

International Development Sub-Committee on the Work of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact

Oral evidence: ICAI's review on the changing nature of UK aid in Ghana, HC 535

Thursday 9 July 2020

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 9 July 2020.

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Members present: Theo Clarke (Chair); Chris Law; Kate Osamor; Mr Virendra Sharma.

Questions 1 - 23

Witnesses

I: James Duddridge MP, Minister for Africa, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development; Philip Smith, Country Director, Department for International Development; Iain Walker, High Commissioner to Ghana, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

II: Dr Tamsyn Barton, Chief Commissioner, Independent Commission for Aid Impact; Sally Ofori-Yeboah, National Director, CAMFED Ghana; Aaron Oxley, Executive Director, Results UK; Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director, West African Civil Society Institute.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: James Duddridge, Philip Smith and Iain Walker.

- Q1 **Chair:** Welcome to our first panel of witnesses for this evidence session of the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI about the changing nature of UK aid in Ghana. I am delighted that we will take oral evidence this afternoon on our first panel from James Duddridge MP, the Minister for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Philip Smith, the country director at DFID Ghana, and Iain Walker, the high commissioner to Ghana.

For my first question, Minister, could I ask what the Government's priorities for UK aid to Ghana are moving forward?

James Duddridge: If you are looking at any country's priorities, perhaps you should ask what their priorities are. Ghana's priorities are getting beyond aid and into a different type of situation and relationship with the United Kingdom and other international partners. My most recent discussions with Ghana have been ones of equals discussing international relations, or more recently with the Vice-President in a virtual meeting looking at ongoing business relations, alongside the development fundamentals we need to establish in partnership with the Ghanaian Government.

- Q2 **Chair:** What lessons have the Government learned from their experience in Ghana over the past 10 years, in terms of helping countries transition away from aid?

James Duddridge: The MDGs and more recently the SDGs have been a very useful benchmark to look to, as has focusing on areas in which we can specifically help, not just the areas that the Ghanaians need help in, but where we have some competitive advantage. Through the Department for International Development, we have a wide range of expertise, not only on the more historic, pure humanitarian side of development, but particularly valuably on the more subtle form of development that allows a country to transition in the later stages out of aid dependency and to being a state that functions through its own resources. There is still work to be done, but this is transitioning the relationship from one state to another rather than the end of a relationship. Our commitment to Ghana is forever.

- Q3 **Chris Law:** This question will be important to all of us, of course, around the merger of DFID and the FCO. Minister, will the merger of DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office lead the UK to reassess its strategic objectives and key deliverables in Ghana?

James Duddridge: These are things we are constantly reviewing, separate to the merger. In the 2014 to 2016 period, I was the Foreign Office Minister covering sub-Saharan Africa. To give you an idea, although we tried to be integrated, I had a visit to Accra at the same time as but completely separate to the DFID Minister. We have already come



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on a stage in appointing seven joint Ministers across the two Departments, but strategically the merger will be more helpful in Ghana than many other countries, where we are transitioning through different stages of aid, as Ghana is, indeed, going beyond aid and having a different type of relationship. There will be change, but I do not think it will be predetermined by a structural change in the UK Government. It will mean that we are fleet of foot in responding to that nuanced change.

In places like Ghana, the main game is not between DFID and the Foreign Office. The really exciting stuff is happening with tax people or central bank people coming over, with much broader HMG experience of how we can help. The high commissioner, Iain Walker, as with all high commissioners, ambassadors and heads of mission, has command and control of the whole of HMG in-country, so these things can be pulled together much more tightly. We do not see the Home Office as being separate from the development offering, which is separate from the police offering and the diplomatic element. It is much more integrated.

Today I have Iain here to assist, but also Philip Smith, our country director. With the permission of the Chair, I might bring him in later for the more detailed and forensic questions about the programme on the development side.

Q4 Chris Law: On that note, this is a question for Philip and Iain. What will you both do to improve delivery and co-ordination of UK aid programmes on the ground in Ghana, especially multilateral programmes?

Philip Smith: The ICAI review shows, hopefully, that we have played a leading role in helping Ghana to deliver many of its pretty impressive development gains over the last 10 years. For me, working in DFID but coming from other contexts around Africa and Asia, Ghana is a pretty specific context. The transition away from aid has many challenges, as the Minister has alluded to. The partnership with the UK is changing from a donor-recipient relationship to a partnership of mutual strategic, political and economic co-operation. Ghana, like many developing countries, is increasingly able to tackle its own poverty and wants to reset the relationship with the UK.

Iain and I have worked together in Ghana for the last three years. It is pretty evident that we need a different approach to development, a much more politically informed approach to ensuring that reform efforts through DFID programmes stick, in which we use the full range of diplomatic tools to encourage Governments of Ghana to make reforms and changes.

We have already started that transition in working differently. We have certainly worked very closely together. We are collectively focused on three things: first, building stronger institutions to help Ghana move beyond aid and recover now from Covid; secondly, focusing on economic development, jobs being the route out of poverty for many in Ghana;



thirdly, remaining committed to leaving no one behind, ensuring our programmes continue to support the most vulnerable and poorest people in Ghana. We are doing that through social protection and our support for mental health, as the ICAI review has set out. We are also upping our game on supporting people with disability.

Iain Walker: To add to that, in terms of how we are co-ordinating our effort, I would see it in two parts. The first is how we have co-ordinated the whole of HMG efforts, so not just with DFID. DFID has done a great job, but as you know we are now using ODA through the Home Office and other arms of the Government. Over the last few years, a big focus has been on co-ordinating and making sure that is all part of one clearly focused set of priorities. Then the second part, as you touched on, is making sure that we lean into the World Bank, the multilaterals, the IMF and others, so we really are engaged with them. We have been for some time and that has been highlighted as almost even more important in the context of Covid, with so much funding going through those bodies.

The first part of the review talks about how this has been co-ordinated. I would say that, in Ghana, we have been trying to talk the language of our Ghanaian hosts, which is about jobs and economic development. We are not necessarily talking about development as an end in itself. If the Government of Ghana are looking for support on agriculture, in that domain there are development opportunities and ways of trying to encourage more private sector participation, by way of example. That is how we have been trying to bring that together so it is a more coherent offer into the country.

Q5 **Kate Osamor:** I wanted to ask a question to Philip and James. What impact will the coronavirus pandemic and economic fallout have on Ghana's view on aid strategy?

James Duddridge: Perhaps I will go first and I will ask Philip to go into a bit more detail. Clearly it will have a massive impact across Ghana. The President is currently in isolation; a number of the Cabinet have been affected. Initially we were aware of a disproportionate number of people in Accra being affected.

