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21 May 2021

THE PRIME MINISTER

*Dear Don't Divide Us,*

Thank you for your open letter commending the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report published on 31 March.

As you state, the Commission's report makes an important contribution to both the national conversation about race, and the Government's efforts to level up and unite the whole country. I am proud that the Commission set out a new, positive agenda for change - balancing the needs of individuals, communities and society, maximising opportunities and ensuring fairness for all.

The reality of ethnic and racial disparities in the UK is complex, and this independent report is the first official attempt to unpack the multiple factors at play. Of course racism exists, but not every issue that affects ethnic minorities will be a result of their race or ethnicity, and we should be clear that there is a difference between a disparity being a race issue and a racism issue. You are right to point out that factors such as deprivation, geography, family structure and sex all merit consideration before confirming that racial discrimination is driving different outcomes between groups.

I appreciate your sensitive acknowledgement that the recommendations were overshadowed by the unfounded criticism of the report, and I too was appalled by the abuse the Commissioners received following its publication. They were prepared for robust and constructive debate, but not the wilful misrepresentation of the report which occurred.

The Government is now considering the independent report in detail and assessing the next steps for future government policy. In recognition of the extensive scope of recommendations, I have established a new Inter-Ministerial Group which will be reviewing the Commission's recommendations. We shall be working at pace to produce a response to the report this summer.

I understand that Don't Divide Us will be hosting one of the Commissioners, Martyn Oliver, at a public discussion where your members will be able to discuss the independent Commission's findings in more detail. I am sure that will be an insightful and thought-provoking event.

No-one in this country should have to endure racism, and this Government remains fully committed to building a fairer Britain and taking the action needed to address disparities wherever they exist.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent loop for the letter 'G' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.