

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson, MP
The Prime Minister

24th November 2020

Next year is crucial for the UK's global reputation. Along with leaving the EU, we chair the G7 and will host the critically important UN climate change summit (COP26). Deciding now to cut our commitment of spending 0.7% of GNI to support the world's poorest peoples would seriously undermine our position and standing at this critical time.

The UK, as President of COP26, will ask countries to build back better from the current crisis in a way that mitigates against the future threat of a changing climate. At next month's Climate Ambition Summit, as COP26 President, the UK will urge countries to pledge new commitments, including to climate funds that support vulnerable countries in the face of growing and devastating climate impacts. As acknowledged in the Paris Agreement, financial support from developed nations such as the UK is essential for helping them deliver their own low-carbon ambitions. By slashing ODA we would, while asking them to show more ambition, be cutting away support essential for helping them deliver it.

At last year's General Election, you stood on a highly successful manifesto which pledged to "proudly maintain our commitment to 0.7% of GNI on development and do more to help countries receiving aid to become more self-sufficient". This commitment, enshrined in law by a Conservative Government, is one of the key reasons the UK is so respected and can still command such influence across the world.

As a nation we stand by our allies and friends through the hardest times. Right now, countries made vulnerable by both Covid-19 and the impacts of climate change are looking to the UK for that help more than ever, to protect lives and shore up resilience. These nations are our natural allies in the climate change negotiations; to risk alienating them over ODA is to pose an additional risk to delivering a successful COP26.

Reducing our own commitments to support developing nations at this time sends the wrong message to nations around the world at the very time when it is essential that we show strength and leadership on the global stage. I urge you to think again.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam
Lord Bishop of Salisbury

Cc:
Alok Sharma, President of COP26
John Glen MP
The Archbishop of Canterbury