



Select Committee on the European Union

EU External Affairs Sub-Committee

Corrected oral evidence: International Development Co-operation after Brexit

Thursday 15 November 2018

11 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Baroness Verma (The Chairman); Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top; Baroness Brown of Cambridge; Baroness Chalker of Wallasey; Lord Dubs; Lord Horam; The Earl of Oxford and Asquith; Lord Risby; Lord Stirrup.

Evidence Session No. 2

Heard in Public

Questions 14 - 23

Witnesses

I: His Excellency Mr Said Tayeb Jawad, Ambassador to the UK of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; His Excellency Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar, Ambassador to the UK of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

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Examination of witnesses

His Excellency Mr Said Tayeb Jawad and His Excellency Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar.

Q14 **The Chairman:** Ambassador Jawad from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Ambassador Al-Nahar from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, we welcome you to our session this morning.

This is a public session and it will be transcribed. We will send you a transcript after the evidence session, so if there is anything in it that you feel needs to be corrected please return it to us. This is really about having an open and candid discussion, as candid as we can be in a public session. I will start by warming up the Committee, then it is up to colleagues to come in, as they wish, and for you, ambassadors, to feel free to come in at any point and respond, or ask your own questions of the Committee.

As an opening question, how do the UK and the EU currently deliver development assistance in your countries, and how could it be done better?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: Good morning. First, thank you for giving us this opportunity. In Jordan, we greatly value our relationship with the United Kingdom, and I am sure that feeling is shared by my good colleague, the Ambassador of Afghanistan. We have long-standing relations, and we enjoy a good, solid and strong relationship with the EU.

I do not know how technical you want me to be. In Jordan, we have a ministry dedicated to planning and international development that takes the lead on all the assistance that is channelled through the ministry to the Government of Jordan. As regards EU assistance to Jordan, the EU is a long-term partner of Jordan, and development co-operation has been governed by three to four-year framework agreements, with ceilings and priorities agreed by both sides. The modalities of EU support to Jordan are varied in scope and nature in both development and humanitarian assistance. Development assistance varies from budget support, sector budget support, project support and twinning projects to various capacity-building instruments. Two budget support loans have been signed with Jordan since 2015, and extended under the microfinance assistance instrument.

Current co-operation is governed by the 2016-18 partnership priorities, which include the EU-Jordan compact. The EU is currently considering an extension of it until 2020 to correspond with the EU single support framework for 2017-20. The partnership priorities provide a robust framework for EU-Jordan co-operation. Accordingly, Jordan and EU co-operation has expanded across various key priority areas for both of us: strengthening co-operation and regional stability; security, including counterterrorism; promoting economic stability, sustainable and knowledge-based growth, quality education and job creation; and strengthening democratic governance and the rule of law and human rights.

I could expand further if you want me to, but I will leave it there for the sake of time and allow my colleague to share with you his experience. I have some exact figures and numbers on our collaboration with the EU, which I will gladly share with you, maybe after the session.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Ambassador.

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: Madam Chair, Lords and Ladies, I echo my colleague's thanks to you for giving me the opportunity to be here, not only to convey the gratitude of the Afghan people and their Government for the substantial financial support of the UK but, as we celebrate Remembrance Week, to show our gratitude to the British soldiers who fought in Afghanistan. We will never forget the sacrifice of 456 soldiers who died in Afghanistan to make that region of the world a safer place for our children.

On your question about how to improve the delivery mechanism of EU and UK assistance, I will speak briefly about the scope of the aid and how it is delivered. Since 2003, we have received about \$3 billion of UK assistance. There is an average of about \$250 million per year of bilateral aid from the UK, focusing mainly on improving governance, girls' education, de-mining, building the capacity of the private sector, helping with democratic processes, such as elections, and other issues. I can discuss that in more detail if needed.

