



Environmental Audit Committee

Oral evidence: Sustainable Development Goals,
HC 452

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Written evidence from witnesses:

- Department for International Development

Watch the meeting

Members present: Joan Walley (Chair); Peter Aldous; Neil Carmichael; Martin Caton; Zac Goldsmith; Mike Kane; Mark Lazarowicz; Caroline Lucas; Dr Matthew Offord; Mrs Caroline Spelman; Dr Alan Whitehead; Simon Wright.

Questions 1-88

Witnesses: **Rt Hon Justine Greening MP**, Secretary of State for International Development, **Melinda Bohannon**, Deputy Director, Post-2015 Goals, Department for International Development, and **James Jansen**, Policy Adviser, International, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Q1 Chair: Thank you for coming along to the Committee this afternoon, Secretary of State, and also to the colleagues from DfID and Defra, if I am correct. Just for the record, I think this is not the first time you have been before our Select Committee but certainly the first time wearing the DfID hat.

Justine Greening: Actually, yes.

Q2 Chair: Thank you for coming along this afternoon. You will be aware that this Environmental Audit Select Committee has taken an interest in the sustainable development goal process from before the Rio+20 Summit, and we intend to keep it under review as it proceeds. Given the Prime Minister's particular standing in terms of the high-level panel when I think a lot of priority was given by the Government, how is that priority continuing? How is it spanning out? What would you say the priority was to getting sustainable development goals secured now as part of the MDGs?

Justine Greening: Thank you, Chair, and it is a pleasure to be before the Committee again on such an important topic. As the millennium development goals finally reach their conclusion in 2015, we have a unique opportunity now to make sure that the next post-2015 framework does put us in the best possible position to eradicate extreme poverty. When we look back at the progress we have seen under the MDGs, one of the areas where not enough progress was made was on MDG7 in relation to environmental degradation and sustainable use of the environment. Of course, alongside that, climate change did not feature at all in the original MDGs. For those reasons, when the Prime Minister co-chaired the high-level panel—which I am sure the Committee knows was essentially a group of experts that the Secretary-General of the United Nations had brought together to do some initial thinking and preparatory work on what kind of a post-2015 development framework we might have—they very much recognised that this was an area that needed to be strengthened.

The report that they came out with had five key areas that it flagged up as underpinning principles. Since then, it has been our ambition as a Government to make sure that, as the discussions on what the new post-2015 framework are going to be continue—the main bit of the process since then has been the Open Working Group—sustainable development does get integrated across the entirety of that framework. As you know, we are in a critical period at the moment because over the next few weeks we will have the UN Secretary-General synthesis report. This is where he takes what the Open Working Group have essentially published and then gives his reflection on that. That then sets the scene for a negotiation over the course of next year to lock down what that new framework will be.

We are at a critical time, and the UK very much recognises, as the high-level panel report said, that sustainability has to underpin this. Therefore, we want to see it mainstreamed. What are we doing in the meantime then? Well, we are making sure that we are advocating at the international level. I saw Ban Ki-moon at the United Nations General Assembly about a month ago, and we are also trying to get a common EU position so that member states in our EU neighbourhood can speak with one voice. We are also trying to make sure that civil society organisations are mobilised to make sure that this is kept on the agenda and that it is successfully incorporated.

A final key point—and I am sorry for perhaps a longer introduction than I had intended—is the other thing we have in mind is making sure that whatever we end up with it is actionable. We need to have goals and targets that can translate into action on the ground that can be monitored, that can be transparently understood outside of Governments and that can make a difference. That is ultimately the test of this post-2015 framework. It cannot just simply be a document that then does not see any change taking place.

Q3 Chair: I hear all of that, and it is clearly important that we find a way of going forward. In terms of the number of goals that you think should be agreed and also the comment that you made about the EU and the progress that there is there already, I would like to press you on both of those issues. First, how many goals should there be? Do you think that 17 is too many?

Justine Greening: I think 17 is too many and the Prime Minister said that he would ideally like to see 10. The high-level panel report had 12. Those are the points that I made to the Secretary-General about a month ago in New York. At the moment, the Open Working Group has 17 goals, 169 targets. That is getting on for one target every two days.

We think that, as difficult as that challenge is, we have to somehow take the essence of what the Open Working Group's report is saying and then condense it down into a framework that can drive action. The danger is if everything is a priority, then nothing gets prioritised at the end of the day.

Q4 Chair: Is this where there is perhaps a little bit of a split between the developed and the developing countries? I think that there is quite a huge welcome for the fact that we are so far advanced with the SDGs at the moment, possibly with that 17 number going forward, and there is a sense—well, perhaps you can tell me whether or not there is or there is not—that certainly the EU, and the UK within the EU, are trying to draw back from that, precisely at a time when we seem to have reached agreement across developed and developing countries. I would like to tease out a little bit more whether the UK is saying we have to have fewer because it will be more likely that we will achieve them, or whether that would be at the expense of some of the sustainability issues that the developing countries think should be included in it.

Justine Greening: I can absolutely reassure you that we do not see having a shorter, more compelling framework as being at the expense of sustainability at all.

Chair: Some of the critics would say that, wouldn't they?

Justine Greening: Perhaps.

Q5 Chair: Would they be justified in saying that?

Justine Greening: I do not think they would be justified in saying that. Our Prime Minister co-chaired the high-level panel. It was very clear that alongside eradicating extreme poverty, sustainable development should be at the core of the next framework. Of course, more broadly, if you had the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change or Defra here, I am sure both of them would say just how much the UK has generally been a leader in the areas of climate change and environment over the years.

What we are seeking to do is to try to make sure that we end up with a post-2015 framework that is one that can work on the ground. We are very much supported by African countries who do want to see a framework that can deliver for them. Within Europe, what we now need to do is to try to build a consensus around how we can get to a framework that can really deliver for the poorest people in the world. That is the process we are in at the moment.

We had an initial high-level statement by the EU a few months ago that set out an overall position. We did not want to go into an excessive amount of detail mainly because the Open Working Group process was still under way. We certainly did not want to undermine the debate between member states that was happening by prejudging where it might end up. The key is to start building a consensus in Europe now so that we can help play a constructive role in getting that final post-2015 framework.

Q6 Chair: You mentioned just now that you are looking at fewer perhaps than 17. I am quite interested to know whether or not, therefore, you are proposing to take out certain specific goals and, if so, which ones.

Justine Greening: I do not think we have been specific about saying that a particular goal should disappear. If you look at the difference between the Open Working Group report and the high-level panel report, both of them had a significant number of points and targets in relation to sustainability directly. What we want to see is a more integrated approach on sustainable development across the piece of the new post-2015 development framework. One of our concerns with the last MDGs—which I think was borne out—and perhaps with the Open Working Group was there is a danger that it gets siloed when, in fact, what we have learnt from our work in DfID and what we believe is that you need to have it running right the way across all of your work if you are going to be successful. You need to take a more systemic approach to poverty reduction if you are going to be successful, but that absolutely has to include having sustainability as part of that.

Q7 Caroline Lucas: I want to echo the concerns that the Chair has already raised that reopening the debate about the number of goals could mean that it is going to be harder to get final agreement over those, because many other member states have more or less agreed on the current number. In particular on this issue of mainstreaming versus stand-alone, I wonder if you could give us any reassurance. Although I completely agree with you, of course, that mainstreaming is absolutely crucial, I think there is a real concern that if we lose the stand-alone, particularly around climate change, that sends a really negative signal, particularly running up to the big climate meeting in Paris next year, too. Although mainstreaming is crucial, there is the risk of the lack of visibility there that a stand-alone commitment—particularly on climate change—would give us. I wonder if you can give us any reassurance that we will not wake up one day and discover that that goal has just gone.

