

Ruth to back UK aid

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Ruth Davidson will today use a major event in London to argue that Britain's commitment to aid and development can demonstrate it intends to remain a "good, global citizen" as we leave the European Union.

The Scottish Conservative leader will be addressing an audience at the Royal United Services Institute to make the continuing case for aid and development spending.

Entitled 'Global Leadership: How Britain Can Use Overseas Aid to Save Lives and Keep us Safe', Ruth will be responding to a keynote speech by Bill Gates, who is the main speaker at the event.

Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Mr Gates will be speaking about the partnership between his foundation and the UK Government on improving global health and ending extreme poverty.

He will also speak to the importance of continued UK leadership on aid to ensure a safer and healthier world.

Also speaking at the event will be former foreign secretary Lord Hague.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson is expected to say:

"As one of the world's major economies, Britain has a responsibility to act – a responsibility that is all the greater now that we are leaving the European Union.

"Our friends and allies are asking whether the United Kingdom is still the outward facing nation they know it to be.

"We must show, more than ever, that we intend to remain a good global citizen.

"From its bases in London and East Kilbride, UK Aid delivers major development programmes to some of the poorest and most unstable regions of the world.

"From mine clearance to economic development to the education of girls, the UK makes a huge and positive impact.

"Clearing landmines doesn't just make a region safer, it returns land to commercial use, helps create and sustain employment of men at risk of terrorist recruitment and aids economic recovery of post-war nations.

"The education of women helps reduce infant mortality, increases economic development and makes a huge impact in improving public health.

“Both are gamechangers in the countries being helped, but equally, both help make a safer, more stable, more equitable world which helps us all.

“The UK Government is undertaking a root and branch review of the way contracts are handled within DFID, and that is absolutely correct.

“Misuse of aid funds not only means that vital support does not go to the people who need it in some of the poorest nations on the planet, it also risks eroding public support for our aid commitment here at home.

“We must now ensure that every penny goes where it is needed.”