

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: DFID's Priorities, HC 485

Tuesday 24 October 2017

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 24 October 2017.

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Members present: Stephen Twigg (Chair); Richard Burden; James Duddridge; Mr Nigel Evans; Mrs Pauline Latham; Chris Law; Mr Ivan Lewis; Lloyd Russell-Moyle; Paul Scully; Mr Virendra Sharma; and Henry Smith.

Questions 1 – 49

Witnesses

Rt. Hon Priti Patel MP, Secretary of State for International Development; and Lindy Cameron, Director-General for Country Programmes, Department for International Development.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Rt. Hon Priti Patel MP and Lindy Cameron.

Q1 Chair: Good morning; we resume for the second part of our evidence taking this morning. Can I welcome very warmly the Secretary of State, who has come to give evidence to us? We have you for a maximum of an hour and a quarter, so we will definitely finish promptly for 12.30. As you may imagine, we have quite a lot of territory that we seek to cover with you in this first session of the new Committee. Let me start by giving you the opportunity, Secretary of State, to set out the Government's priorities for DFID and broader ODA, now and over the next three to five years.

Priti Patel: Chair, thank you and good morning. It is very nice to see the new Committee as well. I want to thank you for inviting me here and pass on congratulations to all of you who have been elected to the Committee. I want to start off by commenting on the fact that I know there are a number of inquiries taking place, but it is worth reflecting right now on the state of world. Many of you hear me say that we are constantly engulfed in crises and challenges around the world. We do not need to look too far right now, whether it is hurricanes or the Rohingya crisis that we are seeing in Myanmar and the impact on Bangladesh.

My focus remains on dealing with and tackling the causes of conflict, instability, poverty and the root causes that are embedded in the themes of international development. That is what my department, DFID, our energies, our focus and our resources are focused on, as well as the SDGs. Through all our international work, I work with multilateral organisations, and SDGs remain core to our purpose and what we are doing.

Then there is the theme of boosting trade and prosperity. We cannot end poverty until we grow new markets and support trade and investment, but also make sure that we continue to educate the world's poorest and give them the skills so that they can stand on their own two feet.

You will already be aware of my work to reform the aid system. Aid effectiveness means maximising value for money, and being absolutely accountable and transparent to British taxpayers about where their money goes and why it serves our interests, nationally but also globally, to invest our international development budget in the way that we do.

Lastly, the theme of leadership never leaves the department, because we lead by example, and where Britain leads I believe other countries follow. We have seen that in the last 24 hours with the Rohingya crisis, when we saw the pledging conference in Geneva. We led major pledges with £12 million, in addition to £35 million that we have already given, and other countries stepped up. I have to say that, most of this year, my time and



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energy has been spent on dealing with crises, famines, droughts and conflicts, and it is Britain that has been leading. Because of our leadership, we have been able to call others out and get them to step up.

Q2 Chair: Thank you very much indeed, Secretary of State. We will come on to some questions specifically about the Rohingya crisis in a moment. Can I welcome the prominence you have given today in your opening statement to the sustainable development goals? The UK, of course, played a very important role in the formation of the global goals. However, we have not so far undertaken a voluntary national review at the UN's high-level political forum on the SDGs. Would there be merit in putting ourselves forward now for such a review?

Priti Patel: If we look at the SDGs, but also the way we are hardwiring them in the government system through departmental plans, we have a great deal of skills, expertise and leadership in terms of what we are doing on the SDGs. We are demonstrating our leadership and specialism in key areas where we lead: women and girls is a classic example; education is another great example; and we are strong in health and global health security. I take the view that, in those areas where we are strong, we should continue to drive change, effectiveness and outcomes through the SDGs, with other countries and through the multilateral system. I am very open to working with everyone to make sure we deliver what we signed up to internationally.

Q3 Chair: Is a voluntary national review on the agenda?

Priti Patel: We are still working across government, right now, in terms of single departmental plans. It is fair to say that we are still coming back after the election in terms of reviewing those plans, but we are working with the Cabinet Office, to make sure that we are absolutely on it and set to deliver the standards and the key goals, as we have originally outlined.

Q4 Chris Law: Just touching back on the real focus being humanitarian crises, as we know, climate change plays a key part in that, and has affected developing countries very badly, from droughts in east Africa to flooding in south Asia. There is no doubt that DFID has done a good job in bringing clean energy to people in developing countries that need it. However, across government, more is still being spent on fossil fuels than renewable energy. Can I ask what discussions you are having with your Cabinet colleagues to encourage the whole Government to get behind clean energy? Given that DFID is a major shareholder in the World Bank, which is still spending more on oil, gas and coal than clean energy, can you work to persuade the World Bank to get with the programme and shift from supporting fossil fuels to clean energy?

Priti Patel: The issue of climate change and clean energy is not just at the heart of my discussions with my colleagues across government; it is fair to say it is at the heart of this Government. If you look at the clean growth strategy that was published just last week, you see the Business



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Department leading and innovating in this area. At DFID, through our work internationally, across the Commonwealth and through the multilateral system, we are leading this area. Our influence is enormous, and, if we look at the investments that we are making in clean energy in poor countries, I think they speak for themselves. We are enabling, facilitating and enhancing new technology, because the reality is that the world is changing and we cannot stand still in this area.

The United Kingdom has a great offer in this space in terms of innovation, technology and businesses, and we want to leverage them more and more, to do more internationally and, importantly, to do more in poor countries. When I speak about boosting trade and investment, and helping countries to stand on their own two feet, there is no easy switch that we flick and everything will be fine. There has to be a combined approach to development, and clean energy, climate issues and resilience issues are all part of that matrix.

If I may say so, with regards to the World Bank, we do not have to ask. We are a very, very strong voice at the World Bank. We are a major shareholder of the bank. I am quite a vocal governor, as you can imagine, but delivering for British taxpayers, delivering our money to make sure that it goes to the world's poorest, and delivering on the changes and the things that they need in their countries, are absolutely at the heart of our strategy and our engagement with the World Bank.

Q5 **Chris Law:** I can take that as a yes, then.

Priti Patel: Absolutely.

Q6 **Chair:** Secretary of State, you mentioned the Commonwealth. We obviously have a very important Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting next year. I know there are a number of issues competing to be priorities for that, two of which I am aware of: one is malaria and the other is disability, particularly sight. Are you able to comment on the department's view of what the priorities for CHOGM will be?

Priti Patel: The Prime Minister has outlined a number of priorities for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting next year, and it is an exciting agenda. I am very proud of the team in DFID, which has really innovated, and we have some great suggestions and content for the summit. Global health will feature, because it is a very, very important and significant area. It could be malaria, but there are many other areas of health that we are working on and looking at.

Do not forget that, in DFID, I have led the NTDs agenda this year as well. That is vital, because in some of the poorest countries in the world neglected tropical diseases still persist, and these are medieval diseases and we want to end them. Again, that is where we show great leadership. If you look at the work we have done on polio, that is us, again, showing great leadership. Those areas are still being discussed, but we are going to have a very, very strong global health focus.



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I have not shied away from the issue of disability at all. Lindy will know, when I walked into the department a year ago, I asked, "What are we doing on disability?" I was given a really nice document, and at that point I wanted to weep, because a document has to translate into outcomes. I am now looking to work with different countries and innovate on disability, because, yes, we will work with organisations, specialist agencies and charities, but we can do better than that. We can use technology innovation in the poorest parts of the world to help the most marginalised and vulnerable children with disability. We could do a great deal of good in Commonwealth countries on that theme.

Q7 Paul Scully: Thank you very much, Secretary of State, for coming, and for supporting the DEC appeal for the Rohingya Muslims: the extra funding of £12 million that you are talking about. When I was in the camps in Cox's Bazar four weeks ago, I saw evidence of clearly DFID, but also USAID, Australian aid, King Salman relief and Turkish aid. I am wondering what more you can do to encourage others to get involved in the support that the Bangladeshi Government are really crying out for.

Priti Patel: Thank you, Mr Scully, for your question. This is just a shocking crisis: the fastest-growing humanitarian crisis that the world is seeing, experiencing and witnessing right now. First of all, it is important to pay tribute to the authorities and the Government in Bangladesh, for the way in which they have stepped up, led in, taken responsibility and become a host community. That phrase is used quite a lot now, in light of the crises that we see around the world.

In terms of what more others can do, I have spent a lot of my time speaking to, for example, Mark Green, USAID. My counterparts, Lindy and all colleagues across DFID, spend a lot of time doing that. We need more resources. This is a humanitarian crisis, and it costs money; it costs resources. It may be a very uncomfortable thing for the world to see and witness, but I tell you what: it will be even more uncomfortable if countries do not step up and provide the resources needed to stop diseases and stop the sexual abuse and violence that is taking place in these camps; provide the psychosocial support that is required for women and children who have seen such horrors and brutality; and, importantly, provide immediate humanitarian relief: food, water, all the things that many of us just take for granted.

In my assessment, that is the immediate need, but it is going to be an ongoing immediate need. This is a crisis that will have long-term consequences. We are stepping up and providing resources for the relief effort, and we have been calling agencies and other countries, getting them to do more. The pledging conference in Geneva yesterday had that catalytic impact. It got others to step up, and that is really important.

The next stage is what we are going to do in the long term. The reality is the Rohingya people do not have peace and security in Rakhine State to go back to. That means all diplomatic efforts will have to be leveraged and pulled together. The international community will have to get its



finger out and exert pressure in the right way to change that dynamic, working with the commission of Kofi Annan. We will have to look at the long-term support and needs of the Rohingya people in Bangladesh, and perhaps even more structured facilities for them: I do not like the term “camps”, but more permanent accommodation for them that goes beyond the tents that you and other colleagues would have seen when you visited Cox’s Bazar.

Q8 Paul Scully: Is there realistically anything more that the UK can do to come up with a political solution to end this situation?

Priti Patel: Our voice is important. On the basis that we are the largest single donor to the crisis in terms of the resources we are giving, in my view, we use our voice effectively and robustly in the diplomatic sphere, to influence and, I guess, coalesce and convene others, so they recognise that the international community needs to do more.

For example, the ASEAN community, the region itself, has a huge role to play here and, of course, our colleagues in the Foreign Office are working alongside colleagues in DFID. We are working internationally, with EU colleagues and colleagues within the international system, to look at how, because it is the how. We all know that there is a crisis, but how can we have the right kind of discussions and conversations to influence the right kind of outcomes? We are in a long game here, but those are the discussions that are taking place, and Britain has a very, very important role to play there.

Q9 Mr Sharma: In about two weeks’ time, on 5 November, the CPA conference takes place in Dhaka. Do you have any plans for using that opportunity, when a large number of parliamentarians from the different countries will be attending? I do not know the exact figures yet, but there will be 150 or so delegates. We can lobby the MPs over there and give the Rohingya issue high prioritisation at the CPA conference, in order to raise awareness and encourage other countries to participate in the way that Britain has done.

Priti Patel: That is a great suggestion. I was not aware of the conference taking place, so I suggest we take that away. The answer is yes: we need to use every single lever that we can, politicians to politicians, delegations to delegations. We have to do more in this space; we really have.

Q10 Mr Evans: I have just come back from St Petersburg, where we had the 137th IPU conference. We always have an emergency resolution. Several are put in, and then it is up to the conference to choose which one to debate. The Rohingya were chosen by the vast majority of people there. That the importance the international community and parliamentarians are giving it, because it is only MPs who attend this conference. What you are suggesting today is that the Governments of those MPs are not taking it as seriously as their Members of Parliament; is that right?



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Priti Patel: Governments need to step up all around the world. It is not just one Government or a handful of Governments. This is an international crisis: we are seeing ethnic cleansing; we are seeing the persecution of the Muslim population, and that is simply unacceptable. If we care about the world's poorest, the world's marginalised, we have to be a voice for them and give them the chance to be represented through other Governments, delegations and other parliamentarians. A lot more needs to happen here.

Q11 **Mr Evans:** MPs are speaking up about it. We all know that an appalling genocide is taking place there and creating hundreds of thousands of refugees, and it could take many years before any of them are able to return to their homelands. Are any countries being absolutely obtrusive and saying, "No, we are not giving any more money"? The fact that they do not give 0.7% to begin with is clearly appalling for a lot of them that can afford to do so.

Priti Patel: From the discussions that Lindy and I have had with many colleagues, people are not not giving resources; we should be clear about that. This is not just about the money; this is about the diplomatic efforts that are required. This is about the world pressing that pause button for now, standing back and saying, "This is unacceptable". Why is it that, in 2017, we are witnessing these scenes: mass movements of people, nearly 600,000 Rohingya people, moving? It is not for the fun of it. They are in fear of their lives; they are being persecuted. For the world to come together internationally, and politicians and others to call that out, would be a welcome step. It is a case of targeting those countries that need to go over and beyond, and cross the line a bit more in terms of resources, but also joining those global efforts and having more of a coalition come together in this space.

Lindy Cameron: One success of yesterday's conference was that we saw a range of partners, including a range of Gulf countries, stepping up and contributing to the appeal. That was one of the successes in reaching quite a high level of funding for the appeal. There are always countries in different stages of their political cycle with elections, and therefore it is not as easy to make contributions, but we have seen a broader range of countries participating in the last couple of days. The key thing, as the Secretary of State says, will be the political leverage and, particularly in terms of the regional players, how they engage on what happens in Burma going forward, as much in response to the crisis

Q12 **Chair:** Is there any sense that China is open to engaging positively on this?

Priti Patel: To be fair, I would not know from the diplomatic side. Lindy's point about the regional powers is really important, because we have to look at the long-term implications of the crisis that is taking place. Most government departments would horizon scan and look to the future, as we do in DFID. We can see that instability and conflict are the key features of the world that we live in. If we do not deal with the root



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causes, some of these problems will continue and will manifest themselves again and again, breeding instability and causing the vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation. Where Governments are showing inertia, we have to lean in and say that it is in our national interest and our security interest to be on top of this and deal with them.

Q13 Mr Evans: Secretary of State, you say more resources are needed, and it seems as if that is absolutely the case and it is urgent that they come now, not in 12 months' time. Is this giving you leverage within your own department to access some of that 0.7% and push it towards projects like the Rohingya and emergencies that we have seen in other parts of the world, as opposed to some of the other projects that get so much bad publicity in papers like the *Daily Express*?

Priti Patel: As I have said during my time in DFID, the 18 months that I have been there, the world is broken. We have dealt with a number of crises this year. We have had the resources to do exactly the right thing, which has been to provide emergency humanitarian support and relief. If you look at north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen and Bangladesh—all the crisis zones—we have been there; we have been out there from day one.

Earlier on, with the famines, it was me writing to the Secretary-General, and it was DFID leading the world through our convening ability and putting the money in, that got others to step up. We will continue to do that, so the resources are there. I guess, Mr Evans, your question is about the choices in terms of how you spend that money. Through the changes that I have instituted in the department on money, we have looked at our spending. I have stopped programmes and projects; I have not hesitated in stopping programmes and projects that I felt did not deliver aid effectiveness or value for money. Of course, that gives us more scope to save lives today and change lives in the long run for tomorrow.

Chair: We are going to come to those broader allocation issues in a moment.

Q14 Mrs Latham: Good morning, Secretary of State. Are you considering suspending, on the same theme, some or all of the £94 million aid programme that you currently give to Burma? If so, what sort of criteria would the department use to do this?

Priti Patel: I am going to ask Lindy to come in on this. Our programming in Burma is part of our multiyear programming, which covers some of the themes we have already touched on, so education and health, but importantly building capacity in the country where it had very little capacity before. One could argue that it seems quite binary—let us just say they are behaving so dreadfully; and they are, obviously, with the persecution we are seeing—to cut off the programmes. Who would that benefit, or who would be affected by that? Ultimately, it is



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still people who are using those services, the poorest in some of the most remote and rural areas in Burma.

It does not mean that we are not looking at those programmes. All our programmes are rightly and constantly under review, so if we felt that there were some levers for us to apply, we would consider them. The criterion always has to be: "Who would be affected by this?", and it comes back to the choices we make in our programming. Who are the net beneficiaries of the programmes and the money we put in? That comes back to DFID's core purpose, which is poverty alleviation, capacity building and support for the world's poorest.

Lindy Cameron: That is right, Secretary of State. To give you the example of the three biggest programmes we run in Burma at the moment, one is livelihood and food security, the second is about maternal and child health and the third is a humanitarian assistance and resilience programme, which is about looking at the needs of marginalised groups. The majority of our programming is about thinking about the very poorest and most marginalised in Burma. We have to be extremely careful not to penalise poor people for the actions of their Government at times like this, but we are looking extremely closely at our whole programme and ensuring that we review it in the light of the actions that have taken place.

Q15 **Mrs Latham:** Do you ever see the Rohingya being able to return to Rakhine State?

Priti Patel: It feels like quite a hypothetical proposition right now. Under current circumstances, no, because there are people still fleeing today from Rakhine State. If the Annan process, through diplomatic means, were to achieve its stated outcomes, yes, absolutely, but then the Rohingya need confidence in terms of going back and that they will have their rights restored. There is an issue right now about the papers they have all left behind; many of them do not even have documentation. These are some of the really difficult, challenging and long-term issues that have to be addressed, and there will have to be some kind of independence around who makes those judgments and how that process is negotiated in the long run.

Q16 **Mrs Latham:** Bearing in mind that is unlikely, certainly in the short term, how serious are Bangladesh's plans to settle the refugees on the island in the Bay of Bengal? Do you think the international community is preparing for a potential exodus by sea when the monsoon season ends?

Priti Patel: This is all very difficult, because it is about people and how they are going to live, not just in the short term, but the weeks and months ahead. The Bangladeshi Government have to prepare and plan accordingly, and we are part of those discussions, primarily because, from the perspective of DFID, the British Government and UK aid, we have some expertise in some of these key areas. We are trying to influence the thinking of the Bangladesh Government in terms of the



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actions that they are considering and some of the steps for long-term planning. That is obviously the right thing to do.

We are also making it quite clear to the Bangladesh Government that we will provide them with help, assistance and expertise, absolutely, but they should not make any rash judgments and decisions in terms of trying to find quick solutions here. The weather conditions are paramount, with so many people living in very open conditions—mud on mud on hillsides and things of that nature. They have to think about the safety and security of them at the same time, but these are discussions that we are heavily engaged in with the Government, through DFID in-country, and obviously it is not just DFID. It is IOM and the agencies on the ground, which, I have to say, are doing quite remarkable work in frankly very challenging circumstances

Q17 Mrs Latham: What about the proposals to create a mega-camp, bigger even than Dadaab, housing 800,000 people? What is DFID's view on that?

Priti Patel: Again, we are working with the Government. We are exploring all options with them. We have to; we have to explore options with them. As to whether it is the right thing to do, I cannot answer that question, because I simply do not know. One thing that I have been quite clear about to the Government is that they have to think about infrastructure, just getting the basics in place. Whether people are relocated or rehoused, there need to be running functional water, sanitation, medical facilities and the right kind of social protections in place. It is just the basics, again, because it is quite sporadic right now. Agencies are there and supplies are all around the camp, but there are a lot of logistics involved in getting equipment, supplies and facilities to people, so we have to think quite structurally about the planning that is required.

Q18 Mrs Latham: Once those very basic things are in place, what about education for those young people who are missing out? They have already missed many months of education. How do they ever catch up?

