



## LCID Submission to the National Policy Forum June 2020

Author: David Taylor, Vice-Chair | [david@laid.org.uk](mailto:david@laid.org.uk) | 07749 702352

Labour has always fought for justice and equality for all both at home and abroad. That must continue. From the Global Recession to the fallout of the Arab Spring, from climate change to Covid-19, the world has been in constant flux in the last decade. But one thing remains constant: Labour values of cooperation and internationalism are the ones to guide us in a globalised world.

### 1. Responding to Covid-19 in the short term

The majority of this submission puts forward a vision for international development under the next Labour Government in a post-Covid world. But the virus is having an increasingly devastating impact on some of the world's poorest people here and now. In opposition, Labour must push for the current government to take a much greater leadership role on the global stage if we are to prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths and poverty increasing for millions.

The poorest countries already have weak health care systems, little testing equipment, hardly any ventilators and few medical supplies. The Central African Republic has just three ventilators for its five million citizens, Uganda has more government ministers than intensive-care beds, and ten African countries have none at all. But this is not just a healthcare crisis. Half a billion people could be pushed into poverty across the world as lockdowns come into force and trade is disrupted.

The International Trade Union Congress (ITUC) estimated that almost 60% of countries in Africa, and over a third in the Americas, are not providing wage protection and income support for workers. And even where there is support, it's not enough to cover essential costs – as is the case for people in two thirds of the countries across Asia.

As Gordon Brown has argued, there must be a coordinated effort to create and guarantee the availability, accessibility and affordability of a vaccine in every country. We must also ensure that developing countries get the \$35bn that the World Health Organisation estimated they need to boost their healthcare systems.

To prevent mass redundancies and a recession becoming a depression, stimulus packages will need to be provided to low income countries, and G20 governments and businesses will need to work together to finance furlough schemes to keep farmers and workers in international supply chains from falling into poverty.

### Labour should push the UK Government to:

- Ensure global access to any vaccines, tests or other treatments related to Covid-19.
- Push for Finance Ministers to approve the International Monetary Fund issuing \$600 billion of 'special drawing rights' (SDRs, its global reserve assets) to finance the global response and recovery to the virus, including:
  - \$3bn needed for a vaccine
  - \$5bn for the Universal Social Protection Fund for the poorest countries ([as called for by the ITUC](#))<sup>1</sup>
  - \$35bn to boost the healthcare systems of the poorest countries (as estimated by the WHO)
- For the G20 and private lenders to agree to a suspension of debt service payments owed by poor countries until at least the end of 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> Details on the ITUC Universal Social Protection Fun can be found here: <https://medium.com/@SharanBurrow/social-protection-systems-underpin-the-most-successful-government-responses-to-covid-19-ba121815a4b2>

## 2. DFID and UK Aid

The creation of DFID as an independent department is one of the greatest achievements of the last Labour government. We set the UK on the path to spending 0.7% of GNI on aid, and by the time we had left office, UK aid was helping lift 3 million people out of poverty each year.

The scrapping of DFID is a shameful decision by this Tory government. By law, UK aid is meant to be focused on poverty reduction, not for any other reason. The best way to ensure that is through an independent department, with a Secretary of State around the Cabinet table. Aid spent by other UK Government departments is consistently rated poorly by independent auditors for its transparency, value for money, and most importantly, its effectiveness.

When development agencies sit under the Foreign Office, that focus gets subverted. Before DFID was created by Labour, the Pergau dam affair saw Tories spend hundreds of millions of pounds in UK aid linked to a major arms deal. In Australia, the scrapping of AusAid has seen them lose much of their expertise and money diverted house refugees within Australia instead of development projects.

A Secretary of State around the Cabinet table is also essential, because it is meant to mean that development issues are discussed at the highest levels of government - that when the Cabinet discusses the UK's approach to a global crisis or G20 or G7 summit, the Secretary of State is there to push for development issues to be part of the agenda.

