

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: Future of UK Aid, HC 100

Tuesday 2 November 2021

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 2 November 2021.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Sarah Champion (Chair); Theo Clarke; Mrs Pauline Latham; Kate Osamor; Mr Virenda Sharma.

Questions 168 - 210

Witnesses

I: Romilly Greenhill, UK Director, ONE Campaign; Mark Miller, Director of Programme—Development Public Finance, Overseas Development Institute; Ian Mitchell, Senior Policy Fellow and Co-Director (Europe), Centre for Global Development.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Romilly Greenhill, Mark Miller and Ian Mitchell.

Q168 Chair: I would like to start this session of the International Development Committee's ongoing inquiry. It is almost one year to the day since this panel was last in front of us to look at the future of UK aid. The timing is also particularly appropriate because this is the last day of the debate on the Budget and spending review. In the last 12 months, there have been a lot of changes to ODA allocation and spend, which we hope to investigate and interrogate with our panel of experts today. May I start by asking you to introduce yourselves?

Romilly Greenhill: Thanks, Sarah. I am Romilly Greenhill. I am UK director at the ONE campaign.

Mark Miller: Good afternoon. I am Mark Miller, director of the Development Public Finance programme at ODI.

Ian Mitchell: Hi. I am Ian Mitchell. I am co-director of the Europe programme at the Centre for Global Development.

Q169 Chair: Thank you very much.

Romilly, may I ask you the first question, please? As I said, it is almost more than 12 months since the merger of DFID and FCO into the new Department, FCDO. Has the merger, and the accompanying reorganisation and review of objectives, impaired the delivery of UK aid?

Romilly Greenhill: Yes, I think it has, and I say that for three reasons. First, there has been a big impact on the volume of UK aid. I know that that is not a direct consequence of the merger, but arguably not having a Cabinet Minister who is responsible and fighting for UK aid in the way that we have seen in the past has had a real impact.

Secondly, on issues around development expertise, DFID historically had a fantastic reputation, with a very strong cadre of staff. I have travelled around the world and seen DFID's work in person. I have listened to stakeholders with whom DFID engaged, who understood the real value of its expertise and what that has done for Britain's global reputation. I think that has been damaged by the merger, if we think about the senior leadership now within the FCDO.

The third issue is around issues of transparency and consultation. Certainly in the NGO community, we have struggled a lot with the degree of access. I think it may be changing now with the new Foreign Secretary, but certainly those issues around having a wider development policy community in the UK have been very problematic over the last year, and that is something that we would really want to see improved in the future.

Q170 Chair: Romilly, could I challenge you? Of course, all that has happened in the background of a pandemic. Could it be argued that it is the impact of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Covid and the limitations that that has created that have made the changes that you speak about? Is it actually the merger that has made those problems more acute?

Romilly Greenhill: I do not think it is the pandemic because I think everyone has moved into a virtual world in terms of engagement and access for civil society. We can talk to Ministers and senior officials virtually. We all know how to do these things virtually. I think there has been more to talk about between FCDO and civil society in the context of the pandemic, such as how we reprogram. There have been some real practical issues about NGOs that get funding from the UK Government. That means practical issues around how you work in a constrained environment due to Covid. But, more widely, how do we deal with the pandemic? What are the policy issues? How do we make sure we get vaccines around the world?

If anything, development issues are really at the forefront now when we think about how we end the pandemic. We need to have a concerted effort across the UK Government and civil society to make sure that we are really rolling out vaccines around the world. So I do not think it is the pandemic. I think that there could have been a better dialogue over the last year. I think it is changing, and it has changed with a new ministerial team, but it is something that we think is very important to strengthen going forward.

Q171 **Chair:** Can you or other panellists give examples of how the merger has restricted aid delivery in the last year?

Romilly Greenhill: ONE is not a programmatic organisation, so concrete examples are difficult. We have seen reprogramming of funding on the ground towards the Covid response and all those other areas. But, in terms of the programmatic side, that is not something we know that much about as ONE. I do not know if colleagues can add more on that.

Mark Miller: One reflection to add is that a lot of things have been happening at the same time, which potentially distract concentration from programme. We have the biggest development challenge in a generation—the pandemic—large changes in budgets and an organisational merger at the same time. Where you have those three things happening at the same time, inevitably your ability to focus on programming and delivery will be affected across the board, because there is so much internal work to be addressed. Speaking to officials, there is a sense of almost dizziness because so much is happening at the same time. That must have implications for how much time and attention you can give to the delivery of work, relative to a kind of steady state.

Chair: Thank you.

Ian Mitchell: Could I just add a little bit to that, Chair? I agree with what Mark said. The year has been extremely challenging for a number of reasons, and having to deal with a machinery of government change will



not have helped. If you are looking at the medium term and thinking about the efficiencies and the join-up, I do not think we have probably seen that come through yet. For example, in December, the Secretary of State wrote with an update on the ODA allocations across Government, and then in a further update in the spring, they dropped back to being just FCDO, not whole of Government. You would have thought that when you integrated the approach that would mean it would be cross-Whitehall.

I think of the Afghanistan co-ordination role. That is another cross-Whitehall co-ordination role. Was that made easier or more difficult by the fact that a year earlier you reduced the number of directors and implemented a large programme of cuts? We are getting used to new Cabinet relationships, and I think we are in that period where the difficulties are.

The only other point I would make is when the case came up for the merger, the case was made that lots of countries do this through a Ministry that oversees both—I think that is absolutely true. I think what is missed in that analysis is that the big providers—the US, Japan, France and Germany—have a separate agency for development implementation. I think that, over time, Ministers will see the value of having that expertise and that focal point for managing all those development issues.

Q172 Theo Clarke: First to Romilly: is there a risk that aid spending will start to operate as an extension of UK foreign and security policy?

Romilly Greenhill: I think there is a risk. Let me say at the outset that development does contribute to UK foreign and security policy in the long run. We all know that. We all know that a fairer, safer world is better for us; it helps our soft power and our reputation. I do not want us to be juxtaposing it too much that it is either foreign policy or development because, in the long run, these things do go together.

However, in the short run, I think there is a danger that there is a real dilution of the poverty focus in UK aid. You can see that already in two ways, one in terms of the countries that aid is going to. We hear a lot about the Indo-Pacific tilt. We are seeing much more money going to the Indo-Pacific region. We are seeing increases in aid to countries like Indonesia and India, which are not the poorest countries. Frankly, they are not the countries that really need UK aid, and we are seeing less money going to Africa and the middle east region, including countries like Syria and Libya, which have a really big need for aid.

