

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

Oral evidence: ICAI's reviews on (1) the UK's aid response to irregular migration in the Central Mediterranean; (2) reducing conflict and fragility in Somalia, HC 443

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Members present: Paul Scully (Chair); Richard Burden; James Duddridge; Stephen Twigg.

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[I](#): Dr Alison Evans, Chief Commissioner, ICAI; Willem van Eekelen, Team Leader, ICAI.

[II](#): Beverley Warmington, Director of CHASE and Migration, DFID; Ed Hobart, UK Migration Envoy, FCO; Nick Williams, Head of North Africa FCO/DFID Joint Unit.

[III](#): Richard Gledhill, Lead Commissioner, ICAI; Mark de Pulford, Team Leader, ICAI.

[IV](#): Phil Evans, Head of DFID Somalia; Julian Reilly, Head of East Africa Department, FCO; Alison Thorpe, Head, Africa Strategy and Network Unit, FCO.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Dr Alison Evans and Willem van Eekelen

Q1 Chair: Thank you very much, Alison and Willem, for coming. It is our first session of the new Committee, so be gentle with us; most of us are new. I know there is a big backlog of work to catch up on over the next couple of months, which you have been doing some work on while we have been sorting ourselves out. I want to launch straight into the report, if I can, because we have to finish pretty promptly; we have DFID questions, and a number of our members will have to go to that, so can we keep our questions and answers relatively concise?

We will go straight into the first report. I will ask you a question, but if you want to have a minute or two, just to sum up your thoughts about the report on migration, then please do feel free. I wanted to start by asking about the fact that you focused on three countries: Libya, Nigeria and Ethiopia. I am wondering why you chose those three countries in particular.

Dr Evans: Thank you very much, Chair, and it is good to be back in front of the Committee. Let me take your prompt and just say a couple of words of background before reflecting on that specific question of country choice.

We decided to undertake this rapid review of the Government's response to the migration crisis in the Central Mediterranean for a couple of significant reasons. Obviously, the numbers of people involved in crossing through the Central Mediterranean are very significant, and became very significant in the last few years, with large numbers of people both trying to cross and also, unfortunately, losing their lives in that theatre. That raised a very important issue, but probably most significant was the publication of the UK aid strategy, which made a very clear commitment from Government to seek to tackle the root causes of mass migration.

In many ways, this is a relatively new area for the Government, in terms of committing its ODA resources, and so we wanted to take the opportunity to take a very early look at the way in which that response was being put together. This rapid review—and this is the first time we have come before this Committee with a rapid review—was very much done with a view of getting to understand how that response is being put together in real time. In many ways, it represents a snapshot of things as they were towards the end of last year or the beginning of this year, and I think when you talk with representatives of the Government, you will also understand how things have evolved somewhat since we took this snapshot.

I will ask Willem to give you a teeny bit of detail about each of the three countries, but let me give some very quick headlines: we did actually look across the piece, but we decided to look in-depth at three countries, and



the response there. Libya is the most important transit country for those trying to cross the Central Mediterranean. Of course, historically, it has also been a really important destination country for migrants from various countries, within sub-Saharan Africa, particularly. It is also home to a large number of refugees and migrants at the moment.

Ethiopia is one of the most important refugee host countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa. It is also a country where we are seeing quite a significant amount of secondary displacement: so, from Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea, people move to Ethiopia and then, because livelihood opportunities are constrained, try to make their way across the Central Mediterranean. Finally, Nigeria is a major source country for many of those migrants trying to cross the Central Mediterranean. Are there any other reasons why we chose those?

Willem van Eekelen: The only addition is that in Nigeria, according to the early documents we saw, there was a lot of migration-related programming that seemed relevant.

Q2 **Richard Burden:** Particularly in the Libyan context, you raised some concerns in your report that some of the work of the Government—in particular, the issue of building up the capacity of the Libyan coastguard—could have unintended consequences. There was a quite pointed comment in the report that it might end up breaching the fairly fundamental “do no harm” principle, and people could end up being returned back to either poor detention conditions, or worse. What the Government seem to have said in response is, “Yes, there is always going to be a risk like that, but we mitigate it as far as is reasonable.” How would you respond to that? Is there always going to be a level of risk, and have they got the balance there wrong?

Dr Evans: Let me take that quickly, and then pass it to Willem for some of the detail. You are absolutely right: that was an area of concern highlighted in the report. Yes, Libya is a very challenging, high-risk environment, as are a number of other countries connected to this Central Mediterranean route. Yes, those risks are significant and at times changing. Our major concern was that the Government were undertaking all of the appropriate actions in terms of due diligence and assessment of that risk, and that we were able to see a clear documentation of their actions to seek to mitigate. That is what we were testing.

In the process, we developed a certain degree of concern that that document trail was not as complete as we would expect it to be, and we did not see information that we would hope to see to ensure that all measures were being put in place. Let me pass that to Willem for a little more detail.

Willem van Eekelen: Methodologically, it is tricky, because what we base this on is not evidence, as you would normally do; we base it on the absence of evidence. We have not seen evidence that the UK



Government consistently and sufficiently thoroughly conduct human rights risk assessments, political economy assessments, and conflict sensitivity analysis. We have gone quite out of our way, almost to an embarrassing extent, to try to make sure that this is actually because the evidence does not exist, because the two alternatives are that the evidence exists but we do not get it, or the evidence exists but they cannot find it. We ask, "Are you sure there are no emails to this effect? Is it not captured in the minutes of meetings somewhere? Maybe another organisation has done this type of assessment, and you based your decisions on that?" We did not find it to a satisfactory extent.

Q3 Richard Burden: What were they saying? If they were not able to give you minutes of meetings or whatever, were they just simply saying, "Look, we undertake these assessments. Trust us"?

Dr Evans: We are very clear when we undertake a certain kind of assessment: there is one particular one called an OSJA, which is done around particular kinds of programming, and we know when we do that, and we have done it where appropriate. Otherwise, we have relied on other sources, and we are confident that those are sufficient to allow us to go ahead with programming. We were pressing very hard on that assessment of sufficiency, and we would have expected to see a much clearer paper trail about those elements beyond the formal OSJA that were said to be put in place that we were not, at that time, privy to.

Willem van Eekelen: Part of the confusion was the consequence of the difference between an assessment that says, "This is the situation; this is what we will do", both of which exist, and the assessment that is, "Once we do this, this situation changes, in terms of political dynamics and economic incentives." That analysis, insofar as we could see, was not always done.

Q4 James Duddridge: The report suggests stronger baseline monitoring going forward, and the Government have pushed back a little and said that that is not necessarily appropriate, but they are committed to extensive research. Are you satisfied with the Government's push-back, that they either cannot or should not have the strong monitoring and baseline that you have suggested?

Dr Evans: We felt, on this recommendation, actually, where we talked about monitoring and evaluation, that there was a slight misunderstanding between ourselves and the Government, because we are actually very aware of, and have looked in many other ICAI reviews at, the strength of monitoring and evaluation systems around more conventional areas of programming. We were not commenting on those; as far as we are concerned, many of those actually do what they say on the tin and do a good job.

