

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

18<sup>th</sup> June 2020

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: EDM 615 - THE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFFICE.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the merger of the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), with specific reference to Early Day Motion (EDM) 615.

Notwithstanding the fact that as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs, in any event, I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system, and I think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with Ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs. With that in mind, I have spoken to Ministers directly about your concerns.

As you know, the Prime Minister has announced that the FCO and DfID will merge to create a new overseas department. The new Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) will place UK aid at the heart of what it does, leveraging the existing development expertise of DfID through the reach of the FCO's global network. The merger is set to be completed by September and the new department will be led by the Foreign Secretary.

I am proud that the UK has been at the heart of the international effort to tackle COVID-19, which shows the good that this country can do through our international engagement. The current crisis shows just how important it is that development and diplomatic efforts are fused together more closely, in order to maximise our international impact and make the biggest difference to people's lives.

The Prime Minister has been clear that this is not about rolling back commitments on international development, but about pursuing them with greater effect, and that reducing poverty will remain central to the UK's international work. The UK remains committed to spending 0.7 percent of GNI on international development, being the only G7 country to have enshrined this in legislation. I am glad that this merger will mean that, within the new department, we will see all the idealism and sense of mission that comes from DfID, alongside an understanding of the need to project UK values, UK policies and UK interests, overseas. Our values are not just right in themselves, but also the best route to lasting stability and growth.

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**