HOUSE OF COMMONS

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: Effectiveness of UK Aid, HC 215

Tuesday 28 April 2020

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 28 April 2020.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Sarah Champion (Chair); Mr Richard Bacon; Theo Clarke; Brendan Clarke-Smith; Chris Law; Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger; Navendu Mishra; Kate Osamor; Mr Virendra Sharma.

Questions 42-110

Witnesses

I: Rt Hon James Cleverly MP, Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa, Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DFID); Dr Liane Saunders, Strategy Director and Strategic Programmes Co-ordinator, FCO; Joëlle Jenny, Director of Joint Funds Unit, Cabinet Secretariat.

II: Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Secretary of State for International Development; Nick Dyer, Acting Permanent Secretary, DFID.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: James Cleverly, Dr Liane Saunders and Joëlle Jenny.

Q42 **Chair:** Thank you everyone for joining us in this Committee session today, which is part of our ongoing inquiry into the effectiveness of UK aid. It is our first virtual session, so please bear with us. Can I ask all Committee members, if they want to come in with a supplementary, to indicate that to me clearly, and I will try to call you all in the order that you have asked for?

I start by turning to our Minister, the right hon. James Cleverly. We are incredibly grateful to you for making the time today. I know what a challenging period it is for your Departments. We are very grateful that you are here with us. You are a joint Minister between the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Welcome to you today.

James Cleverly: Thank you. I would say it is a pleasure to join you, but it is a pleasure to join you all virtually in my first select committee meeting. I am very pleased to be here.

Q43 **Chair:** Could I also introduce your colleagues? The first is Dr Liane Saunders, strategy director and development and programmes co-ordinator at the FCO. Hello, Liane.

Dr Saunders: Hello.

Q44 **Chair:** Can I also welcome our third witness, Joëlle Jenny, who is the director of the Joint Funds Unit at the FCO? Good afternoon, Joëlle.

Joëlle Jenny: Good afternoon and thank you very much for having us here this afternoon.

Q45 **Mr Bacon:** Mr Cleverly, following the recent reshuffle, the junior ministerial positions in DFID and the FCO were merged. Can you tell us how that is working out in practical terms?

James Cleverly: From my point of view, the only comparison I can make is with previous ministerial roles that I have had. That has been in the Department for Exiting the European Union. Obviously, that was a single Department and I was Minister just in that one Department. Finding myself now a Minister in two Departments, it does not feel as different as you might think. My private office is made up of a mixture of civil servants from both the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DFID. The briefings that I get from officials tend to be focused either thematically or around countries. Those briefings are delivered to me by a mix of civil servants from both Departments. Very quickly, you lose track of exactly which official is coming from which Department. In terms of the information that I am gathering in, it is working fine. Because all of the

Ministers are joint Ministers, we have a shared experience, and the inter-ministerial work seems to be working pretty well as well.

Q46 **Mr Bacon:** Where is your private office located? How many staff does it have? How many of them are from the FCO and how many from DFID?

James Cleverly: My physical office is actually in the Foreign and Commonwealth office. I have a private secretary, three assistant private secretaries, a diary manager, an office manager and a correspondence manager. I actually have to think about it; I think it is a 4:3 split. The reason I hesitate is because it is not really that obvious, but I think it is a 4:3 split. I walk up the hill to DFID fairly regularly to have meetings with officials physically located in DFID, as well as the times when they come to my office, which is, as I say, located in the FCO.

Q47 **Mr Bacon:** Does the reporting structure change? Do you principally report to the Secretary of State for International Development or to the Foreign Secretary?

James Cleverly: I can only base my answer to that on what has been a bit of a distorted work pattern because of our response to coronavirus. I have found that there are times when I have been interacting predominantly in my Foreign Office capacity, particularly around support for British nationals trying to get back to the UK. Obviously, a lot of the work that we have been doing as foreign-facing Ministers is around that repatriation and also in terms of liaising with or negotiating with interlocutors around the world to source PPE internationally. I would say that this most recent period has been slightly skewed towards the FCO.

Even within that, I have been doing a lot of work with regard to our humanitarian response to COVID, which is very much a DFID focus, particularly in those three main conflict zones that I happen to have within my geographical brief, which are Libya, Syria and Yemen. I have also been doing a fair bit of work to make sure that the COVID response in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is developed. I would say it has been slightly more FCO than DFID in the short term, but that has been distorted because of the coronavirus response.

Q48 **Mr Bacon:** Does the merging of ministerial terms represent the first step towards absorbing DFID and its work into the Foreign Office?

James Cleverly: The Prime Minister appointed separate Secretaries of State for the FCO and DFID. Ultimately, the structure of Departments is a choice for the Prime Minister, but we do have separate Secretaries of State. The functions of the Departments are complementary and aligned, but they are not the same. The fact that we still have two sets of civil servants, each with different skillsets, indicates to me that the departmental work from the FCO and DFID is complementary. I know the Prime Minister is seeking to get greater alignment and to make sure that all of the Departments of Government that face internationally are pulling in the same direction, but ultimately they are structurally separate and their work is different.

Q49 **Chair:** I have one supplementary on that, Minister. You say that the two Departments are complementary and aligned. In your answers, you were saying that you were having to think whether it was an FCO or a DFID lead that was coming to you. Can you see a situation where there might be conflict because, for example, the FCO is much more about diplomacy and putting forward British interests whereas DFID has a much more humanitarian outlook? Do you think there is a need for the two different Departments? Can you see a situation where too close an alignment might cause conflict?

James Cleverly: Realistically, we have to understand that there are always going to be tensions and disagreements, both within Departments and between Departments of Government. That is just a structural reality that you get within any big organisation. There is not an inherent conflict or contradiction between the work that the FCO does and the work that DFID does.

To give you a real-world example, let us take Yemen, which, as we know, is a really significant humanitarian challenge. There have been problems with regard to getting humanitarian aid into the country and also about making sure that, as a country, Yemen is able to deal with coronavirus. That is very much traditionally DFID type of work, helping some of the poorest and most dispossessed people to deal with the challenges both of conflict and disease. It is through traditional FCO diplomatic work, for example, that a deal was struck with regard to profit-sharing through the port of Hodeidah, for both the Government of Yemen and the Houthis, which enabled that port to remain open, which enabled humanitarian support to get into the country.

That is a DFID driver, which is helping people in Yemen, working with FCO traditional diplomatic stuff, which is about negotiating and speaking with interlocutors. It is the combination of the two that has meant that a route for humanitarian aid to get into Yemen was kept open where otherwise it might have been closed off.

That is where I think there are really great opportunities for the work of the two Departments, through the joint ministerial team, to deliver what we want, which is to help and protect the poorest people in the world.

Chair: Thank you. That is a very clearly made point.

Q50 **Brendan Clarke-Smith:** Good afternoon, James. I was just wondering, now that there is a proliferation of joint DFID and FCO Ministers and they tend to have a bit more longevity than sole DFID Ministers, whether you think this increases the likelihood of being able to have more longer-term strategic planning.

James Cleverly: There are a number of things that I hope will give continuity in the FCO and DFID ministerial team. Having a sustainable working majority, which is something that I know a number of us campaigned for in November and December, gives all of Government a degree more stability. That is a very positive thing. Certainly in the part

of the world that I am responsible for, the Middle East and north Africa, those personal interrelationships are really important. I suspect that is true in a number of other regions around the world. Being able to have sometimes difficult or challenging conversations, with my opposite numbers, ambassadors or whoever it might be, is easier to do when you have already built up a relationship with them.

Me being the primary face of British Government in the Middle East and north Africa means that there are more conversations I can have. There are more things that I can talk about. That gives me greater opportunity to build those relationships, and that has got to be good news for the UK Government's ability to deliver what we want to do, which is to be a force for good, to promote the UK national interest, but obviously to do so in a way that also supports the development goals and our duty to alleviate poverty around the world.

Q51 **Theo Clarke:** Minister, to pick up on Richard's point about these machinery of government changes, the Government have also made recent changes to overseas reporting arrangements, so that DFID officials now report to British ambassadors and high commissioners. What is the rationale for that change?

James Cleverly: Ultimately, what we are trying to achieve, and what the Prime Minister has made clear, is that we want to, as effectively as possible, deliver the respective remits of our foreign-facing Departments. The ambassador or high commissioner within a country is the most senior official face of UK Government in a particular country. Having everybody, whether that is trade officials, our humanitarian function or our DFID offices, co-ordinated has to be a good thing. It maximises the impact that we can have in country.

Frankly, it is not new. My one overseas trip as a Minister, before foreign travel was curtailed, was to Algeria, and I saw there the various parts of our overseas-facing work working very well. There are a number of examples around the world where DFID heads of office, our heads of mission and our ambassadors or high commissioners are already working well together. We always talk about joined-up Government and a desire to maximise the amount of output for any given unit of input. This is something that the Prime Minister is passionate about and it is something that we should pursue, internationally as well as domestically.

Q52 **Theo Clarke:** Could I just clarify, Minister, who the buck stops with if an issue arises during the course of the delivery of a development project? Who is actually signing off the budgets and the expenditure for DFID in-country activities?

James Cleverly: Ultimately, the responsibility for DFID work, both in terms of signing off expenditure and in terms of its impact, sits with DFID Ministers, of which I am one, and ultimately through us to the Secretary of State for DFID. The responsibility framework and the accountability

model are through DFID Ministers and up to the Secretary of State for DFID.

Q53 **Theo Clarke:** Does the change in the reporting requirements mean that, in your view, DFID is no longer independent because it is now joined?

James Cleverly: No, the situation is unchanged. Ultimately, the responsibility for the delivery of our 0.7% commitment for our ODA spend sits with the Secretary of State for DFID. Making sure that is done as effectively as possible should be a whole-Government function. Certainly, our ambassadorial network and our high commissioner network should all be focused on delivering what we aspire to be, which is a force for good in the world, as effectively as possible. That means leaning on subject matter experts, and we have humanitarian experts in DFID who are, I would argue, amongst the best in the world. Leaning on their knowledge and experience, letting them take the functional lead, is just a pragmatic response. Ultimately, the buck stops, as it always does, with Ministers and the Secretary of State for DFID. That is how it is structured.