What we were referring to was this much more substantive and substantial challenge of putting in place monitoring and evaluation related to interventions that have incredibly long results chains and



relatively uncertain causal relationships to the outcomes we are looking for, in terms of managed migration. Our challenge to Government was to think creatively and innovatively about how it was going to put in place baselines and monitoring and evaluation for those kinds of initiatives. Just as an example, quite a lot of activity that was being, at the time of this review, communicated as migration-related had a very indirect relationship to the potential causes of irregular migration.

Q5 James Duddridge: Can you give an example of that?

Dr Evans: Economic development programming in the energy sector in Nigeria. That is not to say that is not a good thing, but its causal relationship to potentially stemming the flow of irregular migration is very complex, potentially a little uncertain, and very, very long term. How the Government is going to demonstrate the contribution of that kind of programming to its overall objective, which it claims is related, is where we posed the challenge.

Q6 James Duddridge: Of course, we do not even do that in the UK. When we build a power station, we do not expect it to have a causal link to better living standards.

Given they have pushed back and are offering extensive, structured research, do you feel that that is adequate as a baseline from which to monitor? I was a little unclear what this extensive, structured research would include, but my main concern was whether this would then allow you to be, in the future, more scientific around measuring outcomes than you were able to be this time.

Dr Evans: I will just give a very quick response, and then Willem can give you some detail on that. One area we were positive about in this report was the investment in research and evidence-building, particularly through the Department for International Development. This is a very complex area, and there is a real commitment to try to fill some of the evidence gaps. Their response, in a sense, reasserts that commitment. Willem, some detail?

Willem van Eekelen: I cannot say that we were delighted with the formal Government response, but we were, in fact, delighted with some of the follow-up documentation received. One of the things that follow-up documentation does is set out much more clearly than was the case in 2016 what targeted migration programming means. Until you have that, you cannot talk about monitoring and evaluation, but once you have that, you can: if this is what you want, and that is targeting certain groups with a high propensity to migrate, then you can think of the context in which you need to conduct your evaluations, and you can design research. In 2016, I would not even have known what the research would have looked like, but now I can predict that on the basis of much better targeted sets of types of programmes. I am optimistic.

Q7 James Duddridge: That sounds like quite a lot of progress in a very short period.



Willem van Eekelen: Yes.

Dr Evans: Definitely.

Q8 Stephen Twigg: Just really to develop the points that you have already touched upon, relating to this issue of what is classified as a migration-related development programme, can you say a little more about the work that is now underway that the Government set out in their response to give greater clarity to what gets defined as a migration-related development programme?

Dr Evans: Just to give that some context, we were looking at a very early-stage response, and I hope in the report we were able to at least acknowledge that this was a very steep curve in which capacity was being put in place at the same time as they were trying to mount some kind of programmatic response to engage in the Central Mediterranean.

To some extent, it may have been regarded as probably necessary, but certainly not sufficient, to try to find a means of defining programming that was already in place, and essentially trying to link it to this challenge of stemming irregular migration. However, when we looked at it in detail, it raised all kinds of problems, some of which we have already mentioned, around definitions and causal chains and so forth. However, since then, there has been some change, and maybe Willem could talk about that.

Willem van Eekelen: Part of the focus is just by process of elimination. In the new overview, things are absent that were there in 2016—so, livelihood, energy sector, and a number of other infrastructure-type things are just no longer there. That in itself gives focus. The result is types of programmes that look specifically at those who have either migrated and are at risk of secondary displacement—so, an Eritrean going to Ethiopia, who may then move on—or people with a verifiably high propensity to migrate: urban young men in capital cities in African countries.

In those areas, you can then have a range of programmes that they list, including regional mobility. If you are able to build your livelihood regionally, you have less incentive to make the dangerous journey to Europe. Regular migration, rather than illegal migration, to the Gulf is one of the things, especially in Ethiopia; it is one of the big sources of employment. There is then protection, which is also part of it, and I do not think the NSC strategy would be delighted if it was only limited to that, but it is an important part of targeted migration programming. You end up, as a displaced person, in a camp in Libya. You do not lose your life there.

Q9 Stephen Twigg: Can I ask specifically about this issue of Boko Haram? In your report, you said that the threat from Boko Haram is not itself a driving factor for migration, and yet humanitarian relief for victims of Boko Haram is classified by the Government as migration-related. What



you said in your review sounds a little surprising, because it does sound like the sort of thing that would be a driving force for migration.

Dr Evans: Indeed. Actually, that reflection is based on evidence that has been produced by the Department for International Development, and they have looked at this very closely. There is, as I understand it, some relationship found between those issues in the north and migration within the region, particularly into Cameroon, but not as a distinctive driver of migration up through the Central Mediterranean route.

It does not mean that it is not relevant; it is incredibly important to do that protection work, as Willem indicated, but it ended up being part of this dragnet approach to trying to link everything that was going on to the challenge of addressing migration. It is only now that we are seeing clarification and very useful inclusions and exclusions from that programming, which make for a much more coherent portfolio of actions.

Chair: Thank you very much. We have got through those quite nicely. Thank you very much for your work on the report; it is great to have, and we look forward to seeing you next time.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Beverley Warmington, Ed Hobart and Nick Williams

Q10 **Chair:** I would like to welcome Beverley Warmington, Director of CHASE and Migration at DFID; Ed Hobart, UK Migration Envoy at the FCO; and Nick Williams, Head of North Africa, from the FCO and DFID joint unit. Again, I might lead off with a quick question, and if you have any general words that you want to say by way of introduction to your response to the report, please do feel free to add them in. We have about half an hour for this session, and five areas that we want to probe.

The UK supports the EU work to build the capacity of the Libyan coastguard, as we have been talking about. What is happening to the migrants that the Libyan coastguards are now rescuing at sea?

Beverley Warmington: I just wanted to start by saying thank you very much for this, and I also wanted to say thank you to ICAI for the review. We really welcome the review. It started a year ago, a year into when we started this programming. It was a really good opportunity for us to get some feedback on a new area of work for us, and we were very pleased that the report acknowledged some really positive aspects of our aid.

We will talk about some of the recommendations later. I just wanted to emphasise that we do not really disagree; we very, very much agree, but it is just that we felt that we were doing quite a lot of this on a lot of the recommendations we got. We feel very positively about this, and we very much like the fact that it highlighted some of the positive work. In



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particular, it highlighted the excellent cross-Government work that we do on migration. I do not know whether it is because it is a new area of work and the governance structure was set up quite newly, but it does seem to be an area where we work incredibly well, or whether that is about the individuals, but that is demonstrated by how, hopefully, we will seamlessly answer some of these questions across various government departments. I am going to hand over to either Ed or Nick.

Ed Hobart: On your specific question about what happens to migrants who are rescued at sea by the Libyan coastguard, first of all, our objectives and the EU's objectives in training the coastguard are threefold. One is to save lives as close to the coast as possible. The death toll for people crossing on that route is very different from those, for example, who have crossed in the past from Turkey to Greece, because the sea is larger and more treacherous. It is to do that in a way that takes account of human rights and gender issues, for example, and it is also to try to tackle smugglers. That third bit is probably an area that we would like to work a lot more on, but it is difficult to find the right partners in Libya.

