



House of Commons  
International Development  
Committee

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**The Changing Nature  
of UK Aid in Ghana  
Review: report from the  
Sub-Committee on the  
Work of ICAI**

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**Sixth Report of Session 2019–21**

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

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 17 November 2020*

## The International Development Committee

The International Development Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for International Development and its associated public bodies.

On 1 September 2020, DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were merged to form the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The Committee remains responsible for scrutiny of those parts of FCDO expenditure, administration and policy that were formerly the responsibility of DFID.

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### Current membership of the Sub-Committee on the work of the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI)

Formally, all members of the Committee are members of the Sub-Committee. In addition, the Committee has established a Sub-Committee core group:

[Theo Clarke MP](#) (*Conservative, Stafford*) (Chair)

[Mr Richard Bacon MP](#) (*Conservative, South Norfolk*)

[Sarah Champion MP](#) (*Labour, Rotherham*)

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### **Committee staff**

The current staff of the Committee are Grace Annan (Committee Specialist), Jeanne Delebarre (Second Clerk), Paul Hampson (Committee Operations Officer), Chloe Jago (Senior Media and Communications Officer), Rowena Macdonald (Committee Operations Officer), Leo Oliveira (Committee Operations Manager), Alison Pickard (Committee Specialist), Fergus Reid (Clerk), Jack Tennant (Assistant Inquiry Manager–Apprentice).

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## Summary

In February 2020, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) published a review of UK aid in Ghana. The Government response was published in March 2020. This was ICAI's first review of a whole country portfolio. It focused on the evolution of the UK-Ghana aid relationship across all government departments and both bilaterally and multilaterally. Over the past ten years, since Ghana achieved lower-middle income status, the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending there has shifted away from bilateral aid to a broader development partnership aimed at mutual benefit.

ICAI awarded the country portfolio a Green/Amber score, meaning "satisfactory achievement in most areas, but partial achievement in others." The review highlighted effective and successful impacts of UK aid in Ghana from the years 2011–19. However, the review raised concerns that some of these achievements may not be sustained in the future due to the pace of withdrawal from bilateral programmes, without consideration of compensating support for core state capacity to deliver the relevant services. We agree with ICAI's assessment of the Country Portfolio and endorse each of the review's six recommendations: in particular, the concerns of recommendation 1 (relating to the pace of withdrawing bilateral financing of service delivery), not least as this was an area consistently raised by witnesses to this inquiry. In this respect, we welcome the Government's plans to develop portfolio level results frameworks this year.

We note the forthcoming FCDO review of ICAI, part of which is to "consider how ICAI can ensure its recommendations are as tangible and evidence-based as possible to enable ... practical changes to improve impact." The other side of the coin from making workable recommendations is that they are implemented. We regard the recommendations of this review as meeting the criterion set by the Foreign Secretary and hope they will be used by the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to make changes to its programmes and objectives in Ghana and that the lessons learnt be applied to similar contexts where a country is 'transitioning'.

We believe that in order to ensure that the UK-Ghana relationship can deliver mutual benefits in the future, the positive impacts that UK aid has achieved in Ghana must be sustained and pivoted towards support for the Ghanaian Government to finance its own development to achieve the goals of its 'Beyond Aid Strategy'. We agree with ICAI that, where a bilateral country portfolio is being reduced because the country is in transition out of 'aid dependence', the pace and profile of that reduction should be based on an assessment of whether gaps left will be filled - particularly in areas of continuing social need. We hope that the UK will continue to engage with civil society in Ghana to ensure that citizens' preferences and needs are included in the decision-making process around the phasing out of bilateral ODA, particularly from programmes in the social sector.

We welcome ICAI's findings that between 2011–19, UK aid programmes in the health, education and social sectors remained strongly aligned to gender equality and leaving no one behind. We commend this consistent focus concurrent with the growing shift towards a 'mutual prosperity agenda' in recent years. We feel it is imperative that, despite the economic and political opportunities that exist for the UK-Ghana relationship, UK

aid should remain chiefly aimed at poverty reduction, particularly focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalised: women and girls, people with disabilities and those disadvantaged by the regional inequalities that exist within Ghana.

# 1 Introduction

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1. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) is an independent advisory non-departmental public body created by the Government in 2011 to independently evaluate the impact and value for money of all Official Development Assistance (ODA) spent by the UK Government.<sup>1</sup> The International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 created a duty on the Government to “... make arrangements for the independent evaluation of the extent to which ODA provided by the United Kingdom represents value for money in relation to the purposes for which it is provided.”<sup>2</sup> ICAI reports to Parliament through the International Development Committee to the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI. ICAI describe their role as working “to ensure UK aid is spent effectively for those who need it most and delivers value for UK taxpayers.”<sup>3</sup>

2. The Sub-Committee’s role is to scrutinise the work of ICAI by examining its review and assessing Government Departments’ responses to these reviews. ICAI published ‘The changing nature of UK aid in Ghana’ in February 2020. The Government’s response was published a month later.<sup>4</sup> It is ICAI’s first country portfolio review, providing an overview of the entirety of the UK Government’s portfolio in Ghana, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The review is an assessment of the evolution of UK aid in Ghana since 2011 when Ghana became a lower middle-income country.<sup>5</sup>

3. What follows is the Sub-Committee’s second Report outlining the evidence, conclusions and recommendations drawn by the Sub-Committee regarding ICAI’s review and Government response to it, as agreed by the main Committee. ICAI’s review was published in February 2020—before the coronavirus pandemic in the United Kingdom. This report also considers the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in Ghana in addition to the ICAI review. We look forward to receiving the response from the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

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1 ICAI, [Framework agreement for the sponsorship relationship for period 1 July 2019 to 30-June 2023 between the Independent Commission for Aid Impact \(ICAI\) and the Department for International Development \(DFID\)](#), September 2019

2 International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015, [section 5](#)

3 ICAI, [‘About us’](#), Accessed 29 September 2020

4 DFID, [HMG response to the Independent Commission on Aid Impact’s country portfolio review ‘The changing nature of UK aid in Ghana’](#), March 2020

5 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), February 2020

## 2 The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana: report from the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI

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### Conduct of scrutiny

4. This Report was made possible by the facilitation of oral evidence via videoconferencing in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. In light of the coronavirus outbreak in the UK, and the measures relating to the conduct of parliamentary business such as social distancing, video-conferencing facilities were developed for Select Committee evidence sessions to be held. We decided that this would provide an opportunity to hear from witnesses in Ghana in addition to UK-based witnesses, helping to better inform our scrutiny. We are grateful for the participation of witnesses through videoconferencing during these challenging times.

5. During the oral evidence session held on the 9th of July 2020, we first asked the Country Director for Ghana in the Department for International Development (DFID), Philip Smith, the High Commissioner to Ghana, Iain Walker, and the joint Minister of State for Africa at DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), James Duddridge MP, a range of questions seeking to establish the Government's view on:

- a) the future of the UK-Ghana relationship, including the UK's strategic objectives and priorities, and the UK's continued support for the Ghana Beyond Aid (GBA) strategy;
- b) the impact of the coronavirus outbreak and economic fallout on the achievements of UK aid in Ghana and progress towards existing development challenges in Ghana;
- c) the changing nature of the UK aid portfolio in Ghana in light of the Government's mutual prosperity agenda and the move away from traditional bilateral financing;
- d) ICAI's recommendations; and
- e) future oversight of UK ODA in Ghana following the merger of DFID and the FCO and the new reporting structure in FCDO country offices.

6. We then took evidence from a second panel of witnesses in order to hear about ICAI's views on:

- a) the adequacy of the Government's response;
- b) the Government's performance in Ghana;
- c) the impact of the DFID-FCO merger on the delivery of UK aid in Ghana;
- d) the sustainability and effectiveness of UK aid in ensuring that no one is left behind, particularly where inequalities exist;

- e) the impact of Coronavirus on the development needs of Ghana and the country's transition beyond aid.

7. On this panel, we heard evidence from: which included ICAI's Chief Commissioner, Tamsyn Barton, CAMFED Ghana's National Director, Sally Ofori-Yeboah, an organisation that works to support girls' education; Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), which seeks to reinforce the capacity of the Ghanaian civil society; and Aaron Oxley, Executive Director of RESULTS UK, who conducted a case study on the ICAI review,<sup>6</sup> with a focus on transition. We asked these witnesses for their views on:

- a) ICAI's findings and recommendations;
- b) how UK aid is contributing to the development needs of Ghana, particularly the needs of the Ghanaian people and Ghanaian civil society;
- c) how effectively UK aid ensures no one is left behind and can support a sustainable transition beyond aid in Ghana and other contexts;
- d) the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on Ghana's development and the transition beyond aid.

8. We are very grateful for the evidence provided by all the witnesses in this process.

## Background

9. Ghana, located in West Africa, became a lower-middle-income country in 2011.<sup>7</sup> It is a member of the African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Commonwealth of Nations. It gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960. Ghana discovered oil in 2007, with commercial production beginning in 2011. UK aid in Ghana has been reoriented since 2011<sup>8</sup> (the beginning of the ICAI review period) to reflect the transition away from donor-recipient status and towards a relationship that is based on mutual prosperity and benefit.

10. Despite Ghana's classification as a lower-middle-income country in 2011, significant challenges remain. ICAI's review indicates that progress on poverty reduction has slowed and many development gains could be reversed as a result of macroeconomic instability, reliance on exports of limited commodities (gold, cacao and oil), growing public debt, and rising inequality.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, strong geographical inequalities within Ghana remain: the rural Northern and North East regions still face significant development challenges and higher poverty levels. The gap with the rest of the country is also widening as poverty has been rising in these areas since 2013.<sup>10</sup>

6 RESULTS UK, [The changing nature of UK aid in Ghana, a case study on Transition](#), May 2020

7 World Bank, [Ghana Feature Story](#), 2011

8 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana](#), para 1.1 p5

9 Ibid, para 3.5 p12

10 UNDP, [Inequality in Ghana: A Fundamental National Challenge](#), p2

## The Ghana Beyond Aid strategy

11. In 2019, the Ghanaian government outlined its ambition to self-finance its future development and to move beyond aid in the Ghana Beyond Aid strategy.<sup>11</sup> The strategy and accompanying Charter outlined a national transformation agenda aimed at “transforming and growing out of dependence on Aid; not about rejecting aid.”<sup>12</sup> The President of Ghana describes the Strategy as a desire to:

“Build a Ghana that is prosperous enough to stand on its own two feet; a Ghana that is beyond dependence on the charity of others to cater for the needs of its people, but instead through political cooperation for enhanced regional and global peace and security.”

12. The Ghana Beyond Aid Charter Committee developed the Ghana Beyond Aid Agenda to be a vision built upon five broad goals: A Wealthy, Inclusive, Sustainable, Empowered and Resilient Ghana, a W.I.S.E.R Ghana.<sup>13</sup> The strategy emphasises the need for investment in education and skills, infrastructure and scientific and technological capability.

## The changing nature of the UK aid portfolio in Ghana

13. Throughout most of the review period (2011–19) UK aid in Ghana was primarily administered through DFID, with 92.8% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Ghana between 2011–16 being spent by DFID.<sup>14</sup>

### Box 1: Definition of ODA

Official Development Assistance (ODA), frequently referred to as ‘aid’, can be defined as “the internationally agreed criteria for funds provided to developing countries or multilateral institutions to fight poverty and promote development. To count as ODA, an activity must promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective. The ODA criteria are set by the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which is a group of 29 donors, including the UK.”

Under the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015, the UK is committed to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income as ODA.

Source: HM Government, ‘[Official Development Assistance](#)’, Policy Paper, accessed 29 September 2020

14. The UK’s approach towards aid in Ghana appears to reflect the Ghanaian Government’s desire to move beyond aid, as outlined in the Ghana Beyond Aid Strategy. It also reflects a broader change in UK aid policy. As shown in our Report ‘*Effectiveness of UK Aid: Interim Findings*’,<sup>15</sup> in November 2015, DFID and HM Treasury published a new strategy for the UK’s spending on overseas aid—‘UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest’.<sup>16</sup> Among other things, the strategy proposed that, while DFID would

11 Government of Ghana, [The Ghana Beyond Aid Strategy and Charter](#), April 2019

12 *Ibid*, p2

13 *Ibid*

14 ICAI, [the Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), figure 8, p18

15 International Development Committee, [Second Report - Effectiveness of UK aid: Interim Findings](#), June 2020

16 [DFID and HM Treasury, ‘UK aid: Tackling global challenges in the national interest’](#), Nov 2015

remain the UK's primary channel for overseas aid, a greater proportion of it would be administered by other government departments (OGDs) and through cross-government funds such as the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and the Prosperity Fund. The Government made this decision as it wanted to draw on skills across government when spending ODA to respond to challenges such as mass migration and the impacts of global warming.<sup>17</sup>

15. Crucially for the UK-Ghana aid portfolio, the strategy also introduced a more explicit focus on using UK aid to promote mutual prosperity and the national interest.<sup>18</sup> Between 2011 and 2016, an increasing amount of ODA in Ghana was spent outside of DFID notably by the former FCO (2.3%), the CDC (4.5%) and other agencies such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) accounting for around £112,000.<sup>19</sup>

16. The Government also elected to reshape its aid portfolio in Ghana as a result of the 2011 Bilateral Aid review, the 2016 Bilateral Development Review and an internal DFID poverty allocation model which resulted in Ghana becoming less of a priority for support, as DFID moved its focus to poorer and fragile states.<sup>20</sup> This meant that another key change to the UK aid to Ghana from 2011–19 was a reduction in bilateral aid<sup>21</sup> and an increase in UK spend through multilateral channels from 45% in 2011 to 66% in 2017.<sup>22</sup>

17. Furthermore, the increased focus on mutually beneficial relationships led the UK Government to focus its bilateral aid more on projects with increasing investment in livelihoods and economic development. At the same time, projects with a focus on investment in health and education received slowed investment.<sup>23</sup> On a three year rolling average, from 2011–12 to 2013–14, investment in social sectors accounted for 70% of UK aid investment in Ghana.<sup>24</sup> By 2016–17 to 2018–19, it had decreased to approximately 43% of UK aid in Ghana.<sup>25</sup>

## ICAI's findings and recommendations

18. For its first country portfolio review, ICAI focused on the following elements:

- A strategy review - ICAI analysed strategies and policies at a global, regional, country and thematic level from 'relevant UK government departments', primarily DFID.<sup>26</sup>
- A literature review;<sup>27</sup>

17 [National Audit Office \(NAO\), EUA0075](#)

18 [ICAI, 'The use of UK aid to enhance mutual prosperity', Oct 2019. See also, ICAI's compendium reports: 'ICAI follow-up review of 2017–18 reports', Jul 2019; and ICAI, 'The current state of UK aid: A synthesis of ICAI findings 2015–2019', June 2019](#)

19 [ICAI, The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana](#), figure 8, p18

20 [ibid](#), para 3.22, p17

21 [ibid](#), para 3.25 p18

22 [ibid](#), para 3.26, p19

23 [ibid](#), figure 8, p18

24 [ibid](#)

25 [ibid](#)

26 [ICAI, The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), para 2.1 p8

27 [ibid](#)

- A programming review of UK aid - ICAI mapped UK aid flows in both bilateral and multilateral channels, conducted a rapid desk review of all programmes, and undertook ten in-depth case studies.<sup>28</sup>
- A stakeholder consultation - ICAI consulted with Ghanaian government informants across local and central government, civil society organisations, media representatives, academics, professional associations and bodies and business representatives.<sup>29</sup>
- A citizen consultation–ICAI conducted their own interviews with Ghanaian citizens recipients of aid as explained further later in this report.

19. Using its scoring system, ICAI awarded the Ghana portfolio an overall Green/Amber score, indicating ‘satisfactory achievement in most areas, but partial achievement in others.’

**Box 2: ICAI’s review scoring system**

ICAI’s review scores range from Green to Red where:

- Green means “Strong achievement across the board. Stands out as an areas of good practice where UK aid is making a significant positive contribution”
- Green/Amber means “Satisfactory achievement in most areas, but partial achievement in others. An area where UK aid is making a positive contribution, but could do more”
- Amber/Red means “Unsatisfactory achievement in most areas, with some positive elements. An area where improvements are required for UK aid to make a positive contribution.
- Red means “Poor achievement across most areas, with urgent remedial action required in some. An area where UK aid is failing to make a positive contribution.”

Source: ICAI, [‘How we work’](#), accessed 29th September 2020

20. ICAI made six recommendations to DFID against three tests:

- “Relevance: How well has the UK aid portfolio responded to Ghana’s development needs and UK strategic objectives?”, where the relevant Department scored Green/Amber;
- “Effectiveness: How effective has UK aid been in achieving its strategic objectives in Ghana?”, where the relevant Department scored Green/Amber; and
- “Sustainability: How likely are the results of UK aid to be sustained in the future?”, where the relevant Department scored Amber/Red.

28 Ibid

29 Ibid

**Box 3: ICAI's recommendations**

- 1) "In transition contexts, DFID should ensure that the pace of ending the bilateral financing of service delivery in areas of continuing social need must be grounded in a realistic assessment of whether the gap left will be filled."
- 2) "DFID should require portfolio level development outcome objective and results frameworks for its country programmes."
- 3) "DFID Ghana should learn from its own successes and failures when designing and delivering its systems strengthening support and technical assistance."
- 4) "In transition contexts, DFID country offices, in coordination with the multilateral policy leads, should increasingly work to influence the department's country multilateral partners on issues of strategic importance."
- 5) "In order to strengthen the relevance of its aid programming and accountability to the people expected to benefit, DFID should include information on citizen needs and preferences, especially for the most vulnerable, as a systematic requirement for portfolio and programme design and management."
- 6) "The Government should provide clear guidance on how UK aid resources should be used in implementing mutual prosperity objectives to minimise risks and maximise opportunities for development."

Source: ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana](#), February 2020

**Government response**

21. The Government's Response to ICAI's review was published on the 25th of March 2020.<sup>30</sup> The Government partially accepted recommendation 1 (pace of ending bilateral financing), recommendation 5 (inclusion of citizens' needs and preferences), recommendation 6 (guidance on implementing mutual prosperity). It accepted in full recommendations 2 (outcome objectives in country programmes), recommendation 3 (lessons learnt for system strengthening and technical assistance) and recommendation 4 (coordination between multilateral policy leads and country partners on issues of strategic importance).

22. In its response to recommendation 1 (pace of ending bilateral financing) the Government outlined that DFID's aid allocation model accounts for country need, aid effectiveness and ability to self-finance. As a result, if a country's ability to self-finance increases, then UK aid flows decrease. On recommendation 5 (including information on citizens needs and preferences), the Government's response confirmed DFID was committed to putting people at the centre of their work and that they do this at a

30 HM Government, [HMG Response to the Independent Commission on Aid Impact's country portfolio review 'The changing nature of UK aid in Ghana'](#), March 2020

programme level. On recommendation 6 (guidance on implementing mutual prosperity), the Government maintained its commitment to poverty reduction at the core of UK aid spending, in line with the International Development Act.<sup>31</sup>

23. In oral evidence, Philip Smith expressed the view that ICAI's recommendations were mostly retrospective,<sup>32</sup> and Minister Duddridge told us that the UK Government:

“... would quite like to see some more recommended actions going beyond commentary in the past [ ... ] That is not to say that we will take them and implement them one by one, but we will certainly consider them. If on reflection the Committee has any ideas, we would receive them very openly.”<sup>33</sup>

**24. Based on the findings presented in the review and the evidence we heard during our oral evidence session, we feel that a Green/Amber rating was an appropriate assessment of the UK aid portfolio in Ghana, and we endorse the six recommendations made to the UK Government by ICAI. We hope that, considering the Minister's comments, the new FCDO will openly consider not only the recommendations from ICAI's review, but our own recommendations outlined below. Whilst the International Development Committee's future remains uncertain, we hope that this Report and its recommendations will highlight the importance of the relationship between ICAI and a dedicated Parliamentary Select Committee with responsibility for ICAI.**

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31 [International Development Act 2002](#).

32 [Philip Smith, Q8](#)

33 [James Duddridge MP, Q9](#)

## 3 Priorities for UK aid in Ghana

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### Main priorities

25. The latest DFID Ghana Profile<sup>34</sup> describes DFID's focus in Ghana as “supporting Ghana to end its reliance on aid” and become a trading partner for the United Kingdom. A sectoral breakdown of bilateral programmes in 2018–19 shows that 48% of bilateral programmes were aimed at economic development and 42% for human development.<sup>35</sup> The portfolio's headline deliverables are:

- Building institutions to help Ghana move beyond aid, which comprises work done by DFID to help Ghana improve domestic revenue mobilisation, reducing the reliance on aid and improving economic management.<sup>36</sup> This is consistent with areas of focus outlined in later sections of our report.
- Basic services and women and girls, under which 97 thousand children have been supported to gain a decent education (as of March 2018) through<sup>37</sup> DFID's top planned spending programme ‘Girls - Participatory Approaches to Students Success (PASS) in Ghana’ (£6.3 million).<sup>38</sup>
- Economic development, which outlines DFID's plans to support Ghana's desire to move ‘beyond aid’, promote investment and create jobs.<sup>39</sup> This deliverable was a priority throughout ICAI's review period and was emphasised in our oral evidence too, as we describe in later sections of our report.

26. A key consideration for the Government's aid portfolio in Ghana should be whether its priorities are aligned with those of Ghanaian citizens and the Ghanaian government. Minister Duddridge told us that: “If you are looking at any country's priorities, perhaps you should ask what their priorities are. Ghana's priorities are getting beyond aid and into a different type of situation and relationship with the United Kingdom and other international partners.”<sup>40</sup>

27. The High Commissioner to Ghana, Ian Walker, further added that “in Ghana, we have been trying to talk the language of our Ghanaian hosts, which is about jobs and economic development.”<sup>41</sup> As a result, the UK aid portfolio has been “evolving continually and continues to do so” and the UK mission as a whole in Ghana (not just DFID's programmes) is now centred around three priorities:

- The first is economic development, with a focus on tax revenue and increasing international investment, including from the UK.<sup>42</sup>

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34 DFID, [Ghana \(including Liberia\) Profile](#), July 2018

35 Ibid

36 Ibid

37 Ibid

38 Ibid

39 Ibid

40 James Duddridge MP, [Q1](#)

41 Ian Walker, [Q4](#)

42 Ian Walker, [Q11](#)

- The second is social sector work - particularly in health and education. DFID's contribution in these areas has recently been centred around providing technical expertise as opposed to funding.<sup>43</sup>
- The third priority is regional security and stability with ODA funding being used to explore how Ghana can further its role as a force for good across the sub-region of West Africa.<sup>44</sup>

28. DFID's Country Director in Ghana, Philip Smith, told us that "The ICAI review shows, hopefully, that we have played a leading role in helping Ghana to deliver many of its pretty impressive development gains over the last 10 years."<sup>45</sup> He also said that the UK aid portfolio in Ghana had been shaped by the West African country's wish to transition away from aid:

"The partnership with the UK is changing from a donor-recipient relationship to a partnership of mutual strategic, political and economic co-operation. Ghana, like many developing countries, is increasingly able to tackle its own poverty and wants to reset the relationship with the UK."<sup>46</sup>

29. In addition, UK aid in Ghana is currently focused on three objectives particularly relevant to the Ghanaian Government's Beyond Aid Strategy:

"first, building stronger institutions to help Ghana move beyond aid and recover now from Covid; secondly, focusing on economic development, jobs being the route out of poverty for many in Ghana; thirdly, remaining committed to leaving no one behind, ensuring our programmes continue to support the most vulnerable and poorest people in Ghana."<sup>47</sup>

30. Each of these stated priorities was reflected in the evidence we heard from witnesses and informed the recommendations we present hereafter on the relative weight the Government ought to give to each of them.

## Impact of the DFID-FCO merger

31. We were also keen to discuss the impact that the merger of DFID and FCO could have on delivery of UK aid in countries like Ghana. Minister Duddridge argued that it would be particularly beneficial to them:

"[ ... ] strategically the merger will be more helpful in Ghana than many other countries, where we are transitioning through different stages of aid, as Ghana is, indeed, going beyond aid and having a different type of relationship. There will be change, but I do not think it will be predetermined by a structural change in the UK Government. It will mean that we are fletter of foot in responding to that nuanced change."<sup>48</sup>

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43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Philip Smith, [Q4](#)

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 James Duddridge, [Q3](#)

32. He also told us that different elements of the UK presence in Ghana should not be seen as separate entities and that the role of the High Commissioner, with oversight of the entirety of Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in-country, was to ensure that development and other HMG work were integrated and "pulled together much more tightly".<sup>49</sup> Philip Smith added that:

"It is pretty evident that we need a different approach to development, a much more politically informed approach to ensure that reform efforts through DFID programmes stick, in which we use the full range of diplomatic tools to encourage the Government of Ghana to make reforms and changes."<sup>50</sup>

33. ICAI's review was published before the Prime Minister's statement to the House in which the merger was announced.<sup>51</sup> To establish ICAI's view, we asked Dr Barton for her views on the impact of the merger on UK aid delivery in Ghana at the session. Her comments were reassuring as she explained that when visiting Ghana, ICAI was impressed with the coherence and collaboration between DFID and the FCO:<sup>52</sup>

"I am not sure in Ghana how much is likely to change, because there was already, in partnership with the Government of Ghana's interests, a strong interest in working together on economic partnership, governance and so on."<sup>53</sup>

**34. We welcome the apparent success that the UK mission in Ghana has had integrating different elements of HMG. We hope that the FCDO will utilise the opportunity that the DFID-FCO merger presents to help further integrate the UK's support for a Ghanaian transition beyond aid. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of UK aid delivery in country offices under the new structure.**

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49 Ibid

50 Philip Smith, [Q4](#)

51 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-06-16/debates/20061637000001/GlobalBritain>

52 Tamsyn Barton, [Q15](#)

53 Ibid

## 4 Supporting a successful transition beyond aid

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### Economic Development and Social services

35. DFID and FCO witnesses told us that one of their priorities was the economic development of Ghana, including improving job opportunities, access to capital and markets<sup>54</sup> We were also told that domestic revenue mobilisation was central to “plugging the kind of gaps that ICAI was pointing to and ensuring sustainability of these programmes in the longer term.”<sup>55</sup> ICAI told us that it welcomed this focus on self-financing through increased economic development but felt that the Government was over-optimistic about the extent to which this could be achieved and sustained through domestic revenue mobilisation.<sup>56</sup> ICAI indicated that Ghana’s macroeconomic instability and over-reliance on a few commodities would not be enough to set Ghana on the path to sustained economic growth.<sup>57</sup>

36. If the UK is looking to foster a mutually beneficial relationship with Ghana, then it needs to support efforts to sustain Ghana’s economic development from the ground up—supporting social sectors and helping to strengthen systems.<sup>58</sup> Nana Afadzinu argued for the need to continue giving social services such as education priority because of their ripple effect for the economy:

“In Ghana, we are where we are now because we have had civil society organisations work on widespread civic participation [ ... ]. The support going to that sector has reduced drastically. These are the ones working in the social sector and giving support to ensure no one is left behind. We have an issue there and that definitely must be addressed.”<sup>59</sup>

37. ICAI echoed this view in evidence to us and highlighted the need for continuing social sector support alongside economic development:

“[ ... ] it has to be said that we feel the UK Government were much too optimistic about how much new revenue could be raised, even with the expert advice of the UK’s HMRC. They need to be more realistic and accordingly tailor their plans for continuing attention and support to social services, particularly for the very poorest.”<sup>60</sup>

38. Aaron Oxley’s evidence submission likewise outlined the need for donors to look beyond gross national income and consider other indicators such as poverty rate, public health, disease burden, education levels and inequity within a country in order to support developing countries’ sustainable transitions.<sup>61</sup> In his view:

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54 Iain Walker, [Q4](#); Iain Walker, [Q11](#)