Priti Patel: It is a familiar story, given what we saw with the Syrian crisis, which was the largest displacement of population since the Second World War. To the credit of the international community, Governments around the world have stepped on education. I see no difference here. We will all have to come together in some shape or form, through our aid budgets, through the work that we do on education—we are very strong leaders in education, in times of crisis—through the agencies we work with, to start setting up programming. We have to have the facilities and the environment to do that, and it is pretty obvious that, in the makeshift camps we see right now, that is not going to happen

Q19 Chair: Secretary of State, I think we would all absolutely concur with what you said today, in praising the response of the Government and people of Bangladesh to this extraordinary crisis. An issue that I raised in



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the debate last week, which had been raised with me by the International Rescue Committee, concerned the ease of registration for organisations like the IRC on the ground in Bangladesh to provide much needed relief effort. Is this something that you would be able to use your good offices to raise with the Government of Bangladesh?

Priti Patel: Yes, and it is a familiar story. We have had many of these issues raised with us as well, and that is exactly what we are doing. We speak about access on the other side, but getting the registration so that the right kind of help can come in is vital, in light of the needs, and we are doing that.

Chair: Thank you very much. We are going to move on to some other issues now.

Q20 **Richard Burden:** Could I quickly take you on to another humanitarian crisis? The UK's approach to humanitarian crises evolved with two consistent principles: first, support for international humanitarian law and the principle of protecting the most vulnerable; and, secondly, immediate expert response to natural disasters. Could I ask, in relation to the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding in Gaza, how the UK is trying to apply the first of those principles: in other words, support for international humanitarian law? I realise that we have contributed to relief, but how are we contributing to the upholding of international humanitarian law?

Priti Patel: First of all, Mr Burden, there are a number points to make up. There is an urgent need to address the terrible situation in Gaza, and that is something where Britain leads, in terms of working with other agencies, the international community, through UNICEF and others, to provide support. In terms of addressing the wider issues, we work with Governments, but also look at the peace process itself. We have to look at this through our diplomatic arm as well, in terms of addressing human rights issues and how they are raised, and providing the immediate relief and support that is required.

That is a combined government effort: it is not just DFID; it is something we do across government, with the Foreign Office too. Across government and in DFID, we will continue to look at both areas—humanitarian and the politics involved around Gaza and in Israel—and, importantly, work to the recognition that is required.

Q21 **Richard Burden:** The ICRC described the situation in Gaza as “a collective punishment in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law”. That was in 2010. Would you agree with that assessment?

Priti Patel: I do not, because our focus is on humanitarian support. I want to come back to what we are doing as a Government; I am not going to provide commentary on what other organisations are giving their view on. The point is that we are focusing on the humanitarian priorities of safe water, sanitation, hygiene for those who are most affected and in



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need. One of the challenges we see, and I have observed this, is: where is the infrastructure? Where is the infrastructure to provide the amenities that people need in Gaza?

We are working with our partners, not only UNICEF but NGOs as well, to look at how we can provide support to people who need it on the basic humanitarian side, and that is something that we do. We are working across government with the Foreign Office, as I have said already, to look at the wider issues, because there are political issues within the region that need to be addressed.

- Q22 **Richard Burden:** This is an area to which we will probably return later in the year. Can I take you on now to another issue? That is DFID itself. DFID is 20 years old this year. Its predecessor ministry was set up as a separate ministry, with a Cabinet member in there at various stages in its development over the 1960s and 1970s. The then Ministry of Overseas Development was a Cabinet Office department; then it was not and then it was again. Is it current Government policy for DFID to remain independent of the Foreign Office, with its own Cabinet-level representation?

Priti Patel: Yes, that is Government policy.

- Q23 **Richard Burden:** There has been some speculation that, in fact, what you are seeing is a creeping merger between DFID and the Foreign Office.

Priti Patel: DFID is a stand-alone, independent government department; that is Government policy. There has been no suggestion from my department or from the Government that that is going to change.

In terms of the fact that we have joint Ministers, we do have joint Ministers with the Foreign Office. That actually helps on some of the issues that we have just been speaking about, Mr Burden, in terms of diplomacy, global Britain and using our international footprint, where we can combine our approach and look at how to use our development levers and diplomatic levers in the right way. In many parts of the world, you see one HMG: DFID and the Foreign Office situated and located together, working to achieve the right outcomes in those countries, but importantly representing Britain in a holistic form.

- Q24 **Richard Burden:** Do you see sharing of Ministers as a trend that will continue? Are more functions likely to be shared between DFID and the Foreign Office?

Priti Patel: I cannot predict the future in terms of what will happen, but we have joint Ministers and I think that works well. When you think about the parliamentary debate that took place last week in the House on the Rohingya, there was a joint response from both DFID and the Foreign Office. That is a good illustration of where diplomacy and international development come together. There are many, many other examples. Coming back to my comments earlier on, when you look at the state of



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the world, the amount of conflict, instability, insecurity that is taking place, predominantly around the Middle East, this shows where we can bring together our levers across government, in both the Foreign Office and DFID, to bang the table for resources, use our convening power, work with Governments in the way that we rightly should be working with Governments, and importantly, in-country, drive many of the outcomes that we want to see, in terms of both foreign policy and international development

- Q25 **Richard Burden:** You have talked about the importance of bringing diplomacy and development together, and I do not think anybody would disagree that, where they are compatible objectives, that should happen. There are presumably some cases where the impetus of diplomacy might be somewhat different from the impetus of development. Would you see the existence of DFID as a standalone department with an absolute policy focus on poverty reduction as a way of ensuring that that boundary does not get crossed?

Priti Patel: That is right, absolutely. We have the global goals, clearly defined, which help to reinforce that remit in terms of DFID's core purpose. I take the view, as do the Government, that Britain, as a global voice and global influence, is very powerful. We should leverage that internationally, particularly when we are seeing so many parts of the world in such a poor condition, or with conflict and instability. We can leverage our voice there, to hopefully determine some very positive outcomes on both sides: on the diplomatic side, but also on the poverty reduction side.

- Q26 **James Duddridge:** I am pleased to hear your analysis that the joint Ministers are working well. When they were separate, I saw significant dysfunction and lack of joining up. Would it make sense for your joint Ministers to have a joint private office, whereas currently they have two separate private offices, as a way of integrating things much more closely, so there is one private office, rather than the DFID team and the FCO team?

Priti Patel: No, I do not, for the very reason I have just highlighted. I think we complement each other very well already. The point about DFID is that we have a great deal of expertise. The Foreign Office's expertise differs from our expertise. In addition, our ways of working and the type of issues that come across our desks on a daily basis are not like for like, even when Ministers are looking at the same regions. To the point about the separation and the independence of DFID and the Foreign Office, of course, our priorities are slightly different. We are focused on people, on outcomes, on the humanitarian side, on poverty reduction and alleviation. Yes, we can combine some of that, as I have already touched on, in terms of working in-country, but I think right now it works perfectly well to have an independent department in DFID and separate offices.