Quite obviously, there is a global crisis happening right now that Britain and DFID should be playing a leading role in tackling – one that is hitting the world's poorest hard. Just at a time when DFID, with its two decades worth of expertise, should be helping lead the global response, they have been side-lined. Just when the world needs global leadership, this Tory government is not only no-where to be seen, but making the problem worse.

### **The next Labour government should:**

- Re-establish DFID as an independent department on day 1, with a Secretary of State that attends Cabinet
- Keep the 0.7% aid target in place
- Push for the OECD DAC guidelines to be strengthened so that ODA is focused on poverty alleviation

## 3. A Responsibility to Protect

We believe Labour is an internationalist party with a proud record of fighting injustices around the world, from supporting Indian independence, to the anti-apartheid struggle, to leading action to protect civilians in Sierra Leone and Kosovo. As Robin Cook said, we must never 'turn a blind eye to how other governments behave and a deaf ear to the cries for help of their people'.

The next Labour Government must learn from the many successes and failures of our foreign policy decisions. Every situation is different, but we will always be guided by our internationalist principles and by our international obligations such as the Responsibility To Protect Civilians, which we signed up to with each and every government in the U.N. in 2005.

This principle acknowledges that when a government either wilfully fails to protect the security of its citizens, or is unable to do so, the international community has a clear obligation to intervene, choosing timely and decisive action from a wide range of approaches, including diplomatic means, sanctions and in the most extreme cases, military operations.

Through our development work and following any direct interventions Britain must always stand ready to support communities and countries to rebuild with a long term development plan to secure safety, stability and prosperity for their people.

The merits of any actions we take or decline to take must always be carefully considered and scrutinised, recognising that both action and inaction are a choice and each has a consequence. The lessons of Iraq will be important in those considerations – so too must be the lessons of Bosnia, Kosovo,

Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Syria. The next Labour Government must make the case for an ethical foreign policy and champion a progressive approach to humanitarian intervention.

Labour has always believed that all people matter, that global inequalities are no less our concern than those we fight at home and that we have moral obligations that reach beyond our borders to people we will never meet and places we will never visit. Labour should never shirk these responsibilities and always work to further progressive Labour values on the global stage.

Over 80 Labour MPs and Peers have signed our statement in support of R2P. We arranged for the launch of the late Jo Cox MP's [report on R2P](#), 'The Cost of Doing Nothing,' which we share with this submission as an annex.<sup>2</sup> You can read the names of the signatories [here](#).<sup>3</sup>

**The next Labour government should:**

- Pursue an ethical foreign policy, including upholding the 2005 UN Responsibility to Protect Civilians agreement, and the Arms Trade Treaty.
- Labour will push for a comprehensive strategy to protect civilians

**4. A whole government approach**

Britain's role in the world – and our ability to reduce inequality and help people, communities and countries lift themselves out of poverty and fulfil their rights – is about so much more than aid, and stretches beyond what Labour's flagship Department for International Development (DFID) is able to achieve on its own.

LCID believes in a pro-rights, pro-equality and multilateralist approach to development that not only lifts people out of poverty but fundamentally redistributes power and addresses structural injustices. Aid remains central – but we need to look beyond it. To do this, we need to mainstream global social justice across UK Government policy.

Policy coherence matters on two levels: within our aid policy and across all UK Government policies that have a global impact. Policy coherence has to begin with coherence of objective. If coherence of objective is achieved then, with the right mechanisms in place, coherence of delivery will follow. That is the only way to ensure that we do not entrench poverty with one hand whilst trying to relieve it with the other. An open, globally-minded Britain should aim to be a development superpower.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only be achieved with a cross-government approach and ensuring all goals are seen as cross-cutting and not in silos. In prioritising some SDGs over others, there is a risk that governments, private sector companies and other stakeholders adopt a 'pick and choose' approach. Further to a cross-departmental approach to the SDGs the UK must ensure it is delivering the SDGs for the many and not the few, ensuring that no-one is left behind.

**The next Labour government should:**

- Ensure that all policies – on trade, tax, immigration, defence, energy, climate change, foreign policy alliances and growth – are 'pro-development'.
- Create a cross-departmental working group to monitor the implementation and success of delivery against the SDGs both at home and abroad, creating a national plan for the UK to deliver from at home.

**5. Gender Equality**

Women continue to face discrimination in every region of the world: No country is on track to achieve gender equality by 2030<sup>4</sup> and 1.4 billion girls and women live in countries failing on gender equality.<sup>5</sup> Gender bias is undermining our social fabric and devalues all of us. It is not just a human rights issue;

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<sup>2</sup> <https://labourcid.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/r2p-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://laid.org.uk/r2p>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/jun/03/not-one-single-country-set-to-achieve-gender-equality-by-2030>

<sup>5</sup> <https://womendeliver.org/press/nearly-40-of-the-worlds-girls-and-women-live-in-countries-failing-on-gender-equality-sdg-index-find>

it is a tremendous waste of the world's human potential. By denying women equal rights, we deny half the population a chance to live life at its fullest. Political, economic and social equality for women will benefit all the world's citizens and is the best chance we have in meeting some of the most pressing challenges of our time—from economic crisis and lack of health care, to climate change, violence against women and escalating conflicts. Women are not victims they have ideas and leadership to solve these problems

Labour has always been a party that champions women's rights at home and abroad. We should embrace a feminist foreign policy and put advancing women's rights at the heart of what we do.

**The next Labour government should:**

- Establish a feminist foreign policy and make gender equality a priority of their foreign policy and Official Development Assistance.
- Invest in women on the frontlines by increasing funding for women's grassroots organisations.
- Lead by example through implementing the recommendations of the G7's Gender Equality Advisory council<sup>6</sup> including identifying and abolishing discriminatory laws, and enacting and implementing progressive legislative frameworks that advance gender equality.
- Back measures to support more women into leadership positions
- Commit to building evidence and disaggregated data- millions of girls and women are currently "invisible" to policy makers [because of a lack of information about their lives](#).

**6. Universal Health Coverage**

The best strategy to tackle COVID-19, build resilient health systems and leave no-one behind is through ensuring that all countries achieve, publicly-financed universal health coverage (UHC).

As Gro Harlem Brundtland identified in her UNGA speech last year, the world has learnt that you can only reach UHC through public financing, where the state compels health wealthy people to subsidise services for the sick and the poor. In particular it is essential that countries replace private out-of-pocket financing (ie user fees) with more efficient and equitable public financing.

If we are to ensure that nobody is left behind in reaching UHC, it is essential that health services are available for everyone FREE at the point of delivery. Switching to a universal publicly-financed health system is an inherently political process which will be opposed by powerful interest groups including private insurance companies, private health providers, big pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies and the rich who fear having to pay higher taxes. These are the forces stopping the US and many other countries from reaching UHC

The foundation for successful UHC reforms is therefore ensuring that there is genuine and sustained political commitment from the head of state (or provincial/state leaders) to overcome these forces and bring UHC to everyone. Generating political commitment for UHC reforms should therefore be a top priority for development agencies but unfortunately most are not willing or able to engage with leaders on political matters and instead they prefer to treat UHC reforms as a technical issue where they only interact with civil servants

In encouraging leaders to launch UHC reforms it is necessary to promote benefits beyond the obvious health benefits and in particular emphasise the economic, societal and especially the political benefits of bringing universal free health care to everyone. It is surprising how infrequently heads of state are told how UHC reforms are a proven way to increase a leader's popularity, win votes and elections and leave a legacy for generations. These incentives are the most effective way to turn a leader into a UHC champion.

In recent years some organisations and individuals (notably: Dr Tedros, The Elders, Gordon Brown and Chatham House) have promoted the political benefits of UHC to heads of state and their interventions have resulted in leaders launching health reforms that have brought free healthcare to millions. Examples include pro-poor UHC reforms in: Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Malawi, Indonesia, China, India and Nepal.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2019biarritz/GEAC-recommendations.pdf>

In the midst of a global pandemic, the case for universal free health care, that guarantees everyone access to quality health services without financial hardship, has never been stronger. Political leaders under pressure should be very receptive to proposals to accelerate UHC reforms as a means to extend health coverage and protect livelihoods which could deliver them quick political benefits. But the global health community is not relaying these messages effectively to top political leaders either in power or vying for power.

