

A fairer world by 2030

RESULTS

Help ensure the UK continues to show global leadership to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

25 September 2020 marked the 5th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by world leaders in 2015 – a promise of a sustainable world free of extreme poverty by 2030. Progress has been made in many areas, but the COVID-19 pandemic has rolled back international development efforts, threatening to increase malnutrition, derail progress toward ending deadly diseases, put people's livelihoods at risk, and disrupt children's education. The new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) leads the UK's international development work, and it is vital that it focuses its efforts on poverty reduction and building strong health and education systems, if we are to see a fairer world by 2030. With a likely reduction in the UK aid budget, it will be necessary to target our efforts on those most in need and in the most marginalised communities. The Government has previously stated its priorities as including girls' education, and ending preventable deaths; these ambitions must be made a reality. The anniversary of the Goals, coming during the COVID-19 pandemic, is an important time to ensure there is political support for the UK to work in partnership internationally to eradicate poverty, including via its COVID-19 response. With World Food Day (16 October) and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October) also coming up, now is a good moment to use the media and social media to grab the attention of your MP and others in your community about the importance of continuing our efforts to end poverty.

The Sustainable Development Goals

25 September 2020 marked the 5th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by [193 governments](#) in 2015. These 17 goals set out an ambition to end poverty and create a more equitable, peaceful and prosperous world by 2030, ensuring no one is left behind.

Progress has stalled

Despite progress in many areas, there is a consensus that the world is not on track to achieve the goals by 2030. And now, the COVID-19 pandemic has [rolled back international development efforts](#), not only through its immediate health consequences, but also its broader impacts on human development. In addition to the deaths caused directly by COVID-19, the [indirect impacts of the pandemic](#) on access to health services will be huge. It is estimated that [70 to 100 million people](#) will fall into extreme poverty this year, and that all the progress on poverty since the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 [will be lost](#).

The pandemic threatens to increase malnutrition, derail efforts to combat diseases, destroy countries' economies and people's livelihoods, and thwart efforts

to give children a quality education. Global immunisation coverage has stalled in the last decade, and at least [80 million children under the age of one](#) are now at risk of missing routine vaccinations as a result of the disruption caused by COVID-19, exposing them to life-threatening and debilitating diseases. Diagnosis and treatment of conditions such as TB, which kills more people than any other infectious disease, is also essential, yet [lock-downs have made accessing clinics and retrieving medicines difficult](#), and over the next five years, it is predicted that we could see [a rise in TB related deaths by 20%](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic is also predicted to massively [increase the number of malnourished children](#), as economies, food supplies and markets are disrupted. Malnutrition has spill-over effects into education too; it strips away [500 million school days](#) from children each year, which could be prevented by school nutrition programmes. And the impact of the pandemic on education systems and on young people's learning and wellbeing is massive, with [850 million children and young people currently out of school](#). School closures [hit the world's most marginalised children the hardest](#), including girls, children with disabilities, and those fleeing conflict.

Strong health and education systems provide people with the wellbeing, skills and knowledge needed to fulfil their potential, underpinning the achievement of many of the SDGs. The SDGs remain a crucial roadmap to ending poverty by 2030 and building back better after the pandemic. If communities are to thrive, and not just survive, it is vital that strengthened health systems and inclusive education are prioritised. Yet just as countries face economic downturns and cuts to public spending because of the pandemic, total overseas development assistance (ODA) from international donors could decline [by up to US \\$12 billion](#). In these circumstances, the poorest and most vulnerable people are at the most risk, and international aid remains critical.

The role of the UK in poverty reduction

The UK is acknowledged as a leading player in global efforts to combat poverty. But with progress jeopardised by COVID-19 and just 10 years remaining to achieve the SDGs, there has never been a more important time to gain support for delivering on the commitments made by world leaders in 2015.

The new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) now leads the UK's international development efforts, and it is vital that it focuses its efforts on poverty reduction, to build a better and fairer world by 2030. With a likely reduction in the UK aid budget owing to a contracting economy, it will be necessary to target the UK's international development efforts on those most in need and on the most marginalised communities, including women and girls, and children with disabilities. The Government has stated its priorities as including girls' education, and ending preventable deaths; these ambitions must be made a reality. The Government must ensure that the priorities and policies of the FCDO focus firmly on the

['human development'](#) programmes necessary for poverty reduction. It should:

- Ring fence education spending in the new FCDO and commit to increasing the proportion of ODA spending on education to 15%.
- Commit to reaching 50 million women and children with high impact nutrition interventions over the next five years.
- Continue strong support for global immunisation.
- Continue support for the fight against infectious diseases such as TB, HIV and malaria.
- Prioritise the Government's [strategy to end preventable child deaths](#), investing in primary health care, including immunisation, nutrition and infectious disease control.
- Provide additional support for the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Political will is needed

As always, political will is needed to make these priorities a reality, and it is vital that the Government sees strong public support for the FCDO to focus on poverty reduction and achieving the SDGs by 2030.

If you were able to take our September action, writing to the Foreign Secretary, Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab MP, thank you! Now, with the anniversary of the Goals, coming as it does during the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a good moment to demonstrate that public support for the UK to work in partnership internationally on the eradication of poverty, including the COVID response. With World Food Day (16 October) and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October) coming up, this is a good moment to use the media and social media to grab the attention of your MP and others in your community about the importance of continuing the UK's historic efforts to end poverty, disease and hunger.

Take action!

Let's inspire our MPs to show public support for one or more of the aspects of human development we want to see the Government prioritise. This month's [Background Sheet](#) contains some more advice on how to do this.

1. **Tweet your MP about one of the human development priorities we want to see, and ask them to show they support it and the Global Goals by sharing your message with their followers.**
2. **Write to your local media site with a short piece on why you support the UK's continued focus on global poverty reduction.** Share your piece with your MP, whether it gets published or not. Ask them to share it with their followers.

Let us know that you've taken action by emailing Dela at delanderson@results.org.uk and don't forget to tag @resultsuk in any social media actions.