To a certain extent, we are also seeing it in the sectoral allocations. Even with big priorities like girls' education—the Prime Minister has listed that as a very important priority for him, and I think we can all agree it is very important for girls, for the economy and for wider society—we are seeing cuts. Looking at the trend of what has happened in the last year, we are concerned that there has been a dilution of the poverty focus in aid.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

In the long run, I think that is problematic for two reasons. One is that it gets us off track towards broader development objectives. But, thinking about the public piece, we know that the public support aid being used for poverty reduction and girls' education—all those sorts of areas. In my mind, I think there is a concern about what the public are going to think about UK aid going to India, Indonesia and countries which, in the public mind, are not the most needy.

Q173 **Chair:** Do you think that the pursuit of the UK's national interest is creating tension with our objective to help the world's poorest people?

Romilly Greenhill: In the long run, we know that aid is in our national interests, so I think you have to really distinguish between the short run and long run. I think in the long run we need to tell that story; we need to talk about UK aid being in the national interest. I think this very short-term language around focusing UK aid on countries where we have a clear commercial and security interest is problematic. For me, the risk is that we dilute the purpose of aid. As I said, I think in the long run we risk diluting public support. Look at the number of times the Indian space programme is mentioned. Given the fact that we are increasing aid to India, there is a real tension there, and it is something that we are really concerned about as ONE.

Q174 **Mr Sharma:** I am very interested to hear you saying whether the aid going to India should be going to Africa. I am not disputing that part of India is very rich, but part of India is very, very poor. There are still regions in India where girls' education is relevant, and where underage marriages, rapes, prostitution and trafficking are very openly done. If I follow your argument that the little aid given to India is withdrawn—I do not want to go into the politics of India because my prejudice will come into it—are we then denying those girls and children access to employment opportunities, training skills and educational courses that are provided by aid?

Romilly Greenhill: Mark may want to speak to this as well. Over a number of years, ODI has done some interesting analysis of who should really finance development and what is a country's domestic capacity to finance development. It looked at the costs of meeting some of the SDGs—extreme poverty; health education; things that I think would be widely agreed as good uses of aid—and what is the capacity of the national Government, if they raise domestic revenue to fund those things domestically?

I think that is a pretty good test because, from a UK public perspective, most people would say we should not be giving money to countries where they really should be funding their own development domestically. That analysis is really quite interesting, because it shows that most middle-income countries, including countries such as India, could fund their own development if they were allocating funding to ending extreme poverty. When you look at Africa, LDCs and the most fragile states, that is where you have the large financing gaps.



In an ideal world, we would be able to spread aid more widely. But when you look at the very serious cuts that are happening across Africa, and particularly to humanitarian aid in countries such as Syria, Yemen and Libya, I think there is a real question around whether we should be increasing aid in some of the middle-income countries, and not just in Asia but, to some extent, Brazil, Mexico and so on. But I think this principle of looking at whether countries can and should fund their own development, and then allocating UK aid accordingly, is a fairly good way of looking at it.

Mr Sharma: I disagree, but there you are.

Q175 **Theo Clarke:** I direct my questions back to Mark and then to Ian.

Mark Miller: On this point on the national interest, it partly depends on how we think about what the national public are interested in. Historically—this is suggested in the International Development Act—the purpose of aid spending is to support poverty reduction. In a sense, there is a national interest—almost an altruistic national interest—in wanting to support the poorest people who cannot afford basic services.

I think what we are seeing now is aid being directed to a differently understood national interest of promoting our economic interests much more explicitly, and thinking about ways in which can support the forward-looking economic strategy of the UK, where we are looking for new trading partners in Asia-Pacific. We are seeing the geography of our aid adapt accordingly, with more money going to those countries where there is prospective future trading growth, and less going to those countries that happen to be the very poorest.

I think the other way we are seeing the national interest interpreted is much more in this idea of addressing global challenges—supporting resilience. Even in the language of the spending review, when it is talking about UK support for health, it is much more about supporting the resilience of health systems and issues around pandemic preparedness. It talks much less about how we promote equity, with basic access to health services in the very poorest countries.

That is definitely contributing to a shift. This inquiry is about the future of aid but, in many ways, I think we really need to start unbundling that and thinking much more about the future of the UK's international public spending? To evaluate that might look very different. Good climate finance is potentially quite different to good investment to support poverty reduction.

Chair: We are doing another inquiry on the philosophy of aid, so you might want to put in some written evidence to that.

Q176 **Theo Clarke:** Just pick up on your mentioning how the Government are now focusing on promoting economic interests, is it not also fair to say that if we are using UK aid for things like aid for trade programming, surely that is in the national interest, and also has the benefit of tackling



poverty? Is that not a win for both the UK and developing countries?

Mark Miller: I agree. There is certainly scope and potential for the UK to think about how it uses its public money to support mutual prosperity. What we need to think about is how we might look at that spending differently. If the sole purpose is to support the UK's economic interests, and we think about things in the past such as the Pergau inquiry, where we are supporting trade in defence equipment, I think all of us would find that quite problematic. But if we are supporting investments in countries' trade in the health sector, pharmaceuticals and vaccines, for example, I think that is something that we could support. I think we need to get a bit more into the nuance of what this win-win economic investment looks like.

Q177 **Chair:** That all seems very subjective to me and is starting to whiff quite badly of tied aid. Where is the distinction for you? Or is there not one?

Mark Miller: If we are thinking about purpose, there does need to be a conversation, together with a greater interrogation of how UK investment to support economic development should look. Should that look different from spending that helps to support basic health services? That would be my view. I do not know if that answers your question.

Theo Clarke: Not really.

Romilly Greenhill: I might sound a bit like an alcoholic, but I have always thought that aid should be the Heineken of the development finance system, in the sense that it should reach the parts that other forms of finance cannot reach.

Chair: I am not sure it is the best metaphor, but I am with you.

Romilly Greenhill: Yes, you get my point. I think there are all sorts of ways in which UK private investment and all sorts of other parts of the UK can work together to promote trade and investment, and work in partnerships with countries across the world. That is entirely appropriate. I do think there is a role for ODA in doing things that other forms of finance cannot do. On where you draw the line, I think it is very important that we emphasise that whatever we do is promoting trade and investment. If you think about girls' education or vaccines—two examples that have been raised—both of those will support economic development in the long run. We know that. We have got very good evidence on that, and that is really important, but the purpose should be around supporting those countries over the long run. That will benefit us and benefit regional economies and so on, but I think the primary purpose is really thinking about what aid can do, given that it is a very precious and scarce resource. There are other forms of partnership that we should be encouraging and nurturing that can support economic development in other ways. That is where I would draw the line.

Q178 **Theo Clarke:** Ian, can I just ask you to pick up on this point, which is clearly partly about those tensions between the UK's national interests and development goals. What is your view on that?



Ian Mitchell: First of all, I want to mention that the last aid strategy, or the one that we are still operating under, was called “Aid in the National Interest”. That was in 2015. A big strand of that strategy was the prosperity fund, which has now been quietly removed from the budget. I think that that is, in a way, the test that we should be exposing ourselves to in 2030, looking back at this development strategy. If we have aid-for-trade programmes that achieve or facilitate trade deals for us, do the outcomes look good? Do they look good from a development perspective and a national interest perspective? Does that enhance our reputation as an international actor trying to get things done at the G7 and the G20? Does it help our economy? Does it help the economies of our partners in trade? I think that is the test we should apply to those examples. Aid for trade can be helpful in supporting partners and unlocking trade deals, but I think the proof of the pudding is in the analysis. Let us see what those cases look like.

I would observe that we have been on a journey where aid is now more in a narrow self-interest than it was. We are doing a piece of work looking at the UK's poverty focus. It still compares quite well to other countries in its poverty focus, but it has declined. It is not as interested in the poorest countries as it was. We have been through the merger and the reduction in aid, and I think at the moment we do not have a very strong strategy for what we are prioritising. I agree with Mark that there are some good things in integrated review, such as being a force for good and supporting the international system. For the UK to succeed and thrive on its own, outside the EU, it needs the international system to work. It needs the system to work for all the middle-income countries that are developing as well. If the international system does not succeed, the UK is not going to be successful, because the world is going to be a dangerous and fragmented place.

Q179 **Theo Clarke:** Could I just pick up on that? You mentioned the importance of evidence; do you have any evidence to show that the UK aid strategy is beginning to shift towards countries where we are going to get more trade and diplomatic benefits, and moving away from those countries that you say are the poorest and most vulnerable?

Ian Mitchell: We have some technical analysis looking at how poor the UK's partners are, but in some ways it is perhaps summarised better by the regions that we are focusing on. For example, a few years ago—I think it was in 2009—we had £8.5 billion in the aid budget in cash terms, and we managed to give £2 billion to Africa. Now we have an £11 billion aid budget and we are not managing to give £2 billion to Africa. I think that is an illustration of how our priorities have shifted. More specifically on the Asia-Pacific, we are doing some new work which we can share with the Committee. The Asia-Pacific is quite a crowded place in terms of support for countries. Japan and Australia are already there, as well as middle-income countries, so the UK's ability to be an important donor in any of those partner countries is quite inhibited. In Pakistan, we were the largest provider of ODA, but I think that will change. In the other countries,



except perhaps for Nepal, I think we would probably have to spend half a billion pounds to become the largest donor in any one of those countries. We will remain a mid-ranking donor in all those Asia-Pacific partners.

I think the Asia-Pacific tilt is important, and there is a strategic competition going on that we cannot ignore. I do not know if ODA and aid is the way to fight that in the Asia-Pacific. The Asia-Pacific strategies of Japan, the EU and the US also encompass East Africa. The integrated review pulls out East Africa, perhaps for historical reasons, but it is interesting that other major players see that as part of the Asia-Pacific tilt, and I think we have got to roll with that.

Q180 Theo Clarke: Do you want to add to that Romilly?

Romilly Greenhill: I would be more concerned about the Asia-Pacific tilt, but we do have very clear evidence in terms of the country allocations, even from just the last year, where we are seeing, exactly as Ian said, more money to Asia-Pacific, and less money to Africa and to middle eastern and north Africa regions. When you see the early data on country allocations, it is quite clear, and your point on Africa is very well made. I go back to what I said before: if you were allocating based on need, you would be much more focused on Africa. I think the trends are pretty clear already, even at this early stage.

Chair: I am going to hand over to Pauline, but before that, can I just say that we are half an hour in—a third of the way through—and we have only covered three questions? We have got quite a lot more questions, so if I could ask the panel to be a bit more direct in their responses, I would be very grateful. If not, I will start doing my sheepdog and nipping at your heels.

Q181 Mrs Latham: Has the UK Government's response to Covid-19-related overseas assistance been undermined by reductions in the UK aid budget? Can we start with Ian?

Ian Mitchell: Yes, I am afraid I think it has. Turning to your bilateral partners and introducing 50% cuts when they are facing exactly the same pandemic pressures as we are has been extremely difficult. In terms of vaccine delivery—I am sure Romilly will want to say more about this—I think the Government have made promises, but are yet to deliver on them, and they are lagging other countries in that respect. We are used to the UK being in the lead and encouraging others, but a variety of reasons—particularly the aid cut, but other factors as well—have prevented it from playing its part.

Q182 Mrs Latham: Which promises are you particularly referring to?

Ian Mitchell: The Prime Minister's promise to deliver 100 million vaccines. Some 10 million have been delivered already, and I think the others are in train, but when you compare us to other countries, the share that we have delivered out of that 100 million is still quite low.

Mark Miller: I think two things. One is regarding the promises that we could not make because of the squeeze on the aid budget. It has just been much harder, for instance at the G7, to come out with bold commitments that lead others. There is a counter-factual: what could we have done with an extra £4 billion? The amount to vaccinate the world that the IMF talked about was about \$50 million, which is not a huge stretch. If the UK had put in £2 billion at the G7, what might others have done?

The second thing is the point that Ian raises. Domestically, there is a really good story that large counter-cyclical spending has limited the scarring from the pandemic at the national level. Internationally, I feel that we have lowered the bar with aid's anti-cyclical approach by saying, "Actually, these are substitutes. We are going to save abroad to fund our own response." I think that has undermined international relief efforts.

Romilly Greenhill: I completely agree with what has just been said. We are, as of now, the sixth out of seven G7 countries in terms of our 2021 commitments to dose sharing. That is a little embarrassing from my perspective as Britain has been such a leader, historically. In relation to Mark's point, we are also the only G7 country that has cut aid during the pandemic. I very much agree that we are lagging behind on dose sharing. We are not where we should be in terms of financing the Covid response, because there is a lack of funding in the aid budget. I think the point about the G7 is very well made also. We saw almost no new financial commitments at the G7, which is quite extraordinary if you think about it. This was right in the middle of the pandemic. It was the first time leaders were meeting in person since the start of the pandemic. I think we would have expected a really big, bold pledge, in terms of dose sharing and financing. I think what we got, because of the aid cuts, was underwhelming and what we are now seeing is other people really picking up the mantle in terms of the Covid response from the UK, to be honest.

Q183 **Mrs Latham:** How do you think the lockdown measures and restrictions on travel have affected the delivery of aid programmes?

Romilly Greenhill: I think programmatic NGOs would speak to that a little bit more. I know it has been a big challenge for a lot of NGOs, but because we are not a programmatic NGO, I think it would be better for someone with that more direct programmatic experience to speak to it.

Q184 **Mrs Latham:** Do either Ian or Mark have anything to add on that?

Mark Miller: The only thing I would say is that there have been benefits in terms of innovation and thinking about how TA can be provided digitally, with carbon reductions as a consequence. I think there has been some innovation in the sector, but clearly it has been disruptive. Travel restrictions on people coming to the UK has also been problematic, in terms of the flow and movement of goods and ideas that can help economies recover.

Q185 **Mrs Latham:** Do you think the Government should reconsider their

decision to count Covid-19-related expenditure as ODA, and why do you think that?

Ian Mitchell: I have argued before that the UK should follow the OECD rules on aid. The OECD rules on aid are going to allow countries to count it as ODA. The reason why the UK is different is because no-one else runs their ODA budget as a maximum. Every time the UK makes a new commitment that counters ODA, it reduces spending elsewhere to make sure it never gets above whatever its target is. While I think it is legitimate to count vaccines as ODA—there is a discussion about that, but the DAC rules says that it is legitimate and I agree that it is—I think it would be common sense, and not letting the tail of the rules wag the dog of the UK's foreign policy approach, to call it additional. That said, I think vaccines are probably relatively small compared to debt relief and SDR allocations, and I think that the same arguments apply to those things. The Chancellor said the SDRs were additional when he signed up to them, but now they are coming out of the 0.5%. The debt relief is not a real flow of money; it is an accounting item. I think those arguments apply, and as the Chancellor appears committed to a return to 0.7%, it would not hurt to let the aid budget go to 0.53% to support those items.

Mark Miller: Regarding the vaccines, what particularly sticks in the craw is vaccines that were going to waste—that would be thrown away—if we are saying, “We are going to reduce aid spending because we are going to give them to a country just before they expire.” If the UK public understood that, essentially, reducing aid spending for vaccines that were going to expire has been budgeted in, that one would be particularly problematic.

Romilly Greenhill: I would agree with what Ian and Mark have said. On Ian's point, we should be thinking about 0.5% as a floor, not a ceiling. I think whether they should be classified as ODA can be debated, but they certainly should not be classified as ODA under the 0.5% threshold for exactly the reasons that they both outlined.

Q186 **Kate Osamor:** I am going to ask questions to all three of you, and I will start with Romilly. You said that the UK is the only G7 country to have cut aid. Do you feel that the FCDO has managed reductions in the UK ODA spending?

Romilly Greenhill: Managed them well?

Kate Osamor: Yes.

Romilly Greenhill: I think it is difficult. The FCDO was not the one that made the decisions about the ODA cuts. It has put a lot of the cuts on the bilateral programme as opposed to the multilateral programme. I think that was probably the only thing it could have done, to be honest, because if you think about the big multilateral organisations, you have these big multi-year replenishments. We have made commitments to things like the World Bank, GAVI, the Global Fund and so on, and it would have been



very difficult and I think quite internationally damaging for us to have reduced the funding to those big multilateral organisations. Effectively, what that means is that there has been a disproportionate amount falling on the bilateral programme.

It is difficult to see what the FCDO could have done differently in those circumstances. I understand the choices that it has made. Going forward, I think it will be quite important that we think about the bilateral-multilateral split. On the NGO side, there have been some challenges around the communication of some of the cuts. Again, we are not programmatic—as ONE, we do not get funding from UK aid—so I cannot speak from personal experience, but from talking to colleagues across the sector, I think there have been real challenges around communication, predictability, people knowing what their budget was going to change by, and having that information. I think that has been really difficult for a number of organisations that we work with.

Q187 **Kate Osamor:** Mark, would you like to add?

Mark Miller: It is just a horrendously difficult task, and I think one that has been further exacerbated by both this year and last year, when the FCDO was quite significantly undercut—even below the 0.5% or the 0.7% targets. This year the budget allocation that it was given to manage for ODA was £10 billion, even though GNI forecasts were £11 billion, with big contingencies. Last year, £3 billion was taken in the initial cuts even though, ultimately, it only needed to be £1.5 billion. Not only have you had enormous cuts to manage, but you have had to cut deeper than even expected. In that shock and awe of remaking a budget, it is always going to cause enormous disruption. I am not quite sure what could have been done differently.

Ian Mitchell: I think I agree with that. I would just note the steepness and speed of the cut. There was a lot of concern when we went from 0.5% to 0.7% 10 years ago, and that happened over years; this happened in six months. I think the steepness and abruptness of the reduction was extremely challenging. I think that probably all of us have some areas where we might have done things differently but, on the whole, I think it was reasonably well handled in the circumstances.

Q188 **Kate Osamor:** Based on what you have seen so far, have cuts to the UK aid spending budget been based on value for money assessments, so retaining those programmes that deliver the greatest impact, or has it just been a salami slice?

Romilly Greenhill: I would say it has probably not been either a salami slice or a value for money decision. We, as ONE, put together a briefing in 2020 when initially it was clear that cuts were going to have to be made because of falling GNI forecasts. At the time, as ONE, we actually said that we understand that, because it is the way the target works, so we understood that cuts needed to be made. We recommended that a number of projects and programmes that had scored poorly on ICAI reviews,



HOUSE OF COMMONS

because they were not clearly demonstrating results, were not transparent or were not demonstrating value for money, should be the first to see cuts. Many of them were outside of DFID at the time. Many of them were from across the ODA budget—the cross-Government spending. It is very unclear what has happened to a lot of that spending. It seems that the decisions have mainly been related to the strategic shifts that we have talked about on foreign policy issues, and we would have liked to see a stronger focus on effectiveness, to be honest.

Q189 Kate Osamor: Do you think the spending is now focused on more effective interventions?

Romilly Greenhill: Without better information about what is happening to ODA across Government, it is difficult to make that assessment. If we had better information on the ODA spending of BEIS, the Home Office and other parts of the Government, we could make that assessment more concretely.

Mark Miller: Within individual Departments, as far as I understand it, they have sought to cut the lowest performing projects first, but if you are asked to make cuts of 50% or 60%, you are inevitably going to have to cut good projects as well as bad ones. The portfolio of projects is pretty good, so you cannot only take away the bad ones. I would echo Romilly's point that it is not a salami slice across the overall budget; it has been a political reallocation. Certain budget lines have been protected: the British Council, BBC World Service, and certain regions—the Caribbean and India. There have been much bigger cuts in certain countries and on certain themes than others.

Ian Mitchell: Two quick points for me. Protecting multilateral was a function of commitments, but a lot of the multilateral organisations such as GAVI and the World Bank are ones that we would see as delivering good value. In that respect, more by accident than design, it did protect some high-value areas. Climate is the other area we should mention because that was really the sector that was protected. In general, on climate expenditure, there is a question of how you assess its value for money and impact that all providers are struggling with. Climate spend is now almost a quarter of global aid, and it has grown up very quickly. I think there is a big future agenda for the Government, but I think with climate spend, some of it is focused on mitigation and quite a lot of it is in middle-income countries. I would have some concerns about that being the protected sector, even though I understand why it was.

Q190 Kate Osamor: Romilly, I wanted to ask you two more questions. According to data published in the FCDO's annual report, most countries will see their aid budget roughly halved in 2021-22, as you rightly just spoke about. What impacts are the cuts having on aid beneficiaries and lower income countries, which Ian slightly alluded to?

Romilly Greenhill: They are having huge impacts. Some of the calculations we have done have suggested that there are going to be 4

million children no longer able to go to school as a result of these cuts, and 3 million people not getting humanitarian assistance. To be honest, in terms of doing a full analysis of what has happened, that is something that certainly we would like to do more of in the coming years. In terms of the results and looking at what DFID has previously achieved, we are seeing huge and very significant cuts, particularly for countries where DFID and the FCDO have been major donors. These are huge cuts to absorb in very short periods of time, during a pandemic which has been very difficult, and there has also had to be some reallocation of spending as well. There are very significant impacts that we are really concerned about.

Q191 Kate Osamor: How well do you think FCDO is communicating the cuts and its rationale for them to the aid sector and beneficiary countries?

Romilly Greenhill: As I mentioned, I know from the aid and NGO sectors that there have been real challenges around better communication to allow organisations to plan. We were into the financial year by the time that some organisations were getting updates on their budgets. As of April and May this year, a lot of organisations were saying, “We still do not know what our budgets are for this year. We do not know how long the cuts are going to last.” Obviously that has huge implications in terms of issues such as planning and staffing. Thinking about value for money, it is very logical that, to achieve value for money from funding, you need predictability. We know that very well, and I think that that has been a real challenge. In terms of communication with beneficiary countries, I have not been tracking that very closely but, certainly from the NGO side, it has been a challenge.

Q192 Chair: Could I just build on Kate's questions? As a Committee, we found it incredibly difficult to get proper information and transparency out of the Department. Have any of you received or seen a strategy around the cuts? I know that the development strategy for DFID, as it was at the time, ran out in 2020. Have you seen the rationale behind the cuts? I am getting a shaking head from Romilly. Mark or Ian, have you seen anything?

Mark Miller: There was the letter on the seven priorities.

Chair: Aside from the seven priorities, which we get chanted at every time you raise this.

Mark Miller: But the allocations are not consistent with—

Chair: I agree. They are not consistent with the integrated review, either.

Ian Mitchell: I agree with that completely, and having the seven areas in a way that you cannot compare with the year before, and likewise with the regions, is problematic. The recent FCDO report was quite detailed in what the changes were in 2021-22. If you look at the normal rhythm of information that the Government publish, that was actually more detailed than we might normally expect from an annual report, I think I am right in saying. I do not know to what extent it is by design, or whether it is a

function of the Government's busy agenda that they have not had the time to go back and calculate things in the previous way.

Q193 **Chair:** Have you seen anything that made the argument and justification before the cuts, rather than retrospectively justifying them?

Ian Mitchell: No, I have not seen an articulation of that.

Chair: Thank you. Over to Virendra Sharma.

Q194 **Mr Sharma:** My question is very simple: what impact is a reduction in the 0.7% target to 0.5% having on the UK's global standing?

Mark Miller: We alluded to it earlier: the ability to demonstrate global leadership. At this time in particular, during this once-in-a-generation development crisis, the UK has not been able to take leading commitments. We saw that earlier this year at the G7 summit around vaccines, and we have spoken a bit about that. I think we are also seeing it this week at COP26, where the UK has announced an increased £1 billion for the climate finance target, but I do not think countries are necessarily welcoming that with open arms when they have seen the overall flow of resources cut by such a large amount. Let us take the example of Bangladesh, a country that is very exposed to climate change risks. The bilateral aid budget fell by almost 60%, so I do not think they will be cheering the climate finance target. I think it is that leadership that is really suffering.

Romilly Greenhill: I will just add to that. With regard to climate, we do know that the chair of the LDCs group in the climate negotiations, raised some quite strong concerns about the ODA cuts, and it happened even with G7 partners. Samantha Power raised concerns—I think she did so in the strongest terms that she felt able to do with an ally. Similarly, we have heard from France and other countries. In terms of our global reputation, our convening power and our ability to lead on agendas in a way that we have done in the past, we know that that has been severely damaged.

When we talk to Government officials and Ministers, from across Africa particularly—people are cautious, to be honest, about what they can say publicly—we know it is a real issue of concern for lots of those Governments. In the run-up to the COP, not only was money being cut, but countries were being asked by the UK to make really ambitious climate change commitments in a context where the UK is not sharing vaccines. I think a lot of them were saying, "Hang on, why should we be making these ambitious commitments at your summit when we are seeing these huge aid cuts and we are not getting any vaccines?" I think there has been a real challenge around our global perception and reputation which was, honestly, so strong. In my career, I have heard from so many Governments, officials and partners around the world about the esteem with which they held the UK because of our development contribution, and I think that we really lost a lot, to be honest.



Ian Mitchell: I would add to that just by emphasising the climate finance point. For a decade, the UK set a great example in climate finance by making it additional to the aid it was providing. In 2010, it reported very carefully on it to make sure that that was the case. Then, in the year where it hosts the COP, it undermines that commitment. I think you will see that the failure to meet the climate finance commitment will be a central feature of this COP. This goes back to what I was saying about the success of the international system. If that process does not succeed, we are all in real trouble, and the UK has not helped its chairing of that at all.

