Mary Creagh MP  
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Mary,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee’s inquiry into the UK’s Voluntary National Review (VNR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Committee makes an important contribution to this agenda and I look forward to continuing the dialogue with you and other Parliamentarians in the coming months.

I promised to provide further information on some of the points that were raised during the session.

**Government response to the EAC’s report in to the SDGs and Goal 2**

I would like to apologise for the delay in submitting the Government’s response to the Committee’s report on the SDGs and food insecurity, which was published in January. I have followed up and I am aware the response is now with the Committee clerks.

**UK Public Awareness of the SDGs**

I fully agree with the Committee that more needs to be done to raise awareness of the SDGs among the British public. Data from the Aid Attitudes Tracker in July 2018 showed 34% of adults said they had heard or read about the SDGs. However, only 9% of respondents said they knew what they were and 25% said that they had heard or read about them but didn’t really know what they were.

The Government plans to conduct further research into awareness of the Goals as part of the National Conversation on Investing for the Global Goals. It will seek to better understand the appetite for investing in impactful ways to deliver the SDGs.
It is clear that Government, as well as the private sector and civil society, need to do more to raise the profile of the Goals. DFID has made the SDGs a central part of its public communications. At the start of the year we launched the social media campaign #MyGlobalGoal which asked the public to link New Year resolutions to the SDGs. That reached 9 million social media users. It is important that we use the VNR to build on this outreach and identify innovative ways to emphasise the importance and relevance of the Goals to everyone in the country.

**Attendance at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF)**

As you know, the Secretary of State for International Development is due to present the UK’s VNR to the UN HLPF in July. In addition to the 15-minute UK presentation, the Government will participate in a number of side events during the HLPF fortnight. We want to work with Parliamentarians and the Devolved Administrations to ensure they are able to take part in the HLPF should they wish to.

**Parliamentary Engagement**

Parliament has played an important role in scrutinising the VNR process and the UK’s contribution to the SDGs. As well as the two inquiries led by the EAC, the International Development Committee is holding an ongoing inquiry into the VNR and our international efforts to deliver the Goals.

I understand that you, along with the Chair of the International Development Committee, have written to the Secretary of State for International Development on parliamentary engagement. He will respond in due course.

I look forward to remaining in touch with the Committee as we pursue our common efforts to deliver the Goals.

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