



Select Committee on International Relations and Defence

Corrected oral evidence: The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa—prosperity, peace and development co-operation

Wednesday 22 January 2020

10.10 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Baroness Anelay of St Johns (The Chair); Lord Alton of Liverpool; Baroness Blackstone; Baroness Fall; Lord Grocott; Lord Hannay of Chiswick; Baroness Helic; Lord Mendelsohn; Baroness Rawlings; Lord Reid of Cardowan; Baroness Smith of Newnham.

Evidence Session No. 1

Heard in Public

Questions 1 – 11

Witnesses

I. Andrew Mitchell MP, Member of Parliament for Sutton Coldfield, Secretary of State for International Development 2010-12; David Lammy MP, Member of Parliament for Tottenham.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

1. This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on www.parliamentlive.tv.

Examination of witnesses

Andrew Mitchell MP and David Lammy MP.

Q1 The Chair: Good morning. May I formally welcome our guests? David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, has a great deal of parliamentary experience, which is very much in the genes of our other guest, Andrew Mitchell, who is MP for Sutton Coldfield but who also served as Secretary of State for International Development from 2010 to 2012.

At this stage, as always in Select Committee, I remind our witnesses and members of the Committee that our proceedings are on the record—broadcast and transcribed. I also remind members of the Committee that if we have any interests to declare we should do so when we ask our first question.

More broadly, this is our first evidence-taking session in our new inquiry on the UK's relations with Sub-Saharan Africa. We are looking in particular at the memorandum of agreement between the UK and the African Union on Agenda 2063, the African Union's plans to work towards a pan-African vision of prosperity and security for all its peoples. We are looking to discover how the UK can best be a partner in the work of the African Union and, of course, to make recommendations, as any Select Committee would, to the UK Government. I will put the opening question first to David Lammy, if I may, and then invite Andrew Mitchell to follow. I will then invite my colleagues to ask more detailed questions.

The first question relates to our historical position as a country with a colonial legacy. I invite you to explain your view of how that legacy affects the views of people in Africa towards the UK, and the perceptions in the UK of our relationship with all the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. That is a big test, as there are so many countries in that area, but giving a general theme would be very helpful. So, Mr Lammy, may I turn to you first, please?

David Lammy MP: Thank you very much, Chair, and the Committee for asking me to speak. Obviously, I have had a little bit to say on occasion on this subject, so I am very pleased to share my thoughts with you. It is important to say that my thoughts are, to some extent, informed by my constituents and a wider population of people in Britain, largely from ethnic minority communities, who sometimes recoil at aspects of this subject.

I suggest that the starting point is whether Britain is reconciled to its past story, and that while people land on the success stories, as you would expect, Britain has been less comfortable with aspects of its modern history that are really quite problematic. It is very difficult to have positive, constructive conversations in the continent of Africa if you have not reconciled yourself to that story.

Let me give you some examples. History, for much of the 20th century, was taught in a particular way in our schools. Certainly when I was at school, Britain tended to see itself as the civiliser in the continent of

Africa. Indeed, studies and polling suggest that 44% of the UK public feel pride rather than regret in their sense of empire. There is a powerful sense that we were in charge across the world; when you look at the pink bits of the atlas, there is the sense of a lifted shoulder at the conquering of those parts of the world.

This comes up a lot in relation to our modern relationship with Africa, which is perceived by the general public largely through aid. There is a sense that people in the continent of Africa should be grateful for the money they receive from Britain, and there is desperate confusion among the public about that—about, for example, the amount of money that is sent back to the continent of Africa from this country in remittances; this is people standing in Western Union sending money, and in the Post Office sending money through MoneyGram.

I wonder if the Committee knows how much that amounts to. Any guesses? You might be surprised to learn that it was £4.1 billion in 2015, the last year recorded. That is more than charities—more, indeed, than our aid budget—give to the continent. You will understand that, because my constituents are the ones doing that, they find it frustrating that Africans assisting themselves and helping their villages, schools and families is not even acknowledged. They find it frustrating that the Government talk about an aid budget but do not have a narrative about these remittances going back. That is one example.

There is another, recent, example. When I travelled back to Kenya and Tanzania recently for a Channel 4 documentary on how the King's African Rifles and the African carriers who participated in the First World War had been treated, I was astounded to learn that they are been buried largely in mass graves with very little recognition. The vast majority of the British public, and I suspect some on this Committee, do not realise that the first shots in the First World War were fired in the continent of Africa, not in Europe and the Western Front. It is quite wrong that, while we celebrate the work of the War Graves Commission and the sense that whatever rank you were you got a headstone, that right was not given to Africans who died on our behalf. How do we talk about those stories? How do we reconcile ourselves to that past?

Finally—this is obviously a subject that we could talk about for many hours—again, studies, polling and surveys suggest that our schoolchildren get the vast majority of their perception about the continent of Africa from NGOs, and the lion's share from Comic Relief. That says something about how geography and history are taught in our schools, and about the role of the BBC in relation to this, and it is one reason why I have been quite robust about how, after a season of Red Nose celebration to raise a small amount of money relative to our aid budget and the remittances I talked about, the British public are left with the perception that children are dying in Africa, that they are helpless, and about how the organisation gives very little agency to Africans themselves to talk about what is really happening in the continent. Do we

really need Ed Sheeran suggesting that the best way to deal with the problem and help these children is to buy a hotel room for a few of them?

The Chair: Mr Lammy, thank you very much for that spirited start.

Andrew Mitchell MP: Thank you for inviting me to give evidence with my good friend David. I want to make three points. First, I recognise the truth of what David says about the colonial legacy. I probably swallowed most of the schoolboy pink-map stuff when I was at school. My view about all this changed a lot once I got involved heavily as the Opposition spokesman on development in 2005.

If you look at Africa and ask the questions that any development spokesman would ask—how do we make things better, how do we do something about these colossal discrepancies of opportunity that disfigure our world?—you have to look at the history of Africa, and you have to see the effect of colonial rule. You will see many of the things that David talked about. You see what happened in the DRC,¹ the biggest country in Africa, which is today the beating heart of Africa and very dysfunctional, probably the most dysfunctional country in the world. You will see the colonial legacy of Rwanda, which indirectly—some would argue directly—led to the genocide, with 1 million people being murdered in 90 days.

You see it in my own university, Cambridge, where in my old college, Jesus, there has been an enormous debate about the colonial legacy and, in particular, the Benin bronze that stood above the Master's head at the high table when I was undergraduate and has now been removed. The new Master of the college has indicated that it must be returned to Benin and to Africa. I remember looking at the Mau Mau, and particular things lodged in my mind such as the appalling hieroglyphics written on a government note by the Attorney-General about suppressing information about the clear breaches of law undertaken by the British authorities in Kenya, so I recognise entirely the point about the colonial legacy.

Secondly, you have to ask yourself what key contribution Britain can make today in looking to the future and the African Union reforms, to which you referred, Madam Chairman, at the start of your remarks. They were led largely by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda when he was Chairman of the African Union last year and are now being substantially handled by Donald Kaberuka, the former President of the African Development Bank. They are looking to the future, and it seems to me that they chime absolutely with the work that we identified and carried through in 2010 when we came into government as the coalition, which was to ask what we could most do to help.

The first and most important thing that we should do is understand that it is largely conflict that mires the poorest in the world in endless demeaning poverty, so we must do something about conflict—stop it starting; once it has started, stop it; and once it is over, reconcile people.

¹ The Democratic Republic of Congo

Secondly, there is building prosperity. I radically reformed CDC,² and I was extremely proud to see the Africa Summit,³ which has been taking place this week in London, attended by 16 heads of state from Africa, where Britain is making a huge contribution, particularly through the work of CDC in African countries by bringing British taxpayers' money to invest there. When I last looked, that British investment was employing something like 850,000 people, which is 850,000 families being fed and paying tax into the exchequers of many of these very poor countries. That tax will not always be spent well, and part of development is trying to make sure it is spent better. Nevertheless, billions of pounds are being paid in tax as a result of the investment of CDC. It is tackling conflict and building prosperity that can most help.

My third and final point chimes with what David said about remittancing. I remember being very struck in Somaliland in about 2011, when I was there looking at what Britain could do to help, that the Somaliland budget—I do not have the figures at my fingertips—might have been something like \$100 million; Britain's contribution, which I pushed up significantly, might have been sort of \$25 million, but the comparable figure for remittancing into the country in the same year was something like \$400 million, so the huge impact of remittancing that David talked about is right.

In terms of the image of Africa—you will see from what I have said about the investment going in and the effort to boost prosperity in these countries, which is hugely to our advantage as well because they trade with us and use our professional services as they get richer—the image that is sometimes projected by the charity sector of fly-ridden children and distended stomachs, which David referred to, is at sharp variance with what is happening in Africa. We have seen that the countries with the highest growth in recent years, albeit from a small base, are many of these African countries, and Sub-Saharan African countries at that.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Mitchell. I now turn to Lord Grocott, who has a supplementary on this. Perhaps it will be right for me to say to Mr Mitchell that when we reach Question 3 that I know that one of the members of the Committee will want to look more closely at and ask questions about your experience on Rwanda, which you have referred to twice in your opening remarks.

Q2 **Lord Grocott:** Thank you both very much for those introductions, which were very helpful. It was a trip down memory lane for people reflecting on educational background and experience. When I went to Leicester University in 1959—you are young lads, you two—

Andrew Mitchell MP: Not possible.

Lord Grocott: —and predictably I was a member of the Labour club, we demonstrated outside a public meeting which Prime Minister Harold

² CDC Group

³ The UK-Africa Investment Summit, on 20 January 2020

Macmillan was attending, and our chant—it is amazing how these things stay in your mind—was “Suez, Hola, Nyasaland”. Two of those three events were in Africa. That illustrates how much students in those days were concerned about international affairs and perhaps gives some balance to the concern which David expressed that those concerns were known a good while ago.

We are looking at the colonial legacy; that is where you have been asked to focus. It is of interest to me, because the colonial legacy, as you, Andrew, pointed out, is not just a British legacy by any means. It is a French, Belgian and Portuguese legacy. It is a German legacy if you go back a bit further. I wonder whether, in understanding the issues that you have raised, which I am certain are extremely important, we learn anything at all from the different legacies of the various colonial powers.

In my superficial knowledge of it, the Belgian Congo, if we can call it that, was, as far as my knowledge of it is concerned, a pretty grotesque colonial legacy. Can we learn anything at all? Is there any differentiation in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa’s view of Britain between those that were under British rule and those that were under the rule of other European countries?

Andrew Mitchell MP: You do not have to have read *The Heart of Darkness* to know the shameful, appalling legacy of Belgian colonialism in Africa. In my experience, the colonial legacy means that they know us quite well. There are different attitudes. I remember talking to a Burmese Minister who was very anti-British. He talked about the British relationship with Burma in the past. At the end of it, I remember saying to him, “Is there anything good that you think came out of that relationship?” He paused and said, “Yes, cricket, and tea at 4 o’clock”. That was the full summation of what he thought well of in the history of earlier times.

There was no doubt at all, if you look at what happened for example in Ghana when the British left, that the legacy included the rule of law, a full Treasury, decent infrastructure. Over the years, that relationship grew much weaker, and the history of Ghana since, on any objective basis, is a chequered one, although it should be clear that, today, Ghana is doing extremely well and has a very effective, functioning democracy. With election results very close indeed, the sinews of democracy held, and Ghana is a splendid example in that respect. If you read the history you will see that there are very different legacies, and indeed views on the comparison between the colonisation that took place under the Belgians, the Germans, the French and the British.

There is no doubt that a degree of guilt has been injected into some of these relationships, and not just about colonial times either: there is no doubt at all that British policy towards Rwanda and the policy of other European countries, including colonial powers, was evoked by the genocide—the feeling that we did nothing at the time. We knew more or less what was going on; we largely left it to the French. Lord Hannay was

there at the time and will remember the events much better than I can explain them to the Committee.

Nevertheless, there is a degree of guilt that characterises our relationship with, for example, Rwanda, and it is one reason why, under both Tony Blair and David Cameron, Britain put in very considerable effort to help with development of Rwanda. Rwanda has been a tremendous development success story; it is widely referred to as a development darling. The element of guilt, the feeling that we let them down and did not do what we should have done at the time to help them when the massacres started back in 1994, is a feature of that relationship.

David Lammy MP: I am less keen to create a pecking order for former colonial masters and who was the worst, except that it is clear that the role of the Belgians in countries like the Congo and Rwanda is a particularly nasty stain, and you could also mention Angola, where there are perennial issues.

I do not think this is about a pecking order. Nor do I think it is entirely about guilt. Of course there is a degree of guilt, but what is more important is recognition, and repairing, of the past, however that repairing is done. There will be different views, it seems to me. It is not until we have recognised and repaired the past domestically in our own country, so that our education system is more fit for purpose in these areas, that the country can move forward.

I want a UK that is able to say, "We did this in the past, which is why we can hold our heads up in the modern world and have very robust views about human rights, genocide, conflict". Until you can be up for that and reconcile that past, it is very hard for you to hold your head up as high as you might like. That takes a reckoning with what people in this country tend to recoil from, and it is a reckoning with a system that we largely invented in this country, although obviously it is also very European, which comes out of bogus science and people like Joseph Dalton Hooker, and aspects of Darwin, which created a pecking order.

That pecking order was established largely to give white Europeans the right to conquer the world, and we live with the legacy of that pecking order today. It is scientific racism, and it is absolutely a white supremacist point of view. Here, in the UK, when we use the phrase "white supremacy" people get a bit uncomfortable, and if they think about it they tend to think about very strange men in the deep south of America who put hoods on. They do not think about a system and a construct that built enormous wealth here in Europe, extracted much from Africa and other parts of the world, and set off a chain of events that have led to some pretty desperate things.

The worst things were of course in the Second World War. But there were other, deep and entrenched aspects in other parts of the world—again, the Tutsi/Hutu problems that led to the situation in Rwanda came from a pecking order and absolutely the way in which the colonial power had pitted one group against another. That is replicated across Africa. It is

also important to mention the sharp lines that cut across communities in Africa. The ruler that created particular borders has had a lasting effect in the continent.

So I do not think it is about guilt; I think it is about recognising and repairing. Nor is it necessarily about this country appearing weak or unable to cope with its past. On the contrary, it is about us being able to stand tall in the modern world.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Lammy. From opening salvos about perceptions and the impact they might have, we turn to policy, and I invite Lord Alton to put the second question. May I ask you, David, to respond first, because the third question is specifically for Mr Mitchell?

Q3 **Lord Alton of Liverpool:** The case has been powerfully put about our legacy, the things we have to own up to and the importance of building on that for the future. I was thinking, as you talked about *The Heart of Darkness*, about *King Leopold's Ghost* and how it tells the entire story of what happened in the Congo. If you want to understand why, today, 35,000 children go into mines to mine cobalt for well-known hi-tech companies, the same principles that applied then seem to apply now.

Although there was reparation in the 1970s and 1980s—Resolution 2626 in 1970 urged countries like our own to meet 0.7% of our GDP in aid—and we have moved in that direction, how do we go beyond aid, because I think that was the point you brought out in what you said?

David Lammy MP: Absolutely.

Lord Alton of Liverpool: I think we all want to understand how trade in particular but also migration and security issues go into the argument beyond aid, something which the Foreign Office and successive Governments have developed increasingly. Where are we now on those three things: on trade, on migration, on security? How do we move beyond the aid issues?

David Lammy MP: I come back to what I said about perceptions here that assist in the discourse beyond aid. What do I mean by that? I do not think it is widely known that the world's fastest-growing economies are largely African: Ghana, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Tanzania. That is now well understood, and we would do well to get that across.

Any one of us who has been to the African continent recently—I went to Kenya and Tanzania in the middle of last year—is immediately struck by the dynamism and upward mobility of youth, the explosion in higher education, and the way in which innovations, technology and social media are assisting that explosion. I do not think the average Briton understands the skyscrapers in Lagos or Nairobi.

Once you understand that, you get into slightly different conversations, which are often about trade. Although I have been clear about my remain position in the Brexit debate, I recognise that there have been problems with the European Union and a level playing field in trade with the African

continent. There has been small progress, but not nearly enough. There are real challenges around intellectual property in the age of the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions in AI and other things, such as who owns the data. How you assist countries and work with them in partnership on issues of data, IP and innovation is hugely important.

As a former Minister for Universities and Skills, I think there are key partnerships for higher education right across the continent. That has to be the lifeblood of progress. There is so much that professors and academics would like to do in partnership with countries here the UK.

We have to be clearer about aspects of exploitation that we are not comfortable with. You mentioned cobalt as an indication of that. There are still quite exploitative practices going on from European countries in the continent of Africa that ought to be sounding much bigger concern here.

The third thing that strikes me, which I am deeply concerned about, is a theme not just in Africa but in the Caribbean. It is about part—I do not want to say all—of the relationship that China has struck with African economies. There has been huge investment in infrastructure. I have been on trains run by the Chinese, staffed by the Chinese, in both build and execution, and on roads. All those things are bringing huge progress for people in their daily lives by speeding up connectivity, trade and access to markets, but the question is whether it is coming at a huge price that could lead, down the line, to a huge debt crisis for African economies. These are very extravagant PFI schemes, effectively, that are largely weighted in favour of China and not the country in which the infrastructure tends to be.

How are we in that conversation? How are we in the business of infrastructure assistance and building a partnership on much better terms than we are seeing from the Chinese?

Andrew Mitchell MP: It is important to recognise that the term “aid” is often seen, particularly by the *Daily Mail* and so forth, as basically a handout by the British taxpayer that is then stolen or misused. That is why I like to refer to aid and development, because actually much of aid spending is going to a far wider set of uses than the British press sometimes says.

Also, it should be recognised that aid and development as we see them today did not really start until the Berlin Wall came down and the Cold War came to an end, because before that aid was used to keep whichever country it was—whether it was Mobutu in the DRC or Angola—either on the Warsaw Pact side of the fence or on the NATO/American side of the Cold War. It was not until after that, when we all recognised that aid needed to have a much purer approach, that aid started to have a genuinely developmental effect. Since then, we have seen that emphasis. In David’s figures on remittancing, remittancing and foreign direct investment in Africa dwarf the aid budgets when added together.

In 50 years' time, the visible symbol of British support for Africa in development will not be DfID; it will be CDC—the investment vehicle I described, which is 100% owned by the British taxpayer—making these investments. That will be seen because of the absolute importance of building prosperity and using aid to empower people to make their own way, build prosperity and live better lives.

On David's point about the EU, the EU has more than protectionist tendencies. The British and the Germans have tended to be a brake on that, because all British political parties understand the benefit of freeing up the trading system and stopping protectionism. If you are a growing African country, it is obscene that you look at the richest bloc in the world, the EU, which is putting up barriers against the one thing that a poor country can often produce, which is its agriculture and the things that it can export most easily. I share with David—

David Lammy MP: Do not go too far.

Andrew Mitchell MP: —that distaste. On China, people who look at China's work in Africa tend to be either glass half full or glass half empty. I am a glass half full person, because I see that a lot of what China does is good. The brake on all this—the Chinese are learning this, and they need to learn it—is that you have to be transparent. As they exert greater influence and authority in Africa, being transparent and open and not having side deals will win them confidence in future business.

When the Chinese President called all the African countries to Beijing—I noticed this while I was Development Secretary—every head of state went, and he announced at the end of the conference that China would increase its trade by \$100 billion over the next number of years. That is a real development output and is very good, and as long as the trade is done in a transparent, open and fair way it is hugely to the benefit of both parties in those transactions.

The Chair: Mr Mitchell, thank you. Leading on from that, I turn to Baroness Blackstone to ask a question. After you have reflected on it—it is a question specifically aimed at you—there will be questions from Lord Hannay and Baroness Rawlings.

Q4 **Baroness Blackstone:** My question is for Andrew Mitchell. On the basis of your experience at DfID, where do you think British development policy in Africa has been a success and where has it failed? I do not mean in geographical terms, I mean in much broader functional terms.

Andrew Mitchell MP: The most important lesson that we have learned, and everyone in the room will appreciate it, is that development works only where it is a partnership. Where it is one side trying to impose something on the other, it does not work.

The best example of that comes from the IMF in 1970s and 1980s and the World Bank where they would impose restrictions on the way money was used and countries would sign up to it, or they would find ways of

employing expensive consultants to put their responses in such a way that they got the money.

Going against the grain of what a country wants to do does not work. That was an important lesson. I think of it particularly in terms of, for example, the basic development aspect of providing clean water. If the funder has the didactic approach that it has to be privatised water but the country does not want to do it in that way, the policy will fail and the people we are trying to help and assist will not get their clean water.

That was a very important lesson. Certainly at DfID I did not care to take an ideological view on these matters; I just wanted something that worked well. There are very good partnerships. For example, there are sometimes difficulties in Rwanda and Ethiopia with human rights and so forth, but in terms of development those two countries were always right at the top because we could trust them completely. When we gave them the British taxpayers' pound, they would explain to us exactly what would happen to 100 pence and they would deliver on that. That made for a very effective and very good partnership.

Overall, I take some pride in the progress that Britain has made in its development work. I regarded the 0.7% as a very important moment showing that we stood by our promises to the poorest people in the world to spend 0.7% of our gross national income on development. The key thrust of development policy, as far as the British taxpayer is concerned, should be to make certain that for every pound of their hard-earned money we spend we get real value in delivery and results on the ground.

If you look at the results of the work that DfID has done in Africa, such as getting girls into school, which is probably the most effective way of changing the world and dealing with the discrepancies I talked about in my opening remarks, and getting clean water—waterborne diseases continue to kill thousands of children every day in the poorest parts of the world—you see that the effectiveness of Britain's work in these areas is very great.

Also, because DfID is, in my view, the best development agency in the world by a country mile, you can see other ways in which it has been effective. I remember spending time in Geneva with the World Trade Organization and noticing that, when it came to negotiating trade deals, the Americans had an army of lawyers and accountants to bring to bear, and the Kenyans, I think, had two people, effectively, and a typewriter.

One thing we did—it was an idea of Michael Howard's, actually—was set up a fund which countries from the poor world negotiating trade deals could draw down on to give them equality of arms in those negotiations. That is the sort of thing that DfID is able to do, and it shows that the reach of aid is far more than the caricature you often see in the *Daily Mail*.

Baroness Blackstone: You told a story, which is very positive, about what DfID has done, and continues to do, but you did not say anything

on the other side of coin. Are there areas where our development policy has not been as good as it could be, or where we have failed, or where we have not got into as much as we should have done? I want to pursue that in relation to agriculture. If you want to help the poorest people in the world, that is where a lot of focus should be given, and I am not sure that there has been enough.

Andrew Mitchell MP: With regard to the focus on agriculture, you are right that you can always do more. One of the problems, of course, is that climate change is changing the nature of agriculture. What George Bush called a genocide in Darfur was clearly exacerbated by conflict between those who grazed their cattle and those who grew crops as desertification took hold.

There is a whole range of things that you have to do to help farmers and ensure that people are able to feed themselves and their communities. Most of the areas that you are tempting me into are ones where I think we should have done more, and there were clearly areas that were not a success, but in the end in development you have to have the confidence to try things that may fail. You should not always play it safe, otherwise you do not innovate and do not get real progress.

This is not about agriculture, but one of the things on which my predecessor Clare Short did a very good job indeed was the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which is part of the answer to the mineral exploitation in the DRC that has been mentioned. By having a common standard across the EITI you drive up transparency and openness. You make sure that countries are not exploited in respect of indigenous minerals and that there is a fair split of the benefit between the people whom the Government of that country are trying to serve and the business or company that is developing those minerals. If that is all open and above board, people can see who is getting the benefit and make judgments accordingly.

Q5 Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Following on from that point, before I ask my question, the country fact sheets we have had reveal one rather astonishing thing about our aid, which is the infinitesimally small amount that is being spent on climate change. It is 1% of our aid in most countries. That does not seem to me to make much sense.

Anyway, may I trespass on your pre-Secretary of State for Development experience in Rwanda when you were in opposition? I know you played a very important and positive role in helping that country back from the horrors of the genocide. It seems to me, and perhaps you can comment on this, that Rwanda in a way is a key example of a problem that we will have to grapple with in this inquiry, which is what importance, what priority, we give to democratic institutions.

On Rwanda—just to be a little sweeping in judgment—I suppose one would say that it is certainly in the upper decile in Africa on economic policy and development grounds, and it is pretty certainly in the bottom decile on democracy, for reasons which you and I and many others

around this table will be familiar: namely, that if you have fully democratic institutions, it is very difficult to avoid a situation in which the Hutu again become the dominant force in Rwanda, with what consequences nobody knows.

Rwanda is not the only country in Africa that has problems like that. I wonder what you would like to say from your experience about that. Should we be thinking more about rule of law and human rights and less about democratic institutions, or what?

Andrew Mitchell MP: Lord Hannay poses, and half answers, a critical question. On climate change, I would question the figures that he gave. Certainly on my watch I agreed to, I think, between £7 billion and £8 billion going into the international climate funds that had been set up. Those figures may relate directly to DfID rather than to Britain as a whole. You might want to probe that.

On Rwanda, so much is dictated by what happened in 1994—the devastation which that country suffered and the extraordinary barbarity that took place there. As you may know, the Conservative Party set up Project Umubano, which in the second year took 100 Conservative activists to Kigali and Rwanda to take part in work in education, health, the judicial system and so forth. A lot of it was about us learning about what in development works and does not work in a very poor country. A lot of it was about putting some development DNA into the Conservative Party under David Cameron’s leadership.

What I learned was the importance of a certain humility in not believing that the Westminster system of government is necessarily the answer to all problems everywhere in the world. I learned that accountability is more important than democracy, so I do not tend to talk about imposing multiparty democracy, as many others do, as the panacea. I think it is about being able to hold those who have the privilege of ruling to account. That would normally in Britain be a free media, because in the end it is a free media that protects our liberties, not the police, judges or Ministers. It is accountability that protects us, and that is true in Rwanda.

I remember being in Rwanda at the time of an election when President Kagame won more than 90% of the vote. In Britain, that was regarded as completely ridiculous because no one could possibly win 90%. I conducted my own poll. I remember talking to a waitress in a restaurant in Kigali and saying to her, “How are you going to vote in the election?” She said, “I’m going to vote for President Kagame”. I looked at her and said, “Are you just doing that because everyone else is doing it?” She looked me in the eye and said, “No, I am doing it, because tonight when I go home from this restaurant to my home in Kigali, I can walk home in safety. That is what President Kagame has done for this country”.

We talk about human rights, but the first human right is to life, to safety, and to be able to live in your community and not to be in fear of what may happen to you and your family. That is what is President Kagame has done for Rwanda. I am quite surprised that he does not get more

than 90% of the vote because, given where they have come from, restoring stability and the rule of law is a quite remarkable achievement.

So the lesson I learned is having a little humility and not believing that Western institutions and organisations are an answer to most problems, and understanding that the history of many African countries, particularly of Rwanda, greatly affects, even dictates, the way in which organisations of state develop and the speed at which they do so.

Finally, on the question of a free media, in Britain, a literate country, if someone says on the radio, "I'm going to murder my neighbour", we regard them as mad. In Rwanda, the use of hate radio in stirring up people to kill their neighbours is well known and well recorded. Of course, if you are responsible for law and order and security in Rwanda you are very well aware of the power of radio, in a semi-literate nation, to lead to the most appalling results.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I sat in the Security Council and we tried to close Radio Milles Collines, but the Hutu-led Government at the time simply would not do it, because of course it was their radio.

The Chair: I am aware that you have commitments today, Mr Lammy—I will invite Baroness Rawlings to ask Mr Mitchell her supplementary question in a moment—and will check your availability. We may just reverse the order of the questions so that you can respond.

David Lammy MP: I am doing fine, save for asking the Prime Minister a question in Prime Minister's Questions, which is not for a little while.

The Chair: I will not get in the way of that. Thank you very much, Mr Lammy.

Q6 Baroness Rawlings: This is a huge question. Since you left office, have Governments developed, whether in the right or wrong direction? I served for many happy years in your international development team, and I remember an all-day conference you organised on aid to and development for Africa. Very constructive it was too, with Clare Short and others.

Your final speaker left a lasting impression on me, because he had an angle on aid that was totally different from all the others'. I do not know if you remember him. He was called Jerome Booth, and he was outstanding. His subject, which Lord Alton just mentioned, was "Beyond aid". He did not want to just send aid to Africa, if I remember correctly; he wanted to develop a system under which Africans could prosper and flourish through remittances, which Mr Lammy mentioned.

The same thing happens in India and other countries. Who is making the middle money with these huge remittances, because they do not send the money back for free? A law was passed in 2003, alas—or not—that UK aid was to be used solely to reduce poverty and which made it illegal to use it for anything else; in other words, for development, as the Chinese do. What is your view on that?

The Chair: That is rather a wide set of questions. Perhaps we might focus on the very last question, which itself is rather wide.

Andrew Mitchell MP: Baroness Rawlings made a huge contribution, I believe, to modern development policy.

First, Jerome Booth, who is an economist and has a big impact on thinking in this area, will, like me, be absolutely delighted by the African investment conference that has taken place. In fact, if you look at the changes the coalition Government made to development policy when we came in in 2010, you will see that the glide path is consistent. In many ways, everyone involved in the African investment conference should be very proud of it, because it focuses on exactly the key points about prosperity that both David and I have been making.

On the point about remittancing, the key thing about the middle-man cost is that there should be competition. When Barclays, for example, decided to pull out of Somaliland, partly because of the anti-terrorist legislation in Britain, there was only one remittance maker into Somaliland. That, of course, is very bad because, as we know, if there is no competition, the middle person will take more from it.

On the point about the Act and poverty, the impact of the Act is not quite as Baroness Rawlings said. It is true that British development policy is focused on tackling poverty, but how you do it encompasses all the other things that we have talked about today. The complaint you sometimes get is that you cannot use it to advantage British goods and services.

On the point about competition, I do not know what the figures are today but, in the open competition that DfID launches, 90% or something tends to be won by British firms bidding. Frankly, it is not right that aid should be tied. First, the Labour Government abolished tied aid. Then David Cameron in opposition accepted that aid should not be tied. Even most American aid is now no longer tied. Tied aid is quite wrong and has a totally counterproductive effect. Most business people I meet do not want a bung from the British taxpayer; they want a level playing field so that they can compete properly against all comers, and if they are good enough and their price is right they can win.

The Chair: Thank you. We turn now to Lord Mendelsohn's question, and I ask Mr Lammy to answer first before I turn to Mr Mitchell.

Q7 **Lord Mendelsohn:** Thank you for your very useful introduction to a set of very important contexts to this. Mr Mitchell, you just mentioned the African Investment Summit, which showed strong co-operation between the different departments in pursuing our current agenda.

Could you reflect on the current institutional arrangements between DfID and the Foreign Office and on whether their activity could, and should, be better co-ordinated? Over time, what institutional arrangements should we have to deal with this agenda, not least in the light of your comments, Mr Mitchell, about the future potential role of CDC and other sorts of agencies?

David Lammy MP: I am very nervous about any suggestion that the Department for International Development should be dismantled and merged with the Foreign Office, because you get right back into day-to-day foreign policy decisions and tied aid, and you miss the important status of development per se.

I do think that an agenda that is beyond aid is very important for a modern economy such as ours, and that it is hugely important to have trade discourse—if you like, the work done by the old Department for Trade and Industry—alongside aid policy. Let me give an example. I remember when I was Minister for Further Education that lots of money was poured into further education, but that sometimes employers said, “The technical skills that you are teaching young people are not what we are using now in business, in manufacturing, in industry”. In other words, the connection between companies, the private sector and the state further education sector was not strong enough in our country.

Similarly, it is important to remember in that conversation, that dialectic, between industry and business, that what really drives change is connected to international development. But that is quite different from foreign policy. So innovation, yes, and really understanding what development means. Development is way more important than aid, and should be—in fact, we should almost abandon the “aid” word—but tying aid to foreign policy is worrying.

There have been developments: funding from DfID going to private school chains, to damaging extractive industries and to private healthcare companies. These are things that need real scrutiny and transparency, notwithstanding what Andrew rightly said, which was that sometimes things will not succeed. That has to be understood. Let us be clear about trade, innovation, skills, proximity to industry and business, so that it is not just aid, which people perceive to be a handout, but not foreign policy.

Andrew Mitchell MP: To Lord Mendelsohn’s precise point, I think the Government would be crazy to abolish DfID or merge it with the Foreign Office. I have no doubt that they would think incredibly carefully before undertaking anything like that, and I am sure they will not do it. People think they want DfID to go with the Foreign Office because they think that will make for much better co-ordination. David Cameron set up the National Security Council, which in my view was one of the most important and effective changes in the machinery of government in 2010. What does the National Security Council do? It is responsible for wiring together defence, diplomacy and development into one strategic national policy. That is where you get the co-ordination of DfID, MoD and the Foreign Office. When I sat on the National Security Council, I thought it worked extremely well.

If you were to put DfID back in the Foreign Office, quite apart from destroying what is internationally recognised as by far the best engine of development in the world, what would happen? All the very good people, the experts whom Dominic Cummings rightly cherishes who work with

DfID because of its international reputation, its success and their ability to effect change, will leave. They will all be pinched within days by the multilateral system, and they will go to work with agencies in the UN and so forth.

You would destroy a vital part of global Britain going forward after Brexit. Indeed, there are some people who would argue that Britain's development effort is the only current example of global Britain that you can find. Destroying DfID would be a colossal mistake and a tragedy, not only for the effectiveness and reach of the British Government but for all the many people around the poor world who have benefited so greatly from Britain's leadership in this area.

Q8 Baroness Smith of Newnham: Turning from institutions to policy-making, what role do you think there is or could be for diaspora communities in assisting in policy-making, and in particular in strengthening some of the lines that you have both been discussing this morning to make sure that we discuss genuine development? You have talked about people sending remittances back to their home country. What else could we be doing as a country?

David Lammy MP: That is a very interesting question. This is an area where there needs to be much better innovation. In a sense it links to the point about democracy and how we can better democratise what we are doing. I have had concerns that it is not just about providing assistance; it is about providing assistance on the terms of those who are being assisted, because that is what genuine partnership looks like.

If African countries are being held back, that is often because of trade barriers, taxes and tariffs. If you listen to farmers, you will hear that. So the question is the extent to which we and, say, the European Union have really been listening to farmers. If you are listening, one of the great opportunities of our colonial history—to end where we started—is that we have a diaspora that we can talk to in this country. They will tell you what they are funding back in the villages and towns they come from, why they are funding particular schools in particular ways, why they are funding relatives' start-ups in particular ways, and why they are going back X times a year—that is the only way you can be on the ground.

These are very important things to understand in relation to how we develop policy. The question then is how we do that on the ground. What is the mechanism to get that feedback? There are innovations in our own country that people are talking about, citizens' assemblies being one of them.

Just as a side bar, I have always been staggered that some of the innovations developed in the area of international development for poverty relief and the huge breadth of knowledge and understanding in the Department for International Development are not replicated in other government departments in relation to poverty relief in our own country. I see regeneration programmes in my constituency with millions and billions of pounds spent where it was clear that the understanding and

knowledge of poverty relief domestically was not as advanced as civil servants and officials understood it in the Department for International Development.

Domestically, we are not doing the basics such as how you do seed-corn funding, or how you preference women and bring them forward. There is an issue with how we listen in our own country, let alone how we listen abroad. That is why I am talking about cross-fertilisation. It is about understanding that those innovations can be applied domestically and in some of the discussions we are having in our own country about how we better hear and understand local communities.

That came out most recently in the last general election. Communities in the north that are perceived not to have been listened to and not understood are challenges that we will be grappling with domestically, and it is possible that, when we get to solutions, some of the solutions about how we hear and how that influences policy could be applied overseas.

One theme that I suspect will come out of that is smaller units and our country's obsession with centralisation, not devolution and getting down to the local. I wonder whether that theme is replicated in relation to communities in the continent of Africa: how we can better understand massive regional variation, which climate change affects, and how we connect and get down to the local and not just speak to a bureaucrat or an academic in the capital city who is very remote from experience in the rural community that you are trying to assist.

Andrew Mitchell MP: I agree with virtually everything David has just said on that point. I think DfID is pretty well wired into the diaspora communities. DfID reaches out to people across the whole of the development sector, which is significant in Britain. In my view, it is pretty well linked into the diaspora. It has to be, because if you are trying to help incubate entrepreneurs or do something to enhance the role of women in a country, you need to understand what is happening there, and a lot of that information comes through representatives of the diaspora. That is important.

I have always thought that we have not done enough on the remittancing point. I remember when I was in government I was shadowed by Harriet Harman, who was extremely supportive. She used to say that she was on my side but on my case, I remember.

She always said that the Government should do more about remittancing, and I think she was right. If you have the huge flows of remittance money, which David and I have referred to, going into very poor countries, I suspect that having structures that mean that that money is not necessarily used for immediate consumption but can be invested in local activity is the way we could do better in ensuring that the money is really well used.

Q9 Lord Reid of Cardowan: Thank you, David and Andrew. I find your

contributions on major issues fascinating, particularly on the driving force of colonialism and imperialism. I would love to engage with you on it, David, but time does not permit.

Andrew's comments regarding the degree of humility that we should have about imposing our system of government on everyone else were very telling, not least because it took us about 300 years of economic development before we got to our present system. We should see that in the light of nations that are developing their infrastructure, but we should also have a degree of humility about putting our free press on such a high pedestal.

My question is much simpler and is to do with our immigration and visa regime—I declare an interest: if it is deleterious, I may have contributed towards that as Home Secretary. In terms of our relationship with African countries—Sub-Saharan countries in particular—and our influence through what is sometimes called soft power, what effect does our immigration and visa regime have, and what do you think of the rumour about changes which the present Government are intending to make to it?

David Lammy MP: Thank you very much for that question. You will understand that I have pretty robust views on this, because I am probably the parliamentarian most linked to the deep concerns that were raised just over one year ago in relation to the Windrush scandal that affected this country. It was a scandal, and it will remain a permanent scar on the experience of those who came from the Caribbean after the Second World War to rebuild this country and give us institutions such as the NHS, of which we are so proud.

I say that first, because it is really important to recognise that there are many Africans who feel that their relationship with the so-called hostile environment has not been given the profile which the Windrush scandal has but which is going on every day. Windrush is an example of people arriving in this country as British citizens. They were British citizens de facto because it was Britain who took their ancestors a few hundred years earlier from Africa to the British colonies, so of course they were British citizens. Then, because of successive changes to immigration under successive Governments but more recently because of the hostile environment, the people who helped build this country were stripped of housing and pensions and many of them were sent back. That is the whole story.

The hostile environment, which fits in with a broader view in Europe of a fortress Europe, is particularly problematic in relation to this subject. If this Committee visited Sangatte, where the British border effectively is now, Members might be surprised at the overwhelming number of people who are from Africa. They are Africans wanting to seek refuge in this country. They held back on the continent from coming to this country, so of course the hostile environment has a direct relationship with this subject.

One has to unpick the hostile environment. There are two important aspects of policy to understand. The first is a Home Office policy on revenue raising and the huge cost of visas and the right to remain. We are asking those from Nigeria, Ghana and the Congo to pay thousands of pounds for the right to remain here on an annual basis. The bill, not just for mum and dad but for three kids, is about £5,000 a year. Most British people's experience of this part of the policy is when they apply for a passport. You apply for a passport and think that the cost is a bit high—it is up to £100—and get very concerned if it takes more than a few weeks for the passport to come. That is your experience with this part of the administration as a member of the general public, but for these people the experience is intolerable and shows no sign of reform.

There is a second policy problem for Britain. Because of the concerns that have been raised about immigration in this country, we are broadly hearing—I believe that some of that rhetoric began in what were fringe parties and has entered the mainstream—that the Government of the day are intent on moving to a regime where you have to have high skills and do a high-skilled job to come into Britain. They are talking about setting a threshold of £35,000 plus.

How will that affect people, immigration and the perception of Africans coming into the country? What I think the Government are saying is that they no longer want immigrants coming to do the sorts of jobs that domestically people did not want to do. If you look at the face of the social care sector in London and across the country, it is an African female face. African women are caring for our elderly in our country, which has a rising age profile and huge need. I think of my mother-in-law, who died at the end of last year, and of the two African women who were with her in the last few weeks of her life dealing with a brain tumour. That is the face, and that is what we will be setting our face against, notwithstanding the huge costs for those women in paying the fees that the Home Office asks of them.

I thank you for the question. It is really important. It is tied up with the hostile environment. I think it is inconsistent for our country, particularly in these key areas of social care, health and agriculture, to set our face against this kind of immigration. It will lead to huge skills gaps in the months and years ahead.

The Chair: Lord Reid, I will ask Mr Mitchell to respond first, and then perhaps the supplementary can go to both witnesses, because I appreciate that Prime Minister's Question Time is still coming.

Andrew Mitchell MP: Let me add a couple of points to what David has said. I share with him the shame we should all feel about the Windrush events, which he so powerfully articulated at the time. We need to respond to our constituents' concern about immigration. That requires a clear-cut, open, firm but fair policy as the Government try to work out whether a points-based system is the right way to do it, not just for skills, incidentally, but to meet the needs that we in Britain have, which David articulated. There is a lot of merit in that.

I would just make two other points. The first is that we have to recognise that if we want to negotiate a trade deal with India, the first question the Indian government will ask is, "What are you going to do about visas?" We have, in my view, shot ourselves in the foot in the approach that we take to visas, because we have deprived many wonderful Indian students of the benefits of Britain's university and education system, and we have deprived Britain's education system of clients and students who would have benefited from it—and who, of course, go back to their own countries with a good view, hopefully, of Britain. Our visa system over recent years has been completely cock-eyed.

The final point I put to this Committee is that I am profoundly opposed to the way in which Britain plunders doctors from the developing world. It is an outrage that there are more doctors trained in Sierra Leone but practising in Chicago and Manchester than there are practising in Sierra Leone. I have won a place, albeit a very lowly place, in the Private Members' Bill ballot in the House of Commons, and I am seriously considering seeking to introduce a Bill that would stop Britain bringing in doctors from the developing world, where they are very badly needed, but saying that, in order to protect a degree of free movement, if a doctor does come from the developing world, the British development budget should pay for the training of two doctors back in that country to replace them.

The Chair: Thank you. Lord Reid has a supplementary, as does Lord Hannay, so I ask them to ask their questions and to have a response from both witnesses before we move on to our final question.

