



## Select Committee on the European Union

### Security and Justice Sub-Committee

#### Corrected oral evidence: UK-EU future co-operation on international development

Tuesday 30 June 2020

3 pm

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Members present: Lord Ricketts (The Chair); Lord Anderson of Ipswich; Lord Anderson of Swansea; Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom; Lord Dholakia; Baroness Finn; Baroness Goudie; Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate; Lord Lexden; Lord Polak; Baroness Primarolo; Lord Rowlands.

One-off Evidence Session

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 1 – 14

#### Witnesses

**I:** The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Secretary of State for International Development; Rachel Turner, DFID's Director for Economic Development; Omar Daair, Head of DFID's Europe Department.

#### USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

1. This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on [www.parliamentlive.tv](http://www.parliamentlive.tv).

## Examination of witnesses

Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Rachel Turner and Omar Daair.

**Q1 The Chair:** Good afternoon, Secretary of State. Thank you for coming to the Justice and Security sub-committee of the EU Select Committee. Thank you also to your two colleagues, Omar Daair, the head of the Europe department, and Rachel Turner, the director for economic development. Both are very welcome. We are time-limited to one hour, I understand, so I ask that questions and answers be as concise as possible, because we have quite a lot of ground to cover.

This session is being broadcast, it will be transcribed, and we will make sure that you see the transcript for correction. It flows from the inquiry held our predecessor, the External Affairs sub-committee, into post-Brexit international development co-operation with the EU. There was some correspondence with you, Secretary of State, after that, but there have been a lot of developments since then, which we are very interested to talk to you about. If you agree, because we are short of time I suggest that we just dive in. I shall ask colleagues to put questions to you one by one, taking about four minutes each if we are going to stay within the time.

Perhaps we can get started with a broad picture from you about where we are now. We all studied the Prime Minister's Statement about the merger of the FCO and DfID carefully and we noted that the objective is for aid to serve our national interest, and to unite our aid with our diplomacy in one department, but we would be interested to hear how the reorganisation will impact on the allocation of aid to the poorest countries, not all of which are ones where we have an enormous amount of direct national interest. How will the UK keep its formidable worldwide reputation for tackling poverty in the poorest countries in this new, merged department?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** Thank you, Lord Ricketts, for inviting me to speak in what, as you say, will probably be a wide-ranging series of discussion points. I congratulate you all on your new committee.

The really important factor for me is that development contributes to improving so many aspects of our lives, from security to organised crime and the impact of migration. The Prime Minister is very clear that he wants to put that development expertise right at the heart of our foreign policy, which is what the FCDO, as it will be called, will embody. There are obviously logistical challenges, as you will appreciate, in bringing two departments together, and we have a short window in which to do that, in a technical sense.

The Prime Minister's vision, which the Foreign Secretary and I share, is that we can do so much more to harness the power of our extraordinary, world superpower status as a development deliverer across the globe and to really impact on how those countries can grow. To me, and I think the Prime Minister, if we get it right with our development, a country does not need us any more. The aim is always to help it to go from a fragile state with enormous challenges to a developing country, fully on its own two feet and able to look after its own population and trade.

Singapore 50 years ago was one of the poorest countries in the world, and it is now one of the leading countries in the world. That is always the challenge. I think the Prime Minister is absolutely rooted in wanting to be able to deliver that message—not only to deliver the development that we deliver when we have experts, two of whom are on this call today with me, with an extraordinary depth of knowledge, creativity and understanding of how to help countries with different needs to make best use of UK taxpayers' money and their own resources, but to be able to build partnerships with those countries.