Justine Greening: We felt that the challenge we faced with the first lot of the MDGs was there was a stand-alone goal but it seemed to get siloed. In siloing out the issue of the environment, the other goals did not sufficiently pick it up.

Caroline Lucas: We need both for sure, but I want to know we have both.

Justine Greening: We felt the challenge was to make sure that the mainstreaming took place across the rest of the framework. I can be absolutely categorical that we see this whole area of sustainability as key. It is one of the reasons why we are doing so much work on climate change, but in my department we work hand in hand with DECC and also Defra very much on adaptation. A lot of the work that you will see us doing, for example, in response to Typhoon Haiyan and in places like Kenya, is about helping communities become climate resilient. Much, much more of our focus is increasingly on ensuring that, when we are working with countries on development, it does have this integrated approach because we know that we will not be successful unless we approach it that way. We have gone through a programme within DfID called Future Fit, where we looked across the piece with country programmes about how we could make sure that climate and climate resilience in particular was integrated into all that work. We have now identified seven countries that are going to be almost like challenger countries that are going to do more innovative work, that are going to share that learning, and we very much recognise that these two things cannot be taken apart. They are inextricably linked.

Q8 Caroline Lucas: I do not disagree with that at all. I am only saying that the signal of having a stand-alone climate change objective as well as everything you have described, which I completely support, would give out a very positive signal.

Justine Greening: We certainly would not want to see the issue of climate change or, indeed, any broader sustainability in any way minimised in the framework that we get for 2015.

Q9 Mrs Spelman: You mentioned Europe and there were tensions between Ministers responsible for poverty and overseas aid and environment Ministers, but it was the Environment Commissioner that took the lead in the negotiations at Rio+20. Could you tell us how that has evolved? Which of the new commissioners will take the lead in trying to get a common position across Europe? Who are our allies in Europe in trying to get sustainability absolutely integrated as part of the poverty reduction agenda?

Justine Greening: That is an important point. It has been one of the complexities in how we get to a good outcome on the post-2015 framework. In fact, when I have been to Development Minister meetings in Europe, we have had Commissioner Potočník—as then was—come to those meetings in order that we can have that breadth of a discussion that we need if we are going to have a balanced approach. As those discussions took place in Europe, what you saw happening was a knitting together of the home of the group of Ministers that were focused on the MDGs, which was the Development Commissioner and to some extent the Emergency and Humanitarian Commissioner—Commissioner Georgieva—and then a recognition that we needed to weave it together with climate change and environment and seeing the EU steadily start to do that. What we need to do is make sure that that co-working continues and that we do not see those silos start to emerge again, having hopefully avoided them thus far. From my perspective, I do think that it is one of the key areas that we need to make sure we keep a watching brief on.

Q10 Chair: Following on from that, does the same apply to what is going on inside the European Union but also inside our own UK Government? Could you share with us who is doing the lead negotiations for the UK Government? Is it the Special Envoy from the Cabinet Office and how does that link in then with DfID and with Defra?

Justine Greening: We have had an interministerial working group in relation to setting out our policy position on the post-2015 framework, mainly because it does cut across so many different departments.

Q11 Chair: Who is leading that?

Justine Greening: DfID essentially leads it working with No. 10 and, of course—as you set out, Chair—the Prime Minister has taken a very personal interest in this from the word go.

Q12 Chair: How are you getting that joined-up approach across Cabinet Office and across DfID and across Defra?

Justine Greening: I chaired those interministerial working group meetings to make sure that across Government all departments—and, in fact, it has gone well beyond the ones that we have talked about so far—are aware of what position we are taking and what it will mean for them. Everybody fully expects that this next post-2015 framework will have this concept of universality, so it will apply to all countries, not just developing countries, quite rightly.

Q13 Chair: Just very quickly from me: the Government has over 1,000 commitments set out in departments' business plans. I wonder if it is possible to focus action on these commitments. Why is it that you think that 17 is too many?

Justine Greening: When we look at the impact of this current framework or in the millennium development goals, a lot of people have tried to step back and understand why it has been so galvanising. Of course, it sat alongside the Millennium Declaration and I have a sense when I talk to people involved in the negotiations at the time that the declaration was the document that politicians really focused their attention on, perhaps angling over every single word, and that offline and alongside a framework of goals was pulled together. People have set aside the declaration in terms of their focus and it was the goals that galvanised people.

Everyone has seen how important those goals were, but they have also looked at why they were so galvanising. One of the reasons was that they were very simple, they were extremely compelling, and they were very clear cut in terms of the targets. As a result, I think it has been very hard for countries involved in development to stand back and say, "We are just going to cherry pick" because there were not that many to cherry pick from. It really has channelled efforts, investment and focus in a way that has been very positive, but we all recognise that there were shortcomings as well. One of those shortcomings was an insufficient focus on sustainability, no focus on climate change, and a sense that the goals perhaps were too focused on developing countries and that because of the changes we want to see they now need to have a more universal application.

The final two areas where, with hindsight, we now see we need to do more work is in the sense of economic growth and inclusive growth so that people can have the dignity of work. We have seen with development in China just how much broad-based growth can lift people out of poverty. In 1981, over 80% of people in China were living on \$1.25 or less a day. By 2009, that had fallen to 12%. Over the course of that period, per capita GDP had risen tenfold. Jobs and inclusive growth needs to go in, but then also peace, security and institutions. We know that if we do not have good governance—and you have to look at issues like illegal logging—it is very, very difficult to get long-term change on the ground. Those are the areas where we felt that the new framework needed to fuse in more issues to be successful.

Q14 Neil Carmichael: Justine, what are your thoughts about the sustainable development goal process itself in terms of setting those goals?

Justine Greening: It is obviously going to take some time to get a framework that everyone can agree to. It is vital that we do. It is a complicated process because of the additional elements that are now involved in it. It is a complicated process because we need to do much more outreach. As part of the high-level panel approach, there was outreach done in particular to young people, to civil society, to businesses. I think we all understand now how important this framework is going to be and, therefore, going beyond a political discussion to have it as a more inclusive discussion with other key stakeholders is incredibly important.

Q15 Neil Carmichael: Do you think there is a consensus about what sustainable development actually looks like?

Justine Greening: I think broadly there is. The main debate would probably be around where the emphasis needs to lie, and the reason that debate happens is because ultimately, if you want to reach an outcome of sustainably eradicating extreme poverty, you need to have a systemic effect. What happens is people come in the system at different points and argue for that point and, of course, it all needs to be there. We need to find a balanced approach.

Q16 Neil Carmichael: A recent General Assembly resolution—and I do not know which one it was—stated the Open Working Group’s conclusion should be the “main basis” for integrating sustainable development goals into post-2015 development agenda. Do you agree with that?

Justine Greening: I would say I do not really disagree with it in the sense that I think the Open Working Group process was incredibly important. It was the first major systematic step for member states to engage in a structured way. Therefore, the report that came out is one that we take incredibly seriously. We think the work done by the high-level panel is also a key input into this process. Of course, as I have said, we need to reach beyond the political stakeholders represented at the UN to talk to young people about their aspirations, to talk to civil society, to talk to the private sector who will play a role in helping to deliver this more now than perhaps they have ever done in the future. It does provide a working basis, but there are more elements to it to consider as well.

Q17 Neil Carmichael: Before the goals are finalised, do you think the process needs tinkering with or are you happy with it as it is?

Justine Greening: We have to see what the UN’s synthesis report is first, the Secretary-General’s synthesis report. At that stage, the precise process that we are all going to have to follow—to go from having the Open Working Group report to locking down the framework—will then be set out. I think we are all waiting to see what the proposal is that the Secretary-General puts forward. For me, the key to success is trying to find some consensus and listening to the differing voices around the room.

Q18 Neil Carmichael: Has our approach to this whole question been different because we are going through the European Union? How does that shape the process anyway?

Justine Greening: I would say two things. First of all, we would always, of course, keep our eye open for any competence creep. Indeed, when we had the Open Working Group process under way, the EU was not per se represented in that. You had individual countries in troikas of three having their say, so there is that element of it.

What it means is that we have a ready-made group of near neighbours to have an initial discussion with. I think the EU can be a constructive voice for helping to reach a conclusion on the post-2015 development framework. The UK is well placed to help shape that constructive view, mainly and not least because we are the first G8/G7 country now to have delivered 0.7% in that commitment of our investment into international development. Much of the work we do and the breadth of work we do—and you only have to look at what we are doing now in Sierra Leone with Ebola—does give us a very credible voice around the table.

Q19 Neil Carmichael: In short, working with your European Union colleagues does give you some advantages and some strengths as you proceed down the line?

Justine Greening: If we can make sure we speak with one voice, yes. That is where we need to get to.

Q20 Chair: That ‘if’ is quite a big “if”, isn’t it? It would be helpful to know how that is defined. What are the issues that would ensure that you were speaking with one voice?

Justine Greening: Yes. It would be great if we can get to that point. There will be some areas where it is always difficult to reach a consensus.

Chair: We are trying to find out what those areas are.

Justine Greening: Well, for example, sexual and reproductive health rights, another element of the framework. There are some European member states who are absolutely very concerned by the inclusion of the word “rights”. That is something for the UK that we are very keen to see in the framework and, therefore, it is hard to sometimes reach a conclusion on that. We think we can get some consensus across the broad base of issues. From my perspective, the most effective route we can take is to find common ground and then build out from that, but be realistic about the fact that there will always be some areas of policy where you cannot reach agreement. You need to try to make sure that, in spite of that, where there is common ground you can use that to make progress internationally.

Q21 Chair: Finally on this process, you mentioned that you had had a meeting with Ban Ki-moon about a month ago. I would be interested to know what you said to him about the approach that the UK would like to see in all of this. Could you summarise what you did say to him about this whole process?

Justine Greening: I reiterated the points I have made to the Committee, which is that our concern is to make sure that the next development framework can be as galvanising and as compelling as the last one and that we are concerned that with so many goals in the Open Working Group report there is a real danger that, as well intentioned as that piece of work is, it will be too many goals and too many targets, and in the end we will not see the focus to get things improved on the ground. I made exactly the same points to him as I have made to the Committee here and I also signalled our willingness and desire to be part of a consensus-building process, starting in Europe but then more broadly internationally.

Q22 Chair: Finally, given the way in which there was a real coalition of NGOs and business out there in Rio at the summit and the concerns that you have just expressed, is it your intention to have a discussion with the NGOs and with business about this clarity that you are seeking so you can make sure that there is an overall consensus about that?

Justine Greening: I think that discussion is under way and has been under way really since the working group came out with its report. As you can imagine, I regularly see NGOs that DfID works with. I am speaking at the Bond conference. Bond is the overarching umbrella body that our UK NGOs are part of, and I am speaking at their conference next month.

Q23 Chair: If they had major concerns about this, would there be an opportunity for them to feed it in before anything was signed, sealed and being taken forward under the EU process?

Justine Greening: We have been very clear that this process needs to involve NGOs and civil society organisations and also the private sector.

Q24 Caroline Lucas: I want to ask about whether you see any risk of contradiction between the different goals. I am thinking in particular, for example, of the goals around trade and economic growth conflicting potentially with other goals on reducing consumption and shifting to sustainable consumption.

Justine Greening: I think this is why it is so important to make sure that this issue of sustainability is mainstreamed across the piece. It is why when we talk about inclusive growth it also needs to be sustainable growth. I do not think it means either/or. I do think it means that when we are looking at, for example, energy infrastructure in countries we need to make sure that infrastructure is low carbon and that that growth is low carbon growth. We have a real opportunity now to get this fitted up right first time as opposed to having growth that takes place in developing countries and jobs that are created and then a process afterwards that tries to make that low carbon then. A lot of the work that we are now doing is around how to make sure that when energy investment takes place it is low carbon, that we can work with communities but also companies to look at how when we are doing livelihoods work it can be sustainable; for example, it does not involve overfishing or use of forests in a way that means those jobs that are being created will not be sustainable in the long term.

Q25 Caroline Lucas: For example looking at goal 8, which talks about a 7% GDP target for developing countries, even if that is trying to be as low carbon as possible, just that net impact of more and more growth right across the world, if there is not a corresponding reduction in more and more growth in the west, means that it is not going to be sustainable. Sometimes it worries me that the words “sustainable growth” are used because it is a way of squaring a circle, but in reality, if you break down what we are talking about, those cumulative growth rates—even if they are less resource intensive than they have been in the past—if they are constantly still going up, it is not compatible at the end of the day with a planet of finite resources and an objective to have more sustainable resource consumption.

Justine Greening: I understand the point you are making and, with respect, I do not agree with it. The 7% growth rate is the growth rate that many developing countries will tell you that they need to over time persistently start to bring more people out of extreme poverty.

Q26 Caroline Lucas: We need to reduce ours here. That is my point. I am not trying to stop developing countries from growing, but I am saying if you are having that kind of growth objective right across the world as it stands—because we are not up to 7% but we are all trying to grow more—there has to be a corresponding reduction in the western countries.

Justine Greening: Let me just finish what I was going to say and then I will come back to that point because it is an important one.

What we are trying to do is work with developing countries so that they can have that low carbon growth. There is also inclusive growth that lifts people out of poverty through job creation. Creating prosperity is one of the ways that we will end up with the levels of investment we need to invest in mitigating and tackling climate change and also adaptation. The reason we can do so much work as a country is because we have an

economy that is producing tax receipts that mean we can invest in international development.

Q27 Caroline Lucas: That is such a dangerous model that has been challenged so many times because the way in which you are creating that prosperity is in itself polluting. Therefore, this idea that we can have an end of pipe solution with that financial resource trying to sort out climate change has really been disproved.

Justine Greening: I do not think we are essentially saying that, because all of what I have just talked about sits alongside all of the work that we are doing as a Government to make sure that our economy steadily moves to a low carbon economy and that our economy is sustainable as well.

Q28 Caroline Lucas: But the Prime Minister has just been at the EU blocking targets on energy efficiency.

Justine Greening: I think what the EU agreed last week was a very sensible approach that was focused on the outcome that we want to get to and recognised that sub-sub-targets beneath that can sometimes lead to perverse consequences.

Q29 Caroline Lucas: That means all of the environmental groups were wrong, then, because all of the environmental groups were saying that there are good environmental and economic reasons for having a binding energy efficiency target, and yet the UK blocked that.

