



19 APR 2010

HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Tessa Jowell
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Your ref: 01101202

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Dear Tessa

Thank you for your letter of 18 March to Alistair Darling enclosing correspondence about supporting the Christian Aid campaign on Child Poverty. I have been asked to reply.

The Government is committed to creating a fairer society. Between 1979 and 1997, the proportion of children in relative poverty more than doubled, resulting in the UK having one of the highest child poverty rates in the industrialised world. This trend has been reversed. Between 1998 and 2008, 500,000 children have been lifted out of relative poverty across the UK. The latest statistics do not take into account measures announced since Budget 2007, which are expected to lift around a further 550,000 children out of relative poverty.

Despite this progress, the Government recognizes that the global downturn has caused many families new financial stress. In response we have announced significant above indexation increases to tax credits and Child Benefit; provided £270m of additional funding for the Social Fund; and extended free school meals to primary school aged children in low income working families, helping provide valuable incentives for parents to work.

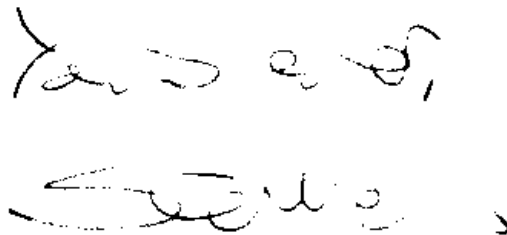
The Government is committed to the eradication of child poverty. The Child Poverty Bill, currently before Parliament, places a duty on the Government to publish its strategy for achieving the 2020 target. In the Pre-Budget Report 2009, we published five principles that will guide our strategy: work is the best route out of poverty; families and family life should be supported; early intervention is necessary to have a sustainable impact; excellence in delivery; and cost-effectiveness and affordability.

Your letter also raised the issue of international poverty. The Government is committed to increasing overseas aid. It is important that we address the impact of the economic crisis on developing countries, many of which will be hardest hit. The Department for International Development (DFID) is committed to reducing child poverty amongst all children.

DFID aims to support particularly vulnerable groups of children through funding programmes for education (£38.5 billion 2007-2015) and social protection programmes which will help children have improved health, education and nutrition (£200 million over 3 years from 2008).

DFID also provides considerable support to non-governmental organisations that have a child-rights focus, such as more than £35 million to Save the Children, Plan International and World Vision to support their work globally. As well as supporting governments and civil society, DFID also has a strategy in place with various agencies to support their work for vulnerable children.

Please pass on my thanks to your constituents for taking the trouble to raise these concerns about this with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Timms', written in a cursive style.

STEPHEN TIMMS