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Foreign Affairs Committee

Lagos calling: Nigeria and the Integrated Review

Seventh Report of Session 2021–22

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Foreign Affairs Committee

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Summary

Nigeria is one of the most important countries for the future of the UK. With a diaspora population of some 200,000 it is one of Britain's largest foreign-born groups and that is without counting those with strong hereditary connections to the country. Nigeria's projected growth in coming years, increasing economic capabilities and cultural weight—not just in Africa—make it a major partner that must be seen as a principal strategic partner of the UK. We recognise that the Integrated Review is correct in its identification of Nigeria as being key to UK policy in Africa but we see it as more important than a merely regional partner. Nigeria should be seen for what it soon will be—a global partner.

The IR has set out four priorities:

- Sustaining strategic advantage in science and technology
- Strengthening security at home and abroad
- Building resilience at home and abroad
- Shaping the international global order of the future

However, the UK Government has work to do to articulate its priorities and approach to the citizens, NGOs, companies and governments of the UK and Nigeria. Such articulation is necessary to demonstrate the importance the UK places on its relationship with Nigeria; to maximise the effective delivery of programmes; and aid the scrutiny of policy. We recommend that the FCDO develop and publish an integrated delivery plan for Nigeria, similar to that produced in Pakistan, detailing how the aspirations of the Integrated Review will be implemented in Nigeria. There should be realistic and measurable objectives for the UK's engagement with Nigeria over the next five to ten years with clear articulation of the activities and policies, the resources required, and the Government departments responsible for delivering them.

We recommend that the Government make the most of the enthusiasm for engagement with policy makers amongst the Nigerian community in the UK to test various ways of involving diaspora groups in diplomacy.

As the UK looks to sustain its strategic advantage in science and technology, Nigeria is likely to be an increasingly important partner. We recommend the FCDO ensures that capacity building support is provided to the Nigerian legal system and legal services for business in Nigeria. It should also pilot a skills development programme within the Information and Communication Technology sector and the civil service. This programme would aim to address skills shortages in both Nigeria as well as training workers for the UK sector. Part of creating an enabling environment for the Nigerian tech sector involves setting out a clear and coherent approach (including how it will be funded) to the UK's partnership with Nigeria on research and training for science and technology. We recommend that part of this support comes in the form of support for the UK-Nigeria Tech Hub.

As the UK Government aims to strengthen security at home and abroad it should continue highly focused support to the Nigerian military in tackling Islamist groups and armed organised criminal groups whilst encouraging adherence to the highest standards of human rights.

The UK and Nigerian Governments share a determination to increase resilience in the face of climate change and habitat loss. We call on the FCDO to champion Nigerian-led international climate initiatives with a broader holistic vision, such as the Great Green Wall, contributing wherever the UK can add value. In adopting an appropriate posture as the UK Government seeks to mobilise public and private sector investment in climate adaptation and mitigation, we recommend the FCDO conduct a review of the support for the various Development Finance Institutions by the UK Government as well as of their methodologies and mandates. The FCDO should also work with the Nigerian Government in making a renewed effort to facilitate UK private sector financial support of low carbon ventures, such as renewable power solutions and the establishment of the Nigerian green tech sector.

As the Government looks to help define the international global order of the future, there should be a renewed focus on aspects of Nigerian culture that represent shared values. We recommend the FCDO champion support for the development of the Afrobeats genre and other Nigerian creative arts. Ring-fencing funding for the British Council and World Service for programming demonstrates synergy with the aspirations of the Integrated Review. Finally, we recommend the FCDO place the Commonwealth at the front and centre of their multilateral approach to diplomacy, trade and cultural exchange with regard to Nigeria.

1 Introduction

1. In spring 2021 we launched our inquiry into Implementing the Integrated Review (IR) in Nigeria. Using Nigeria as a case study (as a country named specifically in the IR), we wanted to explore how far the Government's existing policies are aligned to the priorities of the IR. We also sought to identify new policies that contribute to those priorities and which might also be applicable in other countries. We published the terms of reference:

- What will the vision outlined in the Integrated Review mean for the UK's policy toward Nigeria? Specifically:
 - What are the emerging opportunities for aid and investment in the science and technology sectors in Nigeria? How is, and should, the FCDO be encouraging investment in these sectors, including in SMEs?
 - What opportunities and challenges do the UK's historic links with Nigeria pose when considering the future partnership between the two countries?
 - What opportunities are there for the Government to maximise the benefits of collaboration with Nigeria over financial services and research?
 - How should the FCDO take account of and mitigate potential inhibiting factors to investment (such as corruption, security, human rights abuses)?
- Which states may be strategic partners and competitors in the UK's policy toward Nigeria and how should the FCDO respond? In particular, how should the UK engage with the United States and China?
- To what extent should engagement with Nigeria on the above issues be conducted bilaterally, or through multilateral groupings such as the African Union and the Commonwealth?

2. As the UK supports the Nigerian Government in tackling the significant security challenges it faces, the UK-Nigeria security partnership is very important. We pick up on these in chapter 4 and chapter 6. However, the military partnership and security challenges are complex and too far outside the scope of this report to cover in detail.

3. To inform the inquiry we invited written evidence and received 35 submissions, including from academics, NGOs, groups representing the Nigerian community in the UK, Nigerian businesses in the UK and former Nigerian officials. We held three oral evidence sessions with ten expert witnesses. In addition, we held an engagement event with around 20 members of the Nigerian community in the UK. We held private meetings virtually with the British High Commission in Nigeria, Nigerian officials, heads of UN agencies and UK intermediaries. We also held a private meeting with Nigeria's High Commissioner in London. Given the wide range of issues raised in the evidence and informal information gathering, we have focused on those most closely related to the terms of reference, namely opportunities for the FCDO to help facilitate UK investment in Nigeria and to build on the existing strong partnership between the two countries on matters of mutual interest. We are grateful to all those who gave evidence and supported the inquiry in various ways.

4. The IR identified four priority areas as part of its Spending Review commitments. We assess each of the opportunities we have identified against these priorities:

- Sustaining strategic advantage in science and technology.
- Strengthening security at home and abroad.
- Building resilience at home and abroad.
- Shaping the international global order of the future.

2 Nigeria as the pilot of Africa

*Nigeria is the pilot of the African plane... Africa's future will largely be determined by what happens in Nigeria.*¹

Nigeria in the Integrated Review

5. Nigeria was specifically mentioned five times in the IR. The Government described Nigeria in terms of its regional significance:

South Africa and Nigeria are regional powers with global reach through international fora, with which we share common values and commercial and development interests ...²

We agree with this assessment of Nigeria's strategic significance. The size of its economy and population as well as its cultural and political influence make it a dominant force on the geopolitical landscape.³ In some ways Nigeria represents a microcosm of problems faced across the continent. The evidence we received highlighted several strengths which represent opportunities for engagement. Nigeria:

- has a young and creative workforce with a strong work ethic;
- has a thriving film and music scene;⁴
- has a government with a firm commitment to tackling environmental issues;⁵
- possesses plentiful natural resources;⁶
- has an engaged diaspora;⁷
- and offers multiple opportunities for investment.⁸

The evidence also detailed the challenges that the Nigerian Government and people face which can also affect the ability of UK organisations and businesses to operate there:

- it is a fledgling democracy approaching a critical election in 2023;⁹
- much of its young population, whilst creative and hard-working, are poorly equipped for the labour market opportunities that are opening up;¹⁰

1 Mohamed Yahya ([IRN0040](#))

2 Cabinet Office, [Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#), 16 March 2021, [P63](#)

3 See, for example, CWEIC ([IRN0043](#)) para 5

4 See chapter 6

5 "The government has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2030, when compared to "business-as-usual" levels. This pledge rises to 45% on the condition of international support." ([The Carbon Brief Profile: Nigeria](#), by Daisy Dunne; Carbon Brief, 21 August 2020

6 See, for example, CWEIC ([IRN0043](#)) para 5

7 See, for example, PECCAVI Consulting ([IRN0002](#))

8 See, for example, AFFORD ([IRN0032](#)), Dr Ikpe ([IRN0027](#))

9 See for example, FCDO ([IRN0021](#))

10 See, for example, World Economic Forum 2019 Global Competitiveness Report in CGD ([IRN0003](#))

- separatist, insurgency and organised crime movements are destabilising large areas of the country;¹¹
- environmental degradation (exacerbated by climate change) has stimulated the mass movement of people with implications for ethnic and religious tensions as well as food security;¹²
- over-reliance on oil has resulted in underdevelopment of non-oil-producing areas, corruption, an investment environment perceived by many as risky¹³ and
- environmental degradation.¹⁴

Many of these challenges are closely linked and feed off one another. They require an integrated response (see Figure 2 for example). **The Integrated Review is right in its identification of Nigeria as an important strategic partner for the UK. We would go further to assert that the success (or otherwise) of the UK's engagement with Nigeria, and its ability to take opportunities which emerge in the four priority areas of the Integrated Review whilst rising to meet new and future challenges, is likely to carry lessons applicable to engagement with other African countries.**

6. Nigeria's prosperity is closely linked to the prosperity of the UK and its people. Its ability to neutralise the militant forms of Islam in the country directly affects the threats the UK faces from terrorism at home and against its interests overseas.¹⁵ Nigeria's ability to overcome the economic and environmental threats it faces through carefully targeted investment and development interventions will have a bearing on climate change and biodiversity,¹⁶ as well as on the environments in which UK firms operate.¹⁷ Conversely, support for one issue in Nigeria to the neglect of another may undermine the UK Government's efforts.¹⁸ **Awareness of the interconnected nature of Nigeria's business, governance, security and natural environments is vital at every stage of policy making. The FCDO is well placed to play an oversight role, ensuring UK Government initiatives in one area are not undermined by lack of attention in another.**

An overview of the work of the British High Commission in Nigeria

7. Written evidence and private discussions during our virtual visit suggest that the management team of the High Commission in Nigeria has a strong understanding of the interconnected nature of the opportunities and challenges facing the country, and the UK's place as a supportive partner. The High Commission has integrated the work formerly belonging to the Department for International Development into the structure of the Post.¹⁹ Some of the programmes implemented by the UK Government (regardless

11 See for example HART ([IRN0007](#)); Chatham House ([IRN0013](#)); CSW ([IRN0014](#))

12 See figure 2

13 See figure 3

14 See, for example, [Q71](#) [Barbut]

15 HART ([IRN0007](#)) (4.2); Okuboh ([IRN0011](#)) (6.1)

16 Fatherland Group ([IRN0015](#)); CSTVP ([IRN0033](#)); WFP ([IRN0039](#))

17 See Chapter 3

18 For example, simply addressing military aspects of Nigeria's conflict with armed groups at the expense of tackling the underlying causes (social, environmental, economic and political) may make the situation worse. (See, for example, CSTVP ([IRN0033](#)) and Figures 2 and 3 in Chapter 4)

19 FCDO ([IRN0021](#))

of the lead department) have demonstrated an ability to be nimble and relevant.²⁰ There is a degree of synergy between the existing UK Government funded programmes in Nigeria and the four main priorities outlined in the Integrated Review. However, this is not articulated in a coherent plan.

8. What is far from clear is the difference the Integrated Review is making to the activity of the FCDO in Whitehall toward Nigeria. Rhetorically, the UK Government recognises the deteriorating security situation and encourages the Nigerian Government to implement programmes aimed at tackling the root causes of the country's challenges.²¹ Staff at the High Commission could be forgiven for thinking that this recognition, the synergy of their programmes, and the importance placed on Nigeria in the IR, would lead to greater resources being put at their disposal to deliver UK foreign policy. However, the reverse appears to be true. UK aid to the country was cut from £209.39 million in 2020/21 to £95.12 million in 2021/22.^{22 23} Though the sums involved are not substantial in terms of the investment required to upgrade Nigeria's social architecture, their withdrawal can appear to mirror a lack of interest in Westminster. This would be a mistake and the wrong message to send. There are also planned cuts to the funding to the British Council, which has adopted girls' education as a cross-cutting theme.²⁴ FCDO-funded women's empowerment projects in the north of Nigeria have been suddenly cancelled mid-implementation with immediate effect despite Foreign Secretary Truss' renewed emphasis on preventing sexual violence against women and girls in conflict.^{25 26} **The UK's approach in Nigeria should be one that is defined by detailed and coherent long-term engagement. Yet it should be sufficiently agile to take advantage of new opportunities. As the FCDO makes difficult decisions on programme activities over the coming years, particularly those funded through Official Development Assistance, careful attention should be paid to ensuring the High Commission is able to be proactive and responsive rather than simply reactive. It is vital that UK partners and scrutiny bodies understand the aims and strategy of the UK in Nigeria in order to carry out their work as effectively as possible: *In the next six months we recommend that the FCDO develop and publish an integrated delivery plan for Nigeria detailing how the aspirations of the Integrated Review will be executed in Nigeria. There should be realistic and measurable objectives for UK policy in Nigeria over the next five to ten years with clear activities and policies, and the plan should set out the resources required and which Government departments will be responsible for delivering them.***

20 One example would be the collaboration with UNDP in the North East of Nigeria where a Stabilisation Unit model was used to provide immediate livelihood and shelter support for 1,500 people in some of the most badly affected areas creating instant dividends in stabilising those communities. (Mohamed Yahya [\(IRN0040\)](#) which was supported by accounts from interlocutors during the virtual visit)

21 See written question in the House of Lords on 18th November 2021; MoD [\(IRN0042\)](#)

22 FCDO, [Annual Report & Accounts: 2020–21 \(HC 660\)](#), 22 September 2021, p251

23 This impact is acutely felt in the North East of Nigeria which Mohamed Yahya of UNDP describes as being 'on a tipping point'. He described how, despite the "highly successful" interventions the UK has led, the cuts have been "devastating" for the work of UNDP and the other donors have not stepped in to fill the gap. [\(IRN0040\)](#) We heard similar accounts from other bodies.

