

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: Humanitarian response to Cyclone Idai, HC 2093

Tuesday 2 April 2019

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Members present: Stephen Twigg (Chair); Mr Nigel Evans; Mrs Pauline Latham; Chris Law; Mr Ivan Lewis; Paul Scully; Mr Virendra Sharma; Henry Smith.

Questions 1 - 78

Witnesses

I: Debbie Hillier, Senior Humanitarian Policy Adviser, Oxfam; Ben Webster, Head of Emergencies, British Red Cross.

II: Harriett Baldwin MP, Minister of State for Africa, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Minister of State, Department for International Development; Tim Stern, Head, Africa Regional Department, Department for International Development.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Debbie Hillier and Ben Webster.

Q1 Chair: Good afternoon, everyone. This is an evidence session of the International Development Committee on the humanitarian response to Cyclone Idai. Can I welcome our first panel, Debbie from Oxfam and Ben from the British Red Cross? We have you for about 45 minutes and, in that time, we are seeking to cover seven areas, to get a rough sense of timings. Let me kick off and, when you first answer, please give a brief introduction. To give us a shared understanding of the scale of the crisis, can you update us on the current situation in the areas affected, so in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe?

Ben Webster: Good afternoon. I am Ben Webster, head of emergencies at the British Red Cross. The first thing to note is that, in southern Africa, we have already been seeing chronic food insecurity in the region for the last few years. We were really concerned about that becoming acute this year. We have already seen stresses and strains on communities in the region, and this disaster has compounded those vulnerabilities.

The cyclone made landfall in mid-March. We have seen over 850 fatalities. Mozambique has had the greatest impact. Several of the rivers have flooded. The dam has burst. Roads have been washed away. The infrastructure is heavily impacted. Even now, the assessment is still taking time to understand what the impact has been on some of the rural communities. As well, there is a real risk of a secondary disaster. Cases of cholera are now over 1,000 in Beira city, so we really have to resource the response to get on top of any waterborne disease outbreaks.

In terms of the response, the Red Cross has national societies in all three countries, which had community-based volunteers assisting with evacuation before the cyclone struck, and have been trying to assist with distribution of goods and mobilising the response to the humanitarian situation so far.

Q2 Chair: Ben, thank you. That is a great overview and we are going to deal with some of that in more detail as we go through the questions. Debbie, welcome.

Debbie Hillier: Hi, my name is Debbie Hillier. I am a senior humanitarian policy adviser at Oxfam GB. As Ben said, there have been different impacts in the three countries, so we need to look at them individually, but Mozambique has been by far the worst affected in terms of the breadth and the depth of the crisis.

It is just two weeks since the disaster and there are still many areas underwater in Mozambique. When the flood waters have receded, we have heard people describing it as looking like a bomb has gone off. It has been completely destroyed. The destruction is something that people were really not expecting.



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We understand that around 80% to 90% of people who were identified on the aerial assessments have received some form of assistance, but there are still many needs and many gaps. The true extent of this disaster is not yet apparent in Mozambique, certainly. For Oxfam, we are doing water and sanitation, including cholera prevention, food security, some shelter and work on gender. We are working in all three countries.

In Zimbabwe, just as a taste of that, we are finding that people are heavily traumatised. As Ben said, this comes on the back of quite a severe drought. People are in a state of shock. They are literally digging in the rubble and mudslides to find their relatives. Again, the extent of the death and injury is not yet understood in Zimbabwe either.

Q3 Chair: The United Nations has described the cyclone as potentially one of the worst weather-related disasters in the southern hemisphere. Do you think that is a reasonable assessment based on what you know so far?

Debbie Hillier: I find this question, "Is it the worst one?", a little difficult and uncomfortable, to be honest. It is certainly very, very severe. Mozambique is vulnerable to these kinds of weather events. In 2007 there was a cyclone; in the year 2000 there was a really massive one around Chokwe. This is something that happens to Mozambique, unfortunately, and we need to make sure that Mozambique can become more resilient.

Q4 Chair: Thank you. Ben, do you want to add anything on that?

Ben Webster: For southern Africa, this is a huge emergency right now and the Government in Mozambique are calling it the biggest disaster they have faced. I agree that we need to be careful around what is unprecedented. It gets used a lot, but it is safe to say that this is a huge disaster affecting over 2 million people in the region. Like we have said, there is a real risk of secondary disasters, so we need to take it extremely seriously right now.

Q5 Mrs Latham: I wonder if you could tell us what your immediate priorities are, in terms of providing relief out there on the ground.

Ben Webster: From the Red Cross perspective, speaking with the team yesterday, because of the chronic and the acute food insecurity, food is going to be an issue. One harvest has been completely wiped out and it is unlikely that seeds will be able to be distributed before the next planting season, so that is two failed harvests on top of the existing food insecurity. Food is going to be a big issue, and not just right now, but in the coming weeks and months.

Q6 Mrs Latham: Is that all countries or just one in particular?

Ben Webster: It is Mozambique in particular, but we have seen in Zimbabwe that one area that was projected to have a good harvest has now been impacted by the floods. We need to look at the acute situation



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right now, but it will be a while before the region will be stable and able to sustain itself. Food is No. 1.

In terms of the cholera outbreak, it is about clean water, sanitation and hygiene. There are cholera treatment centres established, but that really will require resources up front, to try to get on top of the outbreak before it becomes more serious.

People are very keen to return home as quickly as they can, but in the meantime they need shelter while they are displaced. Also, in Beira city approximately 90% of infrastructure was damaged, so support is needed to repair their homes once they are able to return. Pretty much all health facilities in the region were damaged by the cyclone and, therefore, people are struggling to access healthcare in Mozambique.

A cross-cutting issue is community engagement, making sure that people are involved in this response and are being heard. The people in Mozambique are incredibly dignified. They have faced these floods year on year and are very keen to get home, replant and repair their houses, so we have to make sure they are involved in this response.

Q7 Mrs Latham: Debbie, what do you particularly want to ask the international community for now, including DfID?

Debbie Hillier: In Mozambique, we are still struggling with access. There are still many areas that are flooded. At the moment, it is still very much reliant on boats and helicopters. Clearly, the use of helicopters cannot carry on forever. It is incredibly expensive. Nonetheless, Oxfam is still struggling to access areas. We do not have our own boats. There is definitely an access issue that we would like to see solved. To repeat, on the cholera one, this is really quite scary. The rapid increase in the number of cases over the last few days has been very worrying.

Q8 Mrs Latham: Is that about vaccines?

Debbie Hillier: Yes, the vaccines are starting tomorrow, apparently. The WHO, working with the Government, is going to start vaccinating tomorrow. The medical side is in place, so that is great. We now need to work more on the community side, the public health promotion side, which has not perhaps received as much emphasis as it could have done. That is where we would like to see some more effort. As Ben said, it has been quite a top-down response so far and that is perfectly sensible, given the context, but as access opens up we need to move into a more community-centred approach.

Q9 Mr Evans: Good afternoon. I am just wondering what sort of early warnings you had been given about the fact that this cyclone was going to hit and how bad the cyclone was going to be.

Debbie Hillier: From a meteorological perspective, this was predicted and this cyclone did follow the predicted path. They do not always do that. Sometimes they veer off, but this did follow the predicted path.



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There is a tropical cyclone centre in La Réunion, which saw this coming, predicted it and estimated that the storm surge would be about four metres, which is what it was. Meteorologically, this was predicted. The question is how that then became translated into early warnings on the ground and scale-up, and perhaps there were some lacks there.

Q10 Mr Evans: Tell us about that. Clearly, the quicker you can get to grips with something, the better you can mitigate. You can get warnings out to people. Give us a bit of explanation as to what went wrong.

Debbie Hillier: It is too early to say, but there certainly was some scale-up in Beira. The humanitarian country team had some people there. Oxfam works with Save the Children and CARE in this consortium called COSACA, and there were some people sent from the COSACA consortium to Beira with some supplies. It was not that nothing happened at all. There was some preparedness and readiness, but the impact was not understood. The scale of the devastation was not understood until it happened, so the preparations that were in place were not enough to deal with the impact.

I cannot answer you right now on precisely why that happened. That will need some unpicking in the next few months. For all vulnerable countries, investing in early warning systems and preparedness and response capacity is really important. A climate vulnerable country, like Mozambique, needs to have really good systems in place and probably there is room for more strengthening there.

Q11 Mr Evans: How many days' notice did you get, then?

Debbie Hillier: Three days, with a fairly clear idea of what would happen.

Q12 Mr Evans: When do you think the met office knew about it? You say it has been well predicted and even the strength of it was well predicted. I am just working out how many days were lost.

Debbie Hillier: I do not know. I do not know what the Government of Mozambique knew at what time. I do not have that information, sorry.

Ben Webster: It is one thing to have the data and the information available, the meteorological offices providing information at the global level, and so on, but we are talking about one of the poorest countries the world. The infrastructure has been washed away. Turning that information into messages that can reach rural communities is a whole other issue. We have national societies working in these countries with community-based volunteers. They are able to evacuate communities to higher ground when information is provided but, when you do not have the infrastructure, communications and road networks, it is extremely difficult to turn that early warning into effective, efficient early action right out at the community level.

Q13 Mr Evans: As far as you are concerned, Ben, you had what? You had the



same three days' notice as everyone else.

Ben Webster: I do not know exactly what access people in Mozambique have, at Government level or national society level.

- Q14 **Mr Evans:** You did a press release, Ben, and it said, "Local Red Cross volunteers were preparing in advance of the cyclone right up until the last moment, getting aid in place and warning communities". We just want to get a sense of this. Something clearly has gone wrong and, for each day, that has to be critical. Can you give some sort of insight into what you can do in a day, in advance? Instead of three days, if you had had four days, how many more lives could you have saved?

Ben Webster: That is an incredibly difficult question. The activities that will take place will be communicating with the communities to explain what is happening and giving communities warning to evacuate. Because in Mozambique there are regular floods, people have areas designated where they will move to. The local Red Cross was able to pre-position some stocks, including hygiene kits, buckets, kitchen sets and so on, which can be pre-positioned in advance when you know roughly which areas are going to be affected. But there is not the capacity to mobilise and have preparedness in place for the entire area that could potentially be affected.

- Q15 **Mr Evans:** You were doing all this preparedness. The question we are trying to search out is how much more you could have done with more advance notice. Chairman, we really need to get to the bottom of what the problem was there.

Debbie Hillier: I do not know if it is about the number of days' notice. It is perhaps understanding the intensity of the impact. That was not understood. As Ben said, supplies were pre-positioned. Some extra people arrived in Beira in an emergency response capacity, but they were overwhelmed by the impact. That is perhaps where the disconnect was, in that not all the people who were ready to respond were quite ready for the impact of what hit them, bearing in mind that a whole year's rainfall landed in Beira in one day. Two massive rivers broke their banks. This is not normal. This was an exceptional situation.

Perhaps we need to look longer term and ask, "If this happens next time, what will we do differently?" There is a piece around making sure the early warning system is right. There is another piece around getting cyclone shelters in place. This is one thing that Bangladesh has done with enormous success, because Bangladesh is also very vulnerable to cyclones. They have built raised, very solid concrete cyclone shelters that people in low-lying rural areas can escape to when a cyclone is coming. That is the kind of thing that saves lives. There is still the livelihoods issue once the waters have receded, but nonetheless that will save lives in rural areas. That is something that perhaps Mozambique needs to look at and donors might need to look at funding for the future.

- Q16 **Mr Evans:** You have mentioned disease—cholera and malaria, I



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understand. How bad is that and how swift does the response need to be in these circumstances, in order for you to alleviate or mitigate the diseases that are breaking out?

Ben Webster: Cholera is endemic. It is always there as a risk. With any outbreak, you want to nip it in the bud, so go in hard early to get on top of it before it goes out of control. Again, it is around the preparedness in advance, making sure that there are pre-positioned supplies, making sure people are trained and making sure that there is clean water, safe sanitation and services. That is around investing in local capacity and local preparedness. We do not want to go in with an international response every single time. The investment needs to be up front. It is much harder to secure funds and to have the rationale to release these funds in advance, but that is where the investment needs to be.

Debbie Hillier: The thing to remember with cholera is that the epidemic can spread very quickly. There were five cases on Friday. There were 1,000 cases yesterday.

Chair: Goodness, there were five cases on Friday and 1,000 yesterday.

Debbie Hillier: It is sort of going exponential, so we are absolutely at the danger point on cholera.

Q17 **Mr Evans:** Are you able at this stage to say what is going to happen?

Debbie Hillier: I was about to say that those are the cases we know about. There are many areas that we have not got to yet and the epidemiological data is probably not 100% accurate yet, so there is a lot of work to be done around clarity on those figures, but we can already see it is very worrying. The other thing is that cholera is relatively easy to treat, so it does not need huge amounts of equipment or technical medical interventions. You need chlorine and rehydration salts, and those are cheap things. It is something we can address, but we need to go in fast now.

Q18 **Mr Evans:** Transport comes into this, but it is also about preparedness, and you had three days. Within the three days, were you able to reach as many people as you wanted to with drugs, medicines and, as you said, chlorine, clean water and all that? Were you able to do that or were there real problems, because maybe the transportation system was shocking and hit by the cyclone?

Debbie Hillier: There are very real gaps in our water and sanitation work right now. There are people crowded together in schools and hospitals, and families stuck together with very little. There are virtually no toilets. There is virtually no clean water. This is precisely the kind of place where cholera will take off. We need to work now to get on top of the water and sanitation issue.

Q19 **Mr Evans:** It sounds bleak.

Debbie Hillier: But doable, right? This is doable.



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Q20 Chris Law: You talked about helicopters and boats. Mozambique I know quite well personally, so I was shocked at the pictures. I do not even recognise Beira any more. There is nothing of it that I could even point to and say, "I have been there". How much of it is still underwater and, as a result, how much of it is still inaccessible?

Debbie Hillier: I do not have the figures off the top of my head. Do you, Ben?

Ben Webster: No. I spoke to our team in Beira last night. They were saying the floods are receding. Beira city is accessible. The road network around Beira is working again, but it is the rural areas outside of the city where the access is challenging. Even when the flood waters recede, because the roads are washed away, it is still extremely difficult to access them.

In my mind, helicopters are a very short-term option. Support is required to re-establish the road network, and that is where the international community really could assist. Longer term, we would love to build back better and ensure the roads do not get washed away next time there is a cyclone or floods that hit them. Right now, getting emergency access to the more rural areas is a critical concern, and it will reduce the cost of the operation if you do not have to use helicopters so much.

