



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office



**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon
Minister of State (Middle East,
North Africa, South Asia and The
UN)**

**Prime Minister's Special
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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
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26 November 2022

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 October to Nadhim Zahawi, former Minister for Equalities on behalf of your constituents, about girls' 'Equal Power Now'. I am replying as the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights.

I welcome the focus in this year's State of the World's Girls report on girls' and young women's political participation. Women's equal political power is fundamental to strong democracies. I was delighted to read that 97% of girls and young women surveyed for the report thought that participating in politics is important. However, it was deeply concerning that so few believed that political leaders understood their views and that one in five have been personally discouraged from engaging with politics. I agree that more needs to be done to achieve 'equal power now'.

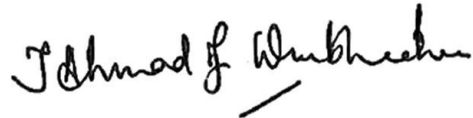
The UK government believes that unlocking the full potential and power of girls and women accelerates progress on all our global priorities, from economic prosperity to security. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) International Development Strategy calls for a world where all girls and women will be 'empowered to

have voice, choice and control over their lives, free from the threat of violence'. FCDO's new approach is framed around 'three Es' – education, empowerment and ending violence and will be set out in full in the forthcoming Women and Girls Strategy.

FCDO is supporting the political participation of women and girls around the world, including through our work with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, taking account of the evidence on what works. Plan International's research on girls and young women is of great value in informing our understanding of the specific needs of this group.

Thank you for taking the time to write about the important issue of girls' political empowerment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON

Minister of State

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict