

Baroness Royall's Speech for close of High-Level meeting of the Global Partners Forum

Lancaster House, Friday 10th February 2006

I bring good wishes and apologies from my colleague, Valerie Amos. However, it is a privilege for me to be here to close the 3rd Global Partners Forum on Children Affected by AIDS. I know that Valerie, Hilary Benn and Gareth Thomas attach great significance to this Forum, which is as relevant today as it was when Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel called for "Urgent Action for Children on the Brink" in 2002. If anything its work is made more relevant by the momentum and emphasis on AIDS which has been generated in 2005. Momentum that we must all deliver on.

The UK was very pleased to be asked to host this meeting with UNICEF, and in close collaboration with the UK Consortium on AIDS and International Development. The level of attendance is truly impressive, bringing together high level representatives from 90 international organisations, NGOs and governments. You are all central to addressing the needs of Children Affected by AIDS. As co-host we have benefited tremendously from working so closely with UNICEF, NGOs, and other governments. I know that colleagues in DFID have felt a real sense of partnership in working with you all, towards delivering successful outcomes from this meeting. We particularly value the partnerships that UNICEF is forming around the global campaign for children and AIDS. This can only bode well for the future, as we look forward to the UN General Assembly meeting in June. We have an enormous amount to do.

As you know, 2005 was a big year for development, and for AIDS. It resulted in important new commitments to increase global aid by \$50bn a year by 2010; to cancel the debts of up to 38 countries, worth up to \$55bn; to reach up to 85% of people affected by malaria. And on AIDS, to get as close as possible to universal access to treatment by 2010. The UK's focus on development through its G8 and EU Presidencies in 2005 helped to achieve these things.

But our commitment goes past 2005. And we are absolutely determined to ensure that progress is made.

So I am pleased to hear from Peter McDermott's summary that you have agreed a series of actions in the 6 areas on the agenda, and that you are all focused on implementation. Clearly, holding the technical meeting prior to the forum was an excellent innovation. It has helped to focus the discussions on the right issues, and to agree concrete actions. These should ensure that the needs of Children Affected By AIDS are strongly represented in the report that UNAIDS publish for Heads of State at the High Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly in June. I know that DFID Ministers are committed to using the UK's position as co-chair of the Global Steering Committee to make this happen.

Our focus must be on action. We must have action to improve the lives of children, their families and communities. But we also have to act because the world is watching. The commitments made at Gleneagles, and endorsed at the World Summit, were made following an unprecedented public call for action culminating in more than 3 billion people watching and taking part in Live8. The spotlight is focused firmly on AIDS. We are rightly expected to deliver. And that's why the Global Partners Forum will report back on progress at its next meeting. We will be held accountable for our record – by global public opinion, and, of course, all of us gathered in this room today will hold each other accountable.

I can confirm, as the Secretary of State has done, that the UK will be playing its part. We are committed to increasing access to AIDS medicines and to increasing the number, range and availability of diagnostics and paediatric formulations. DFID is working closely with pharmaceutical companies to make drugs more affordable, and the UK government will prioritise this on the UNAIDS Global Steering Committee. This may only be one element of what needs to change in order to make children's lives better, but it is something we must do. It is simply unacceptable that it costs six times as much to treat a child as it does an adult.

But we must also take a broader view. And this is why we will also be working closely with Governments, UNICEF and with NGOs to support the development of integrated, long-term, national action plans for children integrated into PRSPs following up on the important Rapid Analysis and Action Planning (RAAAP) process.

We must keep up the pressure in 2006, so that by the time the GPF meets again, we can point to real progress. Not progress in terms of promises. But progress in terms of implementation, so that we make children's lives better.

We can do this. But only by making a huge, concerted effort and by working together.