55 Philip Smith, [Q9](#)

56 Dr Barton, [Q20](#)

57 Ibid

58 Nana Afadzinu, [Q19](#)

59 Nana Afadzinu, [Q18](#)

60 Dr Barton, [Q20](#)

61 Aaron Oxley, [Q21](#)

“For us, the other element of successful transition is what the transition actually does for people living in poverty in a country. [ ... ] That absolutely needs to be at the heart of it. Our concern is that sometimes the most exciting things do not easily translate into actual change in the lives of people who are living in poverty and that, if we do not maintain that focus on leaving no one behind, they will be missed out.”<sup>62</sup>

**39. Whilst the UK appears to be offering relevant and effective contributions to supporting Ghana’s economic development through increased domestic revenue mobilisation, evidence suggests that a sustainable transition hinges on continued support to other sectors as well. *In order to support the transition towards a ‘Sustainable’, ‘Wealthy’ and ‘Resilient’ Ghana, the UK should maintain a diverse aid portfolio in Ghana with both financial and technical support in social sector areas such as healthcare and education.***

### Impact of multilateral spending

40. As touched upon earlier in our Report and identified by ICAI’s review, there has been a substantial shift in UK aid spent in Ghana towards the end of the review period with an increase in the UK’s main ODA contributions through multilateral channels.<sup>63</sup> The review highlighted that between 2011 and 2017, the share of UK aid in Ghana through multilaterals had increased by 21%, meaning 66% of UK aid was delivered through multilaterals by 2017.<sup>64</sup> Between 2011–17, UK aid spent through multilaterals was broken down as follows: 40% through the World Bank; 26% through the IMF (International Monetary Fund); 13% through the AfDB (African Development Bank); 8% through EU institutions; 6% through the Global Fund, 4% through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and 3% through others such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>65</sup>

41. ICAI documented a clear resulting change in the way UK aid programmes were run in Ghana:

“As the bilateral country office spend for Ghana reduced, the intent was that the bilateral focus should shift away from direct financing the cost of service delivery to systems strengthening [ ... ] the emphasis increased on centrally managed programmes and the multilateral share, as Ghana moved to self-financing its development.”<sup>66</sup>

42. ICAI’s review found that the UK’s efforts to improve market access for the poor in the Northern region of Ghana had not “made full use of opportunities to leverage its results with other donors and actors.”<sup>67</sup> ICAI’s analysis also found that:

“ There is little evidence, however, that DFID is strategically working with its multilateral partners [ ... ] to leverage its imputed share, besides long-standing processes of commenting on World Bank and African Development

62 Aaron Oxley, [Q16](#)

63 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), Figure 8 and para 3.26, p18–19

64 Ibid

65 Ibid

66 Ibid, para 3.24 p 18

67 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), Table 6, p 39

Bank programmes before board submission. In view of DFID’s objectives to leave no one behind and protect past development gains, such engagement is important given that DFID has reduced or exited support in areas where Ghana still faces significant development challenges.”<sup>68</sup>

43. In oral evidence, Philip Smith told us that one of the main takeaways from ICAI’s review for DFID Ghana was the need to ensure UK investment through multilaterals is better leveraged:

“What we (DFID Ghana) took from the review was to ensure that we are better leveraging the investment that the UK makes through the multilaterals. We have been doing quite a bit of work on that since the review, to get clarity on the imputed contribution that UK funds are making in Ghana and how we can leverage those.”<sup>69</sup>

44. Other witnesses concurred and stressed the importance of measuring impact—irrespective of whether UK aid programmes in Ghana are delivered through bilateral or multilateral channels.<sup>70</sup>

**45. The UK aid portfolio in Ghana has the opportunity to successfully support the Ghana Beyond Aid agenda, and in doing so, enhance the sustainability of UK aid’s results in Ghana. However, the increasing amount of ODA being spent through multilaterals should continue to complement the successes of previous bilateral programmes and align with the UK’s priorities in Ghana. *The FCDO should seek to increase its leverage in, and cooperation with, multilateral programmes in Ghana that are supported by UK aid to ensure they are coherent with UK aid priorities.***

## Ghanaian citizens’ needs

46. In its review, ICAI highlighted the results of two surveys conducted with Ghanaian people during the review period.<sup>71</sup> For the 2017 *Afrobarometer Survey in Ghana*, a nationally representative random sample of 2,400 adult Ghanaians were interviewed from 9 to 25 September 2017 about their views on democracy, governance, economic conditions and related issues.<sup>72</sup> The top three problems facing Ghana that the government of Ghana should address identified by those respondents were unemployment (50% of respondents mentioning the issue); infrastructure/roads (35% of respondents mentioning the issue) and education (32% of respondents mentioning the issue).<sup>73</sup>

47. ICAI’s review also refers to the results of the 2015 *My World Survey* which found that the top four priorities for Ghanaians from 3,600 households interviewed in April-May 2013 were better healthcare (14.3%); access to clean water and sanitation (11.9%), better job opportunities (11.8%) and good education (11.3%).<sup>74</sup>

48. As part of the review, ICAI also conducted their own consultation of Ghanaian citizens. 800 people across eight districts of two regions were consulted by ICAI using

68 Ibid, para 4.71, p 45

69 Philip Smith, [Q8](#)

70 Aaron Oxley, [Q16](#)

71 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), Figure 11, p24

72 Afrobarometer, [Summary of Results](#), 2017, Question 35, 55, 56

73 Ibid, para 3, p2

74 United Nations Development Programme, [My World Survey](#), 2015, p9

a range of fora including town hall meetings, focus group discussions and informal conversations, interviews with small business owners and market traders, and with young women who had been supported by UK aid to continue their schooling.<sup>75</sup> All respondents either directly or generally benefited from UK aid.<sup>76</sup>

49. The top issues raised by those respondents were: access to better healthcare and facilities; better infrastructure; improved waste management; access to better quality education and facilities; access to markets and jobs; tackling corruption; better dialogue between citizens and authorities; clean water provision; improved security for communities, and better management of public resources.<sup>77</sup>

50. In evidence to us, Nana Afadzinu agreed with ICAI's assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the UK aid mission in Ghana but questioned the extent to which the moving beyond aid agenda had achieved consensus among the Ghanaian population:

“[ ... ] the challenge particularly is with the premise that, first, Ghana is a lower middle-income country and, secondly, we have the Ghana beyond aid agenda. It is a great agenda and we are all excited about it. In reality, it is more aspirational than it is practical. Civil society has raised several concerns in relation to this agenda. We do have it and the Government (of Ghana) now has a strategy, but we have not really engaged it as a country. You do not have a national consensus on this agenda.”<sup>78</sup>

51. When pressed to explain if the UK aid portfolio adequately reflected the needs and wishes of the Ghanaian Government and people, she also stated that it mostly reflected the wishes of the Ghanaian Government:

“ to a large extent, because there is a focus on economic development, which is high up the agenda of the Government. That is understandable and important, but other aspects of socioeconomic development, looking at the social sector, are also critical. In fact, looking now at Covid and how much it has affected or exacerbated inequality in the country, it is extremely important to make sure that we have a specific focus on supporting the social sector, so that we do not erode the gains we have made.”<sup>79</sup>

