



THE RT HON THE LORD HERBERT OF SOUTH DOWNS CBE PC

HOUSE OF LORDS
LONDON SW1A 0PW

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH
United Kingdom

(by e-mail)

18 December 2020

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing to express our grave concern about the future of the UK's global health research budget and to seek your reassurance that the FCDO will not reduce its investment in product development for diseases like Tuberculosis (TB).

Since the announcement of the Government's intention to reduce the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income, scientific leaders have come to us to express their concern over the impact on global health, including potentially dramatic reductions to the FCDO's investment in research and product development.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global TB wrote to you very recently to outline the recommendations of our new inquiry report on TB and global health research. We do not wish to repeat the points made in that letter, but note the report's conclusion that the UK's leadership on global health product development has delivered significant impact on global health security to date, which ought to be strengthened further through increased investment and improved coordination across government departments.

In your statement about the ODA budget to the House of Commons on 26 November, you said: "Second, we will prioritise measures to tackle COVID, and promote wider international health security". We wish respectfully to point out that any cut in the global health research budget would be entirely inconsistent with this commitment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted upon health systems and likely reversed years of progress against infectious diseases such as TB, which killed 1.4 million people last year. Drug resistant TB is a serious threat, causing one third of all AMR-associated deaths, against which we lack effective diagnostic and treatment tools. This is a powerful example of why any prioritisation of global health security must include the ambition and leadership on research that the UK is uniquely positioned to provide.



More than ever before, the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals will rely on the development and delivery of new vaccines, diagnostics and treatments. At this time, any suggestion of an acute reduction in the UK's investment in global health research would be precisely the wrong step, causing disruption and uncertainty for scientists in the UK and internationally.

The decisions you take on the FDCO's global health research budget will be a test of the Government's prioritisation of global health security, the ambition of your newly merged department, and the impact of the ODA budget cut. We hope you are able to reassure us on this matter, and would be grateful for an urgent meeting to discuss the situation before any final decisions are taken.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Lord Herbert of South Downs CBE PC (Co-Chair of the APPG on Global TB)

Virendra Sharma MP (Co-Chair of the APPG on Global TB)

Baroness Barker (Vice-Chair of the APPG on HIV/AIDS)

Lord Black of Brentwood (Vice-Chair of the APPG on HIV/AIDS)

Ms Sarah Champion MP

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

Mrs Pauline Latham MP (Vice-Chair of the APPG on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases)

Mr Ian Lidell-Grainger MP

Mr Navendu Mishra MP

Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP

Lord O'Neill of Gatley

Lord Patel KT



Dan Poulter MP (Chair of the APPG on Global Health)

The Baroness Sheehan

Lord Trees (Vice-Chair of the APPG on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases)