



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 August 2015

Dear Caroline

Thank you for your letter of 18 August (Ref:N9978.CM.18.08.15), regarding ActionAid's "Fearless" campaign to end violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Ending VAWG and improving the prospects of women and girls around the world remains a top priority for the UK Government and I am proud of the leadership that we have shown on this issue over the past five years.

Since 2013, we have hosted the Call to Action meeting on protecting women and girls in emergency situations, the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the ground-breaking Girl Summit to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).

In the past three years, the Department for International Development (DFID) has increased its programming to address VAWG by more than 50%. There are now a total of 109 programmes working on the issue, 19 of which are focussed entirely on VAWG. Our £35 million programme to tackle FGM – the largest of any individual country – is helping to reduce the practice by 30% in 17 countries across Africa, while our £36 million programme to end CEFM is helping thousands of girls escape situations where they have little or no control over their futures.

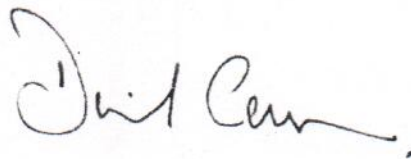
This is all made possible by our aid budget. In March, Parliament enshrined in law the Government's commitment to spend 0.7% of our country's income on overseas aid. The world's richest countries have all promised to do this but the UK is the only one to have actually done so. We should be proud of this achievement and the real life difference it is making around the world.

We know that to prevent VAWG we need to examine the deep-seated attitudes and social norms that allow such violence to exist, and the Government recognises the importance of working with women's organisations on this. A good example of this cooperation came after the Girl Summit, when DFID announced £8 million of support for AmplifyChange, an initiative that supports civil society activists in their work to end CEFM and FGM and address a range of associated issues that affect women and girls.

The UK's leadership on this issue will be critical during the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Summit in September. The UK has consistently championed the standalone gender goal in the post-2015 agenda, including the targets on VAWG, FGM, and CEFM, and we are extremely pleased with the agreed Outcome Document which maintains all of these.

Please pass on my thanks to your constituents for raising these important issues and reassure them of the UK's continued international leadership in the fight to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dr Caroline Lucas', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr Caroline Lucas MP