52. Sally Ofori-Yeboah told us she agreed with Nana Afadzinu's view but was also keen to highlight the areas where the UK aid portfolio had successfully delivered benefits for young women in Ghana and had shown alignment with the Ghanaian Government's priorities:

“ The support that came to Ghana with reference to girls' education, I must say, was extremely important. It has shifted the needle for girls, especially in the northern part of the country. [ ... ] In terms of what DFID support did with girls' education, we cannot discount that support. [ ... ] I can clearly tell that this is of interest to the Government. It is a priority area.”<sup>80</sup>

75 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), para 2.1 p8

76 Ibid

77 Ibid, Figure 12, p25

78 Nana Afadzinu [Q16](#)

79 Nana Afadzinu, [Q18](#)

80 Sally Ofori-Yeboah, [Q16&18](#)

## Engagement with civil society

53. To further the objectives of making sure UK aid to Ghana reflects Ghanaian citizens' needs, witnesses told us clearly that engagement with civil society was crucial, particularly as progress with good governance in Ghana has come from civil society:

“Civil society has really been one of the key drivers for the good governance and democratic consultation that we have in Ghana now. Civil society plays a critical role in complementing public service delivery, in advocacy, in monitoring and holding the Government to account.”<sup>81</sup>

54. In order to address poverty, anti-corruption and good governance, civil society needs to be strengthened.<sup>82</sup> DFID's previous engagement with civil society, particularly through the STAAC (Strengthening Action Against Corruption) programme, has been successful in supporting this:

“DFID has worked quite well with civil society, particularly through STAAC which was the programme that worked on anti-corruption; through STAR-Ghana, which is a facility that supporting civil society work looking at good governance [ ... ] and supporting GOGIG (Ghana Oil and Gas for Inclusive Growth) and other programmes around oil and gas, and the extractive industry, looking at transparency and accountability. There have been some really good programmes there.”<sup>83</sup>

55. However, we believe that the UK's relationship with Ghana and its support for a sustainable transition beyond aid and creating resilience could be enhanced through further engagement with civil society - continuing to support good governance and transparency around oil and gas extractions should be a priority for the FCDO, particularly as this has been a big part of Ghana's recent economic development.<sup>84</sup> Engagement with civil society is an effective means of ensuring that the needs and preferences of citizens are included in UK aid programming, and this information should help to shape the pace at which bilateral financing - particularly in areas such as education, health and livelihoods is withdrawn - without losing focus on the support for Ghana's transition beyond aid. Not least as the WACSI identified that:

“This is definitely one area in which DFID can make a difference. Through STAR-Ghana and other programmes, it can do that and build that resilience. There can be more investment in that area.”<sup>85</sup>

**56. We welcome the way DFID has successfully engaged and worked with Ghanaian civil society organisations on anti-corruption and democratic governance. However, significant progress remains to be done across the aid portfolio to ensure a sustainable transition away from aid. In order to continue to make informed decisions on aid allocation, Ghanaian citizens' needs and preferences should continue to be included**

81 Nana Afadzinu, [Q19](#)

82 Nana Afadzinu, [Q18](#)

83 Ibid

84 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK Aid - Executive Summary](#), p i

85 Nana Afadzinu, [Q19](#)

*when assessing how fast to reduce aid in key social sector areas such as health, education and livelihoods. This should be achieved through continuing engagement with Ghanaian civil society, drawing on previous experiences with the STAAC and STAR-Ghana.*

## 5 Impact of the coronavirus outbreak

57. ICAI’s review—which forms the basis for this inquiry, was published in February 2020. This is before the coronavirus pandemic had ‘peaked’ in the United Kingdom and in Ghana. At the time of our oral evidence in July, the situation regarding the coronavirus had become a global issue at the forefront of a lot of humanitarian efforts. As a result, we felt it pertinent to ask witnesses about the impact of the coronavirus, both for the situation in Ghana, and the implications for the UK’s development assistance to Ghana. All evidence relating to the coronavirus pandemic in Ghana comes from our oral evidence taken in July 2020, and not ICAI’s review or the Government response to the review.

58. We heard in evidence the International Development Select Committee inquiry on ‘Humanitarian crises monitoring: impact of coronavirus’<sup>86</sup> that the Coronavirus outbreak is likely to have profound impacts in developing countries especially in terms of progress towards their development. These concerns were echoed by the witnesses who gave evidence to this inquiry. Across the board, we were told that the pandemic creates the need to re-evaluate development programmes as inequalities will rise:

“Covid definitely has brought out the inequalities that we experience in our countries. In the capital cities and urban centres, we seem to be managing quite well. If you drive to a rural community, they are not observing any of the social distancing conversations we are having [ ... ] communication has not gone down well.”<sup>87</sup>

59. As with many countries around the world, Ghana is highly likely to be impacted negatively from the coronavirus pandemic and the measures the country has had to put in place to try and mitigate the spread of the virus. As a result of border closures, reduction in tourism and a decline in trading volumes and values as a result of global supply chain disruptions it is estimated that Ghana’s GDP growth is set to plummet from a target of 6.8% to about 2.6% in 2020.<sup>88</sup> Despite recent development progress the coronavirus outbreak may significantly hamper results achieved thus far in Ghana (and other countries within the UK aid budget) and may even threaten its status as a transitioning country according to Aaron Oxley:

“It is clear that Covid-19 is going to put huge additional pressure on many countries’ economies. It is going to potentially force us to look at things like eligibility, whether countries are ready to transition, how they are going to transition. Most development financing is set up on the assumption that we have steady and consistent growth over many years. It is not actually very well set up for large shocks. It is particularly not well set up for large, simultaneous global shocks with the size of impact that Covid is likely to have on the global economy.”<sup>89</sup>

60. Furthermore, Nana Afadzinu stressed that the pandemic would have a “major impact” on the development needs of Ghana and its transition beyond aid:

86 [Humanitarian Crises Monitoring: impact of coronavirus](#), International Development Committee

87 Sally Ofori-Yeboah, [Q22](#)

88 Deloitte, [Economic Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Economy of Ghana](#), April 2020

89 Aaron Oxley, [Q23](#)

“The beyond aid agenda, as I said, is an aspirational agenda. We need to look again at it. We can go beyond aid, but we must build the structures that enable us to get there. We do not have them now. That is one area in which DFID would be able to continue to work with the Ghanaian Government and its people to translate the rhetoric into reality. Covid has exacerbated inequality in a major way. If we had a gap, it is going to be even greater and, therefore, we need to look at how to address that.”<sup>90</sup>

61. Sally Ofori-Yeboah argued that the negative impact of the pandemic would be particularly felt in the education sector and by women and girls:

“ Now more than ever, women, who contribute the majority of small businesses, have had their capital eroded. People are home. Economically and on every front, we believe that this would have some impact on us and it would take us years to recover. Additional support to work with Government to put in the right structures, especially to meet the needs of the vulnerable in society, would be extremely helpful.”<sup>91</sup>

