

## THE UK'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS ON POVERTY REDUCTION

On 16 May, the Government published its long-awaited International Development Strategy (IDS), providing a vision for its approach to development, but with little detail or financial commitments. It will influence how the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget is spent in coming years, but rather than being focused on fighting poverty and injustice, it primarily aims to promote British interests, increase trade and investment, and respond to geopolitical uncertainty. It is important that we show that there is public support for targeting ODA on fighting global poverty and inequality.

THIS MONTH, SHOW THE GOVERNMENT THAT THERE IS PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ODA PROGRAMMES THAT DIRECTLY TARGET POVERTY AND INEQUALITY RATHER THAN PROMOTING THE UK'S DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS.

- The IDS is a missed opportunity to state how the UK's ODA spending will be used to reduce poverty and inequality and to save lives. ODA should not be used to promote the UK's diplomatic or economic interests or to promote trade deals.
- There is a high risk that global programmes to improve health and education will continue to be inadequately funded by the UK government, yet these are vital for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Government's own strategy for 'Ending Preventable Deaths' - published only a few months ago - highlights the need for investment in health and good nutrition, yet this is not reflected in the IDS.
- Global health multilaterals such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria must also continue to be adequately funded, but this is at risk as the IDS prioritises a move from multilateral funding to bilateral ODA (funding countries directly).

### What is the Government's International Development Strategy?

The [Government's new International Development Strategy](#) (IDS) sets out four priorities for the UK: honest and reliable investment; providing women and girls with the freedom they need to succeed; providing life-saving humanitarian assistance; and work on climate change, nature and global health. While these sound laudable, the [overall focus of the document](#) is on trade, economic development and promoting British interests rather than on poverty reduction. And the Foreign Secretary Liz Truss states her intention that by 2025, only 25% of ODA will be spent via multilateral institutions (global collaborations) such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. The current figure is nearly 40%.

### Why is this important now?

The IDS is likely to direct more money to investments that do not focus directly on reducing poverty and inequality or on saving lives. With the Government's [commitment](#) to return to spending 0.7% of our Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA by 2025, it will be vital to ensure that [additional resources are focused on poverty reduction](#), especially given the impact of the pandemic on health and food systems, and the ongoing unequal access to vaccines and treatments for COVID-19.

*"Today, as the war in Ukraine has entered a new phase and millions of refugees have fled their homes, the TB epidemic could burst with renewed intensity. That's why the Global Fund support is more important than ever for Ukraine and for all the patients who find themselves in war situations."* Krystyna, Ukraine.

Read more about Krystyna's story and the work of the Global Fund in Ukraine in our new report ['Health systems in crisis: The Global Fund's impact in Ukraine'](#).

Multilateral organisations are very effective at tackling global challenges. For example, the Global Fund provides 77% of all international financing for TB. The move away from funding multilateral organisations highlighted in the IDS raises concerns about the UK's support for international efforts to tackle global challenges such as the TB epidemic.



## How does the IDS achieve the Government's goals on poverty reduction?

[Experience shows](#) that ODA that is aimed at promoting trade deals and the donor's national interests is ineffective at saving lives and overcoming poverty, and that economic growth does not necessarily reach the most marginalised communities or help tackle deep-rooted injustices. The Government's '[Ending Preventable Deaths](#)' strategy (December 2021) sets out its aim to end the preventable deaths of women and newborn babies by 2030, committing to improving immunisation and nutrition, but without making any funding commitments. The IDS does little to show how this aim, or other existing commitments, will be achieved, nor does it say how it will fund the Government's priority to improve girls' education.



**CHECK OUT THIS DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF THE UK'S IDS**

## How should we work together with other countries fighting poverty?

The Government says it will spend more of its ODA budget on bilateral (country-to-country) support - rising to 75% by 2025. Despite acknowledging the importance of multilateral (collaborative) programmes, such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria](#) for improving health systems and tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that funding for these will be further at risk as the Government moves towards bilateral spending. Yet, for example, the Global Fund [needs £1.8 billion](#) from the UK Government over the next three years, a 30% increase on current funding, to tackle the three diseases, overcome the setbacks caused by the pandemic, and meet new challenges such as the [conflict in Ukraine](#). It is critical that the UK and other donors work together to ensure ambitious funding remains available for multilaterals like the Global Fund in order to fight poverty and save millions more lives.

### TAKE ACTION! This month:



**1** Write to the Foreign Secretary, expressing your concerns about the focus of the new International Development Strategy and urging her to ensure that all ODA spending is focused on poverty reduction.

Contact details: Rt. Hon. Liz Truss MP, Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AH. Email [fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk)



**2** Write a letter to your local media or online media outlet, expressing your concerns about the new strategy. Most readers will be unlikely to be aware of it, so make sure your words are non-technical. If you've done any local campaigning, such as running an event or meeting your MP on global poverty, you might want to mention it to give your letter a more local feel. See our [guide to writing to the media](#).



**3** Share your views via social media, tagging your MP or @FCDOGovUK and @trussliz. Check out our [social media guide](#) for ideas.

**4** If you haven't already, please take our [May action](#), urging your MP to ask the UK Government to pledge £1.8 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

Let us know that you've taken this month's action by emailing:

**Campaigns Coordinator Tanya Begum at [tanya.begum@results.org.uk](mailto:tanya.begum@results.org.uk)**