

UK takes action to help world's poorest access financial and public services

The UK will contribute £15 million to a World Bank initiative designed to help some of the world's poorest people have better access to essential services such as healthcare and banking, the Chancellor announced today (17 July) as part of a meeting of G7 Finance Ministers in France.

It is estimated that a billion people worldwide, mostly women and children in rural areas in Africa and South Asia, are without an officially-recognised identity. Having a legal proof of identity is vital for accessing essential services such as healthcare, education, and finance. But paper-based systems can be slow and inefficient, especially in countries without existing infrastructure. New digital technologies could help people in developing countries better access the benefits of the digital revolution.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

Technologies such as cloud computing could revolutionise the lives of millions of people worldwide who are unable to do some of the things we take for granted, like opening a bank account or registering for a doctor. By helping some of the world's poorest become part of the digital revolution, we can lead the way in building a safer and more prosperous future for us all.

Although many countries have agreed to back the [Identification for Development initiative](#) (ID4D), the UK will be one of the first countries to provide aid, alongside Australia, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Omidyar Network.

The Chancellor's announcement marks the start of a two-day trip to Chantilly, France to discuss the opportunities and challenges posed by the digitalisation of the world economy, at a meeting of G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors. During the meeting the Chancellor is expected to continue to push for a global agreement on the future of the international corporate tax framework, in response to digitalisation. He will also meet with his international counterparts.

During the meeting, Melinda Gates will present a report to G7 Finance Ministers, on behalf of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and call for action to boost women's digital financial inclusion in Africa, contributing to the elimination of the global gender gap in financial services usage by 2030.

Further Information

ID4D is a programme hosted by the World Bank. It is financed by contributions from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Omidyar Network, and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The World Bank contributes US\$ 1 million to ID4D annually, as well as in-kind contributions including the staff time of senior management and lead specialists. The initiative focuses on three pillars of work:

- Thought leadership and analytics to advance the understanding of the merits of digital identification and the best practices for rolling-out schemes.
- Establishing global platforms and convening events to promote the opportunities to scale-up digital identification to global, regional and country audiences, as well as providing forums for implementers to share experiences on what works and why.
- Country and regional engagement to provide technical assistance to countries and regional organisations to implement digital identity schemes.