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Witnesses: Lord Malloch-Brown and Sir Emyr Jones Parry GCMG

Baroness Amos

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Members present

Lord Howell of Guildford (Chairman)
 Baroness Coussins
 Lord Grocott
 Lord Hannay of Chiswick
 Baroness Helic
 Baroness Hilton of Eggardon
 Lord Inglewood
 Lord Jopling
 Lord Purvis of Tweed
 Lord Reid of Cardowan
 Baroness Smith of Newnham
 Lord Wood of Anfield

Examination of Witnesses

Lord Malloch-Brown, Former Minister of State for Africa, Asia and the UN, Former UN Deputy Secretary-General, Former Chief of Staff to the UN Secretary-General, Former CEO of the UN Development Programme and Former Vice-President of the World Bank, and **Sir Emyr Jones Parry GCMG**, Former UK Ambassador to the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Q44. The Chairman: Lord Malloch-Brown and Sir Emyr Jones Parry, thank you very much for being with us this morning. Before we get into the business on which we are going to seek your wisdom and advice, there are some routine requirements I have to set before you. I remind you that the session is open and is webcast. There will be a verbatim transcript, you will get a copy, and if you want to change it we are very happy that you should do so. Those are the formalities. Again, thank you for being before us. Our focus, to clarify it, is to formulate an agenda, a set of advices from the direction of the United Kingdom to the new Secretary-General on the sorts of priorities they should be worried about. That, of course, takes us into wider issues and to some extent into how the secretary-generalship comes about and who gets chosen. I do not want to go too much into that, but it is part of the story. I will start, if I may, by putting to you both, at a fairly general level, the question of the potential candidates and their vision of a UN for the 21st century. Lord Malloch-Brown, you talk in your book, which I was carefully reading the other night—I hope it has sold well, incidentally—

Lord Malloch-Brown: Re-reading: you were kind enough to say that you had read it before.

The Chairman: Re-reading, right. You talk about the rules that allow for a peaceful adjustment between states. There is going to be a lot of unpeaceful adjustment now and we somehow have to get back to the rules-based order; aid alone will not solve these matters. Let me start off straightway. In this digital, fragmenting age, what will solve these issues? Where do we start?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Thank you very much, and thank you to the Committee—there are many old friends here—for inviting me this morning. Look, it is a very differently structured world to the world even of 10 years ago, or when Emyr and I were both active in the UN. It is a world where civil society has gotten a much larger voice, a world where the social media revolution has swept much before it, but it is also, perhaps most critically, to make an old-power point, a world where there has been this dispersal of power to a lot more regional and even sub-regional actors. Finally, it is a world where some of those actors are not even states any more but forces battling to control territory or to mount terrorist or other movements at a regional or global level. The idea of a UN that could just manage world problems through the prism of traditional interstate relations, just through representatives of Governments, has really been pushed aside. Going to a UN meeting now, it is striking how many business leaders and civil society leaders are in meetings around the margins. It is a very different environment, so we need a UN that knows how to deal with, manage and find consensus within a—to use a rather uncomfortable word from social science—multi-stakeholder world.

The Chairman: Right. Sir Emyr, you have been at the epicentre of these things, both as our man at the United Nations and in many other ways. How would you respond to that rather general opening question?

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: In a general sense, the need for a United Nations and the difficulties we perceive, which Mark has set out, are both greater today than they were in our time. The UN charter seems to me to provide a basis, but we now have to get the whole system, with all the points that Lord Malloch-Brown has mentioned, to work better and to chart out a new set of relations between the UN organs and the bodies outside, especially the sub-organisations. In my time, one of the things that we did, with the Security Council, was to negotiate the first agreement with the Peace and Security Department of the African Union. That trend has increased since then. There is a need to work with those regional players to build consensus in situations that are exceedingly difficult. With globalisation there is a need for multilateralism to be seen to be more effective—multilateralism being the only way through this—and a need to try to make the system better.

The Chairman: We come to the personalities. Lord Reid, would you like to come in here?

Q45. Lord Reid of Cardowan: Thank you for coming, gentlemen. Both of you have alluded to the radical and far-reaching changes that are going on in the world. One supposes that in order to maintain relevance, the United Nations will have to respond with some form of far-reaching and radical change, yet the evidence we are getting suggests that there are considerable constraints, political, institutional and otherwise, on the Secretary-General in effecting such change. Crucially, he or she will be dependent on a few—more than a few—critical actors from the member states themselves. In the current political context, where do you think the Secretary-General can play an effective role in implementing radical, far-reaching change? What sort of qualities or attributes do you think the new Secretary-General would ideally have, and which battles should he or she pick, or avoid?

Lord Malloch-Brown: First, a successful and effective Secretary-General has to navigate an election process that is rife with all the issues that you raised, Lord Reid. The first thing to overcome is to be someone who can be mild-mannered enough in the process of election to survive the lowest common denominator process and then be bold enough afterwards to be a leader. Two individuals have done that in the history of the UN. Both were elected because they were thought to be mild-mannered civil servants—one was Dag Hammarskjöld and the other was Kofi Annan. Both once in office proved that they had a completely different side to their personality that had been overlooked by the selectors.

Lord Reid of Cardowan: So this is an argument for initial non-transparency.

Lord Malloch-Brown: Yes and no. It is a terrible lottery to look at someone who has always been mild-mannered and hope that they are going to be able to hold a platform and a pulpit when they get elected. Therefore, the hustings that the General Assembly has organised this year are a really important innovation. So far, the candidate who has done best in them and as a consequence has had a huge boost over what experts had anticipated is António Guterres of Portugal. He is the wrong nationality, the wrong gender and from the wrong region, yet he is leading the vote at this point. Those of you who have heard him speak will know that he is the kind of individual who, if he got the job, would immediately use it to effect.

To come back to the second point of the question, which is what, if we get a good Secretary-General, she or he can do, it has always been the case that some of the really big, four-square global confrontations are hard for Secretaries-General to be effective in because the big powers are locking horns. That has been very disabling for the UN in the case of Syria on the political side, for example. But Kofi Annan showed that there are tons of conflicts, I am sorry to say, and issues that are not front of mind for the big powers all the time. In those cases, the big powers not only make way for UN leadership and a UN search for a solution but welcome it, because it lessens the diplomatic traffic for them. For a creative Secretary-General who can both appeal to people and at a broad level establish the moral authority of his or her office, while at the same time being a skilled diplomat, the sky is the limit for what they can do.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: Given the way in which you put the question, Lord Reid, I will begin my answer by saying that I emphasise all the other things that the UN system does. We are talking primarily about the Secretary-General and the Security Council, but the UN family and everything it does is my argument for why, beyond question, we need the United Nations. There is hardly a bit of economic activity globally that is not one way or the other touched by the UN. A lot of that happens well. Of course, the big political issues in the Security Council are where we are seen not to be performing as we should. For a number of member states, perhaps particularly the United States, there is a dilemma. Do they want a powerful leader of the UN? For most of them the answer is no, they do not. It was a surprise when two turned out to be something rather different from what they expected. But the job brings with it an authority and the powers vested in the Secretary-General as set out in the charter, which are not inconsiderable—they lead a substantial Secretariat. But they do not have a direct line of authority to most of rest of the UN family. One of the skills that is particularly important, quite apart from the obvious ones such as politics, tact and all those, is a convening power—someone who can develop consensus among the different players, be they member states, regional organisations or parts of the UN family.

