Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you to register our deep sense of disappointment about your decision to amalgamate the Department for International Development with the Foreign Office. That it is done at all is a retrograde step; that this is being undertaken during a climate crisis and during the Covid-19 pandemic – a crisis that is affecting millions of people around the globe – is particularly disturbing.

We do welcome your commitment to keep the budget for international development and aid at 0.7% of Gross National Income. We share your pride that the UK first hit the target in 2013 and then made it legally binding in 2015. However, we are concerned that through the amalgamation of both departments, some of this budget will be used for purposes other than originally intended. We are particularly concerned that a link might be made between aid and trade.

DfID has built a strong reputation both for its humanitarian work around the world and for doing so in an efficient and transparent manner. The independent aid transparency index rates DfID as the third-best aid agency internationally, while the FCO is sixth from bottom in a field of 45. To gamble with this reputation and record seems reckless, especially at a time when the UK is attempting to strengthen its ties with the world.

The communities and churches of Wales have supported the international development effort in partnership with Christian Aid for 75 years. We do so, not because of any sense of self-interest but because we believe passionately that standing together in solidarity with the world’s poor is an essential element of our Christian Faith. In DfID, we have had a partner worthy of the goal of eradicating global poverty. Losing this partner is both regrettable and disappointing and we believe that the world’s poorest will suffer if the government’s international development work is downgraded.

You have already shown yourself to be strong enough to be willing to reconsider decisions your government has made. We would ask you, therefore, to reconsider this decision also.

We want to impress upon you therefore, the need to protect the values and integrity of DfID. If, despite our representations, this will be within the new department, we would impress upon you to ensure the work which DfID has, and will hopefully continue to do, is done without trade ties. The UK will be better for that, but more importantly, the poorest will be better too.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Cynan Llwyd (Acting Head of Christian Aid Wales)

Revd Nan Powell-Davies (Chair of Christian Aid Wales)

Most Revd John Davies (Archbishop of Wales)

Rt Revd Joanna Penberthy (Bishop of St Davids)

Revd Meirion Morris (General Secretary, The Presbyterian Church of Wales)

Revd Judith Morris (General Secretary, The Baptist Union of Wales)

Revd Dyfrig Rees (General Secretary, Union of Welsh Independents)

Revd Dr Jennifer Hurd (Chair of the Cymru Methodist Synod)

Revd Christopher Gillham (Secretary, The Congregational Federation in Wales

Revd Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair of the Wales Methodist Synod)