Since 2003, EU assistance to Afghanistan has been in the range of €3.7 billion. You have an outstanding commitment to Afghanistan to provide \$1 billion between 2016 and 2020, and the commitment of the European Union for that period is in the range of €1 billion. The amount of assistance received bilaterally from the UK is slightly less than we get from the EU.

The delivery mechanism is slightly different. Fifty per cent of your assistance is channelled through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which is a pool of funding by 15 donors. That assures us sustained assistance and gives you assurance of a certain delivery mechanism and reform performance. Of the €300 million EU support, €200 million is channelled to the Afghan Government budget every year.

On the point about how things could be improved, we prefer direct budgetary support to the Afghan Government because we are responsible for delivering peace and stability, but we understand your concern about transparency, inefficiency and other issues. The trust fund is a mechanism whereby we get some assurance of continuity of support, and you can impose conditionalities or performance benchmarks. Personally, I welcome conditionality on aid because it enables the Afghan Government to push harder for reform.

Some of our other major partners spend aid bilaterally directly through a contracting mechanism. That is their national approach, so it is hard for us to try to change it. When I was ambassador to the US I tried my best,

but it is not easy; sometimes it is not possible. We think that channelling more aid through budgetary support is key for continued success.

Harnessing more and more private sector experience in implementing aid is beneficial. In countries such as Afghanistan that have traditionally benefited from trade and commerce, aid to trade is an easier and more sustainable way of getting a greater return on the investment you are making in Afghanistan.

We understand that you may be concerned about how the money is spent, and we are ready to work with you. The trust fund mechanism works very effectively; we are bound to a certain degree of performance, but it assures us continued funding support.

The Chairman: Thank you, Ambassador. Colleagues will introduce themselves as we go around the table and may put a question to both of you.

Q15 **Baroness Brown of Cambridge:** I am Baroness Brown of Cambridge. I am a Cross-Bench Peer, so I am a non-party-political Peer. Ambassador Jawad, I am interested in aid to trade. Do you have some examples of what has been particularly successful?

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: There are two approaches. One is to focus more of the programme and the money being spent on building the capacity of the private sector. In countries such as Afghanistan trade is an historical thing; it has always happened. But now, if you want access to capital and you go to a bank, you have to meet certain criteria: you need a financial statement and other things. Traders need to be trained in how to do that, so it is about working on that capacity.

We are a very small economy, so it is a matter of providing opportunities to bring our products here. It would not cost anything, money-wise, and would be beneficial in the fight against narcotics to facilitate better ways for our products, especially agricultural products, to have access to the market here and, therefore, a higher premium once they are sold here. That is what I have been doing as part of the job, but there should be an easier way. If I might suggest it, having a trade envoy for Afghanistan, someone focused primarily on that issue, would be very beneficial.

Baroness Brown of Cambridge: What should we be looking for in the shops?

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: Afghanistan fruit is already known. We used to bring in only dry fruit, but now we are able, because of the building of an air bridge, to bring seasonal fresh fruit to the London market.

The Chairman: Apples in particular.

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: Apples and pomegranates.

The Chairman: Ambassador Al-Nahar, would you like to elaborate on where you would like to see perhaps a bit more focus?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: The pomegranate is very healthy.

I have a few examples relating to the EU and Jordan. We have contracted agreements that focus on key domains pertaining to strengthening the rule of law and justice; education reform; school construction; renewable energy; private sector development; microfinance; social protection; upgrading border management; and preventing violent extremism.

The European Investment Bank, which is the EU's long-term lending institution, has supported key projects in Jordan through grants for technical assistance and loans. For example, the bank supported the Red Sea-Dead Sea project, along with much-needed wastewater projects in various Jordanian municipalities. It extended a loan in the amount of €30 million and mobilised a grant from the European Neighbourhood Investment Facility in the amount of €40 million. In addition, it provided €2.1 million as a technical assistance grant for detailed project studies.