24 British Council [\(IRN0029\)](#)

25 [Opinion: UK funding cuts take hope from women in Nigeria](#); by Bukola Onyishi, 20 May 2021, DEVEX

26 In February 2022 Minister Ford told the Committee, the Government is committed to continue to deliver support to women and girls as well as "providing vital life-saving humanitarian and conflict prevention support in North-East Nigeria (including famine prevention); supporting governance and open societies (specifically with upcoming general elections in early 2023); supporting health service improvements; and economic development (including international climate funding)." However, there was very limited detail as: "Country budget allocations have not yet been finalised for 2022/23 and beyond." (see correspondence with the [Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), dated 25/02/2022)

The Nigerian Community in the UK

Nigeria with its large and engaged British diaspora provides the British Government with a perfect medium to engage with Nigeria but also to build stronger relationships with its own ethnic minority populations.²⁷

9. Nigeria has a growing, vibrant and engaged community in the UK.^{28–29} These members of the community act as ambassadors for the UK amongst their friends and relatives in Nigeria and as ambassadors for Nigeria in the UK—they are conduits of soft power in both directions.³⁰ In the minds of Nigerian parents and employers, an education in the UK is highly valued.³¹ The UK is considered to be a good place to do business and presents many market opportunities.³² Nigeria, in turn, exports its creativity in the tech sector as well as its cutting-edge creative arts.³³ Despite the clear advantages, the FCDO's engagement with Nigerian community in the UK is limited to occasional appearances of ministers on Nigerian media outlets read by the Nigerian diaspora.³⁴ The UK is well placed to exercise its soft power in Nigeria in order to help shape the international order. The British Council's analysis of the Ipsos³⁵ polls suggests that the UK is perceived as attractive and trusted in the minds of Nigerians when compared to other G20 countries:

- The UK performs better than China when it comes to overall attractiveness—UK 85%, China 72%

27 PECCAVI Consulting ([IRN0002](#))

28 According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2011 there were 191,183 people living in the UK who were born in Nigeria, 14.5% of the total from Africa ([Nigerians living in the UK](#), Anon., 28 July 2015, ONS)

29 The UK is one of the top ten countries of origin for diaspora communities in the UK. Written evidence suggests the figures for Nigerians in the UK could be considerably more if the criteria were widened to include factors such as citizenship, citizens of Nigerian origin or parentage (mostly second and third generation Nigerians) who identify as British-Nigerians who have emigrated into the UK and naturalised since 2011, and the undocumented. CANUK put the figure as high as 2m when these are considered. (CANUK ([IRN0016](#)))

30 See, for example, Chapter 6 on Supporting Cultural Exchange

31 AFFORD ([IRN0032](#)) (1.4); see comments made on the education table at the diaspora forum; the FCDO highlighted the links that this education forms between the two countries ([IRN0021](#));

32 In oral evidence, Robbie Marwick of Savo Project Management extolled the benefits of the UK legal system when looking at the competitive advantage of doing business in Nigeria: "Ninety per cent of the deals we work on use the UK as the basis for disputes and we have one right now, and it's been a huge dispute for a number of years, which is now being settled in the UK courts, because the legal system is respected internationally and can work for multiple investors. The more we can do to make that accessible to people and to maintain that position, the better." ([Q82](#))

33 In a letter to the Committee on 25 February 2022, Minister Ford described how FCDO officials in Nigeria engage with the Nigerian diaspora (it is not clear how these meetings take place). (correspondence with the [Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), dated 25/02/2022)

34 In a letter to the Committee on 25 February 2022, Minister Ford described how FCDO officials in Nigeria engage with the Nigerian diaspora (it is not clear how these meetings take place). FCDO ([IRN0043](#)).

35 The British Council's soft power perceptions research has been offering insight into educated young people's views of the attractiveness and trustworthiness of G20 economies (including the UK and USA) since 2016. Interviews with 1,000 18–34 year olds in Nigeria with a minimum of secondary education were conducted in English between 21st February and 3rd March. The Ipsos data suggested that perceptions of the UK and US amongst young people in Nigeria are broadly similar:

- 85% of respondents rated gave both the UK as attractive and the same proportion rated the USA as attractive (rating 6–10 out of 10 on an attractiveness scale). However, the US ranked higher out across key metrics including as an attractive 'a place to study', 'a place to do business or trade', and 'a place to visit'.
- 63% rated the UK's people as trustworthy (6–10 out of 10 on a trust scale), of respondents gave the UK between 6–10 out of 10 for trustworthiness of its people compared to 60% for the US.
- While the UK and USA governments were equally likely to be rated as trusted (each 65%).
- Marginally fewer people rated the UK government as distrusted (17%) distrust the UK Government compared to that of the US (21%).
- Trust in the institutions of the UK (73%) was also higher than trust in the institutions of the USA (68%). 5% more respondents gave the UK 6–10 out of ten on trust of institutions than the US.

- There is a much deeper trust in people in the UK than in China—UK 63% vs China 39%
- There is a deeper trust in Government in the UK than in China—UK 65% vs China 48%

10. We noted, from the evidence, that the historic links between the UK and Nigeria present challenges as well as opportunities. Particular issues included:

- Contention over the return of Nigerian artifacts such as the Benin bronzes kept in UK museums.³⁶ Some claim the UK lags behind other competitors such as Germany in engaging on this issue.³⁷
- Accusations that the UK created a “hybrid nation of different cultures and religions” which laid the basis of the civil war from 1967 to 1970.³⁸ The International Organisation for Peace-building & Social Justice UK (PSJ UK) suggests that this legacy, and the practical security concerns that stem from it, provides a moral imperative for the UK to support the Nigerian Government in finding a solution to the conflicts in Nigeria (see Chapter 4).³⁹
- Accusations of UK involvement in inequitable resource extraction that has influenced the southern parts of Nigeria.⁴⁰

11. Issues surrounding the colonial legacy of the UK in Nigeria should be delicately addressed through meaningful dialogue. We recommend that the FCDO should be proactive in encouraging dialogue around any aspects of the UK’s colonial legacy, including the future of the Benin Bronzes, which the Nigerian Government feel are yet to be addressed.

12. The role the Nigerian community can play in the focus areas of this inquiry are covered elsewhere in the report. We believe that the Nigerian diaspora is a resource that is largely untapped by the FCDO.⁴¹ One such area highlighted during our virtual visit to Nigeria was that of engaging the diaspora in the Strategic Communications Platform.⁴² **The enthusiasm of the Nigerian community in the UK to engage with their country of origin provides an opportunity for the UK Government to trial initiatives to work with diaspora groups from other countries where there are overlapping interests. We recommend that the FCDO make the most of the enthusiasm for engagement amongst the Nigerian community to test various ways of involving diaspora groups in diplomacy. For example:**

- Ad-hoc focus groups should be convened for contextual input on UK Government policy relating to Nigeria, particularly those relating to issues such as support for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and those engaging in the creative arts space.***

36 Okuboh ([IRN0011](#));

37 AFFORD ([IRN0032](#)) para 9.2

38 CANUK ([IRN0016](#)); see also BABA ([IRN0026](#)) and Dr Ikpe ([IRN0027](#))

39 PSJ UK ([IRN0038](#))

40 Dr Ikpe ([IRN0027](#))

41 See, for example, PSJ UK ([IRN0038](#)), CANUK ([IRN0016](#))

42 The Nigerian Government has established a strategy to combat the ideologies of the Islamist insurgency groups in the North East known as the Strategic Communications Platform. [FG to unveil National Strategy for Strategic Communications Approach](#), by Kingsley Omonobi-Abuja, 28 October 2015, Vanguard

- b) *A means be provided whereby Nigerians living in the UK can engage with the Strategic Communications Platform for peacebuilding in the North East of Nigeria, and other such engagement platforms as they arise.*

3 Sustaining strategic advantage in science and technology

Opportunities

13. Nigeria presents huge opportunities for the UK Government to make progress toward the priority outlined in the strategic framework: Sustaining strategic advantage through science and technology. Nigeria already has a “vibrant and growing tech sector”⁴³ which has proved to be resilient throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴⁴ Investment in businesses and capacity development in the IT sector have the potential to bring benefits to the people of Nigeria in terms of employment and access to life-transforming technologies as well as improving the dynamism of the rest of the economy.⁴⁵ Nigeria reportedly accounts for 23% of all internet users in Africa,⁴⁶ has 90 tech hubs, and it is estimated that the digital economy could add 3 million jobs as well as US\$88 billion to the Nigerian economy by 2027.⁴⁷

14. We heard that fintech investment⁴⁸ and the development of financial services constitute both an imperative for future growth and an area of promising investment opportunity.⁴⁹ There was a 200% increase in fintech investments between 2018 and 2021, the majority of them foreign investments.⁵⁰ The fact that only 40% of Nigerians have a bank account⁵¹ demonstrates both the opportunities and areas of focus required. The African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) described the opportunities:

Nigeria’s youthful population, increasing smartphone penetration, and a focused regulatory drive to increase financial inclusion and cashless payments, are combining to create the perfect recipe for a thriving fintech sector.⁵²

15. We have observed that, at the level of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), Nigeria is a country with a hugely creative tech start-up community. Many of that community’s initiatives are tackling Nigeria’s social and economic challenges through innovative solutions. We heard from the entrepreneurs of two such companies: one addressing the inadequacies in agricultural supply chains and information regarding production and the other running a start-up to assist public transport around cities.⁵³

16. Many contributors recognised the potential of harnessing the resources and energy of the Nigerian communities in the UK to support foreign policy objectives (see Chapter 2). The British African Business Alliance (BABA) estimates that around 500,000 of the Nigerians in the UK have built up available assets through their work and life in the UK

43 AFFORD (IRN0032); See also Dr Ikpe (IRN0027)

44 Q42 [Helen Depster]; see also PSJ UK (IRN0038)

45 See, for example, IDS (IRN0005), FCDO (IRN0021),

46 PSJ UK (IRN0038)

47 [The Digital Sector Skills Gap Report](#), 2020, Jobberman (in CGD (IRN0013))

48 Fintech investment refers to investment in technologies which provide financial services such as facilitating financial transactions.

49 PECCAVI Consulting (IRN0002); Okuboh (IRN0011); AFFORD (IRN0032); Butler (IRN0030)

50 Okuboh (IRN0011)

51 See AFFORD (IRN0032)

52 AFFORD (IRN0032)

53 Oral evidence taken on 20 July 2021, [HC 202](#)

of around £50,000 and that this collection of “rainy day” savings in UK property and low-value investment activities, add up to around £25 billion.⁵⁴ Some of this, they claim, could be invested in Nigeria if the correct catalyst were found.⁵⁵

17. As an emerging science and technology hub in Africa, Nigeria presents opportunities for the UK Government to make progress toward its priority of securing strategic advantage through science and technology. Investment in businesses and capacity development in the IT sector also has the potential to bring benefits to the people of Nigeria in terms of employment and access to life-transforming technologies as well as improving the dynamism of the rest of the economy. To stimulate diaspora investment in Nigerian small and medium sized tech enterprises the UK Government needs to adopt an approach that builds capacity across the whole tech ecosystem. We recommend that the FCDO prioritise UK Government capacity building support to the Nigerian legal system and legal services for business in Nigeria. Such support will allow UK investors to capitalise on the similarities in corporate law between the two countries as well as de-risking investments.

Competition

*I do not even know what the UK's private sector strategy is in Nigeria. If someone were to ask me where we have won or lost, I would not know, because I do not know what the UK is actually trying to achieve ...*⁵⁶

18. In themes that will be picked up in chapter 5, we assert that the UK Government's response to investment opportunities needs to be clearly articulated, adaptable and flexible. There is no doubt that China is an increasingly significant competitor in Nigeria.⁵⁷ Joe Ochei, founder and CEO of Seloch Energy, highlighted the competition China poses in the science and technology sector with scholarship programmes.⁵⁸ Robbie Marwick of Savo Project Management claimed that China is addressing the traditional criticism of its investment of being “insular” and not “creating a lot of value for the actual economy”:⁵⁹

I think the types of advantages and distinctions that we see are dissipating and the position of the UK as a trusted leader, with market access, is going to disappear if we do not become better at moving quickly and actually supporting Nigerian companies to get off the ground.⁶⁰

54 BABA ([IRN0026](#)); PSJ UK ([IRN0038](#)); CANUK ([IRN0016](#)); see also, CGD ([IRN0003](#)) and note from diaspora meeting

55 Specifically related to tech businesses, AFFORD ([IRN0032](#)) claimed the diaspora is already investing in education, vocational training and other capacity building. They give the examples of:

- Investment funds dedicated to Green and Circular economy especially agriculture (innovative “agritech”, and “agriprocessing”) start-ups seeking to solve the logistics of food waste in the country and learn how to get produce from the farm to the end consumer in the most efficient and effective manner.
- Investment to research and improve access to constant source energy and power as actions related to science and technology require.
- Investment to support the development of eco-tourism and heritage tourism linked to tech solutions.

56 [Q84](#) [Robbie Marwick]

57 Dr Ikpe ([IRN0027](#)) (viii); Alozie and Power - area of China's focus ([IRN0022](#)); FCDO ([IRN0021](#))- arms;

58 Joe Chiedu Ochei (SEO at SeLoch Energy Ltd.) ([IRN0009](#))

59 [Q84](#) [Robbie Marwick]; see also Oluwatosin Adechokan (Karlshochschule International University) ([IRN0028](#)) for description of current model of Chinese investment

60 [Q83](#) [Marwick]

19. Other contributors argued that Chinese investment in Nigeria is small relative to its investment in other African countries.⁶¹ Other competitors mentioned in the evidence included Germany, Russia, Turkey and the USA.⁶² The UK has many unique ties to Nigeria and starts from a position of advantage (as described in chapter 2). These links are, however, insufficient insulation against growing competition and need to be built upon in improved offers to the Nigerian Government, Nigerian businesses and Nigeria's workforce.⁶³

20. Nigeria voted to condemn the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine on 2 March 2022. Nevertheless, the activity of Russian private security firms in Africa and the influence of the circulation of Russian arms in Nigeria cannot be ignored.⁶⁴ Contributors highlighted that Russia and China were the largest suppliers of military equipment in 2014–2018⁶⁵ and that they are expanding their partnerships with Nigeria.⁶⁶ Some contributors warned against the UK trying to match Russia's provision of cheap weapons,⁶⁷ whilst other commentators have warned of the impact Nigeria's over-reliance on Russian armaments could have.⁶⁸

Barriers to investment and growth in the IT sector and amongst SMEs

The Skills Gap

21. Both Nigeria and the UK face a skills gap in their IT sectors.⁶⁹ Every year large numbers of young people leave Nigerian universities with degrees, yet their ability to start any work without further training is limited due, in part, to the standard and relevance of education they receive.⁷⁰ Members of the Nigerian community in the UK shared that, in some universities in Nigeria, students on IT related courses may not have access to computers for the duration of their degree. We heard that, due to strikes by staff and students, a four year course can take six or seven years to complete⁷¹ and that, given funding constraints, desks, chairs and computers are of low priority in many faculties.⁷² There is also a disparity between those able to afford private and foreign education and

61 [Q83](#) [Skipper]

62 FCDO ([IRN0021](#)) mentioned Russia, India, USA and the Netherlands; Adechokan ([IRN0028](#)) mentioned Russia and Turkey; CANUK ([IRN0016](#)) mentioned USA; AFFORD ([IRN0032](#)) (1.9) mentioned Germany in reference to the return of the Benin Bronzes.

63 [Q85](#) [Skipper]

64 See, for example, [Ukraine war: fresh warning that Africa needs to be vigilant against Russia's destabilising influence](#), by Joseph Siegle, 9 March 2022, The Conversation.

65 FCDO ([IRN0021](#))

66 Adechokan ([IRN0028](#))

67 PECCAVI Consulting ([IRN0002](#))

68 See for example [India's Dependence on Russian Weapons Tethers Modi to Putin](#), Sudhi Ranjan Sen, Bloomberg, 20 March 2022

69 In 2018 there were an estimated 600,000 vacancies within the UK IT sector and that 91% of 950 businesses surveyed struggled to find workers with the right skills. This gap was expected to grow. (Open University Business Barometer in CGD ([IRN0003](#))). Nigeria faces similar problems and is ranked 112 out of 140 countries in terms of digital skills development (World Economic Forum 2019 Global Competitiveness Report in CGD ([IRN0003](#)))

70 We heard that there are 170 publicly owned universities in Nigeria producing 50,000 graduates annually leading to unemployment and certificates with limited value (CANUK ([IRN0016](#))).

