

## Written evidence submitted by Robbie Marwick (IRN0041)

### Clarification questions following in-person submission<sup>1</sup> to Select Committee:

- What is your opinion on the attractiveness of Great Green Wall related investments to foreign investors and project managers?
  - *Despite the news and media covering the Great Green Wall, this is not an initiative that has come across my desk with any commercial angle. As such I do not have a strong view on how attractive investment in relation to this may be. However, given the complexities of cross border projects I think this would be a complicated project for any commercial investor to get behind.*
- Short of simply not changing their policies, how could the Government safeguard projects in the pipeline from the impact of changes in policy and funding priorities?
  - *I think the government could do two things: 1) Isolate funding commitments from political changes by creating long term funding commitments/deployments that are then managed at arms length from the government 2) Consider better support for redirecting the projects to alternative funding pots within the government.*
- You mentioned on the phone that the ‘development’ part of DFIs, and the networks involved in DFIs, can represent a barrier. Could you elaborate on how things like an understanding of development projects (language, proposal formats, indicators of change etc.) can act as a barrier for private sector investors?
  - *Yes, within the development community there is an impression held by some, that we have essentially created an industry of development specialists who simply exist to create reports about what could be done or hasn't been done, but are unable or unincited to actually do anything. A prime example of this was in Ethiopia, where the level of DFI support for reports was so overwhelming that one minister who we worked with was genuinely shocked when we said we were actually going to get the project off the ground, as all the other support he had had to date had led to nothing more than reports, which he now had neatly arranged on the shelf behind him, where he had multiple reports covering the same issues done again and again funded by different DFIs (and sometime the same DFIs). Now this is an extreme example, and was clearly being communicated to us in a tongue and cheek fashion, however the underlying issue still remains; where essentially the target outcome of development style support is often dissociated from what is actually needed to get things done, so private sector actors who are not development consultants do not get involved.*

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<sup>1</sup> The witness is referring to the Foreign Affairs Committee evidence session on Tuesday 14 December 2021: [Foreign Affairs Committee - Committees - UK Parliament](#).

***January 2022***