

Gender and Development Network condemns UK aid cuts announcement

The Gender and Development Network condemns the UK government's announcement that it will abandon its legally binding commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of GNI on overseas aid. We share our opposition to the cuts with our members and [many other NGOs, along with former prime ministers and MPs](#)

Combined with a reduced GNI, this means an estimated £4.2 billion will be cut from the aid budget in 2021 at a time when communities in the Global South are already facing a toxic combination of economic recession and pandemic. Meanwhile, the government has found an [extra £16.5 billion to be spent on defence](#).

The commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of GNI on official development assistance is enshrined in law in the 2015 International Development Act, and was reaffirmed in the [government's manifesto pledge](#) in 2019. We echo the sentiments expressed by former Minister Baroness Sugg in her resignation [letter](#) that 'this promise must be kept in the tough times as well as the good'.

As the UK government begins its Presidency of the G7, in a time of unprecedented global crisis, it should be showing leadership as a 'force for good' on the global stage. Instead, it is turning its back on the rest of the world and pursuing a short-sighted and insular approach which can only diminish the UK's reputation internationally.

The Gender and Development Network is equally concerned that the Chancellor has proposed new [principles](#) that will govern the way that this diminished aid budget will be spent. These appear simplistic, reflecting neither an evidence-based nor consultative approach and appears to have abandoned the internationally agreed [Sustainable Development Goals](#). Moreover, it appears aid will no longer be directed where it is most needed but instead will be focused 'only on countries where the UK's development, security and economic interests align'. It is imperative that what aid is left is now spent in ways that meet the needs and priorities of the world's most marginalised communities, rather than being used to promote narrow self-interests.

November 26, 2020