Q10 Lord Reid of Cardowan: David spoke very passionately about what might happen here. I was really interested in what effect—I can probably guess—it would have on African nations' perception of us. I think Andrew has answered that question by illustration of India.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I wonder if I could just focus on the higher education section, which I follow rather closely in the context of the Higher Education and Research Act. I had an amendment to that Bill which related to what we have been discussing.

Could you comment, in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, on how we should handle our visa and immigration policy for students at higher education institutions and for researchers wishing to come to higher education institutions, which we have now, of course, described and categorised in the Act so that we know what they are?

Would it not make much better sense if we simply made it clear that anyone who had an offer of a place, for research or for study, got a visa and did not have to pay very large sums of money for it because they were contributing to the future development both of this country, in some cases—now that the Government have, fortunately, said that you can stay on for two years after—and, in many cases, of their own; and I could not agree more with the view that the hope must be that many of them will go back?

David Lammy MP: My very strong view is that we want a system that is much more like what I saw and experienced as a student at Harvard in the United States. You want young people, particularly those doing MAs—post-doctorate education—to want to come to this country, you want them to have the right to work for a period afterwards, and one should not be too worried if some of them fall in love and choose to stay. That is a great and good thing.

At the same time, thinking of international development, you want to encourage, bring forth and support universities in all the countries that we have talked about, and you want to sponsor innovation. When I was Minister for Higher Education, we had a scheme supporting Israeli students. Its fantastic technical ambassador was Trevor Chinn, who was instrumental in it. He was very keen that we had a commensurate scheme for Palestinians, and we raised a lot of money to ensure that young Palestinians, alongside young Israelis, could do master's programmes in our country and could benefit. There was the same cross-fertilisation back, with UK universities in Israeli and in the Palestinian territories. It was a very successful scheme. That is the principle, and we want to see it extended. I agree with Andrew that you do not want to plunder the world's doctors and nurses for your own benefit, so we have to assist back in those countries.

On the bigger point about visas, which Lord Reid referred to in his question, I am really concerned—and I say this as a member of one of Britain's ethnic minorities and one of the representatives who tend to speak on these sorts of matters in public life—that there are people in our country who, because of the immigration rhetoric, have been led to believe that somehow immigration is going to come down in Britain, that somehow people will leave Britain, when the political class of all parties knows that that will not actually happen. When you negotiate with India and China, and with quite robust African countries, they will demand those visas and get them, and they will get them because we will need to give them to them because we desperately need those trade deals.

Many of the public who voted leave and think that immigration is coming down have been sold a pup by the political class in this country. It is not coming down. A more global Britain will see higher immigration. I find it perverse that immigration is very likely to be higher among black and brown people at the very time when people are expecting Britain to look very different in the years ahead.

You will forgive me, but on that bombshell I really do need to get to Prime Minister's Questions.

The Chair: Mr Lammy, thank you very much for your contributions today. They were robust and thought provoking.

David Lammy MP: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Mr Mitchell, would you like to follow up on that in any way?

Andrew Mitchell MP: Yes, I can do so quite rapidly because I agree with Lord Hannay's analysis about the offer of visas to those who have a place. The only issue is ensuring that it is indeed a place, but subject to that I agree with what Lord Hannay said.

The Chair: I turn to the last question, which, *faute de mieux*, will be for you alone, Mr Mitchell.

Q11 **Baroness Fall:** I reiterate my thanks for a fascinating discussion this morning. On my own behalf, I pay tribute to the work you did in pushing forward the 0.7% and standing by our promise to the world's poor. I think you made a great contribution to our country.

We touched on a lot of things this morning. We have talked about stereotypes in our colonial legacy and all sorts of difficult things, but we have not touched on the very sensitive and difficult issue of racism. With that in mind, to what extent does racism play a part and affect the way in which our country views Sub-Saharan Africa? In your view, does it affect the policies of our Government?

Andrew Mitchell MP: My immediate reaction is to say absolutely that it does not. The Government's policy on Sub-Saharan Africa is, I think, one of great integrity. We want to do what we can to elevate its social conditions and to focus on the things I mentioned at the beginning, such as tackling conflict and boosting prosperity. That is entirely well intentioned.

Once you look at Sub-Saharan Africa, however, you get into some of the drivers of poverty. They include the fact that very poor people are prone to exploitation, including by terrorism and so forth, and there is no doubt at all that if you look across the band of Saharan Africa you move from northern Nigeria, where Boko Haram has wrought havoc, go up through Mali, where French troops, with British assistance, are deployed to try to keep the terrorists at bay, then move into Sudan, where a huge migration of people is taking place and quite extraordinary numbers of people are on the move, and then move across further into the Horn of Africa and the instability there.

Any government worrying about that instability and the growth of terrorist movements—I have not mentioned al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda more generally—are bound to focus on those things and worry about their internal security as a result. That is not racism; it is seeing an area as a source of problems that have to be addressed.

We have certainly tried to do that by assisting with national security. I think particularly of the work we did in Nigeria when I was in government trying to help them tackle Boko Haram. You will remember the quite appalling kidnap of a generation of A-level girls in Nigeria, the slow international reaction and Britain playing a part in trying to do something about that.

I am not sure whether that adequately answers your question with regard to racism, but it shows the multifaceted approach which any Government have to take to an area like the Sahel.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed. I thank both our witnesses for enabling us to have an extended session to take evidence this morning.

Andrew Mitchell MP: I want to make one other point. I should mention that I am an adviser to the African Development Bank. One of the examples of the work that Britain has done in this part of the world came up yesterday at the investment conference, and the Committee may be interested in it. It is that with strong DfID support, both technical and financial, the African Development Bank is leading an effort to ensure that in this Sub-Saharan part of Africa 250 million people who have no access to electricity and energy, get it off grid at an overall cost of something like £20 billion.

That is an initiative that Britain has been very strongly involved with, working with the African Development Bank, an organisation that in my opinion has gone strength to strength first under the leadership of Donald Kaberuka and now under its current president, Akin Adesina. It seems a very good example of Britain putting its financial muscle and know-how through DfID at the service of some of the poorest people in the world and doing something of fundamental importance to elevating their social condition and lifting their lives and their family for the future.

The Chair: Thank you for that positive way of ending a positive session of evidence giving. Thank you for assisting us in launching our process of looking at the UK's relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa. I thank you formally and end the public session.