Q195 **Mr Sharma:** There have been reports that the Government may attempt to rebadge overseas assistance such as debt cancellation and the redistribution of special drawing rights as ODA. In your view, does this break the spirit of international rules on what constitutes overseas aid?

Mark Miller: On the special drawing rights issue, the UK is already recording loans. It lends special drawing rights to the IMF at present and records those as ODA. You will not see them in the Budget because it is seen as a way that the Government manage their reserves, but it is recorded as ODA. That is already happening. Having looked at this, we think the UK is the only country that reports its SDR reallocations in this way. It has been doing this in the past, but I guess the question that comes into the future is if—as would be hoped—there is an upscaling of reallocations of SDRs because of the recent issuance, this would further reduce the UK's grant spend. I do not think it is necessarily a recording issue as such—there is some kind of impact of that—but it is the spirit point that you raise: it gives the impression that you are trying to find gimmicks that save you budgetary funds. If grant programmes are replaced with SDR allocation, it is money that the UK did not raise from the UK public; it was issued centrally by the IMF.

Romilly Greenhill: We touched on a little bit of this earlier. For both SDRs—vaccines and the debt relief—none of those really come at any cost to the UK taxpayer. That, for me, is a critical point to be making. SDR allocation money came from the IMF. As Ian has said, Sudan will not be paying that debt; it has not paid it for decades, and it was not even for development purposes in the first place. These are all things that come at zero—or close to zero—cost for the UK taxpayer and therefore, from my perspective, the idea that that should be counted as part of our donor effort certainly seems wrong.

With the possible exception of Sudan debt relief, we did not know that we would have these SDRs when we first decided to cut the aid budget last November to 0.5%—the Chancellor and Government agreed that. It was not even clear there would be an agreement; that did not come until much later. Similarly, we did not know we would have so many successful vaccines and that we would have surplus vaccines. It is hard to avoid the perception that these are things that are effectively being used to reduce the amount that UK taxpayers have to contribute even further. I think it is really important that they are additional to ODA budgets.

Ian Mitchell: The principle of official development assistance rules is to look at donor effort and compare it consistently. Those rules are imperfect and there are lots of problems with them—mainly because they are set by providers with no input from recipients at all. Loans are overstated. SDRs involve no fiscal effort. Vaccines were not developed for developing countries—they were leftovers. Export credits are not developmental, and when you write them off they should not be debts. Those are all problems with the ODA rules.

It is a shame that the UK, as it has in the past, is not arguing that those things are not included instead of taking maximum advantage of them to reduce its fiscal effort, especially when the Chancellor has predicated the return to 0.7% on fiscal measures. It seems perverse to focus on fiscal effort for returning to 0.7%, but to include lots of things that do not involve fiscal effort.

Q196 **Mr Sharma:** What impact will these accounting changes have on the amount available for UK aid and UK aid programmes?

Romilly Greenhill: To be quite honest, it is difficult to know the exact numbers because certainly the way the special drawing rights work is that it has counted as ODA when loans are made to countries. We are all working with estimates here because we do not know exactly. As Mark said, we hope that there will be more SDRs recycled to poor countries, which would have more of an impact. Most of the estimates that have been made suggest we are talking about £1 billion to £2 billion per year impact on the ODA budget. If you look at DFID's previous results and think about scaling down the results, that is another 50,000 preventable deaths, if you do it proportionally. That is another 2 million children out of school. Effectively, this amounts to a third round of aid cuts and it is really significant

Mark Miller: I need to say that last year it took out £255 million. We already know that at the moment, this year, SDR is probably about £300 million or £400 million. If you have debt relief and vaccines on top, it is going to be much larger.

Ian Mitchell: I agree with Romilly. It is touch and go whether the aid budget increases as you would expect it to with GNI next year because the £800 million increase you would expect could easily be outweighed by the three items that we have just listed.

Q197 **Mr Sharma:** Do you think the spending review enables the UK to remain a "development superpower"? Who wants to take the lead on that? Come on Ian.

Ian Mitchell: I do not like the phrase "development superpower". The wider context of how much GNI other countries are providing on aid is an important reference point. I agree with Mark that the timing of the UK making its cut has been awful from the point of view of the national and international interest. Unfortunately, there are not many others that are

providing more than 0.5%. Germany is stepping up and will do 0.7%; France is stepping up and will move above that. More generally—other than the Nordic countries—the UK is going to be fourth or mid-table. It will still be a very important development actor even at 0.5%.

It is a good moment to mention that the spending review settlement allocates more of the FCDO's budget in capital than it ever has before. Normally that has been about 20% and now it is closer to a third. That seems to be motivated by the Treasury's desire to allocate capital which does not count towards its day-to-day spending target.

We have not seen an explanation of why that increase has been made, but the FCDO is limited in what it can spend it on. Bilateral work on girls' education or bilateral work on health, for example, cannot be funded from that capital budget; it has to go to multilaterals or other sources. That will tie the FCDO's hands to some extent in the forthcoming strategy. If you were focusing on multilaterals as a strategy for its own sake, that would make a lot of sense; if you are doing it to hit fiscal rules, that is the Treasury dictating the international strategy with rules rather than objectives once again.

Mark Miller: I think it is a very different projection of power, and this comes back a bit to the question that Theo was raising earlier—that there is this idea that essentially the UK needs to present an offer that competes with China, so this idea of systematic competition. The UK is clearly keen to use its aid resources to provide an alternative offer on issues such as green and clean infrastructure, promoting business and promoting trade with new partners. We have seen this as a vision—a new line of direction—but I do not think we have seen enough detail yet to see how that will play out in practice. What does that offer look like? How does that money combine with UK industrial expertise? Where does it get delivered? We are seeing a desire to project power in a different way, but I am not sure we know enough about the how yet to really assess.

Romilly Greenhill: I would agree with what has just been said. If you look across the G7, we are going to be third in terms of ODA to GNI, and we are going to be fifth in absolute terms. Fifth out of seven is not a particularly good record if you are looking at the absolute volume of our ODA budget. I think there is this point about who we are on the global stage. We know we cannot compete with America on defence; it is always going to be an enormous player militarily. We know we cannot compete with China in terms of the sort of economic weight, and so on. For the last few years, there has been quite a good narrative around, "Well we offer something that is qualitatively different. We offer rule of law, we offer values, we offer good governance." There is quite a unique British offer that I think that we have had in the world in being good players, trusted partners, honest brokers and all that sort of thing. My concern now is that if we do not offer those things, what is our offer? From my perspective, I like the development superpower language, and I think that that is under threat.