Of course, when the briefs come together or when Ministers are travelling, for example, to the Middle East, it is fair to say that, in light of



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the complexity of the issues, yes, everything comes together. Right now, it works perfectly well to have two separate departments and two separate offices.

Q27 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** You have given some very good answers about the working together between departments. One of your biggest areas of spend is in health. Is there consideration—and I think this would alleviate some of the concerns that it is a merger between FCO and DFID—of joint Ministers or closer working and co-ordination between other departments: for example, a joint minister on global health in the Health Department? Would that alleviate some of the concerns that it is just an FCO takeover?

Priti Patel: Thank you for the question. I do not recognise this suggestion of an FCO takeover, and I reject that premise completely. I absolutely reject that; I have certainly been very clear on that front. If I can come back to some of the basics—and we may touch on ODA and ODA spending shortly—it is important to recognise that 74% of ODA sits with DFID and the rest sits across other government departments. In my tenure at DFID, I have been pretty methodical in looking at that spending, but also accounting for it.

Something that is not recognised widely enough is the fact that we work across other government departments to up their standards, and we are trying to encourage my colleagues across government to do even more to up their own standards and ways of working, in being accountable and transparent to taxpayers as to how they spend their ODA moneys, as well as enhancing their ways of working and collaboration. That is taking place.

Your point about health is a really important one, and I am not an advocate of further joint Ministers, primarily because the government agenda is busy enough as it is, and the health agenda is incredibly busy domestically as well as internationally. If you think about what Britain has achieved on global health, in areas such as AMR, this was down to my predecessors and other Ministers across government, and not just in the Department of Health.

In fact, the Treasury lead Ministers majored on AMR. Look at the work that we do with the WHO. In fact, I have put in quite a robust performance arrangement with the World Health Organisation, which I feel should do much more on global health and be much more accountable and transparent. These are the ways in which we can influence other government departments to be more accountable and responsible, but work with them as well, in delivering some of these big global objectives that matter to us all, not just to taxpayers in this country. They can help to secure us in the long term when it comes to global health issues, whether it is Ebola, pandemics or other issues of that nature.

Chair: You have anticipated our next line of questioning.



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Q28 Henry Smith: You certainly have. Secretary of State, welcome. By 2020, so just a little over two years' time, Government expect that some 30% of the DFID budget will be being spent via other government departments. How do you envisage that spending occurring? Will it be transferred from DFID to other government departments, or will it be a repurposing of spending in those other departments to qualify under the ODA rules?

Priti Patel: I do not have the crystal ball to see how that process will happen, but it is a fact: the figures are published already. Sadly, DFID is a sort of lightning conductor—I think that is fair—for all ODA. We are the pen holders on ODA across government, so it is important that we bring rigour, standards, accountability and transparency across other government departments when it comes to ODA spending. The spotlight that DFID comes under should be equally applied to other government departments when it comes to spending ODA.

Currently, that spending is within the framework of the aid strategy that was defined, published and outlined prior to me becoming Secretary of State, but there are key parameters in terms of how that money is spent by other government departments. As I have said, we lean into that to help to give support to other government departments, in particular on how they spend that money, making sure, if it is resilience issues on climate change, for example, that it is spent in the right way, in the right kinds of countries, delivering the right kind of outcomes.

Q29 Henry Smith: Would you envisage the 30% or thereabouts that is expected by 2020 to be referenced back to DFID, almost in terms of approval from DFID for that spending, or would you see some sort of self-certification under the ODA rules within those government departments for spending on what is eligible?

Priti Patel: There are already guidelines in terms of what is ODA-eligible, and Treasury guidelines, that have been published. Every government department not only has them; they should be living and breathing them; they should be familiar with them. In fact, I have been the convenor over the last 12 months of other government departments, to enhance the understanding and capability, alongside Lindy and her team. In fact, across DFID, across my other DGs, we have been spending a lot of time ensuring that that is hardwired into other government departments and that other Ministers understand the framework and the guidelines for spending that money. It is not about DFID signing off their spending; it is about those government departments being responsible and accountable for how they spend that money.

Q30 Henry Smith: With the forbearance of the Committee and you, Secretary of State, I have one further very brief question. Do you agree or not that it is important that DFID budget through other government departments is spent in the national interest, in terms of security and things like international trade, as well as development?



Priti Patel: Absolutely, yes. I come back to my original remark that the world is in a challenged state. We see a lot of issues: conflict, destabilisation and insecurity. If you look, for example, at coalition forces in Raqqa and what has been achieved there, that has taken place through CSSF support and MOD support, but DFID has been part of that as well, in terms of the humanitarian support that we have put in.

It is important to emphasise and highlight to the Committee that we have a National Security Council, and a lot of these areas are discussed at NSC level and determined through the NSC policy and strategy that is outlined there.

Q31 **Chair:** Just to continue with this important theme, at the Conservative Party conference you said: “Where other government departments need to improve their aid spending, I am challenging them to raise their game and be accountable to UK taxpayers”. I think we can all welcome that. Can you give an example of where you have done that and how that has then followed through with other government departments?

Priti Patel: The best example I can give is through the convening that we have done. We have set up, over the last 15 months, a forum where we have all the government departments coming together, and we go through the key areas around what their spending is. In fact, this is a time of year where our teams and my other DGs will go in—Joy Hutcheon will go into departments, and has done since the summer—to look critically, line by line, at where the money is going and the allocations and choices that are being made, as well as the decisions that are not being undertaken. That happens in the Foreign Office, the Department of Health, BEIS, Defra—all the departments that have a substantial amount of ODA spending—to ensure that there is efficacy in the spending, that it is meeting the objectives of Government and the aid strategy, but also, importantly, that they are on track to invest that money in the right kind of way.

Q32 **Chair:** Is there a specific example there of something that you might previously have been concerned about where, through that new process, you have been able to get a change in the approach of another department?

Priti Patel: The specific example I would give is on getting them to plan how that money is spent. It would not be new news if I were to say that we are constantly accused of shoving money out of the door. That is a phrase that is used in popular parlance. DFID is accused of that; other government departments have been accused of that as well, so other government departments are changing the way in which they fundamentally work, to plan ahead and to make the right kind of strategic decisions and choices on their spending.

