

Response to Plan UK's "Because I am a Girl" campaign

Girls and women are at the centre of our international development efforts. We believe it is essential that girls around the world are supported to receive a quality education, have a voice in the decisions that affect them, and are able to live free from violence. Since 2011, DFID has supported 5million girls to access primary and lower secondary schools. We also support work to increase girls' and women's leadership and participation. For example, the Women Win 'Building Women's Leadership through Sport' programme helps over 24,000 adolescent girls and young women in Africa and Asia improve their confidence, knowledge and leadership skills through participation in sports, life-skills education, mentoring and digital story-telling.

The UK Government is also taking a leading role to combat all forms of violence against women and girls. Since 2012 we have hosted the Call to Action on protecting women and girls in emergencies; the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict; and the Girl Summit to end Female Genital Mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. Alongside these Global Summits DFID has significantly increased our programmes in this area. DFID now has 109 programmes that tackle violence against women and girls globally, compared with 67 in 2012.

I agree that 2015 is a critical year to make progress on international development and specifically for promoting the rights of girls and women. That is why the UK pushed for a strong and explicit commitment to empowering girls and women and achieving gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework. I am pleased that the standalone gender goal and the strong gender sensitive targets across the other SDG's provide a comprehensive package that is widely established as critical to achieving transformational change in the lives of girls and women across the globe.

Ensuring the new framework for financing development leverages more resources for gender equality was a UK priority for the conference. I am delighted that gender is integrated in an unprecedented way throughout the new framework for financing development which was agreed at the conference - the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Secretary of State used her speech at a key side event on gender equality and women's empowerment to encourage other nations to increase investment and international action on women's economic development; the UK is already leading the way in this regard, not least through the International Development (Gender Equality) Act, which makes it the law to consider how Official Development Assistance from the UK will contribute to gender equality.

The climate Summit in December will be another critical moment to secure sustainable development for all, including for girls and women who are particularly affected by the impacts of climate change. The UK is working to ensure that all our climate finance effectively meets the specific needs of girls and women and can support their empowerment.

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