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Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP  
Chief Secretary to the Treasury  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London SW1A 2HQ

8 September 2010

Dear Chief Secretary,

In the Coalition's Programme for Government, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister wrote on spending cuts : "difficult decisions will have to be taken in the months and years ahead, but we will ensure that fairness is at the heart of those decisions so that all those most in need are protected."

We sector leaders, working day-in, day-out with those many people and communities in our society who are most in need, are writing to you today to urge you keep that commitment in the decisions you make on the spending review.

Our fear is that without that commitment being at the heart of your decision making on public spending , we will slip unintentionally into cuts that hit the most vulnerable hardest.

Already many of us are starting to see such cuts on the ground at local level. If this tendency is not checked urgently, we fear the Government will fail in its aim to ensure that "those most in need are protected".

We stand ready to help in this endeavour: ready to help the Government understand how spending cuts implemented in different ways will impact on different communities, and ready to help find solutions to the great problem that we now face: how to cut spending whilst protecting the most in need. We believe there are solutions to this problem, and that the circle can be squared. But we believe it will require partnership between Government and our sector, and putting the coalition Government's commitment outlined above centre-stage.

We are therefore calling on you to set up a Fairness Panel of third sector leaders able to scrutinize the final stages of the spending review process. The aim of this group would be to ensure that fairness and protection of the most vulnerable is at the heart of decision-making on cuts and also to explore with departments ways in which partnership between the state and our sector could help cut spending without disproportionately impacting on those most in need.

Yours faithfully,

Supporting and Developing, Connecting and Representing

**Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations**

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