In an economic way, going beyond the immediate issues of the health crisis, on which the jury is still out in the UK, let alone other countries where we have less sight of the absolute detail, growth is predicted to come down from 6.8% to 1.5%.¹ That may be reviewed again. We have to remember that Ghana is one of the stars across the continent in the growth story. As in the UK and other growth areas, some of that predictability of constant advancement is factored in, so, although it is coming down to growth levels that others were aspiring to previously across sub-Saharan Africa, it is still going to be very damaging. It is going to put Ghana back on its plan to go beyond aid and move from

¹ Witness correction: **6.5%** to 1.5%', corrected to: '**6.8%** to 1.5%



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current GDP of a couple of thousand to \$4,000 and going into upper middle-income status.²

As in the UK and elsewhere, there is going to be a major impact economically. Also, what we saw from the Ebola crisis was very much a general health crisis, where people going to hospital were not receiving advice, with issues around maternal health and children's health being particularly damaging. Ghana is starting get back on its feet, despite the numbers increasing. Senior year secondary school students are back in Ghana³ and restrictions are starting to reduce out of economic necessity. Alongside that, the reaction from the UK Government and the internationals is very strong. We have repurposed, so basically looked at existing programmes and said, "How can we shift those?" For example, the JET programme on manufacturing has helped manufacture things that would be useful in Covid, so PPE materials in countries like Ghana and Senegal.

We are also leveraging funding from our very large shareholding in the World Bank and the IMF. The Finance Minister in Ghana, particularly, has been very vocal internationally on behalf of the African community overall through the AU in asking for equity injection. The IMF is putting in about \$1 billion through their Rapid Credit Facility in April 2020, some of which is UK money.⁴ That will help significantly. It is going to change the way we transition. We replied to this report virtually as Covid was starting to break. Everything has to be reviewed under the new Covid microscope.

Philip Smith: In the health crisis, we are seeing quite a different epi-curve with quite slow onset. We now have 23,000 cases and 129 deaths, but it is certainly accelerating across Africa. We are expecting across Africa the peak to be in the next couple of months. It has gone very differently to what we have seen in Europe.

On the economic side, we are seeing growth prospects go down from something like 6.7% to 1.5%, and that is still very optimistic. We are really concerned about the growing financing gap. We are looking at a \$7 billion gap, currently. At the same time, as the Minister has said, there is a lot of emergency budget support flowing into Ghana through the multilaterals. That necessitates a very different engagement with development partners. The Ghana beyond aid vision is still alive in the Government's view, but we need to have a dialogue with the Government about the transition away from aid and how Covid impacts it.

² Witness correction: **going into middle income'**, corrected to: **'going into upper middle-income status.**

³ Witness correction: **Schools are back in Ghana'**, corrected to: **'Senior year secondary school students are back in Ghana**

⁴ Witness correction: **'The World Bank** is putting in about \$1 billion, around **13% of which is UK money'**, corrected to a footnote saying: **'The IMF** is putting in about \$1 billion **through their Rapid Credit Facility in April 2020, some of which is UK money.**



In the health sector, we are looking at a much longer transition away from aid. Before the crisis we were at about 10% of the health budget funded by donors. I suspect that will go up and we will be looking at a different transition away from health. DFID, through our support, is getting back into direct delivery, particularly in the most rural areas, to support the most vulnerable people.

It is an upset, but then again Ghana's development trajectory has been quite corkscrew in nature. Even 10 years ago we were looking at Ghana as the next success story, and then there was a big macro crisis. We need to work out how we can support Ghana to move away from the boom and bust economics we have seen in the past.

Q6 **Chris Law:** This is a question to you again, James. The question surrounds the priorities of this global Britain in the national interest. Will the Prime Minister's stated intention to increase aid to the western Balkans result in less UK aid available to African countries like Ghana?

James Duddridge: First, we are completely committed to the 0.7% figure. Clearly that, in absolute terms, is going to be less than it would have been had we grown further. Demographic changes, but also changes in poverty levels, mean sadly that at current projections more money will be spread across specifically the sub-Saharan African piece over the next 20, 30 or 40 years, as Africa grows at a slower rate than some of the Asian countries with poverty, and grows more quickly in population numbers. In absolute terms, there will be greater poverty in Africa and, I suspect, a greater percentage spent.

In Ghana, long term we want to have a different kind of relationship. Short term, it will be shifting the types of things we spend the money on rather than the absolute sum. We will probably spend less money longer term, notwithstanding Covid, on health and education, by encouraging multilaterals to pick that up and, ultimately, increasing normal revenue through Accra, through oil and gas and through trading, which is increasingly strong and well captured. We will move our support and development assistance to programmes we have with the Office for National Statistics, the Bank of England and the London Stock Exchange assisting, so much more technical, higher-level pure development assistance than aid assistance, as they move beyond that process.

In terms of money, I would not say it is about less or more. It is about a different way of working and partnering with the country. I would not see a significant change in the levels of aid specific to Ghana, but sadly, because of the change in demographics more broadly across the African continent, I think we are going to see more money being spent, not less money, as a general direction. However, there will be different stories as one goes country to country, and it will be in the British national interest to help develop countries, for example, in the western Balkans and places around the world that perhaps we are less familiar with at the moment, but which may enter a crisis period and require assistance, whether



through a climate disaster, a manmade disaster or a slow downward spiral.

Q7 Chris Law: When the Prime Minister raised the question about increased aid to the western Balkans, many of us got the impression that it was more for issues of national security. He also included Ukraine in that statement. I want to re-emphasise this; I take it that you are not suggesting that. What you are suggesting is about whether humanitarian aid should be in those regions. With this shift in focus, will it continue to have poverty reduction at its core?

James Duddridge: Poverty reduction is at its core, absolutely, yes. It is not all direct. Some of the most effective forms of development are slightly higher up the chain, as we discussed.

If I can choose examples within the African continent, rather than outside my area of expertise, we will work more closely with countries where we see that they are going in the right direction and there is a window of opportunity. Ghana has been a superb partner and I imagine that will continue. I know four or five members of the Cabinet on first name terms, and probably ditto half that number from the last cabinet. That is quite exceptional.

In places like Sudan that have undergone a change, there is a possibility to shift things. In places like Somalia, where there is a window of opportunity, we are much, much more likely to invest than, to pick two other examples, Zimbabwe, where we support the Zimbabwean people but the Government need to help themselves move on, or Tanzania. When President Magufuli came in he was seen as a fresh broom, someone who would change things, the bulldozer that would build for the country. We will look to spot people like that at a time of opportunity, but things have not been delivered in that country. We will look for partners where we think we can get good value for money and deliver on poverty reduction overall.