Q21 Chris Law: In terms of the reporting on cholera, typhoid, malaria and whatever else, a lot of it will be going unreported, as a result of the flooding and areas still being inaccessible, so the true figure could be tens of thousands rather than 1,000.

Ben Webster: We just do not know.

Q22 Chair: On that, you mentioned, Debbie, that the treatment for cholera is quite a straightforward one. Are the supplies there? There is an issue of access to parts of the country. Are there enough supplies of those medicines in country, but is the issue then getting them to all parts of the country?

Debbie Hillier: Yes, that is right. In fact, an Oxfam flight will arrive in Beira tomorrow, so supplies are definitely coming in. You are right; it is more about the distribution.

Chair: That leads very nicely to Henry's question.

Q23 Henry Smith: To both of you, how well co-ordinated do you feel the international community's response has been to this crisis? For example, has there been unnecessary duplication of effort?

Debbie Hillier: I will start on that one. We have to be realistic and remember that it is going to be fairly chaotic in the first few weeks, certainly in Mozambique. It has been an incredibly difficult environment to work in. All the operational agencies have been based at the airport. There is only one place where you can get Wi-Fi. The phone system does



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not really work. The practicalities around that are really difficult. There has been a bit of a scramble for boats and helicopters.

Hopefully we are getting over that. It has been a bit chaotic, but I hope we are getting over that now and the co-ordination will improve. It is being quite heavily led by the UN and the Government, as you would expect, and that is entirely appropriate. The UN cluster system has set up in Mozambique. Broadly speaking, things are moving the way we would expect.

Ben Webster: Our assessment team is liaising closely with the UN OCHA UNDAC team. MapAction has been deployed, another UK-based organisation that is assisting with aerial assessments, sharing the information and the data. As Debbie said, it will always be a challenge in these chaotic emergencies to get everybody on to the same page, especially when there are problems with communications, infrastructure and so on.

As humanitarian organisations, it is never as quick as we would want it to be, but the UN team is leading the negotiations with the Government in Mozambique, and trying to ensure that it is the Government who lead the response and take responsibility for the overall operation. We are trying to do our best to work within that structure.

Q24 **Henry Smith:** Debbie, with regard to Oxfam, I notice your press release talking about working with Government Departments. For this country's part, what has your assessment been of the DfID response to the crisis?

Debbie Hillier: I am not sure I can really answer that in any detail.

Henry Smith: It is too early.

Debbie Hillier: Yes. The UK has clearly done very sensible things in terms of sending out people and a huge amount of assets. The UK is the biggest donor to Mozambique and should be commended for a huge commitment to the response. There should definitely be a commendation for the energy and the finance coming from the UK, supporting seven members of the humanitarian country team. This is a really positive thing to do to help support the co-ordination so, in broad terms, many thanks.

Q25 **Paul Scully:** Can I ask how effective you have been in mobilising financial contributions to the crisis overall?

Debbie Hillier: Our organisations or the whole response?

Paul Scully: Between the organisations, really.

Debbie Hillier: For Oxfam, we are working across all three countries and are appealing to donors for funding. We have received quite a lot through the appeals. The DEC appeal has been amazing and wonderful. We are certainly seeking funding.



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There are still many gaps in the response as a whole. It looks like the appeals from the three countries and various others are going to add up to more than \$500 million. The funding situation in general is not entirely clear, but the UK has been the most generous donor. Most other donors are contributing a few million. We are not seeing the kind of scale-up of donations that we would expect to see, to be honest, at this point.

Q26 Paul Scully: Do you have a target as an organisation?

Debbie Hillier: For Oxfam, yes. We are appealing for \$20 million at the moment, but we expect that our Mozambique numbers might well go up.

Q27 Paul Scully: How far have you got towards that so far?

Debbie Hillier: We are less than half.

Q28 Paul Scully: Ben, what about you?

Ben Webster: From the Red Cross side, the International Federation has launched an appeal for Mozambique of 31 million Swiss francs. We currently have 20% of that hard-pledged. The DEC appeal has launched. The UK public has raised an incredible £21 million, and then there is the £4 million of UK Aid Match going towards that, so that is a fantastic contribution to the response. From the data we have been able to find online on the website, it looks like the UN flash appeal is officially only 8% funded.

Q29 Paul Scully: You talked about the direct support package, the £18 million plus the £4 million matched. How significant a difference is that going to make on the ground? Is it directed to the right places?

Ben Webster: The 14 member agencies of the DEC will all put forward their proposals. As for how that money will be allocated, there will be an initial six-month period, and then the remainder over the coming years for the recovery in the operation. From our perspective, we have a team of sanitation experts who are trying to get on top of this cholera outbreak in the camps in Beira city, so those funds will help us to deliver that operation in Beira and then support the wider Red Cross movement, the local national society and the IFRC with scaling up this response as quickly as possible.

Q30 Paul Scully: DfID said its initial £6 million was for Mozambique and Malawi. It did not talk about Zimbabwe, which it has since started mentioning. For the later £12 million, it mentioned Zimbabwe. Do you think DfID has been allocating it to the right places in that regard?

Debbie Hillier: I do not have clear sight of precisely where that money has gone and what sectors it has been spent on. It is not very easily available publicly. I am sure you will find out in your next conversation, but from our side we cannot say at this point.

Q31 Paul Scully: Fair enough. Is it the same sort of answer from you, Ben, or is there anything else you want to add on that?



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Ben Webster: I have not seen anything official. From what I understand, most of it will be going through the UN system in the three countries, along with the non-food items that have been sent from the UK. In terms of the impact, Mozambique has had the greatest impact, so I would imagine that the majority of funds need to go there, followed by Zimbabwe and Malawi.

Debbie Hillier: I do not know if DfID is funding this, and it may well be, but sometimes in these kinds of crises the emphasis goes on water and sanitation, and food, for obvious reasons, but there are things that tend to get a bit forgotten or come in later, like gender and protection. I really want to see DfID funding frontloading on this. It often comes in later as a second-phase thing, but we are already seeing some quite worrying things from our focus groups with women, with reports of gender-based violence and women feeling very unsafe in the camps. A lot of these very informal camps do not have lighting or do not have toilets that are separated, so there is a real potential for protection issues.

Q32 **Paul Scully:** That is interesting to know. Thank you very much for that. Sticking with you, Debbie, DfID is the largest donor to the Start Fund. From Oxfam's perspective, how effective is Start as a mechanism to mobilise funding quickly?

Debbie Hillier: Oxfam gets money through the Start Fund. It is a very good way of ensuring an early and quick response so, yes, we fully support the Start Fund's work.

Q33 **Paul Scully:** It works well. Can you pick out particular things that make it effective like that?

Debbie Hillier: I do not know whether the Start Fund anticipation window was activated in this response, but in general the anticipation window enables Start network members to respond quickly when it looks like a situation is going to deteriorate, but before it does. It enables an early response, either to do an assessment of whether it is going to get worse or to start a quick scale-up, and then at the same time to do a proposal for, essentially, a bigger amount of money. The anticipation window helps organisations like Oxfam to move quickly, and that is really what you need.

Q34 **Chair:** From what you have both said, in terms of the finances, DfID has responded well and the British public have responded magnificently, but it sounds like there is even more of a struggle than in other situations to get other donors to rise to the challenge. What is this about? Is this about donor fatigue because there are so many other ongoing crises? Is there some particular reason for that contrast between the public, the UK Government and other donors? I do not know if either of you could be tempted to comment on that.

