

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: The global humanitarian system

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Members present: Stephen Twigg (Chair); Fiona Bruce; Dr Lisa Cameron; Mr Nigel Evans; Mrs Helen Grant; Pauline Latham; Jeremy Lefroy; Wendy Morton; Mr Virendra Sharma

Questions 84-137

Witnesses: **George Graham**, Head of Conflict and Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy, Save the Children, **Ann Foley**, Head of Disaster Risk Management, Plan UK, and **Mike Noyes**, Head of Humanitarian Response, ActionAid UK, gave evidence.

Q84 Chair: Good morning, everyone. Can I welcome our first panel of witnesses? We are running today's session in two parts and the aim is to have about 45 minutes with the first panel. We have seven questions that we are going to put to you, so just bear that in mind. Sometimes the questions will obviously be ones we would like to hear from all three of you on, but sometimes it may suffice for just one of you to answer. We will go straight into the questions but if, you say who you are when you answer for the first time that would be lovely. I am going to ask Wendy to ask the first question.

Wendy Morton: Good morning. In evidence that we have received as a Committee, there is much talk of the term "building resilience". Without investing in building resilience in fragile communities, it is argued that the need for humanitarian aid will continue to rise. I would be quite interested to know what the panel's view is on what resilience to crises actually means and how you feel it can be incorporated into development programming.

Ann Foley: My name is Ann Foley. I work for Plan UK. Plan is a global child rights organisation in over 50 of the poorest countries. We focus particularly on adolescent girls and children, and also preparing for and responding to disasters. For us, resilience is a real key component of the work. It is all about whether you can help populations and Governments to understand the risks they face, to prepare for disasters and to be ready so that, if there is a disaster, the impact of it does not hit them so strongly and it allows them to continue with their human development.

There are various things. It definitely saves money. It saves lives, but it also protects the investment in development work. It is absolutely critical and it can make a huge difference. There would be a lot less impact on people if you invest up front rather than just waiting to respond.

Wendy Morton: Would anybody else like to contribute?

George Graham: Yes, if I can say a few words. I am George Graham. I am head of humanitarian policy for Save the Children. The UN Secretary-General's report talks about investing in disaster risk reduction. It sets a target of 1% of official development assistance investment by 2020. That is a good commitment to rally around, as Ann has said, not only because of the human consequences of failing to invest in disaster risk reduction, but also because the financial inefficiency of failing to invest is pretty clear.

The other thing I would say is that it is really important for the incentives of development actors—so that is national Governments, the big donors and the big multinational, multilateral banks—to be completely aligned towards the prevention of preventable disasters. Right now, we are seeing an entirely predictable El Niño event with entirely predictable consequences on food and security. One million children in southern and eastern Africa are severely and acutely malnourished. It is completely unnecessary. It is a scandal that that has happened, is happening again and keeps happening. It should not fall into the humanitarian basket to deal with that, because that is really clearly a failure of development. The development programmes in those countries that are suffering should be held to account for having failed. I do not feel that that is happening strongly enough at the moment.

Q85 Wendy Morton: Before I come on to Mike, can I just follow up by asking whether you think there is sufficient clarity about DFID's approach to resilience building?

George Graham: DFID has historically shown good leadership on this issue. Certainly after the 2011 famine in Somalia, there was real energy behind it. Another one of DFID's strengths is that it has been moving towards more multi-year funding in protracted humanitarian contexts. That makes a big difference because it means that you are not feeding people hand-to-mouth; you can think a bit more long term. DFID is in reasonable shape on this, but there is still a way to go before there is sufficient political pressure on development actors to feel incentivised in the way I described.

Mike Noyes: I am Mike Noyes. I am head of humanitarian at ActionAid UK. Like Plan, ActionAid is a global federation working in both humanitarian and development settings. We particularly take a women's rights approach to our work.

In terms of DFID's approach to resilience in particular, DFID has led on resilience ever since the HERR. It kind of spawned an industry: defining resilience became almost a bigger topic than actually delivering resilience for a while. I think we have moved on from that now. George is exactly right that it is moving, and needs to continue to move, very much more into the development sector in terms of the way it defines how plans are made in that area.

There is a risk that, in doing that, we may start dropping the ball in the humanitarian sector on preparedness, disaster risk reduction and such. I am a little anxious when I see messages coming from DFID at the moment that they may stop funding resilience as an objective in its own right. While it is important that we see it moving into the development sector and being something that is targeted within that, it has value in its own right as well, as we know, in terms of the lives it can save and the damage it can prevent.

Q86 Fiona Bruce: I would like to ask whether you think we need to move even further back towards improving research and gathering better data, so we can understand resilience and target investment to prevent humanitarian crises better. Is there inadequately rigorous evidence as to how this issue should be approached?

Mike Noyes: If we look at that, we can always see where evidence can be improved, but the greatest concern we have at the moment is when evidence is not acted upon; when, as George says, we see entirely predictable events; when we have early warning systems that tell us that the situation is going to be bad and the political decision-making and leadership, whether in individual countries or in the global humanitarian system, fails to respond. More evidence is always good; responding to evidence is even better.

Q87 Fiona Bruce: You send out alerts on the basis of evidence that you have, but you feel that they are not listened to.

Mike Noyes: It is commonly recognised across the sector that we are much better at providing early warning than we are at early response.

Q88 Pauline Latham: Before we go on to my question, George, you spoke about the early warning systems and said it was inevitable because nothing was done, but what should have been done in that situation, in the example you gave?

George Graham: Just to qualify what I said about it being predictable, it was not necessarily predictable that it would happen this year; it was predictable that it would happen at some point in a collection of years. Take east Africa: rains have failed three years in a row so, after the second failure, you can see there is going to be a problem and you can do destocking programmes, which is where you reduce the size of the herds of cattle that people have so that the ones they have survive, rather than them all dying from a lack of access to food. You can do preventive programmes for moderate malnutrition. You do not want to wait until babies are severely, acutely malnourished, are at death's door and, if they are not treated, will die.

This is perhaps a better answer to your question. Another thing you can do, and some countries are getting there on this, is to have social protection systems—benefit systems, if you like—that already exist but flex when there is obviously going to be a spike in humanitarian need. When you see that families are going to really struggle to survive, you can increase the pay-outs so they at least have cash in their pockets to get through what is definitely going to be a lean season. That is a mechanism that DFID is championing and trying to introduce in various parts of Africa. It is something that needs more energising.

Q89 Pauline Latham: In terms of the nourishment and the feeding programme, that is still a reaction. You are not planning for it; you are just doing it a stage earlier. That is not prevention; that is reaction.

George Graham: It is somewhere on the spectrum; you are right. It is preventing the acute malnutrition that leads to death.

Pauline Latham: It is the same with the cows. It is a reaction because it is starting to happen.

George Graham: Yes, so you go further back in the timeline. What you cannot prevent is the rains failing. That is going to happen.

Q90 Pauline Latham: You can, if you are doing the climate change stuff long enough in advance. In time, that should be possible, if you have done enough planting and what have you to keep the rains coming. You say that we should not be waiting for the humanitarian crisis; no, we should not. We should be doing things now that can stop all these things happening in the future. But we will always have to react to crises. We heard last week about the importance of taking pre-emptive action to prevent crises before they happen. Bruno Lemarquis told us that we need “a different balance struck between investment in avoiding crisis and responding to crisis”. That sounds great in theory, but the practice is much harder. How do you think DFID can use the summit as an opportunity to incentivise investment in prevention?

