



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Parliamentary Correspondence Team
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Email:
fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk

Madeleine Hewitt
Reply to madeleine.hewitt@populationmatters.org

www.gov.uk/fcdo

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Dear Ms Hewitt,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Foreign Secretary about biodiversity and supporting family planning.

We would be grateful if you could publish this response on your website.

Biodiversity loss continues at an unprecedented rate and threatens the natural world. The UK was at the forefront of international efforts to secure the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in December 2022, which commits to take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. The GBF does not include a human population target, but it recognises that its successful implementation will depend on ensuring gender equality empowering women and girls. This is reflected in the accompanying Gender Action Plan and Targets 22 and 23 on gender equality and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making. We are working with international partners to support the full and effective implementation of the GBF.

With regard to supporting family planning and tackling population to improve local communities. The UK is a strong defender of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) – including that all people, have the fundamental right to make informed choices about their own sexuality and fertility free of coercion, discrimination, or violence. The UK also believes that everyone everywhere should be able to freely decide whether, when and how many children to have. Although the world faces significant environmental and economic challenges, they cannot be solved by trying to force population growth or decline. Women's bodies should not be used to solve global challenges - international action to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss must be grounded in human rights and seek to alleviate rather than reinforce existing inequalities.

Where population projections show continued rapid growth, then effective, voluntary family planning programmes can change the overall economic development trajectory of whole countries – both by empowering women, and by bringing down fertility rates. A reduction in fertility is the pre-condition for realising the demographic dividend - which to be harnessed also needs the right investments in education and job creation.

We invest in a broad range of SRHR programmes in maternal, newborn and child health, family planning and HIV and AIDS. We work with partners such as UNFPA - a Global Health Initiative (GHI) dedicated to the procurement and distribution of contraceptives and maternal health medicines in over 45 of the world's poorest countries. We also work with the Women's Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) programme that delivers integrated SRHR services across 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The programme will reach up to 10.4million women and prevent up to 30,600 maternal deaths, 3.4 million unsafe abortions and 9.5 million unintended pregnancies.

Yours sincerely,

Parliamentary Correspondence Team
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