71 See note from Southwark meeting

72 [Q45](#) [Ofowwe Aig-Imoukhuede]

those who rely on state education, so that students with innovative ideas enter the market place with little idea of how to implement them.⁷³ The better-educated students are more likely to emigrate, creating a ‘brain drain’ in Nigeria.⁷⁴

22. In the absence of Nigerian Government skills development ‘ecosystems’, the private and third sectors have expanded into that space.⁷⁵ We heard that other countries such as Luxemburg, Germany and Australia have demonstrated success in running programmes in which cohorts of Nigerian workers have been trained in technical IT skills with a proportion staying to work in Nigeria and a proportion preparing to emigrate and work for firms in the respective developed economies.⁷⁶ **The UK Government should be more proactive in initiating programmes that build the capacity of the Nigerian IT workforce. Such programmes have the potential to be beneficial to both countries. We recommend the FCDO lead a pilot skills development programme within the ICT sector that aims to address skills shortages in both Nigeria and the UK. This initiative, requiring close collaboration with other Government departments including the Home Office and BEIS, would be an approach that actively seeks to reduce the chance of a brain drain scenario by ensuring that a proportion of trainees are being trained for jobs they will fill in Nigeria. We recommend that the FCDO ensures in all such programmes rural areas are not sidelined and that candidates from these areas are enabled to participate.**

23. There is a lack of both technical and leadership capacity in the public sector, leaving the Nigerian civil service unable to take advantage of ICT systems that would increase accountability, reduce transaction costs for foreign investors, and improve delivery of services for Nigerian businesses.⁷⁷ We heard that this problem is even more pronounced at the state level as the system of automatic promotion leaves little incentive for self-improvement.⁷⁸ **The FCDO could support the Nigerian civil service by creating opportunities for the Nigerian Government to make the most of future skills development programmes:**

- a) ***including a quota for trainees in the ICT skills development programme who will return to join the Nigerian civil service at both state and federal level as well as ensuring geographical distribution of trainees from northern and southern states. This programme should be complemented by appropriate FCDO support for NGOs and arms-length bodies currently building capacity in the Civil Service, as well as technology provision, to enable application of newly acquired skills;***
- b) ***ensuring the Chevening Scholarship programme has a quota of scholars from the public sector of Nigeria for at least the next three years.***

73 We heard anecdotal stories of students needing to provide sexual favours to university staff to require a satisfactory grade, other students resort to cyber-crime to pay their fees.

74 AFFORD (IRN0032); Q43 [Dempster]

75 Q44 [Dempster]

76 Q43 [Dempster]

77 Q52 [Ofovwé Aig-Imoukhuede] “ICT is the future. It is the way to reach the maximum number of civil servants, in the minimum amount of time, and at minimum cost, but there is no equipment. There is no equipment in universities. There is definitely no equipment in the civil service.” See also Q60 [Dempster]

78 Q57 [Ofovwé Aig-Imoukhuede] to us that 50% of all applications to their training programme came from Lagos, two or three applications from other states and the rest from Government agencies.

Other barriers to development and investment

24. Lack of adequate communications and electricity infrastructure is a constraining factor in the development of tech businesses in Nigeria⁷⁹ yet also offers an opportunity for green business development for SMEs.⁸⁰ **Electricity provision is key to the development of Nigerian businesses. We recognise the priority the UK Government has put on this sector and encourage increased attention be paid here.**

25. A number of contributors to the inquiry characterised Nigerian society as being patriarchal, with age and sex representing barriers for young entrepreneurs, and particularly young female entrepreneurs.⁸¹ Despite women making up 40% of Nigerian entrepreneurs,⁸² 26% of career decisions by African women are necessity (rather than opportunity) driven—women are pushed into low level entrepreneurial roles rather than being pulled by promising opportunities.⁸³ Specific to the tech sector, we heard that whilst lack of skills was an issue hindering the empowerment of women entrepreneurs, lack of confidence and visible role-models also constrains potential.⁸⁴ We welcome the efforts of the UK Government through the DigiGirls project to address some of this disparity.⁸⁵

26. The regulatory environment in Nigeria and the structure of its economy can act as a barrier to growth. Onyeka Akumah, a Nigerian entrepreneur, told us how the inconsistent and frequently changing policies of the Nigerian Government that affect start-ups can hinder their development as well as their scalability regionally or globally.⁸⁶ Aisha Raheem-Bolarinwa, a Nigerian Entrepreneur, agreed and added that lack of co-ordination across various aspects of the industry is a constraining factor.⁸⁷ The reliance on oil causes a number of problems, including restricting the amount of foreign exchange available in-country, particularly in more recent years where price has been volatile.⁸⁸

27. It is not always straightforward for members of the Nigerian diaspora to invest in Nigerian start-ups despite a desire to do so. Investors are concerned that there is not enough transparency in how their money is spent and are put off by high transaction costs.^{89 90}

79 See, for example, [Q3](#) [Belo-Osagie], [Q61](#) [Dempster], [Q32](#) [Marwick], [Q32](#) [Skipper]

80 Written evidence from Dr Modesta Alozie (University of Warwick) and Professor Marcus Power (University of Durham) highlighted the involvement of SMEs in renewable power generation and recommended the UK play a funding and convening role in the development of this sector ([IRN0022](#) rec 2); Ervine Okuboh, a former diplomat and development advisor, hailed the suitability of Nigeria for off-grid renewable energy facilities. ([IRN0011](#) 1.8)

81 [Q4](#) [Aisha Raheem-Bolarinwa]

82 [The businesswomen in Nigeria making money out of moi moi](#), BBC, 10 February 2017, [online video](#)

83 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, [Global Report 2017/18](#), (2018) p13, p14

84 [Q4](#) [Belo-Osagie]

85 DigiGirls is a project of the 'Digital Access Programme' - a partnership between FCDO and DCMS. It aims to catalyse more inclusive, affordable, safe and secure digital access for marginalised groups. The programme, which covers Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil and Indonesia, runs from 2019–2023 (Source: FCDO Development Tracker, [Digital Access Programme](#), Accessed April 2022); online newspaper, 'This Day Live', reported in March 2022 that 2,400 women and girls had graduated from this programme in the first cohort ([UK, Nigeria to Promote Digital Access with Policy Reforms](#), by Nosa Alekhuogie, This Day Live, 10 March 2022).

86 [Q3](#) [Onyeka Akumah]

87 [Q3](#) [Aisha Raheem-Bolarinwa]

88 However, there was little detail on the approach being taken. (see correspondence with the [Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), dated 25/02/2022)

89 PECCAVI Consulting ([IRN0002](#))

90 Transaction costs refer to the total costs associated with making a transaction including preparation of contracts, feasibility studies, renegotiation and dispute resolution.

Often, investors outside the country (whether diaspora or foreign) want evidence of local investment first — something not always easy to secure. There was consensus that faith in the legal system was vital to attracting investment and may help overcome this barrier.^{91 92}

28. Contributors to the inquiry were split on the impact of corruption on SME and start-up development. Tech entrepreneurs suggested that fears over corruption had not hindered investment and that investors were far more likely to prioritise the return on investment over issues of corruption.⁹³ Members of the Nigerian community in the UK, both in our visit to Southwark and in written evidence, named corruption as a barrier to them when considering investment in Nigeria.⁹⁴ Corruption was described as ‘endemic’ and there were calls for more accountability mechanisms to support investment in Nigerian businesses.

29. Similarly, there were conflicting views over the impact that the ongoing security issues in the country have on investment. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Freedom of Religion and Belief concluded that violent conflict was “the biggest barrier” to trade and investment.⁹⁵ Onyeka Akumah, a Nigerian entrepreneur, told us that although the conflict in the north of Nigeria had meant that their operations had to be suspended there, he felt that “there are bigger issues beyond security that need to be tackled” (see Chapter 4 for more analysis of the security situation).⁹⁶

Existing UK Government initiatives

30. The FCDO described how they are “working to strengthen UK-Nigerian partnerships in science, research, technology and data” as well as promoting the “attractiveness and influence of the UK through science diplomacy”—this also extends to the agri-tech sector. The Department for International Trade (DIT) has identified agriculture as one of its nine priority sectors. Part of this is contributed to by DIT’s Global Entrepreneurs Programme.⁹⁷ The FCDO point to the UK’s support of research claiming it is Nigeria’s largest bilateral partner in public funding for research and that they are addressing the skills shortage through scholarships and fellowship programmes as well as highlighting the work of the UK-Nigeria Tech Hub initiated by the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) (see below).⁹⁸ The FCDO also describes work to ensure research is able to meet development challenges by bringing together innovators, researchers, entrepreneurs, SMEs and policy officials.

91 See, for example, [Q82](#) [Skipper] promoting efforts to strengthen the Nigerian legal system which is largely based on that of the UK; see also [Q82](#) [Marwick] confirming that having the support of the UK legal system provides huge value in securing deals; Q6 Akumah described how companies registered in London find it easier to raise capital than those registered in Lagos.

92 See recommendation in para 18

93 See [Q8](#) and [Q9](#)

94 See, for example, CANUK ([IRN0016](#)), also supported by IRN0037 FCRIG; CWEIC described corruption and human rights abuses as “major obstacles in the country’s ambition for...stability” ([IRN0043](#) (6))

95 APPG IFORB ([IRN0019](#)) (2.)

96 [Q14](#) [Onyeka Akumah]

97 The Global Entrepreneur Programme (GEP) offers mentoring and business support to non-UK based founders to help them set up and scale their business from a UK global headquarters. (Department for International Trade, [Get support to move your business to the UK - the Global Entrepreneur Program](#), accessed April 2022; FCDO ([IRN0021](#)))

98 An example of the support they offer is the AfriTech Start-up Bootcamp – an online training programme for scale-able tech start-ups (see [Startupbootcamp](#), accessed April 2022).

31. It is difficult to see how the FCDO will maintain its impact in the current spending climate. The cuts to the UK's aid budget from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5% have reduced the money available for the FCDO's commitments, as outlined in the evidence. Much of the UK's support for research in Nigeria comes through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (23 funding awards to date⁹⁹), which is due to be cut from £245m to £125m in 2022.¹⁰⁰ Both the GCRF and Newton¹⁰¹ have been "scaled back significantly, including with some projects within them being cancelled."¹⁰² **The UK Government, through the merger of DFID and the FCO, aims to use Official Development Assistance (ODA) more effectively to contribute toward wider foreign policy goals. This aim has been undermined by the cuts to research and training programmes in the science and technology sectors, which are ultimately detrimental to both the UK and Nigeria. We recommend that the Government sets out a clear and coherent approach (including how it will be funded) to its partnership with Nigeria on research and training for science and technology in the integrated delivery plan.**

UK-Nigeria Tech Hub

32. The importance of providing opportunities for networking, mentoring and training amongst tech entrepreneurs is stressed by young Nigerians.¹⁰³ The UK-Nigeria Tech Hub is an initiative of the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) in conjunction with British Embassies and supports Nigerian start-ups through facilitating networking and developing skills. Their three focus areas are: ecosystem building, digital skills building and facilitating partnerships.¹⁰⁴ The UK-Nigeria Tech Hub provides an excellent basis on which to build a highly impactful approach.¹⁰⁵ Aisha Raheem-Bolarinwa, who founded the tech start-up Farmz2u, described the support from the tech hub, which took the form of the identification and support for two interns, as "super helpful":

This was before getting funding and we were able to get skills in-house. It was a two-way street in the sense that we were able to get people to work with us, but we were also able to create a job at the end of the process ...¹⁰⁶

33. The tech hubs are funded by the ODA Digital Access Programme, which supports hubs in multiple countries. The £7.5m programme started in April 2018 and is due to finish in March 2022 but it has only spent £426,714 to date.¹⁰⁷ A letter to the Committee

99 Tableau public, [RCUK GCRF Awarded Projects](#), Accessed April 2022

100 [UK scientists attack 'reckless' Tory cuts to international research](#), by Robin McKie, The Observer Science, 14 March 2021

101 The Newton Fund is a scheme to provide established international researchers with an opportunity to develop the research strengths and capabilities of their research group through training, collaboration and reciprocal visits with a partner in the UK. The skills and knowledge gained should lead to changes in the well-being of communities and increased economic benefits. (The Royal Society [Newton Advanced Fellowships](#), Accessed April 2022)

102 Newton Fund by 62%, GCRF by 71% compared to 20/21 equivalent budgets – these figures cover the entire breadth of delivery partners. Correspondence with the [Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#) relating to ODA spending cuts, dated 14/06/2021

103 See, for example, [Q20](#) [Yasmin Belo-Osagie]

104 According to their first impact report (2020–2021):

- 100+ Nigerians were trained in technical areas as part of digital skill initiatives.
- 230+ women were trained and mentored across multiple target programmes.
- 2,552 tech startups impacted.

Source [The UK-NG Tech Hub Impact Report 2021 \(February 2021\)](#)

105 [Q62](#) [Dempster]

106 [Q20](#) [Belo-Osagie]

107 FCDO Development Tracker, [Digital Access Programme](#), Accessed April 2022

from the DCMS on 24 June 2021 confirmed that there were no plans to close the programme because of the cut in ODA from 0.7 to 0.5% of gross national income (GNI); however, they failed to comment on the likelihood of cuts or the possibility of extensions to the programme beyond 2022. **The UK-Nigeria Tech hub is an innovative solution that has the potential to benefit UK and Nigerian businesses through the exposure of entrepreneurs to would-be investors, peer mentoring and training. The lessons learnt here have the potential to be applied to other situations on the continent. To maximise the effectiveness of this programme we recommend the FCDO champion the role of the UK-Nigeria Tech Hub by:**

- a) *ring-fencing funding;*
- b) *encouraging collaboration with other government initiatives, such as the Climate Finance Accelerator, to build capacity in the Nigerian finance sector helping green tech start-ups secure seed investment from local sources;*
- c) *working across Whitehall to better understand the barriers to SME investment in Africa and how to address them.*

4 Strengthening security at home and abroad

*Its [Nigeria's] failure matters because the peace and prosperity of Africa and preventing the spread of disorder and militancy around the globe depend on a stronger Nigeria.*¹⁰⁸

34. Much of the evidence received demonstrated that Nigeria faces a growing existential threat from multiple internal security situations.¹⁰⁹ ¹¹⁰ Instability in Nigeria has an impact on the security of the UK and should be part of the FCDO's core commitment to strengthening security at home and overseas. Supply chains for hydrocarbons, the availability of the region as a training ground for terrorists, and Nigeria as a source of illegal immigration to the UK are all issues that can be affected by Nigeria's stability. The Nigerian High Commissioner made it clear to the Committee that the regular and frank dialogue that takes place between the two governments on security is valued as is the collaborative working which results. Whilst widely regarded as synonymous with particular regions within Nigeria, these threats are increasingly unconstrained geographically. They include:

- Islamic extremist insurgencies in the North-East;¹¹¹
- armed criminal gangs in the North-West and general banditry across the country;¹¹²
- Farmer-Herder conflict in the Central Belt that is also spreading south;¹¹³¹¹⁴ and
- renewed Biafran separatist activity in the South-East.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ [Nigeria Is a Failed State](#), by Robert I. Rotberg, *Foreign Policy*, 27 May 2021

¹⁰⁹ See for example HART ([IRN0007](#)); Chatham House ([IRN0013](#)); CSW ([IRN0014](#))

¹¹⁰ Nine of the submissions of written evidence described Nigeria as a fragile state with a worsening security situation. It is argued that many of Nigeria's security challenges are interconnected and will require an integrated approach to address them. (See, for example, Dr Ikpe ([IRN0027](#)); CSTVP ([IRN0033](#)); PSJ UK ([IRN0038](#)); WFP ([IRN0039](#)))

¹¹¹ CSTVP ([IRN0033](#)); Chatham House ([IRN0013](#)); CSW ([IRN0014](#)); HART ([IRN0007](#)); Open Doors ([IRN0012](#));

¹¹² See Southwark table 4

¹¹³ Institute of Development Studies ([IRN0005](#)); Open Doors ([IRN0012](#)); CSW ([IRN0014](#))

¹¹⁴ There were conflicting understandings of the role religion was playing in the Farmer-Herder conflict. Submissions from Open Doors, HART and CSW (for example) believed that religious tension was both a causal factor as well as a product of the violence. However, the Government downplayed the role of religion as a main driver (see FCDO ([IRN0021](#)); correspondence with the [Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), dated 25/02/2022).