George Graham: My first point was about making this investment in disaster risk reduction, which is the bit that you are talking about, much stronger. In a chronically drought-prone area, you can do more efficient irrigation, for example, so that when rains do fail it has less of an impact. That is a longer-term programme that would prevent the sort of acute crisis we are talking about. On your spectrum, at the extreme end of prevention, action on climate change would really help; moving down the spectrum are the rainwater, harvesting and irrigation that I am talking about; then further down the spectrum are the things I talked about around destocking of livestock and so on. All these measures prevent you getting to the extreme end, which is starving babies and very expensive and difficult work to prevent severe, acute malnutrition.

Q91 Pauline Latham: Have any of you ever thought that, in Africa, for instance, none of the houses out in the country, or indeed in the city, have gutters? They do not have gutters to catch the water and put it into tanks. Why is nobody investing in something like that? That could capture all the water and mitigate against disasters such as drought.

Ann Foley: It is happening, but you maybe have not heard about it.

Pauline Latham: I have never seen it.

Ann Foley: If you look at the spectrum of interventions in terms of building resilience, it could be anything. It is about helping people to adapt to the changing situation, because you cannot stop the climate changing, but you can adapt to it. In many places, if you are working with communities and helping to understand what the biggest risks are, you are looking at rainwater and harvesting systems; you are looking at using new technologies for agriculture, using drought-resistant seeds. There is a whole range of things. It is about helping people to understand what the risks are, what impact they will have on them and adapt to them.

In the chronic disasters, you can foresee it happening, as in Ethiopia, with the huge impact on people's health and nutrition. If there had been funding available or more flexibility to redirect it, things could have been done so people could support themselves rather than having to rely on food aid. When you look at the bigger picture, in the rapid-onset disasters, it is really critical that you are working with communities to prepare. You can invest in early warning systems and help local governments and communities see what their disaster plans are, what the hazards are and how they can mitigate the risk by

ensuring that they are not building their schools in the flow of a potential mudslide, or that they have really good earthquake-resistant building technology. All those things would be about building resilience and reducing risk to people. If you invest in that, far less investment will be needed if a disaster occurs and you will save lots of lives.

Q92 Pauline Latham: Is it just for DFID to produce the plans and then for you to implement it? Do you not have any responsibility to say, “We should be tackling this differently; we should be looking at the longer term”, to put that to DFID and to persuade them to fund those other schemes?

Ann Foley: Definitely. We are already doing that. We are doing that with other donors. We have a lot of DIPECHO funding, where we are doing exactly this. DFID is funding the BRACE project and, as Plan, we are working in Myanmar. We are doing exactly that. We are working with local communities. We are working with local governments. We are using women and children to identify this risk. That is exactly what is happening. It is about putting those plans in place, getting really good education so that, when a disaster comes, they will not feel the impact nearly as much as if you had not made those preparations.

Mike Noyes: One of the things we have seen in recent years, for example in the countries around the Bay of Bengal, is how much cyclones continue to cause damage to the natural environment and agriculture, but no longer kill people in the numbers that they used to, because of the investment that has been made in preparedness, in early warning, in cyclone shelters and the like. Now that first stage is out of the way, we are moving into how we prevent the damage to livelihoods, how we protect agriculture and how we protect livestock. But we have made a huge achievement in that area. If we go back to the Orissa cyclone of 1999, compared with the one we had a couple of years ago the difference in terms of loss of life is a hundredfold.

Pauline Latham: It is the same as Nepal, isn't it, with the preparedness for earthquakes that we saw? Many fewer people died as a result of the preparedness that DFID had put in place.

Q93 Fiona Bruce: You have been talking about humanitarian crises chiefly caused by natural disasters, but of course a huge number are manmade, through conflict. How easily can we prevent humanitarian crises caused by that? Do we need a whole different set of tools, skills or a different approach? Do we have the capacity to prevent the kind of crises we are now seeing globally that are caused by conflict? This is for Graham, because you are head of conflict.

George Graham: I have the word “conflict” in my title, so I have to answer this. There are a few different dimensions. In some conflicts—Syria is the obvious example—we have seen a real failure of international leadership early on and continuing. We need the World Humanitarian Summit to be a moment when states come together and say that it is scandalous that we have allowed this thing to happen. It is a political issue; it is not a humanitarian issue. We cannot fix Syria, but there are things that can happen in other conflict contexts and perhaps could have happened in Syria in 2011 if there was a better quality of analysis right from the get-go, so people really understood the dynamics, and if the advice that Ministers received—though I am not blaming the UK for what happened in Syria—was really grounded in proper analysis.

I am thinking more about some of the neglected countries in the world, such as Mali or the Central African Republic. South Sudan is one I have banged on about quite a lot in the past. It was fairly obvious that there was some serious tension in that Government and that those guys had a very bloody past and knew how to fight, yet there was this great will to make South Sudan work and to throw development financing at it. It did not seem to be anybody's job to worry about or manage the very obvious political risks. Then the inevitable happened; it may be that "inevitable" is too strong a word, but the war happened. Everybody threw their hands up and said, "Now they are fighting each other. How could we possibly have predicted that and how can we help?"

Well, it was predictable. I am not saying it was easy to prevent, but it should not have surprised people. The aid money would not have prevented it, but the development plans needed to have factored in the quite high likelihood of violence. I may have been asked this question before here: DFID, to be fair, was quite good at flexing its aid spend in South Sudan but that was still an example where the world seemed to be taken by surprise by something that should not have been surprising.

Q94 Jeremy Lefroy: Good morning. We have heard quite a bit about something called the grand bargain. Are you aware of this? Perhaps you can explain what you understand by it.

Mike Noyes: Yes, any one of us who is watching the World Humanitarian Summit process is aware of the grand bargain. It is based on the three areas of the call to donors, the call to agencies and the call to everyone. It is around things like multi-year funding for humanitarian crises rather than the year-by-year stuff we have at the moment. It is a lot about transparency. There is a lot about doing things differently. Importantly, for many of us, there is a lot about a greater commitment to localisation, to involving local organisations, and not just involving them but getting money, responsibility and decision-making power down to them far more effectively than we do as a system at the moment.

There are obviously a lot of challenges in this. Some of the ideas are not new. Some of the ideas require many of us—my own agency for one, but DFID for another—to give up some of our sovereignty, decision-making power and influence in order to achieve something that we hope would be a greater good. There are a lot of barriers in the way. We have a hope that, if anything comes out of Istanbul, progress on this is likely to be one of the best chances we have.

Ann Foley: It is important to understand that the success of that is going to be in the detail. It is a really good aspiration and, if it works through to the end, it could be really positive, but we need to make sure we understand that there needs to be a differentiated approach and there will not be just one solution. It is good to have greater accountability and transparency, and we would welcome an understanding of the costs of delivering the money through to the end users as such, but there needs to be greater flexibility. I know DFID has been a great supporter of the Start Fund and it has had incredible results. It has allowed a lot of flexibility to address the needs in forgotten crises. It is really quick and rapid. The decision-making goes as near to the end user as possible and it is really positive. In this grand bargain, we need to be open to looking at different alternatives, not

to be completely focused on the one system and reforming it, but to be looking at innovative approaches.

George Graham: I strongly echo that. The grand bargain is definitely something to take seriously and we are all going to work as hard as we can to make it as meaningful and impactful as possible. In particular, the work around transparency and accountability has the potential to be transformative. I echo Ann that there needs to be diversity in the system. I also echo her point about the Start Fund being a really interesting and potentially transformative innovation, and something that we should keep working on.