I do not want to pre-empt this, but I think this year we can say that this has been an area where DFID has leaned in sufficiently enough that we have seen a changing pattern, more preplanning, and more detailed work



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taking place in government departments, to avoid that “getting the money out of the door” syndrome.

- Q33 **Chair:** As you will be aware, the National Audit Office published a report earlier this year in response to our predecessor Committee’s inquiry, which we had to abandon because of the election. Has that report influenced the process you just described?

Lindy Cameron: We have obviously taken it very seriously. It is not just the committee that the Secretary of State chairs with the Treasury on this one; for example, the regional directors who work for me also participated in the various regional committees, looking at how CSSF funding is spent across government. We can have an input, not only into the technicalities, but also, as the Secretary of State says, into how other departments plan collectively to respond as a whole Government to the National Security Council strategies.

- Q34 **Chair:** Is your view that that addresses the NAO’s point, which was essentially one about the capacity in the other government departments? Is what you are doing through this process addressing that or does something else have to happen?

Priti Patel: I think it does help. Yes, I do; I think it does. It is not just top-down; it is bottom-up as well, in terms of raising awareness, helping to take colleagues, both ministerial and officials, through the detail that they need to know about and the processes. We are big investors in programming and in business cases. We make strategic choices, look at how we work with partners and, as I repeat constantly, follow the money through a lot of the programming work that we do. Trying to share some of that and impart that across other government departments is vital.

- Q35 **Chair:** I have one specific example on the Prosperity Fund. ICAI found that the Prosperity Fund was “likely to face challenges in meeting both its primary purpose of poverty reduction and its secondary aim of creating opportunities for international business, including UK firms”. Does this sound any alarm bells for the wider economic development strategy, which shares these two aims of poverty reduction on the one hand and UK economic interest on the other?

Priti Patel: I do not think it does, no, because I believe the two go hand in hand. We need to help individuals and countries defeat poverty, and to do that we have to look at economic development, fair trade, the approach that we take to trade and investment—investment in people, capacity building, governance, tax revenue collection—as well as helping to create new markets. Creating new markets for businesses to go into, providing risk capital and investment through CDC and the IFIs, is effectively where we need to be. Prosperity Fund aside, we are doing this obviously, but it is a case of how we upskill and demonstrate, through DFID, through the work we do intentionally, through the work we do through the system multilaterally with IFIs and others, how we are



achieving this and what more could be done by doing this in the right way.

Q36 Chair: How do you ensure that that has a focus on the poorest in the poorest countries, rather than the perfectly understandable temptation and risk that there could be more of a focus on middle-income countries, which is one of the features of the Prosperity Fund's work?

Priti Patel: I understand that completely, but it is important to acknowledge that, as countries transition from that low base of being an incredibly poor country, the middle-income trajectory is not like that. There are still stages of poverty that need to be addressed: poverty alleviation, health issues, governance issues. Governance issues, it is fair to say, most of us would recognise can take decades to address, even with things like the capacity and capability to build up basic functionality on tax and revenue collection.

We have to calibrate that. We have to work out, through our models and programming, by working across government departments, where we are going to make the right kind of choices. That is why DFID has a really important role to play, through our international footprint, through our regional teams, through our in-country teams, in sharing the information that takes place in region, in country, on the ground, to influence some of the decision-making that might take place in Whitehall.

Q37 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: The Conservative Party manifesto said that you wanted to update the rules of ODA to better reflect the work that we do, and if you could not change them you would change the law to allow you to use better definitions. The chair of the DAC has ruled out any changes regarding security-related cost, probably quite rightly, because you get into a whole minefield of things there, so what other areas are currently not accounted under official development assistance that you would like to be included?

Priti Patel: First of all, it is important to say that the world is facing, as we have been discussing this morning, a few quite unprecedented challenges. The international rules governing aid were first established over 40 years ago, and they need to keep pace with a changing world. That is an ongoing discussion that I am having with the chair of the DAC and the OECD. I am the first to recognise that we are part of the rules-based system in the world, and we are very proud of the fact that we lead the world when it comes to rules-based systems. It is a consensus-based system as well, so we are working with donor countries to look at what more we can do in terms of modernising the rules, which takes time, as most things do within a rules-based system.

You asked me what changes we are asking for. I have raised the issues of the vulnerability of small island states, climate change, which we spoke about earlier on, and resilience issues. What we have seen with the hurricanes is one example. In terms of other areas, I can see a case to look at rules to capture the high standards the UK has on transparency



and on gender equality, for example, and do more to recognise SDG 16 on peacekeeping. These are other areas.

I am the first to put my hand up and say that this is a discussion within a consensus-based and rules-based system, although I have been very up front about the issues of resilience, hurricanes and small island states. We are having those discussions within the DAC right now. The Committee will know that, last week, the Secretary-General of the OECD was in town. I had the discussion with him and with the chair of the DAC. Through those discussions, the Secretary-General of the OECD was very clear in his own comments, saying on the issue of small island states and resilience that these were exceptional times and we face exceptional circumstances with these disasters. He was broadly very supportive in terms of fighting for that flexibility, so I think that understanding is there that, as the world is changing, needs are changing, but we have to find a way within the system to create the flexibility to address these issues.

Q38 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** Clearly some flexibility, particularly with small island states, is needed. We do not want to end up getting into a situation where people end up ploughing money into Singapore, a small island state that is relatively rich, but other small island states are poorer. Would it not make more sense to look at setting up an international or overseas territories version of the Bellwin scheme that we have already domestically, rather than trying to include small island states, particularly our overseas territories, into a definition that they do not fit into at the moment? Do you get what I am trying to say? Would it not make more sense to create a different scheme for our overseas territories that need it when disaster hits?

Priti Patel: I want to minimise process. It is not just about overseas territories. You must recognise the Commonwealth countries that are equally subject to the resilience and climate change issues we are speaking about. Overseas territories are just one part of this. You will find, in the DAC, there are other members raising these concerns, and the DAC is the right forum to surface these concerns and have these discussions. As I already said, we are part of that rules-based system, and we are leading and trying to shape and influence ways in which we can address these global issues.

Lindy Cameron: That is right, Secretary of State. The key issue about small island states is that, when they have a catastrophic loss of GNI as a result of a natural disaster like this, they have fewer ways to recover. It just recognises the increased vulnerability. That is an issue not just for the Caribbean, including the overseas territories, but also for the Pacific, for example. It is a familiar issue.

Q39 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** I was also taken with your comment about transparency, which is really important. I wonder if you are worried. There have been many reports about us pushing for the institutional method of reporting for the recapitalisation of the CDC, which would count 100% of our recapitalisation as ODA. The NAO says very clearly



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that the CDC does not spend 100% on our own definition of poverty reduction. Is there a danger that we are reducing transparency of aid delivery if we class 100% of the recapitalisation of the CDC as ODA?