¹¹⁵ See CSW ([IRN0014](#)) Paras 26–32; HART ([IRN0007](#)) para 3.1

35. The Nigerian police and armed forces have been accused of perpetrating human rights abuses against civilian populations in separatist areas as well as in their control of unarmed protestors during the ‘End SARS’ demonstrations in 2020.¹¹⁶ There was a feeling amongst some contributors that the Nigerian Government is selective in which issues it addresses.¹¹⁷ We recognise that Nigeria’s security challenges are complex and beyond the scope of this inquiry. Nevertheless the recommendations outlined throughout this report, if applied across the country, would help to address some of the underlying causes of the conflicts.¹¹⁸

36. Nigeria’s security matters to the UK. Evidence described four significant security situations which make daily life in many parts of the country dangerous and sap the resources of the security services. Some of these crises, we heard, have the potential to threaten the very existence of the Nigerian state. These crises exacerbate levels of unregulated migration to the UK, the risks of doing business in Nigeria and the conditions in which international terrorism can be fomented. We recognise the importance of integrating diplomacy, aid and trade, as well as tangible military support, in addressing these issues. *We recommend continued, highly focused, support to the Nigerian military in tackling Islamist groups and armed organised criminal groups whilst maintaining the highest standards of human rights. We recommend that this effort continues to go hand-in-hand with targeted overseas development assistance and investment to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict.*

116 In October 2020 protests took place across Nigeria against the Special Armed Robbery Squad (SARS) who were accused of multiple human rights abuses. On 20 October there was what CSW describes as an “intense military crackdown” in which protesters were fired on, reportedly leaving between 9 and 70 casualties (CSW [\(IRN0014\)](#)). There was also a backlash against the media with three prominent media groups receiving fines of around £15,150 each and several well-known protestors had bank accounts frozen whilst others fled the country (CSW [\(IRN0014\)](#) and [NBC under Fire for Fining ARISE NEWS, Channels, AIT, by Okocha, Ajimotokan and Orizu, this Day Live, 27 October 2020](#)). Written evidence, PSJUK claimed that the response to the End SARS movement was evidence of “the spread of state co-ordinated tyranny spreading through Nigeria” [\(IRN0038\)](#). In 202 there was a [Westminster Hall debate](#) in response to a petition which received 221,258 calling for sanctions on members of the Nigerian Government and police force involved in human rights abuses by the Nigerian police (see HC Deb, 23rd November 2020, [Column 285WH](#), [Westminster Hall])

117 For example: diaspora members at the Southwark forum complained of a lack of action by the government against bandits and kidnappers and a lack of local capacity in dealing with drug control; Open Doors alleged reports showing “wilful negligence or, at worst, complicity by the NSF [Nigerian Security Forces] in deadly attacks [by Fulani herders] against predominantly Christian farmer communities.” (Open Doors [\(IRN0012\)](#))

118 See examples of root causes in: WFP [\(IRN0039\)](#) (8); APPG IFORB [\(IRN0019\)](#) (3.ix.); Chatham House [\(IRN0013\)](#)

5 Building resilience at home and overseas

Nigeria also seeks infrastructural development; however, the underlying feeling anecdotally is that the UK is not playing as significant a role as it could and hence Nigeria (not uniquely) has looked elsewhere (e.g. China and other states) for assistance.¹¹⁹

Climate finance

Synopsis of environmental challenges from written evidence

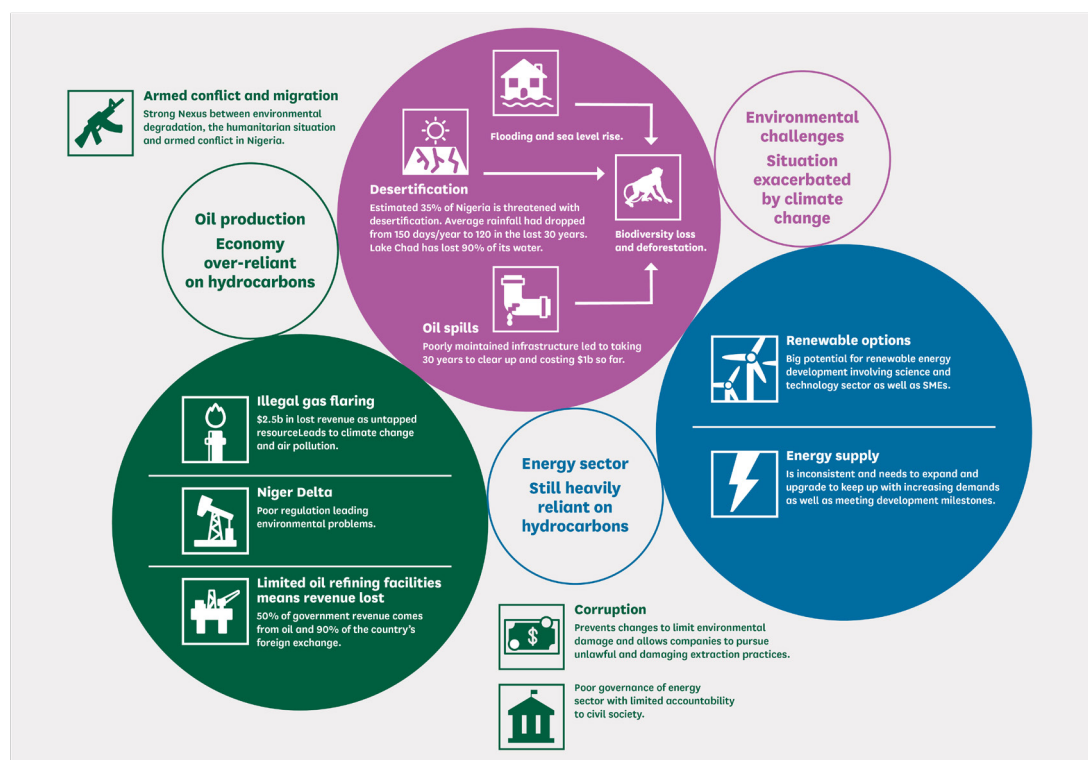


Figure 1 (see IRN [0008](#), [0009](#), [0015](#), [0024](#), [0031](#), [0033](#), [0039](#), [0017](#), [0022](#), [0030](#))

37. Nigeria is at the forefront of the battle against climate change and as such should be a priority as the UK Government takes forward its commitment to build resistance at home and overseas. Climate finance is needed for adaptation in the areas of the country where sea level rise or drought are already creating humanitarian and economic consequences, and finance is needed for mitigation of these as Nigeria transitions away from its reliance on oil and gas.¹²⁰ There are considerable opportunities for Nigeria to combine the much-needed infrastructure and agricultural development initiatives with

119 CWEIC ([IRN0043](#)) (4)

120 For example, we heard from HEDA that Nigeria will be one of the countries hardest hit by climate change ([IRN0008](#)); CSTVP estimate 35% of Nigeria is threatened by desertification and deforestation continues apace ([IRN0033](#)); whilst recognising the funds Nigeria has received, Monique Barbut stated that \$2.2 billion for a population of 200 million people still does not match the scale of the problems the country is facing ([Q67](#); see also [Q65](#) [Barbut]). We heard that if land degradation is to continue at the current rate in sub-Saharan Africa alone, some 60 million people are expected to move from 'desertified' areas to northern Africa and Europe by 2020, and this figure is highly likely to increase out to 2045 ([Q71](#) [Barbut] Ministry of Defence, [Global Strategic Trends - Out to 2045](#), (June 2014), p34)

the greening agenda.¹²¹ What is needed to support Nigeria in its efforts to reduce CO2 emissions and adapt to its impacts is a package of targeted investment in both tangibles and intangibles which addresses multiple issues simultaneously. Interventions which will bear the most fruit for citizens of Nigeria and the UK will be characterised by their provision of cash to finance sustainable infrastructure investment in green innovations, and a long-term commitment to Nigeria to help embed the change.

Synopsis from evidence of interconnected challenges facing rural communities and the Government in Nigeria

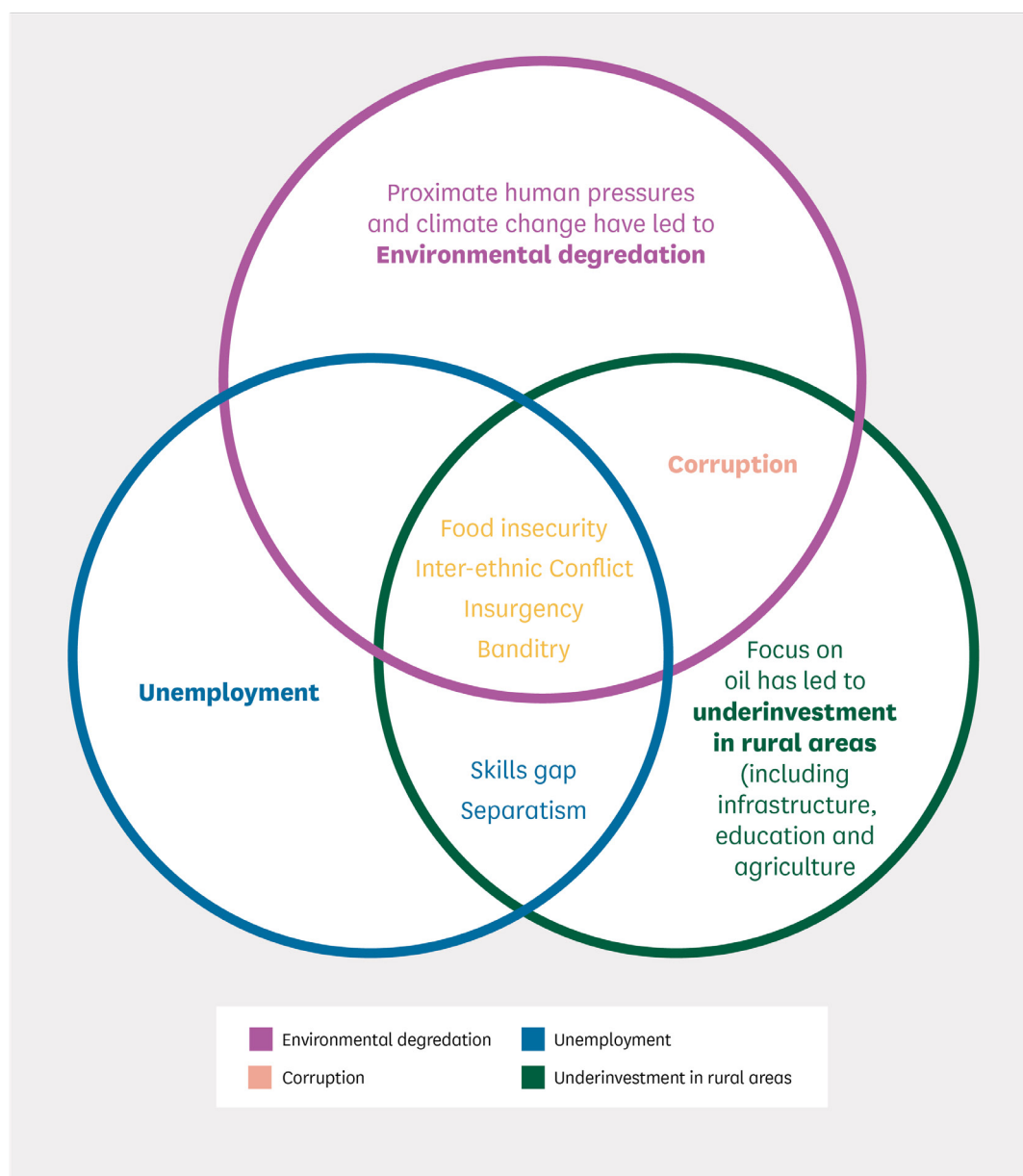


Figure 2

38. We heard how environmental degradation, exacerbated by climate change and underinvestment in agriculture, is leading to mass migration of people in the Lake Chad basin (see figure 3). Simply addressing one of these issues, such as livelihoods, or waging

121 See, for example, Publish What You Pay (PWYP) ([IRN0017](#)) (2.8), Alozie and Power ([IRN0022](#)) (1.), PSJ UK ([IRN0038](#))

war on the insurgencies that may be fomented in these conditions, is insufficient to solve the problem. Taken as a case study, The Great Green Wall (GGW) presents a model for how such a holistic initiative can be implemented. The concept, envisaged and led by Nigeria, sees a multinational effort to address the degradation of land inflicted by climate change and the subsequent mass movement of people to vulnerable areas (such as the Lake Chad basin) or to cities with inadequate infrastructure for such numbers (such as Lagos).¹²² The initiative aims to do this through a cocktail of interventions: the mammoth endeavour of tree planting to reverse desertification; sustainable market development to enable thriving livelihoods within the zone; and sustainable infrastructure development to allow for economic growth.¹²³ We heard from Monique Barbut, former Chair and CEO of the Global Environment Facility,¹²⁴ who explained that the UK Government has been a leader in terms of funding and innovation, and is a risk-taker when it comes to engaging the private sector in climate finance.¹²⁵ She noted, however, that the UK Government is conspicuous by its absence when it comes to support of the Great Green Wall specifically.¹²⁶ We recognise the complexity of delivering on the objectives of the initiative in the highly insecure states of northern Nigeria.¹²⁷ However, we believe that there is much that can be achieved through local communities and individuals with the right support from UK Government. This work will in turn begin to address some of the underlying causes of instability and help create a fertile environment for further investment.

39. The Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI), founded by the Prince of Wales, has identified a number of barriers to private financing of green investments generally. Many of these are equally applicable to any capital investment project.

122 [Q66](#) [Barbut]

123 [Q71](#) [Barbut]

124 As well as deputy secretary general of the UN and former high commissioner for the commission to combat desertification.

125 [Q72](#) [Barbut]. She gave the example of DEFRA's support of £12m for a bid by Natix to invest in land restoration projects. She described the fund as being one of the most successful and largest such funds.