The majority of migrants in the period that we were looking at for this review will not have been intercepted by the Libyan coastguard; they have very few vessels. Most have been rescued internationally and taken to Italy, but where they are rescued by the Libyan coastguard, they are returned to Libya, and normally to detention centres there. Those detention centres are definitely not great. We do not support them directly. We do work to try to alleviate some of the humanitarian issues in those centres, for example by providing basic humanitarian provisions, and opportunities to return from those centres voluntarily to your countries of origin.

We do work around a limited number of those centres—only the ones that are controlled by the Government that we recognise. There are all kinds of other centres, I am afraid, controlled by different militias, and some of the rescues will be by those militias as well, so it is a fairly difficult picture. People are being rescued. We then try to work with the Libyan Government, the Libyan coastguard and their interior ministry to provide some humanitarian relief in those centres.

Q11 **Chair:** ICAI talked about indiscriminate and indefinite detention. Do you agree with that assessment and that concern—that you are delivering migrants back to that sort of system?

Ed Hobart: We are not delivering migrants back to that situation. The Libyan coastguard, within their territory, are trying to take control of that area to try to reduce the numbers of smugglers who are exploiting people's vulnerabilities and aspirations in order to suck them into detention centres to begin with, and then take them out to the middle of the Mediterranean. We are not returning them. The Libyan coastguard returns them.



To be honest, I do not know that they all get returned to detention centres. Some might just get landed on the shore and released. It would depend on detention centre capacity, who picks them up, and who is on duty that day. We are not talking about a completely coherent response. They are not being detained for any particular purpose; they may be in Libya without any legal status. That is why both we and the Libyans are trying to drive up the opportunity to return to countries of origin, which is a programme that we focused on, particularly, about a year ago and the European Union has taken over since. That is increasing capacity quite a bit.

We are trying to protect people outside of detention centres as well, so that that is not the only place you can go for food and sustenance. They are not controlled environments, and they also switch hands sometimes, as well. I do not know if Nick wants to add anything?

Nick Williams: It is a very complex and sometimes fluid environment. It very much depends on who is in control of a particular detention centre. We have always tried to work with those detention centres, overseen by the department for controlling illegal migration, which sits under the MOI, and with whom we have a reasonable relationship, but sometimes situations change, and we try to monitor that as best we can.

Q12 **Chair:** Is there any more that you could do to ascertain numbers and the people who are going into detention, or not going into detention? As Ed says, it is not directly the UK doing this; it is the Libyan coastguard that we are talking about, but is there any more we can do?

Ed Hobart: We have limited ability to move around in Libya, but we do visit detention centres—the ones that we have provided sanitary support to, or food packages. We have some understanding of the conditions, which are pretty poor, and we are trying to work to get access to those detention centres so that, for example, representatives of embassies from the source countries can get in there, re-document people and get them on IOM flights back to Nigeria, for example.

We are doing what we can within the limited capacity that we have safely to move around Libya and to access those centres—there is a limited number we get to—and that develops our understanding. We work with the NGOs that are also engaged in those centres: UNHCR, IOM, and the Danish Refugee Council. I think Médecins Sans Frontières have been involved at various points, but maybe not at the moment; they may have been when the review was done. We work with them to try to understand what that picture is, again. It is a very difficult picture. Constrained by our ability to move around, we do take part in the overall system to try to understand better what is going on. We share information with partners, most of them based in Tunis, about what they are doing and what they have seen on the ground.

Once you have got to Libya, of course, it is too late, which is why so much of our activity—and we may come on to that—is now focused on



trying to provide people with information further upstream, so they understand the risk that they are entering into, and tackling smuggling groups that may bring people back from further upstream. The problem is that Libya has historically been a destination in its own right for workers from sub-Saharan Africa, and you still find that most people who are going there are going to Libya, because they think they can find work in Libya. When they get there, the situation is pretty terrible, and then they may get attracted to move on to Europe.

- Q13 Richard Burden:** As I understand what ICAI are saying, though, they are not accusing you or the UK of returning migrants to very poor conditions in detention centres. What they are saying is that the programme of building the capacity of the Libyan coastguard and providing indirect support to those detention centres could have the unintended consequence of creating more harm than it solves, and in fact, they even float the possibility—which is potentially quite a serious charge—that it could end up breaching the fundamental humanitarian principle of “do no harm”. How do you respond to that? They are saying that they have not seen the evidence of the assessments you are doing that satisfy you that you are that side of the line, rather than this side of the line.

Ed Hobart: Where we agree with them is that this is a very difficult area to operate, and complex, and that is why we do undertake a very careful evaluation of all the programmes that we engage in. That is where we disagree with them: the processes and things that we put in place in order to manage that risk. The alternative is to do nothing. Our interventions are very much focused on the humanitarian side, so human rights protection and humanitarian provisions. That can be food packages; it can be putting toilets into detention centres where we have a level of confidence that that is happening, and we are inspecting those to make sure it is happening.

What kinds of things do we do? First of all, it is careful assessment, through things like OSJAs, of the risk involved. It is choosing our partners very carefully—UNHCR, IOM, and the Danish Refugee Council in these particular cases—and working just with the Ministry of Interior, rather than with militia-run centres. It is inspecting those centres. Since the review, we have appointed a humanitarian adviser who is based in Tunis but focused on Tripoli, so that is another element of security. We share information with other donors: the EU is the main one, but the Germans and I think probably the Dutch are also involved in similar kinds of work. It is inspection visits, and it is continually looking at those assessments through our team who are based in Tripoli and Tunis to understand what those risks might be.

Our interventions are very much focused on those individuals, rather than helping run the detention centres. We are not increasing capacity, for example. We are just trying to address the immediate humanitarian



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needs of people who are there, and then in some cases trying to resolve their situation by giving them a route out and back home.

- Q14 **Richard Burden:** You are very clear, if I have understood you correctly, that DFID does undertake regular assessments of not only the impact of its work, but what the impact of that is down the line and how robust the human rights aspects are that are being catered for. It still concerns me, though, that as far as ICAI was concerned, they were saying that they did not see evidence of those kinds of assessments being systematic or documented, and they raised the question that either means they are not very systematic, or they are very systematic but you do not have the reporting mechanisms that enable you to tell them that. How do you respond to that?

Beverley Warmington: I think it was one particular case where they felt an OSJA had not been completed, and there were reasons why we did not complete an OSJA for that, but we felt we had documentation other than an OSJA. We had not supplied that, because the OSJA was what had been requested, and there was a conversation about the OSJA, but we felt that we had enough adequate explanations as to why, in that particular case, there was not an OSJA. Nick, you are closer to the detail, but that was the one case. We felt we had other documentation that showed we had mitigated the risks. There were other areas where we did have an OSJA, and it was that particular case for which they felt we had not supplied an OSJA.

Ed Hobart: It was partly because it was a €100,000 project being delivered by the EU, so we rely on their mechanisms. In order that we do not have this kind of misunderstanding with ICAI in the future, for the second phase of that particular piece of work—which, actually, is not an ODA piece of work in the second phase, but it was in the first phase—we have done an OSJA, although we did not think we necessarily had to. We did not see any harm in doing it, and as it has caused some of this misunderstanding between us and ICAI, that is a belt-and-braces approach. That is something we have done as a consequence; we did not feel that it was absent to begin with, but we do not see any harm in doing it additionally.