The other point I would make is that the grand bargain will focus on improving humanitarian action, but, to go back to the wider point that we have already made to some extent, we also need development action to look different. It is not just about resilience; it is also about those protracted situations, refugees spending decades of their lives as refugees in camps or not in camps. The grand bargain will not fix the underlying failure of the system to deal with that sort of situation appropriately. For that to happen, you need long-term development spend in those countries. You need a new approach that guarantees that children in those contexts are educated. That sort of reform is something we are pushing for very strongly at the World Humanitarian Summit and will not be fixed by the grand bargain. It is quite important that we do not put all our eggs in the grand bargain basket.

Q95 Jeremy Lefroy: Thank you very much, all of you, for that. On the grand bargain, there seem to be at least a couple of major questions. One is that the vast majority of money going into humanitarian relief comes from very few countries, of which the UK is one, as the second highest contributor. Is the grand bargain therefore fairly irrelevant if it does not bring in other countries to contribute to humanitarian relief?

The second question is around the involvement—and I think you referred to it, Mike—of local organisations. Is there not a risk that a grand bargain will simply involve the big players whether on the humanitarian agency side or on the donor side, and leave out the small actors who, as we heard from Andrew Mitchell and Clare Short yesterday in evidence, are often the people who can get through at a local level because they have the relationships?

Chair: We need nice short answers to those two, I am afraid, for time purposes.

Mike Noyes: Almost yes and yes, then.

Chair: You are a model witness.

Mike Noyes: For the grand bargain to succeed, yes, it needs to be a global humanitarian system that is truly global, truly supported by the world and not just supported by some parts of it. It is no accident that we are trying to cut the grand bargain in Istanbul, with the hope of bringing the Gulf countries in particular much more into that process.

On the localisation thing, yes, there is so much more that could be done there. To give the Secretary-General's report and the high-level panel's report credit, that does come through in what they are calling for in the grand bargain. Localisation is key to a grand bargain working. We know that there is going to be a very difficult discussion about all the issues of risk that working with local organisations brings. I hope that risk management does not get in the way of delivering on mandate and on objectives, and that we do not end up in a

situation where we say protecting the resources we put into our response is more important than delivering the response. That is quite key to the political success.

Q96 Chair: Do the other two witnesses both agree with that in terms of the risk issue? We have had some evidence that has raised concerns about risk as distinct from localisation. Do you think it is something that DFID can manage?

Ann Foley: Yes, there should definitely be a balance between the risk appetite and the opportunity cost. There is so much that can be gained, but there has to be realistic expectation of quite how much you can manage the risk.

Q97 Chair: Is there a tension in the grand bargain between donors, like DFID, on the one hand and your organisations on the other, in terms of what you want out of it?

Ann Foley: The ultimate aim for all of us is that we are really keen to have more reliable funding that can be speedily delivered and can be multi-year and flexible. We do not want all the funding to go into one central pot and stay with the big players. For it to be really effective, it needs to be able to get out to the organisations that know the communities, that have done the assessments on the ground and that understand what the vulnerabilities are and where the greatest need is. Sometimes the big scale things are looking for reach and not understanding the whole agenda of “leave no one behind”. You have to understand that that will take expertise and understanding of the situation. It could cost more money if you are going to meet the needs of the people who are most in need. There is a fear that it is going to stay with the big players and the big donors rather than diversifying.

Q98 Chair: Jeremy made the point that we took evidence yesterday from two former Secretaries of State, Clare Short and Andrew Mitchell, and this came up in their evidence. Is your sense that DFID is on to this in terms of the need to build local capacity or are you concerned? You are saying similar things to what we heard yesterday in terms of the big international players predominating.

Ann Foley: DFID has been very constructive in this. We have had a number of conversations as a group of NGOs talking about how you can make this a reality. I think DFID is really open to this and a lot of the funding would indicate that there is a real will to look at how we can achieve this. We have a long way to go yet, but we are still working out how you can best do that.

Q99 Chair: Do you mean in terms of local capacity-building?

Ann Foley: In terms of local capacity and the whole impact of having to be really accountable and manage the risk. We need to understand that, for local organisations, who can do a fantastic job on the ground, we have to be able to invest in terms of supporting them in capacity development. We also have to realise that we cannot just pass on the risk to them. The donor passes it on to the INGO; if the INGO passes it on to the local actors, it might mean they are paralysed and cannot do anything, they cannot front the money to get started and you are in a really difficult situation. We cannot eliminate fraud or mismanagement even in this country, and yet we expect it to be perfect there. We just need to work out how we can minimise it, put in really good systems and approaches and support people, so we can grow the capacity of the countries we are working in.

Q100 Dr Cameron: Leading into the summit, there has been a demand that “people affected by crises should be enabled to exercise greater voice and choice in humanitarian action”. What are the keys to delivering on this commitment to ensure consultation and inclusivity?

Mike Noyes: One of the things that we have learnt, as a sector, during the Rwanda genocide and increasingly so since, is the importance of accountability, the importance of a voice of affected people and, in a sense, a recognition of doing as you would be done to. What would I like to have happen to me if this was me and my family living in this refugee camp? They need a chance to have their say.

We know that, as a system, we are making moves towards that and there has been some fantastic progress through the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership and now the Core Humanitarian Standard, but there is still a lot to be done. We know, for example, that children are overlooked. We know especially that women are often overlooked in this accountability and listening process. It is very much a mind-set attitude; it is very much a listening attitude. Working with local actors, having local actors involved in the decision-making and the priority-setting is all part of that process, but it is also a mind-set attitude. Somewhere, there has to be a recognition that so often, as a sector, the value-for-money argument means that anything that is not delivering bits of kit to people is seen as a transaction cost and therefore a bad thing, when, actually, getting it right, listening to people and asking people is part of delivering on our commitment to them as humans who have dignity and who have rights.

George Graham: There are lots of elements to how you get this right. There is giving all affected groups in a population an opportunity to participate in these assessments and in the delivery of programmes. Mike is right to talk about women and children typically being excluded groups, and also various marginalised communities. It is interesting that you went to Nepal. Nepal is quite a fractured society, if that is a fair thing to say; perhaps I should not have said that on the record. How you make sure that all those groups have a voice is an important challenge.

There is having opportunities for feedback so that people can say when things are and are not working. There is cash. People have probably talked to you about the excitement in the humanitarian community about the scaling up the use of cash, as opposed to distributions of stuff. The great thing about cash is that it empowers people to make their own choices. There is transparency, which of course is in the grand bargain. The more open we can be about what we are doing in our decision-making, the more we can be held to account.

Getting this right has the potential to be completely transformative for people’s lives and for the cost efficiency of what we are doing. It is probably the future anyway because increasingly, with technological advances, people even in very poor places are much more able to see what is going on than they were in the past. It is a future that is coming and that we therefore need to embrace. The summit is a moment to do that.

Ann Foley: In my experience, if you involve by consulting the people on the ground, you get a much more appropriate and effective response. It is so important that we continue to involve the people on the ground in all aspects of the project, and that we have the flexibility within the funding so that, if something is not going right or the situation changes, we can move the money. You see situations where people are slaves to the

project proposal because there is no flexibility to change: because you said you would do this at the beginning, that is what you do. But it changes. You are in a crisis. Whatever happens in the first 24 or 48 hours, within a week the situation may have completely changed, and we need to be able to respond to that. The people who are best able to tell us about the critical need or the hidden things that we do not see are the affected populations themselves. We must make use of the knowledge and experience of the local organisations who live there, who will be there after we have left and who were there before we arrived. They just understand it. We need to listen to the voice of the affected communities.

Q101 Dr Cameron: Do we monitor this, to make sure that people are included and there is inclusivity of people on the ground who know what needs to be done?