Q198 **Chair:** When you talk to your international colleagues, have we given those values away?

Romilly Greenhill: It is still early days. If we were to get back to 0.7% in 2024—as the Chancellor has said last week—and if we have a sensible plan about how we do that, I do not think all is lost. I think we are at a point of risk at the moment. If we go internationally and say, “This is a short term measure, here is our plan to get back to it. Here are some of the investments and we are going to smooth out multilateral payments.” ONE has offices across Africa and the G7, and I hear a lot of feedback from colleagues that the UK is just not seen as a leader in the way that we have previously been. We did not even attend the global vaccine summit that was hosted by President Biden a month or so ago. It is quite something for us not to even turn up to a big summit on global vaccines. There is a real risk going forward.

Q199 **Mrs Latham:** Perhaps we can change to international climate finance and, more topically, COP26. Ian and Mark, the Government plan to spend at least £11.6 billion on international climate finance between 2021 and 2025. Should that spending be protected when other UK aid priorities are under so much pressure?

Ian Mitchell: I understand why it has been protected. Unfortunately, with the way the international climate finance architecture is set up and the common understanding that is shared—climate finance is measured in the face-value commitments that are made—not enough attention is paid to whether those are additional or not. I can understand why the decision was made on that. Within climate finance, there is some very important work going on that focuses on adaptation in the poorest countries. You can do good development within that envelope, so I was not so concerned to see it protected in that respect. The benefit of mitigation is to all of us, not the partner country. The majority of the UK spend is still in mitigation. There is definitely room for improvement within that £2 billion a year envelope. The UK could do a lot within that to improve how that is spent and how it helps our partners, and I would like to see that.

Mark Miller: I would agree with everything Ian just said. We should focus on what that £11.6 billion is going to be spent on and whether the commitment of 50% on adaptation will be honoured? Going forward, I think those are probably the key headlines for this Committee to look at.

Q200 **Mrs Latham:** It is no good educating girls if there are no schools because they have all been washed away because of climate change—if the ocean has risen, there are no crops to eat and everyone has had to migrate—so COP26 is obviously pretty immediate this week and next. In my view, it is a fairly important thing for them to stick with. Romilly, do you have anything to add?

Romilly Greenhill: No, I think that is exactly right. Mark's point about the 50% adaptation and climate commitments is an incredibly important target. I really think the point is about how it is spent, and doing so

sensibly in an integrated way with long-term development efforts. That is exactly right.

Q201 **Theo Clarke:** Returning to the recently published spending review, the Chancellor has now announced that we will have a potential return to spending 0.7% of our GNI on ODA by 2024-25. Ian, what were your initial reactions to that?

Ian Mitchell: I was encouraged that the Chancellor had made the two tests for ODA also his main fiscal rules, and they are the ones that he will be judged on. If we get the punchy growth that the OBR predicts, it looks like we would be on track for that. I still have some hesitancy. Neither of the former Chancellors—Hammond or Osborne—met their fiscal rules. Depending on what happens with the economy, it may be the case that we do not meet them. My colleague, Sam Hughes, has done some work to say that even on the OBR's basis, there is only a 40% chance of both those scenarios coming to pass, so it is still less likely than 50%.

To a large extent, those figures are within the Chancellor's control. He will get the forecast from the OBR, he will decide his policies in the round, and whether he meets his rules will depend on how much he chooses to spend and chooses to tax, because it is a forecast and not an outturn. As we approach the election, his decisions on whether to offer tax reductions or further spending commitments will affect whether that return is made. Some things like GNI growth are outside his control, but many of the things are within his control. I am still sceptical to some extent that we will be back there before 2025.

Mark Miller: I looked at the details of the FCDO's planned totals over the next three years. It is planning to work at 0.5%, but there is an allocation of £5 billion should the fiscal rules be met. That tells me two things. First, there is still significant uncertainty, as FCDO is planning ahead on the basis of 0.5%. Secondly, I worry again about this kind of management administrative issue. We have just talked about the dangers of having to find £5 billion of savings overnight; it is not actually a lot easier to find £5 billion of additional expenditure overnight. You risk entering into not very effective projects if you have to increase your budget by 50% overnight. The volatility is not helpful.

Q202 **Theo Clarke:** Looking at the spending review, you mentioned FCDO's global challenges and things like girls' education, global health security, climate and biodiversity. What do you think are the implications in the spending review for those global challenges that the FCDO sets out?

Mark Miller: What we see in the budget is a much more top-down focus than there used to be. DFID used to be based on the premise that you would have an aid allocation budget, and countries would lead what the priorities should be within certain guardrails. Within the overall budget, there are now some quite big ring-fences for climate finance, for nature and for Covid. A lot of it will be set from the top down, with less space for

working in partnership with countries to engage on their particular priorities.

Q203 **Theo Clarke:** Romilly, did you want to respond?

Romilly Greenhill: I think the strategic priorities is good list of priorities, and I think that those are good areas for focus. We are seeing cuts even to those areas, because the budget is so limited. Girls' education is one of the things I mentioned earlier. It is a big priority but it is still being very significantly cut, so I think that is a challenge. I know FCDO cannot do anything, but we do also have a concern on some issues like nutrition and water getting very hard hit in terms of allocations, because they are not priorities, and that is something that is likely to continue.

I am not saying that FCDO should look at every sector under the sun, but thinking about the pandemic response and water—we all know how critical hand washing is for tackling the pandemic—we do need to think about how we invest in that. Nutrition has massive impacts on the poorest people and poor children. We need to think about how we prioritise those areas as well.

Q204 **Chair:** It is almost a year since we last met remotely, and it is 14 months since the merger of DFID and FCO. We have seen three—four, to take Romilly's point—cuts in the aid budget and we still have not got a development strategy in place. From the perspectives of yourselves and the organisations that you work for, do you think we are seeing a fundamental shift in the character of UK aid and this Government's approach to it, or is this just turbulent times and we should give them grace for what has been going on?

Mark Miller: I think it is a fundamental shift.

Chair: What is that shift?

Mark Miller: We can look at the spending patterns. Budgets are often talked about as revealing a Government's priorities. We have seen a clear shift in geographic focus and we have already talked about some of the data behind that. There is much less focus on the middle east and north Africa. There is much less focus on fragile states, which has historically been a major focus of the UK, and the poorest countries, yet certain geographies such as south-east Asia, the Caribbean and overseas territories have been more protected. The geographic focus of UK development systems is much more focused on countries that are likely to be future economic or diplomatic partners, and less because a country is poor. I think that is one shift.

