

## House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations and Defence

### The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa: prosperity, peace and development co-operation

#### Government Response

This Government thanks the House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations and Defence for its report, which synthesises a wide range of contributions from a large number influential experts on Sub-Saharan Africa at an important time for the Government's approach to the region.

Below are the Government's responses to each of the Committee's recommendations and conclusions. The Committee's text is in bold and the Government's response is in plain text. Paragraph numbers refer to the Committee's report.

#### **The UK's Africa strategy**

**1. The evidence we received demonstrates why the international community in general, and the UK, a country with world-wide interests and responsibilities, in particular, should take a greater interest in Africa, and recognise its political and economic importance. (Paragraph 33)**

**2. Africa is of strategic and geopolitical significance to the UK. It is a region where the UK really can make a difference. To do so, the UK's future relationship with the countries of Africa and their regional institutions needs to be based, as has not always been the case in the past, on a genuine partnership. Within such a framework there are important trade and investment opportunities. (Paragraph 34)**

The UK Government adopted a new strategic approach to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2018. This was in recognition of the rapidly increasing political and economic importance of Africa. It reflected a thorough analysis of an array of trends across the continent, including geopolitics, trade, economics, demographics and climate change. The approach looks to 2030 and beyond, recognising that over this period African nations will become ever more important international players.

The long-term success of African countries matters to the UK and it is in our interests to support a strong, prosperous and peaceful continent. It is in pursuit of mutual benefit that the UK is partnering with African nations and increasing engagement and investment. The Africa Investment Summit in January was a tangible example of the energy behind this approach.

**3. It is already clear that the impact on Africa of COVID-19, both in health and economic terms, will be very damaging. This adds urgency and scale to the collective responses to the challenges we have identified. We consider that it is in the UK's national interest to work with, and to help, African states to respond to these challenges and to do so more effectively than it has done in the past. (Paragraph 35)**

The coronavirus outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation, with significant implications for people everywhere and the global economy. There is a lot that we do not yet know about the health impact of COVID-19 in African countries. But we are already seeing wider economic, social and political impacts which threaten to reverse the development gains of the last generation. The UK Government is working in close partnership with African governments and communities to tackle COVID-19 to find ways to fight this threat together.

The UK Government has announced £774 million of UK aid to contribute to the global effort to tackle this pandemic. Working closely with our partners in Africa, this funding will be used to provide humanitarian aid in the most vulnerable countries, pioneering tests and treatments and improving access to sanitation. For example, we are investing up to £20 million in the African Union's 'Africa anti-COVID 19 fund' to tackle coronavirus and save lives, making us the largest national donor to the fund. The fund recruits African health experts and deploys them where they are needed most, strengthening global tracking, combatting misinformation, providing specialist coronavirus training for health workers and making information about the virus more accessible to the public.

It is already clear that the secondary impacts of the virus on the continent are severe. The World Bank forecasts that growth in Sub-Saharan Africa will fall sharply in 2020; the first recession in the region over the past 25 years. The UK Government remains committed to supporting long-term prosperity of African nations. We are working with African Partners across the continent to keep jobs safe, support workers and uphold good business practices. The UK-Africa Investment Summit in January this year laid the foundations for this support, building deeper relationships and resulting in billions of dollars of investment deals which will help economic recovery from this crisis both in the UK and in African countries.

***4. Successive governments have said that Africa should be given a higher priority across Whitehall, but have failed to make this a reality in the face of competing demands. (Paragraph 36)***

***5. For over two decades there has been too high a turnover in the role of Minister for Africa. In order to build and maintain relationships in the region, greater continuity is needed. (Paragraph 37)***

The strategic approach has brought together an integrated, whole of Government approach to focus on five key areas where the UK Government has made strong contributions that match the priorities of our partners in Africa. This has been backed by the funding needed to boost our engagement on the continent including by increasing the size of our network and opening new missions. At the heart of the strategic approach is a commitment to build long lasting partnerships that will underpin continuity of engagement.

***6. The UK has considerable soft power assets, which could be used to better effect in Africa. We regret that the Government's global soft power strategy was not published. We invite the Government to explain how it is seeking to build on and support the UK's soft power in Africa. Any action plan for Africa, such as we call for in paragraph 84, will need to ensure that the UK's soft***

***power assets, in particular those of the British Council and the BBC World Service, are sufficiently resourced. (Paragraph 50)***

The UK has an array of soft power assets that increase the attractiveness of the UK as a partner and destination of choice. The role of soft power is being considered as part of the Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development. This will be informed by the conclusions of the cross-government work already undertaken on our global strategy in this area. We recognise that there are areas in which we can strengthen the UK Government's soft power offer. One of these is closer working with African diaspora communities in the UK to make the most of their links, understanding and expertise.

We have increased the reach of the British Council's English Connects programme, which works in countries where there is not currently a British Council office. We have also increased the Chevening Scholarship programme by 100 new African Scholars. Through this outreach, we are seeking to build relationships with the next generation of Africa leaders across all sectors.

The BBC World Service is predominantly funded through the license fee (£268m per annum) and receives over £85m a year from Government as part of the World2020 Programme. The BBC is operationally and editorially independent of government, and decisions on how the BBC spends the license fee revenue lies solely with them. As part of the World2020 programme, the FCO is providing over £370m over five years (2016-2021) to fund enhancements to existing services as well as 12 new language services, including six in Africa: Afaan oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya (Ethiopia); Igbo, Pidgin, Yoruba (Nigeria).

***7. The UK's visa policies are damaging its reputation and the ability of international departments to build and strengthen relationships across Africa, and in some cases fall below the standards of basic human decency. One witness described the process as "arbitrary, expensive, time-consuming and ... humiliating". The Home Office should, as a matter of urgency, review how the UK's approach to the issuing of visas for people from the continent is working. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Trade should participate in this review, to ensure that diplomatic and trade and investment priorities are reflected in how the system operates. (Paragraph 51)***

We are aware of the perceived difficulties surrounding the visa regime in Africa and how this reflects on wider objectives. Visa policy is the responsibility of the Home Office, but our Embassies work closely with UKVI colleagues to deliver a customer focused service.

At present, the Home Office does not plan to undertake a specific review of African visas, however, UKVI is continually reviewing its global visa operation to improve performance, ensure fast delivery and fair decisions to customers. UKVI are also looking into opening application points in more African locations on a demand-led basis.

The service standard for processing a visit visa is 15 working days. UKVI processed 97% within this target in 2018 in Africa. In 2019 the grant rate to nationals of African countries for visit visas was 74% compared to 71% in 2018, and for study visas was 85% compared to 81% in 2018. Over 330,000 visas were issued to Sub-Saharan African nationals in 2019 - an increase of approximately 95,000 on 2016 and the highest volume of visas issued since 2013.

As part of the Future Borders and Immigration System 5-year transformation plan, UKVI is looking to introduce further operational improvements to the visa delivery process that aim to address some of the issues highlighted in the report.

***8. The UK's domestic policies affect how it is perceived in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Windrush scandal and the 'hostile environment' have damaged the UK's reputation. (Paragraph 52)***

***9. The UK's historic engagement with Africa has had a lasting impact on its relationships in the region. This has positive elements, such as the widespread use of English and common-law systems in former colonies, and more negative aspects, including ongoing tensions over the history of how it colonised many countries in Africa, and in some countries its role in the slave trade. The Government should recognise, be open about and address the challenges that this history brings to its relationships. (Paragraph 53)***

***10. The Black Lives Matters protests have brought to greater attention the ongoing problem of racism in the UK, and the importance of appropriately addressing both the treatment of black people in the UK and the UK's historical legacy. (Paragraph 54)***

***11. In order to develop a better understanding of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Government should seek to foster knowledge of the UK's historic relationship with the region among UK citizens. (Paragraph 55)***

Recent protests around the world including in the UK have highlighted the anger felt by people from black and ethnic minority people, and the discrimination they face: in education, in employment, and in the application of the criminal law. The UK Government is committed to do more in eradicating prejudice and systemic and institutional racism.

It is important to recognise, and respond, to the impact our colonial past has on the relationship between the UK and many African countries. This is a challenge that will continue. It is also important that we listen to what African partners tell us about what they value from their relationship with the UK. The strategic approach offers African nations a modern, innovative and different partnership that is built around our shared interests. We believe that genuine partnership with the UK offers a range of benefits to African countries, African leaders and populations.

Our language and communication – both about African countries and in African countries – have changed. They reflect the modernity, diversity and capability of the contemporary continent. We are delivering creative campaigns which make use of high-level engagement and soft power assets. These make a compelling case about

investment in our bilateral and multilateral partnerships with the continent to audiences both in the UK and across Africa.

**12. We are disappointed to conclude that the Government's new 'strategic approach' to Africa falls short. It is not a strategy, but rather some broad ideas and themes, and there is little clarity on how the Government plans to put it into action. (Paragraph 82)**

**13. Communication of the new 'strategic approach' to Africa has been confused and confusing. Since it was first mentioned in July 2018, when Theresa May MP was the Prime Minister, it has been necessary to piece together the 'approach' from different speeches and documents. Moreover, the language it has used to describe its approach has been imprecise—referring to a "strategy" and then a "strategic approach"—and has relied on jargon—referring to "shifts" and "enablers". (Paragraph 83)**

The strategic approach to Sub-Saharan Africa provides a new, and coherent, overarching framework to help focus Government engagement across the continent. A single strategy document for such a diverse continent would not be effective, nor is a continent-wide strategy usual practice. The strategic approach is instead built around country and regional level implementation plans, which set out how we will develop programmes and activities tailored to specific UK or shared priorities and the context of that country or region.

**14. The Government should publish a clearly articulated list of its priorities for its engagement with Africa, and an action plan for meeting them, including ministerial and departmental responsibilities. This should include how it intends to better engage with African governments and institutions, and the role to be played by more high-profile initiatives such as visits and summits. The action plan could be used to measure the Government's success and could be periodically updated as circumstances change. (Paragraph 84)**

The UK Government published detail on the strategic approach in the Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry 'Beyond Aid: The UK's Strategic Engagement in Africa.' This covered early successes and the reasons for the launch of the approach. It is designed to flex with changing context and we are reviewing the approach in light of the COVID pandemic and the ongoing Integrated Review. We intend to publish further information in due course. We will take the IRDC's recommendations into consideration when publishing further information.

