



Department
for International
Development



The Rt Hon The Lord Bates
Minister of State

Supporters of the Global Citizen #SheIsEqual
Campaign

September 2018

Dear Supporters

Thank you for contacting DFID about the #SheIsEqual campaign, organised by Global Citizen.

The UK is leading the global fight to uphold women's rights and improve the lives of the poorest women and girls, creating a world where #SheIsEqual. We know that investing in women and girls works. Achieving gender equality and empowering all girls and women is the right thing to do, and is in everybody's interest - it is fundamental to lasting poverty reduction, and to building prosperous, resilient economies and peaceful, stable societies.

In March DFID launched a new Strategic Vision for Gender Equality, demonstrating our continued commitment to empowering women and girls. We made a global Call to Action to all stakeholders, recognising that we all need to step up on gender equality for it to become a lasting reality.

UKaid is helping millions of women and girls globally to achieve their potential, and tackle the barriers that prevent them from doing so. Since 2011, for example, UKaid has helped 36 million women access finance to work their way out of poverty, supported over 5 million girls get a decent education and improved land rights for 2.5 million women. But we are not stopping there. We continue to tackle the barriers girls and women face to achieving their potential, and providing them with opportunities to thrive.

We welcome the #SheIsEqual campaign, as existing, proud contributors to the funds and issues you are promoting. We have invested £136 million of UKaid in the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP). Our investment supports resilient and sustainable agriculture that benefits and empowers poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth.

We are also providing £30 million funding to the Global Financing Facility (2018-2021) to enable innovative and efficient financing of family planning and sexual and reproductive health. This is one part of the UK's huge investment in family planning; safe pregnancy and childbirth; immunisations and other aspects of women's, children's and adolescents' health in developing countries and at global level. We do this because promoting, investing in and protecting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and women is fundamental to their empowerment. Since 2011 UKaid has given 10 million women access to modern methods of family planning. Our investments help girls and women to exercise choice and control over their bodies and their lives, free from violence. In 2017, the UK committed to spend an average of £225 million per year over the next 5 years on family planning. We estimate that – every year – our investment will save the lives of over 6,000 women.

We strongly support the aims of the International Finance Facility for Education. The UK is committed to accelerating global action on education, especially for the most marginalised. Our investments in education are helping more children, particularly girls, to learn and develop skills so they can stand on their own two feet and help their families and communities to prosper. Earlier this year we announced £399 million of new funding to get 1.5 million girls access to quality education in the developing world. This is part of our commitment to help 11 million children, including 6.5 million girls to gain a decent education between 2015 and 2020.

We are committed to help repeal and reform sexist laws around the world and welcome the work of Global Citizen and UN Women shining a light on the progress that still needs to be made. UKAid support to the Westminster Foundation for Democracy is encouraging women MPs to use their political influence for legislative change that eradicates discrimination towards women and girls in the Middle East and North Africa. Through our work to eradicate child marriage we are supporting national governments to repeal and reform laws that allow girls to marry as children. The UK recognises and supports the critical role women's organisations play in tackling gender inequality and engaging with governments on issues such as this.

Gender equality is a top priority for the UK and we will proudly continue to champion it. If we are to achieve gender equality we must all work towards it and keep our ambition high.

LORD BATES