



Select Committee on International Relations and Defence

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

Wednesday 5 February 2020

11.40 am

Watch the meeting

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

Evidence Session No. 4

Heard in Public

Questions 36 – 48

Witness

I. Baroness Amos.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

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

Examination of witness

Baroness Amos.

Q36 The Chair: Good morning, again. I formally welcome Baroness Amos to our meeting this morning. Thank you very much for coming to contribute your expertise to our deliberations on Sub-Saharan Africa and its relations with the UK. Baroness Amos is, of course, the director of the School of Oriental and African Studies. She was also, as many of us will recall having been in the House of Lords at the time, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs at the United Nations, having been a Cabinet Minister in the UK Government responsible for the Department for International Development. I add some congratulations; I understand that you will be taking up a post this summer as head of University College, Oxford. I give the usual reminder that these proceedings are televised and recorded, and a transcript will be available.

I shall ask a broad question and then invite my colleagues to ask more targeted questions. Looking at the approach of the UK to its relationship with Africa, how has the UK's strategic approach to Sub-Saharan Africa changed in recent years? Do you think that the high turnover of Ministers for Africa has played a role in affecting policy in that area?

Baroness Amos: Thank you very much and good morning everyone. It is a pleasure to be talking to you again.

First, on UK strategy, there is a bit of me, every time we have a new plan for the African continent, that thinks, "Here we go again". I can remember back to the Commission for Africa report, as well as the 2000 International Development Committee report and many reports after that. They very often say the same thing, but perhaps in slightly different language.

So my first point to the Committee is that if as a nation we are really going to capitalise on our relationship with the African continent and the countries of that continent—and, indeed, move to the kind of collaboration and partnership that we talk about so often—we need to learn the lessons of the various strategies that we have had to date and think about what we want to achieve from that relationship.

Linked to that is the need to have a joined-up approach across government. We say this all the time about a whole range of issues, but there is a sense in which we will not be successful if we do not recognise that this is a domestic relationship as well as a development, trade, political and diplomatic one. Many African countries have a huge diaspora here in the UK, but we also have a huge number of citizens who are of African descent. We need to connect up the dots, thinking in particular about the way that social media operates.

I heard Nick talking about our visa regime, for example. The way we treat our citizens here in the UK has a direct relationship back to the perception of the UK by African governments.

On your point about Ministers, of course it does, because every time you have a new Minister you have some kind of change in direction. But linked to that is a sense on the African continent that it is beginning not to matter, because it reflects that Africa is not perceived as important for the British Government, despite what successive Prime Ministers have said.

Q37 Lord Grocott: You talked briefly, Valerie, about the links between British domestic policy and relations with a number of former colonies, and the people living in those countries now. The question is really: can you expand on that a bit, about the ambivalent attitudes there can sometimes be about the colonial period? We have had some evidence about that.

Can you say a couple of more specific things about what certainly seems to me an extraordinary development in recent years? There are countries joining the Commonwealth without any background whatever as former colonies. Is that of any significance in our future relationship with the continent? Is it in any way, or could it conceivably be, an opportunity that arises post Brexit to develop relationships with more countries? Is the Commonwealth of any great significance in our relationship with the African continent? That is the sub-question, really.

Baroness Amos: I have very strong feelings about this in terms of the colonial legacy, as it were, and what it means. The first thing I say to the Committee, being absolutely honest, is that our relationship with the people of the African continent and their Governments will not shift substantially until we address the narrative and legacy of slavery. It is not a popular thing to say but it infects, in my view, that sense of who we are now and who we are when we operate together. It infects who we are as British people coming from different parts of the world, and the narrative we tell ourselves about that.

If we do not acknowledge the important role that the slave trade played in building Britain, and its consequences for the dehumanisation of people from the African continent—what it did through the trilateral trade with the Caribbean and everything else—we will have an ongoing problem, in Britain particularly but also in our relationship with a number of African countries. Mine is not a popular view but recreating that narrative is important.

