



House of Commons  
International Development  
Committee

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# **Extreme poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals**

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**Fifth Report of Session 2022–23**





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Development Goals**

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

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## 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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## Summary

The number of people living in extreme poverty decreased substantially in recent decades, but progress was uneven and had slowed. Now, the effects of COVID-19, climate change and conflict are undermining progress towards eliminating extreme poverty. Without corrective action, decades of progress could be undermined. Eliminating extreme poverty is vital for the security and prosperity of all. The ‘Leave no one behind’ pledge is vital to the UK’s standing as a leader in development, but it has apparently been shelved since the merger of DFID and the FCO. The UK must explicitly reaffirm its commitment to the Leave no one behind agenda and the SDGs.

Some sectors are vital to poverty reduction, but they are not being prioritised accordingly. The Government must build on its recent position papers on health security and ending preventable deaths, as well as the disability inclusion and rights strategy, and develop a coherent cross-departmental Global Health Strategy. Funding for health programmes, particularly the Global Fund and Gavi, should continue to be protected despite the Government’s planned strategic shift to bilateral funding. Programmes targeting girls’ education are important, but building schools and training teachers must be accompanied by targeted actions to break the barriers that stop girls attending school. Those actions include general and reproductive health, WASH access, and preventing exploitative child labour and early marriage. Education spending must focus on the most impactful programmes for poverty reduction, particularly early years and primary education, and those that are disability inclusive, recognising the additional barriers children with disabilities face. The FCDO should continue to champion social protection systems, which can support girls’ access to education and support long-term poverty reduction. It must focus spending on the regions that need it most, including sub-Saharan Africa and fragile states, and it must use the Multidimensional Poverty Index to target spending.

Climate change is a threat multiplier, because it exacerbates existing inequalities and amplifies risk and deprivation for the most vulnerable. The UK must maintain its leadership on grant-based climate finance to help countries adapt to climate change without provoking and exacerbating debt crises. The Government must reconsider how it classifies such spending, which should not be classified as ODA if it mitigates emissions for which low-income countries were not responsible.

Cutting the ODA budget has damaged the UK’s reputation as a development leader. The cuts were made with little reference to need or poverty impact, and they disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable groups. Further cuts are reported to be imminent as the UK spends more ODA in the UK. The Government said that it knows what works. If that is true, the most effective programmes in reducing poverty must be protected and those that do not have a measurable effect on poverty should not be classified as ODA.

Trade and investment are important for large-scale poverty reduction, but trickle-down development is, at best, unreliable. Trade and investment must be designed to reach the poorest, and development finance institutions must show that they are directing investment to the extremely poor. Trade policy must be predicated on creating inclusive, sustainable growth and supporting economic diversification to build resilience.

The opportunity and necessity exist to positively redefine the meaning of Global Britain by focusing on interventions that deliver proven, scalable progress and value for money for UK taxpayers. Reprioritising ending extreme poverty, in terms of recognition and resourcing, is not only the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. The UK Government itself acknowledged ending extreme poverty, through the graduation approach, as a ‘best buy’ approach to development. Returning to the position of leadership on the extreme poverty agenda would not only be vitally important in terms of signalling but also an easy, effective, and universally well-received way for the UK Government to reclaim, and build from, decades of hard-won reputation, expertise and impact internationally.

# 1 Introduction

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1. The decrease in the number of people worldwide living in extreme poverty, from 1.93 billion in 1991 to 659 million in 2018, is one of the most significant success stories in development.<sup>1</sup> The UK is historically one of the largest providers of Official Development Assistance (ODA), and it has made a sustained contribution to that reduction in extreme poverty. However, progress on extreme poverty reduction had already slowed, and the combined threats of COVID-19, climate change and conflict threaten to undo decades of progress. Against that backdrop, we heard that the UK Government's focus on poverty reduction has diminished significantly. Reductions in funding for programmes addressing extreme poverty and the recent International Development Strategy (IDS), have done little to allay those fears.

2. In this inquiry, we examined what interventions are known to be most effective in helping people to lift themselves out, and to stay out, of extreme poverty. In early 2022, we received more than 55 written evidence submissions, held three oral evidence sessions, and conducted an informal roundtable event. In March, as part of our ongoing inquiry on the *Future of UK Aid*, we heard from organisations on the effect of aid cuts on women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. In May, we took evidence from the then Foreign Secretary after the publication of the International Development Strategy. Those sessions helped to inform this inquiry.

3. The response to our call for evidence is indicative of the strength of feeling and concern within the sector about the direction of travel in UK development policy and its focus on poverty reduction. We would like to thank those organisations and individuals who contributed to this inquiry by submitting formal evidence, by providing informal briefing and by assisting in organising the roundtable.

## 2 Extreme poverty: Definition and trends

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### World Bank definition of extreme poverty

4. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 1.1 is to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” by 2030.<sup>2</sup> In autumn 2022, the World Bank defined extreme poverty as living on less than \$2.15 per day, a 13% increase from the \$1.90 a day measure used since 2015.<sup>3</sup> This poverty line has increased incrementally from the dollar-a-day measure developed by a group of independent researchers and the World Bank in 1990. That metric uses the purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange to facilitate international comparisons.<sup>4</sup>

5. Measuring extreme poverty is problematic. Dr Palash Kamruzzaman, a senior lecturer in social policy at the University of South Wales, pointed out that the previous World Bank measure did not equate to people in Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ghana meeting their basic needs.<sup>5</sup> The use of a single level also does not address how many people survive on slightly higher incomes. Despite the limitations, the World Bank definition provides a simple metric with which to measure poverty at national levels and to judge progress over time. The new \$2.15 figure also uses a more recent PPP reference point derived from 2017 rather than 2011. That update changes the global extreme poverty rate for 2019 from 8.7% to 8.4%.<sup>6</sup> The World Bank explained that the increase that could be expected by raising the numerical value is offset by a marginal increase in individuals’ purchasing power in some countries, and that “the real value of the international poverty line is virtually unchanged—it is simply expressed in different prices now.”<sup>7</sup>

6. Accurate, up-to-date national poverty datasets are limited. The World Bank’s *Poverty and Inequality Platform* reports up to 2019, but it includes extrapolated data for certain countries. For example, the most up-to-date figures for India are from 2011.<sup>8</sup> That time lag makes it more difficult to judge the impact of short-term shocks. The available datasets are particularly poor for fragile and conflict-affected states, which often have high poverty rates, due to lack of institutional capacity.

### Multidimensional poverty

7. A more accurate picture of poverty and deprivation can be gained by using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), an economic research centre within the University of Oxford, stated:

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2 United Nations, [Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 1](#)

3 World Bank, [Fact Sheet: An Adjustment to Global Poverty Lines](#), 2 May 2022. The majority of this inquiry took place while the rate was set at \$1.90. For this reason, most of the evidence will refer to this rate. This rate is most relevant for low-income countries. The World Bank has higher rates for lower-middle and upper-middle income countries, now set at \$3.65 and \$6.85 a day respectively.