Regular and additional EU assistance to Jordan, contracted as grants over a 10-year period ending in 2017, reached about €1.6 billion. There were also pledges at the London conference in February 2016, which stood at €1 billion for Jordan and Lebanon for 2016 and 2017. It pledged €13.5 billion in loans for the region. At the Brussels I conference held in April 2017, the EU pledged €1.275 billion for 2017 and €560,000 for 2018-20 for Syria and refugee-hosting countries. The EIB pledged €13.5 million for loans in the region. During the Brussels II conference, which took place in April 2018, the EU pledged another €560,000 in funding for 2018 and the same amount for 2019 and 2020. The bank also pledged €6.1 million in regional loans for 2018-20.

As of November 2018, the EU has extended a total of about \$53 million to support the refugee and resilience components of the Jordan response plan, developed with our international partners and donors to support Jordan as a host community for Syrian refugees. With the help of our friends in the United Kingdom, we were able to reach a 10-year joint decision on simplified rules of origin with the EU back in July 2017. On that note, we still need UK support to work through the shortcomings of that agreement. After putting it to the test, we see that we have to do more together to achieve what it was actually set up to do. I will wait until a later part of the session to comment on UK assistance.

Q16 Lord Stirrup: I am Lord Stirrup. I too am a Cross-Bench Peer. I have had the honour of spending quite a bit of time in both of your countries and am very well aware of the enormous challenges that both your nations face and are standing up to so courageously.

Aid arises from a variety of different sources, in different organisations and countries. Although aid must be welcome, what particular issues, challenges and difficulties do your countries face in trying to produce a coherent programme from so many different sources when, I suspect, different rules and requirements may be set by the various donors? In other words, although more money is always welcome, when it comes from so many different sources, does that give you particularly

challenging problems in employing it effectively?

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: Yes. Afghanistan is a prime case where we face those challenges. When we started to re-establish a government in Afghanistan, the capacity to prioritise what we needed and how it should be spent was limited. The international community came in with good will, which we appreciated, and then determined its own priorities. Some of it has to do with the way the funding mechanism in those countries works—I can speak more about the US, where I served—and some of it has to do with the implementing agencies, which have certain priorities.

For host countries, I think the best approach is first to develop a national strategy in consultation with all the donor partners, not in isolation from them, and to recognise that aid will always be conditional, and to leverage the conditionality of aid in a way that serves the purpose of reforming the Government and enhancing the delivery mechanism. As you can imagine, in any country—Afghanistan and others—the degree of commitment to reform of government will be different. If you have an additional tool to push for reform because otherwise the money will not be there, it enables the reform-minded part of society to push for that reform, but sometimes, when the funding is completely outside the government budget, and even outside their awareness, it is difficult.

Schools have been built in Afghanistan on floodplains because nobody bothered to ask villagers whether there would be flooding during the spring or winter. People come in with an idea and they want to deliver fast; they just put it there and walk away, and then we are blamed for building a school that does not last, or an institution that is not useful. That is why we require a national strategy, in consultation with partners, and why we need to find a mechanism such as a trust fund, although some will still say, “No, we can’t give it to the Ministry of Finance”. In Afghanistan, the international community invested in building the capacity of the Ministry of Finance, so that it could be a viable partner. Now the Ministry of Finance is managing and implementing a lot more aid, because it has the power of implementation and has acquired the trust of the international community.

Those things are key, but the challenge will remain for a long time. I would like to share with you a story. One of our Ministers was at the US Congress. He was a very successful Minister in charge of rural development. He complained to a US Congressman that 40% of US assistance remained in the US before reaching Afghanistan because of the funding and contracting mechanism. To the surprise of our Minister, the answer from the Congressman was, “What is wrong with that?” There are different priorities when you provide aid.

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: As I mentioned earlier, Jordan has a dedicated ministry for receiving aid and whatever is pledged, and channelling it to our needs and priorities according to discussions we have internally and with different partners. The main challenge is that you cannot make a projection unless you have a commitment at least three to five years ahead, so that we can marry the priorities we agree

internally with whatever forecast we have of the money and numbers coming into the country.