Justine Greening: I do not agree with that. I think that a lot of people recognise that we needed to come back to some of those targets that have been well intentioned but actually had too often created perverse incentives for countries. We had a good step forward at the EU council last week. I think the key for me in my job, though, is to make sure that with economies that are at that earlier stage of development we do learn, and that we do the right kind of investment and do the right kind of work on livelihoods and growth that does mean that they are not having to, as it were, recalibrate their economies in the same way that developed countries are.

Q30 Caroline Lucas: Sure. On that point in particular, the right kind of investment, could you say what role DfID and perhaps Defra have had informing the UK's position in relation to trade negotiations in general and perhaps specifically looking at TTIP? Of course, the real concern about TTIP is that it is giving powers to corporations to sue democratically elected Governments over whether or not they believe that those Governments are putting in obstacles to what might be that right kind of investment.

Justine Greening: DfID is involved across Government on a range of different policies, including trade policy. It is one of the reasons why we work increasingly closely with BIS and UKTI, because we want to see investment in trade that is responsible. It is why we have worked with BIS, for example, on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. We are part of all of that.

Q31 Caroline Lucas: Have you raised specific concerns about the impact of TTIP on developing countries?

Justine Greening: I think TTIP is an opportunity to drive growth and prosperity and so I am absolutely—as across Government we are—supportive of getting a deal. I was

absolutely supportive of making sure that the WTO deal that we got is now implemented and that the barriers to that go ahead. In answer to your question, I think TTIP and the work that has been done to help free up trade so that developing countries can have a go at being part of the global economy is really, really important. That is why they are lobbying for that, too.

Q32 Caroline Lucas: But that is also completely contradictory to a regulated framework, whereby we might have some hope of ensuring that the investment that happens is low carbon and does achieve all of the environmental outcomes you have just been talking about. If in TTIP essentially the investor-state dispute mechanism hands powers to corporations—more powers to corporations than it does to elected Governments—then there can be absolutely no guarantee that the investment that you are talking about will be low carbon, environmentally supportive and inclusive.

Justine Greening: I do not agree with your analysis of TTIP in relation to handing powers to companies. I do think that it is important that we work with Governments and companies. In your questions, one of the most important points is the fact that we cannot just contract out of working with the private sector when it comes to development. What we have to do is work and try to shape investment to make sure that it is responsible.

Q33 Caroline Lucas: But surely it is the role of Government, though, to set the framework within which corporations will work, and yet precisely what TTIP is doing, via this mechanism that is alarming so many people, is not allowing Government to set that framework. It is giving companies the power to set it and that is why, for example, you have the situation in Australia where Philip Morris, the cigarette makers, are trying to sue the Australian Government because the Australian Government chose to have plain packet cigarettes. There you have a Government having a democratically agreed objective and the corporations are trying to challenge it. I do not think that it is right to say that somehow within TTIP you can have a Government-led investment programme because TTIP precisely involves giving that power to the corporations.

Justine Greening: I do not share your analysis of that situation.

Q34 Caroline Lucas: Why is there a big argument in Australia between Philip Morris and the Government over plain package cigarettes and why are they able to take them to court?

Justine Greening: I cannot particularly comment in any sort of detail on that particular court case, but I do not believe that the negotiations around how to improve world trade happen with no regulations, no safeguards. They do and what we are increasingly seeing, which I think is a very welcome move, is companies themselves setting voluntary standards that over time can become more used across the board. Alongside flagging up some of the risks that we can see from irresponsible investment, we also need to flag up that increasingly there are many companies who are acting as part of this development push alongside organisations and departments like DfID. That is a good thing and I think we should encourage it. We should encourage companies that are not at that level of development impact to see whether they can get there. That is one of the things my department increasingly tries to do.

Chair: Can we move on to environmental sustainability, to Zac Goldsmith?

Zac Goldsmith: I am going to do that, but I am going to follow up on one point that Caroline made if you do not mind.

Chair: Of course, you have the opportunity.

Q35 Zac Goldsmith: One of the concerns about the dispute resolution that Caroline has just mentioned is that it is hard to see it not acting as an inhibitor when it comes to raising standards. What you are talking about, and what we have been talking about in this and every other session we have ever had, is improving environmental standards one way or another. The problem is that if a Government decides to ratchet up standards necessarily that is going to have an impact on someone's investment somewhere. The problem with the resolution system that Caroline has described is that it does give unprecedented power to those outside investors to challenge those standards that we have set. On that basis, I think it is impossible to deny that this will have an impact in terms of the democratic process of establishing standards nationally. You have already had that debate, but I fear that Ministers and the Government—and I would say this is across all three mainstream parties—are completely failing to look at what the implications are. I plant that seed in your mind and hopefully you will look at it in due course.

I am going to open up a different thing. I have a very general question, just so I understand how important these sustainable development goals are. It would be useful to hear from you, once they have been established and agreed, how big a factor they will be in terms of the totality of DfID programmes. How much influence will these things have in terms of your work going forward?

Justine Greening: I think they will have a significant influence. If you look at how influential the MDGs were in shaping our investment, that was a significant influence. I believe the next framework will run through the work that my department does. I also think you are starting to see organisations like the World Bank look at how they should be organising themselves to be able to deliver it on the ground as well. It will be massively influential.

Q36 Chair: We will be having a session with Rachel Kyte hopefully, so that is perhaps one of the things we will be able to put to her.

Justine Greening: That is a great idea and I think she will be a very good person to give evidence to the Committee.

Q37 Zac Goldsmith: I want to try to understand, in the department's submission, you and, I think, most people agree the millennium development goals were a success on many levels, and you have made that point just now. You have also made the point that they were not as successful in an environmental context. I suppose the question is why that should be, given that the first people to be affected when an ecosystem is destroyed, when free services that nature provides are undermined, whether it is a marine environment or forests or whatever, are the people who are poorest. That seems so blindingly obvious to such an extent that Wangari Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize for planting trees, because it alleviated direct and harsh poverty in the area in which those trees were planted. Why do you think that blind spot was there, because it is hard to understand? For people who are absolutely committed to dealing with base poverty, this surely is the most obvious thing we can do.

Justine Greening: The short answer is that I do not think the focus on sustainability was integrated as much as it needed to be across the rest of the framework. There was a tendency probably for the development community to focus on what it saw as more core development programmes and possibly a sense that environmental sustainability was something that was done somewhere else, being delivered by someone else—as in Caroline’s question and the fact that climate change is under a separate department. I think that is where you saw the disconnect, and that is why you need to make sure that sustainability really does run through all of the development goals that come out to make sure that that does not happen again.

In spite of that, I would argue that over the course of the MDG period the UK had done a lot of work and had been one of those countries that was joined up across the piece in trying to develop development programmes that did have sustainability within them. I think that we were probably too much of the exception rather than the rule.

Q38 Zac Goldsmith: That I think is the green thread that you talked about in your submission. Just on a technical level, how do you explicitly green-proof the various goals that emerge? If it is 10, 17 goals, however many there are, how technically can you ensure that each one of those is measured against its impact in terms of sustainability in terms of the environment generally? Does it have to be explicit in a framing document? How does that happen?

Justine Greening: I think it does need to be as explicit as we can possibly make it. It is why it was explicitly flagged up in the high-level panel report. That is the challenge that all countries now face in trying to reach a conclusion on what that next framework looks like—how to make sure that it is specific enough and measurable enough that we get the right outcomes on the ground.