4 Ibid. Purchasing power parities (PPPs) are the rates of currency conversion that try to equalise the purchasing power of different currencies, by eliminating the differences in price levels between countries. ([OECD](#) definition). It was developed by examining how much was required to cover minimum nutritional, clothing, and shelter needs across a group of the poorest countries, and then converting the resulting national poverty lines into a common currency.

5 Dr Palash Kamruzzaman (Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at University of South Wales) ([SDG0003](#))

6 Ibid.

7 World Bank, [Fact Sheet: An Adjustment to Global Poverty Lines](#), 2 May 2022

8 World Bank, [Poverty and Inequality Platform](#)

The global MPI tracks changes in the number and share of people who are multidimensionally poor, the intensity of the joint deprivations they face, and in what indicators of poverty they are deprived.<sup>9</sup>

8. In addition to income, the MPI considers a variety of aspects of deprivation and their severity, focused on health, education and standard of living.<sup>10</sup> Dr Sabina Alkire, Director, OPHI, told us that the MPI has three advantages over a single income-based measure:

One is the precision of the \$1.90 a day. Sometimes it is based on a little old data. India's data is 2011, imputed from 2014, so that is difficult. A second is that the \$1.90 statistics are only available at the national level, but for us with the global multidimensional measure or for nutrition or education we can go within country. For example, for the national multidimensional measure, within Nigeria it is 4% to 88%. Within Haiti it is 4% to 61%. Chad is 42% to 99%, Ethiopia at 11% to 90%, India 1% to 52% across their states, so disaggregation requires measures beyond \$1.90 a day. The third is the remedy. If FCDO puts a child in school it will be years before that child grows up, earns an income and affects the \$1.90 a day, but if child school attendance is part of your measure it changes that year. If a child was undernourished, is sponsored and becomes well-nourished and the measure is \$1.90, it will take some time for that to change, but if you monitor it directly through one of the indicators of the multidimensional measure or through a dashboard it changes that year. Again, as a management and measurement tool it is a more precise tool.<sup>11</sup>

We refer to the \$1.90 (PPP 2011) / \$2.15 (PPP 2017) metric in this Report, because it is the measure used in the SDGs. However, the MPI provides a more detailed picture of deprivation and can be used to target assistance precisely.

## Progress since 1990

9. Target 1A of the Millennium Development Goals was to halve the rate of extreme poverty worldwide. This was achieved five years ahead of the 2015 deadline.<sup>12</sup> The overall numerical decrease is impressive given the population increase in the same period. Between 1993 and 2017, the world's population increased from 5.3 billion to 7.5 billion, while the number living in extreme poverty decreased from 1.9 billion to 689 million.<sup>13</sup> For that reason, the World Bank observed that SDG target 1.1 to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 "appeared ambitious but within reach."<sup>14</sup> Had the pre-2017 trend continued, the target would have been met in 2024, six years early.<sup>15</sup>

10. As Figure 1 shows, however, extreme poverty is more persistent in some regions and progress has been uneven. According to the World Bank, "of the 1.2 billion people that escaped extreme poverty from 1993 to 2017, 969 million (80 percent) were in China and

9 Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative ([SDG0047](#))

10 These are in turn subdivided into factors such as nutrition, water, sanitation, housing and access to schooling. See Oxford Policy Human Development Initiative, [Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021](#), p2. for full structure.

11 [Q5](#)

12 UN, [Millennium Goals, Poverty](#)

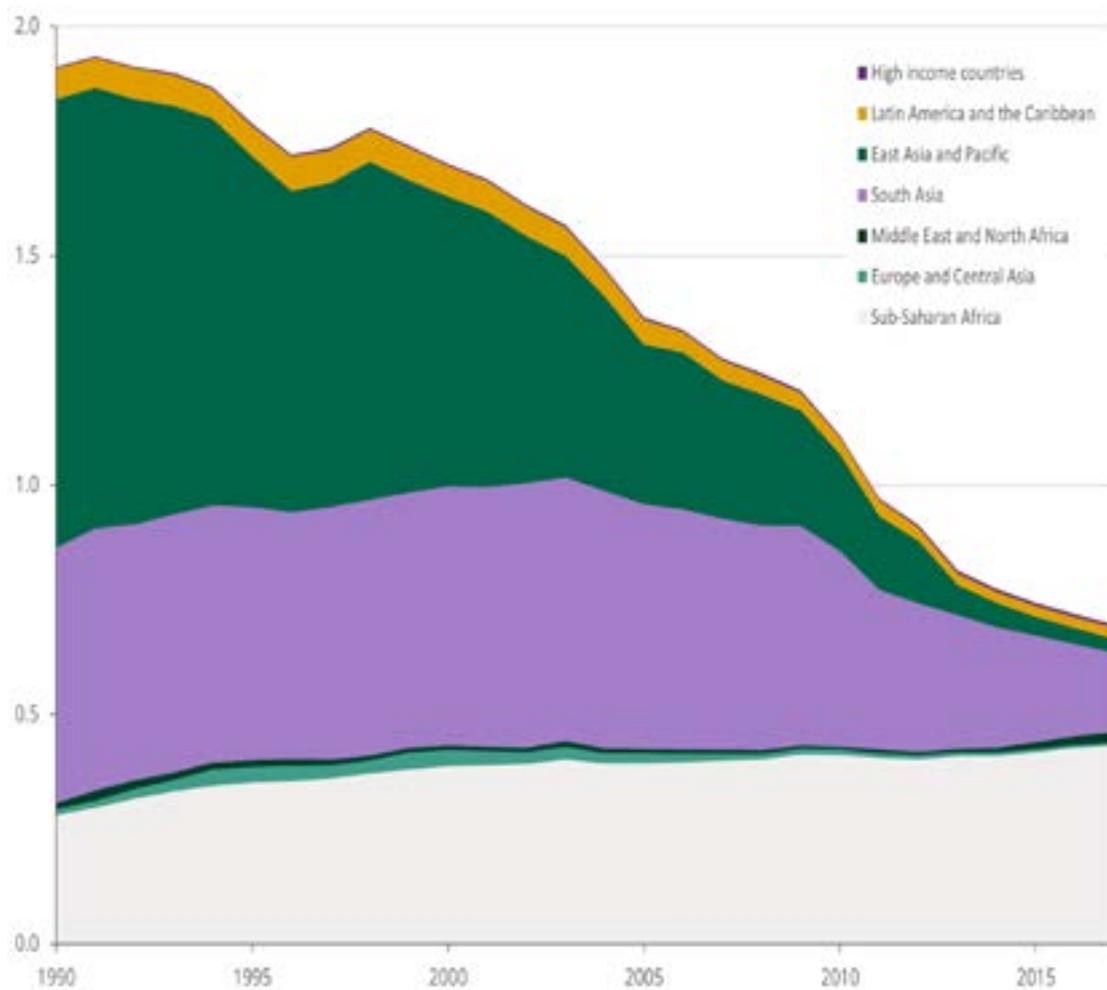
13 World Bank, [Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals 2020 From World Development Indicators](#)