Looking back, one person who was not a Secretary-General but who was rather good at this was Brahimi. In a number of areas, especially when he was in Afghanistan as the Special Representative, he had the capacity of welding together the UN family, the member states and the organisations so that they were with him. You want that sort of innate ability. If you can form the relationships that you need, an awful lot can be achieved. As for battles, it is unwise now to speculate what particular battles you want to engage in. I would advise great care about which battles to choose and how one chooses the battle, preferably off camera. In 2006, I think, Kofi Annan solved a very difficult dispute between Nigeria and the Cameroon, about a peninsula between them, without any fuss at all. Countless examples of that are occurring. It is a measure of tact and the ability to choose your battle carefully and to form alliances.

I should mention one other attribute that I would like to see: someone who can deliver decisions and see those decisions implemented. There is not in the UN system what, in military terms, has always appealed to me, which is a chief of staff function. You need a

commanding officer to decide what should be done, but you need a chief of staff to ensure that it is done. On the whole, in the UN system that is not the case.

Q46. Lord Purvis of Tweed: I quite like the description of a UN convenor—Scottish members of the Committee will be more comfortable with that word. “Convenor” summarises many aspects of the job, rather than “Secretary-General”. I want to ask a brief supplementary question. Do the two of you feel that with a new Secretary-General coming into office it is possible to think of a 100-days scenario? Most elected leaders now want to see their first 100 days as the period in which they set the signals for the rest of their term. Is that relevant in the role of the Secretary-General?

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: Many years ago, when I pitched up in the UK Representation in Brussels, the Deputy Permanent Representative called me into his room and said, “You may think you know something about the European Community”—as it then was—“but you do not know much at this end. Could you do me a favour and for three months don’t have any bright ideas?” I am not encouraging that view but, as for expectations for the first 100 days or whatever, you may not necessarily know exactly how to tackle the job and you may not be familiar with the issues, despite all the hustings and everything else. It is about establishing relations and working out how you are going to come at it. I would advise caution for the first 100 days. Make sure that you have chosen your targets and priorities and get people to agree with you on what you want to do. Best of all, get other people to think that what you are about to do is their idea. That is the form of leadership that inculcates in people the expectation that you are doing what they want you to do, but all the time you have predetermined what the organisation should do.

Lord Malloch-Brown: I am very much on the same lines. Lord Wood’s organisation, the UNA-UK, asked me to write something for an issue that it is just putting out on the UN Secretary-General’s first 100 days and I took exactly the same line as Emyr: that that was dangerous talk. It is all about building relationships, assembling the team and setting some directions. Even the most skilled insider of Secretaries-General, Kofi Annan, decided to do 100 days, but it blew up on him rather. He wanted to reorganise the humanitarian system and do other things, but he got at them too quickly and ended up with less than optimal solutions. He thought that he was trading on a honeymoon period but found that he had not built the understanding of the reform that he wanted to achieve. It is critical. I do not know whether you are aware, but the UK mission at the UN has managed to secure some precious Foreign Office funding for part of a pooled fund to support a new Secretary-General in the transition.

The old Secretary-General, my boss, when they consulted him on what would be the most useful use of this resource, said that when he looked back, what he most missed at the beginning was really highly-qualified human resource help to assemble the right team. What happens is that a Secretary-General is bombarded by demands to put so-and-so into a job. It is very easy to end up with a cabinet of top Under-Secretaries-General who will completely handicap your first term, because Governments have imposed them on you, and all the rest. Annan and I spent a huge amount of time trying to build up the principle that, while we recognised that we needed certain countries or geographies to be represented—the charter calls for that—we would retain control of which individuals got each job. If Governments nominated people they would be on a shortlist, but others would be interviewed too. That process of building a genuinely first-class team is probably the single most critical objective of the first 100 days. Ideally, it would happen before he or she took office, but usually that election gets pressed so close to the date that it instead occupies the first 100 days.

Lord Jopling: Sir Emyr, I think I heard you say that the Islamic states would not be keen to see a strong and powerful Secretary-General.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: I said the United States, not the Islamic states.

Lord Jopling: Ah. That is what I thought you had said. Of course, none of those Islamic states are permanent members, but Russia is. The *Guardian* newspaper of 29 August says: “Only a decisive stand by Russia could now block Antonio Guterres”. How do you read the attitude of Russia towards having a powerful, influential Secretary-General?

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: I am not that familiar with the details of the present candidates, but I would say that Russia would be apprehensive and wary about a strong leader, unless it felt that that leader was one that it had a fair measure of control of.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I want to pick up on the convening point and apply it to a specific instance that is likely to be in the newspaper headlines in the next two weeks, which is migration. There are these two big meetings in New York, one convened by the Secretary-General and one by the President of the United States, if I understand it rightly. I think the reaction will be that these meetings will be underwhelming and will reveal an enormous disparity of attitudes to what is a fiendishly complex but also highly sensitive subject for practically every country. Do you think that the new Secretary-General, whoever that may be, should persist in playing a convening role on this issue, even if the idea of a single set of policies on migration is obviously a pipe dream? Does the UN have a role to play in the next five years on this issue, and if so, will you say a little about how it could do it a bit more effectively than it has done it up to now?

Lord Malloch-Brown: It is obviously a very important issue. Those inside the UN refugee community, which is obviously different from the migration community, because they believe there is a higher level of legal protection for their case load, are extremely concerned that these meetings are diluting the concept of refugees and refugee protection. They are very concerned that, in a sense, standards that were fine until Europe had to apply them have been dropped as quickly as that when suddenly it is Europe, rather than countries that Europe is preaching to accept these case-loads. Within the UN community this is seen in quite difficult, sharp ways, with quietly made accusations of double standards, et cetera. The very capable Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, who has led a lot of the process on this and has a strong humanitarian background, is of the view that even if it is Europe that has breached the wall of the protections and statutes that refugees have been handled within, we cannot escape the fact that migration has become such an overwhelming global issue that it is time for a new compact on migration. The UN meeting in New York sets a timeline for a second meeting two year on, I think, so one way or another there will be a process and a way. One very much hopes that statesmanship will prevail, because I agree with you that at the moment the risk is that it will just lead to a dilution of standards and not some new settlement of arrangements for migration.

Q47. Lord Grocott: I have a specific question. You made the extremely important point that where the permanent members are in obvious disagreement/conflict on an issue that is a headline issue internationally, realistically the Secretary-General is not going to solve that overnight, but in those areas that are less high profile but not directly threatening the interests of any members of the P5 there may almost be—this is the interesting thing you said—a sense of relief among the permanent members that the Secretary-General and the staff can get on with it. Is it too unfair a question to ask each of you: can you give me an example of an ongoing, abiding conflict situation that does not directly affect the P5 on which a Secretary-General might profitably focus their attention?

Lord Malloch-Brown: The Democratic Republic of Congo or South Sudan are examples of conflicts that, just because they have been so intractable for so long, have come up the agenda

and in some ways begun to impact permanent members' concerns too, really should be dealt with at the UN level. I would say that Somalia is another case of that, where there has been very important British support, et cetera, but these are really issues that will need occasional, decisive interventions from member states to give backbone to a UN mediator's efforts but where the bulk of the work should be put on to the shoulders of the UN. It is worth saying that the political side of the UN—the good offices, the proactive mediation, which was referred to when this master of the art, Brahimi, did much of it in the past—really has withered on the vine in the last years. There is just not enough empowered, ambitious, creative political mediation and diplomacy coming out of the UN at the moment.

