

Mr José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero  
President of the Government  
Palacio de la Moncloa  
Madrid

2 March 2011

Dear President:

The undersigned organizations are addressing you to express our concern for the change of course that Spanish development policy has taken. Spain's determined commitment to the fight against poverty and to reaching the Millennium Development Goals had generated great expectation both in Europe and throughout the world, and had made your country a model to follow. However, recent cutbacks and changes in your Government's priorities have made us wonder whether your commitment to poverty reduction and promoting development continues to be a priority for your Government.

We are aware of the delicate economic situation that your country has experienced lately and we therefore understand that a great part of the effort undertaken by your administration is currently focused on solving the crisis that both Spain and the rest of the international community are experiencing. We are, however, concerned that your government may have strayed from its **commitment to reach the 0.7%** mark by the year 2012. While in recent years, Spain had made major increases to its ODA, one must not overlook the fact that in years prior, the percentage allocated had been very low for a country like Spain, and that gradual increases in the percentage of ODA have placed Spain merely at the 0.4% of GDP mark, still very far from the 0.7% established several decades ago. Furthermore, Spain has recently joined the group of countries supporting an international financial transaction tax. We applaud this support to the FTT, but believe that in any event, the revenue generated must be additional and not replace your governments' obligation to devote 0.7% of their GDP to ODA. Given the importance that your Government has always attached to development policy, the horizon of the 0.7% should have been maintained and cutbacks should have been avoided. The United Kingdom, which has made very severe budget cutbacks, has not only maintained its cooperation budget, but has enacted laws to make the commitment binding. We believe that should be the model to follow. We also believe this consideration is not stranger to you, since in 2009 Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs took a public stance on the need for the 0.7% figure to be compulsory in donor countries.

Since its first term in power, your Government has shown true vision on the value of multilateralism in order to tackle the major challenges faced by humanity and fight against inequality and for social justice. We therefore consider that the ODA cutback, made mostly in **multilateral aid** is not consistent with the policy of effective, responsible, solidarity-minded multilateralism that your Government has defended from the outset. To a great extent, the positive results achieved in basic social services over the last few years owe to an increase in support for multilateral instruments which, like the Global Fund for the Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, finance health, education and food programmes in developing countries.

In order to meet the Millennium Development Goals, ODA must be invested in **basic social sectors** as a priority. And this principle makes even more sense now in a context in which available ODA is being reduced. However, the way in which cutbacks have been made in Spain has led the burden to fall mainly on sectors such as **health** or education, areas whose budgets have been cut by over 10 % while bank and financial services funding increase. No cutback in ODA should affect the basic social services of those who have the least, since they are the ones most affected by any crisis in this globalized world.

In the specific cases of the global fight against HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health, your Government's change of course has been tremendous. Over the last few years, Spain had demonstrated a high degree of commitment to the fight against this pandemic by very considerably increasing both its political and financial involvement. Under your Government, Spain increased its contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, placing it among the main donors, although far from what its corresponding amount would be to fight AIDS on a global scale. The cutbacks have disproportionately affected HIV/AIDS, and Spain's contribution to the Fund has decreased dramatically (by nearly 50% in 2010)

and initiatives such as the IAVI or the IPM (which decreased 70%) devoted to R&D of vaccines and microbicides to prevent HIV infection.

The Global Fund is the multilateral instrument that has obtained the best results in health. It has made great strides in the fight against poverty-related diseases with very clear goals set out for 2015: an end to mother-to-child transmission of HIV; malaria as no longer a public health problem; and multi-resistant tuberculosis to be controlled. Spain's commitment over the last few years has been key to saving the lives of 6 million people since the Fund was established. However, Spain's stance over the last few months, diminishing its 2010 funding by nearly half and freezing its 2011 contribution does not correspond to the leadership that your Government has shown since 2007 regarding HIV/AIDS, the Global Fund, and health in general.

The fight against AIDS is a commitment undertaken by the International community during the Millennium Goal Summit, and it is crucial for Spain to maintain it. France has increased its contribution to the Global Fund by 20%, as has the United States, the Fund's main donor, announcing a historical tri-annual pledge. It must undoubtedly be highlighted that the United Kingdom, after a thorough evaluation of its multilateral policy, has decided to increase its contribution to the Global Fund in recognition of the fact that it is one of the most effective tools obtaining the best results working towards the MDGs.

For all of these reasons, the organizations from x countries, working to get the international community to meet its responsibilities in the fight against poverty, strongly urge you to reconsider you plans and ensure that:

1. As soon as possible, Spain returns to its tendency to increase ODA to reach the 0.7% of GDP mark at least by 2015, and makes 0.7% a binding commitment. It will be difficult for Spain to take an engaged, committed lead in defending the Millennium Objectives without a clear an realistic commitment with the 0.7%.
2. Basic social services be a priority in ODA and even more so in the current times of crisis and cutbacks.
3. Spain re-establish its same level of financial and political support to the Global Fund that fights poverty-related diseases by providing access to treatment and prevention to the population at large, and particularly to the most vulnerable groups which would otherwise not access it.

Cordially yours,

Signing the letter:

1. Michael Cashman MEP, Labour Spokesperson on Development
2. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, United States
3. RESULTS UK, United Kingdom
4. Project RING of Japan AIDS and Society Association, Japan
5. Ugoku/Ugokasu (GCAP), Japan
6. Femme Plus, Democratique Republique of Congo
7. International Treatment Preparedness Coalition, Thailand
8. The Health of Romany people Foundation, Bulgaria
9. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Canada
10. TB ACTION Group, Kenya
11. TB Alert, United Kingdom
12. Wote Youth Development Projects, Kenya
13. Slovak Family Planning Association, Slovakia
14. Health GAP, United States
15. Destine Resource Center, Nigeria
16. Red Comunal El Bosque de Acción en VIH/SIDA, Chile
17. Network of Zambian People living with HIV (NZP+), Zambia
18. Partners in Population and Development Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO), Uganda
19. Ntchisi Integrated Development Organisation, Malawi
20. Africa Japan Forum, Japan
21. Centro Comunitario Trabajo Organizado por los Derechos Sexuales Tod@s, Peru
22. Asociacion Animo y Aliento, Peru
23. Asociación de Mujeres Gente Nueva, Guatemala
24. Red Argentina de Mujeres Viviendo con vih-sida, Argentina
25. Fundación Huésped, Argentina
26. Fundación Marco Antonio, Guatemala
27. Intercambios Asociación Civil, Argentina
28. Comité Acceso Universal GBT y HSH, Bolivia
29. RESULTS ED US, United States
30. Catholics for Choice, United States
31. PSI Europe, The Netherlands
32. Stop AIDS Alliance, Belgium
33. Coalition PLUS, France
34. African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (AfrICASO), Senegal
35. International AIDS Alliance, United Kingdom
36. International Civil Society Support, The Netherlands
37. AIDS Action Europe, The Netherlands
38. WIDE, Belgium
39. Genus Pharmaceuticals Ltd., United Kingdom
40. National Malaria Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Uganda
41. KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation, The Netherlands
42. Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia, Mexico
43. Stop AIDS Campaign, The United Kingdom
44. The African Eye Trust, The United Kingdom
45. European Aids Treatment Group (EATG)