Debbie Hillier: We cannot really know what the other donors are thinking and why they are not responding. I do not really understand. This is an obvious case where there should be increased funding. The US



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has pledged \$4.1 million, which is very small in comparison to the needs. I do not understand why that is. The UK is in a good position, as it is leading from the front, to encourage other donors to follow in swiftly behind it. I would like to see the UK taking on that role.

- Q35 **Henry Smith:** Very briefly on that point, Mozambique is a Commonwealth country, and perhaps you would expect the UK to be taking a lead, but Portugal is also a former colonial power. Has there been any input from the Portuguese Government or is that through the EU? What has been the EU response, from your perspective?

Debbie Hillier: Portugal does not have a big aid budget.

- Q36 **Chair:** What has the European Union response been?

Ben Webster: I understand that ECHO is supporting the Red Cross appeal in Mozambique, and the Portuguese Red Cross has deployed its field hospital. I do not know whether that is receiving Government funding as well. Likewise, I am surprised. Given that the UN has declared a level 3 scaled-up assistance emergency, I do not really understand why it is not receiving the attention necessary.

Debbie Hillier: I believe there is a meeting in New York today, led by Mark Lowcock, to try to rustle up some donor interest, among other things.

- Q37 **Mr Sharma:** In your press release you said that, right now, the primary focus is to save lives, but the after-effects of this crisis will be felt for some time to come. How do you see your response to this crisis evolving, and to what extent do you think this crisis will affect the medium to long-term growth and development trajectories of the countries involved?

Chair: That is a great question.

Ben Webster: Thank you for the question. Our response right now is focusing on those areas I mentioned, so food, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and health. Those will be the priorities in the short term, to try to get people home again, back into their houses, get their houses repaired and provide the immediate assistance required.

As I mentioned at the start, this disaster is compounding existing vulnerability in the area. We will really be looking at food security, livelihoods and cash-based assistance, to help people get their businesses back up and running, and to ensure there is a transition into a longer term recovery. As we have been saying throughout, lots of these issues are around preparedness for response and resilience issues. These are longer term issues that will require investment in the longer term as well.

It is difficult to know exactly what is going to happen with this secondary disaster phase. We want to get on top of the cholera outbreak right now, but then, as quickly as we can, get people home, establish livelihoods and ensure that they can recover. It is always concerning when the donor



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funds start to run dry when we get into the longer term development and preparedness for future crises, so that would be our request.

Q38 Mr Sharma: What recommendations would you make to DfID when it comes to considering its future programme?

Ben Webster: When considering the future programme, as the Red Cross we have local responders. We have local volunteers and local national societies. In 2015, the World Humanitarian Summit came up with commitments around the localisation agenda. We would strongly encourage supporting that local capacity to ensure that there is growing capacity and better infrastructure in place to be able to respond in future, and to ensure that it is as local as possible, but as international as necessary. No. 1 is the localisation agenda.

No. 2 is building back better wherever we can, ensuring that the cyclone shelters are built, that the roads are stronger, that the infrastructure is functional and that it is based around community needs, so they are the ones driving the agenda and are empowered to lead the development process.

Q39 Chris Law: As a result of Cyclone Idai, many hundreds of thousands of people will be displaced and could be for a considerable time. The question I am asking is how the international aid community should respond to that. What kinds of things does it need to put in place in the medium and long term?

Ben Webster: From my perspective, in previous flood responses in Mozambique, we have seen that the communities really want to return home as quickly as possible, so there is no point in investing in heavy infrastructure while they are displaced, because it all needs to go back and be mobile to return as quickly as possible. As Debbie mentioned, it is about ensuring good-quality services are provided while people are displaced, ensuring there are gender-separated toilets available and lighting, ensuring they are good-quality facilities, to prevent further spread of cholera and so on while people are displaced, but ensuring that that does not prevent people returning home as quickly as possible.

In terms of displacement, we are seeing that climate change is a threat multiplier. We will continue to see growing displacement in these low-lying areas as average sea levels rise. We are going to see more and more displacement, so we need to bear that in mind. Thinking about the resilience agenda, there is the climate summit later on this year. The UK Government will be helping to lead the resilience agenda component of that. There are great opportunities to lead the charge on ensuring that these countries can have sufficient capacity, resource and infrastructure in place to survive these kinds of disasters going forward.

Q40 Chris Law: You were latterly talking about climate change there. As a sense, do you feel the international aid community is responding, albeit too late after something has happened, or has it started to prepare for



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resilience going forward? For example, you talked about cyclone shelters in Bangladesh, so they have been planning years in advance. Why are we not seeing that in places like Mozambique and elsewhere? Are we lagging behind? What do we need to do to be more proactive?

Debbie Hillier: There definitely are quite a lot of gaps in adaptation, because that is what we are talking about now. In terms of international climate finance, the vast majority of finance is still for climate change mitigation and less for adaptation. In these least-developed countries, it is precisely the adaptation funding that is required, and yet this funding is not getting to countries like Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, so there is definitely a mismatch there.

One thing that Oxfam and others are asking for is that, for climate finance, it should be at least 50% for adaptation and possibly more, but at the moment it is more like 20% for adaptation. A lot of the funding is going into middle-income countries on energy projects, whereas we need to see a bit more balance, in terms of building adaptation in the countries that are really bearing the brunt of climate change, like Mozambique.

Q41 **Chris Law:** As a Committee, we are looking at the impact of climate change at the moment. We are doing a full report on that, so it should be coming through quite soon. My last question is really about child welfare. It has been reported that hundreds of thousands of schools and homes have been destroyed or are in a terrible condition. Education being a fundamental human development goal, I wanted to know how you foresee coping with the educational needs of those who have been displaced and in places where these schools have been destroyed?

Debbie Hillier: A lot of the camps are in schools at the moment, so even if the school is standing it is being used for displaced people. It is definitely a real problem. As Ben said, people will go home as quickly as they possibly can and start to rebuild their lives. Education is one of those things that often get lost in the first phase emergency response. It is something that can be done. It just requires a bit of funding to rebuild those schools, ideally resilient to the risk that they face due to climate change. Again, an issue here is around gender. It tends to be the girls who do not go back to school after a crisis like this, so we have to make sure that any work done to support the education system is gender sensitive.

Q42 **Chair:** Ben, do you want to add anything on schools and education?

Ben Webster: Is it okay to add something on climate change?

Chair: It is, yes. We have a few minutes.

Ben Webster: We can all see what is coming on the horizon. For future generations, it is really concerning. There are pockets of really good practice. We are seeing the ability to access climate-related information and data, and the use of technology. There are some real advances taking place, but just in pockets. What is missing for me is the real



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political will to drive the agenda at a serious scale, because we are lagging behind and it is very concerning. Places like this are just the start of what is going to be coming so, yes, there is a lot more we could do collectively.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed to both of you. I particularly appreciate it when a crisis like this is happening. To spare time to come and help us with our inquiries is really useful and constructive. Good luck to your people on the ground for the important work they are doing, and to the communities on the ground that, as you rightly say, are at the heart of this. Please feel free to stay, if you wish to, for the second panel, but thank you both.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Harriett Baldwin MP and Tim Stern.