- Q15 **James Duddridge:** In the longer term, intuitively, economic development in source countries reduces a push factor, but are you worried that in the short term, economic development might actually be a push factor, in the sense that at the moment, people cannot leave. It is horrendously expensive to complete that journey; you cannot start it on a couple of dollars a day. If you move some people into being able to move, could we, in the short to medium term—I am not quite sure how I am defining this—increase the migration level while progressing in the right direction for the longer term?

Beverley Warmington: We were smiling because we discussed this yesterday. There is evidence both ways; definitely, there is some evidence, but it is very contested and we are looking at that. There are



times when the evidence shows that might be true, but in itself, development is the right thing to do. All of our programmes are about development; the secondary issue is migration, so we would not want to not do a development programme that, in itself, is the right thing to do, but there is some evidence that that might mean that some people migrate.

Q16 James Duddridge: In my mind, clearly, it happens. There is evidence. The only question is how many. We are not going to not do the development because of the migration, but surely we do need to, at some point, put a number on that if people are going to travel during that process.

Ed Hobart: One of my key objectives is to challenge unmanaged migration. That is what brings risks of exploitation and risks at borders, and also a sense of a lack of control of those countries through and to which people are travelling. While the aspiration and resources to enable migration might grow with some increase in wealth, what does that migration look like? If it is controlled and managed migration within a region—for example, ECOWAS—it is quite a good example of where things might work better. If it is a response to refugees in Ethiopia—we may come on to this—and if you are responding by creating legal opportunities for refugees in that market, then that is managing that in a better way.

When you aggregate this data, you have this thing that sometimes people point to and say, “What you are going to do, at a point, is fuel migration overall.” Actually, when you break it down into different situations in different countries, there have been all kinds of different responses. Our overall philosophy is to create jobs at home in the region, and to do that through economic development, so people do not have to travel, or when they do, they do it in a managed way because they have the right skills and they have the right visas, and they are needed in the Gulf or wherever else.

A lot of our work in somewhere like Bangladesh is around how you make sure people are not exploited in migration. It is a massively important thing to Bangladesh. The Philippines is a country that has this managed very well; there are models there of countries that manage migration effectively while it remains a very important economic tool for them. The other thing is free trade. A key part of the Government’s strategy is about how trade can drive development, and how development and trade go hand in hand. If you can do that, you create jobs at home, you reduce the risk, you reduce the sense of huge numbers of people moving regularly or irregularly, and you have overall global GDP growth. That is the strategy.

James Duddridge: That is totally fair.

Stephen Twigg: It is such a massive issue.



James Duddridge: I was contemplating being difficult. I know that you cannot get there and there is no point guessing, and there are variabilities across countries. I am sympathetic.

Ed Hobart: Some of the evaluation that we have talked about is understanding what kinds of interventions have what kinds of impacts. It is a very new area. Probably, there is quite a lot to learn from Latin America.

Q17 **James Duddridge:** We heard earlier that a lot of progress has been made on monitoring and evaluation just over a couple of years. There is more work to be done. That is not to say that what you have done to date is inadequate; it is just that it is definitely an area of interest that we need to hone down on, to get a greater understanding.

Ed Hobart: We can learn from Latin America, where Mexico was a country that generated migration and now is a net recipient of migrants, not only from Latin America but actually from the US as well—Mexicans returning.

Q18 **Stephen Twigg:** Can I move us on to this issue of the categorisation of what is a migration-related programme, which the ICAI review focused on in part? Can you tell us a little bit about the work that you are doing to establish a clearer categorisation?

Beverley Warmington: I want to put this in context a bit. When we were asked for papers—I think it was a year ago now—some of our country offices were asked to supply papers, and one of them, Nigeria, probably over-supplied. They sent a huge amount of documentation, and they felt some programmes could be said to be related to migration. They sent a huge amount. To be fair, we had not done a rapid review before. It was our first. They were doing a belts-and-braces approach to it, and just wanted to make sure they would not be criticised for not sending enough.

Stephen Twigg: This is Alison's dragnet.

Beverley Warmington: This is what Alison was saying. We were not trying to say, "Look at us; we have spent all this money on migration." We were not aggregating that up into some sum to take credit for it. We were not in any way trying to take credit for a big spend on migration. We sent some programmes from Nigeria on economic development that we felt could be, in some causal way, preventing people from leaving, if you were investing in jobs. That is how the Nigeria office interpreted the request. It was not an over-claiming on our behalf: "Aren't we great? We are doing all this work".

We very much agree that we should not label everything as migration-related. You could probably say that about most of what we do, if what we are doing is development, even though—to make your point—development might cause a different response. What we are now saying to our country offices is that we very much agree with that, but



we have sent out a note to all of our offices making it clear what we think is within the realm of “migration-related”: if it has a direct impact on migration—if it is for people migrating, which would include the humanitarian work we have discussed already.

I am sure you know some of the areas we are looking at: protracted crises and the jobs compacts, and that sort of work. There is some work on modern slavery. We have developed a note that has been sent to all of our country offices, which makes it very clear what migration is. There are other areas that would be loosely termed as “might have an impact on migration” or on what the drivers of migration might be. We have been very clear about that: humanitarian work, durable solutions, opportunities for migrants to move safely within region, the opportunities and benefits that migration might bring, and then organised immigration crime, which is an area we are working on alongside the Home Office as well.

Q19 Stephen Twigg: What is your view on this Boko Haram issue that I raised with ICAI in the previous session? Do you see the actions of Boko Haram, and the work that is done by DFID to relieve the humanitarian effects, as migration-related?

Beverley Warmington: If it is working directly with people who have been on the move because of Boko Haram, as we do in the region, then it would be, but if it is an economic development programme, no. As I say, the team sent that through because they sent through lots of documentation, but if we are delivering humanitarian assistance to refugees in the region, in the surrounding countries, then we would call that migration. We would not call the documentation they sent through migration-related.

Q20 Chair: I know that ICAI flagged the jobs compact in Ethiopia up as being a lot of assumptions that were taken at the time, because it had not been tried before. Can you say what has happened to the jobs compact since the publication of the review?

Beverley Warmington: It is, as ICAI said, a very innovative new approach that has been pioneered by the UK. We have done a lot of work with the international institutions to get them on board with this, because that is where we feel some of the funding would come from. The documentation for the project has just gone through our internal quality assessment process, and has come through, and is now ready for Ministers to sign it off. It is all ready to go, and has been internally approved, so it is now waiting for approval from Ministers.

As you know, we have worked with others—the World Bank—to have a window in the World Bank to work on this sort of thing. We have done some research with the World Bank and UNHCR as well, which is ready to go; that is a very big package of research to monitor and evaluate what is going on, and to do more research in the field. We have worked internally in Ethiopia on the legislation, which I think has just come



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through. There are legislation changes in Ethiopia, to allow for these permits, because, as you know, the permits were not allowed for refugees in Ethiopia. It is moving at pace.

Q21 Chair: Can you say a word about the financing of it? It obviously needs to attract quite a bit of financing. Can you say a bit more?

Beverley Warmington: It does, and I have something on the latest on financing. I am not sure how much of it is public, but we now have £154 million of infrastructure finance from the EIB; £44 million of EU financial aid; £154 million from the World Bank—the money we have mentioned from the World Bank—and then DFID have separate bits of money for technical assistance and helping with some of the TA and setting it up. There is quite a lot of money going in.

