**Joint statement**

**16 July 2021**

**Disappointment at UK overseas aid cut**

Following this week’s (13 July) House of Commons defeat of an amendment that would have prevented the UK government from cutting its overseas aid budget, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) Right Reverend Dr David Bruce and PCI’s convenor of its Council for Global Mission, Reverend Dr Liz Hughes, have expressed their ‘deep concern’ and ‘outright dismay’ at the cut, saying that the effect on ‘people who are struggling, far outweighs even the damage done to this government’s standing and reputation.’

In a joint statement, Dr Bruce and Dr Hughes said, “The value and support that international aid can bring and the difference that it can make is unquestionable. We very much regret and share the deep disappointment of many in our Church, and our aid development partners, that the UK government has broken its promise on overseas aid. In going ahead with its planned overseas aid cut from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI), it is a far cry from 2013 when the UK became the first G7 nation to achieve the United Nations’ target of spending 0.7 per cent of its GNI.

“While some may say it is only a cut of point zero two of a per cent, or ‘just £4 billion’ we want to express our outright dismay at what seems to be the UK’s diminishing commitment to supporting the poorest people on the planet. It is a reduction that will affect millions of lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable and marginalised people, especially during the biggest global humanitarian disaster in a century, which cannot be right.”

Dr Bruce and Dr Hughes concluded by saying, “Alongside keeping your promises, this is first and foremost about caring for our global neighbours, which is a gospel imperative. As we have said before, it is a basic humanitarian value as well, shared by people of all faiths and none, and this should include secular governments. As the *Financial Times* reported this week, the ‘UK risks becoming an outlier as the only G7 country to reduce its aid commitments…’ The effect of this cut in overseas aid on people who are struggling, far outweighs even the damage done to this government’s standing and reputation.”