Q54 **Mr Sharma:** Hi, Minister. One of the reasons for creating an independent DFID was to prevent the risk of aid becoming tied and to prevent a reoccurrence of another Pergau Dam episode. What measures are DFID and the FCO putting in place to help ensure that aid is untied, now and in the future?

James Cleverly: I will make it absolutely clear: the UK does not have tied aid. The work that DFID does, the work that our ODA spend is used for, whether that is through DFID or through other Departments—obviously, ODA is spent predominantly through DFID: almost three-quarters of ODA spend is through DFID, about one-twelfth is through the FCO, and then other Departments have other elements as well—is to deliver those development goals. It is about alleviating poverty. It is about creating resilience in some of the poorest countries in the world and also some of the middle-income countries; it is worth remembering that about 60% of the world's poorest people are in middle-income countries.

We do not have tied aid. We do the right things for the right reasons. Obviously, what we have been talking about and what you have been looking into in this inquiry is making sure that is delivered as effectively as possible. In some instances, that effectiveness can be better delivered through non-DFID Departments. There are circumstantial reasons for that. We do the right things for the right reasons, and our aid is to support those development goals.

Q55 **Chris Law:** I wonder if I could ask my questions to Joëlle, so that she is able to give us a little bit more flesh on the bones. How do cross-Government funds balance and deconflict between their primary development objective and their secondary national interest objective? How do you manage to keep them separate and make sure they do not conflict with each other?

Joëlle Jenny: Let me start by looking specifically at the Prosperity Fund, because that is the fund that has an explicit primary and secondary objective. All decisions made on spending and allocating ODA to any programmes have to comply with the requirement of the International Development Act. That is the starting point, and no programme would proceed that does not clearly demonstrate that it has a primary objective of reducing poverty.

That said, we also recognise that the primary and the secondary objectives are very much two sides of the same coin. We have very robust processes in place to assess how, through the use of aid money, we will be supporting the promotion of inclusive economic growth in partner countries. The ICAI reviewed our approach and confirmed that the fund has very strict and robust processes for assessing that this is entirely compliant with aid rules.

Q56 **Chris Law:** We also know that ICAI has been quite critical of the Prosperity Fund—not least of the fact it is failing in its UK commitment to UN sustainable development goals, and the fact it is also funding fossil fuel projects that are supposed to be getting phased out. I wonder what your thoughts are on that.

Joëlle Jenny: The fund is totally aligned with overall Government policy on fossil fuel. We have some activity that supports transition. We have some activity in those countries where it is relevant to enabling sustainable growth. It is entirely in line with the International Development Act and with Government policy across all the Government Departments that spend ODA.

Q57 **Chris Law:** You do not agree with the report coming from ICAI that has criticised the UK's use of the Prosperity Fund, which undermines sustainable development goals. Is that correct, or are you saying that there are areas where it is undermining those development goals?

Joëlle Jenny: Let me start by saying that the reports of ICAI have been extremely useful. We really welcome the engagement that we have had with the commissioners, because there is always the opportunity to improve on any aspects of the programming. That is the beauty of having regular reviews. We have a very strong track record of taking on board very useful recommendations made by ICAI and then making the adjustments that have been required. The rapid review that ICAI did concluded that if you take, for example, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, there had been very significant progress across all the recommendations that the ICAI had made on issues such as learning, having the robust processes in place, and so on and so forth.

Across the board, we can be really confident that when there are elements identified where we can improve, action is really taken upon it. The benefit of having joint funds that spend ODA and non-ODA through approximately 15 Departments and agencies is that, when we issue guidance, that guidance immediately is reflected into the practice of all

the Departments across Whitehall that are funding activities using the Prosperity Fund or the CSSF.

To give you one example in another area, gender, we have issued guidance on the CSSF side about implementing gender measures that apply not only to the ODA-funded programmes that the CSSF produces but also to the non-ODA. Those are the kinds of examples where, by having this joint structure of the fund, we can really complement the work of the Department. We work very closely with DFID for their expertise on all aspects related to the quality of development assistance, but we also draw into the programming the expertise that other Government Departments can bring so that we can ensure maximum value for money and effectiveness of all the programmes.

Q58 **Chris Law:** A couple of questions come from that. Given previous criticisms from this Committee, ICAI and the National Audit Office, I wanted to know about the effectiveness of ODA spend through the cross-Government funds, and what measures have been put in place to monitor the quality of the spending. There has also been criticism about the transparency of the spending. How have you responded to that, as well as the effectiveness?

Joëlle Jenny: Thank you very much for asking that question, because the point about effectiveness is very central to the purpose of the joint funds. It was very much a fixture in the 2018 capability review, where a number of measures were put in place to increase the strategic oversight and the effectiveness that we can provide to the funding. We have used monitoring and evaluation contracts. There is a very solid framework on monitoring, evaluation and reporting that was in place from the very beginning of the Prosperity Fund.

On the CSSF, we now have a new global monitoring and evaluation contract, which I am particularly excited about because what it will really aim to do is aggregate the learning and the lessons from programmes in conflict-affected and fragile states. We know collectively, and the ICAI recognises, that it is harder to monitor impact in fragile states. This is why we have worked with external partners; we have worked with NGOs and we have worked with some of the best experts in this field. We now have this new, really exciting contract that should enable us gradually to aggregate the learning and to share it with the wider community, all of the NGOs and all of our partners who also work in fragile and conflict-affected states.

In addition to that, obviously every programme undergoes regular annual reviews. Every programme must have a theory of change. They must have a results framework. They must have explicit indicators against which we can assess the impact. When we do the annual allocation process, we look at those scores and the results of the evaluation. That informs where we allocate the funding for the following year. There is remedial action that is taken if, through this evaluation, monitoring and

learning, we realise that some of the programmes are not meeting their requirements.

You also asked about the transparency point. To confirm, we have annual reports for each of the funds that are available online. We publish the business cases for the Prosperity Fund. We have started publishing the evaluations. They are new; there were not evaluations of the Prosperity Fund until not long ago, because it is a new fund. We are now reaching the really interesting point at which we can begin to evaluate the impact of this new instrument.

On the CSSF side, there is a presumption of publishing all the annual reviews. On the annual reviews, you will find all the necessary information on implementing partners, objectives, which strategic objectives they relate to and so on and so forth. The vast majority of those annual reviews are being published.

Q59 **Chris Law:** Joëlle, there is just one last question from me. That has been really helpful. You talk about plans that have been published and also the plans for the future, if I am not mistaken. Given the fact that UK Government, Scottish Government and other parts of the UK have declared a climate emergency, are we to hear that CSSF and the Prosperity Fund are no longer going to be funding fossil-fuel projects in countries that are going to get most directly hit by climate change?

Joëlle Jenny: Both of the funds are going to continue to be absolutely aligned with Government-wide policy on the use of funding. The same policies and alignment with the high ambition that we have collectively for COP26 apply to both the CSSF and the Prosperity Fund. We are also increasing the focus through the Prosperity Fund on what kind of green financing we can do and transitioning to low-carbon sources of energy.

On the CSSF side, we have used the programming to help the International Climate Finance achieve its objectives in some geographies where organised crime leads to deforestation. That is also a really good example of where you can use the joint funds to complement the activity of the main Departments, so that we really deliver results as one Government, regardless of which funding instrument we use.

Q60 **Kate Osamor:** I have a question for Joëlle Jenny. As the cross-Government funds expand to include an even greater range of Departments, how do you maintain a joined-up approach across implementing Departments?

Joëlle Jenny: We have an architecture board in place that aims at ensuring that the delivery is perfectly aligned with the national security priorities and with the UK aid priorities. You have at the top the National Security Council, which reviews the annual allocations and the top priorities, and makes adjustments, for example, to the upcoming priorities on the CSSF. You then have a number of regional or thematic boards. We always really encourage those boards not to be a CSSF board

or a Prosperity Fund board but to be a board that looks at HMG priorities and delivery in that specific region.

Those boards are also then replicated at the level of the countries, most of the time chaired by the ambassadors. In those programming boards, you will have not only the CSSF or the Prosperity Fund, when they are both present in the same country, but also other funds from across Government that are reviewed collectively, again in order to really be clear that they deliver towards the same national security and prosperity objectives.

Q61 **Kate Osamor:** I just wanted to follow up on the programmes and who chairs these meetings. Are they chaired by DFID? I know you say that the ambassador chairs them, but is it co-chaired? Is the ambassador advised by DFID? What we are finding at the end of the annual spend is that, for a lot of the programmes that have DFID money, that money is not solely used or spent by DFID. There is a conflict there in the end product. I just wanted to get your advice or your feelings on how programmes can be reviewed during their tenure, as opposed to at the end, where the criticism is in retrospect.

Joëlle Jenny: In terms of how the chairs of the boards operate, obviously DFID is present, particularly if there is a DFID country programme, in those decisions. The exact setup will depend on the situation in the country, which Departments are present, what the objectives are, et cetera.

In all the boards that I attend in London, at the level of co-ordination across Departments, DFID is present but so are the other Government Departments. On the Prosperity Fund board, you will have BEIS, you will have the Department for International Trade and you will have DCMS, because they all have expertise that is valid to the delivery of some of those programmes. All the guidance that we issue is always discussed extensively, particularly with DFID, so that we can be absolutely sure that our guidance is the best there is. As the Minster said earlier, we can be proud of having, in DFID, the best development practitioners in the world. Obviously, we always make sure that the DFID relevant experts have seen the guidance before it is issued.

Q62 **Chair:** Dr Liane Saunders, I am very aware we have taken your time but we have not actually asked you any questions. Is there anything that you would like to add? As you know, this is an inquiry into the effectiveness of UK aid. Is there anything from your perspective you would like to add to the inquiry?

Dr Saunders: I would just like to reinforce from a departmental perspective what Joëlle was saying from a cross-Whitehall perspective, which is that, certainly for the Foreign Office, the fact that we are able to use and access cross-Whitehall funds means that we are able to effectively cohere effort across the whole of Government so that one team works together on that. That means, as Joëlle says, that we can

leverage the best expertise for the functionality that we are trying to deliver and for the outcomes and impact that we are trying to have.

I know that there are concerns that somehow accountability chains are changing, which I recognise in some of the other questions. In actual fact, this is not new, because the Foreign Office delivers on behalf of a range of different Government Departments already, and accountabilities are managed through embassies and high commissions around the world. Ultimately, the responsibility rests with the Department that is doing the delivery, even if the Foreign Office is supporting them in that delivery.

