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Dear Prime Minister,

As leaders of 188 NGOs, think tanks and charities working in international aid, humanitarian assistance, sustainable development and peacebuilding, we urge you to reconsider your decision to merge the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Over the last two decades, the Department for International Development (DFID) has secured the UK's global reputation as a trusted partner, being the guardian of good aid and development that helps build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for all of us. The government can be proud of DFID's record on humanitarian assistance and helping to transform lives by reducing poverty, immunising children and getting girls into school. Abolishing one of the world's most effective and respected government departments at a time when the world is in need of global leadership, undermines our response to Covid-19 and suggests the UK is turning its back on the world's poorest people. It also risks us being less able to respond to the great challenges of our time, such as global health security and climate change.

It is no accident that DFID has the reputation as one of the most successful aid departments in the world. There are a number of key principles that the UK must follow if it is to continue to be a respected world leader in international development:

- Our legal obligation to meet the 0.7% GNI target in a way that focuses aid on poverty alleviation and sustainable development.
- Adherence to the internationally agreed rules and standards governing ODA spending and implementation, and humanitarian standards and principles.
- Our commitment to leave no one behind, reach the most vulnerable in the world's poorest places first, and to spend half of all aid in fragile and conflict affected states.
- A clear focus of aid spend to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and be aligned with the Paris Agreement, contributing to efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Aid spending should never harm the natural environment, but should support it.
- Effective programmes that can demonstrate a positive impact on the lives of the people who need it the most, administered by people experienced in development and working directly with local communities.
- A minister with a seat in Cabinet and on the National Security Council able to provide development perspectives to a whole government approach.
- All UK Aid must be fully accountable and transparent through parliamentary and independent scrutiny, with a cross-departmental select committee and a bolstered Independent Commission for Aid Impact, so government and parliament can ensure that our vital aid budget is accountable not just to those we aim to help, but also to the British taxpayer.

We believe that the best way to deliver on these principles is to retain an independent DFID led by its own Secretary of State with cabinet level representation. Regardless, we must find a way to uphold these critical principles that have underpinned the UK's success. We understand your commitment to building up Britain's role in the world, but this decision is an unnecessary, and expensive, distraction from doing just that. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DFID are already highly aligned contributing their different expertise to a global approach. This decision, taken during a global pandemic with no consultation, ahead of the review of development, diplomacy and defence and against the recent advice of the cross-party International Development Select Committee, does not enhance our reputation in the world, but diminishes it. We urge you to reconsider this merger.

Yours sincerely,

Karl Hankinson, CEO, Able Child Africa
Josephine Rodgers, Executive Director, Access Agriculture
Rocio Moreno Lopez, Executive Director, Accountable Now
Jean-Michel Grand, Executive Director, Action Against Hunger UK
Katie Husselby, Coordinator, Action for Global Health Network UK
Girish Menon, CEO, ActionAid UK
Bert R Smit, CEO, ADRA-UK
Andrew Betts, Director, Advantage Africa
Debbie Ariyo OBE, CEO, AFRUCA - Safeguarding Children
Chris Roles, Managing Director, Age International
Heather Pitcher, Head of Operations, AgriTechTalk International CIC
Professor Ian J Govendir, CEO, Aids Orphan UK Trust
Graeme Hodge, Chief Executive, All We Can
Camilla Knox-Peebles, Chief Executive, Amref Health Africa UK
Jasmine O'Connor OBE, CEO, Anti-Slavery International
Alex Daniels, Chief Executive, APT Action on Poverty
Quinn McKew, Executive Director, ARTICLE 19
Sheniz Tan, Director, Asfar CIC
Penny David, CEO, Ashanti Development
Jo Ashbridge, Director, AzuKo
Mark Habibi, Executive Officer, BASED UK
Alasdair Harris, Executive Director, Blue Ventures Conservation
Dr Kang-San Tan, General Director, BMS World Mission
Stephanie Draper, Chief Executive, Bond
Lewis Temple, Chief Executive, BRAC UK
Andrew Jowett, CEO, Build It International
Peter Anderson, Chair, CADA NI – Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies Northern Ireland
Ian Williams and Lorna Pearcy (Co-Directors) and Laura Vickery (Chair), Caplor Horizons
Laurie Lee, CEO, CARE International UK
Anil Patil, Executive Director, Carers Worldwide
Kirsty Smith, CEO, CBM UK
Cheryl Hooper, CEO, Cecily's Fund
Dr L Allen, CEO, Centre for Global Equality
Anna-mai Andrews and Katie Fowler, Co-CEOs, Chance for Childhood
Henry Pomeroy, Director, CHASE Africa
Jill Healey, Executive Director, ChildHope
Richard Moore, CEO, Children in Crossfire
Rachel Bentley, CEO, Children on the Edge
Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, Chief Executive, Christian Aid
James Thornton, CEO, ClientEarth
Justin Dowds, Chief Executive Officer, Compassion UK and Ireland
Danny Harvey, Executive Director, Concern Worldwide UK
Jonathan Cohen, Executive Director, Conciliation Resources
Peter Marsden, Chief Executive, Concordis International
Caroline Ford, Chief Executive Officer, Consortium for Street Children
Meena Varma, Director, Dalit Solidarity Network UK
Matthew Lake, CEO, Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Julia Misselbrook, Director International Partnerships, Digital Opportunity Trust UK
Ellen Waters, Development Director, Doctors of the World UK

Monowara Gani, CEO, Doctors Worldwide
Petter Matthews, Executive Director, Engineers Against Poverty
Tricia Barnett, Director, Equality in Tourism
Jacqui Hunt, Director, Europe/Eurasia, Equality Now
Michael Gidney, CEO, Fairtrade Foundation
Patrick C. Fine, Chief Executive Officer, FHI 360
Saul Billingsley, Executive Director, FIA Foundation
Rachel Lindley, CEO, Five Talents
Paul Cornelius, CEO, Food for the Hungry UK
Professor Gail Davey, Founder, Footwork, the International Podoconiosis Initiative
Ziggy Garewal, UK Representative, Friends of ACTED UK
Michael Deriaz, Chairman, Friends of Kipkelion
Christine Stegling, Executive Director, Frontline AIDS
Dr. Faith Mwangi-Powell, Chief Executive Officer, Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage
Marie Rumsby, UK Country Director, Global Citizen
Prof Khalid Nadvi, Managing Director and Head, Global Development Institute, The University of Manchester
Jenny Hodgson, Executive Director, Global Fund for Community Foundations
Anna Henry, Director, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children
Bijay Kumar, Executive Director, Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)
Dr Husna Ahmad OBE, CEO, Global One 2015
Mike Davis, CEO, Global Witness
Hyejoung Yang, Chief Officer, Good Neighbours UK
Martin Drewry, CEO, Health Poverty Action
Justin Derbyshire, Chief Executive, HelpAge International
Julie Davis, CEO, Hope for Children
Carwyn Hill, Co-founder & CEO, Hope Health Action
Claire O'Shea, Head, Hub Cymru Africa
Aleema Shivji, CEO, Humanity & Inclusion UK
Dr Christine Sow, CEO, Humentum
Andrew Norton, Director, IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development)
Helena Nightingale, Director, Integrated Village Development Trust
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Prof Tom Potokar OBE, Director, Interburns
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Ognjen Radosavljevic, Managing Director, International Medical Corps UK
John Reynolds, CEO, International Nepal Fellowship
John Young, Executive Director, International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP)
Laura Kyrke-Smith, UK Executive Director, International Rescue Committee
Jodie Ginsberg, Chief Executive Officer, Internews Europe
Jim Emerson, Chief Executive, INTRAC
Naser Haghamed Chief Executive Officer, Islamic Relief Worldwide
Danish Jabbar Khan, CEO, Kaarvan Crafts Foundation
Fiona Bristow, Director, Kanaama Interactive Community Support
Shona Lockyer, Chair of Trustees, Kambia Appeal
Ciaran Maguire, Chief Executive, Karuna Trust
David Bonbright, Co-founder and Chief Executive, Keystone Accountability
Kristine Stave, Global COO, Lifebox Foundation
Dawn Rennie, Executive Director (UK), Light for the World
Fiona Greig, CEO, Link Community Development International

