



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: PANDEMIC TREATY**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the potential new international treaty for pandemic preparedness; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the greatest challenges to the established international order since the Second World War; a global threat that has required global solutions borne out of global cooperation. I pay tribute to people and nations across the world in confronting such a threat. International collaboration was immensely heartening to witness in the darkest of times.

As in the late 1940s, where, to avert a repeat of the cataclysm of total war, world leaders united to establish the multilateral system we have today, I think it is reasonably fair to argue that a similar effort is required on the part of world leaders to strengthen preparedness for potential future pandemics. We should of course learn the lessons of what has happened.

As such, I welcome the suggestion of the former Prime Minister, writing with other world leaders in 2021, that the international community should commit to producing a new international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response. I understand that such a treaty would aim to foster greatly enhanced cooperation in order to better protect the UK from the health, social, and economic impacts, of pandemics.

Discussions are ongoing at the World Health Organisation to this end. I appreciate your concerns about this; however, the Government will not support any treaty which compromises the UK's sovereignty. There is nothing in the proposed treaty that would impact our ability to take decisions about national lockdowns, or associated measures at the national level.

Once adopted, international treaties only become binding in the UK when ratified by Parliament in accordance with our constitutional process. No international treaty can by itself change UK law. If changes to the law are necessary, then a treaty could not be ratified until domestic legislation, agreed by Parliament, was put in place.

Finally, thank you for your kind invitation to attend the Westminster Hall debate held on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023. 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.



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,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

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