Q22 Chair: Is that sufficient for what you are aiming for?

Beverley Warmington: Yes, I think so, because a lot of it is technical assistance on improving the investment climate, the labour productivity, strengthening the social and environmental safeguards, improved investment promotion, improving the status of refugees, embedding approaches for adaptive implementation—as you know, this has to be adaptive. We are going to have to learn lessons as we go along, and move quickly to make sure we are taking the ongoing monitoring and evaluation on board.

Those are the kinds of areas we are looking at. A lot of it is about changing legislation and encouraging the Ethiopian Government, because, as you know, this is also about host communities as well, and ensuring that host communities and refugees get work permits. It is about the legislation around that as well, so it looks like it is moving apace.

Chair: Thank you very much for coming.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Richard Gledhill and Mark de Pulford

Q23 Chair: Thank you very much for coming. We have Richard Gledhill, Lead Commissioner for ICAI, and Mark de Pulford, Team Leader for ICAI. We are changing the subject now, moving swiftly on to Somalia. Thank you for coming in front of us in this new Committee of the new Parliament. I will ask you again, in the same sort of way, a lead-off question, and if you do fancy adding some background to your report, that would be really helpful.

Because of the security situation in Somalia, your methodology did not include any field visits. Do you still have full confidence in your findings?



Following on, how did that affect your review?

Richard Gledhill: The security challenges in Somalia were a real challenge for the review. For example, I visited Mogadishu at the time of the elections, and the team was restricted to travelling around the secure zone around the airport, and could not actually go into the capital. Even then, when we were travelling, we had to travel in an armoured vehicle with close protection officers.

We had to design a programme with those constraints, but we also knew that there have been very real concerns in the past about aid diversion in Somalia, with the risk that aid would fall into the wrong hands, and that aid itself could become a driver of conflict, so it actually became part of the problem, rather than part of the solution. Our approach to addressing this was to look very carefully at the processes for monitoring and evaluation that were adopted by DFID and the FCO. We met the delivery partners, but also their monitors, and we studied their findings and learnings. Importantly, we also compared those with what the independent country experts had been saying to us, in particular through a roundtable we held here in London.

We also drew on an independent monitoring report undertaken by the independent monitoring group set up by the UN Secretary-General to be the eyes and ears of the Security Council in Somalia. The principal focus of that group is on the arms embargo and economic sanctions, but it also provides a detailed and independent analysis of donor activity in Somalia, of the changing political contexts, and of corruption in the country. We found this to be a very heavyweight group that does fully evidenced work on the ground in Somalia, across the country, and so was a very important independent source for our review. As well as reviewing their report, we met them.

We found that remote monitoring was one of the areas where we felt that UK aid had made real progress in Somalia. There was a strong focus, particularly from DFID, on mitigating fiduciary risk through remote monitoring, and we highlighted learnings in this area as being a strength in our report. It might help to put this all into context if we look at a specific example. Perhaps I could ask Mark to talk about how remote monitoring worked in practice in relation to police stipends, and the work we did in that area.

Mark de Pulford: These stipends are supplementary payments made by the donors to support police officers and—although this was not in our particular focus—soldiers, supporting the rule of law. Five years ago, the payments were made in cash, and they were made in circumstances where donors were largely unaware of who was receiving the money. Five years ago, in fact, the UK was not involved in those payments; it now is, but what I noticed was an enormous change in the way in which the donors, and the UK in particular, were able to manage the risk. I do not think anybody would pretend, with Somalia, that you can completely eliminate risk. You cannot do that. However, we had electronic



payments. We had biometric monitoring. We had much greater accountability on verification of the officers receiving the money—that they were doing police work. It is not fool-proof. It is still reliant on, at the end of the day, a degree of honesty that may not always be there, but the improvements are plain for all to see, and they give a greater assurance that money is going to the right target, and not corruptly.

Richard Gledhill: Mark mentioned the army stipends. Those are funded by non-ODA funds, and so were not part of our review, but we were able to look at the different approaches being applied in relation to army stipends, compared to police stipends. We had a healthy discussion with officials at the embassy about these differences, and it appeared to us that the approach that was being adopted on police stipends was a robust approach in the circumstances, although we did understand the differences in approach being adopted by the army, or for the army.

Q24 **James Duddridge:** I had a small question—and just for the record, as Minister for Africa, 2014 to 2016, I am somewhat marking my own homework on this subject—but did you get any evidence in terms of army stipends that Burundian soldiers were being paid, and that that money was being used for nefarious purposes back in Burundi during civil conflict, rather than the proper purpose of just paying soldiers?

Richard Gledhill: That was not covered by our work. Mark, I do not know if you want to add anything.

Mark de Pulford: Our knowledge of it is limited, really, to what we have seen in press reports. We have nothing to add on it, I am afraid.

Q25 **Stephen Twigg:** Since the research was conducted, the humanitarian situation in Somalia has worsened, with the drought. Is there any sense that some of your findings might have been superseded by events as a consequence of the drought?

Richard Gledhill: You are right: our review was designed, and much of the research and evidence was completed, before the full scale of the drought had become apparent, and the main focus of our work was on state-building and on peace-building. Although we did look at humanitarian and economic issues, it was in the context of state-building and peace-building, rather than the other way around.

Even though we were not there to review the drought response, it was clear to us that the security situation and the political problems in Somalia were magnifying the vulnerability of the country to natural shocks like that, and we have also seen the problems over the weekend with the terrible bombing in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab has been pushed out of the main urban centres, but it still does control parts of rural Somalia, and clearly this hampers aid delivery. It also amplifies the risk of aid diversion.

The whole issue of resilience to droughts and other natural disasters is a really complex issue, and it would be wrong to blame that on the conflict.



However, it is interesting to note that, although many countries in that region have suffered serious droughts in the last year, four of the countries that have suffered most have been Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen and the parts of Nigeria where Boko Haram are operating.

Q26 Richard Burden: You gave DFID's programme a green/amber rating on all of the indicators in this report. When they responded to your review, the Government basically said that they were pleased that you were able to acknowledge that they are playing a leading role in building a more stable and prosperous Somalia, and that they would take steps to learn some lessons as regards the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, drawing on experience from other countries, particularly fragile countries. How do you feel about their response to your review? Were you expecting any more from them than that, or do you think that response by DFID was reasonable?

Richard Gledhill: The first point I would like to make is that the green/amber score takes account of the very, very difficult operating environment in Somalia, and whilst we did see a lot of good things and the significant contribution that the UK appears to be making to the peace-building effort and the political settlement, there were a lot of issues where, partly because of the challenges of the operating environment, more needed to be done, and we made a lot of important recommendations.

Stephen in particular will know that in some of our past reports, we have been unhappy with the level of detail in some of the Government's responses, in terms of what action is going to be taken, by whom and by when. Here, in many respects, I was pleased with the response we had had from Government. I was particularly pleased with the response in relation to getting a common understanding of the drivers of conflict and instability, and basing the strategy around that common understanding.

What I have seen from other countries in the region is that the process of refreshing the NSC country strategy can be a really powerful tool to get a common understanding of the issues and a coherent strategy for the country, and there is a commitment to refreshing that strategy, underpinning it with further evidence from the Stabilisation Fund and elsewhere. That is great. We will obviously be very interested to see the new NSC strategy, and it will form a key part of our follow-up review in a year's time when we come to look at what action has been taken and what impact that has had.

In some of the other recommendations, there was probably a lot more business as usual: "This is part of our normal processes. This is underway." You would need to look at the detail to see the important commitments that have been made in relation to CSSF. Clearly, the CSSF is behind DFID; it is a newer operation. There is more learning to be done, more building of programme management capability, monitoring and evaluation expertise, and that, again, will be a focus for our follow-up next year.



Q27 James Duddridge: Clearly, we are just looking at Somalia, but you have an enormous amount of experience of other conflict areas. In your view, what best practice from other conflict areas could be deployed in Somalia where they are perhaps not already being deployed, or exercising best practice that you have seen elsewhere?

Richard Gledhill: I feel I ought to ask if I can come back and answer that in a couple of months' time. I am currently leading a new review of the CSSF, which is looking at the operations of that fund in six different countries, so I will have a better answer to that question at that time.

We saw good sharing of learning at the country and regional level, both in and out of Somalia. The UK strategy on FCAS countries, fragile and conflict-affected states, has developed considerably over the last few years, and we have seen the way the Somalia experience has factored into that, and how regional experience and, indeed, regional resources from Kenya have been deployed to support Somalia. That is quite a positive story.

The less positive story is lower down the learning process. We were quite disappointed that much of the learning from the older Conflict Pool, which represented relatively small amounts of expenditure but still not insignificant, seems to have been lost. One of the programmes that we reviewed was a local radio facility, funded by the Conflict Pool. It seemed to us that although that programme finished in 2014, there were potential dividends from that for UK aid, and the corporate memory of that does not exist. There was a missed opportunity. Partly, that stems from the rapid turnover of staff. Officials only stay 12 months or 18 months in post in a conflict state, but that process of capturing learning and building the institutional memory needs to be managed. That is an important issue, and there is more to do, particularly on the CSSF, around that. That partly reflects the relative experience of running programmes in that organisation, and that is something we will be looking at carefully as part of the CSSF review. Mark, I do not know if there is anything you want to add on that?

Mark de Pulford: On the CSSF, or more generally about lessons?

Richard Gledhill: Lessons at the higher level, I think.

Mark de Pulford: At the higher level, there would be three that I would mention, if I may. The first is our corollary on the use of the private sector, which is one of the positive stories in the report, in terms of access, flexibility and the effectiveness front, but we do have some lessons there about the need to accompany that use with political and diplomatic support, and a better framework for accountability and co-ordination. They are quite an important set of lessons if the policy choice of using private sector contractors, understandably, is continued.

Richard Gledhill: One of the interesting benefits of the use of private contractors is that it gave access to parts of the country that the UN,



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even, was not even able to go through, which is an interesting fact and something that was confirmed by the UN themselves. Importantly, it also gave a sharper focus to the UK's national interest objectives that run in parallel with the development objectives as part of the Aid Strategy. There is important learning there, but there are also issues about how to make it work better and more effectively.

Mark de Pulford: Richard has already mentioned the need for a common view of the underlying causes of the problem we are trying to address. That clearly is essential, and I would connect that to the "do no harm" agenda, and to the quest for sustainable, long-term peace and stability.

The final thing I would mention, if I may, is the prioritisation we are now seeing of inclusion post-the London conference in May. This is about understanding that you do not build a new state unless you take the ordinary citizens with you, and there is now a recognition—and the UK is very active in promoting this concept—that not enough is being done on that, and unless the roots of change in Somalia go down to the ordinary citizen, they will perish.

Richard Gledhill: Although, again, it is slightly outside our brief, it is important to emphasise what was achieved through the political processes—through things like the London conference—in parallel with the activity in-country, and it was through the work and influence that had been gained in-country and the credibility with other donors and the international community that helped empower the political activity in London.

Q28 **James Duddridge:** You asked whether you could answer in two months' time. Perhaps you could use Somalia as a specific example with the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund.

Richard Gledhill: We will.

Q29 **James Duddridge:** On a slightly tangential topic, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund was very good. It had good governance. However, I would ask you to look at the issue of lessons and best practice used, because the Government tried to use best practice on the Prosperity Fund, with disastrous consequences, and that has been much, much less successful. I would be interested to see what other lessons were learned from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund elsewhere, because whilst that has been a success, perhaps the extrapolated lessons have not been as effectively learned.

Richard Gledhill: Willem is actually my team leader on the CSSF, so we will be back to answer that question in a few months' time.

Chair: He is scribbling furiously at the back there. Fantastic. Richard and Mark, thank you so much for coming in front of us, and thank you for your work on the report.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Phil Evans, Julian Reilly and Alison Thorpe

Q30 Chair: Thank you very much. Welcome to you all. We have Phil Evans, Head of DFID Somalia, Julian Reilly, Head of East Africa Department at the Foreign Office, and Alison Thorpe, Head of Africa Strategy and Network Unit. Thank you so much for coming as the final panel. We have about half an hour, because we do need to get into the Chamber for DFID questions, so can we be concise? We are doing well so far. Again, I will ask you a lead-off question, and if you do want to outline any points that you have about the response to the report, then do feel free to do that.

Given the continuing conflict in Somalia, ICAI argues that aid programmes might have unintended and harmful consequences. What are the individual project managers doing in the field to avoid this?

Phil Evans: Thank you, Chair. I am happy to pick that one up. Can I just make a couple of general comments about the review and our response to it? We did see it as a very useful exercise, and well-timed, at a point where we were approaching the end of the first political cycle in Somalia since the new dispensation for the federal Government, and had only really been able to get up to full speed in the final two years of that process, because of instability in Government in the prior part.

It was a good moment to take stock, and we were, of course, pleased with the overall assessment. Getting a green/amber was quite pleasing, and affirming for the work that we are all doing together in a very difficult place; particularly the finding that we are delivering an innovative and largely effective programme in a very difficult place, and that our leadership and influence in Somalia is widely recognised, both across Government and across the international community, and within Somalia itself.

We were also pleased with the finding that we are learning lessons from our work, though we could clearly do a lot more to capture those more explicitly, and this is having an influence on the UK's global work on fragile and conflict-affected states. Finally, we were pleased with the finding that there are encouraging signs that the One HMG way of tackling these kinds of challenges paid dividends, although again there is clearly a lot more that we can do to build that. We do recognise that we can do a lot better, and I hope our management response did reflect that sufficiently.

In terms of "do no harm", that is critically important to us, and a maxim that we try to apply across our programme delivery. I have a number of examples that I can refer to, if that would help you. Where this really counts is at the front end, at the delivery end, in the finer details of programme delivery, so we have an overall understanding of the risks in



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Somalia. It is something we have worked very hard on over a long period of time. We need to apply that understanding at a very technical level in delivery.

Somalia is a very combative place on the ground. There are a lot of tensions, a lot of them framed around clan affiliations, and a lot of competition within those tensions over access to resources, so when you are injecting aid resources, it becomes part of a competition between people. Very small things like where you build a clinic, where you put a livestock holding ground, where you make an improvement in other areas of infrastructure, for example, are highly contested, and it is very important to go in and be clear about where the points of tension are. We have a number of examples. With the livestock holding grounds, for example, which we are seeking to improve under the Somaliland Development Fund, this began by rebuilding some fencing around some holding grounds and introducing some veterinary services for the nomadic population that was using those grounds.

