affected by conflict, including vulnerable children. Through the No Lost Generation Initiative, the UK is funding education and psychosocial support for Syrian children to protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation.

The UK has a close working relationship with UNICEF. I recently met with UNICEF UK's Ambassador, Michael Sheen, to discuss their campaign on combatting violence against children, and how we can work together to ensure vulnerable groups are protected. In 2013, the UK was the largest government donor to UNICEF, with a combined contribution of approximately £375m. UNICEF plays a vital role in delivering projects in a number of challenging environments, such as the Middle East and Ebola-affected countries. We are delighted to be supporting UNICEF's new child protection fund, announced last December at the #WeProtect summit, to combat the online sexual exploitation of children.

As the campaign mentions, Heads of Government will meet at the UN General Assembly in September to agree the Sustainable Development Goals. The UK strongly supports goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, which has a specific target on ending all forms of violence against children. We are also continuing to push for a standalone goal on gender equality with a target on violence against women and girls, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

We can be proud of the work the UK is leading on protecting vulnerable children and I hope this has been a helpful update.

JUSTINE GREENING