

July 2008

Dear Colleague

I know many of you are particularly interested in Pakistan and have significant numbers of families of Pakistani heritage in your constituencies. Given this I wanted to update you on the new support – totalling £480 million over the next 3 years – that the Department for International Development (DfID) has recently provided Pakistan.

Many of us have discussed the progress that Pakistan has made in recent years towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Equally, we remain concerned by the scale of the poverty challenge that remains. When we are confronted by statistics such as: one in ten children die before their fifth birthday; half of the adult population are unable to read or write; two out of five children are malnourished and only half attend primary school – we are compelled to act.

This is why our Labour Government signed a historic ten-year UK/Pakistan Development Partnership Arrangement in 2006. This Partnership Arrangement sets out our on-going joint commitment to work with the Government of Pakistan to tackle poverty and exclusion and improve the lives of nearly 40 million poor people in Pakistan.

The impact we've had to date has started to make a vital difference for poor communities nationwide. In recent years we have: raised the incomes of 300,000 poor women by over 50 per cent; provided clean drinking water and sanitation to over 1.1 million people in the north west of Pakistan; and supported the health sector and government systems

contributing to 200,000 fewer child deaths, 800,000 fewer malnourished children and the prevention of 2.4 million cases of TB.

However, there's still more work to do. Making sure poor people benefit from economic growth and improving access to healthcare and education continue to be big challenges, that is why I was pleased to announce, on behalf of our Labour Government, the launch of our new DfID Country Assistance Plan for Pakistan. DfID Pakistan's programme is doubling to £480 million during 2008-2011. Our vision reflects the UK's commitment to meeting the Millennium Development Goal targets by 2015.

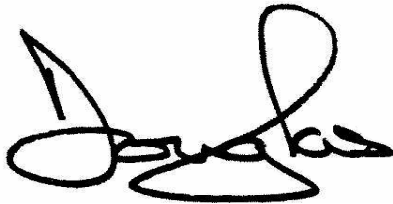
Achieving our targets in Pakistan will mean that:

- 5 million more children will be able to attend primary school; 500,000 young people will benefit from technical and vocational education
- The lives of 350,000 more children and 30,000 pregnant women will be saved; 2.5 million fewer children will be malnourished; 8 million cases of TB will be prevented
- 30 million people will be reached by our work with civil society to strengthen awareness of rights, hold government to account and improve services for the poor

Whilst in Pakistan I also took the opportunity to visit the earthquake affected areas. DfID provided £53 million in immediate emergency relief in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of October 2005 which left more than 70,000 people dead and 3.5 million people homeless. Examples of initiatives underway include the supply of up to 50 bridges and support to an effective disease early warning system. Overall, DFID has committed £126 million to earthquake relief and rehabilitation.

Pakistan is a country that has shown real development progress in recent years, but still faces significant challenges. This is why our Labour Government is committed to working with the Government and people of Pakistan to address poverty. This work is only possible because of the support and campaigning of committed MPs. I am grateful for your continued support.

I will continue to keep you updated on our progress in Pakistan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Alexander', with a large loop at the end.

**DOUGLAS ALEXANDER**