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Stephen O'Brien MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

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Dear Daniel

Thank you for your letter of 17 September to the Deputy Prime Minister about the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the renewed global commitment to these at the Summit. I am replying as the Minister at the Department for International Development, who leads on the issues raised.

The Summit was a success for British leadership and more importantly for the world's poorest people. It was an important opportunity to build political momentum and to secure concrete commitments to accelerate progress on the MDGs as the world approaches the deadline of 2015.

The UK's leadership and in particular the Government's commitment to maintain our pledge to spend 0.7% of our national income on aid from 2013 was commended by all of our international partners. UK civil society also played a critical role in building public support and international momentum both ahead of and during the Summit in New York.

On maternal health the Summit reached agreement on the Secretary General's Global Strategy which aims to save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015. It attracted unprecedented financial commitments from a range of partners – including the private sector and foundations – totalling \$40 billion. The UK's pledge to double our efforts on maternal, newborn and child health will save the lives of at least 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth, save 250,000 newborn babies and enable 10 million couples to access modern methods of family planning.




On malaria, the UK pledged to help halve the number of deaths in at least 10 African countries by 2015 by increasing access to malaria prevention, diagnostics and treatment backed by an increase in funding to as much as £500 million per year by 2014. The clear emphasis on results and outcomes rather than input targets was a very positive development.

The Summit was also notable for the extent of developing country engagement. Tanzania pledged to spend 15% of their national budget on health and Liberia promised to secure universal coverage of bed nets to combat malaria by the end of this year. Developing countries also took the lead on side events on issues such as climate change and conflict.

The UK used the Summit to highlight the challenges around the delivery of basic services, including access to clean water and sanitation. I am pleased that this is reflected in the Outcome Document, which includes a call to continue to increase sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and to redouble efforts to close the sanitation gap and increase the coverage of basic sanitation, especially for the poor. We will continue to work with international partners to ensure this progress towards the achievement of these important MDG targets.

Finally, we should acknowledge the importance of the Summit Outcome Document. Drawing on the real experiences of countries that have successfully tackled poverty in recent years, the Outcome Document sets out an integrated framework for action which can be a focus for global efforts over the next five years.

A great deal of work must be done to ensure that this momentum is carried forward both through the annual review mechanism in ECOSOC which the UK pressed for and in other international fora, including the G20. I hope we can continue to work together to ensure that the energy and political commitment evident in New York are sustained.



STEPHEN O'BRIEN