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Dear Ms Snowden,

Thank you for your letter of 31 May 2019 in which you welcomed the recommendations presented in December by the First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership.

As the Cabinet Secretary with lead portfolio responsibility for human rights and the taskforce, the First Minister has asked me to reply.

The Scottish Government greatly values the contribution made by the Human Rights Consortium Scotland in helping to ensure that Scotland successfully respects, protects and fulfils human rights for every member of our society.

Work is now underway to set up the national taskforce proposed by the Advisory Group and I wanted to use this opportunity to bring the Consortium up to date with our plans for the taskforce.

In particular, I am delighted to announce that the taskforce will be co-chaired by myself and by Prof Alan Miller. As you know, Prof Miller has a distinguished record as an advocate for human rights both at home and abroad. As the former Chair of both the Scottish Human Rights Commission and of the First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership he is particularly well-placed to take on this key leadership role.

Further announcements about the remit and membership of the taskforce will follow in due course. But I do take on board your request that the work of the taskforce should draw on contributions from a wide range of individuals with practical experience and expertise in delivering meaningful participation. I also very much agree with you about the importance the taskforce should attach to embedding human rights in the lives of disadvantaged communities.

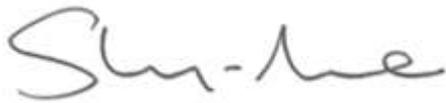
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As you know, parallel work is already underway to take forward incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is being led by my colleagues John Swinney and Maree Todd. The Scottish Government's consultation was published on 22 May and runs until 14 August. I would encourage everyone with an interest to respond to the consultation.

I look forward to engaging further with the Consortium and its members as the new taskforce develops its programme of work, in order to deliver the shared vision of a Scotland where all can live with human dignity and enjoy their rights in full.

Yours sincerely,



SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

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