To come to the other elements of your question, that colonial legacy has a differential impact in the way that we engage. For some Governments and some people on the African continent, particularly those in the elites, they put the narrative to one side as they want a successful trading, commercial and political relationship with the UK. They recognise that we are never really going to address those historic challenges. But with some countries—Zimbabwe is but one example—it plays a particular part in the relationship.

What can we do about it now and is the Commonwealth the vehicle? It is potentially the vehicle, but we would have to be much clearer about what we wanted out of those relationships.

Is it trade? Is it more trade? Trade stands at about 2% right now, and foreign direct investment into the continent stands at something like 2%, so there is huge potential for growth. But we also have to recognise the reality of the investment from other countries across the world. Chinese investment in the African continent stands way above that of anybody else, but the investment from France, the UAE and others is greater than that from Britain. So the world has changed, and we have to recognise that.

My sense is that, while the Commonwealth has up to now been a vehicle for, as it were, people-to-people relationships and for trying to manage relationships with countries in a political sense, how Britain—with the other countries across the Commonwealth—wants to expand the role of the Commonwealth is not clear. However, with countries that have not had that colonial relationship wanting to join because they clearly see some benefit from being members of the Commonwealth, we should perhaps explore what they see those benefits as being and think about how we can best utilise them.

Q38 Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Can we explore a little bit from the basis of your own experience, both as Secretary of State for International Development and from the outside as a UN Under-Secretary-General, what you think about the way that we co-ordinate our policies towards Africa in Whitehall? This question is not just related to DfID¹ and this week's great excitement about what will happen in the reshuffle; it is about whether we have got it right so far. We have made one or two innovations in recent years, such as having joint Ministers for the FCO² and DfID, which probably has improved things somewhat. We have also established a National Security Council, which in theory ought at least to draw together all the strands of policy. Can you comment on how effective that has been, whether it has been in the right direction and whether it needs to go further, and various issues of that sort?

Baroness Amos: The big challenge, not just for national governments but for international organisations, is always: how do you get greater coherence in the policy agenda? You are absolutely right that having Ministers who serve in two departments, as a DfID Minister and a Foreign Office Minister, and having a National Security Council have all helped that agenda.

However, in the United Nations, which is in and of itself a big bureaucracy with a whole number of different parts, the UN agenda for the African continent sits with the political department, with the humanitarian department, with the individual agencies that work in different countries on the African continent and with the peacekeeping missions, and then you have the African Union bureaucracy on top of that. So how we cohere in terms of policy and practice, but also in terms of impact, is an ongoing challenge, because the responsibility does not sit in just one place.

¹ The Department for International Development

² The Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Thinking back to my own experience running the humanitarian bit of the UN, if you did not work really hard to keep colleagues from the political department, the peacekeeping bit, the agencies and everybody else in the loop, you very quickly got out of step and could find that, in any one country, you were pursuing three, four or five different agendas. When you then put national interests on top of that—take the UK, as a donor or as a big political player in a particular country, with the Scandinavian countries on top of that—it can become a recipe for chaos.

The challenge still is who grasps that and who is perceived as being in the lead in delivering the objectives that we want to see in any particular country. So I think that it has got better, but slowly, and there is a great deal more work to do.

The Chair: Thank you. I think Lord Purvis's question follows on from that.

- Q39 **Lord Purvis of Tweed:** Good morning. Perhaps I might preface my question by asking what may be a supplementary to Lord Hannay's question. You mentioned the Commission for Africa, and I believe that the follow-up mechanism for that has now concluded. Do you feel that there is scope for a further Commission for Africa, given that, in my reading of it, its aim was to change perceptions as much as to change British policy? Or have the Global Goals effectively now made this universal? If our focus was purely on the Global Goals, effectively that would be instead of there being a uniquely British perspective. So my question is: what role will the UN now play, given that the African countries have signed up to the Global Goals and they have their own delivery and review mechanisms—many of which are more impressive than our own review mechanism of the Global Goals here at home?

More specifically on the UN, what role will the UN play in Sub-Saharan Africa? From my quick review of the *Global Humanitarian Overview* from OCHA,³ I see that two of the likely global humanitarian pressures over the coming decades are climate conflict and the impact of climate on humanitarian crises. How well equipped is the UN, with its Sub-Saharan partners, to address some of these massive challenges that the subcontinent is likely to face?