As places like South Africa and Botswana have moved towards and into middle-income status, they have then become beacons of stability for the region and neighbours. Through the African Union, ECOWAS, SADC and so forth, they can be a dynamo for change and be development partners in their own right. That is the kind of future I see for Ghana and the continent.

In fact, Ghana is going to host the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies Africa branch, doing cross-Africa business through the investment promotion agency. It won the competition to site the African Continental Free Trade Area. That will potentially, over the next 10 or 15 years, increase intra-Africa trade by 25%, which means countries can specialise more, move up the manufacturing food chain, generate wealth and, to be frank, have more normal democratic governance and accountability. Rather than looking for approval to a foreign Government or an international multilateral, they look to their



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own people, who will be voting for them or not, in Ghana's case, on 7 December.

Q8 Kate Osamor: Philip, what lessons has DFID Ghana taken from ICAI's review and what are the next steps for you as country director?

Philip Smith: It was a really useful review for us. It was the first of ICAI's new country portfolio reviews, which look back over quite a long period. We were surprised that only one of the recommendations related to Ghana and that it was so backward looking. We really wanted to get into some of the meaty conversations we have just been talking about, in terms of our engagement with multilaterals and how we make that transition to a different partnership, which is less about dispensing aid and more about tackling the big challenges of our time, whether it is climate change, antimicrobial resistance, which Ghana is doing a really good leadership job on, or stability more broadly in West Africa.

What we took from the review was to ensure that we are better leveraging the investment that the UK makes through the multilaterals. We have been doing quite a bit of work on that since the review, to get clarity on the imputed contribution that UK funds are making in Ghana and how we can leverage those, working with the World Bank country director. Iain and I have been working with the World Bank on that.

There is an issue about how we get more political in our programming. How do we navigate the political economy challenges of working in a middle-income country like Ghana? When do we walk away from a reform agenda when the political will is not there?

The last area was around instruments, thinking about and working with Whitehall on how we should change our offer to support transition. What new tools do we need? How do we work through civil society and the private sector? What is the role for financial aid in an environment like Ghana, where there may be a short-term financing gap but the investment is worthwhile, to see Ghana transition away from the need for UK aid? That is ultimately our role: to do ourselves out of a job.

Q9 Mr Sharma: My question is to Philip Smith. ICAI awarded an amber/red rating to DFID on sustainability. Do you agree that more needs to be done?

Philip Smith: We had long debates with the ICAI team when they came out to Accra on this. Sustainability is a central challenge for DFID in all our programmes. Ghana is one of those countries that are close to being able to self-finance their own development. Only 5% of Ghana's budget comes from development partners. We felt that the risk of development reversals comes not from donors like DFID withdrawing funding, but from the Government not stepping up in collecting revenues and strengthening its own systems. That is the focus of what we are programming over the next couple of years, working with the health sector and the education



sector to strengthen their own financing, but also working on domestic revenue mobilisation.

We were disappointed by the ICAI review in terms of the extent to which it went into domestic revenue mobilisation. As the Minister mentioned, we have a longstanding programme with HMRC experts working with the Ghana Revenue Authority and there are big revenue gaps that can be plugged, rather than more UK aid. Domestic revenue mobilisation is key, we feel, to plugging the kind of gaps that ICAI was pointing to and ensuring sustainability of these programmes in the longer term.

Finally, we also gave ICAI lots of really great examples of programmes that have moved beyond aid. We have a fantastic out-of-school children programme that was run by DFID and with USAID. That has got 200,000 children back into full-time education. That is a fantastic achievement. The Ministry of Education has now agreed that it will fund that going forwards. This, for me, is a great example of beyond aid. This was a programme run by DFID and USAID, which has now been taken up and delivered by Government to get kids back into full-time education. ICAI did not really see that as sustainable, for whatever reason. We had a bit of a debate about that amber/red and ICAI's interpretation of sustainability.

James Duddridge: In support of that point, I am not convinced by the assertion that development is not sustainable. Just look at the trajectory of Ghana. Quite clearly it is taking itself to a more sustainable position. Passing the baton to the multilaterals as a checkpoint before it is fully embraced at a domestic level also seems very sensible, so the UK Government can commit resource where it has the most value added. I did not, as a Minister, agree with the point being made there.

More generally, the ICAI report was very much a retrospective of what had happened. This is a very expert committee. Having listened to our evidence, other evidence and read the report, if you have additional firm, future-looking recommendations, both for Ghana and for our programme more generally, going forward, in this type of transition environment, where a country is starting to get beyond aid, that will be very welcome. It is not the traditional thing for us to do, but we are not in a traditional circumstance.

The idea of doing this long-term report on Ghana was a bit of a test. It feels a bit like an Ofsted inspection for Ghana. They have invested very heavily. I would quite like to see some more recommended actions going beyond commentary on the past and what we should be doing in the future. That is not to say we will take them and implement them one by one, but we will certainly consider them. If on reflection the Committee has any ideas, we would receive them very openly.

Q10 **Mr Sharma:** Thank you very much, both of you. I am quite confident that the Chair will take a note and we will come back to you with further suggestions of how we would like to see the Government working on it.



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Philip, I wanted to add further to my question. The Government response to the review had little detail about the speed with which DFID is shifting its funding to Ghana. What should DFID be doing more of in Ghana to appropriately support Ghana's transition beyond aid? The Minister has already touched on it, if Philip could add something.

Philip Smith: Much of the ICAI focus was on the amounts of bilateral funding. One of the challenges we have taken away from the review is being clear about how we can communicate the entirety of the UK aid footprint in Ghana, which is made up of not just a bilateral programme run from Accra, but a set of global DFID programmes that also impact on Ghana, as well as a big imputed contribution through multilaterals. We have already talked about how we need to leverage that engagement much more with multilaterals, certainly in the world beyond Covid.

We have already touched on some of the themes of our work going forward, which will be, as the Minister has indicated, less around traditional support in social sectors, but more around system strengthening, financing in social sectors, as well as increasing the domestic revenues to fund those improved services. At the same time, we are focusing on jobs, economic transformation, agriculture and continuing to support those most marginalised people through social safety net programmes and our work in mental health and disability.

Q11 **Chair:** Iain, I had a question for you as the high commissioner. I would like to know what your priorities are for the future of the UK aid portfolio in Ghana.

Iain Walker: Our aid portfolio has been evolving continually and continues to do so. I expect that to be the case going forward. There are three main priorities of our work in Ghana and the DFID programmes across each of them. This is for the mission as a whole, not just for DFID.

Our first priority is economic development. Philip and the Minister have touched on some of the programmes in that area. For the mission as a whole, that also involves other elements of our interests, in terms of encouraging more international investment, including from the UK.

Economic development is the first priority. The second is health and education, our social sectors work. As we have touched on, pre-Covid, we would have been talking about how we spend less money but put more technical expertise into those Ministries, as we have been seeing for the last two years and as we have currently in the Ministry of Education. How can we take that further?

The third priority for the mission as a whole is regional security and stability. We are using ODA funding for some of that to look at how Ghana furthers its role in the sub-region, as a force for good across the sub-region as a whole.

In each of those three areas, which are priorities for the mission as a whole, DFID sits at the centre, with other parts of the HMG machinery



sitting around it. That, for me, is how we plan to see this going forward. Of the three, the area where we have seen some of the biggest movement has been economic development. For the Government in Ghana, the focus has been on jobs, access to capital and accessing markets. As the Minister has touched on, we are drawing in partnerships, for example with the London Stock Exchange. The expertise of the London Stock Exchange, working with the Ghana Stock Exchange, is really helping Ghana prepare its capital markets and open up access and financing to grow their own base.

Secondly, in the same space, we work with Ghana on things like tax reform. It is not for us to fill the gaps there, but it is worth noting that, of the indicators in Ghana, many of which are positive, tax to GDP ratio is resolutely low, not just in Ghana but compared with other countries across Africa. It was about 12.2% in 2019.⁵ That really needs to move. It does not move by us funding it, but by us getting more expertise, working closely with the Ministry of Finance and its treasury function to make those changes themselves.

In my mind, that is what we are looking for: an even stronger focus on partnership, bringing in the real expertise not just from Government but from outside Government, whether that is in digital, agri or all these other sectors, as the way in which we really grow and develop that partnership in the future.

The last point I would make is not just about development, not just about aid, but about the diaspora. It is the area where we have seen the biggest shift in the last few years. Across all those areas, we have such a large British-Ghanaian community, who often identify as British, Ghanaian or both, who know both countries well and are the natural place for this to go. We have been doing quite a bit on this, but as we look towards the next reiteration of this I hope we do even more.

Q12 Chair: As an additional question for the Minister, you have all talked a lot about economic development, but I notice that No. 10 still has a priority on girls' education as a focus. How significantly do you think education will be impacted by coronavirus? What are the main challenges for education in Ghana?

James Duddridge: Girls' education is an absolute priority. It is a manifesto commitment. We raise it in every visit we do and in all relationships. It is a good thing, in absolute terms, that better educated girls and women take decisions around childbirth and maternal health, and have great influence over family, community and country, empirically in a much more positive way than their male counterparts. That will run through everything we do.

They are not disconnected. Yesterday I was speaking at an event that looked at best practice for economic empowerment of women across the

⁵ Witness correction: It was about 12.6% in 2019', corrected to: '12.2% in 2019.



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African continent, to see how we can step up at that level, as well as the 12 solid years of girls' education, because there is strong empirical evidence that female entrepreneurs reinvest their money better in building a business or spend that money more equitably within their community and better for their families.

The other bit of this picture is remittances. Iain talked about the Ghanaian-British diaspora of 250,000 or so. The World Bank estimates that remittances, money sent back home, will reduce by about 20%. That is a global figure, not a Ghana-specific figure. More money goes back into the developing world through remittances than through public sector development investment. We are working with the Swiss at the moment to reduce the cost of those remittance flows and to keep the flows going. In places like Nigeria, Ghana and Somalia, they are as important as the development effort in keeping those bonds together through countries.

I have talked about the number of Ghanaian politicians I have spoken to. Whether it is at the business council virtual visit a few weeks ago with the Vice-President, or more recently with Foreign Ministers over broader international things, it is perhaps that diaspora connection that brings us together more.

I am very much looking forward to going back to Accra. I was last there in 2016. I am sure a central part of that will be visiting some schools to see girls being educated who would not otherwise have been educated if it was not for tax pounds from British citizens, and making very clear that this does not go into a big black hole. It creates development; it creates opportunity.

One of the powerful things I saw in the ICAI report, which I do not always see, is personal stories. A young girl was explaining her story: her father had multiple wives and multiple children, and she would not have been educated if it was not for UK taxpayers, DFID, the development programme and the team on the ground in Accra. That is a really, really strong message. It is one person, but sometimes it is easy to see the numbers in the hundreds of thousands that we help without individualising it.

Q13 Chris Law: Iain, earlier this year there was a bit of a political stramash, or alarm, when it was reported that DFID officials in-country were reporting to ambassadors or high commissioners. This surprises me because there has always been a close relationship in the past, but I wanted to know, as a result of this, what has changed. Has the oversight of ODA changed in Ghana as a result of this?

Iain Walker: We genuinely have a really close relationship between all the parts of Government that sit at post in the high commission. Philip is someone I literally see every day, as I would with other parts of the Government machine, but particularly given the prominence of DFID I work with him very closely. I touched on the three priorities: our focus on health and education, on economic development and on security. The



governance within the mission is set up so that it involves officials from all those different Departments, so we are all working incredibly closely.

In fact, I think the difference will be quite slight. The work of DFID is overseeing all this progress. We have a huge amount of expertise sitting in there; I do not look to replicate that. As we go towards the merger, it seems to me that the question is how we bring out the best of both the institutions that are there, not how we mark each other's homework. In practice, for us, I am sure there will be changes, but I hope that we would try to model the behaviours that you and other parliamentarians would expect, in that we are representing collectively the Government overseas, not individual Departments. That is the ethos around which the post works.

James Duddridge: The truth is that, in post, it has always been a lot more joined up than Whitehall. The bigger prize to the merger is what we do in Whitehall to help serve people on the ground. In many ways, when I have gone from country to country, the way they have joined up has been more inspirational than what I see in Whitehall. This is partly because they are living and working together and seeing everything at close quarters. It makes it a lot more functional. The bigger prize is back in London and increasing our ability to act in a co-ordinated way.

Chair: Thank you very much, Minister. Thank you very much to everyone on our first panel.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Dr Tamsyn Barton, Sally Ofori-Yeboah, Aaron Oxley and Nana Afadzinu.

Q14 **Chair:** We are now going to turn to our second panel of witnesses, which is Tamsyn Barton, the chief commissioner of ICAI, Sally Ofori-Yeboah, the national director of CAMFED Ghana, Aaron Oxley, the executive director of Results UK, and Nana Afadzinu, the executive director of the West African Civil Society Institute.

For my first question, Tamsyn, are you satisfied with the Department's response to ICAI's recommendations, specifically recommendations 1, 5 and 6?

Dr Barton: Thank you very much for the question. I have just listened very carefully to what the Minister and others said in relation to the recommendations. I got the strong impression that there is an even greater relevance to our recommendations than there was before. It has been quite a while since the response came, just at the beginning of the Covid outbreak. In light of that, it has brought new questions, as we heard, from the head of the Ghana office about the pace of exit from the social sectors, for example, for the UK as for other donors. It has brought into the foreground our recommendation on working more strategically with multilaterals and working together with headquarters on that.



What I take from what I heard earlier is an even more strongly positive and welcoming response to the recommendations than we had in the original management response. Of course, we had acceptance of some kind to all our recommendations. I feel that, in some areas, the partial acceptance was connected to a certain defensiveness about the questions we raised over the pace of exit or the principles to be articulated in relation to mutual prosperity objectives. I guess we will come back to those. On the whole, it was a positive response and, from what I hear now, it is even more positive. It is very interesting to hear that they are open to new recommendations. I hope the Committee will take that up.

Q15 Chris Law: This is a question for Tamsyn and Aaron. There is a lot of concern around the impact of the merger between DFID and the FCO. I want to know what your thoughts are on that impact with regards to delivery of UK aid on the ground in Ghana.

Dr Barton: We had the advantage, of course, of meeting both the high commissioner and the head of the DFID office when we went, and in fact the relationship has not significantly shifted since that time. ICAI has sometimes been critical when there is not enough coherence and good collaboration at post, and we were impressed with what we saw in Ghana. In fact, we were positively impressed with the EDIT group working on economic development, trade and investment, where we could see there were benefits both for short-term UK interests and for longer term development interests.

For example, only thanks to that group were connections made to £130 million of taxpayers' money spent outside aid, with UK Export Finance, on development objectives and looking at making more of that and reducing any negative impacts. That was an example of a positive. There were clearly positives in encouraging greater investment from the UK and Ghana.

That is a good basis already. I am not sure in Ghana how much is likely to change, because there was already, in partnership with the Government of Ghana's interests, a strong interest in working together on economic partnership, governance and so on. We would say, though, that people change; leadership changes. Things are working very well at the moment. We think in general it is good to have very clear guidance when it comes to questions of mutual prosperity. This is what our sixth recommendation was about. It is important to be clear what the rules and the principles are. Generally we think at ICAI it is best to avoid things being too murky. We like transparency and clarity. Then it is clear to see what is being aimed at and what can be expected.

Q16 Mr Sharma: My question is to all of you. How is UK aid contributing to Ghana's development needs and the desire to progress beyond aid?

Nana Afadzinu: To a significant extent, we agreed with the report's recommendations. Particularly on the aid that had been given so far, if you look at the relevance and effectiveness, there is something to say



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there. There is significant, noteworthy improvement there, but there are issues with sustainability, and the challenge particularly is with the premise that, first, Ghana is a lower middle-income country and, secondly, we have the Ghana beyond aid agenda. It is a great agenda and we are all excited about it. In reality, it is more aspirational than it is practical.

Civil society has raised several concerns in relation to this agenda. We do have it and the Government now has a strategy, but we have not really engaged it as a country. You do not have a national consensus on this agenda. You do not know what the structures or the plans are. We talk about domestic resource mobilisation and, yes, we are looking at revenue generation, but other aspects like private philanthropy, and how to build a local philanthropic culture and infrastructure to support it, is completely absent. We have a very large informal economy, and yet the role that this plays within the Ghana beyond aid agenda is absent.

We do have this agenda, which is good, but there are issues in looking at the reduction of aid, particularly as it relates to the social sector. You will see from the reports that the reduction in aid has affected the social sector more than any other, particularly as it affects STAAC. We are going to have a serious gap. That is one of the major concerns.

Sally Ofori-Yeboah: I share in Nana's submissions, but I want to focus a bit on the benefits that young women in Ghana have received as a result of this support. From our end, we saw so many young women go through school. We were counting numbers of about 30,000 young girls going through senior high school. We saw community structures rising up to provide young women the needed psychosocial supports to be able to go through school. We know the benefits of schools for girls and the ripple effect that girls' education has in communities. We have seen so many of these girls become change agents in their communities. We have reps making decisions in their various communities, supporting their district assemblies to make decisions.

The support that came to Ghana with reference to girls' education, I must say, was extremely important. It has shifted the needle for girls, especially in the northern part of the country. There are so many who can boast of a senior high school certificate. It is a certificate that allows them to do several other things for themselves. More importantly, these girls have been placed in a position to give back to their community, where we are seeing them come together, pull resources together and provide support to younger ones to go back to school.

In terms of what DFID support did with girls' education, we cannot discount that support. Looking at that in the face of the report and transitioning to technical assistance to the country, I totally share in Nana's submissions. I believe that a lot of gains were made with DFID support and, to safeguard these gains, it is important that this Ghana beyond aid agenda with DFID is staggered in a manner that is helpful and



empowering. We have made so many, and must not suddenly halt that and move to a Ghana beyond aid where citizens are not well informed about this. It is a cliché, we just say Ghana beyond aid, but we do not know the details of this Ghana beyond aid that we are talking about. Only if you engage in these conversations in spaces with donors, bilateral agencies and others do you have a fair idea of what the considerations are.

We appreciate that every Government needs some support in reaching out to the vulnerable and providing social services to vulnerable people. In reference to DFID's strategy moving forward and providing technical support, it is extremely important that we look at the process. It becomes a process. That is staggered support. Social services would suffer, the vulnerable would suffer and people would be left behind if this whole strategy was about technical support to our Governments.

Aaron Oxley: Thanks for the opportunity to speak today. To refer back to the previous question in giving this response, Mr Smith mentioned earlier that the ICAI report focused on the amounts and volumes of aid flows and did not sufficiently look at leverage. That is not that surprising, as it is really clear that, in a lot of international development work, a move to systems strengthening can make it a lot harder to measure impacts in the same way as doing direct programme delivery, whether you are doing that bilaterally or multilaterally. This is really important.

Publish What You Fund recently launched its aid transparency index in 2020. DFID scored incredibly highly on that index—congratulations to DFID. Conversely, the FCO scored much lower; it only achieved a “fair” result. One of the main reasons for scoring so poorly was an absence of outcomes and results frameworks in all the reporting. As we see the nature of the aid relationship changing during transition, particularly given that the way we provide aid is similarly changing, it is essential that the FCDO adopts DFID's approach to impact and outcomes and not the FCO's.

Building on Sally's comments, it is really important to ask the question of what successful transition looks like, because you can define that in a number of ways. We have talked a lot already, and heard evidence in the first session, about how success is about the financial and ownership elements of transition. It is absolutely key to have a Government take ownership of programmes and drive for success and sustainability. Importantly, that also implies that you need to retain the progress that has been gained with donor funding, after having that money reduce or end.