Priti Patel: I do not think so. We discussed this previously, in the last Parliament—it seems strange saying that now—when we discussed the recapitalisation of CDC. It is primarily because of the process that has been outlined with CDC. We are focused on development outcomes and we have been quite clear in the strategy and business case that have come together, in terms of the focus on key countries. The country focus is critical, but so are poverty alleviation and development outcomes. That is one area where, all credit to CDC, it has recognised that in comparison to previous recapitalisations there has been more to do. We are absolutely focused on making sure that we can not just meet that, but go over and above, and demonstrate the real value added that we are bringing through CDC, ODA and the whole mix of poverty alleviation.

Q40 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** We could go for a non-institutional method, which would not be 100%, so it would alleviate some of those problems, but I will leave that to one side. I was really pleased that you responded saying that it is a rules-based system; it is a discussion that we have to have. Is threatening to leave the definition a useful way to have those productive discussions, and what is the realistic chance of the UK leaving the DAC's ODA definition?

Priti Patel: First and foremost, I come back to my earlier remark that we are part of the rules-based system. Look at much of what I have said, not just about the DAC; look at the United Nations and the World Bank. I am pretty challenging of both institutions.

Q41 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** I was very relieved by what you said earlier.

Priti Patel: I am very challenging of all international institutions, because we value the role of the international institutions. That is why we will be challenging of them and we will raise the chance to look at redefinitions or new areas of concerns and issues. This is not about leaving the DAC; this is about UK influence and making the case for change and reform, as I have said, in a system with regards to the DAC where the rules were defined 40 years ago. In my judgment, that is quite a long time ago, the world has changed and the system needs to be relevant. When your rules-based system is more relevant and more functional to the world that we live in today, quite frankly, it will serve a greater and stronger purpose. That is effectively what we are trying to achieve through some of the changes that we are proposing.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: I am pleased that you have rolled back on some of the manifesto commitments.

Q42 **Mr Evans:** You talk about the influence that your department will have with some of these organisations that we pump money into. We saw an example of it with the World Health Organisation's crass decision the other day, which has now been reversed. Perhaps you could briefly



comment on that. Do you believe that you are going to set yourself a deadline on this: that, if you cannot change the rules in order to help these people who clearly need help, and not the richest countries in the world, you are going to threaten to leave or, indeed, leave?

Priti Patel: I do not think it is going to come to that. I just want to emphasise to the Committee that we are great supporters internationally of the rules-based system, and these are discussions that are taking place. As I said, I saw the Secretary-General of the OECD and the chair of the DAC last week, and the Secretary-General of the OECD has made a very, very supportive statement in terms of what we are trying to achieve. I am not a fatalist; I am an optimist, and we will continue to champion the position that we are taking. There are island states out there right now that have been absolutely decimated. They have no functioning economy, they have lost their livelihoods and people have lost their homes. We will be their voice in the DAC to try to get the right outcome

On the other aspects of the international system, you mentioned the World Health Organisation. Quite frankly, the decision that was made there—and the right decision was achieved afterwards—was completely crazy and wrong. We do not subscribe to a system where that kind of decision is made without having some influence in terms of what happens afterwards. It is public knowledge that we have a very transparent way of working with the World Health Organisation. There is a performance agreement. We expect it to raise its game, and raise its game in quite a substantial way, because it was not one of the highest performing international institutions, sadly, despite the very, very important role that it plays and the critical work that it does internationally. As ever, DFID will lead in terms of influencing it to get the right kind of outcomes.

We want it to be successful; we want all the institutions to be successful. Ditto for the United Nations: at the General Assembly this year, I was unapologetic in saying that 30% of our core funding would be linked to reforms in the UN system. There is a wide range of reforms across the entire UN agency landscape, but one of the shocking things that have taken place, and I think it has been swept under the carpet for far too long, is the appalling issue of child rape and sexual abuse that has taken place across the UN system and across UN agencies.

DFID has led the discussion there. We have called it out in a really big way. I have been the first Secretary of State to go to the Secretary-General and say, "Look, we will work with you to change the system". I can tell the Committee now that the day when my letters landed in New York, in the United Nations, there were emergency board meetings being held, because we are serious about reforming the system, but we are also serious about stopping the perpetration of sexual abuse and child rape that has taken place across the United Nations system so far.

Chair: This is a subject Pauline has raised on a number of occasions.



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Q43 Mrs Latham: It is, and I wrote to your predecessor about this, because when I went to the humanitarian summit in Istanbul, more than a year ago now, I was shocked and horrified to find that it was common knowledge, not just among the UN institutions, but among NGOs. They all know that this is happening with people we give money to and trust to look after vulnerable people: they are raping and they are abusing children. How can we as a country lead by example to stop this and blackball these people?

Priti Patel: This is just such a scandal. It is such a scandal; it really is. It is a stain on the international community that more has not been done in this whole area. It is just disgraceful and appalling, hence I have not been shy in my language. I am not prepared to sign up to the language the UN uses, which is sexual exploitation and abuse: it is child rape and sexual abuse that is taking place. In terms of what we can do, we will lead this issue of reform within the United Nations, and I have been very clear about this with the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and across to the heads of the UN agencies.

We need to see independent whistleblowing mechanisms within the UN system. It cannot mark its own homework; it cannot judge this itself. We need to see a publication of data. If British nationals are involved, we want to know; we want to know who they are. We should be pursuing prosecutions. To be fair, Britain has a good track record when it comes to dealing with the issue of sex abuse, through the inquiries we have had and the standards that the Home Office has put in place in the past. We should be bringing some of our expertise to this area.

I would want to go further. I have raised one other area, which is immunity: particularly for these crimes, we should lift UN immunity. That is a wider discussion that has to take place across the international system. I know that others are uncomfortable with it, but, quite frankly, there are perpetrators of these crimes; in my view, they should be brought to justice and Britain should lead the way in doing that.

Chair: You will have a lot of support across the Committee.

Mrs Latham: We need a register of people. They go from place to place to place and nobody stops them.

Q44 James Duddridge: I equally find it bizarre that you can be a sex offender in the UK and still get a job with the UN, and go out to some of the worst environments where one can perpetrate these crimes. The more work you can do on that, the better. That is not the issue I wanted to raise. During the campaign, you were one of the great Brexiters, but your department still spends 15% of its budget through European mechanisms. Can you turn the tap off or is it a bit more complicated than that?