The issues we are talking about when we are trying to work internationally are so complex that they very rarely sit entirely squarely in one Department. It is about being able to bring the skills and expertise to bear to ensure that, as the Minister said earlier, even where a programme fits squarely into a DFID departmental responsibility, we are able to put a diplomatic wrap-around on top of that. We are also able to use other expertise to support those outcomes.

I know that there have been concerns in the past about the Foreign Office's ability to spend across multi-year spend. It is perhaps worth mentioning that most of the cross-Whitehall fund delivery that we do in the Foreign Office is multi-year. One of the reasons why our own departmental programming is not always multi-year is because it is actually relatively small-scale; something in the region of £38 million is spent on delivering foreign policy programmatically in ODA terms. That spend is on areas such as human rights, some of which we deliver across years and some of which we deliver in year; it is a range. The activities and the outcomes that we are pursuing are complementary to those that DFID pursues.

Finally, I will say a word on transparency. We recognise that in the index DFID has a "good" reputation, to which we aspire. We achieved a "fair" reputation in the previous assessment. One of the things that is worth reiterating to the Committee is that the index is set up on the basis that ODA is delivered programmatically, and not all Foreign Office ODA is spent programmatically. It is very difficult in some areas where, even though we are spending in ways that are eligible and agreed with the DAC, we cannot provide programming documentation for that, because we are not spending the money programmatically.

We are doing everything that we can to improve the programmatic transparency. We have made some quite considerable changes over the last few years, and we continue to be in dialogue with organisations such as Publish What You Fund. We have to recognise that, particularly for things like frontline diplomatic activity, which we are entitled to do and where we work with DFID and the DAC to ensure we are calculating correctly, that is not something that can be reported on in a programmatic way. It is reported on effectively and properly through our annual accounts.

Chair: Thank you very much; it is most appreciated. Can I thank you for taking part in this session, and also to Joëlle Jenny for doing so, and of course to Minister Cleverly? It is the first time you have been in front of this panel. Hopefully, we can persuade you to come back, not least given the ongoing inquiry we have into the humanitarian response to COVID-19, knowing that your brief covers humanitarian support but also the Middle East and Africa, which increasingly is going to be an area of concern for this panel. Thank you all hugely for being so open and honest in your answers.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Anne-Marie Trevelyan and Nick Dyer.

Q63 **Chair:** I welcome the right hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan, who is the Secretary of State for International Development, and also Nick Dyer, who is the acting Permanent Secretary for DFID. Secretary of State, thank you so much for joining this Committee, and a belated welcome for your appointment. Shortly after you were appointed you were going to come in front of this Committee, but of course COVID-19 broke at a level that was unprecedented, and I know your Department has been incredibly busy on that front, so thank you for making the time to see us today. I think you want to start with some opening comments for the Committee.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Thank you. Yes, indeed we have been longer in getting together than we would have all liked. Thank you so much for organising the opportunity for me to come and talk to you today about my priorities for DFID and how I see us making the most effective use of UK aid commitments. Congratulations, Chair, on your election, and to your whole Committee, who are now all in place. I am really looking forward to working together with all of you to strengthen our already strong relationships, both parliamentary and in the passion we have for the work that DFID delivers, and to ensure that the great work that DFID does is better known and explained more widely. That is one of the challenges that we suffer from.

I am just a little bit nervous, I confess, that I am now on the other side of the table from Richard Bacon, with whom I spent three years on the Public Accounts Committee grilling others. I shall learn to take the pain that others have suffered over the years. Your Committee is so important in holding DFID and other Departments who spend taxpayers' money on ODA-eligible programmes to account. The impact, value for money and output effectiveness of all UK aid is really important to me. Indeed, I am finding the most effective and seamless ways for Whitehall to maximise its offer to those most vulnerable countries on our planet.

My first 76 days, as you say, have been dominated by how we are responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Our virtual meeting today now seems quite normal in this new social distancing world we have all had to commit to until we are able to be sure that we can contain the disease and protect our citizens, and those across the world with less resources to protect their own families. We have before us a health crisis, a humanitarian crisis and an economic crisis, which threatens to undo 30 years of international development work. The devastating impacts of this invisible killer are already being seen both at home and abroad. My personal profoundest concern is that the secondary impacts will be felt for years to come and the poorest will be most disproportionately affected. The reality is that no one is safe until we are all safe, so finding treatments and a vaccine will be critical to allowing the world's economic activity to get back to some sort of new normal.

The reality is that the humanitarian picture is bleak right now: we have the threat of famines exacerbated by the worst locust outbreak in East Africa for 70 years; weak healthcare systems allowing the spread of the disease; economic disruptions hitting the world's poorest, threatening a global recession and a much longer and harder road back to recovery; and the threat of conflict insecurity increasing and those populations already displaced by war and persecution being left out of reach of their homelands for even longer.

That is why I am really proud that the UK is at the forefront of the global response. We have been repurposing UK aid and British expertise to work to find solutions, not only in the UK but across the world. This is a whole of DFID and HMG effort—it really is—using the full breadth of UK policy and levers to impact, with the private sector, our world-class UK universities, civil societies and NGOs. It is a whole-of-mission effort in post, with DFID and FCO staff supporting each other and refocusing all efforts on COVID-19 response, to support each country as they require it, which indeed the International Rescue Committee report highlighted. That is really important to remember. Most importantly, we are driving global collaboration and corralling international partners through the G7 and the G20, and through global networks, from the WHO to all the UN agencies.

Despite this urgent need to prioritise all the work that we are doing for COVID response, our key priorities have not gone away. Those are the Prime Minister's resolute determination to see 12 years of education for every girl, our commitment to ridding the world of poverty and our continuing commitment to drive programmes and investments that will stop preventable deaths of newborns and children by 2030. Never has the ongoing work in vaccination and healthcare for families been more urgent, now that COVID is threatening us all. We also need to ensure that we strengthen Whitehall governance, and as we review all that we do in the light of the urgent COVID focus, we have the chance to look in depth at all of that, to ensure there is value for money and coherence across

Government, and to challenge the norms that may actually now be outdated for the best delivery of what we are trying to achieve.

I really want this Government's commitment to the 0.7% to ensure that all we do is driving forward to help the world's poorer nations to become stronger, safer and more resilient countries, where their human capital—all of it—is valued and educated, driving security and the chance of economic growth for all of them. While we around this Committee table, metaphorically speaking, may all have different perspectives on how exactly to achieve the sustainable development goals, I know that all of us here today want those outcomes. I am really looking forward to discussing with you all what it is we are doing, and seeking your support and wisdom to help us deliver it as best we can.

Chair: Thank you very much for that, Secretary of State. The first section of questions will be on an area that is close to both of our hearts; it is about gender equality and empowering women and girls.

Q64 **Theo Clarke:** Secretary of State, you mentioned the Prime Minister's commitment to 12 years of quality girls' education. I would like to ask what steps you are taking at DFID to empower women and girls globally.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is a great question. We are starting by having a female DFID Secretary of State, obviously. I will tell you a story. It was fascinating; when I was out in South Sudan earlier in the year, with my Ministry of Defence hat on, I met some of those who were not yet within the Government and are now. One woman, wife of a former fighter, who was now in the political scene, said to me, "It is amazing it is a female Defence Minister sitting at this table with me. This is what we are aiming for: women making decisions". I thought, "Gosh". I had not even really thought about it, but the power of what we represent should never be underestimated on the global platform, because we bring a sense of normality to the idea that men and women sit together in positions of power to make difficult decisions, that it is normal and that it works. We should never forget how valuable it is and how proud we should be to be able to represent that equality as we lead in this space.

We are obviously working in lots of areas. In terms of the challenges of COVID, I was in post and a week later the pandemic hit us, so our focus is very much on the humanitarian and health responses in the short term and working globally on the bigger economic ones. The question of how we drive forward and make sure that everything we do has female empowerment in it, off the back of the strategic vision for gender equality that was set back in 2018, does not ever go away. That is embedded across the Department.

Baroness Sugg has the day-to-day pen still, and she is working on pulling together a five-year plan and programme analytics of how we are going to really ramp up girls' education and that message. We cannot fund every girl's education, but we can lead and really push that global challenge and that global focus. I am a great believer, because if you are

only using 50% of your human capital, then you are going to get 50% of your economic growth and stability for your country. That is the simple message from which we drive forward.

Those five interlinked foundations that the strategic vision put forward, which are education in its rawest form, ending violence against women and girls, economic empowerment, political empowerment and, of course, sexual and reproductive health and rights, are things we are driving forward throughout the education programme that Baroness Sugg is working on, alongside all of our COVID challenges at the moment.

Q65 **Theo Clarke:** How does *A Call to Action for Her Potential, Our Future* influence the design of all DFID programming?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: It is a part of everything we do. Interestingly, you were talking to Minister Cleverly earlier and, whenever any of our Ministers are talking in the international arena, this is part of the core messaging that we put out in every part of the activities that we do. When I was in Sudan as a Defence Minister, I had actually been given a DFID and FCO responsibility: "If you could wear three hats, please, while you are there, Minister". That was my first experience of this, which is genuinely such an important root message that we, the UK Government, want to give, and it feeds out with all of the international activity that we do. Whoever is out there, being the UK on the international stage, has always got that message, is asking questions and is trying to see more clearly where the blocks are and where we can bring support, expertise and leadership to help those countries to work on those issues. It is a complex pattern, but it goes from dads believing in their daughters right through to female politicians, does it not?

Q66 **Theo Clarke:** I welcome DFID's commitment to the 12 years of quality education for girls by 2030. I just wanted to pick up on the fact that the UK recently voted to approve a £500 million World Bank loan to an education project in Tanzania, which I am sure you are aware had a lot of objections from civil society and the United States. I was just wondering how the Department squares support for a potentially discriminatory project like that with this Government's commitment to the 12 years of quality education for all girls.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: In terms of the detail of that, I do not have it to hand. I might ask my Permanent Secretary if he wants to talk in more detail about it. The UK message is absolutely clear, and we work country by country. They are all different, and our in-country teams know their communities to help drive forward investments that do that. In a World Bank proposition, we are one part of a broader group of people making decisions in how that funding is spent. Nick Dyer might be able to give you more detail on that one.

