



## Briefing: the International Development (Gender Equality) Bill

What is this Bill about?

- This is a [Private Members' Bill introduced by William Cash MP](#), working with The Great Initiative, Plan, WaterAid and other NGOs
- The aim of the Bill is to embed gender considerations into every aspect of the UK's aid spending and to ensure consistent and long-term monitoring of how UK aid impacts gender inequality
- It places a duty on the Secretary of State for International Development to consider gender in the disbursement of any development and humanitarian assistance
- It also introduces an additional duty to report annually on those activities undertaken to tackle gender inequality
- It is believed to be one of the first Bills of this kind – enshrining a commitment to reducing gender inequality in development – anywhere in the world
- It is due to be debated in the House of Commons on 17 January 2014. If given broad cross-party support, it should pass through to the House of Lords and become law

Why the focus on gender equality?

- We know that gender inequality holds back development. It is not enough to address democratic reform if the political representation of women is not addressed, or to fund family planning initiatives which fail to address men's roles and responsibilities
- [Millennium Development Goal three](#) is key to such initiatives. Its focus on gender equality and women's empowerment has resulted in a number of gains, such as equality in primary education between girls and boys
- However women around the world continue to face serious levels of violence, limited control over assets and property and unequal participation in private and public decision-making
- [Improving the lives of women and girls](#) is already a policy priority for the UK's Department for International Development, which is seen as key to "stopping poverty before it starts" and will be key to the post-2015 development agenda

What is a Private Members' Bill?

- Most legislation passed by parliament is introduced by the government, however MPs and Lords who are not government ministers may introduce a [Private Members' Bill](#)
- These Bills go through parliament in the normal manner – passing through various stages of readings and amendments – however they have less time for debate and are therefore less likely to complete the stages and become law
- This particular Bill was selected via a Ballot – it was drawn alongside 19 others which have been allotted time for debate on 17 January 2014
- This Bill is second in the running order, which means there should be plenty of time for it to be debated and passed. Due to limited time, others lower down the running order may not get debated
- This Bill enjoys the support of the government, which improves its chances of passing into law