**15. The context of the UK's departure from the European Union, and the Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and international development, present a timely opportunity for a renewal of the UK's engagement in Africa. This should build on the initiative launched by the former Prime Minister and the welcome 'uplift' of staff in the region (Paragraph 85)**

The UK Government remains committed to developing the modern partnerships with African nations that are at the centre of the strategic approach. We plan to refresh the approach in line with the overarching priorities set by the Integrated Review and

reflecting the impacts of the COVID pandemic, while building on the progress made to date. The reinforcement of the UK Government's network in Africa undertaken over the past two years will continue to be crucial to strengthening the partnerships we want with African nations. Likewise, having strong and cooperative relationships with International Partners, including the EU and its Member States, to deliver shared objectives for Africa will remain at the core of our approach.

***16. We recognise that the Government's target to become the top G7 investor in Africa by 2022 may have been overly ambitious; it was unlikely that it could have been achieved. Nonetheless, we regret the Government's decision to drop a formal target for investment in Africa, in favour of an ambition of being the "partner of choice". This new ambition cannot be measured or quantified, and could be seen as signalling the downgrading of Africa as a Government priority. (Paragraph 86)***

At the UK-Africa Investment Summit on 20th January 2020, the Government set out the UK's aim to be the investment partner of choice for African nations, with a focus on the impact of UK investments in Africa, to boost long-term economic growth and create jobs. This is not a downgrading of ambition but a change in approach to one based on partnership, allowing us to go further than tracking investment stock, and to take better account of the needs of our partners in African businesses and Governments. This approach will also enable us to make a more holistic assessment of the impact of our engagement and of progress in building an investment partnership with Africa. Through the combined offer of CDC, PIDG, UKEF, our aid programmes, the City of London, the UK is uniquely placed to mobilise investment into Africa.

***17. France and the UK have common interests in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in the Sahel in particular. It is time to draw a line under traditional rivalries. The Government should continue to work closely with France on issues of common interest. (Paragraph 116)***

The UK Government recognises the importance of close cooperation with France in Sub-Saharan Africa. HMG welcomes the Committee's assessment and will continue to work with France on areas of common interest.

The UK and France already coordinate closely on many issues across Africa. As permanent members of the UN Security Council, we continue to work closely with France on shared priority issues such as Cameroon, Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin. In the Sahel, we have supported France's counter-terrorism mission in the Sahel, Operation Barkhane, with three Chinook helicopters since July 2018. The UK and French Sahel Envoys have a regular dialogue and we have seconded a British diplomat into the French Envoy's team.

We are actively looking for further opportunities for UK-France joint working in Africa on security, prosperity and development, particularly in the Sahel and in Somalia.

***18. The UK and the EU are likely to remain largely aligned on policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa. The UK's departure from the EU means that new methods of co-operation will need to be built up with the objective of engaging with the***

***EU member states and institutions on issues of common interest. (Paragraph 117)***

Leaving the EU does not mean that we are diminishing our commitment to Africa or that we will stop working with European Partners on shared priorities. As the Committee notes, we remain largely aligned with the EU approach in Africa, especially on values, democracy, human rights and international law.

Much of our cooperation with European partners does not depend on EU structures and we have already begun to engage with EU member states and institutions in new ways to reflect our new relationships. We have established regular bilateral Africa policy dialogues with France, Germany and Italy. We also regularly engage with the Portuguese, Spanish, and Nordic partners, the European External Action Service, the European Commission and others at senior Official level. We will continue to work closely with the EU on African issues in multilateral institutions, such as the G7 and G20 and the UN Security Council.

***19. The current US Administration is regrettably less engaged on Africa than its predecessors. Should this change, the UK should seek to re-engage with its principal ally on policy towards Africa. (Paragraph 118)***

The current UK and the US governments continue to work closely together on African issues. We have a particularly strong relationship on priority issues such as Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and the situation in North East Nigeria. There is a monthly dialogue between senior Officials. Our Special Envoys (for Sudan and the Red Sea) are in regular contact with their US counterparts. We also have both bilateral and P3 calls to discuss policy priorities on specific country situations like Cameroon. This is underpinned by a continuous working-level dialogue between the UK and the US Governments on Africa.

The US Africa Strategy aligns closely with our own broad objectives and we have discussed ways to work more closely together on prosperity. The UK Government's new Magnitsky-style sanctions regime offers further opportunities for us to collaborate closely with the US. We are confident close co-operation will continue on Africa with any future US Administration.

***20. The UK and China's interests in Sub-Saharan Africa are not always aligned, but there are areas where their interests overlap. The Government should continue to engage with China on issues of mutual interest, such as stability in the region. Many African governments regard China as an important partner and source of investment, and the UK should seek to work constructively with China where appropriate, especially through multilateral institutions, on issues such as debt, health, climate change and trade, while defending UK national interests and values. (Paragraph 119)***

The Committee's recommendation reflects the Government's current approach. China is an important source of aid, trade and investment for many African nations. However, we are also clear-eyed about the potential risks this poses around issues like debt sustainability and China's economic and political influence. We take a nuanced and differentiated approach. We seek to maximise the positive impacts

that China might have, especially in multilateral fora, whilst working to mitigate any risks. We distinguish carefully between the threats and opportunities China poses in Africa and proactively engage where doing so is in the national interest and supports our Africa objectives.

### **African regional organisations**

***21. The Government should continue to support constructive reforms to the rules-based international order to provide African countries with a voice commensurate with their size and importance. This should include supporting reform of the UN Security Council to better represent Africa. (Paragraph 153)***

***22. The African Union (AU) is an increasingly effective and influential organisation. The UK is right to focus more resources on it, particularly focusing on peacekeeping, climate change and regional integration. (Paragraph 164)***

The Government welcomes the endorsement of the uplift in resources attributed to our relationship with the African Union (AU). We are investing in our partnership with the AU because the AU Commission, the Peace and Security Council and regular inter-state AU meetings are where African states formally agree shared positions and policies; we need to understand and influence these processes.

The AU is driving the continental response to Covid-19; we are working together on the direct and secondary impacts. Speedy implementation and functionality of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement will benefit intra-Africa trade – which is critical to the continent’s economic recovery. Our cooperation on climate change, as we engage Africa ahead of COP26, is closely linked to economy through a focus on green recovery. The AU will remain an important partner in delivering security and stability to the continent. We are supporting African solutions through cooperation on continental early warning and the Africa Standby Force.

***23. While it has had important successes, the AU faces significant challenges, including organisational capacity, funding and its members’ willingness to pool sovereignty. The UK should continue to seek to help strengthen the AU, while recognising that the AU is one of a range of regional stakeholders with which the UK should engage. (Paragraph 165)***

The Government is familiar with the challenges that institutions like the AU face around organisational capacity, funding and sovereignty. Through our Strategic Partnership with the AU, the UK Government is committed to supporting the African Union. In the current context this focusses on COVID-19 including the immediate health challenge and the secondary impacts. We provide long term technical and capacity support to the AU’s Peace and Security Department and to Africa CDC through the DFID/CSSF and Public Health England respectively.

The UK Government acknowledges that the AU is one of many stakeholders to engage with on African issues. We will continue to strengthen our strong relationships with other bilateral partners, multilateral organisations and non-Governmental Organisations in Africa.



**24. The AU–UK Memorandum of Understanding provides an important framework for a reboot of the relationship. Resources and effort should be committed to developing this partnership. Agenda 2063 provides a broad, but useful, framework for engagement. We would welcome further explanation as to how the Government’s work with the AU, and on Agenda 2063, fits into its ‘strategic approach’ to Africa. (Paragraph 166)**

The UK Government is committing resources and effort into developing the UK/AU partnership. To support delivery of the strategic approach we are expanding our diplomatic presence across Africa. The cross-Whitehall AU Team at the British Embassy in Addis Ababa was one of the earliest to be strengthened, reflecting the importance of the AU as a partner for the UK, with a 35% increase to staff numbers expected by the end of this financial year. This has boosted our political and military engagement, added capacity for health engagement and (regionally) on gender issues, and allowed us to raise the diplomatic level of our Deputy Permanent Representative to Ambassadorial equivalent.

Our programmatic support totals approximately £30m over three years and includes peace and security, governance, trade, migration, and training for peace support operations. Our extra £20m funding of the AU’s COVID-19 fund is a step increase in support to the AU.

In May 2019, a UK/AU working group agreed the strategic framework which will underpin the partnership. The framework reflects the UK’s desire to support the work of the AU through concrete action, and underlines how AU and HMG objectives are mutually supportive. The UK-AU strategic framework is based around five ‘pillars’ of cooperation, with the AU and UK committing to work together in each area to move towards agreed objectives:

1. Strengthening Resilience - Peace, Security & Governance;
2. Mobilising Investments for African Sustainable Transformation – including support to AfCFTA and Demographic Transition;
3. Migration and Human Mobility;
4. Promoting Multilateralism and the Rules-Based International System – including climate action; and
5. Investing in People.

There is significant overlap between the framework’s ‘pillars’ and the UK Government’s overall approach in Africa. The overall approach also focusses on five areas – prosperity; security and stability; climate change and sustainable natural resource management; demographic transition; and the Sahel. The objectives of the AU’s ‘Agenda 2063’ are therefore reflected in HMG’s strategic approach.

**25. Bilateral relationships with countries in Sub-Saharan Africa should remain a key part of the UK’s engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa and with the AU. (Paragraph 167)**

Our commitment to bilateral relationships, both across the continent and with the AU, is evidenced in the recent uplift across the Africa network. We are recruiting 30% more staff across the continent and have opened new High Commissions in Eswatini

and Lesotho, giving us a presence in every Commonwealth country in Africa. Embassies in Chad, Djibouti, and Niger are planned and the UK Government has expanded the cross government AU team in Addis Ababa.

**26. The UK should continue to engage with the regional economic communities (RECs) across Sub-Saharan Africa. RECs are often regarded by their members as the ‘go-to’ institutions to address crises in their regions, and many have made progress towards regional economic integration. The UK should concentrate on those which have significant influence, and develop a more clearly-defined offer for its engagement with them. (Paragraph 183)**

Recent staff uplifts have been used to step up our engagement with African multilateral and regional institutions to get the most from their work, including in our engagement with the African Union and the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs). We have made good progress with the African Union, and are currently scoping how we can engage more closely with the RECs

**27. The Government should discuss with African members of the Commonwealth ways in which its work in Africa could be strengthened. The Government should be open-minded about any African country wanting to join the Commonwealth so long as it fulfils the criteria for membership in terms of democracy and respect for Human Rights. (Paragraph 199)**

Over the past two years, the UK Government – as Chair-in-Office – has taken a lead in helping to deliver the commitments made by Commonwealth Heads at CHOGM 2018. This work has included over £500 million of UK-funded projects and programmes under the CHOGM 2018 themes: fairness, sustainability, prosperity, security.