The question of where we spend our aid money in years to come is slightly impossible to answer, honestly, in the same way that, 10 years ago, we did not necessarily spend it in the 32 countries where we spend it today. That will always be a conversation and a development as the world changes and needs change; indeed, there are changes in how we choose to develop our skillsets and bring our unique selling points to the partner countries we want to work with to help them get stronger. Bringing the departments together in the first instance will be our challenge, but then the challenge will be to harness that extraordinary skill, with our global networks, to be as effective as possible in reaching out to those who need it.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I suppose the underlying question is whether poverty reduction will still be a very strong priority for the new, merged department.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** Without a doubt, poverty reduction is a critical element in how the UK wants to deliver its aid spending, quite simply because I always think of the sustainable development goals as a ladder rather than a circle. Every country is on that journey of developing its own self-sustaining capabilities, and no country, if it does not get beyond the initial hard-core issues—water, food, sanitation, survival of your children and a safe environment to live in—can get to the next stage. Whichever countries we are working in, we will want to ensure that those first steps on that ladder can be made as strong and resilient as possible in order to help those countries grow and develop so that they can become countries that we then invest in with economic development tools, helping with business growth through things like the CDC as our development finance institution, and so on.

Poverty reduction will always continue to be a focus, alongside humanitarian work, investment in supporting refugees and countries that support refugees, and so on. Saving lives is always where investing international development money should start.

**Q2 Lord Dholakia:** Secretary of State, can I take you back to the Statement from the Prime Minister? He said that the Foreign Secretary will “decide which countries receive or cease to receive British aid”. Are you aware of government plans to cut off aid to certain countries? What would be the rationale for making such decisions?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** We make those decisions now in DfID; we make conscious decisions to invest in some countries and not every country. DfID focuses on only 32 countries. ODA is spent by other government departments in many other ODA-able recipient countries, but DfID has always focused on a core number. That

has changed over the years. Under the direction of the Foreign Secretary in due course, with the new department, no doubt those decisions will be made according to where there is greatest need, where we can deliver whatever our particular programmes are, where we want to reach out and help, in a number of countries.

DfID offices will be enmeshed with our diplomatic network, so there will be an even stronger network of understanding of a country's needs and how international development funding is required as part of our relationship with that country. It will change over time, as it has in the past; it will just be done under a new umbrella, but with a much more co-ordinated focus. We started, just a few months ago, before Covid disrupted everything, bringing together, in-country, all the constituent parts of UK abroad, under the ambassador or high commissioner as the umbrella of oversight.

In some countries, such as South Sudan, which I visited back in January, because of the nature of the country's crisis state, that hub of UK abroad is very tightly knit—for security reasons and so on—whereas in some countries there has been a much broader spread of DfID activity, ambassador activity, trade activity, perhaps climate change programmes run by Defra, and so on. We had already started to draw this together, to deliver the most coherent message of “UK in-country, here to partner with the country in question and help it to strengthen and grow and become a self-sufficient country”.

**Q3 Lord Anderson of Ipswich:** Good afternoon, Secretary of State. In your letter to our predecessor committee's inquiry in April, you said that you envisaged co-operation with the EU on a case-by-case basis but came out against any formal, institutional structure for co-operation. Yet the Committee thought that we needed, as a minimum, a formal framework for consultation and regular dialogue, not least to avoid what one witness described as “two large elephants trampling around, treading on things and getting in each other's way”. A framework for consultation seems wholly consistent with our status, and that of the EU, as two sovereign equals with much in common. Can you explain why you do not want one?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** The direction of travel will be very much that we will spend all our international development money—our 0.7%—as we choose. At the moment, we are still putting in nearly £1.5 billion a year, and it will take about seven years to taper away to nothing because of our existing programme commitments. We want to be able to go forward and make our choices as we see fit and as the world's needs demand. We have bilateral relationships with many countries, including many in the EU. We work with France, Germany and Norway on all sorts of programmes and projects.

I have no doubt that we will want to work alongside the EU on projects, and I imagine that it will probably want to come in and work with us on some of the projects that we will do in the future. We want to have a clear way of moving forward under our own steam, and the flexibility of working where appropriate. The world does not stand still, nor does the challenge of where the most urgent crises are or where the long-term investments are required, and I hope that the EU and

the UK will work on those projects as they come up. When we get to 2027 and our commitments run out, the plan is to do things on an independent basis.

**Omar Daair:** As the Secretary of State has said, we totally agree about having that sort of dialogue with the EU. It happens with the US, Japan and others. What we were saying in the letter is that we do not think that our position with the EU needs to be part of the negotiations now. We do not need a formal structure to that dialogue to be set up now. We can have that as development experts to development experts. These dialogues can happen in different places and forms. We do not need a set, fixed way of doing it, but the dialogue will certainly continue.