As we started to do that, we began to detect some disputes among clans about access to these resources and this facility, so we got a real-time analysis done—a bit of a deeper dive into what lay beneath that—and made some changes to the delivery. We removed the fencing; made access more open; put a bit more effort into providing water resources, for example, in the wider area, so that there was not a flashpoint in the centre of it. That was a very good example of where we adapted a programme in real time on the ground to dissipate a potential conflict. These guys will go at it if a tension like this opens, and it can get violent quite quickly.

Another good example, which is very current, is looking at “do no harm” issues around our humanitarian response, which was massively scaled-up, as Members will know, during the course of this year. We have held a lot of consultations with our humanitarian partners to make sure that when they are delivering humanitarian aid to the front line, they are factoring in concerns about how that aid is distributed and who the beneficiaries are, and whether that is creating feelings of exclusion among people.

One of the ways in which that has been resolved is to separate the tasks within the delivery chain: identify beneficiaries, for example, on the one hand, for food support, cash transfers, and other inputs from the programme, and separating that process from the actual delivery process itself. We remove the suspicion that people may have that the people who control the distribution of the resource are doing that in a partial way. You do one thing, get it cleared with everybody on the ground, and then somebody else comes in and delivers the goods, for example.

Those are a couple of examples. I could give you more if you would like, but it is something that we are very sensitive to, and we have seen the consequences if we do not get it right.



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Q31 Stephen Twigg: Are you factoring the “do no harm” issue into the ongoing refresh of the National Security Strategy for Somalia?

Julian Reilly: Very much so, and it is also worth saying at this point that the ICAI report was very helpfully timed for that National Security Council strategy. We are able to reflect the lessons that we have taken from that in the report. Whether you are looking at political interventions or our CSSF interventions, or our very large DFID programmes, the “do no harm” principle runs through that, and indeed through the local strategy board that oversees the programming of the CSSF, and the strategy and the implementation of the NSC strategy.

We have recently responded to reflections by including a political sensitivity category, as well as a conflict sensitivity category, because as was alluded to earlier, we are still in a hugely contested and difficult political space as the federal structures and forms of governance and constitutional arrangements across Somalia develop. Whatever we are doing, whether it is ODA or non-ODA; whether it is security reform work, constitutional reform or more economic development, etc, there are always risks of “do no harm”, and that runs across all of the strands of the strategy, and has been particularly brought out in the refresh that will be finalised in December.

Q32 Stephen Twigg: ICAI’s review tells us that no joint analysis of conflict and stability has been done for Somalia. Can you explain why?

Phil Evans: This goes to the heart of quite an interesting dialogue we had with the ICAI team throughout the review. We only partially accept that critique. The NSC strategy, and the formulation of it, brings together a cross-government view on what is going on in Somalia and what the challenges are, and how we need to respond to them. Having said that, we do accept that we need to do more in that area, and some work has been done since the review was published. We now do have a conflict drivers analysis that was done through the Somalia Stability Fund, which is one of our flagship initiatives. It is a key bridge across HMG working.

That was actually underway at the time of the review but, because of the sensitivity around it, it was confidential. We now have a product that we can more widely share, and that was quite useful in reinforcing the implicit strategy that we were working towards, which is all about the effects of state collapse on local political dynamics, conflicts, radicalisation, and so on. It has been implicit in the way we have modelled our approach, but not explicit enough to ensure that everybody is fully on the same page all the time, and that is a response that we have been working up and which will, we hope, be much more clearly evidenced in the strategy itself as that emerges over the next couple of months.

Q33 Stephen Twigg: ICAI tell us that there are different reasons given by DFID and the FCO, so are we going to hear a different reason now?



Phil Evans: Can I just say that there is a kind of philosophical dispute within this? ICAI felt quite strongly, and with good reasons, that our main focus should be on the drivers of conflict in Somalia. That should be the framing set of principles behind what we do.

What actually happened in Somalia since the London conference in 2012 and the Brussels conference in 2013, when the New Deal compact was signed with Somalia, was that that used a slightly broader framework of peace-building and state-building that was developed under the New Deal in Busan. That basically says that the way to stand up states that have been collapsed by conflict is to integrate work on a political settlement that is inclusive and stable, a security guarantee that is linked to that and the reinstatement of the rule of law, and an economic recovery that generates revenue and delivers services to people, and provides a peace dividend. That was a more all-encompassing framework, and conflict analysis is within that as part of the machinery of how you engage with those five main strands of activity.

That was the international agreement about the way in which we should engage with Somalia, which we strongly adhere to, because we as DFID and as HMG have been instrumental in developing that model through the OECD and DAC processes on how to deal with fragile states. The conflict drivers are embedded within that as one piece of the analysis, but it is really important to understand that work on health, water supply, and economic recovery are fully immersed in a peace-building and state-building model in a way that a conflict driver analysis perhaps would overlook. We were disappointed, from the DFID point of view, that ICAI would not accept that our work in human development and economic development was actually part of our peace-building and state-building strategy, although we do accept that we could be more explicit in stating that in the future, and that is what we are starting to work on now with our management responses.

Stephen Twigg: I always wish at this point that we still had ICAI at the table.

Phil Evans: It was a really, really good debate that we had with them, I have to say.

Q34 **Chair:** Julian, do you want to come back on this?

Julian Reilly: Yes, very briefly, because I entirely endorse Phil's response. We have worked extremely closely together on all of these challenges, but what I would just like to add is that also, over the last year and a half, working closely with the UN and other international donors, one of the core principles that underlies the London Somalia Conference was a comprehensive approach to security, which is another way of describing what Phil has also just set out. The much broader set of conflict drivers, and the drivers of what is undermining state-building are core parts of that comprehensive approach to stability.



The New Partnership for Somalia and the Security Pact, which were two of the key products that came out of the London conference, are informed by and address exactly the kinds of challenges that you would see, perhaps in a slightly narrower sense, from a JACS. I am a great fan of JACS; we have just completed one recently on South Sudan, where it is very, very useful, so I am not undermining that as a process, but I feel that we have another instrument that delivers equally on that, although as Phil says, we need to flag up in our programming more clearly where we are applying that.

Chair: I am sorely tempted to do that, Stephen, but I think for the sake of time, I will resist.

Q35 **Richard Burden:** Could I perhaps just ask you about a particular example where ICAI seem to flag up whether the peace-building/state-building agenda may or may not completely link in and integrate with the economic development programmes? That is the Sustainable Employment and Economic Development programme. That was designed to contribute to improved stability through economic growth and sustainable employment.

What ICAI said is that a recent evaluation had said, yes, it does make a positive contribution to jobs and livelihoods, but it does not necessarily make a positive contribution to building stability. In fact, the risk that they raised is that as beneficiaries benefit from increased incomes, they themselves might turn to violent groups for protection, therefore giving another twist to that cycle. How would you respond to that?