Working collaboratively with our donors and partners and targeting activities on top-level political leaders, Labour will be able to help catalyse major pro-poor UHC reforms in at least one of the countries listed below, bringing free health care to millions and encouraging other countries to follow similar strategies.

**The next Labour government should:**

- Establish a centre that will explicitly engage in issues relating to the political economy of health financing for UHC.
  - This will be complementary to other agencies' health financing programmes which tend to focus on technical issues around efficiency and costings etc.
  - It would build a partnership of like-minded organisations and individuals working in this field with the specific objective of championing pro-poor UHC reforms to political leaders.
  - It would also provide them with specialised technical assistance on how they can finance and implement their UHC reforms including advice on overcoming political constraints.
  - The target countries would include: Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, and South Africa.

**7. Climate Change**

We support the call of the UK Climate Coalition for a recovery that gets us on track to net-zero emissions and limits the rise in global temperature to 1.5oC, including increasing support to those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change at home and abroad.

In line with its historic contribution to the climate crisis, the UK should help to drive a resilient, sustainable and inclusive global recovery by strengthening international support for the most vulnerable countries and communities worldwide, including by significantly increased grant-based climate finance.

The UK should also support a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive economic recovery in developing countries by ending all public support, both aid and export finance, for fossil fuels overseas and supporting countries instead to leapfrog to renewable and efficient energy, and energy access for all. This will ensure the UK's leadership in reducing its domestic emissions and on phasing out coal finance is not undermined by locking in further fossil fuel infrastructure overseas, including oil and gas. The government should proactively engage Multilateral Development Banks, other financial institutions and other governments to do the same.

**The next Labour government should:**

- Play a global leadership role to ramp up international climate finance to enable vulnerable countries and communities to adapt to climate change, build resilience, including through food and water security, and address unavoidable losses and damage.
- End all public support, both aid and export finance, for fossil fuels overseas and supporting countries instead to leapfrog to renewable and efficient energy, and energy access for all.

## **Annex: Jo Cox Report on the Responsibility to Protect – Summary of Guiding Principles**

[‘The Cost of Doing Nothing’](#), based on work begun by Jo Cox MP, and completed by Alison McGovern MP and Tom Tugendhat MP, sets out some guiding principles for how Britain can act to uphold its responsibility to protect civilians and prevent mass atrocities:

- Military intervention should be saved for only the most egregious and appropriate cases; there are many other forms of pressure which can be effective.
- We should act early, on the basis of a thorough analysis of the conflict dynamics, and in concert with other actors, wielding diplomatic tools first.
- Responding quickly to unfolding events can save the most lives. Ethnic cleansing and mass atrocities often occur in the early phases of conflicts, as in Rwanda and Bosnia.
- Interference in the affairs of other states is an inherently political act and cannot be devolved solely to the diplomatic or military professionals: we should take a cross-government approach, drawing on the knowledge base and capabilities of all relevant ministries and agencies.
- Any intervention – military or otherwise – should be predicated on a clear strategy, with a clear goal, that calculates the probability of success and takes into account the cost of not acting.
- In the case of military intervention, the strategy should acknowledge at the outset the long-term challenges of reconstruction, political reconciliation, and economic development.
- Whatever form intervention takes, states should set explicit and limited political goals and communicate these clearly to other actors (including their opponents) to avoid violence spiralling beyond control.
- Legitimate humanitarian interventions must ideally, and where appropriate, be supported by as broad a coalition as possible and comprise international, regional, and local actors.
- Allies should anticipate and have the ability to withstand opposition from domestic constituencies and demands for early exits.
- If force is needed, using the appropriate level to avoid retaliation and further conflict is essential. Overwhelming force deters and ultimately saves lives – both of combatants and civilians.
- The credibility of military intervention depends on access to enough military power to back up a commitment to protect civilians and to prevail even if things do not go according to plan.