**Lord Anderson of Ipswich:** To be clear, you say that there will be a regular structure for co-operation, or at least there will be regular co-operation. It is just that you resist the idea of a formal structure for that co-operation.

**Omar Daair:** There will certainly be regular discussions. I just do not think that we need to have a formal structure around them.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** We do not have a formal structure around the many bilateral relationships that we have with other major players in the international development donor sector. Our relationships are thoroughly enmeshed. I have discovered that all our experts are a bit like a family. They are an extraordinary team of people in Governments across the world, always working together to focus on the crisis or issue of the day. I have no doubt that that will carry on, but we do not feel we need any formal framework with the EU because we do not have it with anyone else.

**Lord Anderson of Ipswich:** I wonder whether a disadvantage of what you describe is precisely that it does end up reacting to crises and what is immediate. If you had some sort of structure where people met quarterly, or whatever it might be, might that not be a good mechanism for looking ahead, perhaps saying, "If you do this, we will do that", and ensuring that our respective efforts are more effectively applied?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** That is an interesting question. Through the Covid crisis we have created groupings—the coalition of the willing—of donor countries that have substantial development budgets to invest, to work together on this crisis, making sure that we bring our own specialist skills together or, as you say, to lead on something. The work on bringing Gavi together was a UK lead, bringing everybody together globally to get the best outcome and ensure that that critical vaccine investment programme could move forward as effectively as possible. We are working together in a number of other areas.

There are the crisis issues that appear and need urgent discussions, but a lot of the investment is long-term programming in health systems, education and climate change programmes. These have a long programming time, and, at the point at which any programme is put together, those skills will be drawn together in-country.

We find that those who are working in-country know their counterparts and they work closely together. The risk of not being as close as possible is much reduced by that. It has been interesting to see people getting on the phone in a crisis situation like Covid. The Canadians and I have worked very closely, and drawn others together, to harness, as effectively as we can, the impacts that we can have to support countries in a number of areas.

**Q4 Baroness Primarolo:** Good afternoon, Secretary of State. Can I probe those two elements a little further? Clearly the European Union will influence global policy, with or without the UK. From what you were just saying, I am glad to hear that the Government intend the UK to carry on playing a leading role in global international development policy. First, how exactly do you plan to do this going forward? I want to return to the interaction with the EU, but first I want to have a clear view of how you are going to deliver that.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** I cannot give you a full answer yet, because we are literally in the throes of bringing together what the new FCDO will look like in a structural sense. The commitment to 0.7% is undiminished. We are, Omar will correct me, I think the fifth largest international donor in the sector, and that will continue. The EU is of a similar size in the amount of money it invests in international development each year. We will work alongside those other major players to make sure that we lead. We have a governorship at the World Bank, and a number of key roles in all those multilateral banks.

There is an understandable fear that not knowing what the new structure will look like means that it is hard to get a handle on, but the delivery of our 0.7% will continue. In my short time in this role, I have been fascinated to hear from those around the world that the sophistication, transparency and risk management that DfID has developed, and its ability to deliver effectively into programme areas that are often quite difficult and complex, is world respected. At a delivery level, that will carry over into the new department and will be a core part of how the FCDO is able to harness the power of development investment as part of the perspective of the UK abroad.

I cannot answer the question about exactly what it will look like, because we are literally in the process of designing the shape of the new department. But the delivery outputs will be unchanged, and hopefully they will be able to be harnessed even more effectively.

**Baroness Primarolo:** Thank you. I understand that you cannot actually describe the mechanisms, and I am sorry if my question was not clear enough. It was really about the strategic plan for how the UK will maintain a leading role globally in international development policy. I think your answer towards the end was, "We're going to do that by carrying over the same priorities and inputs that we currently have".

If I can take that on, you have also described that the Government will have a desire to continue to influence European policy in this area, as the EU is an influencer of

global policy. Can you explain to me how you intend to influence that European policy and how it will dovetail with the overall plan and delivery of the UK's development investment?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** It is interesting that you describe it in terms of influencing EU policy. I think we all stand firmly together on a platform of wanting to help those fragile countries to get stronger and to help developing countries more widely to become effective trading partners, stable countries where they can make best use of their human capital and have, in our case certainly, a focus on supporting liberal, open and free societies.