Q205 **Chair:** Do you also see a correlation between Defence being the only Department that was actually overtly cut in the spending review?

Mark Miller: I think, in the previous year, Defence had taken quite a—

Chair: It had taken our £4 billion.

Mark Miller: If we look at international spend in broader terms and we were to unbundle some of what we have been talking about—finance that goes directly to poor countries for poverty reduction, finance for global commitments like climate finance, finance for hard defence equipment, and finance to support economic policy interests through trade—the areas in relative terms that we would see having increased is investment in economic policy interests through trade, investment in global challenges like climate change and a large increase in defence equipment, but a significant reduction in the money that goes to the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Those changes are behind us. The development strategy will put something on paper, but those are the changes that have very clearly been reflected in the spending allocations, if we look line by line at percentage changes.

There has been a fundamental reshaping of the UK's development priorities, but I do not think the public conversation has fundamentally changed. I still think we are talking about aid. This inquiry is about the future of aid. We are assessing all this spending in the same way. I actually think that the conversation and understanding about what has happened still needs to permeate, because I do not think that the public are aware of this, for sure.

Q206 **Chair:** Do you think it is conscious, or do you think it is the lack of someone at the top table—a member of the Cabinet—arguing for development's fundamental role?

Mark Miller: No, I think it is very conscious. The patterns are again there in the numbers. As I said, overseas territories are protected, as is Brand Britain investment such as the BBC World Service and the British Council. These are slight increases versus 60% cuts to the middle east and north Africa. We know those decisions are being taken at the very top. These are not decisions that are being taken at the mid-level based on just project evaluations; they are political decisions. There is a clearly different path on the UK's international spend.

Chair: You cited the British Council, but it is having to cut its staff by 20%, so I am not sure that is the strongest argument, but I take your point.

Mark Miller: But in relative terms—

Chair: In relative terms, some are being cut by 95%.

Mark Miller: Exactly.

Q207 **Chair:** Ian, what are your thoughts? Is this a fundamental shift?

Ian Mitchell: It is definitely a step back. I agree with Mark that it is a fundamental change. It seems to me there is an ongoing debate—or tension or battle—within the Government about whether the UK should retain its development leadership role, and whether that is something it is proud of and something in its national interests. That discussion is

ongoing. Some of our worst fears were not realised about the Government and the merger. For example, ICAI has been retained. It has got relatively smaller, but relative to some of the other reductions, it is not as large. The Committee has been retained. The UK is still active on the international scene. I do think there is an ongoing discussion about that. The question of whether we will return to 0.7% is obviously one issue. The UK's trade policy has been an area where it has sought to improve access for developing countries, and we are still waiting to see confirmation of what that will look like, but there are some areas where it is still committed to development for its own sake.

I always feel that this debate is never quite settled and it is never quite as bad as you fear it might be. But it is also disappointing that the opportunities that do not feel particularly costly are sometimes missed through hesitancy or suspicion. There is still the opportunity there for the UK to take up that leadership role again in its own national interest.

Q208 Chair: Would you like to speculate on the aid champions still left in government versus those that are looking for this somewhat radical change?

Ian Mitchell: I do not quite know who the characters and actors are. Obviously the Foreign Secretary will be really important to this. It would appear in the spending review that she has achieved some of her objectives in avoiding some potential cuts next year, and it seems as though she has fought for the development budget as it is. I think there is an opportunity for the Foreign Secretary to be active on that agenda as the UK aid budget rises, as the UK strikes trade deals with middle-income countries, and as it grows its influence at the WTO, the World Bank and other institutions that need reform. We are seeing problems like the World Bank replenishment. The UK has been the biggest provider to the International Development Association. It should be using that leadership role to influence for the better and avoid undue influence from other shareholders in that institution. Those opportunities are still there, and there is no reason why the Foreign Secretary cannot take them.

Q209 Chair: Romilly, a fundamental shift or just a blip?

Romilly Greenhill: I would say it is too early to tell and the next two or three years will be really critical. The UK actually does have a choice at this stage. We have this 2024-25 recommitment to 0.7%. You talked about the challenge of suddenly increasing financing; we could actually plan very sensibly for that. We could give people clear predictability now of when aid budgets are going to go up. There are a few issues on which the UK could still show leadership—things such as the clean green initiative that we talked about yesterday. There is an opportunity on Covid. I think we have a choice, and obviously we now have many new Ministers in the FCDO. As Mark said, the direction of travel so far has been quite clear, but I think there is a choice about where we go in the next two or three years.



I do think the public conversation here is important because, as I said earlier, the public do not want to see UK aid used for short-term trade deals, Pergau dam and all the rest of it. We have got data coming out our ears that shows us that. They want aid to be used for education, vaccines, women and girls, contraception—all these sorts of things. It is going to be quite important, I think, certainly from the NGO side, that we bring those voices to the Government and say, “Actually this is where the public are. They do not like aid to China. They do not like aid to India. They do not like aid to go into countries where they do not think it is needed.” With really having that conversation, I think there is a bit of a choice that we have as a country in the coming years.

Q210 Chair: We have hopefully got the development strategy coming forward—it has been coming forward for the last 10 years—but do you believe that there has been enough consultation? How should we or you be lobbying to make sure that such consultation is there so that it does genuinely reflect where the British public is? I know you did some surveys about the British public’s views on what money should, could or would be spent on that are not matching up with the strategy or the outcomes that Mark has alluded to.

Romilly Greenhill: I am hoping that there will be more consultation with the strategy. To be honest, it has not been strong so far and it has not been very effective. We are all waiting—I agree that it would have been nice to see the strategy before now—but I think there is an opportunity with this delay to actually have a wider consultative process. I think that does potentially give us an opportunity, and we are optimistic that that certainly will improve in terms of how broad it goes.

If you think about climate, and the degree of public interest and discussion around climate, that has been quite strong and we need to have a similar conversation about development as well.

Chair: This Committee has often commented on it, but I do think, particularly on climate, there is a generational difference going on, and I just hope the politicians recognise that and respond to the next generation coming through, rather than looking so much at the short term, which is what we seem to be seeing at the moment.

If there are no other questions from Committee members, panellists, thank you so much. You have brought us in right on time, so I will start chiding people earlier next time. I really appreciate your contributions and the ongoing contributions that you and your organisations make to these inquiries. It is deeply appreciated.