



## All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Food and Agriculture for Development

### PRESS RELEASE

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Page one of two

**For Immediate Release**

### **Bill Gates in landmark meeting with UK Parliamentarians on the international fight against global poverty**

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*Helping farmers who own small farms and are struggling to feed their family, farmers who face tougher weather conditions over time because of climate change...helping them with seeds [and] funding the extension services is actually one of the most pro-market things you can do – allowing them to have cash crops, allowing them to be educated so that they understands about investing in fertiliser and the latest practices is an extremely important thing*

#### **Bill Gates, Co-Trustee The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Yesterday**

In what has been hailed as a landmark meeting - Bill Gates\*, co-trustee of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, yesterday met with UK Parliamentarians to discuss the critical issue of global food security.

During the private meeting with the APPG Agriculture and Food for Development Mr. Gates commended the UK for its continued global leadership in the field of International Development but also highlighted the not insignificant challenges which still lay ahead.

He stated: "I welcome the UK's leadership on international development and its commitment to maintaining the nation's promise to spend 0.7% of its Gross National Income on official development assistance, despite significant challenges to the British economy. I urge other donor nations, particularly those in the G8, to follow its lead."

It is in this context that APPG Co-chair Lord Cameron of Dillington\*\* called on policy makers to act now and help the poorest people help themselves out of chronic hunger. He commented "With just five years left of the MDGs and with this Parliament set to sit until 2015, this Parliament truly is the Parliament of the MDGs –we must act now or face the unthinkable consequences of losing another generation to extreme poverty and chronic hunger"

The private meeting with the APPG on Agriculture and Food for Development took place in advance of a wider address to Parliamentarians in which Mr. Gates stated: "Aid over the last 50 years has achieved some phenomenal things...We wouldn't be spending the money if it wasn't something that I didn't think was catalytic. We get smarter all the time, but the aid we're spending really makes a huge difference."

Sharing the platform with Mr. Gates, Rt. Hon Alan Duncan\*\*\*, Minister of State for International Development echoed these sentiments by stating "We must do all we can to make the Millennium Development Goal Summit in September a renewal of all countries' commitments to the MDGs a reality."

Alan Duncan concluded: "Britain is leading the way - and should be proud that it is the first and only country in the world to commit to spending 0.7% of its income on aid from 2013."

With just 5-years to go until the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goal's and a special Summit convened in September by the UN General Assembly to track progress Mr. Gates outlined why 2010 must be a year of decisive action in terms of International Development, commenting "In the face of such challenging economic times, we must be even smarter about how resources are used and maintain our commitments to the world's poor."

Indeed great progress has already been made in areas such as reducing the proportion of people in chronic poverty by half, which is within reach for the world as a whole and; increasing access to clean water, with one point six billion people having gained access to safe drinking water since 1990, other areas are significantly off-track.

Yet despite this with just 5 years until the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), many MDGs are off track and some are even moving in the wrong direction.

More people suffer from chronic hunger today than at any other time in history. MDG 1, to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, is so far off track that it is now moving in the wrong direction. To achieve MDG 1 - 115 million people must be lifted out of chronic hunger each and every year up until 2015 – and this would still only be half of the global problem. It is also estimated that the cost of this under-nutrition to the developing world is estimated to be some \$20 – 30 billion per year.

It is in this context that Harriet Lamb\*\*\*\*, Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation called for a new partnership in International Development, stating: "Aid is important but there are also millions of entrepreneurs in developing countries looking for the opportunity to trade their way out of poverty. Instead of business as usual, Fairtrade has shown how business unusual can create a win-win - strengthening producer organisations and sustainable supply chains so that these farmers and entrepreneurs can play a role in transforming their own communities. There is a real opportunity, as the Gates Foundation shows, for the private sector to step up to the plate, and build new kinds of partnership for development."

Aaron Oxley\*\*\*\*\*, Executive Director for RESULTS-UK, echoed these sentiments calling on policy makers to act now and help the poorest people help themselves out of poverty. He commented: "Experience shows us the poor are often poor because they are excluded from opportunities and if we can help create the conditions for those opportunities suffering is averted and development ensues"

Shadow Secretary of State for International Development Rt. Hon Douglas Alexander\*\*\*\*\* noted: "It is a rare privilege to sit on a panel with somebody who has changed the world once, and I think we are in the presence today of somebody who has changed the world twice – first with his work in Microsoft and now with the extraordinary work that he and Melinda are taking forward in the Gates Foundation"

The aim of the meetings was to highlight the 'living proof' of International Development and the crucial difference that it makes to the lives of millions of people worldwide. The meeting with Bill Gates occurs some six months after the APPG published the results of its first inquiry into global food security entitled 'Why No Thought for Food?'

The report highlighted the existing critical need of the 500 million smallholder farmers who face a daily struggle to meet the needs of the 2 billion people who are dependent upon them, that is, nearly one-third of humanity; whilst also drawing attention to the steep projected population rises in some parts of the world such as Africa, whose population is set to increase at a rate of 6 million people per month and almost double from 1 billion to 2 billion by 2036. The APPG concluded that as a result of rising food prices at home and abroad, a new level of public awareness had been created which in turn created a unique opportunity for the UK to seize the agenda in 2010.

## Photos available on request

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### NOTES FOR EDITORS

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***Lord Ewen Cameron of Dillington and Tony Baldry MP, the Group's Co-Chairs, are available for comment and interview.***

**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:** Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people – especially those with the fewest resources – have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

**The All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development (APPG)** was established by Parliamentarians in October 2008 in response to growing concerns over the heightening food crisis. Co-Chaired by Tony Baldry MP and Lord Cameron of Dillington, the APPG seeks to bring together Parliamentarians concerned with agriculture, nutrition and wider food security in the developing world. This cross-party group aims to engender progressive and informed debate within Westminster and beyond by bridging the gap between policy makers and practitioners in the field whilst also giving a voice to the 700 million smallhold farmers worldwide. The Group's website can be found at: [www.agricultureandfoodfordevelopment.org](http://www.agricultureandfoodfordevelopment.org)

**\* William (Bill) H. Gates III Co-Chair and Trustee of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

Bill Gates is co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Along with co-chair Melinda Gates, he shapes and approves grantmaking strategies, advocates for the foundation's issues, and helps set the overall direction of the organization. Bill and Melinda Gates work together to expand opportunity to the world's most disadvantaged people by collaborating with grantees and partners. They also participate in national and international events and travel extensively to focus attention on the issues the foundation champions.

Gates began his major philanthropic efforts in 1994, when he created the William H. Gates Foundation, which focused on global health. Three years later, he and Melinda created the Gates Library Foundation, which worked to bring public access computers with Internet connections to libraries in the United States. Its name changed to the Gates Learning Foundation in 1999 to reflect its focus on ensuring that low-income minority students are prepared for college and have the means to attend. In 2000, to increase efficiency and communication, the two groups merged into the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In 1975, Gates left Harvard University in his junior year to focus on Microsoft, the company he founded with his childhood friend Paul Allen. As chief software architect and chairman, Gates led the company to become the worldwide leader in business and personal software, services, and solutions. In July 2008, Gates transitioned into a new role as chairman of Microsoft and advisor on some key development projects.

Gates grew up in Seattle with his two sisters. His father, William H. Gates Sr., is a co-chair of the foundation and a retired attorney. His late mother, Mary Gates, was a schoolteacher, University of Washington regent, and chairwoman of United Way International. The Gateses have three children.

**\*\* Lord Cameron of Dillington** is a life-peer and cross-bench member of the House of Lords. He was educated at Harrow and later Oxford University where he studied modern History before becoming manager of Dillington Estate in Somerset in 1971, the country estate having been held by his Mother's family for some 250 years. He is co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development.

Between 1995 and 1997 he was National President of the Country Land and Business Association and a member of the Government's Round Table for Sustainable Development from 1997 until 2000 when it was superseded by the Sustainable Development Commission. In addition to this Lord Cameron has held the position of Chair of the Countryside Agency (1999 - 2004) and was the UK Government's rural advocate for England from 2000 to 2004. Knighted in 2003, he joined the House of Lords a year later and is currently a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Royal Agricultural Societies.