For us, the other element of successful transition is what the transition actually does for people living in poverty in a country. We have yet to see any country that has completed that agenda before going through a transition, and transitions often put progress at risk for those people living in poverty. That absolutely needs to be at the heart of it.



The Minister said earlier that the most exciting stuff happening is in tax and governance, with people coming over. Of course, we fully support this work. That is essential for the long-term relationship and Ghana's long-term growth. Our concern is that sometimes the most exciting things do not easily translate into actual change in the lives of people who are living in poverty and that, if we do not maintain that focus on leaving no one behind, they will be missed out.

Q17 Mr Sharma: This overlaps with my previous question and some things that members have already indicated. How confident are you that UK aid is effectively targeted towards ensuring no one is left behind, including in the poorer regions of Ghana?

Dr Barton: Thanks very much for both of those questions. I just wanted to make two very brief points on the earlier question. The first is about the Ghanaian voice in this review. This was a new thing for us. I wanted to make sure that Ghanaians spoke first in answer to the question. In our review, we for the first time had a local Ghanaian team. We consulted 800 Ghanaian citizens and have had some interaction with the Ghanaian diaspora. That is really important to have a realistic assessment.

My second point is really in echo of what some of my colleagues have said about being realistic and looking at history when you look to the beyond aid agenda. It is a fantastic vision and aspiration, but has proved harder to fulfil in the past. You will note that there were accusations that ICAI is backward-looking. That is because we believe in hard evidence and proof of the pudding, rather than just aspirations.

On the leave no one behind point, we were positively impressed by the way in which you can see right across the eight-year period that there has been consistent focus on ensuring no one is left behind, whether in terms of regional inequalities, focusing on the poorest and most marginalised families and individuals, or focusing on women and girls. I was particularly pleased to hear the Minister or Philip referencing that disability is going to continue to be a focus. In general, there is a very good record on this. I am encouraged from what I hear to think that that is not going to get lost entirely in this increasing focus on economic development and governance.

Q18 Kate Osamor: I would like to welcome the panellists. Thank you for your answers thus far. I have a question for Nana and Sally. In your opinion, does the UK aid portfolio adequately reflect the needs and wishes of the Ghanaian Government and people?

Nana Afadzinu: I would say the Ghanaian Government, to a large extent, because there is a focus on economic development, which is high up the agenda of the Government. That is understandable and important, but other aspects of socioeconomic development, looking at the social sector, are also critical. In fact, looking now at Covid and how much it has affected or exacerbated inequality in the country, it is extremely important to make sure that we have a specific focus on supporting the



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social sector, so that we do not erode the gains we have made. I think Sally mentioned that earlier.

We can talk about politics, economics and security. To deal with issues of poverty, good governance and anti-corruption, we need strong human and institutional capacity in civil society organisations. In Ghana, we are where we are now because we have had civil society organisations, work on widespread civic participation, work on consolidating democracy and all of that. The support going to that sector has reduced drastically. These are the ones working in the social sector and giving support to ensure that no one is left behind. We have an issue there and that definitely must be highlighted.

Sally Ofori-Yeboah: To add a bit to Nana's submission, I would once again flag girls' education. I recently reviewed Ghana's education strategic plan and, for every one of the seven strategies that Ghana has with reference to education, you see the priority given to girls or some attention given to girls. If it is about technical and vocational education, the Government are discussing how to ensure that girls are interested. If it is about tertiary or secondary education, they are asking, "How do we ensure that they enrol and they stay to complete education? What needs to be done to be support them to stay in school and to complete?"

Just looking at the Ghana education strategic plan, I can clearly tell that this is of interest to the Government. It is a priority area. It is the reason the Government are implementing the free senior high school, so that the population will be educated. There are of course hidden costs to education. You cannot pick and choose a couple of things to support and make a blanket statement that it is covering everything; it is free education. I remember, when it was rolled out, we had parents walking to schools with empty hands. The students did not come in with anything, because the Government were covering everything. We had to go back in there and do a quick needs assessment to see what to provide for the young women.

If the Government were providing sanitary towels to young women, perhaps it would tick the box that some of these needs are being met. If we find urinary facilities, bathrooms and washrooms that make girls comfortable to stay in school and complete, these boxes are ticked and that is fine, but we do not. Even in the case of Covid, when we ask children to wash their hands and wash thoroughly, we find that they do not have access to water.

I believe that, yes, Ghana beyond aid is beautiful. The Government are looking forward to doing amazing things, with great strategies in there and all of that. But social services need to be given priority. Girls' education definitely needs to be given priority, because of its multiple ripple effects for the economy as well.

Let me just add a few things on Covid.



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Chair: We have a question on that later. I will just let Kate finish her line of questioning.

Sally Ofori-Yeboah: That is fine.

Q19 **Kate Osamor:** Thank you, Sally, for your commitment and your strong words on child education, especially for the girls. We have to get them into school, because they are our future. I want to ask Nana to expand a little on the importance of the civil society space in Ghana and how the UK can work better with Ghanaian civil society organisations.

Nana Afadzinu: Civil society has really been one of the key drivers for the good governance and democratic consultation that we have in Ghana now. Civil society plays a critical role in complementing public service delivery, in advocacy, in monitoring and holding Government to account. They have, to a large extent, worked hard to engage Government and even, in recent times, the private sector to support development in the country. Civil society is critical.

DFID has worked quite well with civil society, particularly through STAAC, which was the programme that worked on anti-corruption; through STAR-Ghana, which is a facility that supported civil society work looking at good governance, work around good governance generally, and that has now transformed into a foundation; and supporting GOGIG and other programmes around oil and gas, and the extractive industry, looking at transparency and accountability. There have been some really good programmes there.

My point, though, comes back to the issue of sustainability. I can give an example of STAR-Ghana. STAR-Ghana is now a foundation. We are all very proud of an independent Ghanaian foundation that will support civil society strengthening, as well as building that local philanthropic culture. STAR-Ghana has been set up as a foundation but does not have an endowment. It is not endowed. It has to struggle, like the organisations it is supposed to support, to survive. It is like giving birth to a baby, breastfeeding it for six months, then setting it down on the floor and saying, "Walk and run".

That is one of the issues we have. I believe DFID has had a brilliant idea in STAR-Ghana and the work that it has done and can do. But, if we really want to look at sustainability, sustaining the gains that have been made and making sure we are going forward and reaching the goals we have set for ourselves, there has to be more investment in strengthening this institution to enable it to work.

It is the same thing across the civil society sector. Civil society organisations are supported to do projects, so they virtually live from hand to mouth. With the current pandemic, for example, you realise that, because there has been no investment in building resilient institutions, many of them are struggling to play the role they have been set up to play, to support the vulnerable in society. This is definitely one area in



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which DFID can make a difference. Through STAR-Ghana and other programmes, it can do that and build that resilience. There can be more investment in that area.