Nick Dyer: Thank you, Secretary of State. I know that this was in relation to pregnant girls not being allowed to go to school, as part of the terms of an education policy. It is difficult to have a position that is both

being really hard-edged about one aspect of education and then holding up the £500 million funding programme for all the other children who are going into school. I know this was quite a difficult conversation in the World Bank board. Ultimately, we are only one voice in the World Bank board. In terms of our relationship with the Government in the country office, we can address these issues bilaterally as well.

Can I go back to your earlier question? We have a legal requirement to take account of gender dimensions in all our projects, which we do when we do our project business cases. One thing that we have done over the years, which has been a bit of a deliberate shift, is that we have moved away from an approach that highlights and emphasises mainstreaming to an approach that focuses specifically on particular interventions, like girls' education. We think that going big on around four or five specific areas that can make a real difference to girls' lives can make a significant real-world impact and real-world change. I know that could potentially be quite controversial, but making a big effort in one area and going big on that particular area is a deliberate policy that we have taken over the last few years.

Q67 **Chair:** Secretary of State, I welcome all that you are saying about gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. However, I am becoming slightly concerned that there is a "Do as I say, not as I do" situation within the aid sector. You will be aware that the previous International Development Committee did an inquiry into safeguarding within the aid sector. The Department has come back and taken on board a number of those recommendations, but not all of them.

Last week I virtually met with the humanitarian women's forum, which is a group of 9,000 women across the country in aid organisations of all different scales. My concern is that one of the reasons that they came together was to deal with the cultural inequality—basically a macho culture, which is quite a misogynistic culture—and to try to form solidarity between the women to both prevent and endure the sexual harassment that they are finding with the aid sector. I wonder what you personally are going to do to try to address and challenge that, because DFID is funding some of those projects where the allegations are coming from.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: This was something that was at the top of my pile of papers when I arrived, and it is an area about which we have to be absolutely no-holds-barred rigorous. It is entirely unacceptable, and I will not see funding going into anything for which we do not have the relevant comfort on safeguarding. The Department has been very rigorous, with Oxfam and Save the Children agreeing to voluntarily withdraw from all general funding. I cannot remember the details exactly, but it has been very rigorous.

We have, on an exceptional basis, funded one or two specific projects in certain areas where those NGOs have the reach and are the only ones at the moment, but I am very clear, and I have been very clear with the Department, that there is no lifting of their withdrawal from overall

general funding until all the reviews have been done, the Charity Commission is comfortable with them and indeed we are comfortable that the changes in policy and delivery of safeguarding in those organisations is as good as it needs to be.

I have not had the chance to get to the detail of it yet, with the skewed way our work programme has been going, but I would be very interested to look with you, Chair, if you wanted to, more closely at the work that Interpol has set up to create a network of knowledge about perpetrators of violence. I would be very happy to take that forward with you. It would give me an opportunity to really get under the skin of it and make sure that we have enough in the international space to do that. I take that thumbs-up as a yes from the Chair.

Q68 **Chair:** That was, indeed, a yes. Thank you very much; I would like to take up that opportunity. Can I also bring in Nick Dyer to comment on it?

Nick Dyer: The conversations that you are having really do illustrate the fact that, no matter how much progress we can make in the short term on introducing new systems and procedures, which we have done following the safeguarding summits of two years ago, this is a deep cultural issue, which will take a long time. We are not going to fix it in a few years. We have made really good progress since the safeguarding summit in terms of the work we have done with Interpol and the misconduct and disclosure scheme that has been introduced. I know that the UN is thinking about a passport for humanitarian workers.

These are all good progress, but it just illustrates that we have to keep going on this. We have to keep the conversations going, we have to keep challenging the organisations and we have to make sure that these systems and procedures that we have introduced are actually working. It is going to take a long time to effect that change.

COVID is a really good example. We have had a look, in the context of COVID, at our risk appetite and how much risk we are prepared to take as an organisation. One of the things we are not prepared to shift on is our low tolerance of safeguarding risk. That is something that we have been very clear about to the organisation. In times of crisis, it is quite often the case that the most vulnerable people are even more exposed to safeguarding threats. We have been very clear to the organisation that we just will not tolerate that. We have to make sure that we are as concerned about it at this moment as we always have been.

Chair: That is extremely reassuring.

Q69 **Kate Osamor:** For the Secretary of State, the Government's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative is an FCO-led, tri-departmental effort, involving the Foreign Office, DFID and the Ministry of Defence. Can you tell us how this partnership is working in practice?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I know that ICAI had a proper look at it. As others have said, it is a really powerful tool to help the Department get

clarity on how progress is being made. As DFID, in what we were talking about just now, but also more widely, we are recognised as a global leader, really taking up this challenge of tackling violence against women and girls. We have to really maintain that. That, at the end of the day, is done by delivery on the ground. It works in all sorts of ways.

Interestingly, with my Minister of Defence hat on in South Sudan, up in one of the UN missions that I visited, there were some female soldiers in British uniforms who were there building a hospital, who had been asked by the padre if they would go and talk to some of the teenage girls in the camp. It was a huge camp, with 29,000 families living there, displaced from the town next door. It was an extraordinary place. These young women engineers in their early twenties were going into the communal spaces in the camp, on a Saturday afternoon, and they were teaching these young women basic self-defence and confidence-building. They could not speak to each other. They had no language capability. The padre was the intermediary.

The extraordinary energy that was transferred from these confident British young women, who were in uniform as defenders of goodness and were there to help, were literally empowering them. One of the girls, who was sixteen, had taken it upon herself to go and pass on what she was learning in her part of the camp. By just the commitment of a few soldiers who gave up their Saturday afternoon in a busy schedule, we were seeing this extraordinary practical sharing of believing in yourself as a woman and not being put off about standing up for yourself. I was just watching this gentle but incredibly empowering activity.

At every level, we must use all the tools we have at our disposal and the expertise that we send out into the world to help these countries, to really make sure that we can teach young women that it is okay, and in fact it is vital, that they should protect themselves and learn how to defend. In the old sense, as the padre said to me, "They must learn to defend their honour", which was a lovely old-fashioned way of saying, "We need to help you to know how to do this".

I know you were talking to Mr Cleverly before about some of the other cross-departmental funds that the Government run. The challenge of bringing together the skills that exist in different UK Departments into a single output is quite complex, but actually, particularly in this area, there is a huge willingness and a passion from all those who are involved in it to really drive forward that message in a number of ways, to educate and empower. It is not only the women, of course; it is also the community leaders and so on. It is really powerful and tri-departmental, although I do not think any of us think about it like that. It is a UK Government effort to get out there and share what we believe is so important.

Q70 **Kate Osamor:** Would you say—in your very unique circumstance, because you have been in both Departments—that it is an equal

partnership between the Ministry of Defence and DFID?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is a really interesting question. I do not think about it like that. It is experts in different ways coming together to think, in very practical ways, about how they can help deliver our values and our belief that this is really important, and working together. There is DFID expertise of all sorts, MoD expertise of all sorts and Foreign Office networks. If I am honest, I have been quite surprised by how effective that cross-party working can be at a grassroots level, which is where it matters, at the end of the day.

Q71 **Kate Osamor:** Lastly, following the postponement of the international conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict last year, I understand that we are in very unprecedented times, but do the Government plan to rearrange this conference?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: We have not got as far as a new date. This is the challenge we have had with so many events. For some we have a way that we can do something that has value as a virtual opportunity. We have not come back to that one yet. We will still hold the Gavi vaccine summit in a virtual capacity, but we have not got around to working out how best to look at that. It certainly has not fallen off the list of events that need to be done. It is probably a logistics challenge, more than anything else, in the short term.

Q72 **Chair:** Secretary of State, to clarify, preventing sexual violence in conflict zones is still a priority for you and DFID.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Absolutely, it is a priority. It is that fundamental route in terms of creating security and stability in countries, from where women are then able to participate in the country's growth and development. Without that balance, without that safety, without the ability for girls to walk to school safely, then they will not walk to school and they will not get educated. At every level, this is a fundamentally important part of the delivery of DFID's programmes. It absolutely sits firmly in the top drawer.

Q73 **Mr Liddell-Grainger:** Secretary of State, I was hoping to pick your brain on how we are looking after people with disabilities in this incredible crisis across the world. What can we do to continue to support them and their lifestyles, but also to make sure that they are not being discriminated against in any way, given that it is very easy, when we have a pandemic like this, for people to forget the most vulnerable in our societies? I wonder if we could have your thoughts on this, please.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: This is a really difficult area. I was quite shocked by the figures. A billion people globally, 15% of the world population, have some sort of disability. At every level, from developed countries through to our least developed countries, we have very large numbers of people for whom, even in western countries where disability is adapted for and there is a conscious and invested effort in making sure that they can reach their own potential, it is more difficult at the moment.

The challenge of achieving better outcomes, or at least stable situations, for those with disabilities is a real challenge. Our teams are very focused on it.

One of the challenges is in terms of a number of our staff having had to come home, so they are working on programming from the UK rather than in country, which leaves them very concerned. Making sure that existing programmes can keep running within the inclusion piece is on their radar as much as it can be. It is genuinely very challenging at the moment. Certainly, talking to some of the leaders and the NGOs in camps for displaced people and some of those more challenging places, again this becomes that much more difficult because there is less access than there was.

It is very much a part of all my team's focus. There is an awareness, and people who are not in country at the moment are trying to keep an eye on it. I do not know if Nick wanted to pick up on anything there. He is more rooted on some of the complexities of these programmes than I am.

Nick Dyer: As the Secretary of State says, this is a huge issue in development but, quite often, it is not very visible, because either the disabilities themselves are not visible—mental health is not particularly visible—or, in many cases, people living with disabilities are hidden away and it is very difficult to really see the realities of disability on the ground.

We have challenged all our country offices to live up to some minimum standards in terms of how they will approach disability, trying to get more data so that disabled groups can become more visible. We are also trying to ensure that we all have consistent engagement with disabled groups on the ground.

That will help in terms of the COVID response. Baroness Sugg and myself hosted an NGO network meeting, right at the beginning of the COVID response. We had someone from the Disability Rights group at that meeting. They were very passionately and articulately making the case for why we need to be doing this.

