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Dear Chair and Committee Members

Thank you for inviting me to give evidence on Tuesday. I hope it was useful. I just wanted to give some further clarification to a couple of the points I was making. Please let me know if there is anything else I can clarify.

1. I mentioned just under half a billion pounds of cuts to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). The precise figures are based on Penny Mordaunt's Statement of CSSF allocations on 28th January and the budget outlined in the Integrated Review on page 79: the CSSF will be cut from approximately £1.366billion in 2020-1 by £492million to £874million in 2021-2. As the CSSF includes both ODA and non-ODA funding not all of this cut is ODA. The ODA cut is based on the statement by Penny Mordaunt and Dominic Raab's statement on the 26th January. They show a cut to the CSSF's ODA budget from £685.8 million in 2020-1 by £348.9million to £337million in 2021-2. While the CSSF is not perfect there is a huge risk that these cuts substantially undermine the Integrated Review's stated objective to 'reduce the frequency and intensity of conflict and instability, to alleviate suffering and to minimise the opportunities for state and non-state actors to undermine international security'.
2. I referred to how the UK cuts had already impacted our work in Myanmar. Just to clarify what that looks like, Saferworld was working with the CSSF on a three year programme to support communities to identify and respond to challenges for their security which was split into three one year contracts. In a normal year we would have had clarity on the coming year's contract and a grant agreement in place by the end of the financial year. Despite the government's position that no decisions have been made on the cuts, with no contract in place for the third year of the agreed programme we have had to suspend that programme in full. The knock on effect has been that partners that include a Myanmar legal association and a number of Myanmar women's organisations have had to suspend their activities. As part of the planned £1million pound programme this year and responding to needs identified by communities they

were due to work on issues such as gender based violence and the impact of Covid-19 on women in border areas. In the wake of a military takeover, escalating violence and curtailing fundamental freedoms it feels like the UK is walking away from these Myanmar organisations.

3. I know the Committee is also looking at the issue of aid cuts to Yemen and my answer to Kate Osamor's question on joining up development and diplomacy is equally valid. The UK needs to ensure that it approaches Yemen with the diplomatic tools to support an inclusive peace process but also that it is using the aid budget to support bottom up peacebuilding to build dialogue, pockets of stability and support Yemeni civil society who will make that peace process truly inclusive and sustainable. The UK also needs to ensure that it maintains stable funding to the Yemeni organisations working across peace, development and humanitarian assistance. The government should clarify whether it will maintain the same proportion of funding to them after the cuts.
4. Despite some welcome commitments to conflict resolution in the Integrated Review we discussed some of the lack of clarity on how the UK intends to join up its diplomatic and development tools. One of the areas I mentioned was the lack of clarity on the status of either the Building Stability Overseas Strategy or DFID's Building Stability framework. The Building Stability Framework examined how a range of dynamics including fair structures and inclusive economic development can have a positive impact on stability alongside conflict resolution. According to the OECD's 2018 State of Fragility Report 80% of the world's poorest people will be living in fragile countries by 2030 – underscoring the developmental imperative for addressing conflict. I hope the Committee will be able to seek some clarity on whether the government intends to use DFID's Building Stability Framework as the basis of a cross government conflict prevention strategy. Ensuring this is cross-government is imperative to guide other departments operating in conflict locations such as the Ministry of Defence and Home Office in addition to the CSSF and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The Defence Command Paper articulates a greater role for the UK military and training to partner forces. In places with poor governance and low respect for human rights this comes with risks, particularly if not joined up in a coherent way that does not undermine development approaches. The merger of DFID's conflict prevention expertise with the Cabinet Office's Stabilisation Unit expertise in the FCDO's Office for Conflict, Stability and Mediation means this office is well placed to lead on this cross-government strategy.
5. I also hope the FCDO will also be able to clarify to the Committee whether it intends to transfer some form of DFID's target to spend 50% of its budget in fragile and conflict affected countries established by the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015.

Thank you again for hearing me and please do let me know if I can clarify anything further.



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