



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

*Dear Commitment,*

**RE: WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE WORLDWIDE**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in developing countries. I have read your comments with interest.

First, thank you for your kind invitation to attend the drop-in event hosted by WaterAid on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Unfortunately, owing to prior, longstanding diary commitments, I was unable to attend, although please rest assured that I will continue to follow the issues raised closely.

Safe water and adequate sanitation are basic human needs. For so many on our planet, these needs remain unmet, particularly in developing and conflict-affected states. I am sure you will welcome, therefore, that improving access to WASH services, including in healthcare facilities, is a global health priority for the FCDO. It forms a core part of the UK's 'Ending Preventable Deaths of Mothers, Babies and Children Strategy', published in December 2021, and is critical to the FCDO's wider global health objectives.

I am proud of the UK's action on promoting safe water, sanitation and hygiene - or UN Sustainable Development Goal 6. Indeed, the UK aimed to provide 60 million people with improved water and sanitation between 2015 and 2020, and exceeded this target in August 2020, helping 62.6 million people access clean water and sanitation, of which 26.2 million were based in fragile states. To achieve this target, the UK entered into a £57.3 million partnership with UNICEF to provide sustainable WASH services to 3.8 million people in ten countries, through the Sanitation, Water and Hygiene for the Rural Poor Programme (2017-2022). The UK continues to strengthen climate resilience and accountability for delivery of WASH services.

I am also encouraged by the leadership role the UK demonstrated in the first UN High-Level Conference on Water in 40 years, held in March 2023. The UK Government announced £18.5 million of funding to improve the quality of water supply, and sanitation and hygiene services in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Ministers also met with international partners and members of the private sector to discuss ensuring water is a safe, sustainable and accessible resource globally.


Moreover, the UK continues to promote WASH through our membership of the WASH In Healthcare Facilities International Taskforce, through bilateral programming such as our innovative hand hygiene partnership with Unilever, and through core multilateral funding, including to the World Bank and the World Health Organisation.



As you note, around the world, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by inadequate WASH access. One of the most direct impacts is the burden of collecting water, which women and girls spend 200 million hours doing each day globally. These journeys can also place them at increased risk of gender-based violence, as does a lack of private and secure sanitation.

Rest assured, however, that making women and girls central to its approach to international development is a priority for the UK. Indeed, gender considerations have been incorporated into the design of the UK's WASH programmes. In addition, the FCDO's 'Ending Preventable Deaths Action Paper' sets out how it will address the barriers to protecting the lives of mothers, babies and children – in which improving WASH worldwide plays a central role.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*  


**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**