The Chairman: Sir Emyr, we are coming to the great powers and the P5 old chestnut issue that we have been battling with for years. Lord Grocott is really asking whether there are things that the P5 do not get involved in because they do not worry, or whether they are so agreed on them—like on South Sudan, where the Chinese are fully involved—that it begins to become handleable at a UN level.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: There are a number of categories. Primarily, the sorts of things that Lord Malloch-Brown is talking about are issues that do not come within the purview of the Security Council itself. Nigeria/Cameroon was never on the agenda, and there are countless examples of preventive diplomacy, the work of the UN system, actually ameliorating the situation out there on the ground. The truth is, though, that the UN, despite the report that came out in 2005, still does not do enough prevention. Special political missions start, but on the whole the experts, the professionals, do not have sufficient resource or opportunity to get in there and tackle those sorts of issues. They certainly ought to. It is an area that is crying out for more to be done.

There are other issues before the Council where there is less direct interest on the part of any members of the Council, even the P5, and where there is more prospect of getting agreement. The P5 come into play, it seems to me, particularly where each of them has an interest, such as in North Korea—when we are debating an issue of that sort and drafting a resolution, unlike most other resolutions that are drafted by experts and come into the PR only when 5% or 10% need to be resolved. In the case of North Korea, my experience was that we did all the negotiations. That, of course, is because the P5 had a direct interest. Mobilising the P5 then in getting an agreement is an art form, and it depends crucially on the relations between, the interests of, and how they are prepared to sit down. On occasion, I have witnessed situations where we have all pulled together and had has worked, and others where there has been an immediate conflagration and you are trying to pick up the pieces. It depends on the issue. Sometimes it is intensely difficult, and individuals can play a very direct part in making it more difficult.

The Chairman: That takes us on to the great-power P5 relationships. Lord Hannay has a question on this and wants to talk about the Americans.

Q48. Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Indeed, because the timing of the US election, of course, is slightly awkward with regard to the report that we are writing, in the sense that this report will be finished and published before 8 November, so it will have to be done in ignorance of the outcome of that election. On the other hand, as I think both of you have experienced, it is the Americans above all who make the weather in New York. They can cause complete marginalisation of the UN or they can put a lot of resource, diplomatic and otherwise, behind it. Could you give us a bit of help in identifying the likely characteristics of a Trump or a Clinton presidency with respect to the UN? I think that we will have to speculate a little about that ourselves because of the timing of the report.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: This is a difficult question for me, because I am conscious that the questioner is better placed to answer his own question than I probably am, but let me have a shot. We have both lived through an experience of working with the United States Administration and in particular with a Permanent Representative that is less than comfortable and made life exceedingly difficult. If such a PR is appointed by a President Trump, and if there is a Secretary of State to back it up, life will be pretty difficult in the United Nations building, of that I have no doubt. If, on the other hand, there is a President who believes rather more in the United Nations system, there is a prospect of working with, but the individuals will have a direct effect. The politics will be difficult in any circumstance, because the UN is not widely supported in Congress and I do not think that public opinion in the United States is hugely in its favour. Looking back to the 1990s, Richard Holbrooke made a particular effort to get the Security Council and the Secretary-General on terms with Congress in order to tackle the budget contribution and the US debts that they owed to the UN system. A major effort will be needed with Congress, with the Administration, to emphasise what the UN stands for and what it can achieve and to try to present that in terms that are non-threatening but that can be seen to support some of the objectives of the United States Administration, whatever it is.

The Chairman: Do you have a thought on that, Lord Malloch-Brown?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Just that if it is President Clinton, there will obviously be a significant degree of continuity. Arguably, things could even be a little better, because while President Obama was an absolutely convinced multi-lateralist as he came into office, he has in some ways been quite frustrated by multilateralism, which has not always given him the results that he wants, and multi-lateralists have been frustrated by him because on issues such as Syria he has not offered the backbone that many of them have wanted to try to get to a peace agreement. A President Clinton who is very close to the more muscular Madeleine Albright when she was Secretary of State and Ambassador to the UN would look to have something in the Albright mode. Indeed, the current US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, would also have wanted a bit more muscularity behind her. With a President Trump, Emyr is evidently right: it would obviously be very difficult. But I suppose that if you were looking for a silver lining, you would say that if issues were not of direct concern to the United States he would have no interest in the US engaging or pursuing them, so in a strange way he would leave more of that space for the UN, but whether it would have the resources or authority to do much in that space would remain to be seen.

The Chairman: There was also a story running—indeed, it is today—that Mr Trump would be rather more friendly to President Putin. Most of us have grown up in a world where the whole thing has been stymied by Russian-American hostility even after the end of the Cold War. It is quite a big thought, is it not, that if the modalities began to change there it might unlock a lot of opportunities.

Lord Malloch-Brown: I certainly hear from Russian diplomat friends tremendous enthusiasm, which I think is very genuine, for the Trump campaign. I do not think they look at it as something sinister where they somehow have a Manchurian candidate. If they did, they certainly would not confess it to the likes of me. They just look at what they see as Trump's "Let's do a deal" view of the world as one that is much more amenable to transactional diplomacy with Russia than what they see as the ideological opposition of the current foreign policy establishment in Washington—and in their eyes, for that matter, in much of Europe.

The Chairman: This takes us on to Lord Jopling's question about how the Secretary-General handles this whole scene.

Q49. Lord Jopling: Lord Grocott raised the issue of the P5, but let us talk about the rather wider issue of the scope of the Council. How would you both, with all your experience, advise a new Secretary-General to deal with the Security Council, and how best do you think he or she could avoid being seen as a poodle of the Security Council or as being at daggers drawn with the Security Council? It is quite a difficult role to hold. What advice would you give that new person?

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: I think I said earlier that the important thing about 100 days is to establish relations. The new Secretary-General's links, relations, with the individual members of the Council will be very important, and of course in no time there will be a new Security Council with five new members. Getting on terms with those is important, and perhaps spending more effort on it than has been customary would be a good idea, as would trying, especially with the P5, to establish a common agenda, a vision aspect.

The point about the Security Council's agenda is that 60%/70% of it is predetermined for you. When you assume the presidency, the Secretariat gives you a list of things that you must debate in the next month. Reports are due, and there are resolutions that need to be rolled over, or whatever. The question is what you do with the other 25%/30%—the creative element. It is important to try to get some understanding betwixt the Secretary-General and the Council; to work with, to challenge but not necessarily—at least initially—confront the Security Council but to develop this relationship. The Secretary-General's power to refer an issue under, I think, Article 101—

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Article 99.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: —Article 99, thank you—to the Security Council is seldom used. We need rather more of that. At the same time, he has to work very closely with his links, with all the other organs; you cannot appear to be a puppet. But “working with” should not mean that you are seen to be subservient or in anyone's pocket. That comes back to the political skill of the individual. It is important to work with it but distance yourself sufficiently from it. Bear in mind that the Council decides, and the Secretariat and the Secretary-General in considerable part do not influence what the Council decides; it is the member states and whoever holds the pen for that particular subject. You are concerting with the Secretariat, but I found in particularly difficult situations that you were basically on your own; you were dependent on your capital, your colleagues in the mission and your allies on the Council. The Secretary-General's role was not so great in the direct operation of the Council.

Lord Malloch-Brown: I would just add that the failure of Security Council reform, now more than 10 years ago, left a legacy of bitterness that is still very evident. You have a lot of anger between the General Assembly as a whole and the Security Council, and within the Security Council between the permanent and the non-permanent members, which is exacerbated particularly by the process that Emyr refers to, which is that the P5 in most cases still retains the pen to write the key resolutions. There is a lot of built-up resentment about the three-class citizenship of the current UN membership. It has always been there, but it has reached very significant levels, and a new Secretary-General will have to find a way to make sure that all three constituencies—the GA as a whole, the non-permanent members and the permanent members—each believe that they own her, or a part of her, because if you get any one of these groups thoroughly disenchanted and against you, your capacity for effective action is diminished.

