

RESULTS UK's response to DFID's White Paper - 'Building our Common Future' July 2009

RESULTS welcomes the new launch of DFID's White Paper and the UK Government's important recommitment to fighting global poverty at a time of economic instability. We look forward to working with our network of grassroots activists and international partners to ensure that DFID is able to deliver on its commitments, and maintain its focus on poverty alleviation, over the coming years.

RESULTS shares DFID's belief that an education, access to healthcare, quality water supply and sanitation are basic rights. We agree that as well as being important in their own right, access to basic services are essential for sustainable and equitable growth and peaceful and stable states.

We welcome DFID's focus on addressing poverty in fragile and conflict-affected states, recognising they include around one-third of those living in extreme poverty, half of children who are not in primary school and half of children who die before their fifth birthday. We eagerly await further detail of the countries that DFID plans to prioritise and how aid will be delivered. We hope that a continued focus on Africa will be strongly reflected in DFID's future country coverage.

We also welcome DFID's plans to place greater priority on issues such as nutrition and maternal and child health but regret that ongoing health challenges such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis have fallen down the agenda. Although DFID has emphasised that it will deliver on previous commitments, we would urge the Department to ensure that significant progress is made in areas prioritised in previous White Papers before moving on to new priorities.

As a grassroots organisation, committed to empowering others to realise their own ability to help end poverty, we warmly welcome DFID's commitment to build greater support for global development issues in the UK. We also encourage DFID's work to improve governance in other countries which will enable citizens around the world to participate in democratic processes in the same manner as RESULTS activists in the UK.

RESULTS UK's submission to the White Paper consultation process focused on the key themes that we have campaigned on over the past two decades such as global health, education and increasing access to financial services for the poor. We also highlighted cross-cutting issues such as aid volumes and delivery methods, the role of civil society and the need to focus on very poor and marginalised populations.

Microfinance

The White paper recognises that two billion people still have no access to financial services such as banking, saving, credit and insurance and also recognises the powerful impact of microfinance to help the poor, particularly women, increase their income and gain access to basic services such as education for their children. We therefore welcome DFID's commitment to increase access to financial services for individuals and micro-businesses and to support the development of a new multi-donor facility across Africa which will reach an additional 10 million clients with microfinance over five years. We hope to see such a facility designed to target the poorest and to measure its impact of helping individuals move above the poverty line. We also welcome DFID's commitment to pilot approaches to micro-level insurance services for the poor and would like to see this scaled-up beyond the pilot project stage in the near future.

Education

We welcome DFID's commitment to get eight million African children into school by 2010 and look forward to engaging further in the new education strategy. We are pleased to see a strong focus on education quality and learning outcomes as well as DFID's commitment to ensure that more support is given to educate children in fragile and conflict-affected states. Education should become a central part of DFID's expanded work in conflict-affected states.

We welcome DFID's recognition of the importance of trained teachers. We encourage DFID to support efforts to remove all structural barriers which prevent countries from recruiting sufficient numbers of teachers. We are disappointed that no explicit commitment was made to ensure greater inclusion of disabled children who make up one-third of children out of school.

We welcome the UK's recommitment to doubling its support to global education and encourage DFID to work with civil society in its efforts to reform the Fast Track Initiative into a more transparent mechanism that will enable increased resources to be disbursed more quickly and effectively to a greater number of countries, included conflict-affected states.

Health

We welcome DFID's commitment to scale up its support for improving the health of pregnant women and newborn children, two of the most off-track MDGs. We also welcome an increased focus on addressing sanitation, a major cause of ill health and death, particularly among children. We welcome the UK's strong position on the abolition of user fees for health which deter families from seeking care.

We commend the UK's long-term commitment to health, including to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and encourage other donors to provide more long-term, predictable aid. We encourage DFID to announce how they intend to spend the £6 billion announced last year for health and urge the UK to respond to the immediate resource gap faced the Global Fund by increasing its annual contributions.

We welcome the bold commitments made in the White Paper to tackle malaria through a range of interventions but regret that the same emphasis was not given to other diseases of poverty such as tuberculosis which kills an even greater number of people each year.

Mobilising resources for development

We welcome DFID's commitment to mobilise *additional* resources over and above existing ODA commitments to address climate change and to fill other gaps for meeting the health MDGs. We also welcome DFID's commitment to meet its existing pledges on financing and urge other donors to follow this lead.

We commend the UK for its leadership on the High Level Taskforce for Innovative Financing for health and encourage the UK and other donors to move forward quickly on mechanisms that will mobilise the greatest resources for development such as a Currency Transaction Levy. We also welcome the UK's support for innovative mechanisms to encourage the development of new drugs, vaccines and other products for diseases of poverty such as malaria and TB.

International Institutions

We welcome DFID's commitment to monitor the relationship that the IMF has with developing countries. We endorse DFID's recognition that a 'one size-fits-all' approach to macroeconomic policies is not appropriate and that countries should be given greater support to agree sound fiscal policies that are tailored to their own economies. We encourage the UK to leverage its position on

the IMF board to push for further reforms and wider representation in all stages of the decision-making processes.

We also welcome DFID's commitment to review and agree a new approach to multilateral funding, to ensure that UK aid is directed where it can be used most effectively. We will continue to monitor the impact and effectiveness of institutions such as the World Bank which receive large proportions of UK aid but where evidence suggests mixed ability to monitor outcomes and reach the very poor. We therefore welcome the commitment to make additional financing to the World Bank dependent on further improvements in performance and governance, and the UK's willingness to use negotiations on IDA replenishments to push for such reforms. We encourage DFID to work with civil society to set ambitious targets and timetables for the reforms of the international institutions.