



James Duddridge MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Africa)
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

17 March 2021

Dear James,

Follow up to the International Relations and Defence Committee (IRDC) report, *The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa: prosperity, peace and development co-operation*

The IRDC undertakes regular follow up work on its past inquiries. The Committee has recently considered progress and action against the conclusions and recommendations of its report, *The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa: prosperity, peace and development co-operation*, published in July 2020.¹ This review reflected on the Government response to the report,² our correspondence in November 2020,³ and the publication of the Integrated Review, *Global Britain in a competitive age*, on 16 March 2021.⁴

As the debate on our report on the floor of the House is unlikely to be scheduled for some time, we have a list of questions, set out below, to which we would be grateful for your response in writing.

Africa strategy

1. You told us during our inquiry that: “Later this year [2020] following our analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 in Africa, we will be updating the strategic approach and will publish the updated information online.”⁵ The Government response stated that “We intend to publish further information in due course”.⁶ Now that the Integrated Review has been published, which committed to “maintain our commitment to Africa, with a particular focus on East Africa and on important partners such as Nigeria”, made further reference to “partnership with South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana in particular to further our shared prosperity goals, our democratic values and our security interests”, and mentioned UK contributions to stabilisation in Sudan, Somalia and peacekeeping in Mali, when will further information on the Government’s strategic approach for Africa be published?

We would welcome in particular information on: (1) how the Government intends better to engage with African governments and institutions, (2) the role to be played by high-profile initiatives such as visits and summits, (3) how soft power will be utilised (4) how the Government plans to increase UK trade with and investment in Africa, and (5) what the UK’s objectives in the Sahel are, and how the UK’s current engagement, including support for Operation Barkhane and MINUSMA, are furthering these objectives.

¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1830/documents/17881/default/>

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2504/documents/28421/default/>

³ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/3671/documents/35629/default/> and
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2982/documents/28419/default/>

⁴

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969402/The_Integrated_Review_of_Security_Defence_Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf

⁵ <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/6414/html/>

⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2504/documents/28421/default/>

Investment

2. We reiterate the importance of setting a target against which an increase in investment in Africa can be measured. How, and with what metrics, is the Government measuring the impact of UK investment on economic growth and job creation in Africa?
3. Are all the deals announced at the Africa Investment Summit 2020 underway? Could you please provide an update on progress in this regard?

Africa in global institutions

4. How is the Government engaging leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa in G7 discussions this year?

Commonwealth

5. In its formal response to the report, the Government welcomed our “encouragement to discuss further specifically with African Commonwealth partners how the work of the Commonwealth institutions can be strengthened in Africa”, and committed to “do so as part of our regular engagement with them on Commonwealth business.” Could you please update us on this engagement, and the response of African Commonwealth members?

Debt

6. Would the Government support a further extension to the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) until the end of March 2022 (a full two years, as we proposed in our report)?
7. Can anything further be done to encourage private creditors to participate in the DSSI?
8. Does the Government regard the Common Framework for Future Debt Treatments to be sufficient, or will debt relief will also be needed? If the latter, what discussions have been had with international partners and creditors on reducing the debt burden of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa?

FCDO structure

9. Could you please provide (1) the final organisational structure of the FCDO and (2) an explanation of how departments are structured to accommodate both former FCO issues and ODA allocation?

ODA

10. When figures are made public in the spring, we request that you write to the Committee to set out how the reduction of the ODA budget in 2020-21 affected programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa.
11. When figures are made public please provide us with information on the cuts made to ODA programmes for 2021-22, given the planned reduction in ODA spending to 0.5% of gross national income.