**\*\*\*Rt. Hon Alan Duncan, Minister of State for International Development**

Alan Duncan MP was appointed as Minister of State for International Development on 13th May 2010.

Alan Duncan's great passion for international affairs is inspired by a lifetime of global voyage and discovery. Born in 1957, raised in Hertfordshire and across the world tracking his father's RAF career, he went onto study at Oxford and Harvard. His early career as a crude oil trader spanned the Middle East, South East Asia and Singapore, where he lived for two years. Alan Duncan has kept a constant watch on the wider world throughout his parliamentary career, reflected in his appointment as shadow

Secretary for International Development from 2004 to 2005. He is personally committed to DFID's central goal of combating global poverty and has long been an advocate of well-managed, effectively-spent aid.

Alan Duncan joined Parliament in 1992 as the Conservative Member for Rutland and Melton. Five years later he was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party and Parliamentary Political Secretary to the Rt. Hon. William Hague MP. He has held a number of positions in the Shadow Cabinet, most recently as Shadow Secretary for Trade Industry and Energy (2005). In 2009, Alan Duncan was appointed Shadow Leader of the House and shortly after, he became Shadow Minister for Prisons and Probation.

**\*\*\*\*Harriet Lamb, Executive Director, Fairtrade Foundation**

Harriet Lamb has been Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation since 2001. She has guided the Foundation through a period of staggering growth, which has seen estimated sales of Fairtrade products in the UK increase from £30m in her first year to £800m in 2009. The number of products carrying the FAIRTRADE Mark has grown from 80 to more than 4,500 licensed products. This enables some 7.5 million farmers and workers and their families across the world to participate in Fairtrade. A flourishing grassroots social movement has also grown across the UK. There are now almost 500 Fairtrade Towns – towns where a commitment to Fairtrade has been made by the council, shops and businesses – together with 120 Fairtrade universities and nearly 6,000 Fairtrade Places of Worship. Nine in 10 households purchase Fairtrade goods.

Harriet Lamb was awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours List 2006, in recognition of her work in building Fairtrade in the UK. In 2008, Harriet won the prestigious Outstanding Woman in Business at the Credit Suisse National Business Awards. This week the Fairtrade Foundation was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Sustainable Development category.

**\*\*\*\*Aaron Oxley Executive Director Results UK**

Aaron has been working in International Development for over a decade, abandoning a career in IT to leverage his professional skills to make a difference to the world's poor. His work has been primarily in microfinance, working on building organizations in the developing world to provide the poor with access to financial services including savings, loans and insurance. From 2006-2009, Aaron worked as Chief Operating and then Chief Technology Officer for MicroEnsure, the world's largest microinsurance broker.

Starting as a volunteer in his spare time, Aaron has been working with RESULTS, a citizen's advocacy group, for the last 10 years. In 2005 he joined the Board of Directors and in September 2009 was appointed Executive Director. RESULTS works to empower ordinary people to learn about International Development issues and to become politically active, using their voices as citizens to create the public and political will to bring about the end of poverty.

**\*\*\*\*\*Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development and MP for Paisley and Renfrewshire South**

Born in Glasgow in 1967, Douglas grew up in Bishopton. He studied at Edinburgh University, and the University of Pennsylvania. After graduating, he worked for former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and then trained as a lawyer. Douglas stood in the Perth and Kinross by-election in 1995, before returning to work with a firm of solicitors. He stood again in Perth in 1997 General Election.

He was then invited to stand in the Paisley South by-election held in November 2007, and was elected to Parliament, holding the seat for Labour. In June 2001 he was returned with an increased majority. Douglas was appointed Minister for e-Commerce and Competitiveness at the DTI in 2001, and in May 2002, was appointed Minister of State at the Cabinet Office. In the June 2003 reshuffle, he became Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster - and in 2004 was appointed as Minister of State for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs.

Douglas was re-elected in May 2005, and promoted to Minister of State for Europe at the Foreign Office. In May 2006 he was appointed as Secretary of State for Transport and Secretary of State for Scotland. He became Secretary of State for International Development during the reshuffle in June 2007, a position which he held until the General Election of May 2010. He was re-elected in May 2010, and now serves as Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for International Development.