Q39 Zac Goldsmith: I do not want to go over it; we have already discussed that a bit. Penultimate question: the PM has talked about the golden thread, so governance, free media, justice and so on. Is there any conflict between the green thread and the golden thread or do these things run absolutely intrinsically together?

Justine Greening: I think they can enhance one another. Some of the work that we have done, for example, on illegal logging in Liberia would have been for naught if President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had not been prepared to take action when she saw some of the illegal logging licences that she believed had been put out. She literally called a halt on all of that while she looked into it. I think governance needs to sit alongside all the work on sustainability and I would argue that you need all that work on governance to be able to make sure that the work on the ground that happens on sustainability is itself sustainable in the future.

Q40 Zac Goldsmith: Can I ask one more question on this point about logging and governance and so on? The ICF, the climate fund pot, is pretty big; I think £3.8 billion or so. A big chunk of that was supposed to be or is dedicated towards international forest-related issues. I am a bit out of date, but the impression I have is that the majority of the money that has been spent—and not all that much has yet been spent—has been spent on governance process-related issues and that less than had originally been planned is being spent on the bilateral, innovative deals that we were hoping to do with countries around the world. I may be very out of date, in which case I would be thrilled to be put right, but I wonder, if that is

true, why we are holding back from some of those country to country deals in places like Ethiopia, Mexico, Indonesia, Congo and so on that were originally very much on the agenda.

Justine Greening: I do not think there is any holding back, Zac. What we have used the International Climate Fund to do is to hopefully turbo-charge some of the multilateral climate funds, which include the forest investment programme. Alongside that, yes, we have also ourselves set up programmes like the forest governance, markets and climate programme, which have worked with individual countries, and there has been bilateral work under way, including with places like Indonesia, as you know. We have sought to get a mix.

My final point would be I think we have learnt a lot over the course of this initial work. I think we all recognise that if you compare the longevity of DfID's work in this area compared to what I could probably term almost decades of work by a government department or within a government department on, say, health or education, it is still quite new. One of the things that we are doing increasingly is a focus on research, understanding what works, and then tailoring that into the programmes that we are bringing forward going forward and also tailoring that research into helping to shape the international programme and the Green Climate Fund as it gets set up so that it can be successful.

Q41 Zac Goldsmith: My very last point—and it is a very unfair question—one of the most valuable things I think you, your department and the Foreign Office have been doing is running a climate programme in Indonesia; magnificent people, extraordinarily good projects there. I want to ask you: when will we hear a commitment that that project is going to continue, that the funding for that climate department will endure? I think at the moment there is a question mark over whether or not it will continue.

Justine Greening: Perhaps, Zac, I can write to the department afterwards and give you more chapter and verse.

Chair: If you could write to the Committee that might be helpful.

Justine Greening: Yes, of course.

Chair: I am conscious that you need to be away at 4 o'clock, I think.

Justine Greening: Yes, I am briefing people on—

Chair: We have about seven questions to get through. It might be helpful for all colleagues to know that. I will turn now to Mark Lazarowicz.

Q42 Mark Lazarowicz: Bearing in mind what you said, I will try to cut some of my questions. First, on the issue of ensuring that the work on sustainable development goals is integrated with other Government approaches on this issue, can you give us a bit more detail of how the UK is co-ordinating negotiations on the SDGs along with processes such as the climate change COP and the biodiversity COP, for example? Obviously, with DfID leading on the SDGs, DECC on climate change and Defra on development, how is that co-ordinated in a practical sense by Government?

Justine Greening: It does involve us working across Government. In terms of the SDG post-2015 framework, it involves that interministerial working group and then, more

generally on a day-to-day basis, it is co-chaired ICF work through DECC, DfID and Defra, and then simply a dual working between ourselves and, in particular, DECC as the Paris meeting comes down the track.

Q43 Mark Lazarowicz: It has been suggested by WWF that the UK's support for strong integration across the SDGs did not really show itself in the discussions about the Gangwon Declaration on the biodiversity goals. What would you say to that?

Justine Greening: We have done significant work in relation to biodiversity. The Darwin Fund that DfID essentially funds provides £5 million to Defra targeted at improving and tackling biodiversity. We did not want to prejudge where those other tools you just referred to would get to, but we are very supportive of biodiversity being part of the SDG framework.

Q44 Mark Lazarowicz: You are now happy with the Gangwon Declaration process as it now stands and the goals that have been set out there?

Justine Greening: As I said, we will wait and see where we get to on the end of that whole negotiation in relation to biodiversity, but we certainly want to see it reflected effectively within the SDGs.

Q45 Mark Lazarowicz: Back to SDGs now and your wish to reduce the number of goals, which I can understand, do you favour a stand-alone goal on climate change remaining as one of the goals? Whatever else happens, should there be some specific goal recognising the importance of tackling climate change as part of the SDGs?

Justine Greening: We are very clear that we need to see climate change explicitly addressed. I think we will have to see where we get to in the overall negotiation on what that final framework will look like. Again, just to reiterate to the Committee, the Prime Minister co-chaired the high-level panel report. You can see the report that was produced by that. It was very, very strong on making sure that sustainable development, including climate change, ran absolutely all the way through it. You can expect to see that approach continued by the UK Government.

Q46 Mark Lazarowicz: Turning to another aspect of the process, you will be aware of the various ideas that in various areas we are reaching environmental constraints or limits. I think the picture is of us in the rich world requiring three planets to be able to sustain our consumption levels, whereas in the developing countries it may be two-thirds of the planet and less, obviously, in middle-income countries. How far are you committed to there being very tough goals on sustainable consumption and production in this process? There are some things there in the draft at the moment, in the goals, but can you give us an indication of the Government's commitment on these issues?

Justine Greening: The way you phrase it is very much how we have looked at this whole area of making sure that there is integration between the production and consumption-related elements of any new framework that comes out. That will be one of the areas that we focus on because otherwise we simply will not end up with a workable development framework. The other point I would make is that we can more broadly have sustainability woven in across the piece alongside perhaps those high priority areas that you have talked about.

Q47 Mrs Spelman: I have a question on Mark's point to you about how you get the alignment of the negotiated position by the UK on climate change and biodiversity with sustainability. Given that 75% of the biodiversity of the United Kingdom is in British overseas territories, would you have any fundamental objection to the kind of Darwin resources that you have within your department going to arresting the loss of species in those territories? It comes back to this nub of the problem that if everything has to be seen through the prism of reducing poverty, it can be difficult to align with where the biodiversity threat is greatest.

Justine Greening: For my department one of the underlying drivers about where we can spend any money has to be that, as you say, it has to be around poverty alleviation, but it has to be in countries that also qualify for overseas development assistance in terms of their income status. We do not have the budget to be able to necessarily do a broader programme on biodiversity, but what we can do is make sure that in those countries that do not have the wherewithal themselves because of poverty to be able to tackle biodiversity, we can help them do that through funds like the Darwin Fund.

Q48 Mark Lazarowicz: My final point was that in our report on the circular economy we highlighted the way in which there were real concerns that there will be price rises of key commodities in developing countries as they undergo economic growth. How far is that something that is recognised by DfID in its programmes in terms of supporting resource efficiency in developing countries, for example?

Justine Greening: I think it is crucial because food security very much underpins so much of the rest of the work that we do. In fact, a year ago, in 2013, alongside the G8 work that we were involved in, we hosted the Nutrition for Growth conference, which was all about making sure that not only is there enough food but it is the kind of food that can help particularly young children grow up to be healthy. What you also saw both in the Open Working Group report and the high-level panel report was a real focus on agriculture and agricultural productivity. Then alongside that is precisely why all of this fits together. You look at water, sanitation, irrigation. All of those things need to be done sustainably because otherwise you just simply will not get any long-term change on the ground.