In the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Board of Governors, the UK Government collaborates with other Commonwealth members in guiding and scrutinising the Secretariat and its programmes. Likewise with the Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning. But we welcome the Committee’s encouragement to discuss further specifically with African Commonwealth partners how the work of the Commonwealth institutions can be strengthened in Africa. We will do so as part of our regular engagement with them on Commonwealth business.

The UK Government remains open-minded about any country (in Africa or elsewhere) wanting to join the Commonwealth so long as it fulfils the criteria for membership. The decision to admit a new member is made by all member states collectively.

**28. The Commonwealth’s role in supporting ‘people to people’ contacts is of value, and the Government should continue to support such engagement, including between UK and Sub-Saharan African judges. The Commonwealth’s value in terms of people-to-people contacts underscores the need for a review of the UK’s visa policies. (Paragraph 200)**

One of the Commonwealth’s key strengths is its people-to-people links. Over 80 intergovernmental, civil society, cultural and professional organisations help connect

the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens across six continents. The Commonwealth diaspora in the UK, and in other Commonwealth countries, also plays an important role in bringing communities together.

As Chair-in-Office, (now extended until the next CHOGM) the UK Government has worked hard to foster people to people links and help Commonwealth Organisations to strengthen their global networks and advocacy. For example, the UK Government supports the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth's inter-governmental organisation for civil society, with over £1m per year. This funding goes towards strengthening people's participation in all aspects of public dialogue and ensure civil society's voice is heard in the building of democratic societies across the Commonwealth.

We also support the Commonwealth Secretariat's Commonwealth Youth Programme which brings together and promotes the voices of young leaders throughout the Commonwealth. The People's Forum, Youth Forum, Women's Forum and Business Forum that take place alongside Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) strengthen these people-to-people links. The Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA) connects judges from across the Commonwealth, including from the UK and Sub-Saharan Africa. Its members, working with other Commonwealth Accredited Organisations, helped to create the Commonwealth's Latimer House Principles, on the importance of separation of powers between Legislature, Executive and Judiciary.

The UK welcomes visitors from Africa and wants its visa system to support our important and increasing business and trade ties with the continent, as well as people-to-people contacts. The Home Secretary set out further detail on the UK's Points Based Immigration System on 13 July. There will be a single global system, ending the automatic preference which EU citizens have hitherto enjoyed, which will benefit Commonwealth countries, including those in Africa.

### **Sub-Saharan Africa's economic development**

***29. Building on the achievements and successes of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals remain an important universal agenda for all countries. (Paragraph 204)***

***30. The population of Africa is projected to double to 2.1 billion by 2050. Providing employment is already a major challenge facing the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa: 20 million new jobs will be needed every year. The UK should support the UN and its agencies, in partnership with the AU, in their work to both harness the benefits and meet the challenges of population growth in the region. (Paragraph 220)***

The Government agrees that the Sustainable Development Goals remain an important universal agenda and that rapid population growth can pose a challenge to sustainable development without corresponding investment in human development. But it also presents a unique opportunity to realise a demographic dividend of accelerated economic and social development, as has happened in other regions of the world.

The UK Government is working with African governments to unlock investment in education, empowerment and opportunities for employment to enable young people across Africa to fulfil their potential and build prosperous futures. The UK is working to accelerate progress by supporting African partners to:

- Invest in human capital and public services that keeps pace with population growth;
- Empower women and girls to have greater access to voluntary family planning and education to advance gender equity;
- Invest in infrastructure, natural resources and job creation that keeps pace with population trends and drives economic growth; and
- Focus on ending preventable deaths, reducing the mortality rate and support a demographic transition.

This work builds upon a strong base of long-term UK Government investment in the drivers of demographic transition, including our flagship sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) programme.

The UK Government supports the African Union's 2017 Demographic Dividend Roadmap. A network of demographic advisers in the region are carrying out demographic diagnostics to support African partners to plan for population trends and guide investments that build the foundations for a demographic dividend.

***31. Intra-Africa migration is a longstanding and continuing phenomenon, with over 21 million Africans living in another African country in 2019. We welcome the Government's provision of technical support to the AU on migration through the 2019 UK-AU Memorandum of Understanding, including support for the implementation of the AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa. (Paragraph 221)***

The Government welcomes the recognition of its work in this area and will continue to work with the AU on their Migration Policy Framework for Africa.

***32. Agriculture remains the main source of jobs and growth potential in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is a sector highly vulnerable to the impact of the climate crisis, thus magnifying the impact of environmental change on the economies of the region. (Paragraph 233)***

The Government acknowledges the Committee's view on the importance of the agricultural sector to jobs and growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through our funding in AgDevCo, a specialist agricultural investment company, c.14900 jobs have been created and c.374,000 up to 2019 across ten Africa countries, demonstrating the Government's commitment to agricultural development. The OECD and FAO Agriculture Outlook for 2016-25 notes that agriculture contributes about 15% to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Africa. As the Committee notes, the sector is particularly vulnerable to climate change, weather events and pests / disease related issues, such as the current desert locust outbreak. It is in this vein that African leaders reaffirmed their commitment, through Agenda 2063 and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation, including promoting greater intra-African trade. This strategic push will positively impact the

strengthening of the sector and people's resilience to climate change, food security and nutritional deficiencies. DFID is supporting this transformation through the Africa Regional Food Trade and Resilience programme. This focuses on stimulating regional food trade in Sub-Saharan Africa, contributing to satisfying a growing food demand and to addressing food shortages through regional food production, processing and trade, and generating more rural jobs, climate resilience and income for farmers.

**33. There are opportunities and demand for infrastructure development across Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly for renewable energy infrastructure. Raising debt via international capital markets has become an increasingly important source of finance. The Government should continue to work with the London Stock Exchange Group in this area, particularly in support of local currency bond issuances. (Paragraph 237)**

The Government agrees there is high demand for infrastructure development across Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the renewable energy sector. This renewable focus is increasingly important in the context of green recovery post-Covid-19, when investment should create jobs and inclusive growth without relying on carbon intensive approaches. The UK Government will continue to help build capacity in Africa for infrastructure policy and planning, and support responsible infrastructure investment including through our development finance institutions - CDC and PIDG.

The Government also recognises the need to support governments and firms across Sub-Saharan Africa to access appropriate finance to make sustainable investments. We agree with the Committee's recommendation and are already working in support of green and local currency bond issues from Sub-Saharan Africa.

At the UK-Africa Investment Summit, the UK Government supported the first green bond from a Kenyan corporate and denominated in Kenyan Shilling to list on the London Stock Exchange. We also announced plans to launch a new facility with the International Finance Corporation to support local currency bonds in African currencies, allowing businesses in Africa to raise investment in their own currencies and protect them from exchange rate fluctuations.

**34. Corruption, tax avoidance and evasion, and illicit financial flows continue to deprive citizens and governments of Sub-Saharan Africa of much-needed funding for development. The UK should seek to ensure that UK businesses operate to the highest possible standards in the region. In particular, this should include compliance with the Bribery Act 2010, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (the Ruggie Principles) and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative global standard on oil, gas and mineral resources. (Paragraph 249)**

**35. The Government should use its influence in Sub-Saharan Africa to pressure countries in which politicians and officials are themselves guilty of corruption to enact and implement reforms. The Government should make such reforms a central component of its relationship with the countries in question, in particular its aid and trade relationship. (Paragraph 250)**

The Government agrees that UK businesses should operate the highest possible standards in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Government has been a long-standing and leading supporter of the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and will continue to ensure UK businesses understand and comply through the UK's domestic implementation of EITI.

The joint DFID-FCO-DIT Business Integrity Initiative has also piloted support for Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses to guard against bribery and corruption (including how to meet the requirements of the UK Bribery Act) when trading and investing in developing countries.

The UK Government's principles for aid partnerships with other governments (i.e. where the UK provides direct bilateral development assistance); include a commitment to strengthening the management of public finances and fighting corruption. Our assessment of a government's commitment to the partnership principles - including on corruption - is used to inform and shape our overall strategy for engagement in all countries with which we have an aid partnership.

***36. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has the potential to transform the continent's economy, by boosting intra-African trade and supporting industrialisation and diversification. (Paragraph 269)***

The UK Government is a strong supporter of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the potential benefits it could bring to the continent and all those doing business there. During the UK-Africa Investment Summit session on the AfCFTA we discussed these benefits but also the challenges that remain, including ensuring the successful implementation of the agreement. We are directly supporting the AfCFTA and African regional trade through our trade programmes, including our African Union Support Programme and TradeMark East Africa.

***37. The COVID-19 pandemic has already had a negative and disproportionate impact on economies in Africa. Export markets have dried up, remittances have fallen, currencies have depreciated and the continent has experienced capital flight. Significant economic support from international partners will be needed to prevent the continent's economic gains over the last two decades being reversed. (Paragraph 285)***

***38. The contraction of the global economy due to COVID-19 will have a negative impact on UK trade with and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa and on UK aid, given that the UK's 0.7% development assistance target is tied to Gross National Income. (Paragraph 286)***

The UK Government is working through the International Financial Institutions and our bilateral programmes to support African countries and to push for coordinated international action to address the impacts of Covid-19. This includes advisory support through partners such as the Bank of England on monetary and fiscal responses to the crisis.

The UK's development finance institution, CDC, has been supporting their portfolio of companies in Africa by increasing liquidity to the market and promoting investments to scale up access to healthcare and basic services.

The UK Government is helping the most vulnerable in Africa by providing advice to Governments to improve the targeting of support, providing direct programme support and humanitarian assistance, as well as focussing on international coordination to keep remittance corridors accessible.

Given the anticipated decrease in the size of the UK economy this year, all Official Development Assistance spending departments have identified changes to the budget to make sure we meet the 0.7% commitment whilst still protecting the most critical ODA spending.

***39. The Government should continue to encourage other countries to maintain their official development assistance (ODA) commitments to Sub-Saharan Africa to avoid exacerbating the impact of the crisis. (Paragraph 287)***

The Government fully agrees with this recommendation. Covid-19 has shown that there has never been a more important time to deliver our UK Aid commitment and we have so far pledged £774million of UK Aid to help end the COVID pandemic as quickly as possible. We're not doing this alone. The PM has called on his fellow G20 leaders to work together in researching a successful coronavirus vaccine and ensuring that it is available to everyone. The Foreign Secretary is speaking to his counterparts to ensure all our support is being targeted where it's needed to stop the spread.

***40. The Government should support the AU's call for a two-year standstill for African countries' public and private debt, and engage with major creditors to the continent in support of this objective. (Paragraph 288)***

The Government is concerned by the impact of COVID on countries with significant debt-related challenges. This is why the UK worked with international partners to push for the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), agreed by Finance Ministers in April. The DSSI will pause debt payments from the poorest countries, providing them with vital liquidity support through 2020 to enable them to respond to COVID. As of 18 July, 42 countries have benefitted from DSSI suspensions. On July 18, the G20 asked the IMF and World Bank to advise later this year on whether the DSSI should be extended. Given the depth of vulnerabilities this seems likely, and the UK would support this and encourage partners to do the same.

***41. Some countries are likely to need debt relief, in addition to the two-year debt standstill sought by the AU. The Government should work with the AU, the IMF and the World Bank to understand which countries need debt relief, and seek to play a constructive role in their international efforts to secure this. (Paragraph 289)***

The Debt Service Suspension Initiative cannot stop every country entering debt distress, particularly those that entered the COVID crisis with pre-existing significant

public debt challenges. The UK is working with the G20, Paris Club of official creditors, IMF and World Bank to help ensure that sustainable solutions can be found for these countries on a case-by-case basis. Where sovereign debt reductions are necessary, it will be important for there to be fair burden sharing between all creditor types, including commercial lenders. In doing so, we will also need to protect the hard-won market access which many sovereign borrowers have achieved over the past decade and which will be essential for financing COVID recovery. We will continue to engage with both borrowers and creditors to find sustainable solutions. As part of this, the UK has announced a £1m contribution to the African Legal Support Facility (ALSF) to provide expert advice to help African countries engage with their creditors.

***42. The Government should continue to work with the AU on its response to the economic impacts of COVID-19 in Africa. (Paragraph 290)***

The Government agrees that it is important to work with the AU on the economic impacts of COVID-19 on Africa. As an interim measure until the end of 2020, the UK and the AU have agreed to re-focus our partnership around four broad pillars of work relating to COVID-19. This new framework is focussed on UK-AU cooperation to (i) tackle the pandemic head on, (ii) support a strong economic recovery, (iii) tackle the security challenges that arise from COVID19 and (iv) meet the challenges of the secondary effects of the pandemic.

'Pillar ii' focusses on mitigating the effects of COVID-19 on Africa's trade and economies. Within this, we will continue to support AfCFTA development, crucial for the Continent's economic bounce back. Another important economic impact that we will focus on is on remittances. We will take action to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on those relying on receiving remittances, supporting an AU / African Institute for Remittances convened discussion.

The Government is also working to ensure the economic recovery from COVID-19 is sustainable. We will work together on Africa's green recovery by co-convening an AU-UK Coalition for Africa's sustainable recovery and supporting a roadmap for Africa's sustainable recovery from COVID-19.

***43. We commend the Government for its additional funding to the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, and its work in support of the Global Vaccines Alliance Summit on 4 June 2020. (Paragraph 291)***

The Government welcomes the Committee's support on the use of UKAid to support the implementation of the African Union's continental strategy for COVID-19. The Minister for Africa, James Duddridge MP, formally launched this new partnership on July 27 in a joint MoU, signing with HE Amira El Fadil, AU Commissioner for Social Affairs. UKAid to the AU will enable the recruitment and deployment of African health experts where they are needed most, help strengthen global tracking of the pandemic, combat potentially harmful misinformation, enhance community awareness and provide specialist training for health workers.

The UK is proud to have hosted the Global Vaccine Summit on 4<sup>th</sup> June, raising \$8.8 billion to immunise 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives in the poorest



countries from vaccine preventable diseases. The UK has committed £1.65 billion to GAVI for the next five years, the largest contribution of any donor.

***44. Access to a vaccine for COVID-19, should one be successfully developed, must be available on the basis of need. The Government should continue to work with international partners—including through Gavi, the Vaccines Alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness—to ensure any such vaccine is made available to developing countries, including those in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Paragraph 292)***

The Prime Minister addressed Global Citizen's 'Unite for Our Future' event on 27 June, setting out the UK's commitment to international collaboration on coronavirus vaccines, treatments and tests. The Prime Minister's remarks emphasised world leaders' moral duty to ensure that vaccines, treatments and tests are truly available to all.

We are implementing our commitment to global access with key international partners to ensure affordable access for the world's poorest countries, including the UK's £250 million support to CEPI and our current support of £48 million to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's COVID-19 Advanced Market Commitment (in addition to our £1.65 billion pledge to GAVI's core mandate of routine immunisation in the poorest countries 2021-25). The UK is also an active participant in the Access to COVID-19 Technologies Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator), an international initiative to drive collaboration to accelerate development of and access to new COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests.

### **The UK's economic relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa**

***45. The UK is a major donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Department for International Development's approach to funding and its expertise is well-respected. (Paragraph 309)***

***46. We regret the decision to merge the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development (DfID). The UK's commitment to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on international development, DFID's expertise in overseas aid and the separation of aid spending from UK foreign policy priorities are part of the UK's international influence. (Paragraph 310)***

As the Prime Minister has said, this merger will bring together our overseas efforts on development and diplomacy so that we can maximise our influence around the world and ensure that decisions on both take into account a coherent and unified set of priorities for our international policy. The UK Government's commitment to spending 0.7 percent of our national income on aid is enshrined in law and we will continue to be guided by our responsibilities under the International Development Act, including a commitment to poverty reduction. We will continue to look at how UK aid can be spent most effectively to support our international policies and commitments, including through the Integrated Review – which will inform the priorities of the new Department. Development spending will remain central to the new department's mission.

**47. We request urgent confirmation that UK ODA will continue to be administered with the promotion of the economic development and the welfare of developing countries as its main objective, in line with the definition of ODA agreed by the Organisation for Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee. (Paragraph 311)**

This merger is not about changing our high standards for overseas spending. The UK will continue to abide by the OECD DAC rules for aid. We will do all we can to help countries grow and develop to end aid dependency and help create Britain's trading partners for the future.

**48. The reorganisation of Whitehall departments does not change our conclusions and recommendations on the value of UK ODA to Sub-Saharan Africa. We seek assurances from the Government that the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office does not represent a change to the UK's approach to ODA to the region. (Paragraph 312)**

The UK's strategic approach identifies five areas that match the UK and Africa's long-term strategic interests, and where the evidence tells us greatest impact can be achieved: prosperity, security, climate change, demography and supporting the push for peace and stability in the Sahel. Official Development Assistance (ODA) has an important role to play in supporting progress in each of these areas. Positioning DFID's expertise at the heart of the new department will ensure that the UK's commitment to reducing poverty in Africa, as well as around the world, will remain central to the mission of the FCDO.

**49. The UK's commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on international development should be maintained. Given that the UK's ODA is fixed at 0.7% of GNI, the Integrated Review will need to consider the impact of the expected decrease in the overall ODA budget as a result of the negative economic impacts of the COVID-219 crisis. (Paragraph 313)**

Like many other nations across the world the UK is experiencing a severe economic downturn as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the expected fall in Gross National Income this year, commitments of aid spending have been reviewed across all departments to make sure we continue to support the most vulnerable around the world. This review took place in order to ensure that the UK Government meets its commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of our national income on aid, which is enshrined in law. Later this year, this Government will also look at how our aid budget can be used most effectively in our national interest through the Integrated Review – which will cover all aspects of the UK's international policy.

**50. UK development assistance is supporting the development of the AfCFTA and helping to improve the business environment and address trade barriers. The UK should offer any form of technical assistance which facilitates achieving the AfCFTA's objectives. This support has benefits for both Sub-Saharan recipient countries and UK businesses seeking to do business in the region. (Paragraph 324)**

The UK Government continues to support the AfCFTA through the AU Support Programme which provides direct support to the negotiations, including a seconded expert and targeted studies. In addition, other trade programmes such as TradeMark East Africa, aim to reduce some of the biggest barriers to trade, ensuring the benefits of the AfCFTA can be fully realised. We continue to consider how this support can be continued and strengthened as our current AU Support Programme comes to an end in 2021.

***51. We would welcome further information from the Government on how it will fund Aid for Trade for Sub-Saharan Africa after Brexit, and how it intends to reallocate its funding and direct support that has been channelled via the EU for Aid for Trade projects after the transition period ends. (Paragraph 325)***

The UK Government is a strong global player on Aid for Trade (AfT), and this will continue after the transition period ends. Our AfT programme portfolio helps developing countries and least developed countries (such as those in Sub Saharan Africa) to break down the barriers to trade and take better advantage of their trade opportunities, helping to create Britain's trading partners of the future.

The UK's AfT support is channelled through our country, regional, centrally-managed programmes and via multilaterals such as the World Bank Group. During and after the transition period, the UK Government will continue to deliver AfT through these trusted methods as well as using research and evidence to decide where we achieve the greatest value for money with regards to AfT interventions.

The UK Government will also continue to support developing and least developed countries at the World Trade Organisation, enabling them to participate fully in important negotiations (such as the fisheries negotiations) and reach the best outcomes for their trade opportunities and economic prosperity.

***52. We welcome DfID's support for the agricultural sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, and its recognition that this sector is critical to growth and job creation. We were told that an update to the DfID conceptual framework on agriculture would be helpful, to reflect the changes to the sector, and ask the Government to give this consideration. (Paragraph 331)***

The Government welcomes the Committee's recognition of the support DfID provides for the agricultural sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. DFID's Agriculture Policy has been an important guidance document for our work in the sector in recent years. Allowing DFID to enable support that recognises the importance of the sector to growth and job creation.

As part of the transition to the FCDO, and following the completion of the Integrated Review, Ministers will take a view on which policies to update and the extent of the renewed focus. From an agricultural sector perspective, this will require a combination of understanding the evolving needs to support Africa's agricultural transformation including incorporating building resilience into supply chains. This focus will also require consideration of the interaction between the internationally facing ambition of the UK and the UK's national food strategy, which is currently under consultation.