Baroness Amos: I kind of shuddered when you suggested a further commission; I think that we have had too many. We know what the issues are. But having that knowledge of what the issues are, the challenge is, working with governments on the African continent, working with the AU—even recognising the AU's limitations in its administrative capacity—and considering the regional economic organisations that exist on the continent, how we can best think through what are the priority issues in a continental or regional economic sense and what are the priority issues for the country.

Where the engagement between a country such as the UK and a country in Sub-Saharan Africa has been most effective has been where that

³ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

country has had a clear sense of where it wants to get to, using the support that it has managed to get from a country such as the UK, to deliver those objectives. Of course, we are talking here about countries that are not mired in conflict but may have a weak capacity that needs to be supported and developed. Ethiopia might be one example, or the economic co-operation deal that was agreed between the British Government and Ghana might be another example. In those situations, there has been a clear sense that we are working with the grain of what a Government on the African continent are seeking to do. Where it does not work so well is where the engagement is perceived as a kind of imposition of our agenda, either through our aid policy or something else.

On the overlap between the Agenda 2063 goals and the SDGs,⁴ one concern that I have is that, even though both the 2063 goals and the SDGs have been brought into governments and governments are thinking about how they deliver them, there are too many of them, so it becomes amorphous. However, that gives a government a degree of flexibility because of the number of goals. It is not that I am contradicting myself, but I think that there are both elements.

Lord Purvis of Tweed: For clarification, would you say that there are too many indicators within the 2063?

Baroness Amos: Or the SDGs?

Lord Purvis of Tweed: Or would you combine them with the 17?

Baroness Amos: Both, I think. Governments have to be really clear about what they are seeking to achieve.

Coming on to your point about climate change and climate conflict, one of the big challenges for us will be how we work with Governments on the African continent and persuade them that the sustainability agenda needs to be way up there for them. You have a whole number of countries that say, "Actually, you guys didn't have any of this when you industrialised. We need to industrialise now and you are inflicting constraints on us that will affect our ability to grow".

I do not necessarily agree with that, but there has to be a way of working together on this agenda that delivers environmental sustainability and continued growth, bearing in mind that eight of the 15 fastest-growing economies in the past few years have been on the African continent, some of them starting from an extremely low base. These are countries that, in looking to industrialise quickly, may well want to put elements of that climate agenda aside. We would not want to see that because of the growth in humanitarian crises linked to climate-related events. So it is complicated but not impossible, in my view.

Q40 **Lord Mendelsohn:** Baroness Amos, our inquiry is looking in large measure at how the UK can support the AU's 2063 goals and how to develop those areas of support from the AU-UK Joint Communiqué. In a

⁴ The Sustainable Development Goals

sense, looking at the 20-year report card of the AU, there has been a lot of institutional development. It is dealing with trying to make the CFTA⁵ come into force and has had numerous military deployments.

How would you judge its effectiveness over that period and its likely prospects in the near future? Also, how would you assess the way in which the AU has worked with other international organisations and where its opportunities are, particularly in relation to the United Nations?

Baroness Amos: I think there has been significant progress from the goals which the OAU,⁶ as it was, set itself when it transformed itself into the AU. But at the same time, the institutional capacity at the AU is still weak. It is significant that only about 60% of the funding for—no, actually, it is the other way round. Something like 59% of the funding for the AU comes from donor countries, not countries in the AU. That says something. When he was president of the AU, President Kagame worked very hard to get AU countries to pay their dues, basically, and put their money into the African Union. If you are not paying for your own organisation and somebody else is, it does have an impact, in my view, on your ability to set your own agenda. This is just one simple way of measuring the extent to which the AU is successful.

I also think that the AU's relationship with the regional organisations on the continent needs to be stronger. There are way too many overlapping mandates and way too many countries that belong to so many of these regional blocs that the ability to have clarity on what a regional bloc or the AU itself is seeking to achieve becomes too disparate.

