



Department
for International
Development



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Baroness Sugg CBE
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Special Envoy for Girls' Education

Richard Rieser
Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum
c/o World of Inclusion
78 Mildmay Grove South
London, N1 4PJ

Our ref

203311

3 June 2020

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your email of 19 May, enclosing a report from the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum about the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities.

There has never been a more important time to deliver our UK aid commitment and we have so far pledged £764 million of UK aid to help end this pandemic as quickly as possible. We are using the best of British expertise, science, businesses, charities and influence for the global response.

DFID is deeply concerned about the significant impact of this crisis on people with disabilities and is continuing to put the poorest and most marginalised at the heart of our response. We recognise that people with disabilities risk being disproportionately affected by COVID-19's social and economic impacts. Existing barriers faced by people with disabilities are also likely to be intensified by the crisis.

We are therefore engaging internationally to push for greater explicit consideration of, and support to, people with disabilities across the COVID-19 response. We also recognise that people with disabilities have a critical role to play in both the response and recovery processes. I chaired a roundtable discussion on 7 May on this subject with Bond Disability and Development Group and other members of the disability sector to discuss these issues. The experience and knowledge of Disabled People's Organisation representatives at the meeting were invaluable in reaching an understanding of how COVID-19 is particularly affecting people with disabilities and how we can make DFID's response more inclusive.

Due to diary constraints I am unable to meet to discuss this further, but Diana Dalton, Head of the Inclusive Societies Department at DFID would be pleased to meet with you remotely to discuss DFID's role in the international response, including the support for and meaningful engagement of people with disabilities. Please contact David Robertson by email at david-robertson@dfid.gov.uk, who will be happy to help arrange a meeting with Diana.

I have shared your letter with my officials who have noted the recommendations in your report. I look forward to my department working with you as we collectively aim to tackle the challenges of COVID-19 and I hope that you and your members find this information helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sugg', with a stylized, cursive script.

BARONESS SUGG