That will continue, and we will continue to have our own UK priorities. The Prime Minister is particularly passionate about girls' education. We are trying to grab hold of that. We already have extraordinary programming skills in that space, but we want to help harness the international effort to focus much more impactfully on how we all spend our collective resources to help to make sure that all girls are educated.

It strikes me as self-evidently obvious: why would any country want to miss out on 50% of its human capital to help it to grow as a nation? Clearly, there are many layers of challenge to overcome for some countries to be able to get there, but for the Prime Minister there will be a really strong focus to drive that forward.

We have already started on that work. Your colleague Baroness Sugg is already in charge of that substantial piece of work to harness what we already do and to try to take it on to the world stage. That is a critical focus, in the same way in which, as I just mentioned with Gavi and that now well-understood best-buy in international development, investing in the vaccination of babies and young children has a massive positive impact—it is obviously life-saving—on the country's ability to grow its next generation.

So, it is about picking key areas—climate change will be another—where we are absolutely focused on driving forward and bringing other countries with us to invest with both their international development investment and within their nations. One of the interesting challenges of the sustainable development goals is that they apply to all of us. They apply not only to developing countries but to us too. They apply to every country across the globe. The challenges of trying to reach no poverty, the full education of women and girls—all those challenges exist for everybody.

The Prime Minister is absolutely sighted on wanting to drive forward some key UK leadership roles, and girls' education and climate change will be the two he is keenest to make progress on. I think of the preventable diseases space, where we have been very actively involved and a leader for years. That will continue, because every year you have more, and you have to make sure that you keep looking after it and try to build sustainable health systems in countries, so that eventually they can do so safely and reliably for their children without needing international development support.

Those will continue to be critical areas that we want to lead on and bring others with us to invest across the globe, because if you do not invest in your human capital you cannot make progress.

**Q5 Lord Rowlands:** Let us get down to the impact of Brexit on the international development programme. Within the European Union, we have exercised considerable influence on the strategy as both a participant and a payer. Now, as an outsider, how will we be able to influence that strategic policy? European development policy will still be a major influence in international development co-operation. How can we do this, particularly given the Commission's role, including its power to veto programmes?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** As a third country, in the same way in which we work with other partners—America, Norway, France and Germany—we want to direct our 0.7% and encourage others to support areas of policy that we think are important. That will continue, so I do not have any concerns that those relationships will be different.

The EU has done quite a lot of investing in more middle-income countries. That is clearly its policy choice. The countries eligible are extensive in number. Our focus in the UK's investment has been much more in the lower-income and lower middle-income countries, where we have invested in both poverty reduction and the building up of trade and agricultural frameworks to help those countries to become stronger.

I do not have any concerns that we will or will not influence the EU. We will set out our stall on where we want to continue to lead with our expertise and UK focus on key areas of policy, which for the Prime Minister, as I say, are climate change, girls' education and preventable diseases. We will continue to drive that agenda and work with the EU on policies there.

The question of migration and helping countries to reduce illegal flows is one on which we will no doubt continue to work with them in a number of ways, because that is really important in supporting those countries to keep their young people there both for their own economic purposes and to stop swathes of illegal migration coming into Europe. That will be an area that we will continue to work on with the EU, but I do not have any concerns that we will not have a very positive relationship. Perhaps Omar can add here—he is in this day to day—but I think the relationships remain profound.

**Omar Daair:** The Secretary of State has covered it very well. Influencing the EU's policy is not a goal in itself. It is to deliver our wider objectives. We work closely with a lot of other actors that we are not a direct member with, so we think we continue that in the same way.

We can be confident in this position, because for most of our priority countries we are a bigger donor than the EU as the Commission. They will want to work with us in

the same way that we want to work with them. We will need to try to co-ordinate that, but it will just have to be in a new way.

