

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP
Secretary of State for International Development
DFID
1 Palace Street
London
SW1E 5HE

January 23rd 2008

Dear Secretary of State,

I have corresponded previously with your department about efforts to improve access to clean water in some of the world's poorest countries and would like to take this opportunity to highlight once more the enormous humanitarian crisis arising from rich countries' failure to act.

Today 2.6 billion people live without a clean safe place to go the toilet. As a direct result diarrhoeal disease kills five times as many children in the global South as HIV and AIDS - some 1.8 million people each year.

I recognise that DFID is engaged with a number of projects designed to promote access to safe drinking water and sanitation. However, I would urge the British government to work with others to deliver more effective programmes that will reduce the number of deaths significantly. The campaigning organisation Wateraid note that Britain's sewerage system was put in place over a period of ten short years in response to the sanitation crisis of 1858, yet eight years into the 21st century nothing like this kind of progress has been made towards tackling our modern day crisis, despite access to clean water being a focus of the Millennium Development Goals. At this year's G8 summit, therefore, I hope that Britain will make saving the lives of millions of people a priority, pressing for swift and decisive action that upholds the basic right to clean, safe water for all the world's population, once and for all.

I trust you will give this your full attention and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.