Q44 Chair: Welcome back. Thank you both for being here with us. We have about eight questions that we are going to seek to cover. Let me start, Minister, by giving you an opportunity to provide an overview of what DfID has done so far in its response to the cyclone.

Harriett Baldwin: Thank you very much to you and the Committee for holding this inquiry, because it gives an opportunity, certainly for me specifically, to thank Tim and the rest of the team who have been leading the UK's response on this from the UK, and to our teams in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, which have been doing an amazing job as well.

The Committee will be aware that the met office was able to forecast. This is the time of year when these kinds of cyclones hit the area and some supplies had been pre-positioned in the area, but clearly what happened was on a scale that has been unprecedented potentially. When I spoke to the Foreign Minister of Mozambique, they had not seen cyclone on this scale since 1962.

The difficulty in a situation like that is access. Every day, we get new information about access and about the reach in terms of supplies. The UK can be very grateful to the generosity of the British public. The appeal so far has raised £23 million. The UK aid budget did a match funding of £4 million and then we have, separately from that, announced a further £18 million in funding to the humanitarian response. In addition, because that clearly makes us by far and away the lead donor into an appeal that the United Nations estimates is around \$280 million, we have been lobbying Ministers from other donor countries to register with them the severity of this particular incident.

The statistic that sticks with me and expresses the scale of it most profoundly for me is that over 3,000 schools have been flattened. The level of devastation has been really quite extraordinary. Mozambique being the seventh poorest country in the world, Malawi being the third poorest country in the world and Zimbabwe having severe economic challenges, we have really felt it was our role to not only be generous ourselves, but to try to lead contributions from other donors.

Q45 Chair: Is there any sense of other donors rising to the challenge?

Harriett Baldwin: Yes, there has been a remarkable response from not only neighbouring countries, but other countries, which have given a range of different contributions, often in kind. Particular tribute should be paid to the Indian Navy, which was able to send ships in very early and fully stocked, in the way that we pre-deploy in the Caribbean, every hurricane season, RFA Mounts Bay. They were able to come in and respond very quickly. South Africa has been very helpful, in terms of search and rescue assets.



I spoke to my Portuguese equivalent recently. They have mobilised an enormous number of people to provide to their fellow Lusophone country a range of different specialist expertise. Every day, we hear of new generous contributions, and some less generous. The UK, in addition to our own contribution, would be 15% of what has come through the EU funds and about 20% of what has come through the United Nations crisis funding.

Q46 Chair: You mention, Minister, the pre-positioning of some of the aid ready for this. Was that in all three countries, or was it more in Zimbabwe and not so much in Mozambique and Malawi?

Harriett Baldwin: It was more in Zimbabwe in the cyclone season, but in all countries we try to plan for a range of extreme weather events. It is worth the Committee being aware that, across the three countries, there was already £150 million of DfID programming on long-term climate resilience work, which I am sure is something the Committee will want to investigate further, given your other inquiry.

It is worth pointing out that we have made a remarkable short-term response, but we will absolutely stand at the side of the people of these countries in terms of the medium-term response. With next week's World Bank spring meetings, we are going to convene donor countries with the World Bank to talk about what we can do to crowd in the medium-term funding that is going to be needed to rebuild the schools, the hospitals, the homes and the livelihoods that have been so destroyed by this unprecedented event.

Q47 Chair: Thank you very much. I am going to give Tim a chance to say something and then, just to say, we are going to come to some of those longer term development challenges in a moment.

Tim Stern: Just to clarify on your question, there were also some items pre-positioned in Mozambique, so we had about 9,000 hygiene kits, 7,000 toolkits and 6,000 family kits. Zimbabwe and Mozambique were well pre-positioned.

Q48 Chair: Why not Malawi? What is the reason that there was not the same pre-positioning for Malawi?

Tim Stern: It is basically based on the evidence of where we think these things are most likely to hit. There are supplies in Malawi, but we proactively put stuff in Zim and Mozambique in advance.

Q49 Mr Evans: How do you measure our response to this tragedy?

Harriett Baldwin: It is convenient to measure it in terms of funding, but it needs to be looked at in a much wider spectrum. The proportion is an important one. If the UN appeal is for \$280 million, and through the generosity of the British public and the DfID response so far we have put in, let us say, about \$50 million of that, there is a response there that is almost a fifth of the total worldwide call for a response.



The other ways that one measures are in terms of the effectiveness and the relevance of what we are supplying. In these crises, water is probably one of the earliest things that are needed. We will be coming on, I am sure, to cholera later in the session. Then it is food and shelter. The UK has developed some real expertise in terms of the quality of that contribution, whether it is from UK firms that are expert in providing water purification technologies or just the way in which we have stockpiled here in the UK. We pay tribute to the work of the MoD and the RAF in flying out some of the 200 tonnes of contribution that we have given so far.

It is about niche capabilities as well. Because we have such a good and effective team on the ground, many of whom are local to the area, we were able to identify that one of the real needs was in terms of moving stuff from the planes that were flying in with aid and getting it around. DfID really has a lot of experience and expertise in those logistics specialities. Those would be some examples.

Q50 Mr Evans: I am sure there is lots of heroic stuff going on and we applaud that, but when you look at the response to the cyclone, which hit on 15 March, do you think, "We could have done that better"?

Harriett Baldwin: It would be wrong to suggest that one cannot learn from all these experiences, but, looking at what we have done here, it would be hard to say what more we could have done to prepare, to respond quickly and to act quickly on the financial side to those who are the responders on the ground. I will be very grateful if the Committee is going to come up with suggestions of things that we could have done better, because we should always learn from each case.

Q51 Mr Evans: The one example I have in front of me here is that the Secretary of State made a statement to the Commons and said that a five-person UK medical assessment and co-ordination team had arrived in Mozambique on 25 March. That is 10 days after. To me, it sounds late and inadequate.

Harriett Baldwin: No, that is not the case at all, because they had been on standby for some time until it was appropriate and access was possible for them to go in and make the appropriate level of assessment. Bear in mind that, in these crises, there needs to be a level of co-ordination between what other countries are providing and what is being provided locally by the relevant Governments.

We have to make sure we focus on something that is additional and complementary. We do not want lots and lots of people who all can do the same thing arriving at the same time. There is an appropriate moment for them to arrive now, because the Committee will be aware that the challenge, working with the World Health Organization, is that some 900,000 doses of cholera vaccine now need to be administered, because this is the time when cholera outbreaks are observed and have the risk of becoming much more widespread. It is about finding the right



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moment. Tim, what would you say about how, in running the emergency team, you have wanted to deploy the right capabilities at the right time?

Chair: In particular, bear in mind Nigel's point that it was the 15th, and 10 days later this five-person team went out.

Mr Evans: I want you to focus a little on the shortcomings, because there clearly are shortcomings. As I say, it is the inadequacy of what we can see here. I fully take on board this communication with a number of other agencies, but we have heard earlier that there were problems with the lead time in which they knew that the cyclone was coming. There could have been more done prior to the cyclone hitting. That is No. 1. No. 2, when it did hit, even though its intensity was known, it seems as if for 10 days they were on standby. Lots of things need to happen here. These once-in-a-lifetime events seem to be happening quite often these days.

Tim Stern: We have a team of experts positioned in Maputo the whole time, including health advisers and a range of others, who will go out to the field immediately and try to assess what is on the ground. We also work with the UN in the cluster system, so it co-ordinates all the different offers that are coming in. There are about 10 emergency teams operating from different donors, so the one thing we try to do is not send an emergency team when we know that there are another three operating in the same space. We try to de-conflict. Although the Ministry of Health has very limited capacity, we try to have some sense of where its priorities lie and where it has capacity.

