

**Letter from prime minister Gordon Brown to Archbishop Nichols
and Cardinal O'Brien**

24 June 2009

Dear Cardinal Keith and Archbishop Vincent

Thank you for your letter of 22 June. Like you, I share a passion for, and commitment to, development issues. When we met earlier this year, Pope Benedict XVI and I agreed that there is a moral imperative that world leaders maintain and fulfil our commitments to the world's poorest, particularly during the global downturn. I am grateful for your support in drawing attention to this issue ahead of the meeting of the G8 in L'Aquila next month.

I am convinced that we can show the leadership that is required. Building on the agreements at the London G20 Summit, which included agreements of \$50bn in support of the poorest countries, I am working with leaders of the G8 and other major economies, ensuring that we continue to provide action on tackling the present crisis and help prevent future crisis.

Critical to this agenda is maintaining and delivering our aid commitments in order to reduce global poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The G8's credibility rests upon demonstrating that our commitments are being fulfilled. The UK is on track to meet our ambitious aid commitments, but we need to improve our ability to track and make progress on past commitments together. I hope the G8 makes progress in this regard.

I am also determined that we make progress on health, and particularly maternal mortality - the MDG that is most off-track. The UK has been working tirelessly to ensure that this G8 signals a strong political commitment to maternal health and secures additional resources beyond meeting existing G8 commitments. The current economic environment means that we will need to agree on innovative new ways of raising funds for health, something that I know you will support, given that Pope Benedict XVI purchased the first IFFIm bond in 2006. Progress is vital to demonstrate that we remain engaged and to preserve our credibility in this area.

We must also ensure that recent gains for development are not lost, particularly in the context of armed conflicts which rob people of the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty. It is vital that the G8 continues efforts to strengthen peace keeping and peace building capacity in Africa, through enhanced coordination and assistance for African-led peace support operations.

I also appreciate the strong interest taken by the Catholic Church in climate change. Eradicating poverty in developing countries and tackling climate change are inextricably linked. The UK is committed to supporting a global deal on climate change at Copenhagen that includes a strong partnership between developing and developed

countries. I have written to my fellow leaders proposing that we seek to agree at L'Aquila the main principles - including the UK's proposal for a compact on finance for developing countries - and a timetable for how we get to Copenhagen.

I am grateful for your work and leadership on these issues. The UK will continue to make every effort to ensure protection of the world's poorest remains central to this year's G8 Summit, which should provide a stepping stone to the G20 meeting later this year.

Yours,

Gordon Brown