This is in part about calling it out, it is in part about data and it is in part about just making sure that we engage and raise the issue at all the opportunities that we can.

Q74 **Mr Liddell-Grainger:** The Commonwealth is another untapped resource that we have and, of course, at the moment, as you both quite rightly pointed out, we are not able to do everything we would like, just because we cannot get access, and that is understood. Maybe we should be using as many of our good colleagues, across the Commonwealth, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and others, to try to access parts that we cannot get to at the moment simply because we are not able to. I wonder if there is a mechanism that we can easily think of to perhaps do that in a fairly quick time.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is a really interesting point that you raise. We are absolutely all sighted in terms of trying to make sure we can see as many ways as possible. Church networks are feeding back the realities on the ground in a way that would have been picked up in-country in normal times. All networks where we have the ability to get a reliable picture are helpful and I would certainly welcome anyone who wishes to come and share with us and the specialists within my teams what they are seeing so that we can try to create as clear a picture as possible. That would be incredibly useful, so I am happy to take that offline and think about how we might do that, if that is helpful.

Q75 **Brendan Clarke-Smith:** Good afternoon, Secretary of State. What is your vision for the UK's aid strategy, and what are your priorities for action now in your new role as Secretary of State for International Development?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: As we have been discussing, it is heavily skewed at the moment to really focusing on the COVID response and the impact that is having, both in the short term but also, as I said earlier, my really profound concern is that those longer-term impacts become endemic and we find ourselves 20 or 30 years back in terms of the problems that we then have to help these countries climb back out of.

We have made some really punchy and world-leading investments early on in terms of vaccine and drug development. £250 million went into CEPI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, which is the organisation that then can help the scientists with, potentially, a vaccine and then roll it out to the next stages of trials and so on. There are a number of those now moving forward. It is really critical.

We have also invested in the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, again to help in that medical space, to help what might be a small business or a small scientific group to take an idea and push it through, because that might be the one that cracks it. Those are really important in that space because, until we can have a treatment programme, be it a vaccine or other treatments that we can take globally, we cannot crack that. These focuses are really important.

We have also put nearly £300 million into resilience programmes, if you like—UN appeals and the WHO—and underwriting British funding to help them to really be able to take up the challenge of assessing and starting to support those most vulnerable countries. Of course, there is then a wider economic response both in terms of the £150 million that we have committed in the short term to the IMF to help with its catastrophe trust, and the Treasury has worked on a big package with the Paris Club for debt deferrals to help underpin and shore up those economies so that they do not crash.

Some of our more vulnerable countries have 90% of their economic activities on an informal basis. That has just come to a grinding halt. These are things that we need to crack. We need to crack treatments and

we must make sure that the expert knowledge that DFID holds and the skills that we can bring to the global party are able to reach as far and wide as they can to do that.

Within that, we continue to know that children need to get back to school. Without education, they cannot pick themselves up and crack on and look after themselves and grow their own businesses. There is always our focus on reducing poverty and stopping preventable diseases. The COVID response is the sharp end of that picture. In the Ebola crisis in West Africa, there were significant decreases in maternal and child health services visits.[1] More women died in childbirth than people died of Ebola, so there is always the challenge of the secondary impact of this shocking pandemic, which forces us to bring ourselves to a halt to stop the spread of this disease. The fact that we cannot manage it yet means that we have to be very alive to those secondary impacts.

A lot of our focus continues to be, in the short term, on supporting the international networks to help do that while also thinking about how we will redirect programming. I have asked that, for all our programmes, it is considered, if they are in healthcare more widely, whether they should refocus into COVID-related support and so on. Some programmes are having to be paused because of the lack of ability to deliver and so on. The whole of DFID is COVID-focused but that involves that wider plethora of not just stopping people catching or indeed dying of coronavirus; it is that wider question of how we ensure those countries can pick themselves up and either return, hopefully, to the level of economic development they were at—many of them have been doing really good things over the last 10 or 15 years—or indeed, if they slip backwards, to be there to help move them forward as quickly as we can.

We have £14 billion, which is a lot of money, but it is a tiny amount of money in and of itself. It is about that leveraging of not only our cash but our expertise, our global leadership and the respect there is for us. This is a lovely job because everyone tells you how amazing the DFID teams are and I get to take all the glory for all their hard work. It is a tough job but someone has to do it. It has been really interesting for me to hear global leaders longing for us to be at the front of any particular challenge—we have taken up a number—to make sure that others will follow.

Whichever bit of this enormous puzzle we try to crack, the UK being at the forefront, both in cash and in the leadership that we bring, is going to be critical.

Q76 **Brendan Clarke-Smith:** You would say that poverty reduction very

[1] Witness correction: *There is good evidence of significant decrease in MNH services across west Africa from the Secondary impacts of major disease outbreaks in low- and middle-income countries K4D report. Across West Africa (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) Ebola death tallies were at 11,310 death between march 2014 and march 2016 whereas the WHO estimates around 14,000 maternal death happened over the same period in these countries indicating more maternal deaths than Ebola deaths. Modelling studies show that a reduction in health services results in additional maternal deaths.*

much remains a focus of the new strategy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Absolutely. That is the root of everything, is it not? The challenge in whatever programmes we deliver is to ensure that we can give all the support we can to help a country to be secure and safer for all its population, to educate them and to give them the opportunity to build those basic healthcare systems so that they can get on and grow their economies.

The frustrations we are seeing at the moment are where economic activity, which has been growing not necessarily in high-value work but really growing their economies, has ground to a halt because the supply chains have stopped because planes have stopped flying. The practicalities of stuff that we all took for granted in our globalised world leaves those countries most at risk of taking the brunt of that shock. It is about making sure that all that we do drives forward to support those activities so that those countries can make sure that they can pick up and start trading again with what they are doing, and we can get in and help with education and healthcare.

Q77 **Brendan Clarke-Smith:** Are you convinced that the UK aid programmes that are administered outside of DFID are adequately targeted at the moment towards poverty reduction, or do you think they could be improved?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: You ask a profoundly important question and one from which we have been distracted. The Treasury has asked us all, quite rightly—we did it anyway—to look at all our programming and to think about it in COVID response terms and to make sure we focus on that. Other Government Departments where ODA money is spent have been doing the same.

Poverty reduction is achieved in lots of different ways and the different funds and the different expertise that other Government Departments bring are part of that mosaic. One of the things I am looking to bring back into regular activity, which officials do all the time but Ministers have not done since 2018, is a regular review of what everyone is doing with their ODA and questioning whether we have as strategic and effective an output across the board as we want to have as HMG. When a moment appears in what is a pretty hard drumbeat at the moment, that is something that will bring more value and the chance just to think coherently about how we are doing that.

The reality is that delivering programmes of education and healthcare are really important. They are the root. The expertise in our economic development is fundamental at the next stage of poverty reduction, working with scientists across the globe through a number of other funds. These things all work towards educating, empowering and offering those layers of value that add to a country's resilience and ability to become self-sufficient. Different Departments bring their expertise, always with a DFID ODA hat sitting next to them. We could benefit from a more

ministerial-led oversight of that, which is something that I hope to do in the months ahead.

Q78 **Chair:** Secretary of State, can I just push you on the poverty reduction? Can you confirm that poverty reduction will be a core priority of the refreshed DFID strategy?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Yes.

Q79 **Chris Law:** Hi to Anne-Marie and Nick. I just want to say very quickly that I am very pleased to see the £200 million package put forward to reduce mass infections and the second wave of COVID in developing countries. That is very welcome.

I just want to pick up a little bit about poverty reduction being a primary focus. In the last couple of years, in fact since 2015, there has been a gradual increase in other Departments but one in particular that is never raised is the Home Office. It may surprise you, Anne-Marie—I am not so sure it will surprise Nick—that almost £500 million of Official Development Assistance money was spent last year, in 2019, to support asylum seekers in the UK. That is an astonishing amount of money. First of all, Anne-Marie, I want to know if you are aware of that or not. Secondly, what are both of your responses to that? Will that be urgently addressed? Clearly, this is money that is the trust of the public taxpayer. There is a moral imperative to get this right and there is obviously a global standing when it comes to international development, and yet this money has been spent on domestic needs within the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I was not aware of the exact figure. It is part of my comment about wanting to have more of a team focus at a ministerial level and looking at that, but I am very aware that that is part of the Home Office's commitment.

Like I said, in terms of the challenge of how we use our expertise and how we think about the support that we give to those in greatest need, whether you are a displaced person in a Syrian camp somewhere or whether you are a displaced person who is here, and in terms of the prospect of wanting to support those families and to help them to sustain and educate their children and to be warm and dry until such time as they can go back with dignity and safety to their own home, which the vast majority of all those who are displaced always want to do, location is a secondary consideration for me. This is one part of that puzzle, but Nick will know more of the detail of that activity than I do.

Nick Dyer: Yes, Mr Law, we are aware of that. First, refugee costs are within the DAC rules in terms of what you can cover and count against your aid budget. That has been the case for many years and this has been the case in the UK for many years.

It is true to say two things. One is that the proportion that the UK gives over to in-country refugee costs is much smaller than many other donors. The other is, as the Secretary of State says, it is completely outweighed

by the scale of support that we are giving to refugees in camps across the world and host communities across the world. Ultimately, if you want to stop migration to the UK, which some people do, the answer to that is to work upstream and make sure that people do not want to leave their countries of origin and, if they do leave their countries of origin, find them opportunities to stay within the region so they can go home when they are ready. That is very much our approach to the issue of refugees.

Q80 **Mr Bacon:** Good afternoon, Secretary of State. As the Chair said, the integrated review of international policy has been paused, but it did start. Within it, are options being considered for the closer integration of DFID and the FCO? If so, what are they?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The reality is that there simply is not the spare brain capacity. The whole of Government are focused on COVID domestically and internationally, and that is the right decision that the Prime Minister has taken to really channel all our resources to make sure that we are doing everything we can in the short term to crack this invisible killer amidst us.