**53. Further technical assistance to support improvements in agricultural productivity should be a high priority for the UK's development work. (Paragraph 332)**

The Government welcomes the Committee's recommendation on the priority that should be given to technical assistance to support improvements in agricultural productivity. We are indeed a world leader in supporting the sector through a combination of investment, finance and technical assistance, not least through the UK funded agri-business impact investment company, AgDevCo, operating across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Following the transition to the FCDO, and following the completion of the Integrated Review, Ministers will take a view on priority sectors and activities for the UK to support in the forthcoming period.

**54. We welcome successive Governments' work to support public health initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa. While direct budgetary support for governments in the region may be necessary in some cases, it can often lead to corruption. The Government should only employ this approach where there are no other options. (Paragraph 343)**

The Government recognises that financial aid is a critical tool for development but it should be used selectively and only after careful consideration of risks and benefits. With appropriate controls and assurance it is uniquely able to support and strengthen partner government systems and builds the capacity of the state, meaning it can be crucial for stability, sustainable development and poverty reduction.

**55. We welcome the UK's provision of development assistance to mitigating and adapting to climate change in the region, particularly in support of low-carbon development. The most significant contribution the UK can make, in addition to action to decarbonise its own economy, is to ensure that the COP26 meeting in Glasgow in 2021 consolidates and strengthens the Paris agreement on climate change. Support from the UK to enable African countries to ramp up the substitution of renewables in place of oil and coal exports and use would also help combat global emissions, while not disadvantaging African development as it grows. (Paragraph 354)**

Africa is disproportionately affected by climate change. Increasing temperatures and extreme weather events are already affecting many African countries and will have a profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of communities, with potentially devastating consequences for developmental progress and future prosperity. The UK is a global leader on this issue, having cut our own emissions by over 43% whilst growing the economy by 71% since 1990. As COP26 President, the UK Government has made adaptation and resilience one of the key areas to progress through the COP process. The UK Presidency's ambition is to deliver the Paris Agreement commitment to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change, and to increase international ambition and commitment to take urgent action. We will work tirelessly to secure commitments by

countries to take this agenda seriously and take real tangible action that supports all those affected by climate change.

***56. The Government should consider how it can learn from its successful climate programmes, and those of other donors, and deliver them more widely across the region. We urge the Government more actively to employ science and technology in its work to combat the effects of climate change in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Paragraph 355)***

The Government agrees with the benefits of learning from its successful climate programmes and delivering them more widely across Sub-Saharan Africa. DFID's upcoming £250 million Africa framework programme is the UK's largest single climate investment in Africa and will be delivered through a portfolio of interventions that build on existing programmes and strengthen partnerships with key strategic partners, including other donors. We also recognise that science and technology play a critical role in combating the effects of climate change in the region.

DFID's Climate and Resilience Framework programme (CLARE), for example, uses cutting edge climate research to improve our understanding of weather and climate systems across Africa and the likely impacts of future change. This will help us produce new, more demand responsive evidence to enable developing country governments and communities to better address climate change challenges and opportunities. We will continue to build more ambitious UK-Africa science partnerships and employ science and technology in our work.

***57. The UK's CDC Group is a leading development finance institution in Sub-Saharan Africa. It will be central to scaling up investment in the region. (Paragraph 373)***

Africa is a priority market for CDC and the scale of its investment activities on the continent has increased significantly over recent years, with additional capital provided by the Government. In 2019, CDC made investment commitments totalling £867m into businesses in Africa.

***58. Although we understand and support the objective of providing smaller amounts of funding to SMEs in the region, we remain concerned about CDC Group's investment in private equity funds. We are not convinced that enough has been done to seek alternative ways to invest in smaller companies. (Paragraph 374)***

CDC's partnership model with Fund managers helps it achieve impact at scale by supporting hundreds of SMEs across Africa. In addition to backing local teams of investors, and equipping them with strong Environmental, Social and Governance practices, the model helps support the development of self-sustaining local finance markets.

CDC also works in partnership with Banks to extend credit to SMEs that would otherwise be unable to access the working capital they need to grow their businesses. The risk partnerships that CDC has with partner banks, such as ABSA Bank and Standard Chartered Bank, that operate across Africa, are particularly important during the current pandemic which as seen many banks limit their lending activities.

***59. It is essential that CDC Group is able to demonstrate the development impact of its investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, to ensure that it generates jobs which have a meaningful and sustainable impact on economic development. (Paragraph 375)***

CDC has made significant progress in developing its tools for assessing the potential and actual development impact of its investments and we will continue to drive improvements in this area as CDCs shareholder. CDC has introduced a new impact framework, which articulates the development impact that CDC seeks to achieve for each new investment and across its portfolio as a whole. DFID and CDC have also agreed a joint Evaluation and Learning Programme, through which it has commissioned impact studies to deepen its understanding of the impact achieved by CDC investments in priority sectors.

***60. Leaving the EU provides an opportunity for the UK to re-cast its trade relationships with African countries and remedy some of the defects in the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements. We were surprised to hear that no detailed work had yet been done to identify ways in which the UK could offer better access to African exporters than was possible when the UK was in the EU. This gap needs to be filled in the UK government action plan on Africa for which we have called in paragraph 84. (Paragraph 415)***

The UK's exit from the EU will enable us to forge a new role for the UK in the world, including the negotiation and design of our own trade arrangements. The Government also sees this as an opportunity to provide leadership on key priorities that support the promotion of our core values globally.

The UK is a key trading partner for African nations: UK-Africa trade increased 7.5% last year to £36 billion and we have already made arrangements to provide continuity of duty-free quota-free access on all goods for 39 Sub-Saharan African countries, and to provide tariff reductions to a further five countries. This includes the transition of the UK-Southern Africa Customs Union and Mozambique (SACU+M) and UK-Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA). Securing continuity arrangements represents a significant achievement. Furthermore, the implementation of new tariff rate quotas does, in effect, give exporters additional market access. For example, the UK and SACU+M examined of

a range of evidence, including historical quota usage data and trade flow data, to reach agreement on resized figures.

In the future, the UK Government will aim to deepen these agreements to make them even better for business, ensuring they reflect the ambitions of African partners to increase trade with the UK in high-value services, including by harnessing the internet and new technologies.

***61. There is appetite within Sub-Saharan Africa to improve trade with the UK; the UK should explore these opportunities with countries in the region. African partners are working to develop the AfCFTA and are likely to seek new agreements which are consistent with this planned continental agreement. (Paragraph 416)***

The UK Government is strengthening its economic partnerships with all African nations to ensure the continent's growing demand for investment can be met by the UK's expertise and innovation. The growth of this partnership was reflected in the £6.5 billion of commercial deals between UK companies and African partners announced at the African Investment Summit. They include agreements with well-known British firms such as Rolls Royce, GSK, and Diageo. In addition, deals worth billions more were made during the day of the Summit. The UK Government also announced over £1.5 billion of UK aid funded initiatives that are expected to create hundreds of thousands of jobs and mobilise over £2.4 billion of additional private investment for the continent.

Furthermore, the UK Government is a strong supporter of the AfCFTA and the potential benefits it could bring to the continent and all those doing business there. During the UK-Africa Investment Summit session on the AfCFTA we discussed these benefits but also the challenges that remain, including ensuring the successful implementation of the agreement. We are directly supporting the AfCFTA and African regional trade through our trade programmes.

***62. In its post-Brexit trade policy, the UK should explore ways of giving better access to Africa's agricultural exports and supporting the processing in Africa of a greater proportion of its agricultural products. (Paragraph 417)***

The UK Government has already made arrangements to provide continuity of duty-free, quota-free access on all products, including agriculture, for 39 Sub-Saharan African countries. The Government is committed to working with our agriculture partners to support economic growth and poverty reduction, to improve nutrition and food security and to support sustainable food systems. The agricultural sector remains vital to helping deliver on the UK's Global Goals, especially on nutrition, poverty, gender, growth and climate change. In addition, better access to Africa's agricultural exports is part of our approach will help deliver DFID's Economic Development Strategy.

The UK Government will aim to build on numerous success stories of agricultural exports from African countries to the UK, based on HMRC data of average trade flows between 2016 and 2018. This included £33m of bananas imported from Côte

d'Ivoire, the £142m worth of tea from Kenya, and £128m worth of South African grapes.

Furthermore, a significant number of DFID's 49 commercial agriculture programmes include work on upskilling workers and businesses in the agriculture sector across partner countries. Programmes which invest in agribusinesses such as AgDevCo and the Global Agriculture Food Security Programme (GAFSP) include support and training to farmers to enable them to meet the quality standards required for domestic and international markets.

***63. UK trade with and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa has flat lined over the last decade. The appetite of UK businesses is uncertain, and a concerted effort will be needed by the Government if it is to deliver on its goal significantly to increase trade with and investment in the region. (Paragraph 430)***

Our trade and investment push in Africa is a long-term and cross-Government endeavour. The £6.5bn commercial deals signed in the lead up to the UK-Africa Investment Summit, and the further £8.9bn commitments in progress at the time of the Summit demonstrate the scale of the increase in trade with the Africa that the Government is helping to drive. Through the Africa Strategy uplift in Africa, we will be increasing staff working on Africa by a third, ensuring we are supporting mutual prosperity and trade across the region. The Summit demonstrated that the UK will go further to generate business to business links, and the UK announced a range of new aid-funded initiatives, including, for example the Growth Gateway programme launched to help businesses to trade with and invest across Africa.

***64. The UK–Africa Investment Summit was a high-profile beginning to this initiative, but concerted follow-up will be required. The Government should set out the steps it is taking in this regard. (Paragraph 431)***

The UK has longstanding trade and investment relationships across Africa, with the Government and the private sector having an important role to play. The Government agrees that the UK-Africa Investment Summit was a successful event, creating new energy, connections and £6.5 billion of investment between UK investors and African partners. Several strands of follow-up are underway, including the new Growth Gateway launched at the summit to drive investment into Africa and our ongoing Support for the Trade Mark East Africa initiative to boost trade in East Africa. We are considering a range of further options to maintain this momentum, including the possibility of another Investment Summit in the future. We are also ensuring our approach reflects the impact of Covid-19.

