



The Church of England  
in Essex and East London  
Diocese of Chelmsford

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To Members of Parliament in the Diocese of Chelmsford

Friday 4 June, 2021

Dear Member of Parliament

In April I started in my role as Bishop of Chelmsford and I have subsequently spent much of my time meeting with and getting to know people across Essex and East London and learning about the challenges we face. As I have previously stated, at the heart of my ministry will be a commitment to work in partnership with others, to serve and support our communities and in particular those who are most in need. It is a commitment I know I share with many of our political and civic leaders including our Members of Parliament and I very much look forward to meeting with you in person to discuss how we can work together.

However, today I am writing to you about two issues of great urgency and international importance. Firstly, the opportunity the forthcoming G7 meeting in Cornwall presents to take critical action to ensure equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines. Secondly, the Rt Honourable Andrew Mitchell MP's Amendment to the Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill and the obligation for the Government to meet its legal requirement to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on International Aid.

### **Equitable distribution of vaccines against Covid-19**

Ahead of the forthcoming G7 meeting in Cornwall. I am asking you to call on the UK Government to use its moral leadership to spur the leaders of the G7 countries to take the decisions needed for global vaccine equity to become a reality.

There are several reasons why it is imperative that the G7 must act now.

Firstly this is a moral issue. At a media conference on 19 April, the Director General of the World Health Organisation stated that one in four people in high-income countries had been vaccinated. In low-income countries, that figure was one in more than five hundred. We have a moral duty to act to address this devastating imbalance.

But this is not just a matter of social justice, it is also a public health issue and an economic issue. The global spread of variants has shown that none of us are safe until we are all safe and that the price of inaction will be long term interruption to the world economy, costing trillions and wrecking lives. Bringing the infection under control can avert this at a fraction of the cost.



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Action is needed before it is too late. We must:

- Share knowledge, licensing, patents, recipes and materials to increase supply to the world.
- Share excess vaccines. Leading economies have ordered many more vaccines than their populations require and surpluses must be shared with countries in need.
- Share urgency. Financial commitment, production capacity, technical expertise, logistics and health systems must all be brought together now. We cannot afford to wait.

The Anglican Church is committed to supporting global action as an expression of our belief as Christians that every human being is made in the image of God and that the love and compassion of Jesus Christ is demonstrated through how we treat the most vulnerable. We are tackling vaccine hesitancy through trusted faith champions across the world, we are committed to providing moral support to governments to help achieve this global challenge and we are committed to raising and communicating this concern through our faith networks. This G7 meeting is a critical opportunity to enable the global action that is needed now. Please play your part in helping to ensure that it is a priority item on their agenda.

#### **Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill and 0.7% of Gross National Income on International Aid**

I fully understand that the Government faces difficult challenges in tackling the fiscal deficit and encouraging economic recovery as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. However, cutting the International Aid budget to 0.5% from 0.7% is not going to make a meaningful contribution to our economic recovery. Moreover, cutting international aid will have a significant effect on our ability to help the world's poorest who are being disproportionately impacted by the global pandemic. The result of this cut will be severe for a number of the UK's flagship aid programmes and the impact will be devastating for people in some of the world's poorest countries.

The amendment to the Advance Research and Invention Agency Bill tabled by the Member for Sutton Coldfield, the Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell, which if successful would oblige the Government to meet its legal commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on International Aid, is receiving growing support from across the House. I very much hope that you will give it your support if it comes to a vote in Parliament.

With my thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely

+ Guli Chelmsford

The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani

Bishop of Chelmsford



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