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

India.”<sup>16</sup> Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, where the proportion of people in extreme poverty has remained high, and the number of people in extreme poverty has increased due to population growth. With the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, food and energy price shocks following the invasion of Ukraine, ongoing conflict, and increasing threats from climate change, the World Bank stated that its target of reducing extreme poverty to less than 3% is “nearly out of reach”. It predicted that extreme poverty will be around 7% in 2030.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 1: Number of people living in extreme poverty, by world region, 1990–2017 (billions)



Source: World Bank, [Poverty and Inequality Platform](#)

### ***Disproportionate impact and disaggregated data***

11. Poverty reduction is uneven not only between nations but within nations. Marginalised groups are disproportionately likely to be in extreme poverty and find it harder to lift themselves out of it. Christian Aid stated:

Extreme poverty, especially where discrimination and social exclusion are factors, is often invisible. People who face intersecting discriminations on

16 Ibid.

17 World Bank, [Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course](#), 2022, p.8

the basis of migration status, race, caste, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation may be isolated, marginalised, denied rights and recognition, be unable to access employment or social protection or be prevented from claiming entitlements, further increasing their invisibility to policymakers and upholding the cycle of poverty and exclusion.<sup>18</sup>

12. National poverty datasets sometimes fail to capture the experience of marginalised groups. They may show an overall improvement, but they do not show who has been left behind. The MPI allows the development of disaggregated data showing which groups are in poverty. Romilly Greenhill, UK Director, ONE Campaign, told us:

If you are a poor girl living in northern Ghana or northern Nigeria, you are significantly more likely to be living in extreme poverty than if you were a man in an urban area. It is logical but the inequality within countries is very extreme [...] It is also the case that we often have very poor levels of data to measure these things. On disability, for example, if you look at household surveys you are often not even picking up levels of disability. You do need some of these more disaggregated micro indicators to capture who is living in extreme poverty.<sup>19</sup>

Dr Alkire provided further examples:

In terms of disabilities, for example, in Uganda by a Washington Group definition, 76.5% of people with a person living with disabilities in their household were poor and 68% otherwise. A big group is children. I mentioned that for us and for the \$1.90 a day, both, children are a key group. We disaggregate every single year by children, and one half of the multidimensionally poor people have not celebrated their 18th birthday; they are children. Of the children in the developing world, one in three are multidimensionally poor, and of the adults it is one in six. This kind of information, as Romilly said, is very important: 55% of the population live in rural areas but 84% of the poor live in rural areas.<sup>20</sup>

## Recent drivers of poverty: The three Cs

13. Despite impressive progress in recent decades, Bond SDG Group highlighted that “even before the pandemic the world was not on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with progress stalling or reversing in some areas.”<sup>21</sup> Christian Aid told us:

Most of the world’s poorest countries are increasingly experiencing a nexus of compounded vulnerabilities owing to climate change, Covid-19 and increased levels of conflict. The world is now “tremendously off-track” to meet the SDGs.<sup>22</sup>

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18 Christian Aid ([SDG0031](#))

19 [Q6](#)

20 [Q6](#)

21 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0006](#))

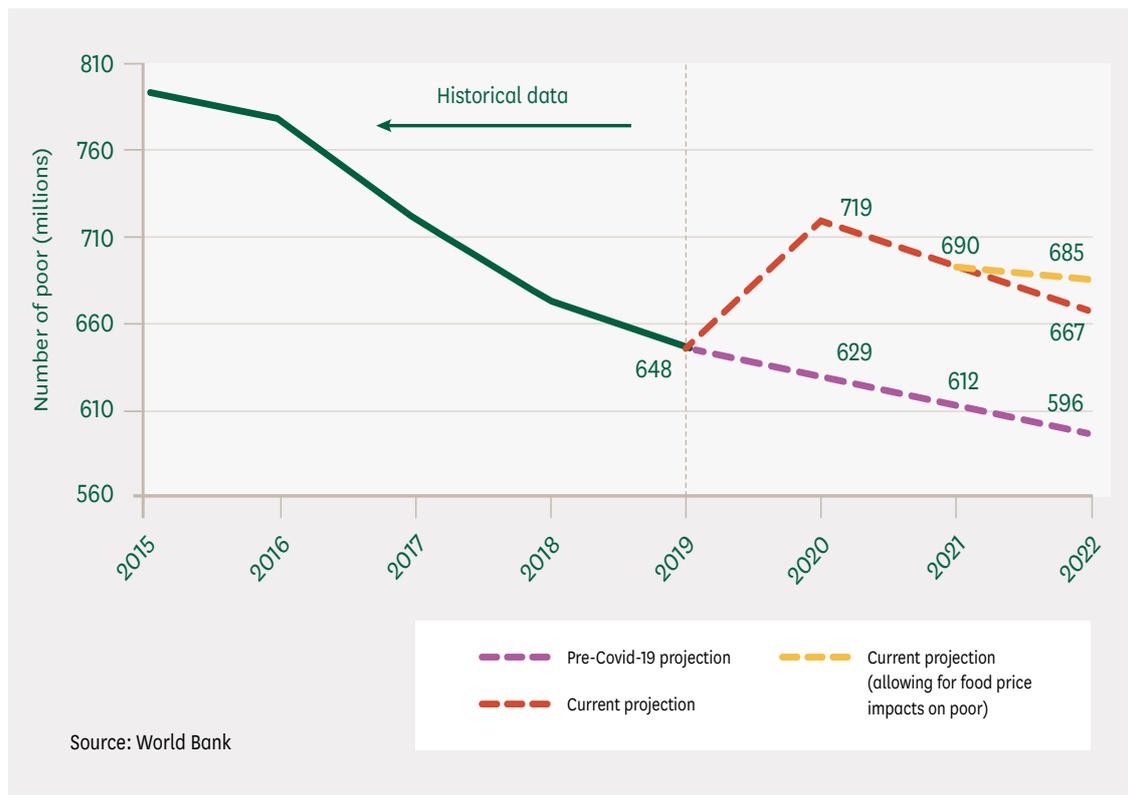
22 Christian Aid ([SDG0031](#))

## COVID-19

14. Although the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic fallout can only be estimated, it has undoubtedly been substantial and negative. The World Bank initially estimated that some 120 million people would be pushed into extreme poverty in 2020, as economies rapidly contracted. That estimate was later reduced first to 97 million and subsequently to 88 million, but it still represented an unprecedented increase in extreme poverty, undoing more than three years of progress.<sup>23</sup> As those estimates were primarily based on growth figures, they were volatile, and the picture improved as economies re-opened. Development Initiatives, an organisation focused on data-driven evidence and analysis, estimated that 50 million people were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020, but that estimate decreased as economies rebounded, leaving 8 million more people in poverty in 2021 than in 2019.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, Dr Alkire told us that by using the MPI, the total figure “is 1.3 billion. It is more than twice the number of acute poor by the World Bank’s \$1.90 a day.”<sup>25</sup> Figure 2 shows current World Bank estimates of extreme poverty taking account of COVID-19 and food price shocks.

Figure 2: World Bank poverty projections 2022

### Poverty reduction resumed slowly in 2021 but may stall in 2022



Source: World Bank, [Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course](#), 2022, p7

23 World Bank, [Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals 2020 From World Development Indicators](#) and World Bank Blogs, [Updated estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty: Turning the corner on the pandemic in 2021?](#)

24 Development Initiatives, [Poverty trends: global, regional and national](#), 10 November 2021

25 [Q4](#)

15. The effect of the pandemic was not equal, because those in insecure employment were most at risk from the economic shutdown. ActionAid, an international charity working with women and girls in poverty, observed:

An estimated 740 million women are employed in the informal economy (more than two-thirds of female employment in countries in the Global South) without sick leave and unemployment benefits. As a result of Covid, they risk losing their jobs, further deepening existing gender poverty gaps.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, children were already disproportionately living in extreme poverty and were most affected by school closures.

16. Although some of these impacts were temporary, which was reflected in the updated estimates as economies re-opened, some were long-lasting or even permanent. Dr Rachel Glennerster, Associate Professor of Economics, University of Chicago, and previously Chief Economist at DFID and later FCDO, explained that for those living in poverty with limited assets, it was not simply a case of returning to work:

I call out the wonderful work of BRAC research here. It has demonstrated how people who become really poor and have very few assets really struggle to get out of poverty, partly because there are lumpy things like owning a cow and the fact that once you have sold the cow, it is very difficult to get back up and raise the money to be able to acquire those assets again.<sup>27</sup>

Dr Glennerster also explained the long-term impacts of school closures:

In Uganda, children have been out of school for two years. It is very difficult to get them back in again. A lot of kids will come back but they will be permanently worse off unless we have very radical interventions to support that. There are examples of these shocks in the past having very long-term impacts. There is a great study of what happened in Pakistan with the earthquake. Schools were just closed for a couple of months but children fell behind and they never managed to catch back up. Three years later, their health was worse, their education was worse.<sup>28</sup>

Shameran Abed, Executive Director, BRAC International, highlighted the acute impact on girls:

One of the biggest ones we have seen is an increase in underage marriage. If you have 13, 14 or 15 year-old girls in schools, that is one way to keep them out of parents marrying them off at a very young age. Now that schools have been closed for two years, a lot of parents have married them off and that has been a terrible thing that we in our work have been trying to prevent but the numbers are still going up. That is something you cannot reverse easily.<sup>29</sup>

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26 Action Aid UK ([SDG0021](#))

27 [Q20](#)

28 [Q20](#)

29 [Q20](#)

## Climate change

17. Despite contributing the least to climate change, the world's extreme poor are disproportionately impacted by it. World Vision UK, a children's charity, described climate change as a 'threat multiplier', because it exacerbates existing inequalities and amplifies risk and deprivation for the most vulnerable, including children.<sup>30</sup> The UN World Food Programme explained that "the majority of the world's extreme poor—about 80 per cent—live in rural areas, as such their incomes greatly depend on agricultural activities."<sup>31</sup> It added:

Disasters and their immediate impacts threaten to reverse development gains and slow poverty reduction and hunger alleviation. In 2019, direct economic losses of USD 70.4 billion due to disasters were reported by 53 countries, of which 60 percent were recorded in the agricultural sector. The incomes of the rural extreme poor largely depend on agricultural activities, making them highly vulnerable to climate change. In particular, smallholder farmers are increasingly exposed to climatic shocks and stressors and progressive land degradation. Adverse weather patterns and pests and disease reduce agricultural income and result in more variable production. Climate change will exacerbate these risks and income losses in the future.<sup>32</sup>

18. Estimates of the potential impact of climate change vary, but most commentators agree that some 100 million people may be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030.<sup>33</sup> The World Bank stated that "health impacts (malaria, diarrhoea, and stunting) and the effect of food prices are responsible for most of the impact."<sup>34</sup> Tearfund, an international Christian relief and development agency, explained:

The FCDO should prepare for the intersection between the fall-out from the pandemic and the intensifying climate crisis, as well as accompanying resource scarcity, on people living in poverty. With fresh water increasingly classified as a matter of national security and a food affordability crisis spreading, urgent investment in resilient and sustainable food systems, especially in fragile states, will be needed. Increased insecurity around food, water and arable land is expected to intensify forced migration and conflict patterns.<sup>35</sup>

19. As with poverty, marginalised groups are disproportionately likely to be impacted by climate change. Bond Disability and Development Group (DDG), which is made up of mainstream and disability-specific development organisations, told us:

Globally, people with disabilities are more likely to live in disaster-prone areas. They are frequently excluded from emergency preparedness plans, experience disproportionately higher rates of morbidity and mortality; are

30 World Vision UK ([SDG0034](#))

31 World Food Programme ([SDG0017](#))

32 Ibid.

33 See for example: Save the Children UK ([SDG0022](#)); Romilly Greenhill (ONE Campaign) [Q2](#), Met Office ([SDG0048](#)). World Bank research suggests a range between 32 million and 132 million: The World Bank, [Policy Research Working Paper 9417](#), 2020

34 The World Bank, [Policy Research Working Paper 9417](#), 2020, Abstract

35 Tearfund ([SDG0026](#))

more vulnerable to gender-based violence and abuse, particularly during humanitarian crises; and are more likely to die in a natural disaster than people without disabilities. Moreover, people with disabilities experience poverty at more than twice the rate of people without disabilities - a risk factor that the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) strongly associates with greater climate change vulnerability.<sup>36</sup>

## Conflict

20. Conflict has always been closely linked to poverty, both as a cause and a consequence. It disrupts agriculture and economic stability, displaces people, reduces access to healthcare and education, makes providing humanitarian and development assistance more challenging and hinders the long-term economic growth and institutional development that can reduce poverty on a large scale. This impact is clearly visible in the Middle East, where there have been notable increases in extreme poverty rates since 2010 in Syria and Yemen.<sup>37</sup> The 2020 World Bank report, *Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight against Poverty*, found that “43 economies in the world with the highest poverty rates are in [fragile and conflict-affected situations] FCS and/or in Sub-Saharan Africa.”<sup>38</sup> Competition for scarce resources can drive further conflict, and it can also have consequences reaching far beyond national borders, as the war in Ukraine and the resultant impact on food and energy prices and supply has shown.<sup>39</sup>

21. Romilly Greenhill told us that “we are seeing increasing concentrations of poor people living in fragile and conflict-affected states. Two-thirds of people living in extreme poverty are expected to be living in those contexts by 2030.”<sup>40</sup> The World Food Programme cited OECD estimates that put this figure even higher, stating that “without action, more than 80% of the world’s poorest people will be living in fragile contexts by 2030.”<sup>41</sup>

22. Although conflict can trap people in poverty and influence every measure of deprivation, poverty can also drive conflict. BRAC said that

Failing to address extreme poverty will also exacerbate issues of conflict, displacement and migration, having major implications on foreign policy and national security.<sup>42</sup>

As Figure 3 shows, eight of the 10 countries with the highest rates of extreme poverty in 2021 were previously classified by DFID as either being fragile or neighbouring a fragile state or region.