Aid for Trade

12. When figures are made public in the spring, please write to us on the impact of cuts to ODA in (1) 2020-21 and (2) 2021-22 on the Government’s support for the AU Support Programme and TradeMark East Africa.
13. We are concerned that cuts to funding for TradeMark East Africa for may undermine its viability as a going concern. What assessment have you made of the impact of cuts on the ongoing viability of (1) TMEA’s long term infrastructure projects and (2) TMEA as a going concern?
14. We are concerned that the UK’s reputation in East Africa, and amongst development partners, will be damaged by cuts to Aid for Trade, particularly to TMEA. What assessment have you made of the impact of UK ODA cuts to TMEA on the UK’s relationships (1) in the region) and (2) with other funders of TMEA?
15. Which Aid for Trade programmes which the UK previously supported through the EU still receive funding from the UK, now that the transition period has ended?
16. Aid for Trade projects are, by their nature, long-term and multi-year undertakings. Does the UK have an Aid for Trade Strategy, which considers the necessity for long-term capital? If so, we request that you provide it to us.

Trade policy

17. In his letter of 5 November 2020, the Minister for Africa stated that the UK is a key trading partner for African nations and that “in the future” it will deepen the existing agreements “to make them even better for business”. What has the Government done in this regard, now that the EU transition period has ended? What plans do you have to provide better terms to African trading partners in the future?
18. What planning and consultation has the Government undertaken on giving better access to Africa’s agricultural exports and support the processing in Africa of a greater proportion of its agricultural products?

Export credits

19. When will the Government’s policy no longer to provide any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas be implemented?

Remittances

20. Please provide detail on the work the UK is undertaking with the World Bank and through the Financial Sector Deepening Africa programme on reducing the cost of remitting money. How is this distinct from, and co-ordinated with, the work on remittances of the FCDO’s Harnessing Innovation for Financial Inclusion programme? What is your assessment of the effectiveness of these programmes to date?
21. Is the Government exploring the possibility of remittance matching?

Mali

22. Are the UK troops deployed to MINUSMA undertaking the operation as envisioned when the deployment was agreed, including long range reconnaissance?
23. Have UK troops deployed to MINUSMA been provided with the necessary air capability to provide casualty evacuation and troop transport?
24. What consideration, if any, has been given to using the Chinooks provided to Operation Barkhane in support of UK troops deployed to MINUSMA?
25. We are concerned that there has been insufficient UK diplomatic and political engagement in seeking a resolution to the situation in Mali. Could you please set out how the UK is contributing to a political settlement, and the diplomatic resources it is providing to this end?

Somalia

26. What actions have been taken in support of peaceful parliamentary and presidential elections in Somalia?

Nigeria

27. What current support is provided by the UK Government to Nigeria’s security forces?
28. Please provide us with an update on the representations the Government has made to the Nigerian government to support urgent action to secure the release of all those abducted by insurgent groups in Nigeria.

Cameroon

29. We are concerned by the ongoing violence in Cameroon. While recognising the importance of Cameroonian participation in counter-terrorism efforts in the Lake Chad region, we urge the Government to use all diplomatic means to press the government of Cameroon to engage in talks with Anglophone leaders. Could you please provide an update on recent engagement to this end?
30. Is the UK engaging with the US Administration to address the treatment of the Anglophone community in Cameroon, particularly in light of cross-party efforts in Congress to bring greater pressure to bear on the government of Cameroon?
31. What is the UK’s assessment of the security impact of the conflict in Cameroon on neighbouring countries?

Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative

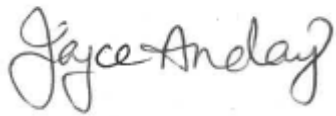
32. Please provide us with (1) an update on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) strategy, and (2) details of funding for the PSVI in 2020-21.

CHOGM

33. Please provide us with an update on (1) how and (2) when the issues of freedom of religion and belief, LGBTQ+ rights and issues relating to the human rights of women and girls have been raised with Commonwealth governments in the run up to CHOGM, and (3) whether these issues will feature on the CHOGM agenda.

I have also copied this letter to Greg Hands, Minister for Trade Policy, following our discussion on trade policy in Africa in November 2020.

Yours, as ever

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jayce Anelay". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns
Chair, International Relations and Defence Committee