126 [Q70](#) [Barbut]

127 The UNCCD's report outlined a number of challenges in the areas of governance, monitoring and reporting, funding and technical. These can constrict the project pipeline and put off private sector partners. (UNCCD, [The Great Green Wall Implementation Status and Way Ahead to 2030](#), 7 September 2020)

Box 1: Sustainable Markets Initiative's barriers

In their interim report of 2021, the Sustainable Markets Initiative identified nine barriers to sustainable development projects:

- Insufficient supply of investment-ready sustainable development projects—many projects are too small for larger investors who are looking to achieve economies of scale on their transaction costs.
- High barriers to entry—challenges here range from a lack of knowledge of the local operating environment to the limited capacity of local officials to handle the complexity of the projects. The Committee heard from Nigerian start-up entrepreneurs that these can be major barriers for those in the Nigerian private sector as well as for international firms.
- High perceptions of the risk—this relates both to the right sort of information required to assess risk and also the government policies required to inspire confidence.
- Expanding and interlinked vulnerabilities—concern that graduation to Middle Income status leaves countries with pervasive vulnerabilities and fewer de-risking options such as concessionary finance.
- Information gaps—these can reinforce perceptions of risk.
- Lack of public-private collaboration—Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) could do more to ensure that the private sector is involved from an early stage.
- Financial complexity—financing mechanisms are increasingly complex and may increase transactions costs.
- Functional and capability gaps—absence of public sector units required to increase efficiencies in project development and execution.
- Gaps in project structuring capabilities—without the knowledge and experience needed to navigate the increasingly sophisticated requirements of blended finance structures, central ministries cannot mobilise private finance at scale.

Source: Adapted from Sustainable Markets Initiative, [Scaling Private Sector Investment in Sustainable Projects](#), June 2021

40. The FCDO is addressing some of these barriers through initiatives such as the Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA). The CFA works closely with the High Commission to map the environment around green investment and supports capacity building both within the finance sector and for those hoping to deliver goods and services.¹²⁸ Along with the success stories we heard about from witnesses,¹²⁹ we noted the plethora of initiatives that the UK is involved in and how inconsistency in policy can affect investment.¹³⁰ Whilst there is growing momentum amongst governments and corporate donors around the Great Green Wall initiative, there appears to be an opportunity for greater community involvement amongst marginalised groups.¹³¹ **We welcome the collaboration the Prince of Wales has given to the Great Green Wall initiative through the Sustainable Markets Initiative. The UK Government, however, is not as engaged as it could be in initiatives,**

128 BEIS, [Notice: Climate Finance Accelerator, 18 February 2022](#)

129 Oral evidence taken on 20 July 2021, [HC 202](#)

130 [Q87](#) [Marwick]

131 See, for example, Matthew D. Turner, Tanya Carney, Laura Lawler, Julia Reynolds, Lauren Kelly, Molly S. Teague, Leif Brottem, [“Environmental rehabilitation and the vulnerability of the poor: The case of the Great Green Wall”](#), Land Use Policy, 111 (2021), p1–17. Whilst this field research was geographically specific to Niger, this could well apply to a wider area and should be something the UK Government is aware of.

such as the Great Green Wall, that take a holistic and integrated approach to climate adaptation and mitigation—addressing multiple causes and effects of climate change simultaneously. This is despite the shared benefits for the UK and Nigeria on the ground, as well as the potential for addressing the root causes of more proximate issues to the UK, such as terrorism and illegal immigration, and to Nigeria, such as conflict and food insecurity. *To maintain a coherent approach, and to maximise the benefits of the multiple initiatives to raise finance and build capacity for projects, we recommend that the FCDO champion Nigerian-led international climate initiatives with a broader holistic vision, such as the Great Green Wall, contributing where the UK can add value. There are opportunities for the FCDO to bring together its expertise in diplomacy, aid and trade to support these efforts as well as supporting UK NGOs already engaged at African Union level. One such action could include convening multilateral bodies and grass roots groups to aid greater collaboration toward delivery and measurement of trans-national projects. The FCDO's approach should be outlined in the integrated delivery plan.*

41. We note the commitment the Government has shown in reorienting investment through DFIs to be better focused towards commitments on the environment.^{132 133} DFIs have the potential to de-risk projects in preparation for greater investment from the private sector. Nevertheless, we see room for improvement. A number of issues with DFIs have been highlighted:

- DFIs take a long time to come to a decision on funding a project, tending to be slower than possible competitors;¹³⁴
- the threshold of risk is too high;¹³⁵
- there can be a barrier to private investors accessing DFI support based on the 'development' within DFIs.¹³⁶

42. **We welcome the part the UK Government has played in involving the private sector in climate finance. We also recognise the breadth of support it offers to those wishing to make sustainable investments in Nigeria. However, the picture of multiple focal points and inconsistent policy decisions suggest that there is room for improvement. We heard how changes in Government aid spending had translated to cuts in green infrastructure development investment, putting the UK at a disadvantage. These create**

132 See, for example, the re-branding of CDC Plc to British International Investment and its summary strategy document (see British Investment International, [Productive, Sustainable and Inclusive Investment 2022 – 26 Strategy Summary](#), accessed April 2022; and CDC ([IRN023](#)))

133 DFIs are a mechanism whereby the Government can provide investment capital and project support to projects with positive development outcomes. Unlike the majority of projects implemented by NGOs, DFIs expect to see a return on investment that can be reinvested.

134 [Q80](#) [Marwick]; this is also supported in [Climate Finance Commitments Aren't Enough. We Need New Tools to Unlock Investment](#) by Julik-Heine, Sekar and Pizel, Deloitte Insights, 6 December 2021

135 [Q80](#); this is supported by research from the campaigning organisation Global Justice Now published in 2021, arguing that it continued to be commercially-minded. It estimated the CDC was making 9.2% profit on its investments, compared to its target of 3.5%. ([Doing more harm than good? Our latest report on the UK's development bank, CDC, by Daniel Willis, Global Justice Now, 15 February 2020](#)); this is also supported [Climate Finance Commitments Aren't Enough. We Need New Tools to Unlock Investment](#) by Julik-Heine, Sekar and Pizel, Deloitte Insights, 6 December 2021)

136 Robbie Marwick explained: "...essentially the target outcome of development style support is often dissociated from what is actually needed to get things done, so private sector actors who are not development consultants do not get involved." ([IRN0041](#))

yet more uncertainty for investors. To stay competitive and to make rapid progress toward the goals of the Paris agreement, there is scope for the UK Government to streamline its approach:

- a) *We recommend a review of the support of the various DFIs by the Government as well as their methodologies and mandates. Specifically:*
 - i) *How DFIs can enter the project development process at an earlier stage to provide initial project development funding.*
 - ii) *How investment risk thresholds for DFIs can be lowered and how to ensure target percentage rates of return can be used to encourage the support of riskier projects.*
 - iii) *How the time taken to process project proposals can be reduced without compromising due diligence.*
 - iv) *How the culture of DFIs can be more accessible to the private sector community whilst ensuring positive development outcomes—the desire to maintain a strong link between project outcomes and development outcomes must not present a barrier to the delivery of sustainable projects.*
- b) *We recommend that the mandates of enabling UK Government programmes are sufficiently flexible to adjust to the results of feasibility studies and changes in the project design—rather than requiring developers to shift to a different programme; and that investment initiatives which have flexible project funding pots be prioritised.*

Decarbonising and the future of oil and gas

*Grievous damage has been occasioned on the Nigerian state and its economy by multinationals through trade-based money laundering (TBML) and other IFF (International Finance Flows). At the nadir of this practice has been international oil companies that have made themselves adept at perverting the course of Nigeria's national life.*¹³⁷

43. The oil industry in Nigeria is riddled with corruption:¹³⁸ it distorts foreign exchange markets,¹³⁹ creates expensive environmental impacts for the people of the Niger Delta,¹⁴⁰ and presents significant costs in terms of mitigating the environmental impacts.¹⁴¹ Moreover, the proceeds of the industry are inequitably distributed, providing little benefit to ordinary Nigerians or significant revenue to the Nigerian exchequer. Evidence points to instances where UK companies and their subsidiaries have been implicated in the embezzlement of corrupt funds¹⁴² as well as being accused of not paying for licences in

137 World Anti Corruption Network (ACRN) ([IRN0031](#))

138 The FCDO claimed that Nigeria is calculated to lose \$10 billion annually as a result of bribery and corruption primarily taking place in the petroleum and gas sectors. ([IRN0021](#))

139 See for example [Q3](#) [Aisha Raheem-Bolarinwa]

140 PWYP ([IRN0017](#))

141 [Q65](#) [Barbut]

142 The Anti-corruption Research Network claims that illegally-gained oil wealth is laundered in the UK, sometimes involving British citizens who have admitted guilt. They do, however, note a failure to secure convictions. This, they argue, has created an environment where senior bankers in the City of London feel they can act, largely, with impunity. ACRN ([IRN0031](#)) (p9)

the harmful practice of gas flaring.¹⁴³ Whilst some illicit funds have been returned and UK citizens prosecuted, evidence suggests this only represents a small proportion of what might be owed.¹⁴⁴ ¹⁴⁵ **The record of UK Government returning embezzled funds from the City of London to Nigeria and in holding those responsible to account has been disappointing. The issues of London being used in the chain of corrupt wealth will be explored in more detail in our forthcoming inquiry on illicit finance.**

44. The OPL 245 oil field is an untapped reserve in Nigeria's waters. The licence, originally awarded to Shell, amongst others, under controversial circumstances, has passed a ten-year expiration date.¹⁴⁶ Based on accounts of current operations, without significant changes to regulation, we believe development of this resource is likely to lead to further social, economic and environmental problems. The package announced at COP26 in Glasgow to support South Africa's transition away from coal,¹⁴⁷ and the announcement by the Scottish Government to restructure the Scottish economy around hydrogen,¹⁴⁸ demonstrate that the political will to adopt feasible solutions is there. We recognise that current UK Government efforts have been positive. These support renewable power provision through initiatives such as the UK-Nigeria Infrastructure Advisory Facility,¹⁴⁹ and the £10 million (5.6 billion Naira) committed by the Government for a facility to leverage further investment in low carbon energy projects.¹⁵⁰ **We welcome the innovative steps the UK Government has taken to support Nigeria's transition to a low carbon economy. However, we believe there is scope for higher ambition in its goals and greater clarity in its approach. We recommend the UK Government works with other international partners to support Nigeria's transition to a low carbon economy. Learning from other initiatives, we recommend that the Government works with the Nigerian Government in**

143 Gas flaring is the process of burning off natural gas associated with oil extraction. It is associated with wasted resources, contribution of greenhouse gas emissions, and localised air pollution. Nigeria's National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency have calculated that 1.8 billion standard cubic feet (scf) per day of gas was flared in the last nine years, one that should ordinarily attract about \$3.6 billion in penalty, little of which was paid. The volume has generated 95.5 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions. The flared gas is valued at \$6.3 billion and it could generate 179.9 thousand GWh (NOSDRA, [Nigerian Gas Flare Tracker, accessed April 2022](#) and [ANALYSIS: As Nigeria continues to miss gas flaring deadlines, huge revenue is lost, by Yusuf Akinpelu, Premium Times, 30 April 2021](#)). The Nigerian Government has set a new target of 2025 for ending gas flaring altogether (HEDA (IRN0008)). Despite the flaring of gas, domestic prices in Nigeria are very high leading to increased demand for unsustainable firewood for cooking.

144 Justin Moore ([IRN0024](#)) (para 8–9) referenced the Nigerian anti-corruption chief who said the Nigerian Government suspected at least \$37bn (£25.6bn) in stolen money from Nigeria was routed through London during 2014–2015. He then referred to the anti-corruption conference, in September 2016, where the UK signed an agreement with Nigeria on returning stolen criminal assets to Nigeria: "As at March 2021, the only stolen money to be returned under this agreement was £4.2 million, less than 0.02% of the total sum that Nigeria suspected had been stolen."

145 Minister Ford told us that the National Crime Agency is continuing to "strengthen the capacity of anti-corruption agencies...to investigate and prosecute corruption cases including illicit finance flows" (Correspondence with the [Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), dated 25/02/2022). However, we have been unable to determine the level and duration of involvement committed. She also referenced an Memorandum of understanding which would "enable a compensation payment to be transferred to Nigeria, following an investigation by the UK's Serious Fraud Office."

146 HEDA ([IRN0008](#))

147 See the PM statement: Prime Minister's Office, [Press release: Joint Statement: International Just Energy Transition Partnership, 2 November 2021](#) and [South Africa's Coal Deal Is a New Model for Climate Progress, by Nichols Kumleben, Foreign Policy, 13 June 2019](#)

148 See the Scottish Government's draft hydrogen action plan (Scottish Government, [Hydrogen action plan: draft, 10 November 2021](#))

149 "The goal of UKNAIF's Power component is to provide targeted support and build sector capacity that will ensure alignment between power sector policies and regulations." (UKNAIF, [About UKNAIF, accessed April 2022](#))

150 Correspondence with the [Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), dated 25/02/2022

a renewed effort to facilitate UK private sector financial support of low carbon ventures such as renewable power solutions and the establishment of the Nigerian green tech sector.

6 Shaping the international global order of the future

Supporting cultural exchange

*We do not have enough opportunities. We move with the little we have and we make it big. That is what a Nigerian and African wants. You give them a slight opportunity and they run with it.*¹⁵¹

45. There is competition for soft power in Nigeria and Africa more generally. Support for Nigeria's creative arts serves to strengthen the UK's strategic advantage through science and technology as a hub for music production and distribution. Creative arts in Nigeria carry high social significance consequently the degree of the UK's influence in music genres, and its role as a catalyst for creative exchange, play a part in shaping the open international order of the future. The UK's place in the worldwide music industry is second only to that of the USA and is a significant source of soft power. With major Chinese players such as Tencent Holdings and Tencent Music¹⁵² moving into the music industry, as well as Transsion and their BOOMPLAY music streaming service,¹⁵³ it is of strategic importance that the UK maintains its position in this sector.

Focus on Afrobeats

46. Nigerian music, including the Afrobeats genre,¹⁵⁴ is estimated to be worth £77 billion/year. We heard of the potential this genre has to engage Nigerians in civil action in their country¹⁵⁵ as well as to act as a unifying force in the face of ethnic and socio-economic fragmentation of their country.¹⁵⁶ Afrobeats superstar, Patoranking, described the power of music:

151 [Q38](#) [Patoranking]

152 In their report, The Economics of Music Streaming, the DCMS Committee highlighted the cross ownership and equity stakes between the three largest music companies, the streaming service Spotify, and Tencent Holdings and Tencent Music. (Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Second Report of Session 2021–22, [Economics of music streaming](#) HC50, para 108).

