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11 December 2009

Rt Hon N Clegg MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Clegg

Poverty impact of public policy and expenditure

As you know, the Get Fair coalition represents over sixty national organisations campaigning against poverty in the United Kingdom. We wrote to you following last year's Pre-Budget Report, when the full scale of the financial crisis and economic recession became known (19th November 2008). As a national coalition, we called for bold and decisive action from Government to protect the most vulnerable and those hardest hit by the recession, including escalating fuel and energy prices, a housing crisis and rising unemployment.

There have been a range of initiatives and support introduced by Government to help deal with the recession. It has signalled spending priorities in the Pre-Budget Report. The immediate support for the unemployed, for example, is welcome at a time of economic recession. However, in building a new economy out of the old, it remains imperative that structural weaknesses are addressed that led to one in five living in poverty during the last decade of relative prosperity. Much more remains to be done. It is vital that next year's Budget and longer term spending plans include a rigorous assessment of the impact on poverty, how public policy measures are used to reduce poverty and inequality. In particular at a time of heightened political debate in the run up to the next general election and in the face of public expenditure cuts.

The depth and breadth of the Get Fair coalition provides particular insight and experience to help better understand the causes of poverty and what it means to be poor across from the children and older people's organisations, refugee, disability, housing, faith and community groups. Our collective concern is to ensure decent incomes and living standards, for a fairer society for all. We would welcome an opportunity to inform debate in the run up to the next general election and work with you to develop measures for poverty-proofing public policy and expenditure, to help achieve a lasting reduction in poverty in the UK.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Stanislas
Chair, Get Fair

c/o Disability Alliance, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA