



Department  
for International  
Development



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP  
Minister of State

To supporters of the Population Matters  
campaign regarding the Sustainable  
Development Goals

September 2019

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), global population growth, family planning in the developing world and the effects on climate change. I am responding as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The UK Government played a key role in establishing the SDGs and is determined to deliver them at home and abroad. The SDGs are embedded in the UK Aid Strategy and DFID's single departmental plan, which is now modelled around the 5Ps of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships. The UK's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) provides a balanced account of UK progress on all 17 Goals and is underpinned by data. The UK's presentation of the VNR at the UN High Level Political Forum highlighted the need to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, and focussed on climate action, data and private sector financing to support delivery of the SDGs.

The UK is also very concerned about the wider impacts of rapid population growth and its effects on sustainable development in developing countries. Our response must be rooted in the rights of women and empowering them to make their own choices. There are 214 million women around the world who want to delay or space their next pregnancy but are not using modern methods of contraception. We are taking action to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to modern family planning methods, to give women in developing countries the reproductive health choices that they want and need. These actions, with wider investment in girls' education and empowerment, and strong economic growth and development will reduce unwanted fertility and help slow population growth.

Britain is leading the world in promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, helping millions more women and adolescent girls in the world's poorest countries to access and use desperately-needed family planning services. This will increase the chance of women and girls completing school and getting paid work, and therefore improving their household and their country's economy.

At the 2017 Family Planning Summit, the UK Government launched a package of UK support, with over 40 African governments making commitments to family planning initiatives and supporting the Summit. We committed to spend an average of £225 million per year over the next 5 years. This will save thousands of women's lives every year and

prevent the trauma of thousands of still births and new born deaths. It will also transform the lives of millions more, giving them the choices and control over their futures that women in the UK enjoy today.

The growth in levels of consumption driven by unsustainable development influence carbon emissions and increase climate change, rather than population growth itself. This is why we champion and provide resources and technical support through public, private and multilateral partnerships to tackle the causes of and meet the challenges presented by changing climates.

Our International Climate Finance (ICF) plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges, and the UK has committed to provide at least £5.8 billion of climate finance from 2016 to 2020. One of the ICF's key aims is to ensure new infrastructure in developing countries is low carbon and climate resilient. DFID's finances are used to build capacity and reduce the risks associated with investments, so that we can increase flows of private finance investments. The IFC has already helped 47 million people to cope with the effects of climate change, supported 17 million people to access clean energy and reduced or avoided 10.4 million tonnes of CO2 between 2011/12 and 2017/18.

I hope this information will assure you that the UK is doing all we can on the important issues raised.

**RT HON DR ANDREW MURRISON**