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36 BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#))

37 Development Initiatives, [Poverty trends: global, regional and national](#), Figure 8

38 Corral, Paul, Alexander Irwin, Nandini Krishnan, Daniel Gerszon Mahler, and Tara Vishwanath, [Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight against Poverty](#), World Bank, 2020, p.5

39 For more information see report of House of Commons International Development Committee, [Food Insecurity](#), Second Report (HC 504) 1 July 2022

40 [Q2](#)

41 World Food Programme ([SDG0017](#))

42 BRAC ([SDG0043](#))

Figure 3: Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP) (% of population)

Country	Most recent value	Most recent year data available	Department for International Development fragility rating 2017
Madagascar	78.8	2012	Low
Democratic Republic of Congo	77.2	2012	High
South Sudan	76.5	2016	High
Malawi	73.5	2019	None
Burundi	72.8	2013	High
Somalia	68.6	2017	High
Central African Republic	65.9	2008	High
Mozambique	63.7	2014	None
Uzbekistan	61.6	2003	Medium
Zambia	58.7	2015	Neighbouring
Rwanda	56.5	2016	Neighbouring

Source: Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$1.90 a day: [World Bank](#); Department for International Development, [Fragile and conflict affected states and regions, Methodology Note](#), 2017. 'Neighbouring countries' are defined as states: That neighbour at least one state categorised as 'high fragility' in DFID's list of fragile states; which are ODA-eligible, based on the list published by the OECD; and where regional instability and DFID funding may have a substantial impact.

**23. The effects of COVID-19, climate change and conflict are undermining decades of progress on eliminating extreme poverty. Extreme poverty drives conflict, displacement and migration. Eliminating extreme poverty is fundamental to everyone's security and prosperity.**

### 3 Effective interventions

24. The International Development Act 2002 states that Official Development Assistance (ODA) may be provided if the relevant Minister “is satisfied that the provision of the assistance is likely to contribute to a reduction in poverty.”<sup>43</sup> In practice, some programmes are more likely than others to reduce poverty, and particularly extreme poverty. The reduction in the aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI) makes it more important than ever to ensure that funding is targeted as effectively as possible.<sup>44</sup> Our case studies demonstrate the impact of some of these funding cuts.

#### ODA cuts case study 1: Amref Health Africa

Cuts to the UK’s Official Development Assistance budget had a direct impact on Amref Health Africa and the communities we serve in 2021.

Family planning work in Kenya, health worker training in South Sudan, support for people living with disabilities, efforts to end female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) at a regional level: all saw their funding reduced or cut off entirely. Our teams have adjusted their activities and sought alternative sources of funding to plug the gaps: but in every case, the cuts have limited the support we can provide to communities living in challenging circumstances.

In terms of the work Amref implements, the impact of the cuts is perhaps most immediately obvious in South Sudan, which is home to one of the world’s most fragile health systems. A whole host of health services in South Sudan are reliant on international funding: any reduction in the latter is catastrophic as, in the words of Amref South Sudan’s Country Director, Morrish Ojok, “there is no back-up plan”. Ojok drew a direct link between the cuts to health programmes and access to / uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination in South Sudan.

Source: Amref Health Africa ([SDG0053](#))

#### Healthcare

25. Programmes focusing on healthcare provision for the poorest are vital elements in the long-term fight against poverty. Poor health traps people in poverty by preventing attendance at work or education, either for individuals with poor health or for their carers. The absence of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in many low-income countries also leaves people facing out-of-pocket expenditure for treatment. Dr Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO, Amref Health Africa, told us:

Universal health coverage would be the shock absorber for families, so that they can save. They can be healthy, they can access family planning commodities, they can access nutrition, and when somebody is sick they do not have to dispose of their savings or to sell their land or their livestock in order to be able to pay. Universal health coverage is a creator of wealth for communities.<sup>45</sup>

43 [International Development Act 2002](#), Clause 1. Note: In this Act, the Minister means the Secretary of State or the Treasury.

44 Gross national income (GNI) is defined as gross domestic product, plus net receipts from abroad of compensation of employees, property income and net taxes less subsidies on production - [OECD](#)

45 [Q139](#)

Amref told us that every year 15 million Africans are pushed into extreme poverty by health expenses and that “a further 97 million people in Africa incurred catastrophic payments which put them at a higher risk of falling into poverty.”<sup>46</sup>

26. The Leprosy Mission England and Wales told us that “there is a clear link between extreme poverty and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), including leprosy.” It explained that

NTDs are a consequence of extreme poverty with transmission accelerated through poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), overcrowding, inadequate nutrition and an inability to access quality healthcare [...] NTDs also often cause long-term disabilities, mental health impacts and stigma from communities and employers, which all prevent adults from working to support their families, create additional burdens of care, and trap households in a cycle of poverty.<sup>47</sup>

Sightsavers commented:

In addition to the enormous benefits to people’s quality of life, the elimination of NTDs also has significant economic impacts. A recent study by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) found that meeting parasitic worm infection elimination targets for four African countries (Ethiopia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Kenya) would yield £3.7 billion in productivity gains by 2040. The withdrawal of FCDO support to all NTDs programmes left more than 200 million of the world’s poorest people at risk from NTDs.<sup>48</sup>

27. Despite the Government’s identification of health resilience as a priority in the Integrated Review, programmes in this area have still been subject to cuts.<sup>49</sup> Action for Global Health told us:

As global health inequality is a structural driver of a range of other development concerns—such as reducing access to education, diminishing gender equity and increasing poverty—these cuts to health will have direct impacts on all other government priorities and deepen poverty for many around the world.<sup>50</sup>

Although health was the sector that attracted the largest sum of UK Government ODA in 2020, COVID-19 related support accounted for nearly 20% of that expenditure.<sup>51</sup> In 2021, UK Government expenditure on health decreased by 56%.<sup>52</sup> Donated vaccines from excess domestic supply were included in that total. Several organisations, including Christian Aid and the Missing Medicines coalition, called for donated vaccines not to be

46 Amref Health Africa ([SDG0053](#)) Payments are considered catastrophic if they take more than 10% of their annual expenditure ([AHAIC Commission Report on the State of UHC in Africa 2021](#), p27)

47 The Leprosy Mission England and Wales ([SDG0025](#))

48 Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#))

49 HM Government, [Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#), March 2021, p87

50 Action for Global Health ([SDG0015](#))

51 Health - £1,590 million, of which COVID-19 control - £317 million: [Statistics on International Development: final UK aid spend 2020](#)

52 Within 2021 bilateral Covid-19 activities, £103 million of UK ODA was Covid-19 vaccine donations, of which £100 million was from excess domestic supply: [Development Initiatives, UK aid: Trends in the quality and quantity of UK ODA](#), 11 May 2022

classified as ODA.<sup>53</sup>

28. The UK Civil Society Global Fund Working Group, which brings together several organisations working in global health, highlighted the interdependencies of the SDGs, and that health targets such as Target 3.3 are closely related to poverty reduction.<sup>54</sup> Praising the FCDO's historical support for the Global Fund, an international partnership to fight HIV, Tuberculosis and malaria, it said:

