

**Written evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on behalf of
Her Majesty's Government (UKA0012)**

House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) Inquiry

Beyond Aid: The UK's Strategic Engagement in Africa

Introduction

1. This memorandum explains Her Majesty's Government's (HMG) strategic approach to sub-Saharan Africa. It outlines the rationale for key focus areas, activity and early progress, and responds to Committee interest in UK cooperation on security, migration and trade and promotion of democratic transitions. It builds on evidence delivered by then-Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin to the Foreign Affairs Committee on 12 March 2019; the Minister's session with the Africa All-Party Parliamentary Group on 13 November 2018 and 4 June 2019 and on former Prime Minister Theresa May's speech in Cape Town on 28 August 2018.

Strategic context

2. Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing a period of rapid and dynamic change, driven by major economic, climatic and demographic trends. The region already has the world's youngest and fastest growing population, 62% of people in the region are under 25¹ and the population is projected to double to 2.1 billion by 2050.² The

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019: Data Booklet* (ST/ESA/SER.A/424). [Viewed 29 August 2019]. Available from: https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_DataBooklet.pdf

² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019: Data Booklet* (ST/ESA/SER.A/424). [Viewed 29 August 2019]. Available from: https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_DataBooklet.pdf

IMF estimates that the region's working age population will increase by an average of 20 million each year over the next two decades³. This represents a huge resource of human capital. This young and fast-growing population can be a powerful engine for economic growth and poverty reduction. But for this generation to build prosperous futures for themselves and for their countries, they need quality education, healthcare, and productive jobs.

3. Progress across African countries has not been uniform, and far too many people on the continent have not benefited from everyday improvements to education, healthcare, and security. 600 million people in Africa currently do not have access to electricity⁴ and, over the next century, climate change will have a profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of communities through increasing temperatures and extreme weather events. By 2030, 90% of extreme poverty is likely to be concentrated in Africa⁵, and instability remains a persistent challenge.
4. International allies and competitors are also offering more to the continent. It is therefore in our national interest to ensure the UK's offer stands out if we want to remain competitive and use our resources effectively. In 2018, the UK Government agreed that we needed to take a new strategic approach. To remain competitive, we agreed to step up our presence in Africa, reprioritising 1% of HMG's current spending in sub-Saharan Africa to increase the size of our network by around 33% and to open 5 new missions (eSwatini, Chad, Niger,

³ Abdychev A., Alonso C., et al., (2018). *The Future of Work in Sub-Saharan Africa* [online]. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund African Department. [Viewed 29 August 2019]. Available from: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Departmental-Papers-Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/12/14/The-Future-of-Work-in-Sub-Saharan-Africa-46333>

⁴ IEA's World Energy Outlook 2018. <https://www.iea.org/weo2018/>

⁵ DFID Chief Economist's Office, (CEOFF) Oct 2017, internal modelling based on IMF and World Bank data.

Lesotho and Djibouti). We need to ensure that we deliver an integrated, whole of Government approach with an increased focus on five key areas where the UK can make strong contributions that match African priorities:

- a. Prosperity
- b. Security and stability
- c. Climate change and sustainable natural resource management
- d. Demographic transition
- e. The Sahel

5. As a package, these shifts should deliver a more modern, innovative and exciting UK offer to African countries, built around shared interests. They are not wholly new areas of work for the UK. The biggest shift in each is adopting a ‘fusion’ approach to long-term delivery: successfully deploying the full range of UK assets to increase our support to countries whilst, at the same, time enabling the UK to more successfully realise its interests. The four thematic areas are mutually reinforcing and connected, for example, security is essential for prosperity and climate change will affect the region’s pathway to greater prosperity. These issues all come together in the Sahel, an area of long-term instability and extreme poverty where we have traditionally had little representation.

Taking these themes in turn:

Prosperity

6. Stronger economic partnerships will deliver increased investment into African countries, encourage job creation and grow UK-Africa trade relationships. This is

for African partners looking to transition from aid recipients to commercial and political partners, capable of financing all their own development needs. We already have deep trade and investment relationships across much of Africa, with over £50 million investment wins recorded from 10 projects in South Africa in 2018-2019, and we currently export as much to Africa as we do to China. We are strengthening our commercial expertise on the continent by 50%, allowing us to focus on emerging important markets, e.g. Angola, Mozambique and Cote d'Ivoire. We are working with businesses, investors, governments and international institutions to enable trade that creates jobs, stimulates investment, diversifies economies and creates the environment for businesses to thrive. We are aiming to:

- Increase public and private investment in Africa, particularly into economic infrastructure and agriculture, areas which countries themselves have identified as key to development. We will also maximise the use of instruments including CDC (the UK's development finance arm) and UK Export Finance, to help meet the estimated \$1.2 trillion annual investment gap the continent faces⁶ and improve access to finance and reduce illicit financial flows by supporting development of robust financial systems.
- Increase government revenues, including taxes, with a focus on the equitable, accountable and sustainable economic growth that, ultimately, increases everyday living standards and drives long-term poverty reduction.

⁶ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Centre for Africa. (2019). *Africa 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Three-Year Reality Check* [online]. Kigali, Rwanda: SDG Center for Africa. [Viewed 29 August 2019]. Available from: <https://sdgcafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/AFRICA-2030-SDGs-THREE-YEAR-REALITY-CHECK-REPORT.pdf>

- Increase African trade flows with the global economy, including broader and deeper trade arrangements with the UK, to enable African products to reach world markets.
- Position the UK as a key partner for investment and trade, by creating opportunities for British businesses to win contracts, increase exports and grow relationships with the markets of the future. To this end, we intend to host an Africa Investment Summit in 2020 for some of the larger and more open economies in Africa. This will be a key moment to bring together government and business leaders from across Africa and the UK with investors and multilateral organisations.
- The focus, in the early stages of this approach, has included making almost £300 million of UK aid newly available through the Private Infrastructure Development Group to deliver essential infrastructure, such as power, roads and water, and lay foundations for new trading and business opportunities. Additionally, we have introduced cargo-tracking technology and improved infrastructure in East Africa, which has slashed customs clearance times in Nairobi from nine to two days, and helped British companies like clothing manufacturer, Hela, do business. We will also work closely with the City of London to mobilise £4 billion of private sector investment.

Security and Stability

7. The UK has long been supporting African capacity to tackle African crises. We have a strong history of supporting United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) operations across Africa. Our long-standing engagement on Somalia is

contributing to stability and long-term development. We have effective training partnerships with troop contributing countries such as Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, which enable us to further our objectives for peace and security in Africa. We are the second largest bilateral donor to the International Organisation for Migration's work in Africa. Bilaterally, we support several countries (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya) to strengthen their ability to tackle organised crime (including illegal migration, drugs and illicit financial flows). We will now also have a greater, longer-term focus on upstream threats that will further support and help reduce future threats to African and UK interests.

8. The focus of this work includes preventing and resolving conflict by working with African institutions to find peaceful solutions; tackling serious and organised crime to enable stronger economic growth, managing migration, and building stronger regional and national public health institutions to deliver improved resilience to outbreaks of disease. Early examples of where the approach is taking effect include:

- A Defence Memorandum of Understanding with the Mozambique government. This enables us to strengthen our defence cooperation to tackle instability across Cabo Delgado. We are also focused on tackling long-term drivers of instability through humanitarian, education and CSSF programming. A new agreement with the Kenyan government to return stolen and corrupt funds that have been moved out of Kenya and hidden in UK banks. This is a further example of progress and part of a major new series of UK aid programmes to help bring criminals to justice and recover millions of pounds of illegal assets in developing countries.

- The UK's contribution to the current Ebola response (largely channelled through multilateral institutions) is intended to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries to effectively address the current outbreak, whilst strengthening national health systems and regional preparedness. We are focusing on deepening partnerships with regional and national public health institutions so they can improve capacity to prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks of infectious disease. We have completed 30 National Action Plans to date, with partners such as the World Health Organisation and African Public Health Institutes. These offer a road map for more resilient health systems and improve capacity to prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks of infectious disease. It is only through investment in stronger health systems that we can sustainably mitigate outbreaks of infectious disease, protecting people in African countries and around the world.
- Continuing our commitment to UN peacekeeping missions by preparing for the deployment in 2020 of 250 UK personnel, as part of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali. To support this, we are setting up new programmes to train troops from other African nations who will also deploy to UN peacekeeping missions. Three UK Chinook helicopters are currently deployed to the French-led Operation Barkhane. Additionally, we will be piloting new work to identify conflict and support mediation initiatives, which prevent more costly and damaging conflict; for example, in Ghana, where there is a threat of contagion from instability in Burkina Faso. We will be

supporting the AU with its peace support operations remit as part of the new strategic relationship that was agreed during the visit of the former Minister for Africa in February 2019.