Q20 Mr Sharma: My question is to all of you, but hopefully Tamsyn will lead it. ICAI awarded the UK Government an amber/red score for the sustainability of its aid portfolio in Ghana. What further steps could the Government take to ensure the results of UK aid are sustained in the long term?

Dr Barton: First, I will explain a little in response to what the Government said, because they obviously felt that we were unduly hard on them in relation to sustainability. It is important to say, as we did in our report, that this is incredible difficult. It is not easy. It is not easy to be effective, but it is 10 times harder to be sustainable. We recognised that. We recognised that it was a great achievement to get the Government to take on a commitment to complementary education for example. However, experience suggests, particularly in Ghana where it tends to swing between different parties at each election, that it is quite hard to sustain commitments over a long enough period to ensure that that education for the very poorest carried on. That is the basis on which we took what seems like a tough assessment. It was based on rigorously looking at the evidence.

We agree that it is incredibly important for them to continue the work, for example on domestic revenue mobilisation. That is a top priority, to ensure the Government have the revenues that can be spent as they have committed to. For example, all education is now free, so that requires additional revenues, which is more challenging when growth is shrinking. However, it has to be said that we feel the UK Government were much too optimistic about how much new revenue could be raised, even with the expert advice of the UK's HMRC. They need to be more realistic and accordingly tailor their plans for continuing attention and support to social services, particularly for the very poorest.

We also felt that there should be no slackening in the focus on governance. To pick up the points made by civil society organisations, the West Africa Civil Society Institute in particular, these organisations are absolutely key for social accountability, for the voice of citizens to come through. It has been very important, whether it is looking at oil and gas revenue—there was a centre that pointed up when projects that did not seem to be real projects were being funded from oil revenues—or at the level of monitoring how many bribes have to be paid in hospitals. It is very encouraging to hear, as we heard, that that support is expected to be continued.

The areas may be right, but the balance and the pace of change are important. It felt to us too quick to move too strongly in a direction of only economic development, with a bit of governance thrown in.



Aaron Oxley: I agree with all of that. Sustainability is hard; it is really difficult, and particularly when we are looking at a country such as Ghana with rapid levels of growth. The issue of simultaneous transition also becomes extremely important when we are talking about longevity. It is interesting to hear the Minister talking about how DFID's bilateral investments in health and education are declining and shifting to multilaterals. The multilaterals, though, are also in the process of doing country transitions and eligibility. We have looked at this not just in Ghana but in many countries. Our evidence suggests that the co-ordination between all these various instruments needs to be absolutely excellent if gaps are not to appear, in which those who are receiving services and support move towards missing out.

Acknowledging that that is really hard and is a risk that needs to be managed, it is important to include multilaterals as part of the sustainability element of the provision of aid, but we need to recognise that that is risky and has some very particular charges, particularly when we look at people living in poverty and the services that they need.

Chair: Nana and Sally, would you like to comment on Virendra's question about how to make your programmes sustainable in the longer term?

Sally Ofori-Yeboah: With the support we received, some attempts were made at building the structures that oversee these engagements, so that beyond DFID funding we would be able to continue. There was funding to bring together all the girls' education. There was support to the Girls' Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service, with a lot of cross-learning among the teams. There was an annual conference for the girls' education officers to learn, so that, beyond that, they would be able to manage their own engagements. Of course, the level and the capacity at which this was done cannot be compared to what the institution can manage on its own at this time.

Back to the point of staggering, partnering and making this a process, it is just like Nana was saying. It is difficult to tell your baby, "I stopped breastfeeding today and that is it". You have to balance that with other foods and wean off at some point. How do we manage that weaning-off process in a manner that ensures sustainability? What do we need to do together to ensure that, giving ourselves this amount of time, we should be able to see these things happening?

For instance, if you were providing support to education—and our education ministries are receiving technical assistance, so cross-learning and peer reviews are happening—there would be an opportunity to see in the course of time that they are on their feet; they are crawling; this is possible within this time, giving some level of support. This needs to be done to ensure sustainability goes on. We need to continue to work together. We need to balance breastfeeding and weaning with solid meals, until such a time as we think it is good to pull back and focus on just governance and economics.



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Nana Afadzinu: Specifically for civil society, it would be very helpful to provide the kind of support that helps build their institutions and enables them to be in a position where they can look at it. The Ghanaian Government do not support civil society. They do not give funding to civil society, like the UK supports its civil society. Civil society in Ghana depends a lot on external donor funding. Even though we are working on building the local philanthropic culture, there is still some way to go to get that kind of philanthropy to support social justice work, social protection and social accountability. To do that, we need to have the capacity.

I believe that that is one area, because a lot of the funding is about projects and activities. We need to look at strengthening the institutions that do those activities, so that they can be agile, be nimble, respond to issues, raise their own funds, and have reserves. I am on a number of boards and some of them, UK organisations, have reserves. Many of the organisations here do not.

Those are some of the challenges that we face. Knowing the critical role that civil society plays in ensuring Ghana stays where it is and grows in its democracy, democratic development and sustainable development, we need to support civil society to be strong and resilient.

Q21 **Mr Sharma:** Aaron, how can donors support successful transition in developing countries in general?

Aaron Oxley: There are a number of ways in which donors can do this more broadly. We think that, as part of sustainability and transition, citizen voice is incredibly important. The experiences and accounts of civil society and affected communities, and the potential impact of transition decisions, have to be heard in the decision-making processes surrounding transition. It was great to hear ICAI involving so many Ghanaians in its analysis and review. That sort of thing is really important.

Maybe linking to the previous question around sustainability, if a national Government do not have mechanisms in place that allow them to do social contracting, for example, that is a huge barrier to the ability for the Government to continue funding the civil society elements of bilateral and multilateral programmes. The services provided by really good civil society organisations could well disappear simply because the legal frameworks or the institutional norms of doing social contracting are not in place. It is not only about DFID and other donors being able to provide direct programmatic support.

Generally speaking, one of the most important things donors can do to support and do good transitions is to take a step back from primarily focusing on gross national income as the indicator and the trigger. Different donors in different countries do that differently, with different degrees of rigour. Issues such as the poverty rate, public health, disease burden, education levels and inequity within a country are all incredibly



important criteria to help analyse what a good transition looks like, where and how it could happen, and where areas of focus need to be made.

That context really matters. That needs to be deployed in fact, not just in theory. We hear a lot from different donors, and occasionally from DFID, about how multidimensional analyses are used. We also hear about how the most important of these is GNI and it always comes back to GNI. Frankly, we are all very smart people. That is just not good enough. We need to be able to do better.