Q49 Mark Lazarowicz: Can you be a bit more specific about resource efficiency? I know that is included generally in what you said, but can you give us more specific examples of how you are encouraging resource efficiency for key commodities?

Justine Greening: We have a variety of programmes around water and irrigation. For example, I saw an excellent programme in Zambia that had enabled irrigation to take place on what had essentially been unproductive land that enabled farmers to be able to farm all year round and get productive work done all year round. They had reinvested a lot of the money that they had earned into improving their school and their local hospital.

Another example of that is some of the more technology-related work that we have done through our BRACED programme. That is all about helping climate resilience and disaster resilience. It has seen us, for example, being able to invest in so-called scuba rice in Bangladesh—which is rice that can basically cope with wetter conditions and still be effective—and also helping to develop different varieties of maize that are more drought resistant. It is taking what people are already doing in some cases and helping them to do it more effectively, more productively, so that they have more sustainable livelihoods. In

other cases, we are helping to create livelihoods and helping to create, for example—I think someone mentioned Ethiopia—economies that can start to transition.

Q50 Mike Kane: The Committee spent half a day with the British Academy the other week looking at inequality. I was reading a report the other day where Pope Francis was addressing the heads of UN organisations on the sustainable development goals. He said inequality was the key driver of poverty, environmental decline and ill health. Do you support goal 10 and having inequality in the goals as laid out?

Justine Greening: We have been very clear that we think the next framework needs to have this underpinning concept of leaving no one behind. We know that under the last MDGs there are the most marginalised, most vulnerable people, for example—sometimes disabled—who will still not, say, be in education. Making sure that we have a development approach that gets to everyone, not just most people, is absolutely critical.

Q51 Mike Kane: Within the goal itself there are two elements. There is inequality within society and inequality between societies. Is it an achievable goal to reduce inequality between societies in your opinion?

Justine Greening: Our focus is on reaching to the very, very poorest people in the world and eradicating extreme poverty. How their circumstances relate to other people is a secondary consideration from my perspective. At the end of the day, the work that we do, whether it is in Sierra Leone or anywhere else, is about reaching out to the very poorest people who often have absolutely nothing, or perhaps have very little, and when disaster hits they are often hit hardest and hit first and have the least capability to be able to bounce back from that. Those are the people that we are focusing on and that is personally where I feel the next framework should focus as well.

Q52 Chair: Was that a yes or no for goal 10 in a short answer?

Justine Greening: I would say it is about keeping the end in mind. It is about saying that no one must be left behind. The more political debate around inequality and—

Q53 Chair: But it was not a clear commitment to yes to goal 10 being included?

Justine Greening: It was a commitment to no one being left behind by this development framework, the focus being about reaching to the very poorest rather than simply equalising people but possibly reducing the prospects for some people. The bottom line for the people I met in Turkana in Kenya is that you could have an improvement in inequality that saw them stay exactly where they are in terms of their day-to-day life. I would not see that as progress for them and neither would they.

Q54 Chair: Sure, but the sustainable development goals are meant to apply equally, aren't they, to developed countries as well as developing countries?

Justine Greening: Correct.

Q55 Chair: Therefore, inequalities in terms of SDG10, if it stays there, would apply equally to developed countries as well. You are not giving a categorical assurance that that would be there?

Justine Greening: I think I have been very clear about the objectives that we see for the next development framework, which is about leaving no one behind and lifting people out of extreme poverty and, in fact, eradicating that in a generation.

Q56 Peter Aldous: Secretary of State, could you outline the role of the Cabinet Office in co-ordinating the Government's position on sustainable development goals?

Justine Greening: Essentially, as with other processes like preparing for the G8, they would have a Sherpa role, which would essentially see them liaising internationally. Of course, the overall policy approach is then led by DfID.

Q57 Peter Aldous: A Sherpa role is not the same as a lead role, then?

Justine Greening: Essentially, it is an ability for Government to have preparatory discussions and positions understood, of our Government but also of other Governments, that means we can then get a clear sense of where the lie of the land is politically so that at that stage you can then understand what the best strategy is to proceed.

Q58 Peter Aldous: Reading your department's submission, it certainly would suggest that the Cabinet Office were having a lead in a co-ordinated role and one just gets the sense that perhaps they have, for whatever reason, been shifted out of that position. Would you agree with that?

Justine Greening: No, I think I am content with the fact that we are working together effectively on this.

Q59 Peter Aldous: I think clause 19 of your submission does refer to the Cabinet Office chairing directors' meetings. Are those meetings still taking place?

Justine Greening: They will take place for as long as it takes to lock down the development framework. There is quite a long way to go in the process. I would describe it as being probably right in the middle of it, towards the end of the middle if you like, but this next year of discussion, and particularly the next six to nine months, is absolutely critical. All of that cross-government work will continue while we bottom out this final framework.

Q60 Peter Aldous: When did the last cross-departmental directors' meeting take place?

Justine Greening: Oh, I will have to write to you with that date. I do not know the exact date.

Q61 Peter Aldous: There are ones still scheduled to come up as well?

Justine Greening: I am very happy to write to the department with the officials' process that is under way. Just to provide reassurance, I think all parts of government are working effectively together both at the political level in terms of Ministers, but also at the officials level.

Chair: If I could just interrupt, I think Ms Bohannon wanted to come in on that.

Melinda Bohannon: The short answer is yes, they take place regularly. The next one is scheduled for 8 November.

Justine Greening: There you go.

Chair: I think it would still be helpful to perhaps have details of the discussion and the agenda for that, if possible.

Q62 Peter Aldous: Just on meetings, when was the last interdepartmental ministerial meeting on the SDGs?

Justine Greening: I think I would need to write to the Committee to set out the precise date. The previous meeting that we had would have been in relation to trying to make sure we had a common position for the EU Council meeting that we were building up to. Again, let me set out in more detail how that ministerial group works.

Q63 Peter Aldous: I get a sense that it is meant to be complementary, with all departments in the car, if you like. I get the sense that perhaps your own department is in the driving seat and perhaps none of the other departments are in the car at all.

Justine Greening: I do not think that is correct. Essentially, we have pulled together other government departments where appropriate, both collectively and individually. We needed to reach a position when we got to the stage where the EU communiqué and that higher level statement was coming out. After that, we went into a part of the process that was very much about the Open Working Group going through its deliberations and its processes, at which point we needed to wait for them to come out with their outcomes. In the meantime, the key challenge was lobbying on behalf of the position that we had already set ourselves.

Certainly, what I have never proposed to do is to get Ministers around a table overly frequently to agree a position that we have already agreed and that we are not proposing at this stage to change. It is just the way that the process has worked but—as I said, Peter—I am absolutely content that we have done quite an effective job, frankly, of marshalling a cross-government view but then making sure that we took a sensible approach.

Q64 Peter Aldous: I think I am right in saying, Secretary of State, you wrote to all the departments to get their views on the SDGs. Did you get responses from all of them?

Justine Greening: It is a government convention that broadly if government departments have a particular issue that they want to flag up, they will do that. Otherwise, they will submit a nil return. We got feedback from all the departments that felt there were any relevant points that they wanted to make in relation to what we had written.