Q50. The Chairman: We will perhaps have just one more question on that and will come to aspects of China in a moment, which is the new giant on the scene. Is it possible that China

might end its “me too” attitude vis-à-vis Russia and begin to move away, and might that create a more handleable situation for a Secretary-General?

Lord Malloch-Brown: It would. There are issues, such as on South Sudan, where we are seeing a very clear China policy, as you mentioned. The Chinese, unlike many of the other P5, are now a significant contributor of peacekeepers. They are on African disputes, particularly in countries where they have investments around natural resources, proving to have a bit of an independent voice. It has been interesting that on the selection of a new Secretary-General, on the one hand they have rather imperially sat in Beijing and the different candidates have come and visited them, but when they have got there—an interesting point—the Foreign Minister has seen each of them, whereas that has not been the case, for example, here in the UK. Finally, they have retained much a greater discretion about how they are actually voting in these straw polls. There are two votes against Guterres. The assumption in New York is that one is Russia and the other, strangely, is New Zealand—because there is a New Zealand candidate—but it could be China. We do not yet know, because these are not colour-coded ballots, but I think the question is correct: the impetus is towards a more independent Chinese position at the UN. Balance against that the fact they, like the Russians, look at this as still a heavily American-dominated institution and therefore I think they are going to be careful to continue to co-ordinate heavily with Russia on things, even when they disagree.

Lord Wood of Anfield: I have a quick question while we are on the dynamics of the P5 and the Security Council. Do you think that the referendum vote in this country will have any effect on the way Britain is regarded inside the Security Council, or on our standing in the Security Council, in the medium term?

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: I shall start by making one point about the British representation in New York. For the most part, it is the most effective and best regarded in terms of its contribution. We have always, with one exception—my own, I will say—sent the best people to New York. It is recognised as a very effective team. In my time, there was one moment when there were five EU member states sitting on the Council; two permanent, two elected from the WEO group, and one from the eastern European constituency. It was an anomaly, but there were five. That was a wonderful basis for starting any discussion in the Council. Post-Brexit, the United Kingdom will be in a position where we will be part of none of the massive EU co-ordination that takes place in the UN system.

There has never been EU co-ordination for the Security Council, but there has been intense interest among the other member states about what happens in the Security Council. There is a close relationship among those from the EU sitting in the Council, and we were thinking with one accord most of the time, instinctively. That will be lost, and we will be detached from the basis of working with that grouping. The whole question of how we attach ourselves, if we want to, with a common foreign security policy is going to be very difficult. I do not see a model in how the United States, Turkey and the EEA link up with it. Normally in the UN system, if a statement is made in the General Assembly on behalf of the European Union, it says, “the European Union ... and the following countries associate themselves with it”. It is normally a very impressive list of countries, but they have no part in the decision-making or in shaping what the EU is going to say. They see it and they add their names to it. We are not going to be part of that.

The UK Permanent Representative and his team traditionally have to work very hard simply to demonstrate that, by virtue of that efficiency, they are well-regarded, despite the anomalous position of being a permanent member—or perceived by most people as being anomalous. Traditionally, that UK team works flat out and delivers. It will have to do that in spades,

because it will be detached from the EU family. This belief that we can suddenly jump into bed with others and that everything will be wonderful—it does not work like that. Politics and events lead us; situations determine what you inherit and how you work. I inherited a post-Iraq invasion situation with all the complexities of that. I had seven United States colleagues in four and a quarter years: seven. Three were acting, but for periods of three months, and of the other four, three were confirmed and one not confirmed. Getting a relationship with the United States was in some cases quite easy—there have been some outstanding United States representatives, and those who were lucky enough to work with those benefited from it—but if you do not have that, post-Brexit life will be really quite difficult. At the same time, we will want to say that with this wonderful freedom that we have, liberated from the European Union, we can use all our influence, et cetera, and we will be better placed. That seems to be the argument. I just suggest that in practice it will be that much more difficult and the team will have to work that much harder to justify a continued position as a permanent member. I have every confidence that they will do it, but it will be even harder.

The Chairman: Lord Malloch-Brown, may I just add a rider? Does the Commonwealth ever caucus at the United Nations?

Lord Malloch-Brown: It does. A handful of Commonwealth countries—I think this is still correct—are in common premises in terms of their representation, subsidised by the UK Government. I am not surprised that you have added that codicil. I remember many times as a Minister when you asked me, “What about the Commonwealth?” If I may, I will answer at a rather fundamentalist level, because I think this is a dangerous issue for the UK and requires thoughtful handling of our position at the UN post-Brexit. I agree with everything that Emyr has said and would add that he was pretty good at PR too. We have been lucky with really first-class representation, and it is recognised across the membership that we have very smart people in our delegation and in its leadership. The Brits have always been terribly good at indicating that they have the broader interests of the UN at heart. That is part of how you deal with the anomaly that if the permanent membership was determined today, possibly neither Britain nor France would have seats. How we have extended our lives is that, unlike the P3, we try to be solicitous of the interests of the UN as an institution and the body of principles that it is obliged to stand for. The great mistake would be to think that, liberated from the EU, we should in the UN go back to pushing a strongly national agenda. Our way of preserving ourselves in this preferential status at the UN is to redouble our efforts to show that we consider the whole UN our constituency and that, as a P5, we will act beyond our own interests in that broader interest of the organisation. A good starting point for that is how we acquit ourselves in our role in selecting a new Secretary-General. We should be demanding quality and refusing to fall in with a backroom deal between the major powers that produces a less than optimal candidate, for example. That would be the kind of position that would earn us the respect of the broad membership.

The Chairman: Thank you. The time is getting short, but Baroness Coussins would like to go into the machinery side of things.

Q51. Baroness Coussins: I would like to ask about the reform of the UN system and its effectiveness as an institution. As I think you have both said, or at least hinted at, it is one thing to identify the geopolitical priorities but quite another thing to deliver. The UN seems to have a dreadful track record in producing umpteen reports on reforms, all of whose recommendations are agreed, with none of them being implemented, going back to the 1960s and the report by the wonderful Margaret Anstee, who sadly died recently. What advice would you offer to the incoming Secretary-General to turn that around and be able to implement reforms? What would you identify as the key barriers to reform? You have

mentioned recruitment and teambuilding, but there is the whole gamut of the bureaucracy, including budget allocation, which has been persistently recommended for reform throughout the history of all these reports. To extend the question slightly, one aspect that has come up from other witnesses with whom we have talked is the need for the UN to co-ordinate better between the three key pillars of peace and security, development and human rights and how the structure of the UN could deliver better on that. Do you agree with that analysis? In particular, could the UK do anything to help to spearhead or drive the kinds of reform that you would identify as important?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Having been one of those quixotic reformers who has taken more than his fair share of tilts at the windmill, I would say that your point about budgets is critical. I had run the UN Development Programme, a large independent organisation just on the other side of First Avenue from the UN proper. When I went from there to be Kofi Annan's chief of staff and then deputy, I could not believe the relative freedom that I had had at UNDP versus within the Secretariat. The UNDP is broadly left alone within its envelope of resources to deliver development results. There are lots of problems, but it kind of works as it is meant to. In the Secretariat, however, there is an extensive committee structure, which literally ticks the box on every single post and expenditure line and gives very little flexibility for shifting resources between them. I have been in various seminars of other UN reformers where the basic point—I have argued it—is to give a new Secretary-General space to manage and then hold them accountable for results. Pull back those committee structures and make them much more results-focused rather than process-focused. Those changes are in the wherewithal of member states, as they are the ones with large delegations of second secretaries sitting on different management and administration committees with massive vested interests in keeping these structures. What needs to happen is the burning down of those structures to create a much more streamlined results framework and assessment of performance against it. As I say, a fire needs to be lit under the committee structure.