Phil Evans: It is an interesting question. You have to imagine that question in a context where you were not doing that kind of work. If you were not trying to rebuild the economy in a state that has been completely collapsed by conflict, then you would not be putting in place the conditions for a full recovery, and one that is sustainable through economic growth and the generation of revenue. Again, the devil is in the detail: how do you do that in a way that reduces the conflict risks?

The SEED programme was the first attempt, alongside the World Bank, to do this—to get back into a recovery of livelihoods and jobs—and we did learn a lot from it. Those lessons are being applied in the successor programme, which is called PIMS, which is about looking at value chains, all the way from the producer to the trade end of the value chain, and trying to apply some of those lessons.

I do not think we saw from SEED and the evaluative work that was done any major concerns about causing harm or getting diversion of the benefits that came out of it, but what we did see is that it was not having the kinds of effects that we might have hoped on things like radicalisation, for example. There was not a direct causal link that has been established so far, by any work anywhere that we are aware of, that shows that if you give people jobs, they are less likely to join Al-Shabaab,



for example, which was more of a focus of the debate that emerged out of that.

However, the sustainability of all the work we are doing, particularly in the security sector, which is expensive, relies entirely on generating more income and more revenue, so that you can pay soldiers and properly equip them to provide security guarantees, for example. We have to keep doing it, but keep learning from it, and be very conscious of exactly the risks that Mr Burden has set out. However, we are going into the unknown, basically, because this is the first time we are doing these kinds of things in Somalia.

Q36 Stephen Twigg: Phil, you referred to One HMG, and ICAI recommended that DFID and the FCO explore opportunities for greater integration in their Somalia programmes. Can you update us on progress towards achieving that?

Julian Reilly: Yes, I will kick off with that, as the FCO has the responsibility for building coherent platforms. There is a really good story to tell. ICAI were absolutely right to set out the huge challenges that we face, operating not only in Somalia or any difficult location, but actually across four sites in the region—Nairobi, Addis, Mogadishu and Hargeisa—and the difficulties travelling between them.

However, we do have increasingly good technology to support that. We all meet virtually by videoconferencing every week to make sure that London and all the four components are together. People travel very regularly, both between London and the region and within the region. In terms of IT, DFID are now part of our global address list, so everybody can be included in shared information. It is a work in progress, and as Mr Duddridge will know from his time with the Foreign Office, our IT is not always perfect, but it is getting better—wonderful new technology arrived the other week—which is enabling us all to work in a more mobile and integrated way.

I also think, actually, that BEM—the British Embassy in Mogadishu—is a platform that always has DFID people on it. It has a permanent member, and there are regular visitors all the time. That enables that kind of interaction, and people passing through Nairobi from the FCO side, making sure they are working closely with DFID.

Q37 Chair: In your response to the review, you said that you would take some steps to improve your monitoring, evaluation, and lesson-learning capabilities for CSSF in Somalia. What progress have you made?

Alison Thorpe: Perhaps I can answer that. I should explain that I am not here as a Somalia expert, unlike my two esteemed colleagues, but I am rather head of the team that manages the Africa CSSF programme, so as well as Somalia, I also oversee the other seven programmes that we operate. We found the ICAI report on M&E really useful and timely, because one of the things that I am keen we look at is how we continue



to build our M&E capability across the piece—not just in Somalia, but elsewhere—and exchange those lessons, as you rightly said, between programmes as well as within the Somalia portfolio.

We have taken on board ICAI's comments about ensuring that we have stronger M&E mechanisms. There is some innovative work going on, which I wanted to bring to your attention that we are doing, which we are piloting in Somalia and the wider Horn around monitoring and evaluation of political impact, which, as far as I am aware, is new and has not been done before. A lot of what CSSF does is political: how do you monitor that, and how do you evaluate it? It is quite difficult to measure political impacts, so we are designing a series of tools to do exactly that.

We are using third-party verification, as ICAI referred to, out in those parts of Somalia that we cannot get to, and we also have a mechanism for ensuring that the monitors are monitoring the right thing. We are monitoring the monitors, if you like, to ensure that that monitoring and evaluation work is happening. We are also ensuring that the wider CSSF family share their lessons from M&E more broadly, and in fact, some of the activity we have piloted in Somalia about using third-party verification is now being trialled in north-east Nigeria, which is equally difficult to get to for UK members of staff, and where we are very much drawing on the Somalia model.

However, that said, there is still more work to do. As ICAI mentioned, CSSF is very much in its infancy still. Compared to our DFID friends, we are but a baby, and we are constantly learning and evolving. It is a high-risk programme; that is what it was created for, and so we do not always get it right. However, the important thing with CSSF is that we have the mechanisms in place to know very quickly where we are not getting it right, and to be able to turn it off, adapt, or flex accordingly. I do not know, Phil, if you want to add anything from a DFID perspective?

Phil Evans: Just to add, on exchange of good practice, that one of the upsides of us being scattered is that there is a concentration of programme management staff in Nairobi, and the DFID team—which is too large, actually, to sit on the platform in Mogadishu at the moment, because of the cost and security questions—sit alongside colleagues working on the programme management side of CSSF. There is a constant flow of dialogue and exchange of knowledge and information between them, and a very strong, collegiate sense of common purpose.

This has had a lot of these hard-to-measure, but nonetheless visible, impacts of pushing up the standards across all of our programmes, because there is cross-learning back to us as well, about the kind of problems that CSSF colleagues are facing in the work that they do, particularly on the political track. That is having a very positive effect on the learning across the whole of the piece, and that is feeding, as Alison said, back into the wider thinking across the whole of CSSF, not just what we are trying to do in Somalia.



Q38 Richard Burden: Could I just ask you to comment on a particular example, again, where ICAI have raised some concerns about whether ODA CSSF projects actually do end up fulfilling clear developmental objectives? That is about the aid investment in the new police headquarters, where they said that the leverage that that created was being used, but in practice, it was being used to secure co-operation on particular security issues, rather than that leverage being used to unblock progress on police reform legislation. Is that a fair comment?

Alison Thorpe: It is safe to say that we have taken away, off the back of the ICAI report, the need to be much more explicit in both our paperwork and our communications about how the ODA aspects of our work deliver to the DAC criteria.

On the particular case that you mention, I would actually argue that it did both. It is true to say that the programme you are talking about did deliver a benefit to the UK national interest, and certainly our CT colleagues found the work that we had done had helped advance their objectives, but there was also a clear piece to that about building police capacity. I do not think that it necessarily needs to be a binary choice, in that we can deliver both with our ODA activity, and that still meets the criteria but also brings a benefit to the UK. Julian, you know the Somaliland context; I think this programme that you refer to is in Somaliland.

Julian Reilly: It is worth noting two things. Of course, the great thing about CSSF is that we have the ODA and the non-ODA elements. We are able to use the non-ODA elements for those parts that are purely about delivering for British interests and do not meet the primary purpose of economic development, etc, test.

However, on the particular example that was given, as Alison said, we can be clearer in our paperwork about how the primary purpose was the really important mission of developing the police, and the DFID Security and Justice programme is doing a huge amount on that. We are using CSSF to help complement that in certain areas, and where there is a grey area, we are also able to bring in non-ODA funding to supplement that, to focus on the parts that are about the UK.

Chair: Fantastic. Can I just thank you very much for coming, and thank you for your work on the response? Thank you.