62. Witnesses at the ICAI subcommittee’s oral sessions for this report made points around the Covid-19 crisis. In the ICAI commissioner’s view at the oral session she said that, the Covid-19 crisis reinforces the case for ICAI’s main recommendations around 1) maximising UK aid impact through multilaterals and 2) listening to citizens’ needs on the ground.<sup>92</sup> Dr Barton told us about the significance of ICAI’s recommendations in the context of the coronavirus, stressing that:

“There is always a risk with something as huge as Covid [ ... ] that a review like ours could be rendered completely irrelevant [ ... ] Actually, in the case of our review, I really think it has revealed why our recommendations are important. It has put even more focus than before on why it is important for the UK to work in a new, much more strategical way with its multilateral partners [ ... ]”<sup>93</sup>

63. Minister Duddridge said the likely reduction in economic growth would be “very damaging” and “put Ghana back on its plan to go beyond aid” and move towards upper middle-income status.<sup>94</sup> Dr Barton suggested in oral evidence that one of the concerns that ICAI had, particularly now in face of the coronavirus outbreak, was the pace of withdrawal from bilateral financing:

“It has been quite a while since the [Government] response came, just at the beginning of the Covid outbreak. In light of that, it has brought new questions, as we heard, from the head of the Ghana office about the pace of exit from the social sectors, for example, for the UK as for other donors.”<sup>95</sup>

**64. We welcome the fact that the UK aid portfolio over 2011–2018 is widely acknowledged as having had a positive impact on Ghana’s economic and social development, reflecting some of the top priorities of Ghanaian citizens and the**

90 Nana Afadzina, [Q23](#)

91 Sally Ofori-Yeboah, [Q23](#)

92 Dr Barton, [Q23](#)

93 Ibid

94 James Duddridge MP, [Q5](#)

95 Dr Barton, [Q14](#)

**Ghanaian Government’s Beyond Aid Strategy. We welcome DFID’s direct delivery interventions, but as the UK aid portfolio shifts towards reducing financial support for Ghana’s social services,<sup>96</sup> we are concerned about the impact on the most vulnerable, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.**

## Leaving no one behind

65. A key aspect of sustainable transitions is maintaining support for social services and targeting this support to the most vulnerable - an agenda usually encompassed under the ‘leave no one behind’ goal. According to ICAI, over the review period UK aid in Ghana has been consistently committed to ensuring no one is left behind and that UK aid is targeted towards those who need it most - particularly in the face of geographical inequality.<sup>97</sup> The ICAI review found that some of the areas UK aid was supporting, such as in community health services, education access for girls and teacher pre-service training demonstrate a focus on the areas that Ghanaian citizens had identified as most important to them.<sup>98</sup>

66. In oral evidence, ICAI’s Chief Commissioner reiterated that she was ‘positively impressed’ by this consistent focus and by the Government’s commitment to maintain it in the future.<sup>99</sup> However, ICAI’s review also raised concerns:

“A key concern, however, is that crucial decisions on the pace of reducing the financing of service delivery in the social sector were not supported by a comprehensive analysis of the consequences to service delivery. DFID’s planning, programming and monitoring approaches gave it insufficient insight on the needs, priorities and experiences of the poor in Ghana.”<sup>100</sup>

67. Strong inequalities remain in Ghana, as highlighted by Nana Afadzinu in evidence and many are concerned that the coronavirus pandemic is exacerbating inequality in Ghana:

“[ ... ] looking now at Covid and how much it has affected or exacerbated inequality in the country, it is extremely important to make sure that we have a specific focus on supporting the social sector, so that we do not erode the gains we have made.”<sup>101</sup>

68. Philip Smith also expressed strong concerns, particularly around the economic impact of the pandemic on Ghana’s development gains and transitioning pace.<sup>102</sup>

“In the health sector, we are looking at a much longer transition away from aid. Before the crisis we were at about 10% of the health budget funded by donors. I suspect that will go up and we will be looking at a different transition away from health. DFID, through our support, is getting back into direct delivery, particularly in the most rural areas, to support the most vulnerable people.”<sup>103</sup>

96 ICAI, [The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana](#), para 4.40, p33

97 Ibid, para 4.14, p26

98 Ibid

99 Dr Barton, [Q17](#)

100 ICAI review, para. 4.38

101 Nana Afadzinu, [Q18](#)

102 Philip Smith, [Q5](#)

103 Philip Smith, [Q5](#)

69. **We recognise and welcome that Ghana has made substantial development gains supported by UK aid, and welcome the successful role the UK has had in supporting this. However, the coronavirus pandemic and its global economic impact may negatively affect Ghana’s economic trajectory and development needs, particularly in areas where UK ODA spend has reduced in recent years.**

## Girls’ Education

70. Minister Duddridge told us that girls’ education is an absolute priority for UK aid in Ghana.<sup>104</sup> In particular, he referred to a standout feature of the ICAI review:

“One of the powerful things that I saw in the ICAI report, which I do not always see, is personal stories. A young girl explaining her story: her father had multiple wives and multiple children, and she would not have been educated if it was not for UK taxpayers, DFID, the development programme and the team on the ground in Accra. That is a really, really strong message.”<sup>105</sup>

71. This success story is consistent with evidence from CAMFED Ghana, who have shared with us stories of Ghanaian girls who have been able to access education thanks to donor support, with particular reference to the vital support of DFID which, according to Sally Ofori-Yeboah:

“[ ... ] Has shifted the needle for girls, especially in the northern part of the country. There are so many who can boast of a senior high school certificate. It is a certificate that allows them to do several other things for themselves. More importantly, these girls have been placed in a position to give back to their community, where we are seeing them come together, pull resources together and provide support to younger ones to go back to school.”<sup>106</sup>

72. In light of the evidence suggesting that women and girls are likely to be more negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, CAMFED Ghana told us that it was crucial that the pace of support to girls’ education in Ghana remain consistent:

“In reference to DFID’s strategy moving forward and providing technical support, it is extremely important that we look at the process. That is staggered support. Social services would suffer, the vulnerable would suffer and people would be left behind if this whole strategy was about technical support [ ... ]”<sup>107</sup>

73. **We welcome the Government’s continued commitment to girls’ education, especially in the northern regions of Ghana where strong inequalities remain. It is clear that the UK aid portfolio in Ghana has been largely successful in supporting social sectors such as education, which in turn fosters sustainability. Evidence suggests that women and girls will bear the brunt of negative impacts from the covid-19 pandemic and will continue to need dedicated support in developing countries. *To help support an ‘Empowered’ and ‘Inclusive’ Ghana and in line with the Prime Minister’s priorities for the UK aid budget, the FCDO should continue to ensure girls’ education remains a***

104 James Duddridge MP, [Q12](#)

105 Ibid

106 Sally Ofori-Yeboah, [Q16](#)

107 Ibid

*priority across UK aid spending in Ghana, especially in the poorest parts of the country. In light of pressures on the UK aid budget due to Covid-19, the Department should engage with the Ghanaian Government to review the impact in terms of support for quality education in Ghana.*