There is a uniqueness in the situation of Jordan and that region in particular. It is like a hot potato: the whole place is, unfortunately, highly unpredictable. Jordan made a decision a long time ago to get rid of aid dependency, but, again unfortunately, we keep finding ourselves in circumstances that we have to deal with on behalf of not only the country and the region but the international community. They are circumstances that we certainly did not help to create. Those are the major challenges.

Q17 Lord Horam: I am John Horam, a Conservative Peer. Following up your last point about the effect, presumably, of the refugee situation on Jordan, it must have had a huge impact on what you do and how you can plan ahead. You said you wanted to get out of dependency on aid and become more self-sufficient, but the refugee situation must have made that infinitely more difficult. What effect has that had on normal aid procedures?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: Excuse me if I do not give exact figures, but, for the sake of example, imagine a 20% increase in your own population in a period of three to four years. The strain on the infrastructure, economy and social fabric of the country is huge, yet Jordan was successful in dealing with it.

Lord Horam: Have you had to divert money from aid donors to deal with that, or is a separate tranche of money coming in to help with the refugees?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: A lot of pledges were made by donors throughout the years, but unfortunately not all of them arrived. Jordan received a certain percentage from international donors, but it did not reach 100%. The figure I am familiar with, which I will correct if it is wrong, is that only between 60% and 67% of what was pledged arrived.¹ Unfortunately, the Government had to pay a little over \$10 billion towards dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis from their own budget. Bear in mind that Jordan is a country with a huge energy bill: 96% of our energy has to be imported, so for such a small country it is a huge amount to pay.

We have developed what we call the Jordan response plan for Syrian refugees and the host community. Of the 1.3 million Syrians in Jordan, only 140,000 of them live in refugee camps; the rest are absorbed by towns and villages across the country. That adds a burden. Jobs are not easy to come by: the declared rate of unemployment by the Jordanian Government is about 18%. That is the declared figure, so you can imagine the actual figures. In addition, we have a very youthful

¹ Note provided by the Ambassador after the evidence session: this percentage represents the funding level from the donor community to the Jordan Response Plan, which covers resilience and humanitarian support requirements for the Syrian Refugees. As of 22 November 2018, funding reached 20.62% out of the total funding requirement of \$2.517 billion.

population and job creation is a challenge. That is why Jordan deserves every bit of help it can get, because it is carrying a burden on behalf of the whole international community, not just on behalf of the region in which it exists.

Q18 Lord Risby: I am Richard Risby, a Conservative Peer. I was taken with the point that the Afghanistan Ambassador made about trying to promote the private sector as important.

To take on the point that Lord Horam made, British policy has always been to try, when there are dramatic situations, to keep the populations affected by them as refugees as close to their home as possible. We saw that in Kosovo, for example, relative to other countries, and it encouraged people to go back. To ask a specific question, are any of the refugees going back to Syria? That is the first thing.

On a more general point, you mentioned that the majority of Syrian refugees are not in camps. On the qualitative aspect of aid, of course there is emergency relief, which is very important, particularly at the beginning, but for the local population, with regard to the impact on their living standards, to what extent is aid defined in terms of the local population that has been negatively affected in addition to what is given directly or indirectly to the Syrian refugees?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: Thank you so much for that. Some tens of people have returned to Syria since the situation eased for them to a certain degree. I do not have an exact figure, but it is in the hundreds, not the thousands. The challenge is that we have to help our own population to be amicable to the refugees among them; we have to equip our own population and raise their living standards so that they are even more hospitable to their guests.

I will give an example. Our classrooms are overcrowded, and our schools work two or three shifts. We have classes of about 50 students over two or three shifts, which does not really help the education of our own population, let alone that of the Syrian population. There are almost 200,000 Syrian children of school age in Jordan, and the Government have accommodated a little more than 130,000 of them in Jordanian schools. It is that kind of impact on the host community that the international community needs to know about; it needs to know what the host community is going through.

