



GOVERNMENT WHIPS' OFFICE
HOUSE OF LORDS
LONDON SW1A 0PW

BARONESS WILLIAMS OF TRAFFORD
BARONESS IN WAITING
020-7219 3778

Telephone 020-7219 3131
www.lordswhips.org.uk
holgovernmentwhips@parliament.uk

10 November 2014

Dear Anthony,

**SERIOUS CRIME BILL – LORDS REPORT STAGE: FEMALE GENITAL
MUTILATION**

During the Report Stage debate on various amendments to tackle female genital mutilation (FGM), you asked whether the Government would take steps to persuade other countries to collaborate, if necessary by amending their laws, in order to eradicate this vile practice (Hansard, 28 October, column 1099). I said I would write to you.

The Girl Summit

On 22 July 2014, the UK government and UNICEF hosted the first Girl Summit, aimed at mobilising domestic and international efforts to end FGM and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) within a generation. The summit resulted in commitments to take action to end FGM and CEFM from organisations, governments, businesses, communities and individuals across the world.

The Girl Summit Charter on ending FGM and CEFM was signed by hundreds of signatories who agreed that “Governments must design and implement effective, properly funded policies and clear legislation to end these practices forever, and to protect anyone at risk. Where necessary they should work together across borders to implement these policies and legislation.”

Aside from the Charter's signature by the government of the United Kingdom, the Welsh and Scottish governments, and the office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland, the governments of the following countries signed the charter: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cyprus, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Malawi, Malta, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Puntland, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, Yemen, and Zambia.

The Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC
House of Lord

As well as the signatory countries, the following other countries also made commitments on tackling FGM: Egypt, India, Japan, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, and the USA.

The Charter added that "Legislation alone is not enough," stating that signatories would also work to provide access to appropriate services for girls and women at risk, raise awareness and understanding, and drive systemic, sustainable change, working with governments, faith groups, traditional leaders, NGOs, civil society groups, young people, practitioners, people affected, communities, international organisations, media and the private sector to take action to end FGM and CEFM.

Work by the Department for International Development

The Department for International Development (DFID) has begun an ambitious programme to address FGM in Africa and beyond. The programme will work with communities, through civil society organisations, in at least 15 of the most affected countries.¹ This will support whole communities to end the practice through a comprehensive package of support including education and awareness-raising. The programme will also ensure that legislation and policy is in place and appropriately implemented. Through the Africa-led campaign, *The Girl Generation*, 10 African countries will also receive dedicated support to the development of national social change strategies to bolster community-based activities. DFID's programme will raise the profile of this neglected issue – moving it from a taboo subject to the mainstream of international development. A robust research agenda will be integrated in the programme to produce high quality global evidence on what will work to end FGM in different contexts so that this can inform future programming.

The total funding is up to £35 million over five years. The programme aims to see a reduction in cutting by 30% in at least 10 countries in five years (measured by prevalence among 0-14 year olds) with an ambition toward ending FGM in one generation.

The Girl Generation

DFID recognises the strong links between diaspora communities and their countries of origin/home countries and they therefore work closely with the Home Office on this issue. There are many organisations and individuals in the diaspora who are doing great work to address FGM, both in the UK and overseas. On the other hand, we have also heard about diaspora families taking their girls back to their home countries to have them cut. This is illegal under UK law. It can also undermine efforts to end the practice in the home countries. The Girl Generation www.thegirlgeneration.org is developing ways to support diaspora organisations to bring about change in their countries of origin.

DFID are also supporting an African-led movement to end FGM. 'The Girl Generation: Together to End FGM' was launched on 10 October 2014 and will start its work in Kenya, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. The Girl Generation will support campaigns to end FGM in some of the most affected

¹ The UN Joint Programme works in Senegal, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Djibouti, Somalia, and will add Nigeria and Yemen in Phase 2.

countries in Africa. The programme aims to bring stories of change to a global audience, stimulate media campaigns, recruit ambassadors, and mobilise resources to help end FGM in one generation.

I am copying this letter to Baroness Smith of Basildon, Lord Rosser, Baroness Hamwee, Baroness Meacher, Baroness Butler-Sloss, Lord Dobbs, the Bishop of Rochester and Baroness Hughes of Stretford. I am also placing a copy in the library of the House.

Yours ever,

Susan

Baroness Williams of Trafford