Q22 Chair: I have a question for Sally. Earlier we heard the Minister commit to the UK retaining its focus on girls' education. You have talked a bit about that in Ghana. I wondered if you could give us some very specific examples of the challenges on the ground. I presume it is extremely different from the UK where we have social distancing in classrooms, bubbles for school groups, and much more access to running water where children can wash their hands and have their food prepared. It would be helpful to hear on the ground what it is like for schools. What is the current situation?

Sally Ofori-Yeboah: I like to refer to them as young women; forgive me. The young women are home. They have been home for some time. As an organisation, we have done two situational analyses with the various age groups, looking at secondary students, senior high school students, and then those in tertiary, just to sense-check how staying at home and how online engagements are going. We know that the Ministry set up Ghana Learning TV to continue from academics to students. It is a channel dedicated to tuition. Unfortunately, there are marginalised and deprived communities that do not have access to the internet and television. So many families do not have radios or digital resources. All these students are cut out of whatever engagements are happening in the capital city and the big cities.

When schools resumed for final year students, there were conversations about whether we have WASH facilities in the various schools to support all the social distancing protocols, washing your hands and all the WHO protocols. It appears that we do not have these in most of our schools, while asking them to wash their hands and use nose masks. We have checked with some of our schools since resumption and not every child feels comfortable being in the space, particularly girls, who need water at some times of the month. They stay at home, because they do not feel comfortable to be where they are supposed to be or to stay in school at specific times of the month.

On that ground, we have young women who are concerned that their families have lost businesses. They are beginning to feel the burden of supporting their family. They are asking, "What small business can I start in order to support my family, although I am a student?" We are seeing young girls who are overburdened with house chores. Parents are yet to appreciate that they are still in school. Even though it is an online session, they need to be given time to study. That weight continues to be



on the shoulders of young people. Safeguarding conversations and psychosocial support to young people—it could be virtual or whatever—and the provision of these services in the various communities appears to be extremely important. We should give some attention to that.

Q23 Chris Law: This is a question for everyone, but I would like to particularly begin with Nana and Sally. I know I only have a few minutes, but what impact will the Covid-19 outbreak have on the development needs of Ghana and its transition beyond aid?

Nana Afadzinu: It would have a major impact. The Finance Minister himself, sometime in March, wrote a paper in the *Financial Times*, complaining that we are now looking at only 1.5% of growth. He had a projection of about 6%. When he was talking about that, we had less than 1,000 infected cases. Today, we have 23,000 infected cases. There is an ongoing registration with crowded places. We are going to have more infections. With that, there are attendant economic issues, so it is a major challenge. The challenge with education has already been highlighted by Sally. I am not going to even go there.

Technology is not only about access; it is also about affordability, even for those who have it. Our health systems are going to be in serious trouble. A lot of people work in the informal sector and that has been heavily affected. We are going to have a huge number of people falling below the poverty line. Women bear an even greater brunt of what is happening.

The beyond aid agenda, as I said, is an aspirational agenda. We need to look again at it. We can go beyond aid, but we must build the structures that enable us to get there. We do not have them now. That is one area in which DFID would be able to continue to work with the Ghanaian Government and its people to translate the rhetoric into reality. Covid has exacerbated inequality in a major way. If we had a gap, it is going to be even greater and, therefore, we need to look at how to address that.

Sally Ofori-Yeboah: Education and girls' education is my space, so it is the point I will continue to emphasise. Across all levels, we will bear the brunt of these things. From what I hear, even girls in tertiary are concerned about jobs after graduation and they know that the rate of unemployment is skyrocketing. As much as possible, when they are in school, they are looking to start small businesses so that, if they do not find jobs themselves, or find corporate employment, they can start something on their own.

Now more than ever, women, who contribute the majority of small businesses, have had their capital eroded. People are home. Economically and on every front, we believe that this would have some impact on us and it would take us years to recover. Additional support to work with Government to put in the right structures, especially to meet the needs of the vulnerable in society, would be extremely helpful. Covid definitely has brought out the inequalities that we experience in our countries. In the



capital cities and urban centres, we seem to be managing quite well. If you drive to a rural community, they are not observing any of the social distancing conversations we are having, because they do not understand it, communication has not gone down well, they do not appreciate the issues or for other reasons. Some investment in education, awareness creation, sensitisation and advocacy conversations will continue to be needed moving forward, to help us get back on course.

Dr Barton: There is always a risk with something as huge as Covid, with its enormous implications, that a review like ours could be rendered completely irrelevant, because the programme might need to have such major shifts to take account of what is happening. Actually, in the case of our review, I really think it has revealed why our recommendations are important. It has put even more focus than before on why it is important for the UK to work in a new, much more strategic way with its multilateral partners, which are long-term partners and can act at the kind of scale, with the kind of mandate and technical specialism, that is required.

The pace of change has become more acute, given that we are not going to see the same kind of growth. It is going to be very important to take account less of short-term results and more, as Nana was talking about, institutional strengthening. It is Ghanaian institutions, in the end, that are going to secure sustainability.

Last, but by no means least, what Covid-19 tells us in relation to our recommendations, which I perhaps have not highlighted enough before, is that listening to citizens about what is happening on the ground is more important than ever. I certainly hope that that is going to continue to happen. In our review, we saw that this was happening in the majority of programmes, but it needed to happen in all the programmes as a matter of course.

Aaron Oxley: It is clear that Covid-19 is going to put huge additional pressure on many countries' economies. It is going to potentially force us to look at things like eligibility, whether countries are ready to transition, how they are going to transition. Most development financing is set up on the assumption that we have steady and consistent growth over many years. It is not actually very well set up for large shocks. It is particularly not well set up for large, simultaneous global shocks with the size of impact that Covid is likely to have on the global economy.

That translates into something really, really clear on the ground. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for example, just published quite an alarming study, projecting that the damage done by Covid is likely to set back by a decade the fight against what used to be called the big three diseases—they might now be part of the big four—AIDS, TB and malaria. That is 10 years of gruellingly hard work, all undone over the course of a summer. We are seeing similarly alarming warnings on things like routine immunisation, nutrition and food security.



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The Global Fund has costed it out. It says it needs \$5 billion to do its part in helping to prevent that massive backsliding. When we look at the global scale of the response, which is measured in the trillions of dollars, we have to be able, as an international community, to find this kind of money. For this and so many other parts of the response, if we do not find these relatively modest amounts of money in the grand scheme of things to make these interventions, the economic damage and the damage to people's lives is going to be orders of magnitude more. That would be my plea as to how we should be trying to focus at this very critical time.

Chair: Thank you very much to everyone who has given evidence today, and to our second panel. I now call this meeting to an end.