**Q6** **Baroness Finn:** The UK has a new global Britain strategy for foreign policy, and international development will be part of that policy. In this new integrated security, defence and foreign policy strategy, which will allow us to reassess the ways we engage on the global stage, can you tell us specifically how the global Britain strategy will affect international development policy?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** The Prime Minister's vision is very clear. To put it bluntly, he feels that we are not effectively punching at our weight. We have extraordinary pools of resources that we use in our UK-abroad relationships in so many ways. He wants to be able to harness those to make sure that we get the best bang for our buck—I speak as an accountant—and make the impact that we should.

My view is that we invest a great deal in the multilateral systems, and in cash, but for some years we have not been appreciating how important those relationships are and what we can do with them to drive the agendas that are important to him. In the area of development, 12 years of education for all girls is critical. The climate change agenda is an enormous challenge for the whole globe. We can harness all our expertise by bringing it together into one much more integrated whole to encourage and draw together the global community.

In developed countries, changing behaviour is something we can afford and need to do. In doing so, we set a new direction that developing countries can follow so that they too can do what we believe is important and grow within a net zero globe by 2050. The challenge is to harness and be more proactive in using all the assets at our disposal, be they cash, expertise, or the UK's standing in the world and our support for the rule of law. Our world-renowned diplomatic network can be harnessed to help the Prime Minister and the country to be all that we can be.

**Q7** **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** Over the years, our technical experts have worked closely with their EU counterparts to evolve compromises and consensus policies. Do you see that there is a mutuality of interest between ourselves and the EU?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** Very much so. We will continue to want to work with them in areas where we want to drive forward policy-making for change, supporting whole regions, not necessarily individual countries, to make step-change progress.

Working with the EU may well be one of the key partnerships that we will want to build on. That will not change for now. It works both ways. What will be interesting is that the EU may want to work with us, and we may also want to work with it, perhaps on issues such as migration. The international development community is a coalition of the willing.

Bringing people together on crises or longer-term issues is the route for progressing generational shifts in how the globe sees itself and looks after its neighbours. It is a really powerful group of countries. There is not enough money in the international development pot to fix all the problems, but harnessing that level of cash with the

multiplier effects of drawing in private sector money, and helping technological change, can have an impact on how countries can leapfrog from the situation that they are in now to being strong economies.

**Lord Anderson of Swansea:** You mentioned girls' education as an example. This has always been a key UK policy. Have you been constrained in any way in what we want to do by being part of the EU?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** That is an interesting question. Not that I am aware of. I look to my officials to answer that question, but I do not think so. It is a very co-operative relationship across the board. In any year, countries—or indeed the EU—choose where they want to drive programme decisions, but we will continue to make it one of our central tenets of investment, because we believe in it.

**Lord Anderson of Swansea:** As, presumably, will the EU. But can you give specific examples of where in the past our policies have diverged from those of our EU partners, and where we have reluctantly gone along with a consensus policy?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** That is a good question, to which I cannot give an answer because I have not been in post long enough to know. I look to Rachel or Omar to answer.

**Rachel Turner:** I think of the point you made earlier, Secretary of State, about where we focus our development support financially. It is true that, historically, the European Commission's programming has tended to focus on richer countries than we wanted to. Over time, we did a lot of work with the EU to move the weight of programming towards the very poorest, to engage and focus on fragile states. Something that we felt we were constrained in doing was having the weight of resource going into the very poorest countries. To be fair to the EU, we did manage to shift that policy over time, but there were certainly times when it was definitely a constraint.

Q8 **Lord Anderson of Ipswich:** We provided you with a list, Secretary of State, of six areas where, according to our witnesses, co-operation with the EU was a good idea. I shall repeat quickly what they were: women's rights; women, peace and security; migration; the human aspect of security; least developed countries; and climate change. Do you agree with those six priorities for co-operation with the EU? If so, how will we accomplish that?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** Those are all critical areas where we do a great deal of work already. We will continue to look at them as UK activity. As I said before, if there are specific programmes where we feel there is a synchronicity to working directly in those areas with the EU—or them with us—we would be more than happy to do so.

We continue to be very focused on the whole question of human security and gender violence. Climate change is the great global challenge of our time that we are trying to wrestle with and take big, chunky steps forward, not only in international development but in the UK. The Prime Minister set out some of that

vision in his speech this morning. We will continue to make those key areas the focus of the UK's 0.7% investment. I will, no doubt, work closely with the EU and other major donor nations that want to make inroads into some of those difficult territories.

**Q9 Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate:** We all appreciate the work of UK NGOs, and the delivery of aid of various kinds is often in their hands. The EU External Affairs Sub-Committee inquiry heard from their representatives that between 400 and 500 organisations in the UK are very worried indeed about a shortfall in the money they are able to dispense post Brexit.

I am concerned about that as well, because grants to NGOs through EU aid, or budget lines in Europe, are vital. We are talking about a possible shortfall of over €350 million. You spoke about priorities in your answer to Lord Anderson. Can I be quite sure about the monies that we are talking about here, and that the NGOs will not be starved on the back of some new government priorities in which their priorities, which we mentioned a moment ago, are subsumed into something that is very different from what can be delivered by those NGOs?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** There are a couple of issues there. There was concern last year, when we were moving towards leaving the EU, that there might be a cliff edge for some NGOs and they might be stopped from reaching EU funding. But the Withdrawal Agreement, which is now in place, guarantees that UK organisations remain eligible to bid for all the EU development programmes approved by the end of this coming year and then to be able to implement them through to closure. We obviously continue to contribute to EU funds on a sliding, downward scale until 2027. NGOs will also still be able to bid to implement most of the development programmes in, for instance, the least developed countries through our OECD membership beyond the transition period.

So that concern has been much alleviated now. It was more of a problem last year, before we had actually left the EU, when there was still the anxiety of that cliff edge. The withdrawal agreement has taken that anxiety away.

NGOs bring specialist expertise in one arena of development or another, and they will continue to be able to work with the UK Government and, indeed, other Governments to bring their particular skills. We are very clear where our major areas of interest are—in girls' education, preventable diseases and climate change—but we work in a vast range of programme requirements. DfID, the health department, Defra and BEIS also have substantial ODA budgets which they invest, and they use the skills of all sorts of NGOs within their particular lines of specialism. I very much hope that we will be able to move forward, and they will continue to be critical partners as we do our work.

**Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate:** Much alleviated, but not totally alleviated, particularly by a letter which your predecessor, Alok Sharma, wrote to NGOs, in which he gave financial assurances, in quite a lot of areas, that they would have their funding protected on a longer-term basis.

I am slightly worried by the comments made not, I think, by you but by some of your colleagues in which the whole area of aid—again, this reflects Lord Anderson’s question a short time ago—will be narrowed and truncated and linked much more to returns to this country than has been the case up to now. I am not saying that is a wrong thing, but it is a big worry from the NGOs’ perspective.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** Baroness Sugg and the department’s team have been working very closely with the NGOs recently. There is a reasonable anxiety that, because of the drop in GNI that we are seeing this year because of the pandemic and the shutdown of the global economy for three months, we will have a reduced 0.7%. It will be a smaller pot. We cannot yet identify quite what it will be, but there are some real challenges on which we are working closely with our NGO partners to scope risk and support them as best we can if there are areas that come under challenge.

Going forward, we will continue to build those relationships, as I am sure has happened over the years. There was a time when we did not do certain things and now we do. NGOs have grown up with this. You harness the global specialists to deliver the best programmes to help us achieve our goals.

The question of what UK national interest means is fascinating. Everything to do with development is in the UK’s national interest. If we can help a country reduce its migration of young people, that is in the UK’s interest, not only because it reduces our illegal migration challenges, but because it helps that country to grow, become more stable and move towards being a trading partner with the UK in the years ahead.

There is a synchronicity to all these things that should never be underestimated. To suggest that the UK national interest somehow subsumes others is the wrong way round. We need to look at it holistically: how our investments of taxpayers’ money can help a country to grow and help the globe to become a safer and more stable place.

One of the interesting challenges with how we spend our ODA money going forwards is that the framework is based on a country system. The DAC rules were built in the 1960s around a country system, but a lot of the challenges that impact on the most fragile countries are pan-regional or global, like climate change.

