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I read with some interest your article in The Telegraph on 14 January 2018. I was concerned to read that you intend to use UK aid to mitigate the negative impacts of Brexit on trade and investment with the UK's security and prosperity key factors in deciding how aid is spent. The reiteration that aid spend must be "in the national interest" was particularly disappointing.

I was pleased that you confirmed your support for the 0.7% of GNI on Official Development Assistance spending target, which both the Prime Minister and your predecessor committed to in the last 18 months. Scottish Government funded ODA of course counts towards the UK's 0.7% spend target. We would be particularly concerned if the UK Government were to make any moves to abandon this target.

Your comments follow on from the UK's Aid Strategy "*Tackling global challenges in the national interest*", which is changing the way in which UK Aid is delivered in that it is explicit that aid spending should also benefit the UK - for example, by promoting "*economic development and prosperity*", which will also "*strengthen UK trade and investment opportunities*". There has also been the further change of more UK Aid being disbursed through non-DFID ministries and departments, including the Ministry of Defence, FCO and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. These changes, coupled with your comments about aid "in the national interest", and being part of a "bold new Brexit-ready proposition to boost trade and investment with developing countries" clearly raise potential issues.

The Scottish Government's International Development Policy positively articulates the vision of Scotland's place in the world as a good global citizen, committed to playing its role in contributing to addressing the challenges faced by our world. We are also committed to delivering the First Minister's support of the UN Global Goals.



I would, therefore, be grateful for further clarity on your intentions for UK aid and your commitment to international development following your comments in The Telegraph. I hope that aid spend by the UK Government, whether by DFID or via the increasing role of other UK Departments, will clearly be designed *to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries* – not the UK's own national interest, now or post-Brexit.

I understand you will be attending the British Foreign Policy Group event at McEwan Hall in Edinburgh on 26 January, which I also will be attending. I hope that we will be able to meet each other in the margins of that event.



ALASDAIR ALLAN