We have to provide health and security. We have to be aware of what is going on within these communities, and there must be border control. It is all very expensive, and, at the end of the day, to a certain degree, everybody escaping from a crisis in the region escapes to Jordan. I do not want to say that we are used to it, but it is a sign that Jordan is a healthy country that appreciates humanity in the first place.

Lord Risby: Are you satisfied that the international aid community, whether from the United Kingdom, the European Union or a mixture, understands exactly the point that you are making and is responsive to it?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: We see a lot of understanding from our international partners. We require more understanding from international financial institutions, because that is important for us. Jordan is working on a growth plan, quite apart from anything else, and we definitely need the support of our partners to convince financial institutions worldwide that, while Jordan is going through the unfortunate circumstances of having to have so many people in a small country, it is trying to get out of the aid reliance bracket into a viable economy that could be competitive.

Bear in mind that our natural trading partners, Iraq and Syria, have been closed to us for the past seven years, if not more. Even with all the efforts, going back to Iraq and what have you, we stand at only 30% in terms of trade with Iraq compared with what existed pre the Gulf War. Syria was closed until recently, when the Jaber-Naseeb crossing was opened; Syria is our route to markets in Turkey and Europe.

Jordan finds itself in a very suffocating condition, economically speaking. I hope that, when things go back to normal—although I do not know what normal is in the region—or when circumstances get better, it will be a sign that the Jordanian economy and people are resilient, and we will have a shot at getting rid of our aid dependency.

Q19 **Lord Dubs:** I am Alf Dubs, a Labour Member of the Lords. I was in Jordan about a week ago looking at refugees, so what you are saying is striking. I have two questions. First, can you confirm the shortfall to Jordan of the extra cost of the refugees, compared with the money you are getting to meet it? I think you said there was a deficit. I will ask my second question after that.

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: What would be needed for this year and the year after to cater for the Syrian refugee presence in Jordan is about \$7 billion.

Lord Horam: Do you mean per annum?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: For this year and next year, it would be \$7.1 billion. I will happily share later what we call the Jordan response plan, which was delicately done and is sector based, to cater for education, health, welfare and what have you. It is quite detailed. As to how much of the money Jordan is actually getting, again, I do not have the figure, but I do not believe that it is more than 40% of what is basically needed.

We notice some sort of donor fatigue in that sense, but we have to keep pushing and asking. It is not charity, by any means; Jordan has undertaken a huge role and a huge burden that needs to be catered for. For instance, right now, discussions are happening in Parliament in Jordan, in Amman, because the Government are trying to introduce a new tax law or make amendments to tax law. Such things do not go down very well with Jordanian citizens, because at the end of the day the

Jordanian citizen is picking up the bill, and to a certain degree, in the view of many, that is probably not fair.

Lord Dubs: I should have said at the beginning that, on my visit to Jordan, I came away very impressed by what Jordan is doing in the face of enormous difficulties, given the percentage of your population that has arrived in the last few years. I was in the Zaatari camp. I should have said that beforehand.

In my second question, can I follow up something Lord Stirrup said? Obviously, you do not want to turn anybody away, so, given the multiplicity of owners, NGOs and so on, is there a method by which the combination of various donors, NGOs and so on could work more effectively for Jordan? In other words, what could be done to make things better for Jordan with the aid money going to you under different headings?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: In all honesty, I think that Jordan is quite well developed. As you have been there, I am sure you met people and have a direct sense of how the country is thinking. I am one of those who would call for direct budget support, under the circumstances. Lots of infrastructure projects need to be catered for; lots of maintenance needs to be done on roads and bridges, so that the Government can offer better services. When a Government who are supposed to cater for around 6.5 million people are catering for 10.5 million people, things can get complicated. That is why we are working both on building capacity in the public sector and on building partnerships with the private sector. Of course, we are getting a lot of technical assistance and help on how to do that from countries such as our partners here in the United Kingdom and others.