Q65 Peter Aldous: How many of those departments were there who provided—

Justine Greening: Again, I would probably need to write to the Committee to give you a slightly more detailed view on that.

Chair: That would be helpful, and the points they made in those replies.

Justine Greening: To the extent that is possible, I will do that.

Q66 Peter Aldous: Finally, what is the role of the Treasury in the process?

Justine Greening: Of course, Treasury is part of that process. Treasury is the department that has enabled us to reach the commitment of spending 0.7% of our GNI on international development, so I have no doubt they will continue to play an absolutely vital and fundamental role in the UK Government's position in this area.

Q67 Simon Wright: Which departments have identified potential consequences for UK domestic policy from the SDGs?

Justine Greening: I think the lead departments that we work with are the ones that I set out. That would be Defra and also DECC. To a lesser extent, we work increasingly with BIS and UKTI. Of course, to the extent that development often focuses heavily on health and education, those departments would take an interest. The approach we took was one that assumed that every department, however apparently unconnected with development of the post-2015 framework, may have some interest. In a sense, we cast our net out wide rather than just simply choosing to work with perhaps DECC and Defra, which might have been the departments that we would generally work alongside, and, of course, the Foreign Office.

Q68 Simon Wright: Within those departments, are they identifying policies that will have to change?

Justine Greening: Whatever comes out of this new framework, we will, of course, be going through a process of looking at how it will impact our own approach. That is precisely why we have the interministerial working group in place so that we have a forum that is ready-made for us to be able to have that discussion and debate within Government.

Q69 Simon Wright: At this stage, do you yourself have ideas and policies that you think will have to change?

Justine Greening: I think it is too early to say. The key for us is to make sure that we get a framework that is one that can deliver for the poorest people on the ground.

Q70 Chair: Secretary of State, can I go back to something you said about the departments that flagged up health and education? You will know that I was interested following our earlier reports in trying to promote the work of the Hard Rain Project to promote education. I was slightly concerned that the department had not had time to properly consider this. I wonder how much awareness raising and education is something that will be funded and looked at as part of the ongoing work that DfID is taking forward.

Justine Greening: I would describe education as one of the areas perhaps in which we have focused most, particularly in relation to girls' education. I would absolutely expect that to continue. I think education is one of the areas where we have seen some of the biggest progress under the MDGs, with over 90% of children now going to school. The debate and the challenge now is to make sure that children can continue to the secondary level and then college level—and that girls do not drop out after primary school—and DfID will continue to play a key role in helping to make sure that children can get an education.

Just on health, if you do not have healthy people you have no chance of having a healthy economy. Again, you see this with our investment in things like AIDS, TB and malaria. We will continue, no doubt, to play a leading role in our work on healthcare.

Q71 Chair: Do you regret that there was no scope for an innovative project like the Hard Rain Project to be part and parcel of providing some of the wider public awareness about these ideas?

Justine Greening: We do an awful lot of innovative work, including outreach in talking to young people around the UK on why development matters. If you look at the Girl Summit that we did last summer, that had a massive outreach on social media, much of it to young people, and we worked with NGOs like Restless Development alongside that. We had a day when we opened up DfID as a department to young people and had an event called Youth for Change that was extremely successful. Freida Pinto was part of it as well. It was all about reaching out to young people and talking to them about why we feel development matters but also what their priorities are for development, too.

Q72 Chair: You have not really answered my question on Hard Rain. I wonder if you had a set of criteria that led you to reject that.

Justine Greening: Again, I think I would need to write to you, Chair, about the precise criteria in relation to Hard Rain.

Chair: I am very happy for you to do so.

Justine Greening: Suffice to say, although we spend an awful lot and we prioritised in relation to international development, there are a myriad of extremely valuable projects that are out there that we simply cannot expand our reach to always fund, however good and effective they are.

Chair: We would welcome clarification on that.

Q73 Dr Whitehead: Turning to air quality, an issue that is obviously relevant to both developed and developing countries, many countries that have made the fastest progress in living standards and reducing poverty have, as it were, been hit round the back of the head with unbelievably high levels of air pollution. I was in Beijing last week and the air quality was efficiently described as “crazy bad”, off the measurement scale. Is there a possible contradiction between the draft SDGs referring to reducing health impacts from air pollution and other targets on reducing poverty and improving living standards? How can these be reconciled easily as far as the goals are concerned?

Justine Greening: I think it comes back to the focus of the inquiry that you are doing. When growth happens, it has to be sustainable because if it is not, you then have to retrofit the growth that has taken place so that it is one that people can live with. I have also been to Beijing and seen some of the air pollution challenges there. Of course here in the UK we have some of our own air pollution challenges as well. I think, in a way, your question is precisely why this whole area is so important to make sure that it is going right the way through the next development framework.

Q74 Dr Whitehead: Do you support the inclusion of health impacts from air pollution as essentially an SDG? Would that be one of your SDGs?

Justine Greening: The area of environment will see a number of different sub-targets and, irrespective of where we need to be on the post-2015 framework, this Government will take the issue of air pollution incredibly seriously, including in relation to development.

Increasingly a lot of the work that we do, for example, within cities is on the impact of urbanisation—and how we can make sure that cities can cope with what are often large numbers of people moving around them—and the impact of transport systems on air pollution.

Q75 Dr Whitehead: How are you considering that in terms of structuring that into the department's aid programme, particularly as it relates to infrastructure projects, with some of the outcomes that I have raised?

Justine Greening: It is very much part of our infrastructure work on transport in terms of some of the low carbon energy programmes that we have, looking across the piece even when it comes to providing healthcare and doing that in a low carbon way. So, for example, some of our work is around helping people shift away from oil-burning cooking stoves, which we know are not only one of the biggest killers in the developing world but are also massively polluting. We look across the piece and that is what the Future Fit programme that we did within DfID was intended to do.

Q76 Mrs Spelman: You gave us a clear example of where your department is mainstreaming environmental sustainability into your aid programme through the approach to sustainable agriculture, but I wonder if you could reassure the Committee that you take a comprehensive approach to assessing the environmental sustainability of all your aid programmes. We have had evidence from the World Wildlife Fund that has expressed, in their words, “Concern that the assessment of environment and climate opportunities and risks in DfID’s programme has declined”. How would you respond to that?

Justine Greening: I would say I would not agree with that and that the whole point of the Future Fit programme was to make sure that we were doing that work effectively.

Q77 Mrs Spelman: Aid is distributed through some other departments—sometimes you are giving money to other departments, for example Defra through the Darwin Fund and other funds, such as Rio+. You do give money to other departments. Does your assessment tool of the environmental sustainability of their programmes reach across to the other departments?

Justine Greening: I would say it does. The same goals that we have to make sure we can achieve that mean that we are often part of the governance structure that those departments have in place to divest that money. For example, the ICF fund is overseen by DECC, by Defra and by DfID and we are part of that decision-making unit—similarly with Darwin. Alongside that, we have annual reviews of how programmes are performing, and there is a monitoring and evaluation piece of it that helps make sure we stay on track.

Q78 Mrs Spelman: You would say that you consistently assess those programmes?

Justine Greening: Yes.

Q79 Mrs Spelman: When we previously undertook a report into overseas aid you stated that you would engage with some of the multilateral organisations that did not perform very well when it came to climate and environment, and I wonder what progress you have made with them. Just to name to a couple, UNICEF and CERF were organisations that did not rate well in the environmental area, have you had any breakthroughs with these organisations and are they regarded as a reform priority?