153 The Boomplay app which claims to have 62m users across Africa is owned by Chinese mobile phone manufacturer Transsion Holdings (alongside NetEase) and comes pre-installed on Transsion handsets ([Market Profile: Nigeria](#), Musically, 6 May 2020). Transsion has developed handsets that cater more specifically to an African market and has been able to capture 64% of the market. It is claimed that the company has received millions of dollars in Chinese Government Subsidies and its CEO has publicly supported China's Belt and Road Initiative. There have been controversies around pre-installed malware, Triada, which "secretly saps users' pre-purchased data, signing them up for subscription services, generating fake clicks, and downloading suspicious apps, all without the user's consent and knowledge." The company have blamed an unidentified vendor in its supply chain for this. ([Transsion: a Chinese Prodigy in Africa?](#), by Connor Fairman, Council of Foreign Relations, blog, 21 October 2020)

154 Afrobeats refers to the commercial music being produced by West Africans and the West African diaspora, especially in the UK. It originated as Afrobeat in 1960s Nigeria and was created by Fela Anikulapo Kut. The name Afrobeats (also known as Naija beats) was coined in the UK to refer to the new music coming from Nigeria. It is defined by high-energy and rhythmic drumbeats. ([How Nigeria's Afrobeats are redefining the sound of Africa](#), by DJ Edu, *The Guardian*, 24 April 2014)

155 [Q30](#) [Shopsy Do]

156 "Apart from football, what brings people together in the country is music. That is the only tool we have to communicate; that is the only tool for people to voice their opinion." [Q35](#) [Patoranking] (see also [Q35](#) [Shopsy Doo])

There is no division in Afrobeats; it is just one music that speaks for all ... Regardless of where you are from, your tribe, your state or culture, there is no division; it is just one music, one people and, most importantly, one voice.¹⁵⁷

47. London is considered the “Mecca of Afrobeats”¹⁵⁸ and there is a symbiotic relationship between the Afrobeats scene in both countries. Many of the pioneering artists and promoters in Afrobeats have been members of the Nigerian community in the UK.¹⁵⁹ There has also been a merging and collaboration of Afrobeats artists with other genres (e.g. Grime), that are more traditionally associated with the UK, to create hybrids.¹⁶⁰ Barriers to growth in the Afrobeats genre, many of which are applicable to other creative arts, include:

- problems around intellectual property rights, with Nigerian artists not enjoying the same protection as those in other countries;¹⁶¹
- lack of infrastructure in Nigeria for large concerts;¹⁶²
- a complicated system of “red tape” around allowing artists to travel to the UK to perform;¹⁶³
- Many young musicians having to overcome barriers of poor education and family demands to contribute toward basic income;¹⁶⁴
- The structure of the music industry making it difficult for independent artists to promote their work,¹⁶⁵ yet the dominance of the three large music companies has suppressed the returns delivered to artists from track sales;¹⁶⁶ and
- Lack of investment in the creative industries more generally.¹⁶⁷

48. We heard how the UK Government has been working through DCMS, the BHC and the British Council to support musicians and convening networking events between stakeholders.¹⁶⁸ We believe there is scope to go further. **Investment in, and support for, Nigerian creative arts bring social and economic benefits for Nigerians. Investment**

157 [Q35](#) [Patoranking]

158 [Q25](#) [Shopsy Doo]

159 Two of the most successful artists, Burna Boy and Tiwa Savage, were both born in Nigeria but attended UK universities. Another star, whose song ‘FEM’ was heard being sung during the ‘End Sars’ protests was born in the USA of Nigerian heritage and studied at the British International School in Nigeria. ([Burna Boy, Davido and WIZKID: The Rise and Rise of Afrobeats, by Russ Slater, Songlines, 17 February 2021](#))

160 such as ‘Afro bashment’ and ‘Afro swing’ which have appealed to wider audiences in the UK. ([8 Afrobeats collaborations linking the UK with Africa, Laura Khamis, Redbull, 1 November 2019](#))

161 [Q26](#) [Shopsy Doo]

162 [Q36](#) [Patoranking]

163 [Q33](#) [Shopsy Doo]

164 [Q28](#) [Shopsy Doo]; [Q31](#) [Patoranking]

165 [Q31](#) [Patoranking]

166 See Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Second Report of Session 2021–22, [Economics of music streaming](#) HC50, para 108

167 [Q33](#) [Shopsy Doo]

168 Written evidence from the FCDO described the work they are doing through the British Council to support the arts: “Art, culture, film, fashion and music are key elements of the UK-Nigeria relationship and British Council training and support to entrepreneurs in the arts has helped to further strengthen creative partnerships between our two countries.” (FCDO ([IRN0021](#))) The submission from the British Council explained their role in facilitating virtual sessions to “warm up” the creative industry sector ahead of networking events which took place during the visits of the Prime Minister’s trade envoy, Helen Grant MP. (British Council ([IRN0029](#)))

builds on the UK's soft power as a champion of the arts, helping maintain its position as a leader in the worldwide music industry. *We recommend the FCDO support the development of the Afrobeats genre, and other Nigerian creative arts, through:*

- a) *Funding proposed projects and broadcasters, such as the BBC World Service, aimed at extending the access of Nigerian creative arts to a wider audience.*
- b) *Supporting initiatives aiming to use the creative arts as a tool for reconciliation, development and empowerment in Nigerian society. Such initiatives should seek to support emerging artists from disadvantaged backgrounds and the approach should be outlined in the integrated delivery plan for Nigeria.*
- c) *Championing cross-government policies that encourage the cultural exchange between the UK and Nigeria including a track to make it easier for Nigerian musicians to perform in the UK as well as support for creative artists in maintaining the intellectual property rights over their work. The FCDO could consider initiating a UK-Nigeria Creative Arts Hub with DCMS that would allow for greater collaboration between artists. It could also facilitate access for artists to UK organisations which assist in development and training.*

Maximising the UK's cultural assets in Nigeria

... there is an African proverb that says that we are given two ears and one mouth for a reason, and that is pretty apposite, because one of the things we need to do is listen more.¹⁶⁹

49. The British Council and BBC World Service provide invaluable services which are mutually beneficial to Nigeria and the UK. The BBC World Service, we were told, has four language services in Nigeria and has an audience of over 30 million people a week.¹⁷⁰ It is considered to be a provider of trustworthy news—research in 2011 found it to be the most influential international broadcaster in Northern Nigeria.¹⁷¹ However, we heard that the BBC World Service could go further in the promotion of moderate and democratic ideals.¹⁷² In addition to the cultural exchange function these organisations provide (covered more in the previous section), they enable a conversation on matters that are important to Nigerians and Africa more generally, and represent a tool for promoting shared values. **We applaud the important work undertaken by the British Council in promoting greater cultural ties and building on soft power assets. Similarly, the BBC World Service provides both a voice into, and a voice out of Nigeria, communicating British and Nigerian values and interests. We recommend that British Council funding for programmes that demonstrate synergy with the aspirations of the Integrated Review is ring-fenced. Funding for the BBC World Service should be sufficient to ensure that it remains the most popular and reliable source of accurate news and current affairs in Nigeria, as well as a relevant means of promoting cultural exchange.**

169 Q78 [Skipper]

170 FCDO (IRN0021)

171 Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, "[Media consumption amid contestation: Northern Nigerians' engagement with the BBC World Service](#)", School of Media, Arts and Design, University of Westminster, August 2011, PhD thesis.

172 PSJ UK described the effort of USAID to use Sesame Street as a means to spread messages of religious tolerance and equal education opportunities but suggested that the campaign would have had more impact if it had been run by the BBC World Service. They suggested that the BBC World Service should be more active on these issues due to its reputation and influence ([IRN0038](#))

Human rights challenges

50. The recommendations to the FCDO in this report have the objective of supporting the Nigerian Government as a responsive partner in addressing the root causes of instability. In order to be consistent with the values outlined in the IR the UK Government has a responsibility to draw attention to security and human rights challenges in Nigeria, something community representatives we spoke to felt was lacking.¹⁷³ A number of human rights issues were raised in evidence:

- accusations of Government complacency in the Herder-Farmer conflict (see Chapter 4);
- concerns that the controversy around the ‘End SARS’ campaign has not been fully resolved (see Chapter 4);
- concerns around the treatment of religious minorities by the Government;¹⁷⁴
- a general move to increase surveillance of citizens and suppression of voices critical of the Government;¹⁷⁵ and
- accusations of war crimes perpetrated by Nigerian troops and security forces.¹⁷⁶

51. **The Integrated Review defines the aspirations for Global Britain as being a force for good that supports open societies and defends human rights. We recognise that the understanding of these is one that is shared by the Buhari Government, which has committed to improving Nigeria’s human rights record. We have received evidence that there are still concerns from civil society that abuses and inaction by Government forces constitute a concern for the upholding of human rights. Within Nigerian society there are still concerning allegations of human rights abuses against minority groups, control of the media, and citizen surveillance. We welcome the UK Government’s efforts to support the Nigerian Government as they address these issues and in practice recommend this should mean the following:**

- a) ***Ring-fencing support to projects that assist the Nigerian Government in its efforts to promote human rights; and speaking out when rights are abused.***

173 Diaspora groups represented in Southwark felt that whilst the UK Government has been active at speaking out on China and Hong Kong, for example, they had been less vocal than the US in speaking out on issues in Nigeria. (Southwark Table 4)

174 The Institute of Development Studies point to evidence of the Nigerian State using Covid-19 restrictions as a ‘cover’ for restriction of religious minorities. (IDS ([IRN0005](#)))
Humanists UK ([IRN0004](#)) highlight cases of alleged abuses against Humanists in Nigeria and quote the conclusions on Nigeria reached in Humanist International’s 2020 Freedom of Thought Report:
‘Blasphemy’ or criticism of religion is outlawed and punishable by death’
‘Apostasy’ or conversion from a specific religion is outlawed and punishable by death’
‘Expression of core humanist principles on democracy, freedom or human rights is severely restricted’
‘The non-religious are persecuted socially or there are prohibitive social taboos against atheism, humanism or secularism’
‘State legislation is partly derived from religious law or by religious authorities’.

175 IDS ([IRN0005](#)) draws attention to the purchasing by the Government of Huawei AI technology alongside repression of critical media voices; Chatham House ([IRN0013](#)) raise concerns the freedom of speech for civil society organisations and media is under threat; see also CSW ([IRN0014](#))

176 War Child told the Committee: “A preliminary investigation by the International Criminal Court recently concluded that “there is a reasonable basis to conclude” that war crimes and crimes against community have been committed by the Nigerian Security Forces in the context of operations against Boko Haram including crimes involving children.” ([IRN0025](#))

- b) *The integrated delivery plan should include concrete steps for how the UK Government will support the Nigerian Government in promoting freedom of religion and belief, as well as preventing violence against women and girls, across their engagement activities in Nigeria.*

Strengthening Commonwealth ties

52. We were interested in exploring the part the Commonwealth could play in realising the aspirations of the IR in Nigeria. Not only does the association provide a platform for like-minded countries to project shared values through multilateral organisations such as at the WTO,¹⁷⁷ according to evidence from the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC), intra-Commonwealth trade has lower transaction costs of 21% compared to trading outside the bloc.¹⁷⁸ Their submission described Nigeria as being consistently one of the “strongest contributors to Trade and Investment work” within the Commonwealth networks.¹⁷⁹ Particular opportunities were identified in the fintech sectors and through the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda, as well as the potential comparative advantage represented in the respective diaspora communities;¹⁸⁰ nevertheless, caution was urged about taking the Commonwealth relationship for granted or using it as a fall-back option.¹⁸¹ **The Commonwealth presents a significant opportunity as the UK looks to strengthen ties with Nigeria and other African partners. The foundation of common history and the desire for greater reciprocity should not be taken for granted nor be overlooked as the UK Government seeks to deepen cultural and economic ties. We recommend that the UK Government place the Commonwealth at the front and centre of their multilateral approach to diplomacy, trade and cultural exchange with regard to Nigeria.**

177 Correspondence with the [Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), dated 25/02/2022

178 CWEIC ([IRN0043](#)) (5)

179 CWEIC ([IRN0043](#)) (5); Aisha Raheem-Bolarinwa also promoted the opportunities that could be enabled through greater use of Commonwealth networks; PECCAVI Consulting ([IRN0002](#)) described the Commonwealth as a “readymade trade and influencing block”;

180 Dr Michael Butler of Clark University ([IRN0030](#)); The Commonwealth, [Connectivity Agenda](#), accessed April 2022

181 Journalist Oluwatosin Adechokan ([IRN0028](#)) highlighted the opportunities for greater collaboration via the Commonwealth in Fintech but cautioned that the landscape looks very different from when the UK was last looking to trade with Africa; Dr Michael Butler ([IRN0030](#)) echoed these observations and recognised the need for a “heightened awareness of, and sensitivity to the legacy of colonialism.”

7 Conclusion

53. Nigeria is at the forefront of change in Africa. Whether it be at the forefront of implementing democracy, a revolution in science and technology, an explosion in start-ups, a struggle against militancy or a battle against climate change—all eyes are on Nigeria. In order to achieve the aspirations of the Integrated Review in Nigeria, and to bring about benefits to Nigerian and UK citizens alike, the FCDO needs to sharpen its focus and recognise the fundamental importance of Nigeria to the UK. By doing so, and by bringing together the instruments of diplomacy, trade and aid, there is an opportunity for the UK to remain one of Nigeria's closest international partners.

54. There are significant opportunities to be realised through supporting a fertile investment environment in Nigeria, particularly in the science and technology sectors as well as in climate adaptation and mitigation infrastructure. In so doing, there is the potential to create a virtuous cycle of addressing the barriers (perceived and actual) to investment, whilst strengthening democracy, tackling climate change and improving the lives of our populations. Official Development Assistance can play a key part in identifying and beginning to address these underlying conditions. However, success will also depend on the responsiveness of the UK Government to the concerns of private sector investors and its ability to help de-risk investments. An ability to remain open minded and innovative over how these goals are achieved will be important in maximising the effectiveness of the resources available.

55. The FCDO must also be prepared to maintain its position of influence with the Nigerian Government, as a leader in the international response to the security and humanitarian situation in the north and as a champion of open societies in Nigeria. Development assistance, trade and diplomacy need to work together to achieve this. Finally, there are opportunities for greater cultural exchange in the creative arts. Such exchanges enrich both nations financially and socially.

56. In helping to meet the above, the FCDO has a largely untapped resource in the shape of the Nigerian community in the UK. The diaspora can act as a source of investment capital for Nigerian business start-ups, a source of insight for UK policy makers, and constitute a group of ambassadors for the UK amongst Nigerians. They contribute hugely to the cultural diversity of the UK and enrich us all.