We have a team there immediately, the day after this hits. We then assess what else is needed, in co-ordination with the rest of the UN system, and then we send people out once the roads are a bit clear and once you can access some of the surrounding area, which is not on day 1; it is probably on day 7 or day 8. A team can go out and look at where the health needs are, where we should be providing additional supplies and where the vaccination campaign should run. We start with the emergency phase and then the medical assessment team looks at what needs to be done in the next weeks and months to deliver programming, aid supply and vaccinations, and how to plan for that, so there is a phasing to it.

On the learning, DfID always has a clear monitoring framework and a lesson-learning approach that is run in parallel to this. We try to collect all the evidence of what could be done better. We do not have a complete conclusion to that yet, but that is run in parallel to the emergency response.

Q52 **Paul Scully:** Minister, you had the initial £6 million funding and then added the £12 million on 20 March. What assessment of need did you consider when coming up with those figures?

Harriett Baldwin: You have to operate initially by saying what we can do immediately to get things geared up. We have a crisis reserve, and we clearly saw that this was going to be a serious crisis. We wanted to get



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things going with the first £6 million and re-evaluate not only what the need is, but what else is being given by other contributors. It takes a week to 10 days for the UN to put a figure on it, which was the \$280 million. We keep these things constantly under review. To get things going initially, £6 million was needed. Then we announced a further £12 million. The DEC appeal got going very quickly and we were able to announce that that was to be match funded up to £4 million. That really helps drive a very strong contribution from the British public as well.

Q53 Paul Scully: Were there any other deliberations to get the extra £12 million, or was it just that you had to stage it for the reasons you have given?

Harriett Baldwin: It became immediately apparent that £6 million, albeit very welcome and needed immediately, given the scale of the event, would need to be supplemented pretty quickly. That was done with a very minimal amount of bureaucracy and done very quickly by me and the Secretary of State shortly after that scale of things had come in and was apparent.

Q54 Paul Scully: It was three days since the cyclone reached land that the first £6 million went in. Was there any scope for getting it in earlier than that?

Harriett Baldwin: To get people in?

Paul Scully: The funding I suppose, to therefore get the support in earlier.

Harriett Baldwin: The funding was never a constraint in terms of getting the support in. A lot of the initial support was flown into Maputo, because access to Beira airport in the first 24 hours was questionable. The port itself was badly damaged by the cyclone, so it is only as time has passed that we have been able to get all the supplies moved up to Beira airport. The port is now beginning to function reasonably. The road up to Chimoio is now back open again. In the very early stages after this, it is a question of getting things out there as quickly as possible, to the nearest possible point, and then moving on.

One of the challenges, as I mentioned in my earlier answer, was to do with having the right equipment on the ground at the airport to move stuff around once we got there. We flew some of that out from the UK. Tim, do you want to add anything to that response?

Tim Stern: To be really clear, the announcements of additional funding were not a limiting factor, because we have programmes operating with WFP, WHO and different parts of the UN system. They already have those partnerships on the ground, so we can immediately start to flex them to respond. Then our team on the ground will ask, "Is there going to be an announcement of additional support to cover the next weeks and months?" and that is when the Minister announces additional funding and they get that guarantee. From day 1, they are already working with the



UN, so they just have to give the go-ahead on the ground to flex their programme and respond.

Q55 Paul Scully: The initial press release of the £6 million was talking about Mozambique and Malawi. Was there any reason that Zimbabwe was not provided with any financial aid at that point?

Harriett Baldwin: The Zimbabwe team in Zimbabwe had enough resources within its bilateral programming to provide an initial response. As time passes, I know that two experts have now gone up to Chimanimani, and they are clear that there is going to be further need, particularly around food security, bearing in mind how extensive the crop damage has been. They had sufficient financial resources to make the first immediate response but I think there will be an assessment of further response needed. Tim, do you want to add anything to that?

Tim Stern: No, that is fair. Zimbabwe had enough resources for what we saw as the initial need. We will revise that and review it if they need some further resource.

Q56 Paul Scully: You are signed up to the Grand Bargain with commitments regarding localisation, because local organisations are often best placed to respond, so you have 25% of humanitarian funding going local. What proportion of funding is being allocated to local partners in this case?

Harriett Baldwin: It is about a third, again focused on Beira, and it took a while for the local response to get itself organised into a grouping in Beira: Unidos pela Beira. Sorry for my Portuguese pronunciation. We are working with those local groups that have got themselves organised, and I think it is about a third being deployed by local groups.

Paul Scully: So you are meeting the target.

Harriett Baldwin: It is worth pointing out that we put the money in at the UN level, but they themselves will also potentially have local partners that they work with. We have also reached out across the political spectrum. I am sure that the Committee is aware that May is an election month in Mozambique and we have reached out across the political spectrum in terms of local engagement.

Q57 Paul Scully: We heard in the first session about how protection is such a significant issue as well. Many people have been displaced to informal camps with poor toilet and washing facilities, and security. What proportion of funding from DfID has been allocated to address specifically women's protection issues in the camp?

Mrs Latham: And girls.

Paul Scully: And girls, indeed, yes.

Harriett Baldwin: It would be hard at this stage to tell the Committee the exact proportion, but the response we give will be absolutely focused on those most at need. Often, the most vulnerable people in this situation may be children and women, so I would think that, when we are able to



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go back and look at the evaluation, it will be significantly more than half. Tim, do you have any data on that coming in yet?

Tim Stern: No, I am afraid we have not yet been able to disaggregate. We do for all DfID ongoing programming but, for humanitarian response, because it is such a rapid onset, we do not disaggregate at the initial stage. We will monitor that and look at the number of recipients reached.

Q58 **Paul Scully:** It would be interesting to find out, if you are able to let us know when that is available.

Harriett Baldwin: Bearing in mind the leadership that we have tried to show on safeguarding over the last 12 months, we have very much made that core to the message wthat we are asking our delivery partners to achieve.

Q59 **Chair:** The leadership is very welcome. This is an interesting test case, I suppose, in a way. Is there anything being done differently because of the greater focus on safeguarding than might have been the case if this cyclone had happened two years ago?

Harriett Baldwin: That is a great question. What is being done differently is the standard that we insist on from our delivery partners.

Chair: That is important.

Harriett Baldwin: What is happening then when it goes down another level? Tim, what would you say?

Tim Stern: One of the things that DfID has done over the last few years in response to safeguarding issues is to set up a unit of experts. We have deployed one of the senior experts from that team, who is out in Beira, on the ground, helping to ensure that, with all the provisions we provide, all partners understand the standards that DfID expect and are following those. As well as the standard things of saying, "We will ask all our delivery partners to do this", we have someone on the ground checking and ensuring that that follow-up is done.

Chair: That is crucial.

Q60 **Mrs Latham:** According to the 2018-19 supplementary estimate memorandum, within its central programmes budget DfID holds a £200 million re-deployable crisis reserve fund. Has the £18 million direct funding support announced by DfID, and the £4 million funding provided to the Disasters Emergency Committee, been allocated from this particular crisis fund?