The question of the integrated review is one that the Prime Minister has, as you know, spoken of for some time. It is about really having the chance to properly look across Whitehall at all our outward-facing activities and to ask ourselves what our priorities are. Are we doing it as well as we can? Do we want to change direction? Coming out of the EU after 40 years, there are large asleep policy areas because they were not ours to make independent decisions upon. He really wants to properly kick the can in every area and have a coherent and wide conversation, not only within Government but with all those who are experts in any particular part of that international conversation. It had begun. We had a couple of gatherings on it. Quite a lot of thinking has gone on.

Q81 **Mr Bacon:** Share some of your thinking so far. What are the opportunities and risks of merging development with foreign affairs?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is what I would call a kind of machinery-of-government side-line outcome at this point. The Prime Minister is absolutely committed to the 0.7%. You all know him as well as I do. He is an internationalist to his boots and he believes in it incredibly strongly. As he put in the manifesto, "We will proudly maintain our commitment to spend 0.7%". He did not have to put the word "proudly" in; I thought that was rather touching. He genuinely feels that this is something that the UK should and will continue to do.

Regarding the question of how we deliver it most effectively, and whether the Foreign Office and DFID together do a better job, they do different things. The Foreign Office has some very specific global leadership roles. DFID is all about delivery, really, and strategic policy thinking and working with international agencies like the World Bank and all those sorts of organisations. They do two very different things.

Q82 **Mr Bacon:** You would agree, would you, that how something is done can profoundly affect the effectiveness with which it is done?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I come from the private sector, as you know, Richard. For me, effectiveness is about efficiency of delivery and understanding the most effective way to do that and finding the best tools. We work very closely. Interestingly—I know that you were talking to Mr Cleverly about it earlier—the more formal alignment in country of all the various UK-facing constituent parts under the ambassador has caused a flurry of conversation. That is what I would call a practical and efficient way of everyone knowing what everyone else is doing that is UK in a country. Whenever any of them are relating to the local government or other leadership, it is very clear that the ambassador is the front man or woman of the UK in country and there is a really coherent message.

It happens in practice in many countries already, because that is the most effective way to deliver, particularly in the most vulnerable countries where delivery is quite challenging. That is already the case; the ambassador oversees everyone and is the dad or the mum with their arms outstretched, checking everyone is okay and has the tools they need to deliver their particular programmes.

Whether that is the right thing to do in Whitehall as well as in country is a conversation to be had. The question is: what are Whitehall roles for compared to the delivery? A lot of what DFID does in delivery in country, or in the international development global conversations and policy areas, is different from what the Foreign Office officials and ambassadors deliver. Does it work better if you glue them together? We can have a proper think about it in due course.

The first challenge of the integrated review is to assess what it is that we do, whether we want to still keep doing it that way and whether we are doing it as well as we can, not only in the FCO and DFID but in MoD, BEIS, DEFRA and all those Departments where there is a global dimension and an outward-facing sharing of UK expertise with the rest of the world.

Q83 **Mr Bacon:** What lessons are being learned from elsewhere, for example in terms of what has happened in Canada and Australia?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That will be a part of that wider picture. I have been really interested in discovering that. Where you have two separate representatives at the high table, you have a different perspective. Where you have a Foreign Office Minister who holds the pen on their international development activity as well, they bring their own perspective. There is definitely real value to having two, and countries that have two speak with a level of confidence and authority about what it is that their country is presenting, which is noticeable as the new girl on the block.

For me, it is all about delivery. I hope we will have the opportunity in due course to properly consider what it is that we want to be doing as the UK. We have to make choices. We prioritise what we do. We prioritise the countries we want to support. All of us here would love to be able to help everyone but that is not a reality. Thinking about the leadership we bring, the policy skills and how we share those globally and make them effective is as important as the simple machinery of government. Not losing all those skills and that leadership is more important to me than the process.

Q84 **Mr Bacon:** You will know from your PAC days that one of the criteria of effective delivery is knowing who is in charge. Now, if DFID staff in country are reporting to ambassadors, does that mean that they are their line managers and does it mean that ambassadors can give DFID staff in country instructions?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The processing line has not changed in the sense of: if it is a DFID programme, that sits with me. I hold the DFID budget and my Ministers will manage. They each have a part of the whole picture. DFID programmes and their teams report up to them. It is a practical framework for day-to-day activity and for everyone to be fully aligned and make sure that everyone knows what everyone is doing in country so that we can present the most coherent UK outward-facing presentation in that country, to the host countries and their population.

Q85 **Mr Bacon:** The Government's ministerial statement on the integrated review referred to the commitment to 0.7% of GNI. Is that a commitment to 0.7% as defined by the OECD DAC?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Yes, it is 0.7% of GNI.

Mr Bacon: As defined by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee definition.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Yes, and also by our own International Development Act 2002, which restated it and restated our commitment to helping reduce poverty.

Q86 **Mr Bacon:** Is the proposal to purchase a hospital ship for the Royal Navy with ODA money evidence of a looser approach by the Government to the 0.7% target? Can you tell us at what stage these proposals are at?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: There is no proposal to buy a hospital ship for the Royal Navy. I am looking at the prospect of investing in a humanitarian relief platform, which DFID would use as one of many tools to deliver a number of potential healthcare and other humanitarian activities. That will probably be manned by the Royal Navy, but it would be a DFID tool in the same way that we have an emergency field hospital that we keep in case of humanitarian need.

We are considering the opportunity to use the maritime space more effectively than we have done in the past. Indeed, we regularly, every

year, borrow a ship from the Royal Navy to go and be prepared to deliver humanitarian relief in the Caribbean should the weather demand that support. It is about looking at having a more consistent ability to use the maritime to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Q87 **Mr Bacon:** Do the Government intend to explore options to have their own definition of ODA?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: This is a conversation that is kicking around. The integrated review is certainly an opportunity for a conversation. The ODA framework is pretty good and pretty permissive, to be honest. There are a number of areas where, by virtue of time—this is decades of thinking—there should be a continued conversation about what is ODA eligible. The plan, COVID permitting, is that there is a meeting in the autumn of the DAC members to have that conversation. Particularly, within the climate change space, interestingly, that was not on anyone's agenda 40 years ago. It is not in the conversation specifically. On the question of oceans and management more widely, what I find quite interesting about the way ODA is framed is that it is country-specific, which makes sense, but it does not naturally fit with what I might call regional thinking or, indeed, in climate change, a completely different way of looking at how one invests cross-border and other ways to fit the needs where you are looking at those bigger strategic questions to help really mitigate against climate change.

There is a whole series of areas where this should be an ongoing conversation. The reality is that the ODA rules are very broad. Some countries make them more restrictive for their own political purposes and some broader, and maybe that is a good thing. It is there for countries to use in as much as they feel minded to. We are third in the charts and I hope we will continue to do that, because what is good for the world is also good for the UK.

Q88 **Chair:** Minister, we are going to start to move into quick-fire questions now, if that is okay. The first couple are from me. When will the integrated review restart?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is the $64 million question, Sarah. The plan is, hopefully, in the autumn but everything at the moment, I am afraid, is slightly a moveable feast by virtue of the challenges we have with COVID. The plan at the moment is to pick it up again in a fully focused way in the autumn.

Q89 **Chair:** In your opinion, does DFID have a future as a standalone Department with a Cabinet member as a Minister? Are you looking to do yourself out of a job?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: No, I am not. My view at the moment is that the delivery question is a technical one, but what having a separate DFID Secretary of State brings to our global leadership and respect, and what we can deliver in trying to achieve the reductions in global poverty, is well served by having both a Foreign Secretary and a DFID Secretary. I

will take some persuading, if I am honest, but the machinery of government is a moveable feast. The reality of having those two voices and a Prime Minister who is global-facing is a really powerful message to the rest of the world.

Chair: I would completely agree with you on that.

Q90 **Chris Law:** I just have a quick supplementary question around the question of ODA and whether you are looking to redefine it or not. I suppose the fundamental question that we are all thinking about on this Committee at the moment is whether, if you are not happy with the current definitions of the Official Development Assistance, that means you will sit around a table with other partners from the Development Assistance Committee to find a solution that is agreed against all partners, or whether you would be prepared to walk away from the Development Assistance Committee altogether, which would mean there would be a unilateral approach rather than a multilateral approach.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The more I get my head around the minutiae and the realities of whether we feel restricted by it or whether we can move into areas that just perhaps have not been used for whatever reasons, there is a huge amount of flexibility. There are areas where there just has not been the conversation yet. There have not been the members really kicking the tires on ODA, particularly on climate change and in terms of the funding of peacekeeping as well. Those are the two key areas where more thinking about it should go on.

The ODA rules are sensible and really broad, and countries are using them in different ways, which is okay. It is a gathering of like-minded souls who want to try to help the world be a stronger and better place and to help those who need the support of wealthier countries to invest. For me, fundamentally they are okay, but we should not be afraid of saying, "Can we all have a bit of a look at this because there is a gap?" or, "Actually, the world has changed and we should be thinking about it differently".

Q91 **Chris Law:** I have just one last question on that particular point. You mentioned climate change. Are you looking to use ODA money specifically to support developing technologies or changes through climate change, or should that be a separate fund outwith ODA for climate change?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: It is a really interesting question. Should we do something different? That is not to say we should not do other things but, in terms of helping countries where they need investment and perhaps skills to help them move into cleaner energy, more robust distribution networks, protection of biodiversity and a number of areas, ODA is not a bad thing to help them with that because it is all about that broader question of security, economic growth and sustainability, which are a natural part of supporting countries needing to get stronger.

It is an interesting question of whether, actually, we should be thinking more widely. We obviously do things both bilaterally and multilaterally. I

might refer to Nick, who is the expert in the multilateral space in this, but we actually come at this from a number of different angles. It is an interesting question as to whether Governments might take that on. That is a big geopolitical question. I will ask Nick to give you more detail on that.

Nick Dyer: Thank you, Secretary of State. There are three dimensions to this in terms of the climate space. One is what we can do to help countries directly to invest in their renewable energy or improving the resiliency of their populations to climate shocks, which we do a lot on.

The issue that you intimated was whether you should use ODA to invest in research that addresses climate technologies. If it has a primary and a big impact on developing countries, absolutely yes. That is a good use of ODA to invest in technology and research so you can leapfrog and make progress quicker. That is very much in scope.