The AU has worked very well with other organisations, for example in relation to some of the peacekeeping issues. If you look at Somalia and the way the AU has worked with the UN there, you have the AU, which has worked on some political crises. Guinea-Bissau is a good example of where it has worked with other organisations to put in place special advisers, special representatives, to help to negotiate a political solution to crises on the continent.

The way that the AU has grasped the political nettle in relation to some of the bad behaviour of countries on the continent, when they have gone outside the accountability mechanisms that the AU has set itself, has been extremely good and promises well going forward. It is holding governments accountable for their governance, which is important too. I would say that it is a mixed picture.

- Q41 **Baroness Rawlings:** Several African states and the UK Government have expressed a desire to go beyond aid. How should the Government balance their work to promote trade and investment opportunities with the legislative commitment to poverty reduction? Is this handicapped by what you said earlier about the slavery legacy—the colonial legacy? What about other worldwide countries that have the same legacy? Should it still be a problem just for us, or is it a problem for other countries too?

⁵ The African Continental Free Trade Area

⁶ The Organisation for African Unity

Baroness Amos: To start on that last point, we have a colonial legacy, a history, that we ourselves need to sort out. Of course there are other relationships and other countries that need to do this too, but my interest is in Britain and Britain's relationship to these countries and how, when we talk about partnership, collaboration and respect, it is actually based in something concrete and not based on a perception that we have of the role that we have played, which is very different to the perception that those countries and governments have of the role that we played. I am not saying that we will always be able to agree on a shared narrative, but we have to have a degree of honesty about the role that slavery, colonialism and everything else played in building a prosperous Britain. Even that is not acknowledged, regardless of a whole range of other very emotive attitudes that have developed as a result of that history. It infects our present in a way that we do not acknowledge, so I would like to see Britain deal with it, whether or not anybody else deals with it.

To come to your specific question about going beyond aid and how we balance, I am not sure that "balance" is the right word. I do not know what the right word is. I have been playing around with whether it is about sequencing or overlapping interests, but I do not think that it is about balancing our work in terms of trade, investment and poverty reduction. I think that it is about recognising both that we need all of that and what the best levers and vehicles are to enable us to work in a positive way with countries to ensure that that happens.

The African continent is a very young continent and desperately needs opportunities in terms of job creation and investment that enables those young people to be in productive work. So the trade and investment agenda is right up there but, at the same time, you have Governments that are not able, for a variety of reasons because their economies are not yet strong enough, to put the kind of resources into areas such as education and health that they need to.

Perhaps those are the areas in which we can do a great deal more through our aid budget, while at the same time promoting investment opportunities and working to ensure that the narrative that has been so strong about the African continent—which has been about poverty and philanthropy, without recognising the totality of what these countries and their peoples are about—needs to change. It has been promoted very much by our NGO community. Of course we all recognise that we have a moral responsibility in terms of people across the world who have much less than we do, but the African continent is made up of much more than that. Actually, the remittances from African people themselves going back into their countries is much greater than our aid budget.

So let us get some facts out there, as opposed to continually promoting this picture of a continent with some poor child in ragged clothes who needs the £1 or £5 that we put into a charity bucket. Yes, there is poverty, but the story is much bigger than that, in terms of development on the continent: the active creative arts industry, the digital transformation that we are seeing in various countries on the continent

and the vibrancy of the people. I must say, a lot of young Africans I speak to are very ambivalent about Britain, partly because of the issues around visas and the perception of a hostile environment, but also, if we think about social media, they will have family here who are constantly reporting back on what it is like to be living and working here.

Q42 **Baroness Smith of Newnham:** I have a supplementary question drawing on some of the points that you have been mentioning. You commented earlier about the need to address the narrative and the legacy of slavery. I would like to have a sense of how we might go about that. Is it about changing the school history syllabus, which rarely talks about our colonial past? Is it about reparations? How do we start the discussions, because we are one country? We keep talking about Africa as a continent, but it is a continent of many countries. Do we do this on a bilateral basis? Where do we start?