Harriett Baldwin: The £4 million has come from one of our core budgets, which is Aid Match budget. The £18 million has come from the crisis reserve but in two different financial years: £4 million from the 2018-19 financial year, and £14 million from the 2019-20 crisis reserve.

Q61 **Mrs Latham:** Is the £200 million a yearly fund?



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Harriett Baldwin: We always put money into the crisis reserve as part of the budgeting process, and this clearly qualifies as a crisis. We were also able to announce additional funding for Yemen recently. I cannot speak for where the crisis reserve will end the financial year at this point. Tim, do you know?

Tim Stern: For the 2018-19 financial year, it is pretty spent.

Harriett Baldwin: Pretty much done, yes.

Q62 **Mrs Latham:** It is fully spent, which is why some of it is coming from the next financial year.

Harriett Baldwin: Yes, that must be the reason it has been put across two financial years, but I would not want the headline to be "crisis reserve runs out".

Q63 **Chair:** I suppose we have gone into the new financial year.

Mrs Latham: Not quite.

Harriett Baldwin: We are just on the cusp.

Tim Stern: The way that we budget is based on when the activity is carried out, so it does not really matter when you write the cheque. It is when the activities are carried out, and most of those will be in the 2019-20 financial year.

Q64 **Mrs Latham:** Yes, but, because of the various crises around the world over the last 12 months, we have spent that £200 million.

Harriett Baldwin: We have allocated quite a bit of the crisis reserve over the last 12 months, and I can let the Committee know when we get past the financial year-end whether there was anything left in the 2018-19 financial reserve from the £200 million.

Chair: Can you write to us with the exact figures? It might not be the full amount.

Mrs Latham: That would be quite useful. If there is some left, what happens to that money? Does it get lost or does it go into next year's budget?

Harriett Baldwin: Tim and I believe that there is probably not going to be much left this year and that we will be budgeting a similar amount for next year. As the Committee will appreciate, by its very nature, we will be able to ensure that it is there for crises.

Q65 **Henry Smith:** The bilateral plans that DfID had for Mozambique for the financial year we have just entered were, I understand, £2 million less than the financial year we have just left. I think it was £47 million this financial year just gone and £45 million planned for the financial year we are about to enter. Yet funding levels are expected to remain relatively constant for Malawi and Zambia, approximately £65 million and £86



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million respectively. In light of the crisis precipitated by the cyclone, is the budget for Mozambique something that is now likely to be reviewed, given the fact that it has suffered this quite significant impact?

Harriett Baldwin: Yes, there will always be three elements to what we are doing within any given country: there will be the bilateral element; there will be the spend that we do through DfID's centrally managed programmes; and there will be the programmes that come through the World Bank and multilaterals. There will be those three elements. We will always have a significant level of programming in a country like Mozambique, which is the seventh poorest in the world, but the Committee should also be aware that, with oil and gas having been discovered off the northern coast of Mozambique, the Mozambique Government would share the expectation that, when we get into the 2020s, there should be a big improvement in the finances for the country.

For the time that we are in now, there are a significant number of very poor people in Mozambique, and our programming will reflect the priorities that we have, not only in terms of the programming that has been in place for a while but, as we develop our new strategic approach to Africa, we are putting more emphasis on climate resilience. We are hiring 20 climate experts across the DfID network, who will work to help countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change to access some of the international climate finance to which the UK is contributing £5.8 billion in this period. There will be more emphasis on climate programming. There will also be more emphasis on security programming and prosperity programming, and more emphasis on a modern approach to family planning. Of course, there will be more programming done in, for example, the Sahel.

I would expect to see our programming in Mozambique continue but reflect those increased emphases in terms of the overall approach over the years to come, and then, once Mozambique is able to have much bigger Government revenues as a result of this discovery of oil and gas in the north around Cabo Delgado, for us to do what we always try to do in our work to end extreme poverty and achieve the sustainable development goals, which is to put ourselves out of business in a given country.

Q66 **Henry Smith:** Absolutely, and please do not get me wrong: the generosity of the UK public and Government in the immediate humanitarian crisis is very much to be commended. Would you say that some of the human development initiatives that we have been funding and supporting will continue and that it is not just a case of shifting to humanitarian response? Are those longer term programmes still programmed to carry on and develop, and almost not be deflected by the immediate humanitarian situation?

Harriett Baldwin: Yes. The figures that I have for bilateral spend this year are about £62 million and, through centrally managed programmes,



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about £24 million. Then there will be multilateral spend as well. I would regard that as very much part of the ongoing work that we will be doing in Mozambique, which will now be supplemented by not only this short-term humanitarian response to the cyclone, but the work I have outlined, in terms of leading at the World Bank and other fora, to bring in the kind of rebuilding that is going to be needed for the infrastructure, in particular the schools and hospitals that have been destroyed by the cyclone.

Chair: We will come, in a moment, to a number of questions around medium and long-term recovery.

Q67 **Mr Lewis:** Good afternoon, Minister. The Secretary of State, in her statement last week, said that this was a cross-Government effort. I just wondered if you could elaborate on how DfID has been working with other Departments.

Harriett Baldwin: Yes, absolutely. Tim, as the point person in our crisis response centre with DfID, has been linking up across Government, primarily in getting the MoD to work with us on the delivery of supplies on one of the A400s from the UK. Tim, which other Departments have you been primarily working with? The Foreign Office is one.

Tim Stern: Yes, I have worked closely with the Foreign Office and with Public Health England, to use its expertise. I have been chairing daily meetings with all those Departments, making sure that we use military assets to get stuff out there and that we use Public Health England expertise, as well as FCO and DfID core skills.

Q68 **Mr Lewis:** The Secretary of State also made the point last week that DfID is working with leading flood experts at the Universities of Bristol and Reading, as well as the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts to see how the extent and impacts of the floods might change up to 10 days in advance. In terms of engaging with those experts, what are they currently advising? What are they currently telling you?

Harriett Baldwin: I have not seen one of their reports, except that water levels are dropping. Tim, they are not forecasting another cyclone anytime soon, are they?

Tim Stern: No, they are not. What they particularly do is translate meteorological data, which we get from the met office, into flood analysis, and they say where the water levels are going to rise and where dams are going to be put at risk. We have been monitoring that really closely. Now, the weather has improved and water levels are going down. They told us where we needed to get experts and where the Government of Mozambique needed to deploy resource to manage a dam that was at risk of breaching, and that really helped. We shared that with the UN System, and that was really welcomed by all partners engaged.

Chair: We move on to some of the medium to long-term issues.



Q69 Mr Virendra Sharma: To what extent do you think this crisis will affect the medium and long-term growth and development trajectories of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe?

Harriett Baldwin: These countries are very aware that they need to work to build much greater resilience as they go forward. They have always been vulnerable to extremes of weather: for Malawi, the drought, and this kind of extreme weather event with rain. I am not saying that this is not already the case, because it struck me, when I was there only last month, how the roads had been built with very good culverts. They had been built with very high banks above the flood plain. A lot of resilience had been built into the way that the infrastructure had been put in place, but it was not enough to face something on this scale.

Here in the UK, we regard it as a particular responsibility of ours that we have been asked by the UN to lead on the response to resilience at the UN meetings in September. We are very keen, as I said, at the World Bank spring meetings to bring the world together in terms of providing the medium-term financing that is going to be needed to rebuild a very significant swathe of infrastructure across the area. I am insistent that this is not just about the short-term response; this is about working with the rest of the world on how we build in greater resilience and how we stand by countries like these for the medium term, in terms of their response and building in greater resilience in the future.