Justine Greening: We put in place the multilateral aid review precisely so we could have a more structured look at how different multilateral organisations were performing, against one another but also against key priorities that we set out. As you point out, in some cases we felt that they were not performing well enough. In cases from the European Union, for example, we identified climate environment as a priority for them. When we have gone back and looked at that, we have seen some progress for the European Union work, and also similarly with the International Committee of the Red Cross, we had also identified climate and environment as a reform priority for them. In that case we have seen significant progress. A third example would be the African Development Bank, and again we have seen progress against that reform priority that we set out.

We will be reappraising the MAR in the forthcoming months and, again, that will give us another chance to look at whether reform is continuing in those organisations where we have identified there to be some weakness. It has been a process, certainly for DfID, that we have found extremely valuable in helping us understand how to drive change, how to get value for money, to the extent that a lot of other organisations and donor countries are now using that same approach to understand multilateral funding.

Q80 Mrs Spelman: Finally, since you have brought two civil servants with you—and I have to say I am not absolutely sure which departments they have come from as I do not think that was made clear at the beginning—through you could we ask this very important question about how DfID is seen across Government as consistently appraising the environmental aspects of the aid that Government disperses through different departments? Do the civil servants, if they are from other departments, get that sense of DfID's rigour in the assessment process? Can we ask that through you?

Chair: Should we ask it first of all of Mr Jansen?

James Jansen: I would think simply in respect of the ICF—

Q81 Mrs Spelman: You are with?

James Jansen: With Defra. As the Secretary of State has said, there is, in a sense, a triple lock mechanism on the ICF. There is certainly a sense that those governance arrangements reflect the interests of all three departments, and we have that rigorously in place across the projects that it shows.

Melinda Bohannon: I am from DfID but I have led the management of the International Climate Fund and I also initiated Future Fit, which is the programme the Secretary of State talked about. Through both those mechanisms we are absolutely clear that we look with a very critical eye at the environmental and climate strengths and weaknesses, because of course in programmes there are both. It is very important, I think, for civil servants when they are being as professional as they possibly can be to be very open with the departments about both.

The ICF, as the Secretary of State and James has just said, has a board that meets on a regular basis to look critically at every single programme. The Future Fit initiative is essentially about identifying accelerators and detractors within the department and fostering learning between programmes. So, certainly from a civil service point of view, we have done as much as we possibly can do. There is always more we can do, but I think

we have done as much as we possibly can do so far to look very critically at climate environmental issues.

Q82 Chair: I am conscious that we do not have anybody from the Cabinet Office as well, that is where some of the lead work was being done. Maybe we can pick on that at a later stage, perhaps through correspondence.

Before we move on, in answer to Caroline's question just now I am not sure we have a response to the organisations including the ones that Caroline mentioned, which was UNICEF and CERF.

Justine Greening: In terms of UNICEF and CERF, we did not identify climate and environment as a core reform priority, that is why I did not refer to them in my comments earlier.

Q83 Chair: One more quick question from me. You talked just now about the poorest people and the importance of emergency planning, could I ask—perhaps you can answer in further correspondence, which might be helpful—where animal protection fits into that in terms of disaster planning? Often it is the poorest people who depend most upon their animals and I am not quite sure how much attention is being given to animal protection.

Justine Greening: I talked about the work we are doing in Turkana in Kenya, that is a social safety net programme that is there to make sure that when crisis hits people do not have to either slaughter or sell their livestock, that they have the wherewithal to be able to keep it. We know that is absolutely critical. It is a lot harder for families to recover when they have had to get rid of their livestock than if we can help them keep it. We absolutely do do that.

It is probably worth pointing out that one of the other core programmes and work that DfID has done with Defra has been to help fund the International Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference, and also the programme of work that Defra has had tackling that.

Chair: It would just be helpful to the Committee to have some detailed clarification on the role of animal protection.

Q84 Dr Offord: Secretary of State, I want to ask, have you or the department considered new ways of monitoring and reporting on getting sustainable development goals?

Justine Greening: It is important that whatever the goals are they can be monitored. The high level PAN report talked about a data revolution and underneath that is the need to make sure we have the right data. We have gender disaggregated data that we look at across income scales at how people are being affected by work on the ground. We have a transparent mechanism for monitoring that data.

This is something I talked with Graça Machel about at the UN General Assembly when I was there. Alongside what is going to be in the framework, we need the how of how we are going to monitor and drive it through on the ground over the coming 15 years. Again, going back to the original MBDs, that was one of the areas that everyone says probably could have done with more thought at the beginning. The good thing is that there is a body of work now underway on how we can make sure this data revolution can give us the transparency to make sure we get some progress.

Melinda Bohannon: To build on that, we as DfID, with the Cabinet Office as well, have worked very closely with the Office of National Statistics to look at the data that the UK has available to monitor and measure progress against the Open Working Group goals and targets as they stand. The Office of National Statistics have produced a report and also fed that into the Secretary General's synthesis report process. It is a very good piece of work but also very challenging in terms of the feasibility of measurement of all of the goals and targets. Simply from a practical point of view, we do not have the stuff to measure it right now so how do we go about doing that? That is one example of how we are taking domestic implementation very seriously.

Q85 Dr Offord: I would like to return back to the point that the Secretary of State said about helping bodies on the ground, as you described it. Is there a mechanism, or do you intend to introduce a mechanism, that enables those bodies on the ground to contribute some feedback?

Justine Greening: Yes. That is the debate that is going to happen over the coming months. There are some different forums that could be used to bring people together to look at progress regularly. As Melinda set out, perhaps the most important thing is the data itself and understanding how we can go through a baselining exercise so we know where we are starting from, and making sure that—alongside getting all the right sorts of goals and targets—ultimately we do not have goals and targets that sound good, but we can't find out whether we have made any progress against them. Those are the sorts of considerations that will happen over the coming months.

Q86 Dr Offord: Are there any areas where you see the UK being the leader on sustainable development goals? What can we teach the rest of the world?

Justine Greening: We have done some pioneering work in relation to sustainability and climate. I have been one of the co-chairs of a group called Political Champions for Disaster Resilience, which is all about having a more sustainable response in the case of disaster hitting. I think that we have also played a leading role in particular around the areas of women's and girls' rights, and then also latterly around this golden thread agenda of how important it is to have institutions, rule of law, justice, all sorts of building blocks that need to be there for development to happen successfully. We can be a real force for shaping the argument in a constructive way and we have some unique relationships with many countries that allow us to work together in partnership, perhaps more than other countries. If you look at the work in Sierra Leone now, we have an amazing history with that country that is allowing us to partner in tackling Ebola together.

Q87 Dr Offord: Are there initiatives in other countries that you would like to replicate?

Justine Greening: As we go through sorting out, resolving and finalising the post-2015 framework, the monitoring and evaluation mechanism and transparency around it is incredibly important because it also can give us a chance to share best practice. Again, I co-chaired a big international conference in Mexico this year, which was called the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. It was all about saying there is a huge body of work on the way and we need to do much more to learn the best practice from that. DfID plays a key role in helping to build that body of research that other countries can use too.

Q88 Chair: We are dead on 4 pm, and we did say we would let you leave by then. If no other members of the Committee have any further points, I thank you, Secretary of State, and your colleagues, for coming in.

Justine Greening: Thank you and thank you for what I am sure will be a very interesting report.

Chair: It has been a comprehensive session. Thank you very much.