Global Fund partnership has turned the tide against infectious diseases, built health systems and saved more than 44 million lives. In countries where the Global Fund invests, AIDS related deaths have dropped by 65 per cent, malaria deaths by 45 per cent and TB deaths by 28 per cent since 2002.<sup>55</sup>

RESULTS UK, Romilly Greenhill, ActionAid UK and Malaria No More all cited the Global Fund and Gavi, the vaccine alliance, as examples of best practice and areas where the UK's commitment should be maintained.<sup>56</sup> IAVI, a non-profit scientific research organisation, said that “as recent experience with Covid confirms, global health is an area of genuine UK leadership, expertise and comparative advantage.”<sup>57</sup> As part of a strategic shift signalled in the IDS, as we discuss in the next Chapter, the FCDO will reduce the proportion of ODA administered through multilateral channels. The UK Government did not make a pledge at the seventh replenishment conference in September 2022.<sup>58</sup> However, on 14 November 2022 the Minister for Development, Andrew Mitchell MP, announced that the UK will contribute £1 billion to the seventh replenishment, which covers the period 2023–25.<sup>59</sup> The UK is the fourth largest donor for this cycle, behind the US, France and Germany.<sup>60</sup> For 2020–22, the UK contributed £1.46 billion, and is the third largest donor overall to date.<sup>61</sup>

29. In December 2021 the FCDO published the position papers *Health systems strengthening for global health security and universal health coverage* and *Ending preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children by 2030*.<sup>62</sup> However, the Government does not currently have a cross-departmental global health strategy. Action for Global Health noted that this was the first recommendation of the former Chief Medical Officer Sally Davies in her final report in 2019.<sup>63</sup> In our January 2021 report *Covid-19 in developing countries: secondary impacts*, we recommended:

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53 Christian Aid ([SDG0031](#)); Oxfam GB (Missing Medicines coalition) ([SDG0050](#))

54 UK Civil Society Global Fund Working Group ([SDG0029](#)) Target 3.3: By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

55 UK Civil Society Global Fund Working Group ([SDG0029](#))

56 RESULT UK ([SDG0002](#)); [Q13](#); Action Aid UK ([SDG0021](#)); Malaria No More UK ([SDG0023](#));

57 IAVI ([SDG0033](#))

58 The Global Fund, [Pledges at Global Fund Seventh Replenishment Conference](#), accessed 26 October 2022

59 HM Government, Press release: [UK aid will save over one million lives from killer diseases](#), 14 November 2022

60 Ibid.

61 The Global Fund, [Government and Public Donors, United Kingdom](#)

62 FCDO, Policy Paper: [Health systems strengthening for global health security and universal health coverage](#), 14 December 2021

FCDO, Policy Paper, [Ending preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children by 2030](#), 14 December 2022.

63 Action for Global Health ([SDG0015](#))

that the Government should publish a multi-year, cross-departmental global health strategy, to map out how UK policy can deliver a strategic and integrated approach to strengthening global health.<sup>64</sup>

The Government responded that it had “no immediate plans” to publish a global health strategy, but that it would “continue to review our approach and consider how it should evolve in light of lessons from the pandemic and the outcomes from the Integrated Review.”<sup>65</sup> Repeating calls by organisations including Bond DDG, Sightsavers, MSI Reproductive Choices and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative for the Government to publish one, Action for Global Health explained:<sup>66</sup>

A global health strategy is essential because it outlines and delivers synergies that will increase the impact of the UK Government’s work across global health – including aligning initiatives to improve health equity alongside other SDGs, such as tackling extreme poverty and improving education outcomes.<sup>67</sup>

**30. We welcome the FCDO’s position papers on health systems strengthening for global health security and universal health coverage, and ending preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children by 2030. We recommend the Government builds on these, and the disability inclusion and rights strategy, and develops a coherent cross-departmental Global Health Strategy, with clearly defined targets and delivery plans, within six months. We repeat our previous call for this to set out how the UK intends to use levers at multilateral and bilateral levels to achieve its aims, how this ensures progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goal, and how the strategy will reach the most marginalised and vulnerable communities.**

**31. Poor health drives people into and traps them in extreme poverty. Withdrawing funding from programmes that fight AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases not only puts lives immediately at risk, but impacts wider objectives on education, gender equity and poverty reduction. While we were encouraged to see the UK Government finally make a pledge to the Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund, we were disappointed that our contribution has fallen by nearly £500 million since the previous cycle. The UK Government must reassume its position as a leader on global health. The UK Government must prioritise funding for health, both in bilateral programming and support for effective multilateral schemes, as one of the most effective interventions in extreme poverty reduction.**

## Nutrition

32. Nutrition is key to health. The World Food Programme highlighted its key role in poverty alleviation:

64 International Development Committee, [Covid-19 in developing countries: secondary impacts](#), Eighth Report of Session 2019–21 (HC 1186), 26 January 2021, p.17

65 International Development Committee, [Covid-19 in developing countries: secondary impacts: Government Response to the Eighth Report of the Committee](#), Session 2019–21, Eighth Special Report of Session 2019–21 (HC1351), 26 April 2021, p.9

66 BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#)); Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#)); MSI Reproductive Choices ([SDG0042](#)); Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) ([SDG0039](#))

67 Action for Global Health ([SDG0015](#))

Extreme poverty and hunger exist in a vicious cycle. Inadequate food security and malnutrition are among the main causes of extreme poverty, affecting health, impairing physical and cognitive development and capacity, and negatively affecting the livelihoods and economic capabilities of vulnerable populations.<sup>68</sup>

Bessi Ndovi, National Coordinator for Malawi for the Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance, told us how good nutrition was particularly important for pregnant and lactating women, both for their own health and in determining outcomes for their children:

[...] undernourished children are usually at risk of developing low cognitive ability as well as physical impairment. The doctor [Dr Gitahi] touched on the issue of stunting, which is usually something to do with brain development. If the brain has not fully developed, it means that the cognitive ability of the children in question is very compromised. This results in high dropout rates, or even high repetition rates, in schools. In the long term, this results in those individuals having low economic opportunities when they become adults later in life. It is a continuum of activities, because one thing leads to another.<sup>69</sup>

33. Our Report on *Food Insecurity* highlighted that “the world faces a catastrophic hunger crisis.”<sup>70</sup> Those living in extreme poverty, and particularly those in the Horn of Africa, are most vulnerable, with an estimated 22 million people at risk of starvation.<sup>71</sup> Many more will likely suffer the long-term outcomes outlined by Bessie Ndovi and others. In June and September 2022, the Government pledged more support for food security, including via the World Food Programme.<sup>72</sup> Like health spending, however, this comes against a backdrop of previous cuts. The application of the 0.5% GNI target as a spending cap means extra money is usually taken from other programmes. Concern Worldwide told us that “funding for nutrition programmes fell by more than 70% in 2021, compared to 2019.”<sup>73</sup> Development Initiatives’ analysis shows that “sectors that saw the largest percentage cuts across the period [2019–2021] were agriculture and food security (62%), water and sanitation (58%) and humanitarian (53%).”<sup>74</sup>

**34. Nutrition is a keystone investment. It builds resilience in health, improves education outcomes and strengthens the economy through labour market participation. Moreover, investing in it represents very real value for money.**

## Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

35. WASH suffered heavy Government spending cuts in percentage terms, but formed a relatively slight proportion of overall spend (£176 million in 2019).<sup>75</sup> WASH programmes

68 World Food Programme ([SDG0017](#))

69 [Q130](#)

70 House of Commons International Development Committee, [Food Insecurity](#), Second Report (HC 504) 1 July 2022, p3

71 World Food Programme, [Horn of Africa ‘Cannot wait’: WFP scales up assistance as historic drought raises famine threat](#), 19 August 2022

72 HM Government, [PM pledges new support for countries on the food security frontline](#), 24 June 2022; HM Government, [UK announces new support for people facing famine in Horn of Africa](#), 21 September 2022

73 Concern Worldwide (UK) ([SDG0018](#))

74 Development Initiatives, [UK aid: Trends in the quality and quantity of UK ODA](#), 11 May 2022

75 Statistics on International Development: [final UK aid spend 2020](#)

can help to prevent the transmission of NTDs, which can lead to sickness, long-term disability and death.<sup>76</sup> Sightsavers said that “NTDs are diseases of poverty, they exist in areas without adequate sanitation, clean water and healthcare and are particularly prevalent in remote and rural areas and conflict zones.”<sup>77</sup> We also heard that poor access disproportionately affected women and girls. Dr Gitahi said:

The issue of water and sanitation stops young girls from going to school. Secondly, it increases the chance of child mortality, because mothers have to take care of their children. There is no water, so the children are dying of diarrhoea or pneumonia.<sup>78</sup>

CARE International, a humanitarian organisation, estimated that the budget reduction saw “9 million fewer women supported to access clean water and sanitation.”<sup>79</sup>

## Education

36. The link between education and poverty reduction is established. Save the Children, as well as the ONE Campaign, recommended that 15% of ODA should be allocated to education, recognising it as “a critical means to break intergenerational cycles of poverty.”<sup>80</sup> Girls’ education can be transformative. Dr Alkire told us: “when we looked at our global MPI this year we found 1.3 billion people are poor and two-thirds of them, 836 million, do not have an educated girl or woman in their household.”<sup>81</sup> Romilly Greenhill explained:

Girls can better support their families and have better economic opportunities over the long run if they are better educated. Again, it is about the level of education. Pre-primary education is very important. Primary education has been shown to have a much bigger impact on poverty than focusing on tertiary, universities and specialised training, for example.<sup>82</sup>

37. UK ODA funding for education decreased by 46% between 2019 and 2021.<sup>83</sup> UNICEF observed:

Despite strong language prioritising girls’ education, UK aid to support education has been steadily declining since 2014, leaving a learning poverty gap for millions of children. This was accelerated by the overall reduction in the UK Aid budget in 2020 and 2021. The 2021 reduction resulted in \$460 million less funding for education, which could have supported 4.7 million children to learn.<sup>84</sup>

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76 Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) ([SDG0039](#))

77 Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#))

78 [Q134](#)

79 CARE International, [UK Government decisions to cut UK Aid are disproportionately falling on women and girls](#), 2021

80 Save the Children UK ([SDG0022](#))

81 [Q3](#)

82 [Q8](#)

83 Development Initiatives, [UK aid: Trends in the quality and quantity of UK ODA](#), 11 May 2022

84 UK Committee for UNICEF ([SDG0038](#))

The FCDO identified girls' education as a strategic priority in 2020.<sup>85</sup> In the IDS, the Government repeated its commitment to women and girls, including plans to “mobilise our partnerships and investments behind the G7 commitment to get 40 million more girls in school and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 by 2026.”<sup>86</sup>

38. The UK's role extends beyond funding in the education sector. Dr Glennerster explained:

The main thing is not just money to do girls' education. The main way in which we can improve girls' education is to improve the way education is done, the way teachers teach. That is where the UK can be incredibly effective: investing in understanding and learning what is the best way to help teachers teach better and then piloting and working with Governments to introduce programmes in their schools, not fund a few schools, not fund a few UK schools; that makes for a great photo op for Ministers, it makes our NGOs very happy, but it does not move the needle. What we need to be doing is helping Governments improve their education systems.<sup>87</sup>

Nick Dyer, Director General, Humanitarian and Development at FCDO, also highlighted the importance of knowing what works:

When it comes to the how, that is where the value for money really kicks in. That is a question about whether we know what works. If we are investing in an education project, do we know what the best types of investments in education are? There is an awful lot we know about what works in education. We know that the best investment is to focus on training teachers, because that gives you the biggest bang for your buck.<sup>88</sup>

39. Marginalised groups face more barriers to education, compounding inequality and preventing people from escaping poverty. COVID-19 was more likely to affect girls' education due to the risk of early marriage. MSI Reproductive Choices, a provider of sexual and reproductive health services, told us that “a girl in South Sudan is more likely to die in childbirth than finish secondary school.”<sup>89</sup> Dr Gitahi also told us that family planning was vital, particularly in preventing early teenage pregnancies, which are “one of the biggest challenges in terms of creating intergenerational poverty.”<sup>90</sup> Vulnerabilities can also intersect. Tearfund told us that “in conflict situations, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys.”<sup>91</sup> Dr Glennerster spoke about other barriers:

Schools are not adapted to be able to deal with students who have disabilities. Even simple things like eyeglasses, kids who need glasses. In a large majority of low-income countries, they do not have access to glasses and therefore they cannot take the opportunity of the educational benefits.<sup>92</sup>

85 Correspondence from Dominic Raab MP, then Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, [2 December 2020](#)

86 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [UK government's strategy for international development](#), May 2022, p.12

87 [Q33](#)

88 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q264](#)

89 MSI Reproductive Choices ([SDG0042](#))

90 [Q134](#)

91 Tearfund ([SDG0026](#))

92 [Q24](#)

While the UK's commitment to girls' education is welcome, Sightsavers said: "The FCDO must outline how they will target girls with disabilities in the GEAP [Girls Education Action Plan], as this has yet to be defined."<sup>93</sup> This was echoed by Bond DDG:

We welcome the UK government's role in securing the Girls Education Declaration at the G7 and the new Girls Education Action Plan, but we would welcome further clarity about how these initiatives will ensure women and girls with disabilities also benefit from quality education.<sup>94</sup>

**40. The FCDO's commitment to supporting women and girls, particularly through education, is welcome. However, reductions in aid have been shown to disproportionately affect women and girls. Girls' education is often more vulnerable when families face hardship and particularly during conflict or crises such as COVID-19. Many of these girls will never be able to return to school. Therefore, it is vital that the conditions that allow girls to attend to school for longer are addressed as well as the education systems themselves. General and reproductive healthcare, WASH access, caring responsibilities, child labour and early marriage all affect girls' education, because new schools do not help girls if girls cannot attend them. *Programmes that enable girls to access education must be adequately supported in line with the FCDO's general commitment to supporting women and girls. The FCDO should focus education spending on the most impactful programmes for poverty reduction. This can be enhanced by complementary investments in social protection that reach the most vulnerable households, which are otherwise most likely to take girls out of school when crises occur.***