Baroness Amos: I do not think that this is remotely easy. The history that we teach is very important in relation to this. What our young people learn and think about our colonial legacy and our relationships with other parts of the world is crucial. One thing that really concerns me is that we are a country made up of people from different parts of the world. If you have young people who are not able to celebrate the heritage of the countries they come from and understand the complexity of some of the relationships between those countries, it is very hard to move forward. I see that all the time when I talk to young people. Some of them are ashamed that there is a bit of their history that involves slavery and they do not want to talk about it; that is because we do not open up the opportunities to do that. Of course, school is a good place to start.

You can also look at the stories that are peddled about the reality of that history. How we understand the Second World War comes to mind. When you look at who actually fought in that war and lost their lives, it was people from all over the British Commonwealth, yet that is not known across our country.

So when people yell at me or others to go back to the countries we come from, it feels rather rich when you have been here for so long. As it happens, I came when I was nine years old, but so many of that generation were born here and our young people do not understand and appreciate that history. Reparations sometimes feel like a tricky political minefield. It is something that we need to open up a conversation about. We all have very different views about it. Is it about reparations to countries or individual reparations? Is it about an understanding of how land has changed hands? The fact that it is difficult does not mean that we should not talk about it. I am a great believer in opening up opportunities for these conversations.

Q43 **Baroness Helic:** What do you think are the greatest security challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa, and how can development be used to address them? In the same context, is there a case for a change in the international rules governing the definition of development assistance, and how would that fit into ODA⁷ so that these security challenges could

be met through the capabilities that we already have in place?

Baroness Amos: One of the difficulties we have, not just in Sub-Saharan Africa, is that the nature of conflict has changed so much. Of course there is conflict between states, but conflict within states, the rise of militias and the rise of jihadist terrorism, for example, all play a part. There is also growing conflict as a result of climate-related emergencies, so people engage in conflict because of a lack of water, for example.

I must say that gender-based violence has to be right up there on the agenda. From what I saw in countries such as the DRC⁸ and South Sudan, it is not always just conflict-related; I am thinking about countries like South Africa and the violence in intimate relationships, for example—what we would call domestic violence here. It is not just about the countries on the African continent. We see it here in the UK, too.

So the security challenges are very broad. Our ability to deal with them is becoming more difficult because of their variety and because of the impact of rapid urbanisation, for example. There are huge challenges, which we must deal with, partly through a conflict management agenda and partly through an agenda that tries to prevent conflicts in the first place. We can do that much more successfully for climate-related violence. We can definitely do it more successfully in relation to gender-based violence. We should be coming down much harder and stronger on state-sponsored violence, such as the violence of armed groups that come out of government armies. We need to deal with all that much more strongly than we do.

On your second point about whether we should redefine ODA, I am not sure. There is an ongoing debate about it. Part of the strength of our development agenda has been that we are very clear about what our development resources are being spent on, but that does not mean that we should not look at how we can best integrate what we seek to do partly through what is ODA-supported and partly through what is supported through other areas. I would be very loath, for example, to see ODA money being used on military resolution to conflict. That is a very different thing. You have to have an agenda that is about how you deal with those conflict-related emergencies but where different pools of money are going into it.

Q44 **Baroness Helic:** May I very selfishly take this opportunity to ask you this question? I am really pleased to hear you talking about gender-based violence as one of the really important issues. I think that it often gets overlooked, and I get disappointed that all our conversations with Africa are about trade, as if issues such as modern-day slavery, child slavery and gender-based violence do not exist.

One of the potential things that might address this so that we have a more systemic way of addressing the issue would be, in my view—I have never run the department so I am probably just freelancing here—to

⁷ Overseas Development Assistance

⁸ The Democratic Republic of Congo

dedicate a certain amount of our DfID budget to fighting gender-based violence. I do not mean on an ad hoc basis—not when there is a conflict, movement of people, displacement, et cetera. I mean having a pool of resources that is constantly available, and that the issue—it cannot be resolved within a particular period of time but would be a generational change—be something that we constantly keep an eye on and are really, fully, truly and honestly committed to. Thank you. I am sorry that I am taking up your time with this.

Baroness Amos: No—I have thought about it. One thing we often do when we want to shine a spotlight on something—we have done it sometimes in relation to our own domestic agenda when it is about sex equality or race equality, when we have been very clear that this is a priority—is to ring-fence resources around that because we know that, if we do not, the resources become dissipated. This is worth thinking about. I do not have the right answer to it but I am sympathetic to thinking about it, because it is about then saying very clearly that this is a priority issue that needs resolution.