## 6 Conclusion

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74. We welcome the mostly effective and relevant contributions that UK aid has made towards supporting Ghana's transition between 2011–19 and we particularly applaud the support that the UK has offered to the poorest and most vulnerable in Ghana. Nevertheless, we are concerned about the sustainability of the results of UK aid, not least in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and its economic impact as we heard in our oral evidence. As a result, we hope that all of ICAI's and our recommendations will be acted upon by the FCDO to ensure that UK ODA spending in Ghana can continue to remain a success story. We will closely monitor the new, integrated FCDO to ensure it works carefully to continue to support the needs of Ghanaian citizens, and uses a ground-up approach to move towards HMG's aim of fostering a mutually-beneficial relationship between the United Kingdom and Republic of Ghana.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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### The Changing Nature of UK aid in Ghana: report from the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI

1. Based on the findings presented in the review and the evidence we heard during our oral evidence session, we feel that a Green/Amber rating was an appropriate assessment of the UK aid portfolio in Ghana, and we endorse the six recommendations made to the UK Government by ICAI. We hope that, considering the Minister's comments, the new FCDO will openly consider not only the recommendations from ICAI's review, but our own recommendations outlined below. Whilst the International Development Committee's future remains uncertain, we hope that this Report and its recommendations will highlight the importance of the relationship between ICAI and a dedicated Parliamentary Select Committee with responsibility for ICAI. (Paragraph 24)

### Priorities for UK aid in Ghana

2. We welcome the apparent success that the UK mission in Ghana has had integrating different elements of HMG. We hope that the FCDO will utilise the opportunity that the DFID-FCO merger presents to help further integrate the UK's support for a Ghanaian transition beyond aid. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of UK aid delivery in country offices under the new structure. (Paragraph 34)

### Supporting a successful transition beyond aid

3. Whilst the UK appears to be offering relevant and effective contributions to supporting Ghana's economic development through increased domestic revenue mobilisation, evidence suggests that a sustainable transition hinges on continued support to other sectors as well. (Paragraph 39)
4. *In order to support the transition towards a 'Sustainable', 'Wealthy' and 'Resilient' Ghana, the UK should maintain a diverse aid portfolio in Ghana with both financial and technical support in social sector areas such as healthcare and education.* (Paragraph 39)
5. The UK aid portfolio in Ghana has the opportunity to successfully support the Ghana Beyond Aid agenda, and in doing so, enhance the sustainability of UK aid's results in Ghana. However, the increasing amount of ODA being spent through multilaterals should continue to complement the successes of previous bilateral programmes and align with the UK's priorities in Ghana. (Paragraph 45)
6. *The FCDO should seek to increase its leverage in, and cooperation with, multilateral programmes in Ghana that are supported by UK aid to ensure they are coherent with UK aid priorities.* (Paragraph 45)

7. We welcome the way DFID has successfully engaged and worked with Ghanaian civil society organisations on anti-corruption and democratic governance. However, significant progress remains to be done across the aid portfolio to ensure a sustainable transition away from aid. (Paragraph 56)
8. *In order to continue to make informed decisions on aid allocation, Ghanaian citizens' needs and preferences should continue to be included when assessing how fast to reduce aid in key social sector areas such as health, education and livelihoods. This should be achieved through continuing engagement with Ghanaian civil society, drawing on previous experiences with the STAAC and STAR-Ghana.* (Paragraph 56)

### Impact of the coronavirus outbreak

9. We welcome the fact that the UK aid portfolio over 2011–2018 is widely acknowledged as having had a positive impact on Ghana's economic and social development, reflecting some of the top priorities of Ghanaian citizens and the Ghanaian Government's Beyond Aid Strategy. We welcome DFID's direct delivery interventions, but as the UK aid portfolio shifts towards reducing financial support for Ghana's social services, we are concerned about the impact on the most vulnerable, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. (Paragraph 64)
10. We recognise and welcome that Ghana has made substantial development gains supported by UK aid, and welcome the successful role the UK has had in supporting this. However, the coronavirus pandemic and its global economic impact may negatively affect Ghana's economic trajectory and development needs, particularly in areas where UK ODA spend has reduced in recent years. (Paragraph 69)
11. We welcome the Government's continued commitment to girls' education, especially in the northern regions of Ghana where strong inequalities remain. It is clear that the UK aid portfolio in Ghana has been largely successful in supporting social sectors such as education, which in turn fosters sustainability. Evidence suggests that women and girls will bear the brunt of negative impacts from the covid-19 pandemic and will continue to need dedicated support in developing countries. (Paragraph 73)
12. *To help support an 'Empowered' and 'Inclusive' Ghana and in line with the Prime Minister's priorities for the UK aid budget, the FCDO should continue to ensure girls' education remains a priority across UK aid spending in Ghana, especially in the poorest parts of the country. In light of pressures on the UK aid budget due to Covid-19, the Department should engage with the Ghanaian Government to review the impact in terms of support for quality education in Ghana.* (Paragraph 73)

# Formal minutes

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## Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI

**Tuesday 17 November 2020**

Members present:

Theo Clarke, in the Chair

Mr Richard Bacon	Kate Osamor
Sarah Champion	Navendu Mishra
Brendan Clarke-Smith	Dr Dan Poulter
Mrs Pauline Latham	Mr Virendra Sharma

Draft report (*The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Summary and paragraphs 1 to 8 set aside.

Paragraphs 9 to 74 read and agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the report be the second report of the Sub-Committee to the Committee.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the report to the Committee.

[Adjourned to a date and time to be fixed by the Chair.]

## International Development Committee

**Tuesday 17 November 2020**

Members present:

Sarah Champion, in the Chair

Mr Richard Bacon	Kate Osamor
Theo Clarke	Navendu Mishra
Brendan Clarke-Smith	Dr Dan Poulter
Mrs Pauline Latham	Mr Virendra Sharma

Draft Report (*The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Summary read, and agreed to.

Paragraphs 1 to 74 read and agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

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

[Adjourned till Thursday 19 November at 9.30 a.m.]

## Witnesses

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

### Thursday 09 July 2020

**James Duddridge MP**, Minister for Africa, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development; **Philip Smith**, Country Director, Department for International Development; **Iain Walker**, High Commissioner to Ghana, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Q1–13](#)

**Dr Tamsyn Barton**, Chief Commissioner, Independent Commission for Aid Impact; **Sally Ofori-Yeboah**, National Director, CAMFED Ghana; **Aaron Oxley**, Executive Director, Results UK; **Nana Afadzinu**, Executive Director, West African Civil Society Institute

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## List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

### Session 2019–21

First Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: the Rohingya	HC 259 (HC 658)
Second Report	Effectiveness of UK aid: interim findings	HC 215 (HC 820)
Third Report	The Newton Fund Review: report of the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI	HC 260 (HC 742)
Fourth Report	Effectiveness of UK aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger	HC 596 (HC 820)
Fifth Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: impact of coronavirus (interim findings)	HC 292
First Special Report	Follow up: sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector: Government Response to the First Report of the Committee	HC 127
Second Special Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: the Rohingya: Government Response to the First Report of the Committee, Session 2019–21	HC 658
Third Special Report	The Newton Fund review: report of the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 742
Fourth Special Report	Effectiveness of UK Aid: Interim Report & Effectiveness of UK Aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger: Government Response to the Second & Fourth Reports of the Committee	HC 820