Finding ways to harness our investments and those of our donor partners and the private sector to overcome that becomes much more far-reaching than a simple country programme. There is a big shift coming in the way we, the UK, with our global leadership in this space and in areas of policy that we want to encourage around the globe, can lead. We can lead on there in new ways, because some of the challenges are global.

**The Chair:** I am looking at the time and we still have five questions to cover. Can we squeeze another 10 or 15 minutes out of you in order to complete our very important series of questions? Do you have any flexibility at the end of the hour?

We could usefully use a few more minutes.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** Not much, I am afraid. I am summoned to the Foreign Office. I cannot be late.

**The Chair:** Oh, well. Can we therefore be quite brief with the final questions, because I want to give every colleague a chance to ask them?

**Lord Polak:** I will help the Committee, because my question has been answered already. I just want to say, Secretary of State, that much of your department's work is underappreciated and often maligned in the press, which concentrates on the tiny minority of possibly questionable projects. I hope that the new department will try to address these issues. You do not need to answer.

**The Chair:** Very good. Thank you.

Q10 **Baroness Goudie:** Good afternoon, Secretary of State. I will keep my points short, too.

Bond recommended official development assistance no longer being spent through the EU to reduce the shock of Brexit on the NGOs. Have the Government considered this, and do they intend to advise NGOs on EU funding streams in future? You have touched on this a little bit, but this is really important.

Added to this, how are we going to work with funding from the private sector and trusts working together? This is the new future, especially coming out of Covid.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** As I say, we work very closely with our NGOs. I have no doubt that, as the years progress and our commitment to existing programming slides away towards 2027, the NGOs' relationship with the EU and with us will continue. Only about 10% of our total ODA spent is with the EU at the moment. Therefore, 90% has always been delivered directly by us. That, and the relationships with our NGOs, which we absolutely rely on and value so much, will continue.

You are right about how we harness the private sector more effectively and much more actively. The private sector is a very live issue now. It is keen to invest, because of course it sees the merits of investing in developing countries and helping businesses to grow. Africa is the biggest future market for so many industries, so there is a huge amount of work to do there to help countries to develop safely and get the best investment they can.

In our work and relationships with the World Bank and other regional development banks, where we have always had and continue to have important roles, harnessing that money and match-funding it with private sector investment is a key focus. CDC, the Commonwealth Development Cooperation, which is a long-standing part of the UK's development investment going back to after the war, is absolutely focused on that investment portfolio, working in the long term with businesses as they develop in developing countries. Rachel might be able to add one or two things, because that is very much her specialty.

**Rachel Turner:** I will make two quick points. As our development finance institution, CDC will continue to work closely with the development finance institutions of European partners. They work closely at the strategic and policy levels, but also with individual transactions where each development finance institution can bring different products and different risk-sharing appetites to bear. It is an important piece of continuing collaboration between the development finance institutions.

In terms of our ambition for the private sector, we are very proud and aware of the great offer we have in the UK, including our financial institutions. We would certainly expect to build on their relationships with developing countries and continue to push forward and support the role of the UK, the City and the financial sector as drivers of responsible, patient investment in the poorest countries, very much as we showed with the Africa investment summit earlier this year.

Q11 **Lord Rowlands:** The Government have indicated that they are open to collaborating with the European Union through the trust funds that exist. Can you enlighten us a bit on how you see this arrangement occurring? Which kind of existing trust funds would you support and favour?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** We will continue to work with all our partners, including the EU, as I say. We have been involved with the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa; Omar can probably give more detail on that. Going forward, those relationships will be about the issues of the day, both crises and the long-term issues on which we want to make headway with our partner developing countries. Omar, do you want to add anything?

**The Chair:** Can I be very directive as Chair and ask Omar to drop us a line on that point?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** That is a very good idea, Chair.

**The Chair:** The Minister's time is running out like sand in a timer. Would you mind, Omar? That would be great. We would appreciate it.

**Omar Daair:** No problem.

Q12 **Baroness Primarolo:** Secretary of State, in your letter you mentioned joint programming as a possible mechanism for future co-operation. Historically, the UK has not been keen on participating in that. Could you explain how the Government intend to make more use of joint programming?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** The reality is that under the new framework there will be existing instruments, and no doubt new ones which the teams will come up with, that are relevant to the challenges that we are trying to help to solve or make progress on. I would not want to pre-empt how the Foreign Secretary might want to work with our amazing teams to do that.