Mike Noyes: Very clear standards have been set, first with the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership and now with the Core Humanitarian Standard, which give us the mechanisms for monitoring this and for ensuring the systems are in place. All of us here on this table, through our commitment to that and through things like the DEC and such, monitor this quite closely. It is something we know we can always do better, but it is a commitment from pretty much every agency here and, to be fair to DFID, it is something they are good on as well. They are also very reactive when we ask for changes. They do not say, "That is what you planned. You must deliver." They do listen.

Q102 Mr Evans: I want to ask you about the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in a moment, but I just want to get to the crux of this World Humanitarian Summit. It sounds great, doesn't it? What is going to prevent it from just being a do-gooders' jamboree? What do you expect to come out of it and what input have you guys had into the programme?

Mike Noyes: The World Humanitarian Summit is a challenge for us all. We have seen this rather big global consultation process that has been going on for a long time. Many of us were involved in various parts of that.

Q103 Mr Evans: In which way? How are you helping to direct what is going to come out of this thing?

Mike Noyes: As ActionAid, for example, while we are here this week, some of my colleagues are working with women from local organisations that we have been supporting in emergency responses. They are currently in New York with UNOCHA and others, at the Commission on the Status of Women, raising the issue of the humanitarian summit to the women's leadership community there, with a view to taking that back. What we will be doing at the summit is bringing women from the affected communities we are working with to make sure that their voice, which we say we are committed to, is delivered and is heard, and it is not just the same people talking to each other.

Q104 Mr Evans: You will be expecting something to come out of this summit, then, rather than people just getting together and spending millions, which could be going directly on aid to people where they need it instead of on you guys all going to Istanbul and having a jolly good time talking about how you are helping other people.

Mike Noyes: The results of the summit will depend on the level of political leadership that different countries invest in this. DFID in the UK has been a key leader in humanitarian thinking and humanitarian progress.

Q105 Mr Evans: How are you going to measure whether it was worthwhile at the end of the summit?

George Graham: The way we see it, the World Humanitarian Summit is—you were using this phrase—a once-in-a-generation moment. It is the only one that has ever happened. We had a very successful summit in September last year on the sustainable development goals, but those goals will not be achieved unless the world comes up with concrete commitments that will fix what we do in the hardest places, in the humanitarian places. That is an important part of it.

I also think failure is not an option, not only for the reasons that you have given about the disgrace of all of us investing all this time and achieving nothing—that would be a really bad outcome—but also because, if the world cannot agree on something as fundamental as action to support the most vulnerable and needy people on the planet, what can it agree on? It feels to me that this is a pretty critical thing to get right.

Q106 Mr Evans: I assume that is a taken. You do not need a summit to come to that conclusion.

George Graham: If you look at Syria, Yemen and other places, there is work to be done, but I would like to think you are right.

In order to get there, as Mike has said, it is really important that there is high-level commitment. We would like to see the Prime Minister go. We would like to see other Heads of Government go. This thing has to be a summit, not a lower-level talking shop. Then there need to be the commitments that you are talking about. How about a new deal for refugees, so that people who are displaced for months or years of their lives know they can expect to be supported with the basic services they are entitled to as human beings: education, healthcare and so forth? How about a new platform for education, to guarantee that any child, regardless of their circumstances, has access to schooling? That is deliverable. There is a process in play to launch that at the summit, but it will need political backing to make that happen.

There is the localisation agenda that we have talked about in the grand bargain. If those things can be landed, then that is meaningful. Then there is the commitment on international humanitarian law that I mentioned at the start. That may or may not be transformative, but you need to have that, because otherwise it looks very bad. Those, to me, feel like a basket of meaningful commitments that could and should be made at the summit, which would make it worthwhile, but there is a risk that that will not happen, so it is important that we get behind it.

Q107 Mr Evans: Looking at the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, it seems to be a very vague body, almost elitist. I have just had a look at the membership. Do you guys ever have an input into what the Inter-Agency Standing Committee does?

George Graham: Save the Children does, a little bit. There is some NGO representation on it through another elitist group, frankly, of the larger NGOs, which includes Save the Children, so we have a little bit of access to it.

The IASC has established a global normative framework for how to do humanitarian action, but that framework does not speak brilliantly to lots of the contexts in which we work. To give an example that perhaps none of us have thought that hard about apart from a colleague of mine in Save the Children Australia, in Vanuatu there was a rather nasty cyclone. It was of such a scale that the international system landed in Vanuatu, but the international system did not speak to the Vanuatu system at all. The Vanuatu system is used to cyclones. It is not perhaps used to cyclones on that scale, but it is used to cyclones and it has disaster preparedness and so forth. This internationally set-up framework that had never bothered talking to Vanuatu did not bother talking to Vanuatu while the thing was happening, and there was a real disconnect and unnecessary dysfunction. International agencies were crowding out local agencies.

There is an issue there that needs to be unpicked. We need to move away from the idea that this IASC framework is the only framework. We need to accept a more plural and diverse approach, particularly in places like East Asia, where states are typically relatively capable and willing compared to other parts of the world, and do not need to be imposed upon by a body that sits in Geneva or New York.

Q108 Mr Evans: Are you saying it is too cumbersome, remote and arrogant? Is it?

George Graham: I would never accuse my peers of being arrogant, but remote, maybe. The world is big and complex. It is impossible for somebody sat in a headquarters somewhere to understand all the different nuances of all the different contexts in which humanitarian action might take place, so it is important that the frameworks we establish are flexible. I am slightly reluctant to completely argue for the killing off of the IASC, because it serves quite an important purpose.

Mr Evans: You think it needs fundamental reform, by the sounds of it.

Mike Noyes: George was able to point to a number of things we would like to see the summit achieve. For the civil society sector, the one disappointing thing about the direction in which the summit is going is the apparent lack of movement towards reform of the UN system, including the IASC as part of that, which has been put into the “too difficult” box. Let us perhaps not accept that. We know that the IASC needs to be more flexible and open. It needs to be more open to local organisations and local government; it needs to be more open to the voice of affected communities. The voice of affected women in particular is something that we know it very rarely hears.

Q109 Mr Evans: Does it need a change in its membership as well?

Mike Noyes: It need a change in its membership, greater flexibility in its membership, some movements in that and some recognition that it is an evolving process and a changing world, and that the system we set up in the past is not what we need in the future. It is the big unknown for Istanbul, that one, at the moment.

Q110 Mr Evans: Do you think they are aware of how people think about this organisation, and why do you think they are so resistant to reform?

Chair: Let us have a quick answer to this. Nigel is taking rather more than his allocated time and he has not asked the question he was meant to ask.

Mike Noyes: I think they are aware. Whether it is the entrenched interest or just the entrenched slowness of the UN system in bringing about reform when it has so many other priorities in terms of how it keeps every individual member state happy, it is part of the process. We will not give up what we do not achieve in Istanbul. Many of us reflect on the Beijing women's summit and how that was the start of a movement for change, rather than just a one-off event. We hope that the World Humanitarian Summit will create the momentum that leads to that change in the future, if not now.

Mr Evans: I combined questions 6 and 9; that is how clever I am.

Q111 Chair: Thank you very much, Nigel, but 9 is to a different witness. When we had evidence from the Minister, Desmond Swayne, last week, rather than institutional change for IASC, he said that the UK could use its funding power to bring about reform. Would it be fair to say that you are taking a different view to that, Mike, briefly?

Mike Noyes: We always become anxious when money equals power in the humanitarian system. That is the short answer.