Rainatou Sow, Executive Director, Make Every Woman Count
Charles Nelson, CEO, Malaria Consortium
Julian Watson, Director, Mbedza Projects Support
Catherine McCarthy, Chief Executive, Medical Aid Films
Simon O'Connell, Executive Director, Mercy Corps Europe
Joanne Balaam, Acting Executive Director, Mercy Ships UK Ltd
Joshua Castellino, Executive Director, Minority Rights Group
Ruth Whitaker, Chief Executive, Mission Aviation Fellowship UK (MAF UK)
Bev Jullien, Chief Executive Officer, Mothers' Union
Kashif Shabir, Interim CEO, Muslim Aid
Irfan Khan, Director Humanitarian and International Partnerships, Muslim Hands
Karl Wilding, Chief Executive, National Council for Voluntary Organisations
Suneeta Kaimal, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer, Natural Resource Governance Institute
Annabel Harris, CEO, Network for Africa
Martin Hartberg, Director, NRC UK
Fiona Gorton, Company Secretary, Omega Research Foundation
Libby Drew, Director, On Our Radar
Sam Bickersteth, Chief Executive, Opportunity International United Kingdom
Rachel Cable, Head, Oxfam Cymru
Alan Sweetman, Executive Director, Pahar Trust Nepal
Harris Iqbal, Chief Executive Officer, Penny Appeal
Dr Keith Tyrell, Director, Pesticide Action Network UK
Tom Edwards, Director, PHASE Worldwide
Mollin delve, Director, Phoebe
Camila Garbutt, CEO, PIN UK
Rose Caldwell, CEO, Plan International UK
Robin Maynard, Executive Director, Population Matters
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Kate Garvey and Gail Gallie, Co-founders, Project Everyone
Gary Forster, Chief Executive, Publish What You Fund – the Global Campaign for Aid Transparency
Terina Keene, Group Chief Executive, Railway Children
Julian Olivier, Chief Executive, Raleigh International
Nancy E. Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, Relief International UK
Perry Maddox, Chief Executive Officer, Restless Development
Erica Belanger, Executive Director, SafeHands
Paul Murphy, Executive Director, Saferworld
Kevin Watkins, CEO, Save the Children UK
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Jane Salmonson, CEO, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Paul Stuart, Chief Executive Officer, Send a Cow
Richard Kramer, Chief Executive, Sense and Sense International
Patricia Alexander, Managing Director, Shared Interest Foundation
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Mitchell Payne, International Programmes Manager, Signal
Meike van Ginneken, CEO, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
Alison Wallace, CEO, SOS Children's Villages UK
Christina Bennett, CEO, Start Network
Mike Podmore, Director, STOPAIDS
Fadhili Maghiya, Director, Sub Sahara Advisory Panel
Charlie Gamble, CEO, TackleAfrica
Nigel Harris, Chief Executive, Tearfund

Tricia Young, CEO, Terre des hommes UK
Ian Wishart, CEO, The Fred Hollows Foundation
Mukhtar Amirali Karim, CEO, The Lady Fatemah (as) Charitable Trust
Peter Waddup, CEO, The Leprosy Mission England and Wales
Ian Agnew, Chairperson, The Lorna Young Foundation
Romilly Greenhill, UK Director, The ONE Campaign
Alistair Dutton, Chief Executive, The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF – Caritas Scotland)
Caroline Qutteneh, Director, The Welfare Association
Philippa Carrick, CEO, Tibet Relief Fund
Sarah Ingleby, Chief Executive Officer, Tools for Self Reliance
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Charlotte Timson, CEO, Traidcraft Exchange
Caroline Barber, CEO, Transaid
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Nicola Chevis, CEO, Vision Aid Overseas
Philip Goodwin, CEO, VSO
Susie Ventris-Field, Chair, Wales Alliance for Global Learning
Claire O'Shea and Rachel Cable, Co-Chairs, Wales Overseas Agency Group
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Asad Rehman, Executive Director, War On Want,
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Mikey Rosato, CEO, Women and Children First
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