The Chairman: Sir Emyr, do you have an additional thought on that?

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: What are the barriers? There is inertia and resistance to change, although the UN is not unique there. There are the vested interests of organisations, member states and individuals. The efforts made in 2006-07 to try to get a more co-ordinated approach to the disbursement of development foundered in large part because some member states and a number of UN organisations did not want their power, as they saw it, to be affected by co-ordination and leadership by somebody else. So vested interests are very important. Politics jump up there, as do traditional conflicts. Also, as Mark says, there is the behaviour of member states. None of us is immune from that. Lord Malloch-Brown described how the Secretary-General should have the choice to put together his team, but that is not the way some Governments, including the United Kingdom's, have worked in the past, when they have said, "This is our candidate and we insist that we have that post". That is not fair to a Secretary-General. The French Government make a habit of giving two or three nominations for a particular job and at least the Secretary-General can appear to be exercising some degree of choice. If those are the barriers, I agree that allowing a Secretary-General to lead and to run is necessary. One who is prepared to do those things is also necessary. The emphasis on delivery and implementation has not been there, in my view. I talked earlier about conflict prevention. I remember a case when the Secretary-General was asked in a meeting, "How many extra people did you get in the budget for conflict prevention?" The answer was eventually produced by somebody who said, "One and a half people". What was interesting was the derisory number and the fact that the Secretary-General's team did not seem aware of how many they had. That tells you a lot about where the emphasis ought to be.

As for what we need to reform, there is the budget process, prioritisation, measuring outputs—not just what you put in but seeing how effectively you do things—and seeing exactly what is being done to hold people accountable. The member states seem to believe that through this system, as Lord Malloch-Brown described, they are holding the administration accountable. They are not. They are interfering so much, but there is no actual accountability. What we need is better accountability, but a freedom at the same time to be able to get on and do. Those two go together. The UN also needs to focus better, of course, on tomorrow's challenges and not yesterday's battles. The Department of Political Affairs is, I think, still structured to deal substantively with post-colonial issues—"to get countries into independence"—and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Actually, there are other priorities that that department ought to be focused on, but again the member states have slots that they have held for the last 40 years within the DPA and they are not prepared to relinquish them. So the member states have a heavy responsibility to back off and allow people to manage and at the same time to hold them accountable more effectively for how they are managing.

The Chairman: There is a final question, a very important one, but I have to ask for nutshell answers to it. I almost feel that we need another session to deal with it because we are very tight on time.

Q52. Baroness Hilton of Eggardon: In your opening statements you said that we live in a more complicated world, with a proliferation of terrorist groups and so on, so that the whole peacekeeping role has become very much more difficult. It is no longer between two clear warring factions, it has become multifaceted and it is not quite clear whether we should be supporting one side or the other, or whether we would end up being in more trouble if we do. It is suggested that perhaps our role should be more about protecting the civilian population, rather than taking sides. How do you view that suggestion?

Lord Malloch-Brown: It is an enormously important one. Most resolutions now have a reference to protecting civilian populations, but the actual peacekeeping forces as assembled often do not have the police skills to do that, as against the military skills, or the numbers. Because it is often a much more broadly based, geographically distributed task than just manning some border posts. We do not have fit-for-purpose peacekeeping forces, which then brings up issues such as the terrible recent record—or the not so recent continuing record—by peacekeepers of sexual violence and other things. In truth, this is the classic case for reform that I put forward 10 years ago under the Secretary-General: a set of reforms to peacekeeping that were all about better training, better unitary command under UN control, better and quicker mobilisation of forces, more appropriate forces, more opportunity for leave, more opportunity for sports and other things, in order to get a more trained and better behaved and disciplined force. It all costs money. It did not go anywhere. It was after your time, Emyr, but the UK was one of its opponents because it cost money.

The Chairman: It is a huge subject and we ought to be dealing with it at much greater length, but do you have any final observations?

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: I can say very quickly that peacekeeping is based on the assumption that there is a Security Council resolution, which now always includes the protection of civilians and the use of force to do so, and provision of troops generated by the UN system, funded by a special budget, but there has to be a peace agreement and consent of the parties. That is the traditional role. It needs looking at desperately. In Cyprus, we have been going for 42 years with a peacekeeping operation. Is that justified in today's terms? Personally, I doubt it. But the challenges that we confront are very different. Part of why the UN needs to reform is to address those other issues, through special political missions, mobilising with regional organisations and working in all sorts of ways. But there are different models emerging.

Darfur and Somalia are distinct, and the challenges about what you do about terrorism and other issues have to be addressed, as well as reforming the classic peacekeeping operation.

The Chairman: Lord Inglewood, can you just slip in your China question right at the end?

Q53. Lord Inglewood: We have seen problems between the Secretary-General and P5 members who might decide to go in their own direction. We obviously have the instance in front of us of China's defiance of the court's ruling in the South China Sea. Do you think the Secretary-General should engage and, if so, what do you think his options are?

Lord Malloch-Brown: This is a classic case of what Emyr was talking about earlier: pick your fights. It is at the moment a legal fight where in the opposing country, the Philippines, the new President is not even clear whether he is going to stick on his legal rights on this. I think the Secretary-General should insist that this process stays in legal channels for as long as possible, and try to press the Chinese to respond in that forum, rather than by further militarisation of the situation in the South China Sea. So I think he has to exert pressure, but it has to be done behind the scenes. It is not about trying to get into the rights and wrongs of it, but trying to insist on a legal as against some kind of military solution to it.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: I would simply add, due process, legal, and at the same time the closest possible links with the different parties to make sure that no one does anything stupid.

The Chairman: So, there we are. It is a huge subject and you have imparted some fascinating information to the Committee. We are very grateful, but we are over time and I think we would really like to continue this at other opportunities. In the meantime, thank you very much indeed.

Examination of Witnesses

Baroness Amos, Former Secretary of State for International Development, Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief, and Director of the School of Oriental and African Studies

Q54. The Chairman: I now ask Baroness Amos to join us. First, I promise that we will get you away on time at 12.30 pm; I know you are under a very heavy schedule and we are very grateful to you. As a formality, I am required to inform you that this is a public session, it is webcast and there will be a verbatim transcript, which will come to you afterwards and you can make changes to it. You are familiar with these things, I know. You are also very familiar with a great many of the issues that we are trying to look at as we formulate a suggested agenda, or set of priorities, for the new Secretary-General, whoever she or he may be. We shall start with an overview question about the UN development system generally. We heard earlier that it ran as a rather separate show from the UN Secretariat, although it had many problems. How would you assess the state of development activities, and where do think the priorities should lie for a new Secretary-General?

Baroness Amos: Thank you for inviting me to give evidence to the Committee. On the priorities for a new Secretary-General, particularly around development, a huge number of priorities have already been set around a policy agenda as a result of the numerous summits and conferences that were held last year. There was one on climate change, one on sustainable development, there was a humanitarian summit this year, a financing for development

conference, and there is a refugee meeting coming up. The enormous challenge faced by the United Nations is the rise in conflict-related disasters around the world and the length of time that it takes to get a country back on track. The average length of time that a person is displaced as a result of conflict is now a staggering 17 years.

The Chairman: Seventeen years?

Baroness Amos: Seventeen. Some 63.5 million people across the world are either displaced internally or are refugees. We have a system that was established for humanitarian work and for development work, and the two have very different ways of operating. Actually, what we have today does not work effectively for the nature of the crises that we have currently. On the humanitarian front, which was developed for a quick going in and out to support people in the midst of conflict and basically to stabilise a situation, and then for development work, which was meant to be longer-term support to countries working in very different ways, the two do not work as closely with each other as they should because they have different operating practices.