Q112 Fiona Bruce: I have two questions. I am just going to address them to George, because of time. There have been lots of consultations involving thousands of people in the run-up to the summit, but there have also been comments that maybe there has been insufficient systematic evaluation and analysis of the evidence in terms of what is needed to effectively deliver humanitarian aid. I wondered whether you thought that preparations for the summit and priorities for reform have been sufficiently based on a systematic review of evidence.

George Graham: I saw that question coming and I was pondering it this morning. It is a fair point you are making. There has been a very good process of consultation. Lots of actors that typically would not have the chance to air their views have had a chance, including lots of smaller civil society organisations around the world. That is great. I would hope that a lot of the testimony and evidence that people have given is based on real experience, credible, meaningful and therefore useful. But you are right, in that I have not seen that much rigorous research: "We know this method works and this does not work."

Another example is that we talk a lot about funding flows and how to get the maximum efficiency of that, but I have not seen a definitive piece of work that shows what an optimal efficiency approach might be, so there is a job to do. I talk to colleagues at the ODI and they have a long list of bits of research they would like to do, all of which I can see the value of. It is fair to say that there has not been a great body of research, but I am not hugely worried about that because I do think that the consultations have been very valuable.

Q113 Fiona Bruce: Thank you. Again, I have to ask for a short answer to a question that justifies a lot more. You mentioned really positive practical outcomes you would like to see regarding, say, schooling or refugees. One of the five key responsibilities to be addressed

at the summit is “political leadership to prevent and end conflict”. How would you like to see that appear? What can DFID contribute in terms of leadership and example towards that?

George Graham: The UK has a very clear commitment to champion the international rules-based system and it has allies in that aspiration. Having it firmly on the table in international humanitarian law that the bombing of cities, etc, is illegal and having that really spelt out would be a helpful step.

On the prevention of conflict, as I talked about already, the Security Council is stuck, but it would help if the Security Council were at least to acknowledge that that sticking is causing lives to be lost. I am not hopeful that the Security Council is suddenly going to say, “We are no longer going to veto situations where there are massive atrocities” and all these other nice things we would like to see, but, if they at least acknowledged the problem, that would be a start.

Q114 Fiona Bruce: We have a Cabinet-level Minister responsible for delivering our aid. You work globally at Save the Children. Do you have the same sense across the world that there is that high-level political input?

George Graham: On aid generally?

Fiona Bruce: Absolutely, yes. I am looking, for example, at the fantastic high-level political direction in Sierra Leone, when Ebola broke out, that was available from the UK. Is that something you see across the globe in other countries, or do you feel it is an example that needs to be replicated more?

George Graham: The UK is definitely a leader in this space. There are other good countries out there, but there are also countries that are less impressive. It is not surprising that it was the UK that stepped up in Sierra Leone and not AN Other Country, because that is the sort of thing the UK does. It is something to be proud of.

Q115 Fiona Bruce: With more of that, is there more likelihood of prevention of conflict?

George Graham: Yes. One would hope that more engaged and humane approaches by the world’s big donor countries would lead to conflict prevention. The reason I am slightly hesitant is because conflicts start for all sorts of reasons and there is not a panacea to prevent them. The combination you are pointing to of political leadership and a strong development agenda is absolutely necessary to ensuring that conflicts are prevented.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed. We have covered a lot of ground in 50 minutes. I thank the three of you for giving us evidence today. Thank you very much indeed.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Professor Mukesh Kapila CBE**, Professor of Global Health and Humanitarian Affairs, University of Manchester, gave evidence.

Q116 Chair: Professor Kapila, Mukesh, welcome. Thank you very much for coming to give us evidence today. We have eight questions for you and about 40 minutes, so let me kick off. As has already been mentioned, last week we took evidence from the Minister, Desmond Swayne, and he said, “You would not design the system we now have”, in terms of the world humanitarian architecture. If the humanitarian system were to be completely redesigned from the ground up, what do you think would be the key differences compared to what we have at the moment?

Professor Kapila: Thank you for inviting me. It is good to be here. The humanitarian system could be better designed if it started off by listening to the people, which is what the consultation for the World Humanitarian Summit did. I should declare an interest here, because I am acting as special adviser for the World Humanitarian Summit, but I will be very frank and independent in my answers.

Thousands of people around the world said, “Thank you for the great generosity of the world, but do not expect us to be grateful.” What they are looking for is not charity; what they are looking for is dignity. Unfortunately, the rituals of the world humanitarian system, as it has grown up, have turned unfortunate people into beggars. The agencies at work in the humanitarian system—good people and good organisations—have had such perverse incentives placed upon them that, to some extent, they have become dishonest.

To answer your question about a better system, Stephen, there are a couple of points. First, we have to have a separation of powers between those who judge what the needs are and those who fund them. At the moment, the system is that you are judge, jury and executioner at the same time. You go to the ground as an organisation, a UN agency or an NGO, and you decide what the needs are, you write an appeal, you get the money, you decide how to spend it and then you judge for yourself whether or not you have been successful. No other public enterprise operates in this particular way. When you take your car to the garage to have it serviced, that is fine, but then you go somewhere else to have its MOT. Separation of those powers is important.

The second important difference that has to take place is that we must have independent accountability for the performance of humanitarian organisations, and that includes the donors, in the same way that we have the independent body set up here in the UK. I do not see why that cannot happen on a global level.

Q117 Chair: Do you mean a global version of ICAI?

Professor Kapila: Yes.

Q118 Chair: Say more. Tell us a bit more about how that might work.

Professor Kapila: How that might work is very simple. I can imagine the appointment by the UN Secretary-General, the General Assembly or some combination of an independent commission of people who have no vested interests in any of the organisations that are the beneficiaries of the billions coming from donors like DFID. There should be no conflict of

interest. At the moment, there is a revolving door. One day you are working for DFID; another day you are working for the UN; and the third day you are receiving the benefits of that.

This body of people must be completely separate from both the givers of the funds and the intermediaries responsible for spending them, whose only purpose is to make sure that what is done with the money is done in the best interests of the people on the ground. They should be able to rule without fear or favour, without politics or patronage. That lack of accountability and democracy we have in the global system is the root corrupting influence of why everyone is so dissatisfied with the humanitarian system at a time when the world has never been more generous in giving money to it. That is the paradox.

I do not see many of the solutions and discussions I have heard, including evidence in front of this Committee, as grappling with the fundamental core of the problem, which is to reinforce confidence in the system and bring it to a different level of maturity and accountability.

Q119 Chair: You were in the gallery. You heard Nigel's questions on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. How do you see what you are proposing, which I am going to call the global ICAI, fitting with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee?

Professor Kapila: Can I start off by saying that I have been a long suffering veteran of the IASC? Unlike many of the people who have given you evidence, I have sat in the IASC, on its committees, working groups and so on, representing different organisations, depending on who was paying me at the time, in the UN system or, indeed, even the Red Cross, because the Red Cross is an observer in the IASC.

I do not know why you and others are fixated on the IASC. It is just a committee. If agencies of the UN system want to get together and meet up from time to time to discuss their business, I do not see what the big deal is. I also hear that donors and Governments want to join the IASC. That is a very bad idea, because you will fall back into the problem of confusing the powers. Either you are a donor giving money and holding to account those who are spending your money; or you become part of the action and the operational policy-making machinery. What you cannot do is both.

The IASC issue is a non-argument. I used to spend my time trying to delegate my attendance to some junior person, because they were mostly boring meetings. The real decisions are not made there. The real decisions are made among the leaders of organisations, as part of the normal interactions of diplomacy and working on common problems and issues at the country level or at the global thematic level. The committee is just a mechanism for normal interactions and normal diplomacy in the world. It is no big deal.

Q120 Mr Evans: It sounds as if you think it should be wound up.

Professor Kapila: If agencies want to have a committee to discuss things, why not? No one has yet invented a system when they wanted to discuss things, other than to have a committee. It is called an IASC. It has done some very good work, for example setting up norms on various issues. I remember the work I did with it on guidance for HIV, in relation to people with AIDS who were caught up in emergencies and so forth. It does

useful work, but it is not the great block to change that I hear from some of the narrative I have read.

Q121 Chair: I put to the previous witnesses the point that the Minister, Desmond Swayne, made to us last week, when he said he saw the main way in which the UK and DFID could exercise influence as through money rather than through seeking institutional reform. Do I take it that you are, at least in part, disagreeing with that, with your advocacy of a new body?

Professor Kapila: I can only speak from personal experience. In this case, let me start off with the DFID experience, where I was the head of the conflict and humanitarian affairs department at a time when budgets were beginning to go up. In my part of the show, I presided over the giving away of hundreds of millions of pounds to institutions of all sorts—global institutions, international institutions. I can tell you that the use of money to bribe a bully is not the way to change a world system. You can buy compliance with sums of money, according to projects, for a period of time, and everyone will be grateful to you for a period of time, but it does not last.

Firstly, organisations are very resilient. The word was used earlier on, but organisations are themselves very resilient to cope, and then someone else comes along and offers them more money or better support. Money is good to change behaviour if that is done in a morally appropriate way, but, as to the idea that you can buy change by just throwing money, we live in a very rebellious world.

As I travel around the world, I find that, on the one hand, people are grateful for the generosity of donors, including DFID. On the other hand, they are angry. They are angry because nobody likes to be at the receiving end of charity. Unfortunately, the largess of the UK, which I am very proud that our Government are so good at giving, has to be tempered with a degree of humility and a degree of gentleness. I am afraid the UK cannot buy its way, just because it is a generous donor. The world does not work that way anymore.

Q122 Chair: That is very fair. To be fair to the Minister, so I do not mischaracterise his evidence, I think he was saying that the UK would prefer to use its position as a major funder to argue for change, rather than looking at institutional changes in the world humanitarian system.

Professor Kapila: May I come back to that? I think this is a little bit of a cop out.

Chair: I thought you were saying that earlier, but you did not quite say it in the previous answer.

Professor Kapila: I would certainly agree with the Minister and others who say that now is not the time to get into huge bureaucratic battles about changing mandates. By the way, there is nothing wrong with the mandates. Read the vision statement and mission statement of any agency you can think of: beautiful words, beautifully written, nothing wrong with them, as relevant today as they were 50 years ago in terms of their intent. Mandate is not the problem. The problem is the way in which organisations, because of the humans who inhabit them—and this is part of human nature, territoriality and so on—have grown, metamorphosed and become distant from the clients they serve. That is the problem. Therefore, that is where the big debate should be. How do we bring back the

word “human” into “humanitarian” and, in doing so, influence the behaviours of the leaders of these organisations and those who work in them?

Q123 Jeremy Lefroy: You mentioned at the beginning, Professor Kapila, that the key is to listen to people. They are looking for dignity, not charity, which is something I am sure we would all agree is vital. What happens in cases where you have grave humanitarian crises, as we saw after and during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, for instance, and the refugees, those who need the aid, are under the influence of some pretty awful people—in that case, the Interahamwe in Goma and elsewhere? If you are not really able to get through to the people who really need it, because they are being influenced or, in some cases, controlled by forces that are not benign, how will we get through there? I do not think that is the only instance where that has happened, where political actors who have a real agenda have controlled the humanitarian space in a refugee crisis.

Professor Kapila: Indeed, as it happens, I was myself in Rwanda in 1994 during the hundreds of killings, representing ODA, the predecessor to DFID. In those extreme circumstances, there is no alternative but for the international community to do the best it can to get the access it needs and to do it in the most robust way possible. But those are extreme circumstances. There are others. I was involved in Darfur. I was head of the UN in the Sudan when the Darfur genocide happened, and I was also in Srebrenica. Those are extreme circumstances. The thing about extreme circumstances is that they make very bad case law. They are good cases, but they make very bad law. By and large, in the vast majority of situations, it is perfectly possible to work with local authorities, even bad Governments, and local communities to improve humanitarian access.

There is a certain patronising influence in the West: we think that the only people who can be trusted are our organisations or us, the international system. By and large, from my experience, including under some pretty horrible regimes, I have seen that, apart from the extreme situations, a lot can be done on the ground, if only we have the patience to operate on the ground. All Governments are not bad. My problem with the humanitarian-development divide, a question I hope you are going to ask sooner or later, is that the humanitarians think that basically all Governments are bad; only they can be trusted with the purity of their ideals; and only they are capable of neutrality, impartiality, humanity and the rest of it. It is like a little ideology.

The reality is much more nuanced than that. It is time that we became a little humbler as humanitarians and realised that most humanitarian relief is done by locals without external assistance, and most assistance is provided by Governments themselves to their populations before the international donors come in. That is the channel that we have to work on. I hope the summit will take us closer in that direction.

Q124 Jeremy Lefroy: We saw an example of that during our visit to Nigeria a couple of weeks ago, where Pauline, Fiona, Lisa and I visited an internally displaced people’s camp in Abuja. All the aid there was being given by local people. The school was being run by local mosques and churches, and others were giving the day-to-day requirements for those people. We have seen that in action. It seems that, with 2.2 million IDPs in Nigeria at the moment, all of work that is being done for them is being done by the Nigerian states, the

Nigerian Government and the Nigerian communities themselves. That reinforces what you are saying.

Professor Kapila: Absolutely. What you saw was fairly typical of many situations around the world. I have just spent a month in Lebanon looking at the situation of the Syrian refugees, and the Palestinian refugees, who have been lying there for 70 years, in addition to the Syria refugees. There is a lot of international aid coming in, but by far the greatest quantity of aid in the most acceptable way is being delivered by the local communities, including the host populations, incidentally.

Q125 Dr Cameron: I am very interested in what you are saying about bringing the “human” back into “humanitarian”. How do we enable local actors and organisations to play their part and to be fully involved? What would the mechanisms look like to ensure that happens on the ground?

Professor Kapila: Humanitarian delivery is a retail affair but, unfortunately, our system works wholesale. In the translation from wholesale to retail—to the corner shop, where each individual’s monetary transaction takes place—something is lost. The only answer to that is to really start from the bottom up. That is not a new statement; everyone says that, but it requires an awful lot of patience, an awful lot of risk-taking and an awful lot of time to work one’s way up. It is very difficult to do when you are under pressure and you have to respond to donor applications. The EU says, “We have X million for this thing; we need proposals in by next Monday”, and then you have to craft those proposals in the appropriate format and so forth.

You need to take a long-term and more open-ended approach, starting with the grassroots and being prepared that you will not be able to show results in the way DFID would like. DFID’s approach, for example, is to count everything that moves. If it cannot be counted, because it cannot be linked to UK aid, they will not fund it. I deplore that approach. I have seen many donor agencies take a reductionist approach, instead of looking at these as complex, interrelated and long-term problems, the outcomes of which cannot be measured simply in numbers of immunisations, numbers of babies saved and how many malaria tents you have given out. That has to change, and that would then incentivise local players to start thinking about these things in a different way.

Q126 Pauline Latham: You have partially answered what I was going to ask you, but I will ask it anyway, in case you want to add anything to it. The idea of aligning humanitarian and development assistance is not new, so why do you think calls for change have failed in the past and what does DFID need to do to ensure lasting future action?

Professor Kapila: The humanitarian-development debate has been going on for at least as long as I have been in the business, in different roles, which is 20 to 25 years. The reason it has not progressed as much as we would like is because I am not sure the culture wants to be shifted in the institutions concerned. It is actually quite a comfortable life. We have funds. We have mechanisms for this, that and the other. There is a whole set of rituals and bureaucracies, which are very familiar, in the way money is given out. We take a categorical approach: “This is a humanitarian problem; this is a development problem.”

I remember, when I was the United Nations resident and humanitarian co-ordinator in the Sudan, my struggle was that this school was funded by humanitarian aid and that school

was funded by development aid. They were exactly identical schools, but some countries only did humanitarian aid to Sudan, which was a priority at the time, and some said, “We will do more development.” We had an almost impossible problem, trying to address the issue of children’s education, with which no one would disagree.

We need to completely shift the paradigm. It is not about changing institutional structures and systems; it is about changing mind-sets and taking, as the Secretary-General’s report for the World Humanitarian Summit says, an outcome-oriented approach and working according to an outcome of problem-solving, as opposed to according to categories.

Q127 Pauline Latham: Going back to the schools issue, your practical example, supposing they were DFID-funded, how would they have acted differently?

Professor Kapila: What we did was to stop issuing a humanitarian appeal. We called it the consolidated, all-Sudan, all singing, all dancing appeal. We tried to get all donors’ funding not necessarily into a common pot, but at least aligned to a common framework or a common approach. This is incidentally what the World Bank has also been trying to do. Its new fragility, conflict and violence group is trying to find a new mechanism whereby we might more effectively help countries that face a development challenge and have a humanitarian challenge at the same time and, through common assessments, without defining them one way or the other, come to more objective-oriented approaches. Then we hope that the bilateral donors like DFID will respond in a flexible way. DFID is quite flexible. It is good in that regard, but it can do much more in terms of moving towards common approaches.

The danger is—and I see this in various proposals—a fund for this, a fund for that, £1 billion for this, £500 million for that. I see these proposals coming out. Unfortunately, all that will do is to create more transaction costs, more different categories, if you like. We have to reduce the gaps between different categories and sectors, rather than add to them. The only way to do that is in a very slow and steady way. There is no quick fix. This is the job of a generation, and maybe the World Humanitarian Summit is the starting point for reforms like that.

Q128 Pauline Latham: When you said about DFID counting everything, one of the reasons they do that is because they are accountable to the British public, who are paying for this. They have to be accountable back to the British public. I understand why you dismiss that as being irrelevant. It is not, for the British public. We, as politicians, have to get over to the British public that aid is a good thing, and we have to prove it. That is extremely hard when you have a very cynical public out there. It is very easy to say when you are down there doing the job, and I understand that, but we all have to be accountable and we cannot forget that.

Professor Kapila: I was not disagreeing with you, but there is a difference between countable and accountable. As others have said, not everything important is countable and not everything countable is important. My point is solely that, if we are trying to show accountability and show to the donor public the good that is being done with their resources, we need not to dumb down our communications with the general public. I appreciate that you are a politician, and I dare not argue with you.

Chair: I believe you.

Professor Kapila: The point is that I really think you do the British public a disfavour when you think either that they are so selfish that everything has to be sold according to the national interest, or that somehow they are, in a sense, not generous. Look at the generosity in relation to the refugees and migrants. The generosity of the British public was far greater than that of the British Government when it came to getting refugees in. We will not get into that debate if you do not want to.

Pauline Latham: Some, not all.

Professor Kapila: Okay, some. My main point is, yes, by all means count what is countable, but do not dumb down the whole issue. The reason the MDGs failed in some areas and worked in other areas was because they did not address the uncomfortable issues in between. The SDGs are much better, even though there are many of them, as opposed to the smaller number of MDGs. The main point is to realise that the complexity of the human developmental endeavour cannot be reduced down to counting a few numbers and then using that to sell to the uneducated public that we are doing good—aren't we wonderful and aren't we leading the world? That is dishonest.

Q129 Mrs Grant: You are making a really important point. My understanding is that, to get the culture change we really need, there has to be more long-term thinking and joining up, possibly doing things that cannot be ticked, crossed and given points for. Having said that, the world has just agreed a set of goals, 169 targets and 17 goals, and I am not sure that, within that, we have the unaccountable element that you are referring to. I just wonder what your thoughts are on that. I agree with Pauline that the accountability has to happen, but there should also be, within the system, a way of getting credit for the unaccountable element, if you see what I mean. I wonder whether perhaps we have missed an opportunity with the SDGs and whether something could have been incorporated.

Professor Kapila: Work is ongoing on the measurement framework for the SDGs. They have only just been approved. Having been involved in the MDGs—at that time, I was in DFID—the translation from the goals was very slow; the SDGs are much faster. I am more optimistic, in the sense that we will have both quantitative and qualitative measures by which to measure progress. I hope we will also allow diversity. The SDGs are as relevant in East Anglia as they are in east Africa. This is the great progress of the SDGs conceptually, compared with the MDGs. If we take that approach, we have to allow licence for each country or territory to translate it into its own needs. This will genuinely make it more sustainable, as in sustainable development goals, and allow ownership at the community and the ground level. Let the people also decide what the measures of accountability are.

Remember, by the way, that, as important as British aid might be, it is not the most important element in the development of nations. As we know, the number of countries that rely on foreign aid is a reducing number, which is a very good sign. Other resource-transfer instruments are becoming far more important. A more holistic approach, as envisaged in the excellent DFID aid paper last year, is taking us in that direction. I am optimistic that the SDGs provide a broad framework for both development and humanitarian work. A slogan of “do not leave anyone behind” is particularly relevant to our business, which is the billion or so crisis-affected people around the world.

Q130 Fiona Bruce: To what extent does a successful outcome of this summit depend on high-level political commitment? Can I ask you to comment on the question that I think you heard me ask earlier, regarding this key responsibility to be addressed of “political leadership to prevent and end conflict”? How do you think that would look, ideally?

Professor Kapila: Political leadership to end conflict would look like beefing up and giving teeth to the mechanisms of compliance with the international rule of law. What that means is supporting the International Criminal Court and the growth of other courts; internal compliance with international humanitarian law and other mechanisms; and a policy of zero tolerance. The UK’s good leadership of the work on female genital mutilation and the summits held over recent months were an excellent example of that. The UK’s diplomatic efforts should be directed at working with countries that are an obstacle at the moment, and trying to have greater accountability for that.

The Prime Minister could signal that by attending the World Humanitarian Summit, considering that he himself was on the committee that helped adopt the SDGs. The UK is such a major player, as we all know, on the humanitarian side. I know that he is important; he has the EU referendum and the G7 to worry about, but I cannot think of a more important signal of political leadership from the UK than for the Prime Minister to at least show up in Istanbul. Many countries in the European Union have told me that they are watching to see whether David Cameron turns up; and then they will decide whether the leaders of other countries will turn up, so it is really important that the UK Prime Minister turns up personally.

To your earlier question about what success would be, do you mean success of the summit or success of the humanitarian system improvements?

Q131 Fiona Bruce: I mean in terms of a successful outcome of the summit. How much does that depend on high-level political commitment? With regard to the phrase “political leadership to prevent and end conflict”, what would that look like, particularly the “prevent” part?

Professor Kapila: First, the World Humanitarian Summit should not be looked upon as an end. It is the beginning of a new chapter. The best outcome for the World Humanitarian Summit would be a framework or a broad agreement in principle on the critical strategies or directions of travel for the future, and political commitment to doing that, for example by reforming the international architecture. That does not mean getting into the weeds of UN agency reform, but at the higher level that I talked about at the very beginning of our conversation. It would mean having a plan of action that is deliverable. I could maybe see, for example, the emergence of some strategies, which might be reviewed, harmonised with the period of the SDGs, which is 2030, and movement towards some goals and targets specifically for humanitarian populations, for example minimum-service packages for crisis-affected populations. After all, we have targets for children at school and so on. I do not see why we cannot have targets for life-saving needs and ends.

All of that requires strong universal political commitment. What would be quite wrong—and this could be anti-political, if you like—is if this is seen simply as a Western liberal push. The real political leadership has to be universal political leadership from all the continents and cultures in the world, especially taking on board the different styles in which humanitarianism is expressed all around the world. It is not just what we think in

the West that is important here. The other countries—China, India and the African nations themselves—are the most important players in how we start addressing the gaps in the system and making a real difference to the lives of the most vulnerable people.

The real politics—and here the UK Government can add its wise counsel—is to really ensure that it does not come over as preaching; it does not come over as telling the world, “We are leading”. Every third sentence in the great policy paper we were talking about says, “The UK is leading”. I can tell you that these kinds of statements go down very badly around the world. It might be fine for a UK domestic audience, but there are many leaders in the world. Real leadership is how to bring other people together, and that is where the politics really lies.

Q132 Chair: Which African countries do you think are ready to rise to that challenge of leadership at the moment?

Professor Kapila: Many African countries are willing to rise, but they do not want to be told that they have to do it this way: for example, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, even Uganda, despite some of the political issues there.

Q133 Chair: You would say the current South Africa is now ready to rise to this sort of challenge.

Professor Kapila: Everyone has different capabilities. They have different interests and preoccupations. Obviously, in the same way that the UK is worried about migration to Europe, they are worried about issues in their region. That is only right and proper. In my travels around these countries, talking to the Foreign Ministers and others, I see that there is a consciousness—more than a consciousness. There are also regional organisations, such as the African Union, and sub-regional organisations, which are gathering in capacity and strength. We have to create space for them. If you do not give people space, you cannot at the same time keep on blaming them for not rising to the challenge. The way politics is done in the humanitarian area has to change. This is why I used the word “humbleness” earlier on.

Chair: We are running out of time, so we will have to race forward slightly.

Q134 Jeremy Lefroy: Very quickly, turning to the international financial institutions, for instance the World Bank, some people have suggested that the eligibility for IDA assistance should be changed and should be on need rather than income levels, so that countries that are above the middle-income bracket, which is \$1,215 at the moment, but have substantial problems with refugees are able to access some long-term financing from this. Of course, we know that it is a rather arbitrary level. We have seen countries like South Sudan go in and out over a period of years. I wonder what your view on that is. If the World Bank took a lead, I think other IFIs would follow.

Professor Kapila: I was recently in Washington DC at the World Bank, at this fragility, violence and conflict forum, where some of these issues were being discussed. I had just come back from Lebanon, where I saw the fact of this very personally. Personally and professionally, I am very sympathetic to more flexibility, a loosening of some of the definitions and taking, as you said earlier on, an outcome or problem-oriented approach. Definitely, middle-income countries that are hosting refugees should be given some kind

of additional deal that allows them to host these refugees and, at the same time, not compromise their own development. This can only be a win-win and a good-good.

In the longer run, whether or not one should be changing threshold figures of LICs, MICs and so on is a highly technical argument and, to some extent, the answer depends on the incentives that would send to countries. The fact is that, if you are a middle-income country, you are a middle-income country and you have to take your responsibilities as a middle-income country. I can see a middle-income country with problems being helped, but whether we should change more than that requires much more discussion.

Q135 Mr Sharma: Thank you very much for your very passionate responses to all the questions. My question has been generally addressed by you already, Professor, but I still think there is more you can add. My question is in three parts, so that is why, looking at the time, I have put it all together. First, what benchmarks should be used to gauge the success of reforms? Secondly, for the purpose of the summit, humanitarian assistance seems to be defined as external intervention only. Should the aim of national capacity-building be to reduce this reliance on external assistance? Finally, without setting outcome goals, is there a chance that business will continue as usual? You have already touched on some of that.

Professor Kapila: They are also interrelated. Let me start with the last one, which I think is the answer. Very definitely, outcome goals are needed, because, without both countable and accountable outcome goals, we are not going to see any change in the business. The real challenge is exactly defining those goals, because I am sure we will have huge arguments about what is a suitable outcome, but the answer is yes.

As to humanitarian action, we have to remember that humanitarianism is the most ancient of instincts in humanity. It was there before humanitarian organisations came into existence, and before donors and recipients came into existence. That common and universal humanitarianism is what we have to incentivise further. The idea that humanitarian aid means external assistance is completely wrong. There are plenty of figures to show that most humanitarian assistance is local, and that is the best. How to trigger more of that is the real reform that is going to be needed. That is what the WHS is all about.

Your first question is the most difficult one: what would the benchmarks be, or what is the best way to judge results? I would say they should be measured in the way that people at the receiving end of this decide they should be. If they feel valued, if they feel their dignity is restored, if they feel they have had a say in how their lives are governed and if they are enabled to sort out their problems—these, by the way, are all measurable; they are not as qualitative as I am making them sound—then we will have succeeded.

I can tell you what is not a benchmark. What is not a benchmark is what percentage of humanitarian appeals are funded or how much money is going into humanitarian aid as a percentage of GDP, GNI or ODA. These are inputs; these are not benchmarks. The amount of money we spend on humanitarian aid is not a cause for celebration; it is a commemoration of our failure. When the UK issued a press release recently saying it had passed the billion-pound mark on helping in Syria, I went into mourning, because what that displayed was not that we are generous—I hope we are generous—but simply: “Oh my god, what a testament to failure.”

The real benchmark is if we change the quality of our international co-operation, as a consequence of the comprehensive nature of actions that are taken to address humanitarian needs and turn them into human opportunities.

Chair: Thank you very much. Helen has the final question, which relates to what you just said.

Q136 Mrs Grant: It does. The summit seems to be based on doing more with what is available, rather than attracting more. Do you think that is the right approach in terms of narrowing the gap between needs and resources? Do you think we might have missed a trick with the summit in relation to putting more pressure on other countries to commit to 0.7%?

Professor Kapila: It reminds me of my time in the UK National Health Service, where the needs were always increasing and there was always a gap. I guess it is the same nowadays. The summit is right that, before asking the world for more, it must do better with what it has. Throwing money away at problems is not necessarily a recipe for solutions. That is not to say that more money could not be useful, and the needs have certainly grown a lot while humanitarian aid contributions have not kept up with them. But the first thing to do is definitely to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the current spending, from all sources—private, government and so forth.

Your second point is exactly why the summit is taking place, which is that, by making it a world humanitarian summit, every country in the world is invited to the table. It is not a UN meeting; it is a world humanitarian summit. It is a combination of we the people and we the Governments. Doing that sends the signal that our common humanity dictates a common human response. That means all countries and all Governments have a role to play. By and large, from my own consultations around this, we are gratified by the response we are getting. People like being put on the same table as both rich and poor countries and finding common solutions together. It is the only way to address what is basically a common problem for all of us.

Q137 Chair: Mukesh, thank you very much indeed for a fantastic evidence session. It was really great to hear from you. You have covered an extraordinary amount of ground in three-quarters of an hour. Thank you very much indeed.

Professor Kapila: Please do some good with this and get some things done; and get the UK Prime Minister to come to Istanbul.

Q138 Chair: We will do our best. Thank you very much, M