Money donated to NGOs working on the ground would be better spent by directing it towards the Jordanian Government, who need it to cater for the basic services that people actually need. We have a great partnership with the United Kingdom. The UK supports Jordan, and we are working with it on science and innovation; for instance, we established the Newton-Khalidi Fund a couple of years ago. With our partners, we know what really needs to be done. Whatever is done as regards aid is really appreciated; we know our priorities and where we need to go, and we just need our partners to trust that we will spend it in the right direction.

As for transparency, Jordan and the EU have had an association agreement since 2002. As I am sure you realise, there is a lot of scrutiny of EU money and where it goes. The Jordanian Ministry of Planning and its work with our international partners and donors is a shining example of what actually needs to be done.

Q20 Baroness Chalker of Wallasey: I am Lynda Chalker, a Conservative Peer and a past Overseas Development Minister. My experience of Jordan was when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, and I went to Jordan to try to help your country with the influx of refugees. Some of my thinking is inevitably formed by that. What we found in those days, which is no

longer true, was very low capacity in the Jordanian Government to cope with many of the problems, but you seem to have solved that.

Are there any particular areas where the Jordanian Government need more capacity building to cope with the enormous extra pressure? The current situation is far worse than what I had to cope with years ago, and it strikes me that we may not do enough to help you as a government.

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: Thank you so much for that. The focus on education is key. Together with our friends and partners in the United Kingdom, we have a plan, hopefully, to build more schools, to build capacity and to address what future jobs would look like and prepare our youthful population for them. On the rhythm and speed of that, I hope that it will be done sooner as opposed to later. In this day and age, unfortunately, development is extremely fast; what used to take 10 years back in the 1980s now takes six months because of all the progress in artificial intelligence, and generally in computing. I hate to say it, but if we do not move fast enough in areas such as education and preparing for the jobs of the future, people will miss the train.

Jordan has always led in our region in sending doctors and engineers to almost everybody around us, back in the days when we were building capacity. We used to be able to build capacity in different countries in and around the region; but circumstances change, and we need to be up to speed on what is happening.

Q21 The Chairman: Thank you so very much, Ambassador. We have to touch on the B-word: Brexit. It would be helpful to hear what impact you feel Brexit will have, after the UK leaves, on the delivery of programmes of development assistance in your country.

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: The Afghanistan Government, the UK and the EU share a common objective for stability, peace and pluralism in Afghanistan. Both countries and institutions have proved reliable partners for us. I hope that the UK commitment to Afghanistan remains unaffected, but I see a global trend of less appetite for international aid and a greater domestic focus, not here but in many other countries. Some predictions are that we may see a 3% or 4% reduction in foreign aid in the coming years. When the UK share of between 10% and 13% of the EU aid budget is cut, I hope that other members of the EU will substitute for the shortfall. On the other hand, there may be an opportunity for countries that enjoy a close partnership with the UK to benefit from the £1.5 billion or more that will be distributed bilaterally.

In addition to aid, I would like to see a strong return of the UK to the international arena, in some of the hotspots and areas of the world with big problems, such as Yemen and Syria. When talks take place, the UK is sometimes no longer there, and the world is deprived of the soft problem-solving skills that the UK has traditionally offered. It is both aspects: the financial support, and the need for the soft problem-solving skills that the UK used to be known for to be further utilised internationally.

On assistance, I think that Afghanistan will be less affected, because our partnership with the country and the institutions is solid. We do not think that we will be much affected. I hope too that post Brexit there is a mechanism for the UK to stay in some pooling way with the EU, because there is historical experience and knowledge, as well as expertise, that will be beneficial in implementing European programmes. I understand that there are arrangements with Switzerland, Norway and others that allow them to contribute to the pooled fund of assistance without necessarily being in the Union.