Conclusions and recommendations

Nigeria as the pilot of Africa

1. The Integrated Review is right in its identification of Nigeria as an important strategic partner for the UK. We would go further to assert that the success (or otherwise) of the UK's engagement with Nigeria, and its ability to take opportunities which emerge in the four priority areas of the Integrated Review whilst rising to meet new and future challenges, is likely to carry lessons applicable to engagement with other African countries. (Paragraph 6)
2. Awareness of the interconnected nature of Nigeria's business, governance, security and natural environments is vital at every stage of policy making. The FCDO is well placed to play an oversight role, ensuring UK Government initiatives in one area are not undermined by lack of attention in another. (Paragraph 6)
3. The UK's approach in Nigeria should be one that is defined by detailed and coherent long-term engagement. Yet it should be sufficiently agile to take advantage of new opportunities. As the FCDO makes difficult decisions on programme activities over the coming years, particularly those funded through Official Development Assistance, careful attention should be paid to ensuring the High Commission is able to be proactive and responsive rather than simply reactive. It is vital that UK partners and scrutiny bodies understand the aims and strategy of the UK in Nigeria in order to carry out their work as effectively as possible: *In the next six months we recommend that the FCDO develop and publish an integrated delivery plan for Nigeria detailing how the aspirations of the Integrated Review will be executed in Nigeria. There should be realistic and measurable objectives for UK policy in Nigeria over the next five to ten years with clear activities and policies, and the plan should set out the resources required and which Government departments will be responsible for delivering them.* (Paragraph 8)
4. Issues surrounding the colonial legacy of the UK in Nigeria should be delicately addressed through meaningful dialogue. *We recommend that the FCDO should be proactive in encouraging dialogue around any aspects of the UK's colonial legacy, including the future of the Benin Bronzes, which the Nigerian Government feel are yet to be addressed.* (Paragraph 11)
5. The enthusiasm of the Nigerian community in the UK to engage with their country of origin provides an opportunity for the UK Government to trial initiatives to work with diaspora groups from other countries where there are overlapping interests. *We recommend that the FCDO make the most of the enthusiasm for engagement amongst the Nigerian community to test various ways of involving diaspora groups in diplomacy. For example:*
 - a) *Ad-hoc focus groups should be convened for contextual input on UK Government policy relating to Nigeria, particularly those relating to issues such as support for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and those engaging in the creative arts space.*

- b) *A means be provided whereby Nigerians living in the UK can engage with the Strategic Communications Platform for peacebuilding in the North East of Nigeria, and other such engagement platforms as they arise. (Paragraph 12)*

Sustaining strategic advantage in science and technology

6. As an emerging science and technology hub in Africa, Nigeria presents opportunities for the UK Government to make progress toward its priority of securing strategic advantage through science and technology. Investment in businesses and capacity development in the IT sector also has the potential to bring benefits to the people of Nigeria in terms of employment and access to life-transforming technologies as well as improving the dynamism of the rest of the economy. To stimulate diaspora investment in Nigerian small and medium sized tech enterprises the UK Government needs to adopt an approach that builds capacity across the whole tech ecosystem. *We recommend that the FCDO prioritise UK Government capacity building support to the Nigerian legal system and legal services for business in Nigeria. Such support will allow UK investors to capitalise on the similarities in corporate law between the two countries as well as de-risking investments. (Paragraph 17)*
7. The UK Government should be more proactive in initiating programmes that build the capacity of the Nigerian IT workforce. Such programmes have the potential to be beneficial to both countries. *We recommend the FCDO lead a pilot skills development programme within the ICT sector that aims to address skills shortages in both Nigeria and the UK. This initiative, requiring close collaboration with other Government departments including the Home Office and BEIS, would be an approach that actively seeks to reduce the chance of a brain drain scenario by ensuring that a proportion of trainees are being trained for jobs they will fill in Nigeria. We recommend that the FCDO ensures in all such programmes rural areas are not sidelined and that candidates from these areas are enabled to participate. (Paragraph 22)*
8. *The FCDO could support the Nigerian civil service by creating opportunities for the Nigerian Government to make the most of future skills development programmes:*
 - a) *including a quota for trainees in the ICT skills development programme who will return to join the Nigerian civil service at both state and federal level as well as ensuring geographical distribution of trainees from northern and southern states. This programme should be complemented by appropriate FCDO support for NGOs and arms-length bodies currently building capacity in the Civil Service, as well as technology provision, to enable application of newly acquired skills;*
 - b) *ensuring the Chevening Scholarship programme has a quota of scholars from the public sector of Nigeria for at least the next three years. (Paragraph 23)*
9. Electricity provision is key to the development of Nigerian businesses. We recognise the priority the UK Government has put on this sector and encourage increased attention be paid here. (Paragraph 24)
10. The UK Government, through the merger of DFID and the FCO, aims to use Official Development Assistance (ODA) more effectively to contribute toward wider foreign policy goals. This aim has been undermined by the cuts to research and

training programmes in the science and technology sectors, which are ultimately detrimental to both the UK and Nigeria. *We recommend that the Government sets out a clear and coherent approach (including how it will be funded) to its partnership with Nigeria on research and training for science and technology in the integrated delivery plan.* (Paragraph 31)

11. The UK-Nigeria Tech hub is an innovative solution that has the potential to benefit UK and Nigerian businesses through the exposure of entrepreneurs to would-be investors, peer mentoring and training. The lessons learnt here have the potential to be applied to other situations on the continent. *To maximise the effectiveness of this programme we recommend the FCDO champion the role of the UK-Nigeria Tech Hub by:*
 - a) *ring-fencing funding;*
 - b) *encouraging collaboration with other government initiatives, such as the Climate Finance Accelerator, to build capacity in the Nigerian finance sector helping green tech start-ups secure seed investment from local sources;*
 - c) *working across Whitehall to better understand the barriers to SME investment in Africa and how to address them.* (Paragraph 33)

Strengthening Security at Home and Abroad

12. Nigeria's security matters to the UK. Evidence described four significant security situations which make daily life in many parts of the country dangerous and sap the resources of the security services. Some of these crises, we heard, have the potential to threaten the very existence of the Nigerian state. These crises exacerbate levels of unregulated migration to the UK, the risks of doing business in Nigeria and the conditions in which international terrorism can be fomented. We recognise the importance of integrating diplomacy, aid and trade, as well as tangible military support, in addressing these issues. *We recommend continued, highly focused, support to the Nigerian military in tackling Islamist groups and armed organised criminal groups whilst maintaining the highest standards of human rights. We recommend that this effort continues to go hand-in-hand with targeted overseas development assistance and investment to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict.* (Paragraph 36)

Building resilience at home and overseas

13. What is needed to support Nigeria in its efforts to reduce CO2 emissions and adapt to its impacts is a package of targeted investment in both tangibles and intangibles which addresses multiple issues simultaneously. Interventions which will bear the most fruit for citizens of Nigeria and the UK will be characterised by their provision of cash to finance sustainable infrastructure investment in green innovations, and a long-term commitment to Nigeria to help embed the change. (Paragraph 37)
14. We welcome the collaboration the Prince of Wales has given to the Great Green Wall initiative through the Sustainable Markets Initiative. The UK Government, however, is not as engaged as it could be in initiatives, such as the Great Green Wall,

that take a holistic and integrated approach to climate adaptation and mitigation—addressing multiple causes and effects of climate change simultaneously. This is despite the shared benefits for the UK and Nigeria on the ground, as well as the potential for addressing the root causes of more proximate issues to the UK, such as terrorism and illegal immigration, and to Nigeria, such as conflict and food insecurity. *To maintain a coherent approach, and to maximise the benefits of the multiple initiatives to raise finance and build capacity for projects, we recommend that the FCDO champion Nigerian-led international climate initiatives with a broader holistic vision, such as the Great Green Wall, contributing where the UK can add value. There are opportunities for the FCDO to bring together its expertise in diplomacy, aid and trade to support these efforts as well as supporting UK NGOs already engaged at African Union level. One such action could include convening multilateral bodies and grass roots groups to aid greater collaboration toward delivery and measurement of trans-national projects. The FCDO's approach should be outlined in the integrated delivery plan.* (Paragraph 40)

15. We welcome the part the UK Government has played in involving the private sector in climate finance. We also recognise the breadth of support it offers to those wishing to make sustainable investments in Nigeria. However, the picture of multiple focal points and inconsistent policy decisions suggest that there is room for improvement. We heard how changes in Government aid spending had translated to cuts in green infrastructure development investment, putting the UK at a disadvantage. These create yet more uncertainty for investors. To stay competitive and to make rapid progress toward the goals of the Paris agreement, there is scope for the UK Government to streamline its approach:
 - a) *We recommend a review of the support of the various DFIs by the Government as well as their methodologies and mandates. Specifically:*
 - i) *How DFIs can enter the project development process at an earlier stage to provide initial project development funding.*
 - ii) *How investment risk thresholds for DFIs can be lowered and how to ensure target percentage rates of return can be used to encourage the support of riskier projects.*
 - iii) *How the time taken to process project proposals can be reduced without compromising due diligence.*
 - iv) *How the culture of DFIs can be more accessible to the private sector community whilst ensuring positive development outcomes—the desire to maintain a strong link between project outcomes and development outcomes must not present a barrier to the delivery of sustainable projects.*
 - b) *We recommend that the mandates of enabling UK Government programmes are sufficiently flexible to adjust to the results of feasibility studies and changes in the project design—rather than requiring developers to shift to a different programme; and that investment initiatives which have flexible project funding pots be prioritised.* (Paragraph 42)

16. The record of UK Government returning embezzled funds from the City of London to Nigeria and in holding those responsible to account has been disappointing. The issues of London being used in the chain of corrupt wealth will be explored in more detail in our forthcoming inquiry on illicit finance. (Paragraph 43)
17. We welcome the innovative steps the UK Government has taken to support Nigeria's transition to a low carbon economy. However, we believe there is scope for higher ambition in its goals and greater clarity in its approach. *We recommend the UK Government works with other international partners to support Nigeria's transition to a low carbon economy. Learning from other initiatives, we recommend that the Government works with the Nigerian Government in a renewed effort to facilitate UK private sector financial support of low carbon ventures such as renewable power solutions and the establishment of the Nigerian green tech sector.* (Paragraph 44)

Shaping the international global order of the future

18. Investment in, and support for, Nigerian creative arts bring social and economic benefits for Nigerians. Investment builds on the UK's soft power as a champion of the arts, helping maintain its position as a leader in the worldwide music industry. *We recommend the FCDO support the development of the Afrobeats genre, and other Nigerian creative arts, through:*
 - a) *Funding proposed projects and broadcasters, such as the BBC World Service, aimed at extending the access of Nigerian creative arts to a wider audience.*
 - b) *Supporting initiatives aiming to use the creative arts as a tool for reconciliation, development and empowerment in Nigerian society. Such initiatives should seek to support emerging artists from disadvantaged backgrounds and the approach should be outlined in the integrated delivery plan for Nigeria.*
 - c) *Championing cross-government policies that encourage the cultural exchange between the UK and Nigeria including a track to make it easier for Nigerian musicians to perform in the UK as well as support for creative artists in maintaining the intellectual property rights over their work. The FCDO could consider initiating a UK-Nigeria Creative Arts Hub with DCMS that would allow for greater collaboration between artists. It could also facilitate access for artists to UK organisations which assist in development and training.* (Paragraph 48)
19. We applaud the important work undertaken by the British Council in promoting greater cultural ties and building on soft power assets. Similarly, the BBC World Service provides both a voice into, and a voice out of Nigeria, communicating British and Nigerian values and interests. *We recommend that British Council funding for programmes that demonstrate synergy with the aspirations of the Integrated Review is ring-fenced. Funding for the BBC World Service should be sufficient to ensure that it remains the most popular and reliable source of accurate news and current affairs in Nigeria, as well as a relevant means of promoting cultural exchange.* (Paragraph 49)
20. The Integrated Review defines the aspirations for Global Britain as being a force for good that supports open societies and defends human rights. We recognise that the understanding of these is one that is shared by the Buhari Government, which

has committed to improving Nigeria's human rights record. We have received evidence that there are still concerns from civil society that abuses and inaction by Government forces constitute a concern for the upholding of human rights. Within Nigerian society there are still concerning allegations of human rights abuses against minority groups, control of the media, and citizen surveillance. We welcome the UK Government's efforts to support the Nigerian Government as they address these issues and in practice recommend this should mean the following:

- a) *Ring-fencing support to projects that assist the Nigerian Government in its efforts to promote human rights; and speaking out when rights are abused.*
 - b) *The integrated delivery plan should include concrete steps for how the UK Government will support the Nigerian Government in promoting freedom of religion and belief, as well as preventing violence against women and girls, across their engagement activities in Nigeria.*
21. The Commonwealth presents a significant opportunity as the UK looks to strengthen ties with Nigeria and other African partners. The foundation of common history and the desire for greater reciprocity should not be taken for granted nor be overlooked as the UK Government seeks to deepen cultural and economic ties. *We recommend that the UK Government place the Commonwealth at the front and centre of their multilateral approach to diplomacy, trade and cultural exchange with regard to Nigeria.* (Paragraph 52)

Annex 1: Virtual Visit Details

Two virtual visits to Nigeria took place as part of this inquiry.

Tuesday 20th July 2021

In attendance:

- HE Catriona Laing CB – British High Commissioner to Nigeria
- Dr Christopher Pycroft – Development Director Abuja
- Ben Llewellyn-Jones OBE – Deputy High Commissioner Lagos
- Tom Tugendhat MP, Chair
- Royston Smith MP
- Stewart Malcolm McDonald MP
- Bob Seely MP
- Neil Coyle MP
- Chris Bryant MP
- Alicia Kearns MP
- Henry Smith MP

Tuesday 14 September 2021

In attendance throughout:

- HE Catriona Laing CB – British High Commissioner to Nigeria
- Tom Tugendhat MP, Chair
- Bob Seely MP
- Neil Coyle MP
- Chris Bryant MP
- Alicia Kearns MP
- Henry Smith MP
- Claudia Webb MP

Interlocutors:

- James Duddridge MP (then Minister for Africa)
- Colonel Rory Shannon, Multinational Joint Task Force HQ

- Governor Babagana Umara Zulum of Borno State
- Dr Mairo Mandela, Special Advisor and Coordinator for Sustainable Development, Partnerships and Humanitarian Support to the Borno State Governor
- Dr Katherine Brooks, First Secretary Political (Lake Chad Basin), British High Commission
- Jonathan Powell, Inter Mediate
- Honourable Aliy Gebi, Peace Champion for the North East
- Mr Eddie Kallon, UN High Commissioner for Refugees
- Ms Simone Parchment, World Food Programme
- Mr Mohamed Yahya, UN Development Programme
- Mr Peter Hawkins, UN International Children's Fund

Annex 2: Engagement event with members of the Nigerian Diaspora in Southwark

Thursday 16 September 2021

In attendance:

Tom Tugendhat MP, Chair

Chris Bryant MP

Neil Coyle MP

Claudia Webbe MP

Alicia Kearns MP

Represented were diaspora organisations and other prominent individuals from the Nigerian community in the UK.

Note of the discussion:

Table One: Doing business in Nigeria

Challenges to doing business in Nigeria:

- Infrastructure
 - Current infrastructure is not good enough—electricity, roads/ other means for transporting goods.
- Equal access to funding
 - Even when the infrastructure is sufficient, there is a limited amount of money to support businesses in Nigeria, making it difficult for SMEs to scale up. There is therefore limited sustainability for businesses. Most new businesses disappear within a few years, which does not benefit the economy.
 - Funding is a particular issue for SMEs. There is a lack of funding support for start-ups and many rely on micro-financing.
 - There is no single government policy to guide investment—each bank has its own individual approach.
 - One participant (a bank manager) described the approach of his bank - they give SMEs small instalments rather than large, single upfront payments, then use KPIs to monitor how they use the money before progressing their application to the next stage.

- Red tape is a significant obstacle to financing, and all participants agreed that it ultimately comes down to who you know. Even in banks, decisions ultimately come down to managerial discretion.
- There is a lack of a level playing field. The huge wealth gap means that there is a disparity between those with ideas, and those with the connections and resources to actualise such ideas.
- The government sets targets for banks to loan in certain sectors. This means that some sectors—such as agriculture—get preferential treatment.
- Companies must meet certain criteria to qualify for European Social Funding. However the macroeconomic conditions—rate of growth, balance of payment etc—are not there.
- Rule of law
 - Rule of law “does not exist”. If a business owner ends up in court, the outcome of the case will be determined by who they know rather than the strength of their case.
 - Tax evasion is also a significant issue in Nigeria, although participants acknowledged that this is a problem around the world.
 - There is no accountability for how the government uses funds.
 - UK money laundering laws make it much harder for Nigerian businesses to invest and operate in the UK. Even when their funding sources are legitimate, companies frequently find their investments being blocked due to complex systems that are hard for them to navigate, and therefore resort to using illicit channels instead.
- Skills and market access
 - Many Nigerians gain their qualifications overseas, it is far harder to break into industry in Nigeria compared with the countries where they qualify. There is a lack of system in place to support those trying to enter the market.
 - There is high unemployment—many students leave university unemployed.