Climate change and sustainable natural resource management

9. A sharper focus on climate change and natural resource management will deliver stronger African capacity to build resilience to the impacts of climate change, support clean growth and energy security. This will enable economic growth and prosperity, and protect the environment through sustainable natural resource use. Over the coming years, we aim to work with African governments, institutions and civil society to: integrate adaptation and resilience into long-term planning; deliver on the Paris Agreement; access climate finance; take the lead on climate in international fora and; improve use and understanding of climate science and data. Our work will include:

- Leading the way in scaling up efforts to build resilience to climate impacts, by encouraging countries to implement commitments from the UN Climate Action Summit, for which the UK is co-leading on the adaptation and resilience agenda with Egypt, in partnership with Malawi, Netherlands and Bangladesh.
- A new £250 million technical assistance programme from 2020, to support African countries increase their climate resilience, and supporting small-scale renewable projects across sub-Saharan Africa through the Renewable Energy Performance Platform.

- Investing into clean energy projects across the continent through UK Climate Investments and ensuring that, going forward, all UK Official Development Assistance is aligned to the Paris Agreement.
- Partnering with media experts and talented African creatives and activists to design effective multimedia climate communications.
- Engaging African partners to deliver a successful COP26 in 2020, which the UK has bid to host, in partnership with Italy.

Demographic Transition

10. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the world's youngest and fastest growing population. Realising the aspirations of this generation of young people will be key to the economic development of the region. Sustainable progress on this will be led by African governments, institutions and civil society organisations – but the UK will work in partnership on supportive policies and investments. In particular, we will partner on: greater access to quality education, especially for girls; healthcare including voluntary family planning; measures that tackle gender inequality and enable women to enter the labour market; and the creation of productive jobs that keep pace with numbers of workforce entrants. This includes:

- A commitment to spend £225 million every year until 2022 on voluntary family planning in low-income countries worldwide. This is estimated to give 20 million people access to contraception and save 6,000 women's lives each year. Our flagship Women's Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) programme, operating in 24 countries in Africa (and 3 in Asia), will ensure that six million couples a year can gain reliable access to voluntary contraception.

- Our Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) supports up to 1.5 million marginalised girls with access to education across 17 countries, 14 of which are in Africa.
- The UK Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR) programme improves accessibility, affordability, quality and relevance of higher education systems in sub-Saharan Africa and builds capabilities of young people to meet labour market needs. Seven of the nine partnerships within SPHEIR are led by, or involve, UK universities. Over five years, SPHEIR expects to reach more than 78,000 students and 1,500 academics and teaching staff.
- Ventures to stimulate large-scale job creation, e.g. the Kenya Catalytic Jobs Fund (KCJF), which aims to work with 15 companies over the next four years.

The Sahel

11. We will pivot UK resources towards Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania, which are areas of long-term instability and extreme poverty. We aim to deliver development impact, address long term threats, and support our alliances with international partners such as France, Germany and the AU as we exit the European Union. Our efforts in the Sahel seek to contain threats to regional security and wider UK interests, and make migration safer while providing critical humanitarian support to those who need it. Activities in this area include:

- Membership of the international Sahel Alliance platform, which is designed to improve the effectiveness of development aid in the region. Through this

and our Sahel Envoy, we aim to improve international coordination and establish mutual accountability between Sahel governments and donors, such as France and Germany, to drive forward progress on long-term solutions to the drivers of conflict, poverty, and instability.

- Leadership of the Sahel Alliance gender group, which seeks to mainstream gender in programmes and increase targeted investments to promote gender equality in the region.
- Providing life-saving humanitarian aid to 2.3 million people across the region between 2015-19, in our capacity as the third largest humanitarian donor to the Sahel.
- A £50 million contribution (since 2014) to support the development of national social protection systems that can adapt and respond to the impacts of climate change. Early success has enabled the UK to leverage German and French support.
- Providing up to £30 million to support education in the Sahel and neighbouring countries to help up to 100,000 children, 50% of whom will be girls, gain a quality education.
- An increased UK presence by growing our embassies in Mali and Mauritania, opening a regional hub in Dakar, Senegal, and establishing new embassies in Niger and Chad. This will allow us to more effectively address the causes of instability, poverty and conflict, and contain threats to regional security and wider UK interests.

Enablers

12. Underpinning these five shifts are a set of key enablers; namely people/platform, science and technology, soft power and strategic communications.

People/Platform

13. Additional funding is supporting eight participating HMG departments⁷ to fund approximately 400 new positions (front line and support staff) in 49 locations. Of these, roughly 75% will be in the Africa network, 20% in the UK and 5% in the wider global network such as Ankara, New York, Cairo, Beijing, Paris, and Riyadh. New High Commissions in eSwatini and Lesotho have recently opened, giving the UK a presence in all Commonwealth countries in Africa. This will be followed by new embassies in Niger, Chad and Djibouti. We are also expanding the cross-Government AU team in Addis Ababa, reflecting the importance of the AU as a partner for the UK.

Science and technology

14. The last Spending Review period has seen a doubling (from approximately £550 million per annum in 2016/2017 to £1.2 billion per annum in 2020/2021) of Official Development Assistance (ODA)-funded research and innovation across HMG. This will allow us to focus on scaling-up new technologies and innovations in African countries to transform the lives of the poorest, and promote growth of African economies. We will build more ambitious UK-Africa science partnerships and facilitate development of science, technology and innovation markets for the future. Early progress in this area includes:

⁷ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Department for International Development, Department for International Trade, Department of Health and Social Care, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Home Office, HM Revenue & Customs and Ministry of Defence.

- In May 2019, co-hosting with the Kenyan government a high-level symposium of UK and Kenyan researchers, urbanisation specialists, innovators and entrepreneurs to support development of affordable housing and sustainable infrastructure.
- The Government's Tech Hub Network flagship 'Go Global Africa 2019' programme brought 18 innovative digital start-ups from South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria to the UK. This led to potential job creation, securing of international investment and created opportunities to scale businesses to the UK.
- Launching the £25 million FLAIR Research Fellowships (Future Leaders African Independent Research), a joint programme of the African Academy of Science and Royal Society, designed to help talented early-career researchers whose science is focused on the needs of the continent.
- UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) is developing a Government strategy compiling all UK-funded doctoral fellowships, raising the profile and demonstrating the significance of UK funded UK-Africa PhD research support.

Soft power

15. The UK has a distinctive offer: the English language as the global language for business; the span and credibility of the BBC World Service; our world-class education system; the strength of our arms-length institutions; our cultural and sporting reputation and; the dynamic and engaged African diaspora communities in the UK. But our research shows us that Africans, including in some of the 19

African Commonwealth nations, no longer feel an instinctive affinity with the UK and have limited awareness of what the UK has to offer in comparison with other global powers. To address this, and to strengthen our soft power offer, we have set aside up to £7 million of ODA programme funds to specifically focus on:

- Increasing our Africa Chevening Programme by 25%.
- Expanding the British Council English language programmes in Francophone West Africa. This has increased their reach from 2 million to 16 million people.
- Improving our ability to reach young Africans by investing in a new strategic communications capacity, that will transform the way we communicate in Africa, including to the rising generation of future leaders.

International engagement

16. Real transformation will come through a co-ordinated African and international effort. International engagement in Africa has changed significantly over the last 20 years. China has become Africa's biggest trading partner⁸, Germany, Turkey, Brazil, Russia, India and the Gulf States are increasingly active. The US, EU and France remain significant players and will continue to be important long-term strategic partners for the UK in Africa, including in the promotion of a rules-based approach, and shared interests in security, economic development, and promoting democracy and good governance. We engage in regular dialogues with them on Africa, sharing information and aligning approaches (for example, at a senior official meeting in July, the P3 agreed to work together to support

⁸ Abdychev A., Alonso C., et al., (2018). *The Future of Work in Sub-Saharan Africa* [online]. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund African Department. [Viewed 29 August 2019]. Available from: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Departmental-Papers-Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/12/14/The-Future-of-Work-in-Sub-Saharan-Africa-46333>

Nigeria's efforts to address insecurity in the Lake Chad basin). We are also putting extra staff in Paris to work alongside the French government on the Sahel, and continuing strategic dialogues on Africa bilaterally with countries such as Italy and Germany.

17. China is sub-Saharan Africa's largest trading partner⁹ and a significant source of investment and development finance, such as the \$60 billion commitment announced at the 2018 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The full scale and impact of Chinese finance is difficult to assess due to the lack of transparency, although there is some evidence that its lending is contributing to debt distress in several countries. China tends to focus on infrastructure and economic development activities, increasingly including telecommunications, with delivery linked to Chinese implementers.

18. China is open to co-operating with the UK in Africa, where it values our security, humanitarian, development and commercial expertise. Whilst we are aware of the risks involved, working with China to improve the effectiveness of their investments could contribute significantly to development in Africa, and create opportunities for UK firms, whilst continuing to protect our values and Africa's development interests. We have collaborated with China on public health issues, including joint UK-China health projects in developing countries and support to regional public health bodies. Global public health is an area that we will continue to engage on with China, including working through multilateral agencies. DFID's Global Development Partnership with China, and the UK-China strategic dialogue

⁹ Abdychev A., Alonso C., et al., (2018). The Future of Work in Sub-Saharan Africa [online]. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund African Department. [Viewed 29 August 2019]. Available from: <https://www.imf.org/en>

on Africa provide opportunities to help shape Chinese policy on development assistance. They also allow us to engage with China to promote peace and security in Africa, including through UN peacekeeping (China is now the biggest contributor to UN peacekeeping operations).

19. The interest in Africa from the Gulf States, Turkey and others has also risen significantly in recent years. Turkey has 42 Embassies in Africa and between 2000 and 2017, Gulf States invested \$13 billion in the Horn of Africa, mainly in Sudan and Ethiopia.¹⁰ A renewed UAE focus on shipping and port infrastructure has, for example, led them to overtake Saudi Arabia as the largest GCC investor in East Africa.¹¹ We have appointed a UK Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, to work with partners across the region in support of inclusive and collaborative approaches to shared challenges, e.g. piracy, terrorism, illegal migration and trafficking. We have also increased the number of officers at some of our non-African embassies, such as Riyadh, Cairo and Ankara who will also track other countries' engagements in Africa.

20. The AU is playing an important role in building political consensus among African countries on difficult issues. In recognition, we have increased the size of the UK mission to the AU and signed up to a new partnership and regular high-level dialogue with the AU in February 2019. In addition to traditional peace and

¹⁰ Meester J., van den Berg W., Verhoeven H., (2018). *Riyal Politik: The political economy of Gulf investments in the Horn of Africa* [online]. Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations CRU report. 45. [Viewed 06 September 2019]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324747567_Riyal_Politik_The_political_economy_of_Gulf_investments_in_the_Horn_of_Africa

¹¹ Meester J., van den Berg W., Verhoeven H., (2018). *Riyal Politik: The political economy of Gulf investments in the Horn of Africa* [online]. Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations CRU report. 47-48. [Viewed 06 September 2019]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324747567_Riyal_Politik_The_political_economy_of_Gulf_investments_in_the_Horn_of_Africa

security cooperation, we now also engage the AU on trade, migration, climate change, demography and serious and organised crime. For example, we are providing technical support to the AU to help them develop their ambition of African Continental Free Trade Area, with potential for a single African market of 1.2 billion people and \$2.5 trillion Gross Domestic Product, creating the largest free-trade bloc in the world and boosting African growth.

Values and democracy

21. Equality, respect for human rights and good governance, promoting democracy, and values remains at the heart of the work that we do; for example, we have worked closely with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) organisations in certain countries to ensure that our strategies help protect and promote their rights, without damaging their safety. We have supported civil society in Ethiopia, resulting in a new law which abolished the prevention of foreign-funded Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) engaging in advocacy on human rights and democracy issues. These changes should make a major difference to how Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) operate.

22. We support good governance and democracy. Where political transitions are taking place we work hard to shape and support a more inclusive political settlement across all sectors of society. In Nigeria we trained over 100 CSOs across the country to monitor the electoral process. In Kenya, we have provided around £10 million to support elections and strengthen democracy, including by supporting women's political empowerment, voter education, election security and peace messaging, disability inclusion, legal reforms and domestic

observation. In Somalia, the UK is providing £27 million over four years to support elections, and a revised constitution, to help build a more stable and democratic country.

23. We have long supported democratic progress in Sudan and commend the successful mediation efforts of the AU to deliver agreement to a transition to civilian led government. We worked alongside Troika partners Norway and the US, as well as with UN and international partners to emphasise the importance of human rights, protection of civilians, and justice and accountability for atrocities committed by both the former regime and by the Sudanese authorities during recent events. Lord Ahmad and Minister Stephenson have expressed UK support for the new civilian-led government in Sudan in meeting the challenges ahead and ensuring that respect for human rights are at the heart of the democratic transition.

24. In Zimbabwe, the UK co-funded approximately 6,700 domestic election observers as well as another 7,600 human rights observers during the 2018 elections. We have pushed for greater respect for human rights, constitutionality and wider political reforms with the new government. But we are clear that for the Zimbabwean government to achieve the international re-engagement it desires, including Commonwealth re-admission, the UK, alongside international partners, require further progress on fundamental political reform. We work with political leaders from all sides to encourage political and economic reform and support a credible national dialogue.

25. We welcome the Committee's timely interest in this agenda, as we begin to put in place the strategic approach and framework to guide UK activity across sub-Saharan Africa. This approach is about establishing long-term, meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships by forging strong connections, building on our common interests and delivering a safer, healthier and more prosperous future for us all. The UK Government is committed to driving this approach forward and we are putting additional resource in place to support this change. Given this is a long-term agenda and we are at the early stages of implementation, we propose keeping the Committee updated.

September 2019