Q22 The Chairman: To widen that a little from the EU development side, the instruments on neighbourhood development and infrastructure are changing. How do you see that impacting on the work that has already been done in your country?

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: It is premature to conclude how it will have an impact. The instrument is being developed now, as is the governance mechanism of the 12 or 13 new programmes or instruments that the EU is putting together, so it might be a little early to comment.

I can see an advantage in consolidating the different programmes. A lot of aid programmes were designed way back when, and our global priorities have changed. For instance, climate change and gender equalities are more important issues for us internationally. There should be ways to incorporate those demands throughout the different funding streams and mechanisms, so the consolidation may serve the purpose of finding a solution for some of the new challenges that we face. It could be as simple as taking care of refugees in a way that will not damage the environment, for instance. As Lord Risby indicated, that is the first humanitarian assistance that has to be delivered right now in some places. The wisdom has developed to do it in such a way that we keep in consideration climate change, gender equality and other issues.

The Chairman: To clarify it in my mind, do you feel that, alongside the instruments changing, you are being supported to implement those things and that you have the technical assistance for the people who have to deliver them in your country?

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: Yes, definitely. Building capacity locally to be able to prioritise and implement is the most sustainable way, so even when the programme ends the human capital remains where it is. If the consolidation helps in having a more unified approach on how those things are done, it will benefit us tremendously. The knowledge that we gain by being an implementing partner, or at least part of an implementing tool, will be applicable across many other projects that we undertake.

Lord Horam: I have been to Afghanistan; indeed, my stepson served as a soldier in Helmand province. As regards the efficiency of programmes, one of the problems I saw was the short-term commitment of donor countries. Personnel turned over very rapidly and were often not there for more than two years at a time, which made it very difficult to develop

long-term programmes, particularly in the economic area—for example, in agriculture, mining and so forth. You cannot get long-term programmes going when personnel are constantly changing. Does that remain a big problem?

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: It is improving, because we are looking into different funding streams and at getting the private sector more involved, instead of being dependent on just one funding source. The budgetary cycle of many countries will work for one or two years, sometimes four years, and even if you get a commitment you are not assured that it will continue, because there will be a different budgetary cycle. By diversifying funding sources across the country and getting elements of the private sector more involved, and the blending fund, as we call it—

Lord Horam: How does getting the private sector more involved help you?

Mr Said Tayeb Jawad: First, it is building the capacity of the private sector in the region, and then the tools that are acquired are implemented. Secondly, there will be no need for international contractors to come from outside and leave after six months, if not two years, because once he is trained the person in the village or city will be around for a long time.

Q23 **The Chairman:** Ambassador Al-Nahar, could you comment on Brexit?

Mr Omar Bakart Mnawer Al-Nahar: Yes, all the fun is happening outside. I could barely contain myself last night.

I think that the UK-Jordan relationship post Brexit will sustain itself. The British Government and institutions have expressed their commitment numerous times, and have displayed a long-standing commitment to supporting Jordan in various sectors. Jordan-UK co-operation is not likely to be impacted by Brexit.

On the EU instruments, our people are very serious about collaboration with the EU. They have taken a long, hard look at the new instruments that will be in place and the tools that will come into force in 2021 and remain in effect until 2027, and which are slated to become the EU's main tool to contribute to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development, prosperity, peace and stability in the neighbourhood. Jordan would remain eligible to receive financing under the various pillars of that tool, strengthening resilience and making better humanitarian developments and actions. We should be quite comfortable with whatever tools the EU introduces in the next couple of years.

The Chairman: On behalf of the Committee, we are extremely grateful for your coming in today. You have highlighted some of the real challenges, which are often not heard in real-life time, about what you face in your countries, but you are still optimistic that we can work country to country, outside the European Union, or whatever the shape is going to be after these internal discussions are had. The Committee has hugely benefited from your presence here today. Thank you very much

indeed for coming in this morning, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you and taking information from you to inform our reports and inquiries.