Q70 Chris Law: I wanted to know, given the scale of this crisis and given that we can predict, to some degree, weather patterns going forward, what changes there will be in DfID's regional priorities in the longer term. Are there any under consideration just now, for example initiatives designed to manage displacement?

Harriett Baldwin: Specifically with regard to Africa, I have alluded to the new strategic approach that we are taking. Because we are the first and only country to have put 0.7% into law, we are able to look ahead over very long-term horizons and specifically towards the 2030 sustainable development goals. We can see where the levels of extreme poverty and need are going to be in the future. There is no question that places like Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe will continue to be the real focus countries, if you look at the demographic projection, climate projection and projection of economic trajectories.

We are able to make decisions. For example, I highlighted the need for more climate specialists across the DfID network if we are to be one of the lead donors, and as we are bidding to host COP 26. If we are to be doing all that and if we are to lead the UN work on resilience, we have to demonstrate how that resilience, adaptation and ability to cope with climate change is really built into our programming in countries like these. It informs really everything that we do, whether it is in the work we are doing on agriculture or the work that we are doing on investing in climate-smart prosperity initiatives. It informs everything that we are looking at in our programming. Since it is a strategic approach that has



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gone to the NSC and been signed off across Government, it will inform decision-making for the foreseeable future in these areas.

- Q71 **Chris Law:** If I could ask a follow-up, you highlight the point that, because 0.7% is in law, you can do long-term planning. How much is that position useful for persuading other donors, "Look, this is something that really works for us in medium and long-term planning; why do you not follow our lead?" It is a wider question, I guess, but I just thought it was important on this.

Harriett Baldwin: We welcome it when other countries step up. We welcome the fact that France has announced that it is going to go from 0.35% up to 0.55% by 2020. We do think that, by doing these kinds of things, we can show leadership in this area. One thing that has happened over our lifetimes is that China has gone from being a recipient of development assistance to having, in the last 12 months, set up its own development department. We have an important role to play there in terms of the soft power influence we can have in showing the kinds of things that seem to work over the long run, to ensure that we meet those sustainable development goals, which, after all, the whole world has signed up to.

- Q72 **Mrs Latham:** I wanted to come back on the China point. It is encouraging that they are setting up their own international development organisation, and we know that they are spending a lot of money particularly in African countries, but we are still spending a lot of money in China under the umbrella of international development, which seems to me to be a complete waste of time when we are talking about small change down the back of the sofa in comparison with the money they are spending on development in their own country but also in developing countries. It is something that DfID should be looking at. It may not be DfID itself spending that; it may be the Foreign Office or whoever, but, as it is development money, we should be looking very carefully at whether we are spending it wisely in China and why we are spending it there.

Chair: I will let Pauline do that, although it is slightly off-topic.

Mrs Latham: It is, but you did mention it.

Harriett Baldwin: I will agree with Pauline and I would like to put on record that we are very grateful that China has sent a ship with some rice as a response to this crisis. It would be wonderful to see them step up and do more, given the very significant Chinese footprint that I observed when I was there. Although DfID does no bilateral programming at all in China, it is important that we lobby on climate, which is one of the things that we do. On the illegal wildlife trade, I think the British public would want us to do that. Having BBC World Service and the British Council available in China is also something that I hope the Committee would support.

- Q73 **Chair:** Most certainly. Some of our concerns are related to specific Prosperity Fund programmes. The examples that you gave were well



selected, Minister, because they are ones that we would all agree with. Can I take us back to climate change? You were with us quite recently as part of our climate change inquiry, which is drawing towards a close now. António Guterres, the UN Secretary General, talking about the cyclone, said it was “yet another alarm bell” as relates to climate change, and we know that millions of lives are being affected by it. We heard from Oxfam earlier on the suggestion that the mix is not right in countries like Mozambique in terms of adaptation and mitigation. Is that something that is being looked at specifically in the context of Mozambique and lessons from the cyclone?

Harriett Baldwin: We feel that there is more work to be done in this area. The UK is leading by example through the climate steps that we have taken in this country, the record amount of renewable energy that we are now generating and the amount by which our carbon emissions have fallen. It is right that we should do that and it is right that we should encourage others to do similar, and it is great that we are bidding to host COP 26.

Yes, we should be emphasising both adaptation and mitigation more in the work we are doing, not only through our international climate finance contributions but through the specific programming we are doing in countries like the ones have been affected by this cyclone. Whether it is the event that we held recently, which was for African Energy Ministers from different countries to talk about off-grid renewable energy, the United Nations meetings or steps that we can choose to take together as a world to enhance resilience, or whether it is through our research budget, where we have come up with innovations like scuba rice, or what I saw in Darfur, which is millet that is particularly drought resistant and high yielding in very dry climates like the Sahel, these are things that we can do as a public good for the world. We can come up with some of these adaptations, then share them with the world and allow people to both adapt and mitigate in their response to climate change.

Q74 **Chair:** Tim, did you want to add anything on the specific issue around the amount that is spent on adaptation in the context of Mozambique?

Tim Stern: Briefly, our international climate finance spend in Africa will be over £1 billion in the next year or so. The majority of DfID spend is on adaptation, given the very low emissions coming particularly from sub-Saharan Africa. We focus on how to help those countries adapt through all sorts of programmes around energy and agriculture, so that is a strong element of our African support programmes.

Q75 **Chair:** Minister, can I conclude with a broader question around the team that works on these issues in conflict, humanitarian and security? I have had correspondence with the Secretary of State about redeployment of staff for no-deal Brexit planning. Has that impacted on this crucial humanitarian work? Are you able to tell us anything about that today?



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Harriett Baldwin: It is an opportunity to say how amazing our teams are and how resilient and adaptable they are. We have deployed 87 people, primarily in policy roles, to help with Brexit no-deal planning. That has not in any way impacted, as the Secretary of State assured the Committee, on our ability to respond to these kinds of crises and our delivery of the 0.7%.

Q76 **Chair:** None of them are the sort of people who might be deployed by the Department to work on a crisis like this one.

Harriett Baldwin: There might be some behind me who have done a bit of shifting and multitasking but it has not affected in any way our ability to respond to this crisis.

Q77 **Chair:** Is it challenging if people are having to multitask like that, who might otherwise be entirely on this task?

Harriett Baldwin: It highlights the kind of thing that the Permanent Secretary would want to emphasise to the amazing team of civil servants that we have in DfID about how incredibly resourceful and deployable they are and how they have been able to adapt to this, as you say, double-whammy of challenges. They have successfully done that in a very effective way while making some choices, which Ministers have signed off on, of things that we can deprioritise in terms of kicking off our new initiatives at the moment.

Q78 **Chair:** I will just finish with a similar comment to the one I made to the previous panel, to show our appreciation as a Committee to the DfID and, indeed, Foreign Office staff who have responded in this situation and are still doing so now. Thank you for taking some time with us today so that we could be updated and able to interrogate some of this. Clearly, this is a huge crisis and one to which the British public has responded magnificently. That is probably the main thing that I take from the evidence that we have taken today, but thank you also.

Harriett Baldwin: I totally agree with that. I totally endorse and am delighted to put on record again how impressed we have all been by the response from the UK teams in country and what a fantastic job they have done on behalf of the UK.

Chair: Brilliant. Thank you both very much indeed.