The Chair: Thank you. I have three supplementaries in the queue. May I first go to Lord Reid, then to Lord Hannay and then to Lord Purvis?

Q45 **Lord Reid of Cardowan:** Thank you, Val. I know you said that your primary interest was in Britain, but you have also been a Foreign Office Minister and at the United Nations; you are a politician and an academic. So I want to ask you about China, particularly about the comments made by our last witness, Nick Westcott, who, as far as I can make out, was saying that in many areas of Africa we have a common interest with China. Indeed, the title of our inquiry is “The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa—prosperity, peace and development co-operation”, and Nick came pretty close to suggesting that prosperity, peace and development were exactly the aims of China. I know that we do not have its resources—that will increasingly be the case—and it does not have our history in Africa. What do you think it is that the Chinese are doing well there and doing better than us? What can we learn from them, rather than expecting everyone else to learn from us?

Baroness Amos: If I was not clear, I said that my primary interest was Britain in relation to the colonial legacy, not in relation to the wider agenda that the Committee is thinking about. Let me just be clear about that.

I do think that there is a degree of common interest, but there is also a degree of competition. There is talk now about a new struggle for Africa. There was a proposed Saudi Arabia-Africa summit; that one was postponed, but Nick talked about Russia, there is China, and there are the broader interests of the Middle East. At all those summits, they get more leaders than we got at our Africa investment conference, so that tells us something about how we are seen and the perceptions of where we might go in the longer term.

What do they do better than us? The first thing is that they are more respectful than we are. I was an Africa Minister a very long time ago. Our relationships have shifted but I read somewhere—I wrote it down but I cannot find it—someone talking about the kind of arrogance that we still have in our relationship with people from the African continent.

Lord Reid of Cardowan: It may have been Andrew Mitchell.

Baroness Amos: It may well have been Andrew Mitchell, but I think it was somebody else too.

That arrogance is still there. We need to acknowledge that. When I was the Minister for Africa, the one thing that leaders kept saying to me was that they felt that they could talk to me and that I understood the challenges they faced, while at the same time they did not think that I, as a British Minister, was going to be easy on them because I had an agenda to negotiate with them too.

I will not say who it was, but I remember sitting with the leader of an African country. We had a huge disagreement about what had happened in a recent election; I was talking about my concerns about the fact that more than 100% of the electorate who had the right to vote had voted. We sat and had a very difficult discussion, going at it hammer and tongs; there was only one other person in the room, who kept very quiet and wanted, I think, to slink out. That President eventually ended up leaning over and holding my hand because he respected the points that I was making but, at the same time, I was making them from a position of evidence and talking about the importance of a direction of travel for his country. I was not, I think, being patronising or arrogant. I was able to get my points across, whereas if somebody else had been trying to do the same thing but from a slightly different position, it would have been more difficult.

China is respectful. It is clear about its economic interests and what it wants out of those relationships in a way that we are not.

- Q46 **Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** I want to go back to the answer you gave to Baroness Helic about the DAC⁹ rules, security issues and so on. Perhaps I have got this a bit wrong, but it strikes me that there are quite a few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa—such as the DRC, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Somalia—where, properly said, development is simply not possible. You cannot do it, because there is not the security within which to do it. It is not an infinite list, but it is a serious one. I wonder whether the DAC rules, which were drawn up in a completely different world, are still apt for purpose given that pretty big resources will be needed from somewhere if those sorts of countries are to be rendered secure, at which point you will be able to start what most of us would call development.

⁹ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee

Baroness Amos: I would not be against a review of the DAC rules. Take the DRC: the British Government put quite a lot of money from our aid budget into looking at how to reform the police there. I do not think that is an issue, because this is about how you bring safety and security to your community in the DRC, how you make sure that the police service works with proper rules and regulations, how you ensure that the police do not turn on their own people and so on.

