



June 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about UK spending on foreign aid, otherwise known as Official Development Assistance (ODA).

This country has been and always will be open and outward-looking, leading in solving the world's toughest problems and striving to be a force for good in the world. Whether it is stepping up to support desperate Syrians and Yemenis in conflict zones, leading the fight against Ebola and Malaria, or supporting millions of children to gain a decent education.

Nevertheless, we must be honest about where we are. The UK is currently experiencing its worst economic contraction in 300 years because of the pandemic, with a budget deficit double that caused by the 2008 financial crisis. At this time of unprecedented crisis, tough choices must be made, which is why the Chancellor announced a temporary reduction in the UK's ODA budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of the UK's Gross National Income (GNI).

I am encouraged that the UK will be spending more than £10 billion in 2021 on its seven ODA priorities, as set out by the Foreign Secretary – climate change and biodiversity; global health security, including Covid-19; girls' education; responding to humanitarian crises, such as those in Yemen and Syria; science and technology; resolving conflicts and defending open societies, including human rights; and promoting trade.

As one of the most generous aid donors in the G7, with a commitment considerably higher than the OECD average, and coupled with our expertise and convening power, the UK remains a development superpower.

The UK is, for example, the biggest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education, the largest fund in the world dedicated to improving education in developing countries; and the World Bank International Development Association, which works to accelerate progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Likewise, our contribution to the COVAX AMC is amongst the largest, and will contribute to the supply of at least 1.3 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines in 2021, already reaching over 120 countries.

I have been assured that the UK will return to 0.7% as soon as the fiscal situation allows.



**Chris Heaton-Harris**

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I appreciate the concerns about the specific impact of the temporary aid budget reduction on funding for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). Again, the impact of the global pandemic on the UK economy has forced the Government to take tough decisions. Nevertheless, I will ensure that Ministers are aware of the points you have raised.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**