There is then the wider issue about whether you should be reflecting the deep vulnerabilities that many small island states are subject to as a consequence of climate change, but they cannot get support because they are too rich. That is an absolutely valid conversation to have at the DAC as to whether there needs to be some rethinking about that approach. These countries, because they are so vulnerable, can fall back very quickly because of the impacts of climate change, and they are very vulnerable but cannot get support to improve their resilience. That is one of the issues that we should have a conversation about at the DAC.

Q92 **Navendu Mishra:** Good afternoon, Secretary of State. Why are all junior ministerial posts in DFID shared with the Foreign Office?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I suppose the first step towards thinking about how we can most effectively give our outward-facing message and skills to the rest of the world was to join these two up, much like when I was in South Sudan and I was three bits of Government at once. Whether a Minister is visiting a country to visit a DFID project or indeed to go and see the ambassador and talk to local country Ministers about wider foreign policy, the relationship is with the UK; they are seeing the UK come to visit.

It was quite an interesting experience to think about which Minister had which DFID programme areas, and indeed which bit of the world, in terms of matching the puzzle of FCO with DFID. You can ask them all. I think Mr Cleverly was quite clear about how his matches up. There is a really powerful message that we deliver by having a UK Minister. Clearly, in the last six weeks no one has gone anywhere, but we all were able to do a little in these new roles before COVID hit us. That coherence of message for the country we are visiting, the country we are looking to influence and to support, has an advantage for that because we do that.

In practice, it was happening before but perhaps without a coherent framework. Whichever Minister was visiting somewhere was asked if they

could raise the question of sexual violence or the lack of girls in school, or pick a subject where there was an area of concern. This gives a holistic presentation of that, and I think it is working well. They tell me it is; they might not want to tell me honestly if it is not. You will have to ask them and then report back to me on what they say. It feels like that overlaying of the two—of certain areas of the world and indeed the kind of DFID programme delivery that is going on there—gives a strength to the UK's message more than anything else.

Q93 **Navendu Mishra:** It could be argued that this is a departmental merger by the back door. Would you agree with this statement?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: No, I would not agree with the statement because that is obviously not what it is. This is about joining up those two outward-facing parts doing the job. It has been really interesting. Under stress, with the COVID stresses, the initial challenges for all of them have been the bits of the world they have oversight for and repatriations. It has been a mammoth, spectacular effort by the Foreign Office, with the DfT supporting them, working alongside countries to bring British citizens home.

Interestingly, of course, there are other issues and they overlay. Stressing it has proved to me that it is a really good decision, because that joined-up messaging makes it easier to help deliver what we are trying to achieve and, in the case of repatriation, there has been a phenomenal effort by the Foreign Office. None of those Ministers has had enough sleep for quite a long time.

Q94 **Navendu Mishra:** Just building on that, how has this change affected the way that the two Departments operate, specifically in terms of budgetary constraints?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: In terms of accountability and accounting officer oversight, it has not changed at all. There are still two Departments with their Treasury allocations, and our Permanent Secretaries are duly the responsible accounting officers and so on. That has not altered at all. This is ministerial oversight review and recommendations, both up to the Foreign Secretary or me on either of our project activity. I do not know whether you want to say anything, Nick. Nick is on the other end of the scale, receiving and signing off on these things. I do not know what it feels like to you, Nick, at a practical level.

Nick Dyer: Yes, I have lived through this. I have lived through this change that has happened. I would say that COVID is the perfect example of why this change makes sense. COVID tells you two things. The first is the power of having a separate, independent and senior development voice that can project, engage and raise issues around development. The other reality of COVID is that the response requires more than just a DFID response; it requires a diplomatic response, a health response and a Treasury response. It just demonstrates that you

need the contributions and the reflections and the inputs from a whole range of Government Departments. Alignment is all about how you make that collective voice come together in a coherent way that brings in the constituent parts, which you then hold to account for delivery. That is what this is for DFID. I very much share what the Secretary of State says on joint Ministers. It brings the diplomatic lever alongside the development lever, which we just did not do 10 or 15 years ago as coherently and as well as we do now. That is a good thing.

The question is about who does the initiatives. Who initiates ideas and proposals for DFID spend? It is DFID staff. Who proposes the proposals to joint Ministers for DFID spend? It is DFID staff. Now, FCO staff and FCO Ministers may well then come in and have a conversation, but ultimately the decision on a DFID project will go to the Secretary of State for International Development and me as the accounting officer. I am very clear about those lines of accountability.

Now, in country, do you want one country plan that brings together all the constituent parts of the British Government under one umbrella? Absolutely, of course you do, and that makes complete sense to me. Do you want one person who is held to account for that overall plan who is called the head of mission? Why not? That makes perfect sense as well. The DFID head of office is responsible for delivery of the DFID part of that plan and will be quite rightly held to account by the head of mission for the delivery of that plan. Ultimately, if there is going to be a change in a spending proposal, it needs to go through me as the accounting officer and the Secretary of State as the responsible Minister.

Q95 **Navendu Mishra:** Who has the final call on decisions? Is it yourself or is it the Foreign Secretary? What happens if you disagree?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: If it is a DFID programme, it is my call.

Q96 **Chair:** To push you a little bit on that, Secretary of State, if it was a joint programme, as was outlined by the Permanent Secretary just then, and the two of you disagreed—the Foreign Secretary and yourself—then what?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: If there was a joint programme that was agreed in one of the joint funds or whatever, the programme would have been pulled together and there would be an SRO, who would be FCO, MoD, BEIS or DFID, and then that would be the line of accountability from there on. As we see with all sorts of cross-departmental programmes, they will sit somewhere once they have been pulled together and constructed for whatever the output is that we are hoping to achieve in country. A Department will then have the SRO—the senior responsible officer—for that programme and that will feed through to Nick and myself or the Foreign Secretary or the BEIS Secretary accordingly.

Q97 **Chris Law:** I just want to follow on a bit more with that, Anne-Marie. My understanding is that DFID officials are now answerable to British

ambassadors and high ambassadors in country, but given that these officials are spending DFID money, why do they need to be reporting to the Foreign Office at all, or any official for that matter?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I hope that what the Permanent Secretary just set out answers that a little. The reality is that a programme is being delivered by a team of DFID specialists in country, and there may be a climate change programme being delivered by some DEFRA specialists and there may well be a defence attaché and a number of MoD people in country. The aim of aligning all of that under the head of mission, who would be the ambassador or the high commissioner, is to make sure that, for the purposes of the host country, the UK presentation of all that we are doing in the country is clear and there is direct accountability.

The practical financial accountabilities and delivery accountabilities end up, if it is a DFID programme, with my team here in Whitehall making sure that they are delivering it right. We would monitor the risk profile, whether the programme was going according to plan, whether it was in delay and so on. At a day-to-day level, having that alignment in country means that the day-to-day oversight support, which is a really important part of all of this, looking after our people—be they DFID, DEFRA, MoD or FCO in country—has an overarching lead, and that is the ambassador or the high commissioner.

Q98 **Kate Osamor:** Secretary of State, what is the impact of the UK's COVID-19 response on DFID's ability to deliver its projects around the world?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is a really good question, and I cannot give you a full answer yet because we will not know for a while. In the short term, we have brought home a number of our in-country staff. Nick will correct me if I am wrong; I think 75% are back in the UK, certainly in the short term. They are still delivering programmes where they can. There are some programmes that simply cannot be delivered at the moment because we cannot access certain places, so they are paused. We are working around those challenges where we can. There are some NGOs for whom the delivery of programmes that we fund is still possible. Some, again, are challenged by the short-term restrictions that COVID has brought on everybody. It is something that we are monitoring very closely. The honest answer is that full oversight of the whole picture will not be clear for some time. I know that Nick and the team are constantly overseeing this, so, Nick, you could give more detail.

Nick Dyer: Thank you, Secretary of State. There are two dimensions to this. The first is what is happening to our own staff. The Secretary of State is right. We have 500 UK-based staff, broadly, overseas in total. Some of those posts have been drawn down, i.e. some of those staff have come back to the UK. Of those drawn-down posts, the Secretary of State is right that 75% of the staff have come back. That still leaves our 750 locally based staff posted in country who we recruit and employ still in country. Many of them are disrupted because they are working at

home. There is a question around how our own staff can work and operate in country.

The second dimension to that is what has happened to our suppliers. Can the suppliers operate at the scale and at the expectation that we currently have of them? We are currently working through that in terms of understanding which of the programmes that we have in operation can still deliver at the pace and to the scale that we originally expected. We just do not know what the answer to that is yet but we are working that through.

Q99 **Kate Osamor:** Thank you for providing us with the support that you are providing to our overseas staff, who are doing a crucial job in a very difficult time. I just want to end by saying that the projects that really need your magnifying glass on them are the ones that help with sanitation and ensuring that people who live in very hard-to-reach camps are able to keep themselves clean. Can you ensure and be confident that that work can continue in a very difficult terrain, which I appreciate?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: You are absolutely right that that basic message of washing your hands and maintaining that cleanliness is critical; it is uncomplicated in and of itself, but it is a critical and not necessarily straightforward message. We have partnered with Unilever on a £100 million project, of which DFID has put in £50 million, that will reach a billion people, with the message of washing hands and cleanliness and the basics of soap and tools to be able to do that. That is one of the things that we have done, using a partner that has, as the Permanent Secretary said, the opportunity to reach into many places.

We have also funded £55 million to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent; again, they have regional access into some of the most difficult camps and IDPs so that they can actually provide that support where other NGOs, and indeed normal aid workers, simply cannot get in at the moment. We are acutely conscious of that and looking for ways. We are also supporting the WHO and their in-country teams, to help them reach as many as possible. That is exactly right. One of the great challenges at the moment is just reaching those that we want to look after.

Q100 **Chris Law:** I return to the questions around the reporting to British ambassadors and high commissioners. That has been going on for years and years—maybe not in a more formal setting, but it has certainly been the case with in-country DFID officials along with ambassadors. What is changing? How has it changed? Under these new reporting arrangements, how do we know that DFID Ministers are going to be fully responsible and accountable for aid budget and spending decisions?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I will ask Nick to tell you how it is working in practice and in gritty detail, because he has the pleasure of managing it day to day. The reporting lines have not changed in terms of programme sign-off and financial decisions. They sit firmly with DFID still. Nick can give you the gritty detail of how it works day to day.