Also, the humanitarian phase of a crisis now takes much, much too long. Because there is a greater degree of flexibility and ways of working on the humanitarian side. The development side of the UN's work is essentially with Governments and takes place principally through the funds and programmes, which in governance terms have a separate governance mechanism from the core United Nations activities. The incoming Secretary-General will not necessarily have a huge amount of control over the development side of the system. The UN Development Programme has a separate board and UNICEF has a separate board. All the funds and programmes have separate boards that determine their priorities, and they see themselves as slightly separate from the overall UN system.

The Chairman: And presumably, while we are dealing with a civil war, or the horrors of Syria, which you have been very involved in, the parties that are fighting are not too interested in development anyway. That is not their priority, so a detachment occurs between the development aspirations and the fighting and security aspirations, and the ghastly result is the humanitarian crises that we see all around the world.

Baroness Amos: Yes, that is absolutely true, but it is also more nuanced than that. To give a couple of examples, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo the peace agreement was signed a long time ago and the world continues to pour in a huge amount of humanitarian assistance in the east, in the Kivus. The rest of the country is volatile but is not in the midst of the same kind of conflict that there is in the east. Yet the Democratic Republic of the Congo is treated essentially as a humanitarian crisis. I am not saying that a huge amount of development does not go on in other parts of the DRC, but if you look at how much money has been spent on a peacekeeping mission, on humanitarian intervention, as well as on elements of development activity, the question has to be asked as to why, over the years, we have not been able to establish the rule of law, for example, which is so critical in a country like the DRC. The approach has to be much more nuanced.

The same applies to a country like Somalia. Clearly, parts of the country are under the control of al-Shabaab, but in parts of Somalia that are relatively peaceful—Somaliland and Puntland—there is a lot of more stable activity. The way we think about a crisis in a country helps to determine how we respond.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I shall follow up a little on this, because it is an interesting area. If I understood rightly, you were suggesting that there are rather a lot of countries around the world where classical development policies cannot be applied because there is no security and because there is an ongoing conflict, either an internal one or less often an external one. Yet

the DAC1 guidelines make a very clear, black and white distinction between what you can and cannot do and seem to inhibit, for example, greater and more flexible activity in dealing with insecure, failed states and—to bring in another area—with migration, which is hugely important now. Do you think that the new Secretary-General ought to try to give a lead in greater flexibility in applying things like the DAC guidelines? I do not know whether that involves changing the guidelines or simply applying them more flexibly. Because that, it has been suggested to me by many people, is really rather important.

Baroness Amos: There are a number of challenges relating to the guidelines, but I shall touch on just two. One is the issue of fragility, which you have raised. There was a meeting in Busan in Korea precisely to begin to address some of these issues—a fragile states agenda to inform the development work of the United Nations, its agencies, NGOs and others. At the other end of the scale you have middle-income countries. How do you work in development terms in those countries, and where does the aid go? India is a classic example, because it has huge numbers of some of the poorest people in the world but it is also a country with huge aspirations that is looking towards having a space programme, for example. Ordinary people ask, “Why should our aid money go towards supporting a development programme in a country such as India when it has these other aspirations in the longer term?” The reality is that if you look at the numbers of poor people in India, clearly there is a case to be made.

Our development system has expanded and reformed over time, but one thing that a new Secretary-General could do is ensure greater and more in-depth strategic and policy thinking around some of these issues. These guidelines, of course, were developed and agreed. One thing that people in multilateral institutions do not like to do is open these things up for new scrutiny, because it takes so long and because sometimes you lose the positive elements of what you already have. I remember in my case, on the humanitarian front, not wanting to open up the principles under which humanitarian work is conducted internationally because I felt strongly that we would not get now what we already had if we opened it up to look at it again. That is an area that a new Secretary-General will have to look at.

The Chairman: Lord Grocott, would you like to press on into the humanitarian aspect in particular?

Q55. Lord Grocott: This may be a “how long is a piece of string” question, but all the evidence that we get is about the gap between humanitarian need and resources. First, can you give us any indication of how big that chasm is? Secondly, can you give us an idea of whose responsibility that primarily is? You can perhaps be a bit less discreet now that you are no longer in the front line in the same way. I suppose that implicit in this is how we put it right.

Baroness Amos: The latest figures are for 2014, because, as you can appreciate, there is a gap between pulling all the data together and producing a report. In 2014, the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report* showed that the total amount of assistance asked for was \$24.5 billion, of which the United Nations asked for \$19.5 billion. The gap between what the United Nations asked for and what it received was \$7.5 billion. That is a lot of money, but there is a huge “but”. I feel strongly that this is not all about money. Why do I say that? Sometimes there is collusion between humanitarian organisations and donors, in the sense that because you know that the donors are not going to give you all the money that you want, you inflate what you ask for. You have a sense that they might give you about half. I am not saying that you necessarily double the figure, but there is a degree of inflation because of the recognition of that reality. That is one element, but it is not the major element and I would not

¹ The OECD Development Assistance Committee

wish the Committee to go away with the idea that this happens across the piece for everything.

You also have some appeals that are very well-funded and then some countries that frankly fall off the bottom. When I was at the United Nations, trying to get money for the Central African Republic was an uphill struggle. If you speak to any member of the public, they do not have a clue where it is, even though part of the clue is in its name. It does not really have a champion, although France is a bit of a champion. Nobody much cares what goes on there. It does not have a strategic position. Although it now has a peacekeeping force and so on, as a result of a couple of members of the Security Council becoming real champions for it, it is an example of a number of countries where this happens. There are also places where you get continued underfunding, because people ask, "Is that crisis still going on?" One such country is Sudan. People say, "I thought you solved that a long time ago. What is there still to do?"

It is also important for the Committee to remember that, as well as humanitarian financing, \$8 billion a year goes into peacekeeping, and there is all the money that goes into development, some of which should go into resilience, while very little money is spent on prevention. About \$600 million a year is spent on political prevention, including mediation, at the United Nations. Compare that to the huge amount going into peacekeeping and humanitarian development and it is very clear what one of the priorities for a new Secretary-General should be.

Your next point was whose fault this is. Some of that goes back to what I said at the beginning, which is that the humanitarian phase of a crisis goes on way too long in some places, so it is harder and harder to raise money. There needs to be a much closer relationship in these fragile states between the work that is being done on the peacekeeping side, the work on the humanitarian side and the work on the development side. My experience is that often, when things get really tough, as happened in Syria or Yemen, one or two countries will step up and find the resources. The United Kingdom has done that on many occasions, as have the United States, the Nordics and others, depending on the situation. This whole area of humanitarian financing—a panel looked at this last year—needs to be reviewed. To look at humanitarian financing completely separately from development financing will not work. It reinforces the silos. What we know from the way in which the crises have an impact in these countries is that it is all joined up.

The Chairman: Are we not to some extent also in the hands of the media and the public? What really moves public opinion are the visible signs of the horrors of refugee camps—the sort of the things that you have personally visited—with the suffering and the cruelties of the weather and lack of food and so on. That is what really creates the pressure from the public and the media, often on Governments. What would you say about that?

Baroness Amos: I think that is partly the case, but the Governments who are really good and effective will have a clear, strategic approach. In some countries, donor Governments between themselves will perhaps say, "We'll focus on X and another country will focus on Y", so that you are spending the resources as effectively as you can. But more and more donors are wanting to determine specifically what the money goes on. Again, that becomes very difficult, because the core funding that you require just to keep the system going goes down and down year on year. If you have donors with favourite countries that they want to put money into because of historical relationships, or because they have communities from those countries, so there is a domestic political imperative or push, again, it means that the resources get out of synch.