***65. The Government must ensure that its provision of export credits is consistent with its commitments to tackling climate change. It should match its announcement at the UK–Africa Investment Summit that it will no longer invest in new coalmining or power production projects with similar commitments on gas and oil. (Paragraph 432)***

Tackling climate change remains a key priority for the UK. The Government has legislated to ensure that the UK's carbon account reaches net zero emissions by



2050, the first G7 country to do so, and the Prime Minister has committed to doubling the UK's international climate finance spend to £11.6 billion from 2021 to 2025.

The UK Government keeps its balance of support for overseas projects under review on an ongoing basis to ensure alignment with government priorities and we are actively considering HMG's international support to the energy/ fossil fuels sector, not least in the run up to COP26. We are supporting countries to transition to low carbon alternatives.

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is helping to drive UK content into overseas renewables projects across the globe and has been proactively developing its green growth and renewable energy support. In the spring 2020 Budget, £2 billion was allocated to UKEF's Direct Lending Facility specifically to support clean growth and renewable energy projects. Over the past two years, UKEF has supported nearly £400 million worth of contracts in the renewables sector.

As part of Government's Green Finance strategy, UKEF has also committed to making climate-related financial disclosures in its accounts, in line with recommendations by the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

***66. Education is an important UK sector for UK – Sub-Saharan African trade. The visa regime for potential students from the region is unduly onerous and requires reform. (Paragraph 433)***

The UK welcomes international students, and the Government fully recognises the important contribution they make to the UK's higher education sector, both economically and culturally. We recognise that the student journey needs to be as simple as possible in order to ensure that the UK remains an attractive destination for international students. From October, Tier 4 student immigration route will be replaced by the Student route, which will simplify the visa system for international students and make the pathway through the system clearer. As part of the Student route, students studying at Higher Education Providers (HEPs) will not be required to submit evidence of previous qualifications with their visa applications as this will have been assessed by the sponsoring institutions. In addition, students will be able to apply for further leave to remain from within the UK, provided they meet the academic progression requirement and the new course of study commences within 28 days of the expiry of their current visas.

Students in the UK who have held visas for a consecutive one-year period prior to the date of application will not be required to provide evidence of funds for maintenance. We are also enhancing our offer to international students by introducing the Graduate route in the summer of 2021. The Graduate route will enable students who successfully complete a degree at undergraduate level or above with a HEP to remain in the UK to work or look for work at any skill level. Students who graduate with a Bachelor's or Master's qualification will be able to

apply for two years on the route, while students who successfully complete a PhD will be able to apply for a three-year period.

***67. We welcome the decision to suspend English language tests for visas for Chevening scholars. We recommend that the Government should: move away entirely from English language tests for visas for both Chevening and Commonwealth scholars; expand both of these schemes; and, where English language tests may be required for visas for undergraduate and post-graduate students, they should be carried out in the student's country of residence, or online. (Paragraph 434)***

International students must demonstrate that they have a sufficient level of English ability to access their course of study. This requirement is fundamental as it helps to ensure that students are able to understand and engage with their course to the required level. Students undertaking courses at degree level or above must demonstrate level B2 English against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and students undertaking courses below degree level must demonstrate level B1 English. However, we seek to ensure that the burden of satisfying this requirement is as light as possible. To this end, Higher Education Providers (HEP) with a track record of compliance – which includes virtually all UK universities – can self-assess the English ability of their students who are studying at degree level or above. It is up to the HEP to determine how and where it carries out the assessment. The Government does not impose any requirement that prospective students must leave their home country to undertake a test.

The Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships annually fund around 1,000 scholarships for individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa, providing high-quality educational opportunities and thereby contributing towards sustainable development, prosperity and stability in their countries. Following a £2.7 million increase in Chevening funding for Africa, 2019-20 saw the largest ever cohort – 466 scholars – for the continent in Chevening's 36-year history. The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission does not impose additional English language checks, relying instead on the self-assessments carried out by education providers. As of this year, Chevening will no longer conduct additional checks, simplifying the process for scholars. Although both Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships will be slightly smaller this year, due to the impacts of Covid-19, the UK remains committed to supporting the best and brightest future leaders from the African continent.

***68. Remittances from the UK to Sub-Saharan Africa are given too little profile in the narrative of the UK's economic relationship with the region. Remittances from the UK exceed aid and charitable giving to Sub-Saharan Africa, and provide essential economic support. (Paragraph 447)***

**69. We welcome the Minister's acknowledgement of the importance of remittances from the UK to Sub-Saharan Africa and the May 2020 UKSwiss 'global Call to Action' on remittances, to address the projected fall in remittances as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. We would welcome more information on the actions the Government is taking to facilitate the sending of remittances to Africa from the UK diaspora through this initiative and to avoid disruption, and whether it is exploring the possibility of remittance matching. (Paragraph 459)**

**70. The Government should work to lower the cost of remitting money to the region, including the use of its powers over competition policy, consistent with the SDGs. It should review the application of the EU Payment Services Directive after the EU transition period ends and consider how it could support greater competition in the market for money transfer companies in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Paragraph 460)**

We recognise the importance of remittances from the UK to Sub-Saharan African countries. In response to the predicted global decrease in remittances in 2020 due to COVID-19 the UK, together with the Swiss government, launched a Call to Action in May to highlight and address this which 27 countries have joined to date including 9 African countries. We are working to address the market constraints responsible for high remittance prices. We continue to work with key stakeholders (in particular the World Bank and the UK's Financial Sector Deepening Africa programme) to identify opportunities that would support greater access to low-cost, secure remittance services. We are also working to lower the cost of remittances through digitisation, transparency, and improving data quality. In order for the full benefits to be realised market constraints will need to be addressed in both the first mile (UK) and the last mile (recipient country). This approach will lead to an improved competitive landscape and reduce the entry barriers to new remittance service providers. A recent example of practical Government support in this area is the amendment to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020 to include money transfer organisations as essential service providers, exempted from restrictions during the lockdown period.

**71. The Government should explore co-funding and support for the AU's new African Diaspora Finance Corporation. (Paragraph 461)**

The UK Government is committed to supporting innovative mechanisms that can leverage sustainable sources of finance for African economies at scale. We note that the African Diaspora Finance Corporation is not yet a legal or operational entity, but we will evaluate individual requests for assistance to it as part of our work supporting private financial flows into Africa.

**72. We heard that the UK's Sub-Saharan African diaspora is not consulted and engaged in a consistent manner. Representatives of the diaspora are an essential resource in delivering the Government's plan to increase trade and investment with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. The Government should embed consultation with the diaspora into policy making towards Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular with regard to trade and investment. (Paragraph 478)**

We recognise that African diaspora communities have a range of skills and experience that can, and do, contribute to stronger development outcomes across the continent. The UK Government is committed to furthering our engagement with communities to ensure that we make the most of their expertise and understanding. This includes working closely on issues such as trade and investment, where we can directly support the medium-term outcomes on supporting currency bonds, increasing trade engagement and boosting science and technology outcomes. We recognise that African diaspora communities provide important and significant remittances to countries of descent that support development and alleviate poverty.

Many African diaspora groups are able to leverage networks, understanding and personal connections to boost industries and increase trade. Engaging with African diaspora communities was a key part of the UK-African Investment Summit, and we are committed to continuing and increasing this engagement. Another key area in which we will be increasing our diaspora engagement is on climate related issues. The Government intends to use the opportunity provided by hosting COP26 to boost African voices at COP26 and spotlight evidence from climate research across the continent.

***73. The Government should give consideration to how and in what ways it could better encourage diversity on UK boards. It should work proactively with diaspora communities to make progress in this regard. (Paragraph 479)***

Building a fairer economy means ensuring the UK's organisations reflect the nation's diversity. We are committed to working with the business community to create more inclusive workplaces from the shop floor to the boardroom. Ministers have written to all FTSE350 companies regularly to stress the importance of meeting the Parker Review and the Hampton-Alexander Review targets and we will continue to liaise with businesses on improving business leadership diversity. The Government supports the target set out in the Parker Review that requires at least one director who is a person of colour on FTSE100 boards by 2021, and on FTSE 250 boards by 2024. McKinsey research found that companies with a higher rate of ethnic diversity are 33% more likely to see higher-than-average profits than companies in the lowest quartile.

### **Peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa**

***74. There remain significant challenges to peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa. These challenges are likely to be exacerbated by wider trends affecting the region, including population growth, weak states, violent ideologies and the climate crisis. (Paragraph 493)***

The Government agrees with this assessment. The UK's strategic approach to Africa is designed to address these wider contextual challenges. Our analysis showed that by addressing demography, climate, prosperity and security issues in coordinated way we would maximise the outcomes of the approach. The security and stability shift focusses on the long term drivers of conflict, and seeks sustainable African-led pathways to peace.

Additionally, we are committed to supporting African nations' responses to Covid-19 with a sustainable green recovery in mind. Not only have we increased technical assistance and funding to the AU's Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (an additional £20million, making the UK the highest bilateral donor), we have also considered how we can shift our current programming to respond to the impact the pandemic has on security and stability in the short term. For example, we provided CSSF-funded training for senior officers in the Nigerian Police Force on policing the Covid-19 response and produced operational guidance for serving officers.

We will ensure that our understanding of wider trends and their impact on peace and security is considered as we review the approach, ahead of the Integrated Review.

***75. Insecurity in the Sahel threatens the welfare of millions of people across the region, and risks spilling over into neighbouring countries. We welcome regional and international efforts to stabilise the region. (Paragraph 521)***

The UK Government is concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel, its impact on people in the region and the risk of violence spreading. We are committed to playing our part in the international effort to build long-term peace and stability in the region, ensuring our contribution adds value and draws on UK expertise.

***76. It is vital that the international response to instability in the Sahel is not overly focused on conflict management, nor overly securitised. To achieve a lasting peace, it will be essential to address the underlying causes of conflict, including climate change and economic inequalities. (Paragraph 522)***

Tackling the drivers of conflict is at the centre of the UK's approach to the Sahel. While our contribution to the security response is important, we know that international engagement must do more to address the causes of violence. The recent coup in Mali has highlighted the fact that we need to see more progress on the peace process in Mali, an end to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and urgent steps to improve governance across the region. This is necessary to reduce the abuse and exclusion that has driven violence in the Sahel and beyond. Better governance can also help people to adapt to the impacts of climate change, which can exacerbate factors causing conflict. The UK is contributing to international efforts in each of these areas.