Nick Dyer: Thank you, Secretary of State. This is still work in progress but we are having conversations around what a modern matrix organisation looks like in terms of reporting lines. If you talk to big private sector companies that run both country or thematic businesses as well as cross-cutting businesses, like we do, they have multiple reporting lines. They have people who report in the country line and people who report in the thematic line.

I am quite comfortable moving to a situation where, in country, you have DFID staff having a reporting line to a head of mission but also having a reporting line back to their director in London. We should be quite comfortable with that kind of reporting relationship, so long as we are also clear about two things. The first is regarding who has the right of initiative. A high commissioner may well say to the DFID office, "I think you should do issue X in country". I would perfectly expect the DFID staff to look at that, take it seriously, think about it and come up with a view. If the ambassador says, "You have to spend your money in this way", then that would lead to a separate conversation of a different type.

Ultimately, the DFID members of staff are coming up with the projects, they are designing the projects and they are seeking approval through the DFID approval chain. Ultimately, the Secretary of State signs off on that as the responsible Minister, and I do as the accounting officer.

Q101 **Chris Law:** Nick, can I just take that a little bit further? The concern for me, and for many members of this Committee, is the question about the target of DFID being poverty reduction and helping the poorest and most vulnerable in the world. Is there not a risk of moving to a Foreign Office-led aid delivery model, whereby using UK aid to enhance mutual prosperity will lead to the return of tied aid? How do you separate that and make sure that never happens as a result of what you are trying to do, which is a modern matrix?

Nick Dyer: As the Secretary of State said earlier, the clear objective is poverty reduction, and it is in the International Development Act. There has to be a line of sight, in terms of the spend, to poverty reduction. If the spending is going to be regular, it has to accord with that objective. That is very clear. I am very clear about that, the Secretary of State is clear about that and so are DFID members of staff. Unless the Act changes, that is not going to change. I do not think there is any doubt about that.

A relationship with any particular country has multiple facets to it. There is a development relationship. There is a foreign policy relationship. You would expect that each of the constituent parts of the UK Government would be very clear about how those relationships are going to work. We would look for, where we can, the read-across and how they can benefit each other, if they can. If we can demonstrate that a big UK effort in country X is supporting a UK company as a secondary benefit, that is absolutely and perfectly fine.

Q102 **Chris Law:** You are comfortable with this position. I want to ask a further question on this. In terms of transparency and accountability, are you suggesting, therefore, that there will be a role for the Independent Commission for Aid Impact across both the Foreign Office and DFID? One of the key criticisms has often been that the Foreign Office is not as transparent and accountable for its spend of official development assistance. Can you assure us—or assure me, certainly—that there will be a cross-departmental role for the Independent Commission for Aid Impact as this transpires?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: DFID is world-renowned and Whitehall-renowned for its transparency and its willingness, and in fact its enthusiasm, for making sure that we are clear about what we do, perhaps because there are detractors in this space. We have learned to be really clear about setting out why we are doing something, why it is important, why there is value for money and why there will be a positive poverty reduction impact, healthcare impact or whatever the project happens to be. We are really good at that in DFID. Whether we should help other Departments take our skillsets and our methodology and use it too is an interesting question, which I shall feed in on your behalf into the integrated review.

If it is a DFID programme, we are in charge of it, and DFID is exactly that. It is absolutely clear that transparency and accountability for what we do is without question. As the Permanent Secretary said, in country it is a team effort to think about a new area that might be worthy of consideration for a DFID programme. The full weight of the DFID assessment system and challenging ourselves on why we are doing it and the outcomes that you want to have does not go away. I completely agree with you that we should share DFID's really excellent programming and transparency skills across Whitehall.

Q103 **Chris Law:** If the Independent Commission for Aid Impact is still going to have a role, which parliamentary committees are likely to be responded to? Will it be the International Development Committee? Will it be the Foreign Affairs Committee, or, indeed, will it be the Treasury Committee, given that it will be across Departments?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is an interesting question and one that would be up for discussion. It seems to me that, if they are overseeing ODA-type spend, the chances are that it continues to sit with you. In the same way that you would have other Ministers from other Departments who are using ODA-eligible funds to deliver programmes across the globe, you would have all of them. It is not to say that I would not necessarily also have value at a different committee, but I would have thought they would continue to be within your reach most evidently.

Q104 **Mr Bacon:** I want to return to Mr Dyer's point about poverty reduction, where his answers were very clear, and ask him what the biggest contributor to poverty reduction is. To put it another way, why is it that there are countries now that are middle-income countries that were very

poor 25 years ago? What is the biggest cause of poverty reduction?

Nick Dyer: How long have you got?

Chair: Ask the Secretary of State.

Nick Dyer: There have been many books and research pieces done on what makes effective states and why some states grow and some do not, why some countries get trapped and some people get trapped in poverty and some do not. I know that there is some fantastic material out there that points to those things. My own personal view is that there is no magic bullet.

Q105 **Mr Bacon:** Can I be a bit more tendentious than I have been? I was thinking of the comment of Hilary Benn when he was Secretary of State some years ago. He said that trade would do far more to raise the levels of prosperity and to reduce poverty in most of these countries than international aid would by itself. What did he mean by that?

Nick Dyer: As I say, I do not think that there are any magic bullets. There are two things that make a really big difference. One is education. The Prime Minister's focus on girls in education is absolutely the right thing. The other is jobs and economic growth. If someone has a job, a lot of things happen that would have otherwise not happened. Does that equate with trade? Not necessarily.

Mr Bacon: Not necessarily international trade, though of course internal economic activity is still trade in kind, is it not?

Nick Dyer: Yes, absolutely, but the reality is that many countries have access to trade preferences but do not take advantage of them because they do not have a supply response. They do not have a supply response because they just do not have the economic conditions that allow them to grow their economies. Getting the economic conditions right and growing economies and getting growth going is very difficult in the COVID context; some of them are going backwards. Sub-Saharan Africa is just about to experience its first recession in 25 years, and that will set the continent back.

Economic growth is very much part of the toolkit, which is one of the reasons why, over the last four or five years, the amount of resource that DFID has spent on economic growth has doubled.[2]

Q106 **Mr Bacon:** Does the Secretary of State want to add anything?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I know Mr Bacon most enjoys testing the brainpower and experience of the Permanent Secretaries before committees and, whilst I am here too, the wisdom and knowledge of Nick Dyer far exceeds my own.

---

[2] Witness correction: *DFID spend on economic development doubled over 7 years from 2012/13 (£1.1bn) to 2018/19 (£2.2bn).*

There is that self-evident truth that, if you do not educate your human capital, you cannot help your country be as strong and effective in being self-sufficient. That is absolutely the root of helping a country to be able to do that. In order to do that, a safe and secure environment is required. Basic healthcare, so that those young children do not die before their fifth birthday, is critical too. It is a combination of all of them. If you made me pick one, it would always be education.

Q107 **Chair:** Secretary of State, can I ask about the Gavi replenishment fund? Is the UK committed to replenishing at the same levels that it has been?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Yes, we are very proud to be leading this replenishment fund and hopefully, in very short order, I will be able to reassure you of just how much leadership we intend to show.

Chair: Excellent, that is very good news.

Q108 **Brendan Clarke-Smith:** What is DFID doing to ensure the international response to COVID-19 is properly co-ordinated and learning from the Ebola epidemic between 2014 and 2016?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is a really good question. It is critical because, at the end of the day, none of us individually can fix this challenge. We have been working, right from the get-go, very closely with the WHO, which has been critical, clearly, in terms of its global reach, health response messaging and the legitimacy it has with so many countries around the world, to try to cohere some stable messages and encourage countries to do the right thing whilst we start to understand this virus.

Our membership of the G7 and G20 has also been critical. We have been driving forward messaging for collective action. We have been making sure that countries put their hands in their pockets to support the international organisations that can see where the most urgent need is. The Paris Club creditors suspending debt repayments for the poorest this year was a case in point, led by the Treasury. Those international fora are critical, be it in the economic spaces, the World Bank, or the multilateral banks and how our voice is heard most effectively, to make sure that we are supporting those countries.

We are also working through the healthcare routes, as the Chair said, in terms of Gavi and CEPI, and supporting the WHO to have all the tools it needs; that is not only cash but the expertise from all those countries to help them to reach those in most need who do not have those tools themselves. It is all of those things. We are absolutely leaning in from every angle and we will continue to do so, while at the same time making sure that, domestically, we look after our own citizens.

That is not enough. We can crack it here. We can make ourselves secure, but, as soon as the borders open up and everyone starts to move around again and a new normal comes back, if the disease has not been tamed, if not solved, with a vaccine, it will be back. We absolutely have to keep

focus on globally trying to stop those second waves, which could have economic consequences of much greater proportions.

Q109 **Brendan Clarke-Smith:** You very briefly mentioned the WHO. Obviously, the US have withdrawn their funding for that. Has there been any look at what the impact of that may be or whether there are financial implications for ourselves that may come out of that at all in terms of funding?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The US has said it is stopping three months' funding. It has also said that it would commit to investing those funds in different ways into aid areas. We continue to talk with the US and hope that it will do that. I have every confidence that USAID will find ways to support those in need.

The UK is absolutely committed to supporting the WHO through this incredibly challenging time. There will be the need to look back and challenge ourselves and have lessons learned in the way that we did with them after the Ebola crisis. Right now, it is all hands to the pumps, as far as the UK is concerned, and we are supporting the WHO.

Q110 **Brendan Clarke-Smith:** Finally, health is missing from the UK's integrated review. How is that justified, in the sense that it is central to the UK's efforts linking it with security and influence and prosperity?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is a very good question. When we were thinking about the outward-facing parts of Government and how we would look at that with the integrated review, pandemic was a theoretical threat, which has very sadly become a real challenge to be dealt with and overcome. When we, as part of the review, look at threats to the UK, including the questions of health threats as opposed to others, and indeed opportunities that we are looking at, we will no doubt bring in some of those specialists within DHSC who are presently working flat out, not only in the domestic setting but in the international one, to support the global effort.

Chair: Secretary of State and Nick Dyer, you have been incredibly generous and kind with your time, and it is hugely appreciated. This is what happens when this Committee has a few months before we can get our hands on you, so thank you for indulging us. It has been very interesting. Thank you for being so open. We look forward to seeing you again soon.