The way forward:

- There is no shortage of business ideas in Nigeria—just limited ability to establish, scale and sustain. More support could be provided for this through:
 - More subsidies for start-ups;
 - Removal of red tape;
 - Tax breaks.

- Transparent processes to increase awareness of - and access to - funding. Many people do not know about the existing money that is there. Lots of schemes are launched, but the money is given to certain well-connected individuals before anybody else even hears about it.
- UK Government could work with Nigerian communities—rather than the Nigerian government - to support equality of access to funding and avoid corruption. Removing the government as middleman could support open access and ensure that companies applying for funding are judged on merit.
 - If the UK Government does choose to release funds directly to Nigerian communities and bypass the Nigerian government, it will need support from an NGO in Nigeria. However there are risks here, as NGOs can come with the same risks of corruption. Another solution could be to enable citizens to apply for funds directly through embassies.
 - During the plenary feedback session, one participant supported the proposal for direct funding. However they noted that there would need to be a system to ensure that the money is distributed fairly and that it is used effectively. SMEs should be monitored and held accountable for how they use the money they are granted.
- Support skills-building, for example by setting up skills enterprises in communities, and by facilitating easier freedom of movement between the UK and Nigeria so that skilled Nigerians can contribute to the UK economy and vice-versa.
- UK anti-money laundering laws could be streamlined so that they are easier for Nigerian businesses to navigate, perhaps supported by the UK High Commission. This would mean that legitimate Nigerian businesses attempting to do business in the UK are not blocked/ delayed and resort to using illicit channels.

Table 2: Education and skills in Nigeria

Characterise the current situation

The education system:

- The education system is modelled after the UK system.
- It used to have the UK system of 6,5,2,3 (6 years of primary education and 5 years of secondary, 2 years of higher level / A-Levels, 3 years of university education.)
- After independence, they adopted the US style with 6,3,3–4 (6 years primary education, 3 years junior secondary, 3 years of senior secondary and 4 years tertiary education.)
- The current education situation should be characterised as a state of emergency.

Corruption:

- In Nigeria, corruption is endemic. There has been a new embrace of corruption.

- One person stated that, “Until we embraced corruption, things worked.”
- Federal and state news shows that the government is selective on who is prosecuted.
- State (public) education vs private education

State education:

- Private vs public → the government do not care about the quality of state schools.
- State schools (public schools) are not funded.
- Budget → in Nigeria: less is spent on education than is spent on health or defence.
- Nigerian education system is no longer competitive as teaching is poorly paid. Teachers are often not paid at all. It is no longer attractive to go into teaching.
- College of education provides a national certificate to teach. But often there are the wrong people teaching the wrong things. Eg: There will be English teachers who are not fluent in reading or speaking English.
- Sometimes teachers are not qualified, or they leave for better professions.
- Schools are physically in bad shape: they are often dilapidated.
- Children sometimes carry their chairs into schools and back again.
- Children often have no access to computers in Nigeria.
- Many have never seen a computer/tablet.
- Children will often have to raise funds to repair roofs.
- Often see children who are barefoot with torn uniforms.
- Disabled children in Nigeria suffer from a lack of facilities, so they cannot go to school at all.
- The Nigerian national curriculum itself is more geared towards rote learning rather than understanding and applying like in the UK.

Private education:

- There has been a proliferation of private education in Nigeria.
- There is a divide between cities and rural areas because cities have more private schools instead of state schools and so have a better education system.
- The rich are driving the prices up, making it harder for others to pay.
- Parents must be really rich to send kids to these schools.
- Therefore, those who get higher opportunities is because they already have the means.

- Described as “rich get richer, poor get poorer.”

North vs South Nigeria:

- There is a North/South divide in Nigeria.
- However, it was noted that as the economy grows, the amalgamation of the North and South grow.
- In regard to education, one person noted that the greatest investment is in the North where the issue is cultural whereas in the South the issue is poverty.

North Nigeria:

- Education is worse in Northern Nigeria.
- People in the North used to have a more nomadic education due to their culture/lifestyle.
- The North is still different to the South culturally. Culturally, it has more Islamic ideas/ideals. It has less identification with the country and more with religion. The North believes less in education. Girls don't go to school, they are married young, sometimes into polygamous marriages with older men.
- Boko Haram's name is a statement against education.
- Boko Haram believe in no education except an Islamic one.
- Young people are afraid to go to school in the North due to Boko Haram.
- Boko Haram will kidnap boys and girls alike.
- There is a system that is recruiting young minds. How do we prevent young people wanting to engage in those kinds of activities?
- Cultural mindset fuels the terrorism.
- This is directly linked to the security issues in Nigeria.

Universities:

- University in Nigeria works with a Joint Admissions Board. There is a common entrance exam for universities.
- For a university admissions place, lower score is needed in the North to encourage Northerners to get a Western education.
- Universities are on strike all the time. Both students and professors. Most of the year, they are closed.
- This can make 4 year degrees take 6 or 7 years.
- They are striking as there is no incentive to teach. 6 or 7 months of pay might be needed, so professors will sell books necessary for exams as a means of income.

- Private universities don't have this issue.
- The number of private universities is increasing.
- Between state and federal universities, federal universities are often preferred by applicants as they are old/respected and have well-known names.
- However, there is no government help with living costs in Nigeria.
- Accommodation has also worsened.
- So, many go to state universities in their own state to live at home.
- Equally, girls end up in prostitution with politicians etc. to fund their education
- Cybercrime is often carried out by young boys who need to fund their education.
- Many also study subjects that they cannot apply.
- Problem of unemployment. "Graduates who roam streets."

Education abroad:

- Affluent Nigerians take their children out of Nigeria for education and send them to UK, US, and also to Ghana.
- Ghana is becoming an education destination due to it becoming increasingly stable recently.
- These who come to the UK and study don't go back to Nigeria. It's a "huge disservice. They will never go back."
- Many described it as a 'brain drain'.
- Nigeria has human resources but suffers brain drain.

What needs to be done:

Those on the outside are apprehensive as to whether change will happen.

Funding:

- Pumping money in does nothing due to corruption.
- Many don't see any evidence of the funds on the ground in Nigeria.
- The UK should not fund the Nigerian government directly, but through other partners rather than give it to people who will pocket the rest.
- More work needs to be done to change attitude of politicians. For example, the UK could use visas. Previously, the UK has stopped certain politicians and military people who are corrupt coming to the UK. They stated this has value as many Nigerians come to the UK for access to medical services.

Teaching: The UK needs to invest in teaching education.

Education programmes:

- Nigeria has the talent, but the workforce needs more skills. English, maths, science, technical/vocational education.
- Nigeria needs more incentives for businesses to invest in technical and vocational skills.
- The UK should invest in/build youth institutes and centres of technology.
- It should create education programmes that fit a community/culture.
- It should create programmes for the reorientation of young people away from terrorist organisations. This would be “lots of work by politicians.”

Inclusion: The UK and Nigeria should prioritise special-needs children in education.

Aid programmes: There was a discussion about how it could be unfair to send people over for aid programmes due to the security situation.

Overseas education:

- The UK should rethink strategy of bringing students here due to risk of them not going back.
- People are not wanting to go back to Nigeria due to living standards, such as gas/electricity issues.

Table 3: Security and the Environment

Problems:

- Boko Haram has grown; bandits and kidnappers remain a big problem. Govt allows these groups to operate in the north and does not take action against them. School closures and displacement of people accentuates the problem.
- Law enforcement, especially in relation to drugs, is weak. There is not enough local capacity in terms of intelligence gathering and sharing to combat the problem effectively.
- School closures provide a breeding ground for terrorism.
- Health security—there is poor health provision in Nigeria and a problem of health tourism for those who can afford it.
- Climate change: big impact on herders / farming and on migration flows out of the country.
- Previous UK-Nigeria partnership goals have not been delivered on. This affects trust. There has been silence from the UK Govt on the seriousness of the security situation in Nigeria.

- Constitutional arrangements do not work. The country is too big to be governed from one place. There needs to be a devolution of power, not necessarily on a state basis, but to take account of differences in wealth and religion.

Policy solutions:

- The UK Govt to support Nigerian Govt in improving education, not by funding distributed in-country, but by actually delivering the infrastructure directly, to minimise the impact of corruption.
- The US govt IS speaking out and exposing the security situation in Nigeria. UK is speaking out in China and HK but not Nigeria. Open and frank engagement on the issue of terrorism and oppression is required.
- Aid should generally be channelled through UK-based organisations to avoid corruption.
- UK agencies should administer the selection process for security and police positions.
- UK Govt should support local democracy and bottom-up participation. Governance is too top down in Nigeria.
- The constitutional arrangements need to be addressed - break up the country to make it governable and take political decision making closer to the people.
- Need better policies to protect against money laundering from Nigeria through London.
- Needs to be a move away from a “life support provision” attitude to Nigeria towards enabling Nigerians to help themselves.

Formal minutes

Monday 25 April 2022

Members present:

Tom Tugendhat, in the Chair

Chris Bryant

Neil Coyle

Alicia Kearns

Stewart Malcolm McDonald

Bob Seely

Henry Smith

Graham Stringer

Draft Report (*Lagos calling: Nigeria and the Integrated Review*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 56 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Annexes agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Adjournment

[Adjourned till Tuesday 17 May at 2.00 pm]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 20 July 2021

Aisha Raheem-Bolarinwa, Founder and Vision Director, Farmz2u; **Yasmin Belo-Osagie**, Co-Founder and Board Chair, She Leads Africa, Director, FSDH Asset Management; **Onyeka Akumah**, Co-Founder and Director, Plentywaka

[Q1–20](#)

Tuesday 21 September 2021

Patoranking, Nigerian music artist and performer; **Adesope Olajide (AKA Shopsy Doo)**, Broadcaster and definer of the Afrobeats scene

[Q21–40](#)

Ofovwe Aig-Imoukhuede, Director, Africa Initiative for Governance; **Helen Dempster**, Assistant Director, Centre for Global Development

[Q41–63](#)

Tuesday 14 December 2021

Monique Barbut, Former Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

[Q64–73](#)

Robbie Marwick, CEO and Founder, Savo Project Developers; **Andrew Skipper**, Partner and Head of Africa Practice, Hogan Lovells, Co-Chair, UK Government Africa Investors Forum

[Q74–88](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

IRN numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Action against Hunger; and Norwegian Refugee Council ([IRN0035](#))
- 2 Adeshokan, Oluwatosin (Graduate Student, Karlshochschule International University) ([IRN0028](#))
- 3 African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) ([IRN0032](#))
- 4 All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief ([IRN0019](#))
- 5 British African Business Alliance Ltd ([IRN0026](#))
- 6 British Council ([IRN0029](#))
- 7 Butler, Dr. Michael (Associate Professor of Political Science, Clark University) ([IRN0030](#))
- 8 CDC Group plc ([IRN0023](#))
- 9 CSW ([IRN0014](#))
- 10 Center for Global Development (CGD) ([IRN0003](#))
- 11 Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom ([IRN0016](#))
- 12 Chatham House Africa Programme ([IRN0013](#))
- 13 Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council ([IRN0043](#))
- 14 FATHERLAND GROUP ([IRN0015](#))
- 15 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ([IRN0021](#))
- 16 HEDA Resource Centre ([IRN0008](#))
- 17 Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV), University of St Andrews ([IRN0033](#))
- 18 Humanists UK ([IRN0004](#))
- 19 Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust ([IRN0007](#))
- 20 Ikpe, Dr Eka (Senior Lecturer, Development Economics in Africa and Deputy Director, African Leadership Centre, King's College London); and Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin (Professor Security, Leadership and Development, African Leadership Centre, King's College London) ([IRN0027](#))
- 21 Institute of Development Studies ([IRN0005](#))
- 22 International Organisation for Peacebuilding and Social Justice ([IRN0038](#))
- 23 MBE, Olasubomi Iginla Aina (Executive Director, Lightup Foundation) ([IRN0036](#))
- 24 Marwick, Mr Robbie (CEO, Savo Project Developers) ([IRN0041](#))
- 25 Ministry of Defence ([IRN0042](#))
- 26 Moore, Mr Justin ([IRN0024](#))
- 27 Ochei, Mr Joe Chiedu (CEO, SeLoch Energy Ltd) ([IRN0009](#))
- 28 Okuboh, Mr Ervine Sylvester ([IRN0011](#))
- 29 Open Doors UK & Ireland ([IRN0012](#))

- 30 Peccavi Consulting Ltd ([IRN0002](#))
- 31 Power, Professor Marcus (Professor of Human Geography, Durham University); and Dr Modesta Alozie (Research Fellow, University of Warwick) ([IRN0022](#))
- 32 Publish What You Pay UK; and Policy Alert ([IRN0017](#))
- 33 Sproat, Dr Peter (Senior Lecturer Financial Crime, Financial Crime Compliance Research Interest Group, Northumbria University); and Professor Jackie Harvey (Professor of Financial Management , Financial Crime Compliance Research Interest Group, Northumbria University) ([IRN0037](#))
- 34 VSO ([IRN0006](#))
- 35 War Child ([IRN0025](#))
- 36 World Anti Corruption research Network, Kent Law School, University of Kent ([IRN0031](#))
- 37 World Food Programme ([IRN0039](#))
- 38 Yahya, Mohamed (Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme) ([IRN0040](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	In the room: the UK's role in multilateral diplomacy	HC 199
2nd	Never Again: The UK's Responsibility to Act on Atrocities in Xinjiang and Beyond	HC 198
3rd	Sovereignty for sale: the FCDO's role in protecting strategic British assets	HC 197
4th	The UK Government's Response to the Myanmar Crisis	HC 203
5th	Global Health, Global Britain	HC 200
6th	Sovereignty for sale: follow-up to the acquisition of Newport Wafer Fab	HC 1245
1st Special	A climate for ambition: Diplomatic preparations for COP26: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2019–21	HC 440
2nd Special	Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2021–22: In the room: the UK's role in multilateral diplomacy	HC 618
3rd Special	Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report: The UK Government's Response to the Myanmar Crisis	HC 718
4th Special	Government response to the Committee's Third Report: Sovereignty for sale: the FCDO's role in protecting strategic British assets	HC 807
5th Special	Never Again: The UK's Responsibility to Act on Atrocities in Xinjiang and Beyond: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 840
6th Special	Global Health, Global Britain: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 955

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Viral Immunity—The FCO's role in building a coalition against COVID-19	HC 239
2nd	Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID	HC 525
3rd	Flying Home: The FCO's consular response to the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 643
4th	A brave new Britain? The future of the UK's international policy	HC 380

Number	Title	Reference
5th	No prosperity without justice: the UK's relationship with Iran	HC 415
6th	Striking the balance: Protecting national security through foreign investment legislation	HC 296
7th	A climate for ambition: Diplomatic preparations for COP26	HC 202