***77. We welcome the UK's increased attention to instability in the Sahel, and the Government's decision to contribute UK troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. However, the Government's wider strategy in the Sahel is unclear and the UK risks being unable to add value in a highly contested space. We would welcome further information from the Government on its objectives in the Sahel. (Paragraph 523)***

The UK Government is stepping up its engagement in the Sahel across the development, diplomacy and defence pillars, to reduce poverty, promote long-term peace and stability, and support the most vulnerable.

**78. As the UN Security Council penholder for Somalia, the UK has a position of particular influence, supported by its provision of aid and active diplomacy in support of stability. The UK should continue to support preparations for Somalia's first one-person-one-vote elections this year—although there is doubt as to whether these elections will now be held—and to engage with its international partners in support of AMISOM. (Paragraph 531)**

The UK is a leading partner for Somalia, not only on the UN Security Council but also as the second largest development and humanitarian donor, champion of the debt relief process and the only Western country training military forces outside Mogadishu. Somalia is currently at a crucial phase in setting the future direction of its stability and development. Delivery of timely, constitutional and inclusive elections will be essential to building long-term security and stability. And whilst we are clear that coordinated international security support to Somalia will need to continue beyond this point, the expectation that greater security leadership will pass from AMISOM to the Somali authorities in 2021 will also mark an important milestone in rebuilding the Somali state. The UK remains committed to working with Somalia and international partners to build increasing security, stability and prosperity in Somalia.

**79. Nigeria faces multiple security challenges. The UK should explore how its security and defence partnership with Nigeria, agreed in 2018, can be utilised to best support stability in Nigeria and the wider region. (Paragraph 542)**

The UK-Nigeria Security and Defence Partnership, signed during the visit of former Prime Minister Theresa May in August 2018, provides a clear framework for existing and future support to Nigeria to tackle the threat from terrorism and other security challenges. Under the partnership, the UK and Nigeria have deepened our collaboration on issues including: human rights, tackling serious organised crime and civil-military cooperation. We are also providing training to Nigerian military personnel on topics including: human rights compliance, rules of engagement and counter-IED. We are planning a ministerial dialogue in late 2020, to review progress and discuss future co-operation. The Government would like to reassure the Committee of our commitment to working with Nigeria and the wider region in support of greater stability.

**80. We welcome Minister's condemnation of the abduction and continued captivity of Leah Sharibu and other Christian and Muslim school children by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, and his assurance that the Government will continue to engage with the government of Nigeria to support urgent action to secure the release of all those abducted by insurgent groups in Nigeria. (Paragraph 543)**

The Government reiterates our condemnation of the abduction and continued captivity of Leah Sharibu and other school children by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa. We will continue to engage with the Government of Nigeria in support of urgent action to secure the release of all those abducted by insurgent groups in Nigeria.

**81. We are concerned by reports of a deteriorating security situation in Cameroon and of human rights abuses against the Anglophone community, in**

***addition to the closure of schools for four years and the displacement of civilians by the conflict. (Paragraph 554)***

***82. The UK should work within the international community, including regional and sub-regional bodies, to promote an approach which would ensure the restoration of the long-standing autonomous rights of Anglophone Cameroonians and the end of human rights abuses. Such an approach would need to enlist the backing of key stakeholders, including France. (Paragraph 555)***

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the situation in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon. The high levels of violence in these regions have driven hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. This is having tragic, unacceptable and preventable consequences for civilians, and children in particular. Inclusive dialogue remains vital to ensure that people's grievances are understood, and all sides can work together to help restore peace. We continue to call for an end to violence, restraint and humanitarian access to the affected populations.

We are aware of reports of human rights violations and abuses by both security forces and armed separatists in the North-West and South-West regions. The British High Commissioner to Cameroon has made representations to the local authorities about the importance of credible, impartial and transparent investigations into such reports. On 21 July the Minister for Africa publicly highlighted on Twitter his concerns about violence against humanitarian actors, calling for violence and intimidation to stop. The Minister also made a public statement following the appalling attacks in the village of Ngarbuh in the North-West region on 14 February, calling for those responsible to be held accountable. The Government of Cameroon investigated the incident and published a summary of its findings, attributing responsibility to a number of soldiers in the Cameroonian Army. It is now for the Government of Cameroon to bring the perpetrators to justice, and we will continue to monitor this closely.

The UK Government will continue to raise concerns about the crisis at the highest levels including with the Government of Cameroon and in multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council. We continue to discuss the situation with international partners, including France and the United States, and urge regional bodies such as the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States to support a sustainable solution to the crisis.

We are committed to supporting civilians affected by the conflict in the North-West and South-West regions. Through the British High Commission in Yaoundé, we are supporting local partners in their campaigns to resume children's education, which has been severely disrupted for the past four years by the crisis. In 2019 the UK made a £2 million contribution to the UN's response, supporting 34,000 people with essential supplies, such as mosquito nets, hygiene kits and nutrition support. Future humanitarian support is under discussion.

***83. Conflict-driven migration, often from countries already hosting migrants, has a particularly high human cost. The high number of refugees hosted in the***

***region, often for long periods, pose significant challenges for development and stability The Government should continue to explore how it can support Sub-Saharan African countries which host significant migrant communities. (Paragraph 560)***

Latest figures show there are nearly 30 million refugees worldwide - forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict and persecution. It is often developing countries that are most affected and that host the greatest number of refugees. The UK remains at the forefront of responding to forced displacement around the world, including in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The UK Government played a leading role in agreeing the Global Compact on Refugees, which aims to boost refugees' self-reliance while simultaneously supporting generous host communities and countries – an approach that the UK has helped to develop and champion. This includes through the Jobs Compact in Ethiopia (funded by DFID and other international partners, including the World Bank and the EU) which is helping to create tens of thousands of jobs for both refugees and for Ethiopians. Other UK aid programmes in countries including Uganda and Kenya boost local trade and create economic opportunities that benefit host communities and refugees alike. We remain committed to this agenda.

The UK Government is also a major contributor to the humanitarian response to the Mediterranean migration crisis, having allocated over £175million since October 2015 for interventions along the entire route, including in Sub-Saharan Africa. As part of the response, DFID is now delivering a £78million migration programme, Safety Support and Solutions Phase II (SSSII). SSSII is making migration safer and more orderly and providing critical humanitarian support. This results in fewer deaths and less suffering for people moving along migration routes from West Africa via the Sahel to North Africa (and beyond). SSSII is also supporting communities in 'host' countries affected by migration.

***84. Women and girls play multiple roles in conflicts across the region, including as victims, participants, and in governmental responses to insecurity. (Paragraph 569)***

The Government agrees with the committee's conclusion. Through our work on the Women, Peace & Security (WPS) agenda, the UK recognises the important role women can and do play in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls.

The UK Government continues to fund the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth Network (WMC), which we launched in 2018. The network aims to increase the participation of women in peace processes at the local, national, and international level, by connecting and supporting women mediators from around the world, and promoting their work on the international stage. In 2019/20, the UK provided over £2.9 million to support women peacebuilders and mediators to resolve conflict and build peace in their communities, including through support for the WMC. We also provided £1 million in 2019 to the Elsie Initiative, which aims to increase the number of uniformed women in peacekeeping roles.



The 'protection' component of the WPS agenda is also an important strand of our work. The UK takes a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence, and we are working to ensure that all survivors have access to both criminal and restorative justice, through funding initiatives such as the Murad Code on documenting conflict-related sexual violence and the Mukwege Foundation/Nadia's Initiative Global Survivors Fund. We also seek to secure strong language on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in all UN peacekeeping mandates. We recognise as well the important role which women play in preventing and countering violent extremism (CVE); that is why CVE is one of the strategic outcomes in our WPS National Action Plan. Women can also be participants in violent extremism; at the UN Security Council we advocate for gender-sensitive approaches to the reintegration of combatants.

***85. Women and girls are central to the prevention and resolution of conflict. The Government should continue to champion their rights in its work on peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Paragraph 570)***

The Government agrees with this recommendation. We are committed to supporting the meaningful participation of women in all efforts to build sustainable peace.

In addition to supporting the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth Network (WMC), we are engaging with the African Union on how best to support their efforts to promote and deploy women mediators and peacebuilders, and to expand and strengthen their network. For example, the UK Government supports the 'Friends of FemWise' donor group, which actively reinforces the AU Commission's efforts to promote greater female mediation. We are currently exploring whether we can provide programmatic support, including how to better link FemWise with the WMC. Another example of our work in Sub-Saharan Africa to support women's meaningful participation is our Women in Politics (WiP) programme in Nigeria, which helped increase female political candidates in WiP implementing states from 300 in 2015 to 709 in 2019.

***86. The UK has been a leader in international efforts to prevent sexual violence in conflict. This work has, however, suffered from a lack of senior political leadership in recent years. The Government should review its work in this area and consider carefully the issues raised in the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's recent report. (Paragraph 582)***

The UK has led international efforts to tackle conflict-related sexual violence since the establishment of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI). The Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict has been a ministerial appointment since the creation of the role in 2014, and the UK continues to be the only government in the world to have a dedicated team working solely on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence.

The PSVI raises awareness and encourages global action on tackling conflict-related sexual violence through diplomacy, advocacy, and convening power. The UK also continues to invest in longer-term initiatives and programming to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence and tackle its root causes. This includes

the development of the Murad Code, which will strengthen evidence collection practices to ensure that investigation is safer, more ethical, and more effective, and DFID's flagship £67.5 million *What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale* Programme, which is the largest investment by any single government donor in programming and research to prevent violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence.

In future, the FCDO will lead the development of a longer-term strategy on conflict-related sexual violence, with input from the MOD, to strengthen its Theory of Change and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. It will also embed efforts to tackle conflict-related sexual violence within the UK's broader efforts to combat gender-based violence, through cross-government initiatives such as the Gender Based Violence Theory of Change.

Preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence is a cross-cutting theme in the Government's work to advance the WPS agenda in Africa, which often aligns with the AU's activities in strengthening women's participation in conflict resolution and preventing conflict through expanding women mediator networks and strengthening grassroots initiatives. The UK continues to champion work to integrate gender-sensitivity into AU peace support doctrine and AU Commission standards.