Priti Patel: Can I just make two points? One is on the sexual abuse thing, and I will come on to answer your question. When it comes to international development in the UK and DFID in particular, the



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Government get quite a hard time in terms of how we spend our money, but this is one area where, on behalf of British taxpayers, we can use our voice very constructively. I said at the UN that British taxpayers would be appalled to know that their funds have been used over decades to support a system that has perpetrated these crimes. Again, this shows where we can be strong leaders and influence others within the aid and development system.

With regards to EU budget contributions, of course, we directly give to the European Commission and the mechanisms that it has for funding aid and development. As I have said at Committee previously, as a great believer in transparency and accountability, there is not much oversight, transparency and accountability in terms of how that money is spent. We cannot follow the money in the same way that we would. I would like much of that money to remain with us, so for the money that we now give to the EU to come back to us, and then we could obviously determine how it was spent.

There are some important points to make about where we work with the European Union. We co-operate with it on many development partnerships in the world. We cannot fix a broken world on our own; we should be very clear about that. That is why we are part of the rules-based system and we work with multilateral institutions: the UN, the World Bank, the IFIs and others. We have, for example, the EU-Turkey trust facility; we have various programmes that go through the European Investment Bank and things of that nature.

Going forward, once we leave the European Union on 29 March 2019, we will look at all programming. We are absolutely not going to write cheques unconditionally, in the way in which we have done already, to the European Commission, but we will of course look at where we can have the right kind of partnership working. If it is in a refugee camp, for example, in Jordan or in Bangladesh, that kind of work will continue, but it would be a very, very different way of working to what we have now where we just give a chunk of money to the European Commission that we do not have any oversight of.

Q45 James Duddridge: Is there perhaps a specific opportunity? If you wanted to strategically change DFID's focus over time, you would have to do that over time, but there is 15% of the budget that could become available for you to forensically target at a particular region or issue. Have you given any consideration to what that might be, as a way of accelerating change?

Priti Patel: First of all, my ultimate principle is that we should be taking back control of that money, full stop. As I have said, the world is in such need right now. We can absolutely use it for humanitarian, but also for prosperity, Britain post Brexit, trade and economic development. There are a whole raft of opportunities for us to use that money in our national interest, global Britain's interest, as well as helping to alleviate poverty around the world and doing more in terms of international development.



Q46 Mr Lewis: Good afternoon, Secretary of State. Are you writing cheques unconditionally to the European Union? You have been in the job a long time. You just said that you are writing cheques unconditionally to the European Union and Commission, but you get no clarity over how that money is spent and what outcomes are achieved, no transparency, no value for money impact assessments. Is that all true? That is one question.

The second question is a bigger picture question. Who is framing our negotiating position in the context of Brexit with regard to both our investment and future collaboration and co-operation? Who is framing the United Kingdom Government's negotiating position on these specific issues of interest to this Committee?

Priti Patel: On that latter point, there is a piece of work taking place across government on the framing, because that involves international development, security, so the MOD, and, of course, foreign policy and foreign affairs, so the FCO. That is where we are all collaborating and framing the proposition as part of the negotiations taking place going forward with David Davis and the Prime Minister. The point is that it is about co-operation: the co-operation that could take place once we leave the European Union.

That is absolutely critical, because there are strengths and weaknesses with the European Union on development. It does not have the expertise that we have, for example. We have convening power; we have a lot of technical expertise in areas where it simply does not. That is basically what I am suggesting: where we can come together on a case-by-case or even, dare I say it, crisis-by-crisis, issue-by-issue, theme-by-theme basis going forward, that is where we will look to leverage our strength and resources to deliver the right outcomes for people in need, humanitarian, poverty and things of that nature.

With regards to money that currently goes to the European Union, we do not have oversight as to where that money ultimately goes on programming. That is not something that I can follow line by line, in the same way that I can follow DFID's money through the in-country programming we run. In my view, that is simply not right. At the same time, we are in negotiations to leave the European Union. We have the Brussels development committee, and we have meetings where we discuss a range of issues and crises. At the same time, it is not just about the money that we give the European Union. We are also spending money and core funding on other programmes, such as the Brussels conference that took place on Syria this year, where we were giving more resources to very targeted programmes and specific outcomes for the region.

I cannot rewind all this now, because we are where we are in terms of negotiations and our ways of working are established with the European Commission. I would have liked to see much more oversight and transparency of that money.



Q47 Mr Lewis: Thank you, Secretary of State, but the logic of what you said applies to all multilateral institutions, not just the European Union. You say that you have less control over line-by-line spending. That is the case for all multilateral spend that the department engages in. You are not proposing to retreat from the vast majority of multilateral spend in other contexts. What is your response to that?

On the second issue, I am just trying to get to the forum, the structure or the mechanism that will determine the UK Government's negotiating position on matters that are relevant to this Committee. Is there a committee? Is it about conversations between you, the Prime Minister and the Brexit Secretary of State? Where is the mechanism and the structure that will determine the negotiating position?

Priti Patel: There are Cabinet committees that are already having those discussions, and that is the mechanism within Government.

Q48 Mr Lewis: There are currently discussions about development investment and development collaboration.

Priti Patel: Yes, absolutely, collaboration, because we have to look at security and diplomatic issues.

Q49 Mr Lewis: What about investment?

Priti Patel: Not in terms of financial investment, no, because we are not determining figures right now. As with development, we are determining based on need, partnership, thematics and crises, as I have already said. Look at the work undertaken on the Syrian crisis, for example: the Brussels conference that took place this year, the London conference that took place previously. These are convening forums where we identify and work through many of the development partnerships and initiatives that we are working on. That is in addition to where we already spend our money with the European Union.

With regards to the multilateral system, I have already said very clearly that we are within a rules-based system, but I am challenging where UK taxpayers' money is being spent. It is about being much more accountable on core funding within the UN system, and similarly with the World Bank on IDA replenishments. There are active discussions right now about capital increases in the World Bank. We are having discussions about where our money goes and the type of programmes and countries that our money will go into. These are active discussions that I and the department are having right now, and I think that is right and proper. We are part of a rules-based system, but as one of the largest players in the world we will use our voice, not just to replenish, but to say we want UK taxpayers' money to go to the right kind of development impact, the right kind of outcomes and the right kind of countries when it comes to poverty alleviation and economic development.

Chair: Secretary of State, thank you very much indeed. I did undertake



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that we would not overrun beyond 12.30. We have covered a lot of ground. I guess we will want you back quite soon, because there are lots of issues we would like to have gone into today, but there was not time. We have covered some very major and important issues. In summary, I will welcome two things: your strong reaffirmation of the rules-based system and the very powerful comments you made about the Rohingya crisis. Thank you very much for being with us today.