Q56. Lord Purvis of Tweed: We have received quite a lot of evidence suggesting that structural change in the UN should not be a priority and that the new Secretary-General could get bogged down, but can what you outlined be delivered without quite significant structural change to the bodies that were established many years ago, in a different age for different challenges?

Baroness Amos: I think the UN needs to be much more agile in certain areas, and I think you can do quite a lot of this through culture change. There needs to be a great deal more collaborative working, the top of the UN being much tougher on areas where there is overlap. However, and this goes back to the point I made at the beginning, if you have funds and programmes that have a separate board and separate priorities it becomes very difficult for a Secretary-General to say that your focus should be on X and not on Y. Of course, there is also a member-state element. If member states are making decisions about what their priorities are and what they would like to put money into but that are not necessarily the top three, four, five or six core priorities of the fund programme, the agency or the UN Secretariat overall, that also creates an imbalance.

The Chairman: Turning to human rights, Baroness Smith.

Q57. Baroness Smith of Newnham: One of the things we have heard from witnesses and obviously in the public debate is that with the prospect of the UK leaving the European Union, the UK wants to lean into other organisations and to reinforce our commitment to NATO, the Commonwealth and the UN. But we have also heard evidence that a lot of the activity on human rights is done as part of the European Union. What impact do you think Brexit will actually have on that, and what role do you think the UK currently has but might have in influencing the human rights agenda? And what advice would you give the UK in taking the agenda forward?

Baroness Amos: I think the impact of our leaving the EU will depend entirely on what we do about our own Human Rights Act, and what we do about labour protections and other protections that we currently get as a result of being a member of the European Union. If we unravel all that and take ourselves out of that, of course that will have a huge impact on how we are viewed globally with respect to human rights, but it will also have a huge impact on the role we are able to play in the Human Rights Council. There is a commitment at the United Nations to mainstream human rights as one of the three core pillars of the UN's work. That work has to be an important priority for a new Secretary-General. I would certainly want to see the UK continuing to play a strong role at the UN—not just at the Human Rights Council but in making sure that human rights are mainstreamed in the UN's peacekeeping work, humanitarian work and development work. There are some big successes that we can point to with the UN's human rights work—a lot of the work on women's rights, for example, and on protecting children in armed conflicts. Things that we do not necessarily flag up as success stories are very important indeed. So I would want to see the UK continuing to play a big role.

Regarding the other impact that I think leaving the European Union could have, in multilateral fora the UK helps to as it were interpret to the rest of the world what is happening in Europe, and the rest of the world expects us to have a huge, positive influence on that. We will lose that.

I have another concern. We talk a lot about the importance of our relationship with the United States and what that means globally. I think we talk about it far more than the US does. I think there may well be more interrogation of that relationship in multilateral fora, and

that we will actually be seen as followers, rather than partners, in our relationship with the US.

The Chairman: Who might take our place as chief interpreter of EU goings on if we are not in the team?

Baroness Amos: It is quite hard to tell who that might be at the moment, partly because the EU has become so inward-looking. One of the things that really struck me in my time at the United Nations was the outward-facing and very positive role that the European Union had in helping to influence global policy. But I saw that eroded over time, as the EU became much more inward-focused.

Q58. Baroness Coussins: One of the aspects of human rights that I think it fair to say the UK has taken a leadership role in at the UN is promoting the Ruggie principles on business and human rights. What needs to be done by the new Secretary-General and/or the UK to sustain the momentum on those guiding principles?

Baroness Amos: The UK would have to be seen as applying the principles ourselves, very clearly and positively. Again, what happens in international fora—particularly with the P5 but also with other countries that are seen as taking a leading role on some of these perceived-as-sensitive issues around rights and values—is that there is a perception of hypocrisy: that we wag the finger and do not ourselves do what we are promoting. So we will have to be very careful about that, which is why I say that what we choose to do domestically with human rights—the rights and freedoms that we have under the European Convention, for example—and whether we find a way to ensure that those stay enshrined through domestic legislation, all of that will have an impact on the way we are seen.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Following up on this point about human rights, if the UK starts to take a more prominent and independent position on human rights, to what extent do you think that will actually make us much more vulnerable than when we were broadly supporting an EU position? And to what extent will that therefore risk making us a lot more timid about taking up human rights issues, because of our increased vulnerability?

Baroness Amos: Vulnerable in what sense?

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Vulnerable commercially, or vulnerable through the country concerned picking on us and not giving us contracts, for example. If we are rather stropky in some discussion in the Human Rights Council—on our own, as opposed to through the EU—we will be more exposed. My own view, and I would like you to comment on it, is that this will, alas, almost certainly make us more timid about doing these things.

Baroness Amos: Undoubtedly we would be more exposed, but it is also important to say that we were exposed even in the context of working within the European Union, because even if the European Union were promoting a set of principled positions, it did not necessarily mean that every country in the European Union actually backed up those positions in their own practice. We have seen that not just within the UN but within the European Union itself. I share your view that that would make us more cautious. I think that one of the challenges of leaving the European Union will be trying to manage, or balance, this difficult issue of how we maintain economic prosperity and access to the European Union market and other markets while at the same time doing what the British people voted for in voting to leave the European Union, which is to curb migration and immigration. I think that that kind of dilemma is going to occur in a number of different arenas and that we are likely to see it in the area of business confidence as well.

The Chairman: I think that is indeed the circle to be squared, or the square to be circled. Baroness Smith, did you want to pursue anything more on this front?

Baroness Smith of Newnham: No, I think I have been suitably depressed. Unless Lord Grocott wants to tell us all to cheer up, I am happy to move on.

Lord Inglewood: I have one quick question. How much difference does our championing of human rights make in the forum we are considering?

Baroness Amos: I think it makes a huge difference. On human rights, we have to recognise that we have made significant progress over many years. It is not something that changes overnight. In a UN context, very often a report will make recommendations that nobody takes any notice of, but actually 10 years later the time is right and you can begin to work on and negotiate proposals that have been made. On the human rights agenda, I think there has been a lot of chipping away at attitudes and behaviours on which, when the Human Rights Council started, or when it started thinking about some of these issues, you would never have thought we would have made the progress that we have. It is very important that we champion these issues. We have to be careful about being seen to be pointing the finger, being a powerful nation and not ourselves living up to those values. A little humility now and then, indicating that within the UK we continue to have challenges ourselves on some of these issues, goes a long way towards helping other countries to recognise that these are issues that they need to take seriously.

The Chairman: One final question on human rights. Do you think there is enough connection between the human right agenda and aims and the sustainable development process? For example, there is major pressure from the UN and other organisations for enhanced gender equality, but what about the message that any economy that only employs half its workforce, or excludes half its workforce, is not going to develop anyway? Is the UN arena in which you have worked the place where those two thoughts can be put together to give power to both?

Baroness Amos: Again, one of the major challenges for the UN is that it is a member state organisation, so there is always deal making. One issue in relation to that is that while there is a commitment to mainstreaming human rights across the UN's work, there is also the issue of state sovereignty, with many countries saying that this is a cultural issue for us. There needs to be greater challenging, I have to say, from within the UN of some of those attempts to undermine or constrain that work on human rights. This is a founding pillar of the UN's work. The UN's charter makes a commitment to rights very clear. Countries that are part of the United Nations have signed up to these things and there needs to be much greater accountability in the system. One thing is lacking: how do you get countries to hold each other to account for the things they have signed up to but do not deliver? The thing that countries use is their individual sovereignty, and it is not for an organisation like the United Nations to step over the boundaries of that sovereignty. This is another difficult circle to square.

The Chairman: Let us move on to a final area.

Q59. Lord Reid of Cardowan: Yes. Welcome, Baroness. I should probably say "welcome back". My question ranges beyond your own particular responsibilities, but I have no doubt that you will have views on it. The more we look at this question, the more it appears that the UN is increasingly in a rather uncomfortable position, because it is caught in a pincer movement. On one hand, the member state constitution of the UN is increasingly challenged by social, economic, technological and political disputation, or, in this post-Westphalian age, about the exclusive domain of sovereign states, not only by cyber and the technological side, but by economic multinationals and non-state actors. On the other side, there is a proliferation

and a growing strength of alternative fora for engaging in these issues—the G20, regional fora and so on. I suppose my question is a strategic one about the UN: how can the UN retain legitimacy when key international actors are non-state actors and the legitimacy and authority of states is increasingly contested not only by the non-state actors but by social, economic and technological development? In that context, what steps could the UN take to engage more effectively beyond the sovereign state level, with civil society?

Baroness Amos: There were about a million questions in there, but I shall try to address them all. It is not just sovereign states and alternative fora; there is a third element. The UN is an intergovernmental organisation, but the world we have now is much more about citizens communicating directly with each other, through social media and other elements, so the third element is: what are people doing? Actually, people are much less respectful of their Governments and what their Governments are seeking to do. That is a third challenge for the United Nations, because although there is a very elaborate system of consultation with civil society, and they have a voice through those fora, that does not really represent what is happening with people across the world. The UN is in an extraordinarily difficult position when it comes to the questioning of its relevance in today's world.

I happen to believe that we need the United Nations more than ever, but the United Nations has to make its case. It has to make its case with young people, who do not necessarily remember the history of the why the United Nations was formed in the first place and take what we have in the world now for granted. Leaving aside all the areas of conflict and so on, all the work that has been done post the creation of the United Nations and the stability that has been achieved as a result of the creation of the United Nations are taken for granted, so there is a need to restate the case for the importance of the United Nations. We do not talk enough about what the organisation has achieved. We focus all the time on the continuing challenges and on what the UN has failed to do.

How can the UN retain legitimacy? There is absolutely no reason for the UN not to talk to non-state actors. As I said, I think that the \$600 million that is spent on special political missions and mediation is a drop in the ocean. There are only a tiny number of UN sanctions against individuals and countries, as opposed to ones that have been imposed by national Governments, such as the UK and US Governments. Even in the instance of individuals having warrants against them as a result of the ICC², you can still make a case for the importance of doing that, as I did in one instance for somebody whom I had met as a UN official. You liaise with the court and it gives you dispensation to do it. I think that the UN should be doing much more work in making that contact with non-state actors. A lot of it is done through the humanitarian prism, because one of the principles of humanitarian work is that you can talk to anybody you need to in order to ensure that you can get humanitarian aid to the people you need to. In the initial stages of the Syria conflict, a lot of the engagement with the non-state actors was through humanitarian workers. More of that needs to be done on the political side. You can then make decisions about whom you talk to and when, because, as we all know, timing is everything. It is not always appropriate to talk to some of these organisations at the beginning, but there is now such a proliferation of non-state actors in countries such as Syria and Somalia that I think there should be a presumption that that engagement happens at a much earlier stage.

To come to your question about civil society, this is a difficult area. Almost the first thing I was asked in a country that I visited was in the midst of a conflict—I was trying to persuade the Government that they should allow international NGOs into the country to help with humanitarian assistance and that they should be giving more space to their own national

² International Criminal Court

NGOs—was about legitimacy. The Government will say, “We are a legitimately elected Government. Where is the legitimacy of these NGOs? Where does that come from?” The United Nations is tussling with big questions in relation to the way in which elected Governments treat civil society in their countries if they feel that these organisations have a political agenda. There is a lot of that in many of the countries where there is significant conflict. The whole issue of sovereignty is used as a way of marginalising civil society. There has to be a way of persuading countries to listen to their people. One of the mechanisms through which you do that is national civil society. But there is also a kickback against international civil society organisations, particularly on the humanitarian and development front, because they are seen as organisations that come in and take over the legitimate role of government. If you take away what those civil society organisations do, millions and sometimes billions of pounds stop being spent on essential social services—education and health—in those countries, because civil society is taking the place of government in providing those services. There is no easy answer to any of the questions you raise. It is part of the complexity of the current context that we are in.

The United Nations has a role to play in helping to mediate those relationships, but this also partly goes back to what national Governments see their role as being. There are many countries in the world where national Governments have a different relationship to their citizens. Even in democracies—they may not be democracies as long-standing as ours—this remains a major problem.

The Chairman: That is fascinating. Lord Grocott.

Q60. Lord Grocott: Just to follow up on that, it is not always a question of a national Government being worried about an international NGO taking over some national government responsibilities. As is implicit in what you said, NGOs are sometimes seen as taking sides in the disputes going on within the country.

I turn finally to something that we touched on in earlier evidence but not today. We have a lot of experience of development and humanitarian issues through the Commonwealth. What value has that, if any, in the effects that we can have within the United Nations? Is it a factor that is not considered of any significance within the UN? Does it inform and help us in the work that we do at the UN? If so, is that recognised?

Baroness Amos: It is not really recognised. The Commonwealth does not have a lot of resources. The countries of the Commonwealth do not operate as countries of the Commonwealth within the context of the United Nations. People operate within their regional groups, not within Commonwealth groups. Commonwealth Foreign Ministers, for example, have a meeting in the margins of the UN General Assembly because they are all there. Sometimes it is a meeting at Head of State level, but it is a Commonwealth meeting, not a meeting that has an impact on the work of the United Nations. The Secretary-General has an annual meeting with the heads of regional organisations, which includes the Commonwealth—the head of ASEAN³, the Commonwealth and so on. There is an annual meeting to look at strategic priorities, but I would say that the Commonwealth has little or no visibility at the United Nations.

The Chairman: Do you think that might change after Brexit?

Baroness Amos: If it is going to change, it would have to change because the Commonwealth is making that effort. It is not going to change from the UN. The UN is so much bigger. It is a bit like a juggernaut and a Mini.

³ Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Q61. The Chairman: A final, impossible question. Here we are, trying to prepare a set of priorities for the new Secretary-General. With all your experience, what would you put at the top of our UK list, as we present our report?

Baroness Amos: I have six, I am afraid.

The Chairman: I thought you might say that.

Baroness Amos: The first, really, is implementation of the outcome of all those major summits. You have had all these summits. What is going to happen as a result of them? The second is that there has to be a major political agenda, given the rise of instability and insecurity across the world, and using the convening power of the Secretary-General in a highly strategic way to bring major players together to try to resolve some of these protracted conflicts—Syria, Yemen and so on. The third is prevention. Significantly more attention needs to be paid to prevention and peacebuilding. The fourth is changes to UN culture. I talked about having more collaborative working, fewer silos, and more agile, more strategic organisation. The fifth, which I touched on, is mainstreaming human rights. The sixth is accountability: the relationship between accountability and the UN brand. It links a bit to the question from Lord Reid about making the UN more credible and legitimate. If the UN was seen as really being accountable, promoting very strongly those values—that actually happened as a result of member states not being accountable and not living up to those values—it would improve the UN brand significantly and would lead to greater credibility and a recognition of the importance and legitimacy of the UN.

The Chairman: That is very clear and concise. You have written our report for us now, and we can carry on with that work. Thank you very much indeed for your time and your wisdom. We much appreciate your visit here.

Baroness Amos: Thank you, and good luck.