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Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London, SW1A 2HQ

Sent by email to externalaffairs@hmtreasury.gov.uk

24 January 2024

Dear Chancellor

We are writing to ask that you put tackling poverty at the heart of your Spring Budget.

The Catholic groups and organisations we represent have a deep concern for the poorest in society, both in this country and around the world.

This concern is rooted in our faith and the teachings of the Catholic Church. In Pope Francis's most recent encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, he writes: "Amid the daily concerns of political life, the smallest, the weakest, the poorest should touch our hearts: indeed, they have a 'right' to appeal to our heart and soul."

This is why we have come together to make this joint submission. Ahead of what is likely to be the last Budget before the next General Election, we urge you to focus on helping people escape poverty so they can live in dignity.

At home, this means making changes to our tax and benefit system to help families keep more of the money they earn and support those most in need.

This should include finally lifting the two-child cap on Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits; a policy which a parliamentary inquiry found had "evident, unintended consequences that no Government should be willing to accept".

Internationally, this should include returning our overseas aid budget to 0.7% of GNI in line with the commitment made in your manifesto at the last General Election. Support should also be provided by the Treasury working towards debt-relief for low-income countries that need it.

This overseas aid budget should be used to promote integral human development amongst the world's poorest. This money was never intended to be used supporting those seeking asylum in this country. Nor should it be spent without regard to a country's human rights record.

At the Budget last year, there was barely any mention of efforts to tackle poverty. We strongly encourage you to make poverty reduction central to your next Budget and encourage you to publish an impact assessment of your policies in relation to poverty metrics.

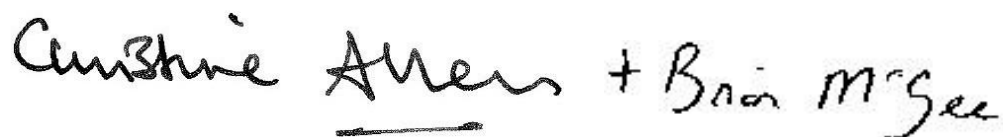
The Catholic Union of Great Britain: The Voice of Catholics in Public Life

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Catholic churches and charities are at the forefront of efforts to support people on the margins of society. We see the needs of the communities where we live and serve on a daily basis. We would be happy to meet you ahead of the Budget to discuss ways of reducing poverty.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Allen + Brian McGee". The name "Christine" is written in a cursive style, "Allen" is underlined, and "Brian McGee" is written in a similar cursive style.

Christine Allen
Director, CAFOD

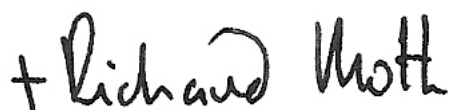
Bishop Brian McGee
Bishop President, SCIAF

Handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R Friel". The "R" is large and stylized, followed by "Friel" in a cursive script.

Raymond Friel OBE
Chief Executive, CSAN

Handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Nolan". The signature is highly stylized and cursive.

Archbishop William Nolan
Bishop President, Justice & Peace Scotland

Handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Richard Moth". The "+" is at the beginning, followed by "Richard Moth" in a cursive script.

Bishop Richard Moth
Chair, Department of Social Justice,
Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nigel Parker". The signature is highly stylized and cursive.

Nigel Parker
Director, Catholic Union of Great Britain