DfID is a very practical organisation. It is all about delivery, and that will continue to be the focus. It will bring a sense of delivery and outcomes-based decision-making to the new department, which will afford many opportunities for the Foreign

Secretary to work with the many partners in international development to tackle the big issues of the day, be they the three big, chunky ones that we are focused on, or the wider ones where we might want to work with particular partners to try to crack a challenge and help a country to move on to the next stage of development.

**Q13 Lord Lexden:** I want to ask about embedding sustainable development within different areas and departments, particularly trade. How do you intend to incorporate this into future potential UK-EU international development co-operation?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** As all the new trade deals start to be pulled together, my teams are very involved with DIT in making sure that issues which affect developing countries are considered and ways to support them are found to move issues forward. Those conversations will be part of the EU trade deal, which is in full swing at the moment. Development is not so much the issue in that deal, but we will continue, as we always have, to work with the trade teams.

As part of the new in-country, single-team mentality, all the trade envoys and commissioners—where there are some in-country—will work with the ambassador in a close-knit way. That is part of the much more single-team focus in-country which we brought in in April. Those trade relationships and activities will be enmeshed with the whole UK abroad team.

**The Chair:** Secretary of State, you have already mentioned the sustainable goals, so I will skip over that and give your last remaining minutes to Lord Arbuthnot.

**Q14 Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom:** Secretary of State, you have largely answered the question I was going to ask, so can we come on to the Covid pandemic? To what extent do you think that the pandemic will affect our international development policy in supporting developing countries with the consequences of the pandemic?

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** I did not hear all your question, but we have been leading the way. When the pandemic hit, we were out of the stocks fast to come up with ways to support the most vulnerable countries. One of the challenges was that western communities were able to lock down very quickly and to support their communities and their businesses financially. Developing countries also locked down relatively fast, probably before the virus had really set to in their communities in quite the same way as in European and American environments.

But the reality is that, because such large parts of their economies are informal, the impacts of those lockdowns are likely to be extensive, and as severe for other issues as the disease itself. So, we are very focused on supporting healthcare systems so that they are not overwhelmed as the disease works its way through those countries. Sadly, we are now seeing increasing numbers day in and day out in developing countries.

The likely impact, however, will be poverty and other healthcare issues. When the Ebola crisis hit, there was a huge spike in maternal deaths because women did not want to go into the healthcare system. So, we are trying to support countries in

other areas where the risk of secondary impacts and deaths could end up being far worse than Covid itself. We are focusing a great deal of energy, alongside our early investment of nearly £750 million into vaccine research and immediate healthcare support, and quite a lot into the refugee space as well.

Those secondary impacts are the ones that we, and indeed many of our donor country colleagues, are working on, and we have diverted quite a lot of programming, which we could not necessarily deliver because of Covid, into thinking about how we can support those countries in those areas. It would be beyond tragic if we found that it was not the Covid disease that caused development to go backwards and countries to find themselves in a really difficult place but other things as a result of shutting down economies. So, there is a lot of work there.

The other thing that is keeping me awake at night almost as much is the locust plague that is ripping its way across east Africa and heading up towards Pakistan. That has the potential to leave millions upon millions in a state of extreme poverty and famine. Working with the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN to tackle that is critical.

Covid is a monster and a really challenging disease that we are all sighted on, but DfID is equally focused on the risk of secondary impacts and deaths from other sources.

**Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom:** The Secretary of State has already answered my other questions, so I will leave it there.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Secretary of State, for packing a great deal into an hour. It was rather a sprint for you at the end, and I apologise for that. Thank you also to your colleagues. There were one or two points where it would be helpful if the team could follow up in writing to us. We will produce a transcript and make sure that you see it. If you are late to the Foreign Office, you can always blame an old FCO PUS for holding you up. That is an easy escape.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP:** I will do that.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much. It is much appreciated. I know that it has been a very busy day for you. We release you at this point and I close the meeting.