

Response to Save the Children's Put Children Lives First campaign

Thank you very much for supporting this important campaign to bring an end to preventable child deaths. The UK has for over two years been pushing for an ambitious and transformative set of Sustainable Development Goals, and will continue to do so through negotiations in New York this summer, at the G7, at the Addis Financing for Development (FFD) Conference, and right up to the summit in September. Since the High Level Panel, co-chaired by the Prime Minister, the UK has long prioritised the principle of leaving no one behind including by ensuring that no target will be considered to have been met unless achieved for all relevant economic and social groups, including all children.

The UK is a world leader when it comes to improving child health in the developing world. DFID uses its financial, technical, and political support at global, regional, and country levels to deliver real progress in child health. Our investments will help to save the lives of at least 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth, and 250,000 newborn babies by 2015. By the end of the year, we will have enabled more than 3 million safe deliveries by providing long lasting improvements to maternity services, such as better trained doctors and midwives. We will also have helped immunise more than 55 million children against preventable disease and have helped to halve the number of malaria deaths in ten of the world's worst affected countries.

DFID promotes a multi-sectoral approach to address causes of child mortality. In addition to the direct interventions noted above, DFID also invests in strengthening countries' health systems, to enable them to better respond to their child health challenges. We also support interventions in other sectors, such as the provision of safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and good nutrition which are critical to improved health. For example, the UK will have reached 24.5 million children under the age of five and pregnant and breastfeeding women with nutrition programmes by 2015.

As we approach the Addis Conference in July, I am proud to have led the Government's successful effort to enshrine the 0.7% ODA target in to law. We want to see developed countries making a strong commitment to international public finance, but in order to ensure that the SDGs are fully financed we need to see a range of other measures including domestic resource mobilisation, the private sector and, as the campaign rightly observes, we need to clamp down on illicit flows so that the least developed countries are able to raise the tax revenue they need to finance services.

Helping developing countries to tackle evasion and avoidance has been at the heart of DFID's tax and development work since the UK's G8 Presidency. By working through the G20, we are ensuring that developing country concerns are addressed in the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) outcomes, which will help address corporate tax avoidance, and we are promoting tax information exchange, which will help tackle tax evasion. This complements our in-country work to improve tax policy and administration in our priority countries

I plan to attend the FFD Conference in Addis and I hope that we can come to an agreement on FFD and post-2015 that will help the most vulnerable people, particularly women and children.

JUSTINE GREENING