***87. We welcome the Government's support of the use of UN-assessed contributions to fund AU-led peacekeeping missions. We would welcome more information on how the Government plans to use the 2019 UK-AU Memorandum of Understanding to support further security co-operation. (Paragraph 604)***

The security pillar of the 2019 UK-AU MoU envisages ongoing cooperation on existing key priorities, including in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, the Sahel and Libya. Due to COVID-19, our Peace Support Operations (PSO) training (aimed mainly, but not exclusively, at the AU Mission in Somalia – AMISOM) has been put on hold in 2020. Instead, the UK and AU will focus on working together to develop the detailed design for an AU-led successor mission to AMISOM, whose mandate expires in 2021. We will also develop a new programme to support police in AU-led PSOs, to come on line in 2021. We are committed to working together to expand and strengthen the role of women in conflict resolution and prevention mediation. The UK will also support the AU's weapons amnesty month in September, as part of its initiative, Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 (STG2020).

Much of our work with the AU on peace and security is centred on a close political dialogue with the AU. As a P5 member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), our perspectives on a wide range of issues are valued by the AU. Together the AU and UK can work to find common ground for the three African members of the UNSC to articulate in New York, for example on Sudan and the Central African Republic. We discuss areas where we can support AU efforts to resolve conflict, such as in Cameroon where mediation remains key to finding a solution to the "Anglophone" conflict between government and English speaking parts of the country. We are encouraging the AU to offer ideas of how it can support UN-led efforts in Libya.

Under the 2019 framework we have sought to support institutional capacity building of AU's Peace & Security Operations Division (PSOD) through:

- a Wilton Park-led conference to explore options for an AMISOM successor mission (held in March this year);
- AU peacekeeping doctrine support (a key condition to the AU accessing UN assessed contributions) – we have been directly involved in the drafting of the doctrine; and
- convening a working group to review PSO training implementation.

We have provided two secondees to the AU Peace & Security Department's (PSD) Early Warning Unit in support of AU's Continental Early Warning System as well as analytical and research support. Their work continues. We support implementation of the AU policy on the management of recovered weapons in peace operations and provide training on ammunition and weapons stockpile management as part of STG2020. Alongside PSO pre-deployment training we will look to continue counter IED training, and provide additional training for the deployment of police officers to PSOs.

***88. The UK and its international partners have too often focused on addressing the immediate consequences of conflict, to the detriment of efforts to tackle the underlying conditions that allow conflict to emerge. The Government should, in its Integrated Review, consider how the UK can best use its resources and influence to develop longer-term strategies to prevent conflict, and above all to prevent genocide, and support regional partners. (Paragraph 619)***

The Government agrees that efforts to tackle the underlying causes of conflict are necessary to ensure longer-term stability, prevent serious harm, and reduce the need for costly interventions. Under the strategic approach to Africa, the UK is committed to support more accountable, transparent and capable institutions in African countries to enable partners to deliver earlier identification of risks, more effective efforts to address drivers of instability, and better management of conflicts. New conflict, security and justice programmes in fragile and conflict affected states will deliver immediate outcomes to support our African partners – states, institutions, organisations and regions – to improve security, justice and conflict prevention for their population.

We also work closely with the AU to increase its capacity to lead an African response to conflict prevention. The UK has provided technical assistance to the AU's Peace and Security Department to support development of its Continental Early Warning System as well as strengthen alignment between the AU and Regional Economic Communities' conflict prevention and response mechanisms. We also provide support to the AU's Political Analysis Cell which supports democratic processes and transitional justice in countries undergoing political transition. It also champions increased women's participation in political processes. The Integrated Review is a good opportunity to review our current work and ensure our strategy will make maximise resources and influence.

**89. As part of efforts to support regional partners to take the lead in conflict prevention, management and resolution, the Government should review its approach to military training. It should consider whether the British Army should accompany the militaries it is training on some missions. The Government must be mindful that militaries in the region themselves sometimes contribute to instability and human rights abuses. (Paragraph 620)**

**90. We reiterate the conclusion of the 2016 report of the International Relations Committee, *The UK and the UN: Priorities for the new Secretary-General*, on the “critical” importance of pre-deployment training to improve operations and “act as a preventative measure against misconduct”. This is relevant to training for the UK’s partners in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in the context of UN missions. (Paragraph 621)**

The Government agrees with the recommendation from the 2016 Report on the importance of pre-deployment training to act as a preventative measure against misconduct. We deliver UN peacekeeping training both to UK personnel and to African troop contributing countries (TCCs) to enable them to perform to the highest standards on peacekeeping operations. Where possible, we focus our TCC training on partner states that are planning to deploy alongside UK personnel. We also help validate their training through an impartial performance check. Ahead of providing support, thorough assessments are undertaken to understand and mitigate any risks faced in training and partnering with other militaries. These include consideration of partner militaries’ respect for human rights and their stance on the disputes and conflicts we aim to resolve.

The UK currently has a number of training partnerships with African troop and police contributing countries, providing training to around 10,000 peacekeepers annually. By way of example, in 2019 and 2020 the UK provided pre-deployment training to Malawian and Zambian battalions deploying to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, and to Liberia ahead of deployments to Mali. We also worked in partnership with the US and the UN to deliver police pre-deployment training to African police contributing countries including Ghana and Nigeria. We cover a broad range of training support to improve overall mission performance, including developing planning, tactical and medical skills, as well as operating standards, which includes combatting sexual exploitation and abuse. We continue to seek ways in which we can work with partners on upstream measures, including ‘training the trainer’ to build long-term military capacity and resilience to forestall conflict.

UK peacekeepers conduct mission specific training and training using UN Core Pre-deployment Training Materials. These include sessions on Protection of Civilians, Conflict Related Sexual Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Our deployments to Cyprus and Mali aim to demonstrate best practice to other TCCs with respect to improving mission planning, performance and information analysis. This is supplemented by UK leadership in the form of deployed Military Staff Officers to six UN missions and the UN Headquarters. We have over 30 deployed.

The UK Government fully supports the UN Secretary-General's zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse in any part of the UN system. In the UN Security Council the UK has successfully argued for all Peacekeeping Mission mandates to contain language on protection of women and children from sexual exploitation and abuse offences, and on accountability measures. Over the past three years the UK has provided \$3 million to support the UN's efforts to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and improve accountability.

***91. The Government should consider ways to better engage local Sub-Saharan African partners, including civil society groups, in its conflict prevention work. (Paragraph 622)***

The Government agrees that engaging with local partners is necessary to understand the drivers of conflict and the interests of different local actors in order to inform and deliver our conflict prevention work. In February 2020, the FCO and Wilton Park co-hosted a conference on 'Fostering Social Cohesion in Nigeria', bringing together civil society, faith and political leaders, representatives from the Nigerian government and UK parliamentarians who shared vast collective experience and expertise. Discussions helped to form recommendations to tackle intercommunal violence in affected states in Nigeria.

The UK's Special Envoy to the Sudans holds regular briefings with civil society, local communities and diaspora in Sudan, particularly Darfur, alongside the joint UN-AU Mission. These discussions give a deeper understanding of the conflict, improve our relations with local partners, and have been incredibly valuable in shaping how we provide support to bring about a successful and sustainable political transition.

The UK Government continues to deepen our partnerships with local partners and civil society to feed into our conflict prevention work, and are well positioned to do so via our network across Africa.

***92. Revisions to the Development Assistance Committee's rules on ODA to help support peacekeeping efforts have been helpful. There could be value in further revisions to support work on addressing the underlying causes of insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa, but the Government should be careful in proposing further changes to ensure that the function of ODA remains supporting poverty reduction in developing countries. (Paragraph 630)***

Peace and security is the basis for all development – this was recognised in Sustainable Development Goal 16 for peace, justice and strong institutions. Peacekeeping is a key contribution to this. UK leadership in 2017 helped to deliver the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) revisions to the ODA rules on peacekeeping. We also welcomed the DAC's "Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus". Co-drafted by the UK, this recommendation aims to promote better collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors to tackle the interconnected challenges of fragility, conflict and protracted crises.

The Government's integrated defence, security and foreign policy review will further ensure that we focus our combined international assets and efforts as effectively as possible in the national interest.

The Committee recognises that that UK has "led the way in pushing for reforms". We are now working with our international partners to see how the ODA rules could evolve further to keep pace with development trends and offer strengthened support to poverty reduction in developing countries.

### **Human rights, democracy and governance in Sub-Saharan Africa**

***93. We recognise that some African countries have had a difficult relationship with the International Criminal Court. We believe that the court remains an important part of the rules-based international order. In this context, we welcome the agreement of the new Sudanese government to cooperate with the court regarding former President Omar al-Bashir. (Paragraph 653)***

The UK Government strongly supports the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the role it plays in holding perpetrators to account and achieving justice for victims. The UK welcomes Sudan's intention for Omar al-Bashir, and four others indicted by the Court to stand trial for alleged crimes committed in Darfur. The UK Government also welcomes the surrender, arrest and transfer to The Hague of Ali Kushayb earlier this year. The Sudanese authorities have not yet set out how they will cooperate with the ICC, but have stated their intention for those indicted by the ICC to be tried for the crimes for which they have been charged. Such accountability is a significant step in Sudan's progress towards the goals of the revolution and a peace settlement in Darfur. At a UN Security Council briefing by the ICC's lead prosecutor on 11 June, the UK called for the Government of Sudan to engage constructively with the ICC and, as a first step, allow a visit by the prosecutor to Sudan as soon as possible.

***94. The Government must continue to afford significant importance to human rights in its relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time as the UK pursues new economic opportunities and seeks to tackle security challenges, human rights remain critical. (Paragraph 662)***

***95. The Government should consider support for accountability, human rights, the rule of law and anti-corruption as a package that helps build the necessary conditions for democracy to function in Sub-Saharan Africa. Organisations such as the British Council, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and UK-based NGOs and charities make an important contribution to this agenda. (Paragraph 663)***

The UK Government is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and anti-corruption in Africa. Along with a determined focus on thematic priorities such as media freedom, preventing sexual violence, and promoting women, peace and security, human rights are at the heart of our efforts to support open, inclusive and accountable democratic societies in Africa.

The UK Government engages persecuted activists, pro-democracy campaigners, parliamentarians, and political leaders to understand local challenges and support transparency and dialogue. We agree that several other organisations also make an important contribution to the agenda and we recognise the value-added of seeing these issues as a mutually re-enforcing package.

***96. The Government should seek to use its participation in the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali to promote freedom of religion and belief, LGBTQ+ rights and issues relating to the human rights of women and girls. (Paragraph 664)***

The UK Government will continue to work closely with the Rwandan Government and the Commonwealth Secretariat to share our experience as host of CHOGM 2018, and ensure that the protection and promotion of human rights feature throughout the summit.