That is different from, for example, what we might do in relation to the army in the DRC. That kind of distinction is currently important, as is the question of whether there is more at the margin that we can look at. Yes, let us do that, but I would be against looking at the DAC rules purely on the basis, which has been part of the debate in the UK, that because we have legislation and the 0.7% commitment, there is this pot of money so we should all try to grab a bit of it. That is very different from your suggestion.

- Q47 **Lord Purvis of Tweed:** My question is linked, but it is less to do with the DAC rules and more to do with the classification of the wealth of the country that the World Bank or the OECD operates with, which tends to be retrospective on performance but does not necessarily give any indicator of forward potential. In many of the countries that I have visited in the region, there have been clunky examples of a situation in which, although there is clear development need and likely development need, because the UK operates under the country classification rules, which are very transparent, we have to pull back. As you said in your earlier answer to me, the Government now have a clear forward-looking strategy, while China, which does not operate under these rules, can come in and offer a perhaps less good relationship than we could. Is there scope for looking at the classification of the potential of the country rather than the past economic performance of the country? Is that a better area for us to start to pursue, rather than the DAC rules, which only kick in afterwards?

Baroness Amos: This is the middle income point.

Lord Purvis of Tweed: Yes. I have often seen a cliff edge of good support through development assistance when one trigger means that we immediately have to stop that support, because the country has moved from one band to another.

Baroness Amos: I think that we have a challenge in relation to that. We should look more at the fragility and vulnerability of countries. I suggest that we look at a greater set of criteria. I am thinking of, for example, some of the small countries in the Caribbean, which are extremely fragile and vulnerable because of climate change, but it is difficult to work with them through ODA because they are seen as being middle income. The same applies to some countries on the African continent. It also links partly to what is seen as the absolute number of people who are still in poverty. There is a case for looking again at the criteria that we use to identify what is ODA-ble and what is not.

- Q48 **Baroness Blackstone:** I want to pick up on something that Nick

Westcott said to us, which was that we have a comparative advantage in financial services and in education. There has been, in many senses, a decline in the quality of African universities compared with 40 years ago. Certainly, in many African countries a small proportion of young people ever get to undergraduate education. It has for a long time been the policy of DfID, a department that you at one time headed, to focus almost entirely on primary education in Africa.

I wonder what your views are on whether that should continue or whether, if we want to promote economic growth, which underlay what Nick Westcott was saying, we need to do something much more extensive with African universities. That cannot come without government funding, because British universities—as you and I know well—are not funded to do development work and many institutions in Africa are so poorly resourced that the idea of partnerships is not real until they are better resourced.

Baroness Amos: I agree 100% with the sentiments behind your question. The focus on primary education at the time we were doing it was absolutely right, because we were trying in particular to get those children at least to a stage where they could go into employment. It was particularly important for girls, because we know the impact that it had on the size of a family and them encouraging their children to school, for example. All of that was absolutely critical.

We are now at a different stage of development, with partnering between some of what were excellent universities on the African continent, which, as a result of lack of resources, have fallen down the league table. Supporting those universities and promoting partnerships between UK universities and those universities is absolutely critical.

There have been some excellent partnerships on the research agenda through the Global Challenges Research Fund. I very much hope that that fund will not only continue, because it promotes south-south co-operation, but increase. We have some excellent examples of research at SOAS that has been possible as a result of money from that fund. One example of that concerns migration and refugee issues. I would be very happy to send a note to the Committee about some of that research.

We also have some research looking at the best strategies to tackle corruption in countries. What is happening at the borders of countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, for example, with drugs, slavery and that kind of development? They are not on the African continent, but those kinds of issues are obviously important when it comes to borders between countries on the African continent.

There are models of potential good practice that we can capitalise on. SOAS has entered into a partnership with a university in Ghana where the first phase is us flying in some faculty, but it is mostly about how we build the capacity of the faculty in that university so that in the longer term they will take over from us. Some people think it is problematic,

because you are doing yourself out of a job. I think it is essential to the continent for that kind of partnership to grow and develop.

The Chair: Baroness Amos, thank you very much indeed for contributing your expertise, which covers a wide range of roles in the past. We wish you well for your future roles.

Baroness Amos: Thank you and good luck with the inquiry.