**41. *As well as continuing to use its expertise to train teachers, the FCDO should focus education spending on the most impactful programmes for poverty reduction, particularly early years and primary education. All programmes should be disability inclusive, recognising the additional barriers disabled children face when accessing education.***

## Social protection

42. Social protection encompasses a broad range of measures. It can be vital in preventing people falling into poverty, for instance during the COVID-19 pandemic, and providing people with the tools permanently to lift themselves out of poverty.<sup>95</sup> The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines it as:

A set of nationally owned policies and instruments, organized around systems that provide income or in-kind support and facilitate access to goods and services to all households and individuals at least at minimally accepted levels, to (i) protect them from multiple deprivations and social and economic exclusion, as a matter of human rights and particularly during shocks or periods of insufficient income, incapacity or inability to work; and (ii) empower them by increasing productive capacities and enhancing capabilities.<sup>96</sup>

93 Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#))

94 BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#))

95 For detailed analysis of responses to COVID-19 see: The World Bank, [Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures](#), 14 May 2021

96 UNDP Mansour Ndiaye ([SDG0055](#))

It may include:

- Social transfers: cash or in-kind, such as food stamps
- Social insurance mechanisms, such as health or pensions
- Social services such as childcare, counselling, residential care
- Labour market interventions and training programmes
- Informal services such as local grain banks, community health insurance
- Legislation and policy: anti-discrimination, minimum wage, maternity leave etc.<sup>97</sup>

43. Concern Worldwide told us that “government-led social protection systems offer a great opportunity to provide safety nets at scale. Yet 4 billion people around the world are not covered by social protection.”<sup>98</sup> According to the World Food Programme:

Only 46.9 percent of the global population are covered by at least one social protection benefit [...] In low-income countries only 1.1 percent of GDP is spent on social protection compared to 16.4 percent in high-income countries, and these national systems tend to be weakest in terms of coverage, adequacy of assistance, and sustainability of financing.<sup>99</sup>

44. Humanitarian organisations can work alongside governments to support and complement existing systems. Concern Worldwide explained that humanitarian organisations use not only government lists, but can use their expertise to develop project-specific targeting criteria.<sup>100</sup> Mansour Ndiaye, Head of the Inclusive Growth, United Nations Development Programme, explained that a combination of programmes can achieve the best results:

Targeting and designing programmes for the most excluded is important to ensure that the right programmes reach those who need them most and to reach them first; this is especially important in the context of fiscal constraints. At the same time, broad or universal social protection policies would be more effective to reduce poverty and vulnerability in the long term.<sup>101</sup>

He added that “development partners like the UK play a vital role in the dynamic development of national social protection systems around the world.” Some examples include high-level political support for social protection, capacity building, integrated programming and co-financing, plus other measures such as debt-relief. The UNDP also advocates the use of the MPI for more effective targeting.<sup>102</sup>

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97 UNDP, [Leaving no one behind: A Social Protection Primer for Practitioners](#), Table 4.1, pp.40–41

98 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

99 World Food Programme ([SDG0017](#))

100 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

101 UNDP Mansour Ndiaye ([SDG0055](#))

102 UNDP Mansour Ndiaye ([SDG0055](#))

45. *The FCDO should continue to use its expertise and influence to champion social protection systems and universal health coverage. The COVID-19 pandemic showed the value of such systems, which are already urgently needed due to the effects of climate change and food insecurity and are likely to become even more important in the future.*

### Cash transfers

46. Assistance in the form of cash transfers can be delivered either through national social protection schemes or by humanitarian organisations. We heard that cash transfers are the most effective way in which to provide relief in response to emergencies. They have also shown significant value as a method of longer-term poverty alleviation. The World Food Programme highlighted the UK's leadership in this area:

FCDO/DFID has been a strong advocate for the use of cash transfers and contributed to the global evidence base on cash transfer programming, which presents a strong value for money case and a proven ability to deliver for the poorest. UK leadership has been pivotal to the increasing use of cash transfers in humanitarian assistance.<sup>103</sup>

Cash has several benefits, including empowering people to prioritise their own needs, and the 'multiplier effect' of injecting cash into local economies. Additionally, it can drive economic inclusion by providing "first-time access to bank or mobile money accounts and financial services to unbanked populations, particularly women."<sup>104</sup> Cash is also often easier to deliver than food or other commodities, but its utility depends on functioning markets, so it is not always feasible in conflict or disaster contexts. Cash should continue to be applied as a key tool and complement to other development interventions in line with the evidence base FCDO helped to build to help alleviate multi-dimensional poverty.

47. Cash can also support long-term poverty reduction by removing barriers. Romilly Greenhill told us:

There is really good evidence to demonstrate that that can help with education, for example, if you provide cash transfers to girls or to the families of girls who stay in education and do not leave, which is a very common problem. Girls complete primary education and then they take on caring responsibilities with their families, they reach puberty and often they then leave education. When you provide things like cash transfers or feeding programmes and so on they are much more likely to stay in school and that has longer-term beneficial impacts.<sup>105</sup>

### Graduation programmes

48. Positive results in extreme poverty reduction can be achieved through a 'graduation' approach, such as that adopted by BRAC in Bangladesh. This approach involves identifying the most vulnerable and grouping multiple interventions. BRAC explained:

The Graduation approach puts the ultra-poor on a sustainable upward trajectory with a set of four key interventions, designed to address their

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103 World Food Programme ([SDG0017](#))

104 World Food Programme ([SDG0017](#))

105 [Q9](#)

multidimensional needs. These four elements are: connecting participants to social protection to meet their basic needs; providing training and assets for income generation; financial literacy and savings support; and social empowerment through community engagement and life skills training - all facilitated through in person coaching.<sup>106</sup>

Shameran Abed described the long-term effect on those in the programme:

The evidence suggests that not only are they a lot better off at the end of the two-year programme period, which you would expect given the amount of support that they are getting. However, three, four, five, or seven years post what we call graduation out of these programmes, these families continue to progress out of poverty. Therefore, the two year intensive investment in these families has a long-term and sustainable impact. Yes, there has been a lot of discussion around cash versus some of these more intensive programmes. The research suggests that cash transfers have a good short-term impact but a big investment in these households that give them the assets, the training, the skills and the confidence to pull themselves out of extreme poverty lasts a longer time and the impact is much more long term.<sup>107</sup>

49. Concern Worldwide also uses a graduation approach, providing a “layered and sequenced package of support,” which may include cash and social assistance, skills training, coaching and mentoring, financial inclusion, and capital or asset transfer.<sup>108</sup> It explained:

In Concern’s Graduation programming we also work on the wider enabling environment—what people are graduating into. This can involve, for example, strengthening community institutions, supporting and building capacity of agricultural or veterinary extension services, disaster risk reduction measures, access to quality basic services such as health, nutrition, water and sanitation, or education.<sup>109</sup>

Like BRAC, Concern Worldwide reported a high success rate. For example, it stated, “In Rwanda, 90% of participants were able to meet their food and healthcare needs after one year and 88% maintained this after programme support finished.”<sup>110</sup>

50. The UK, along with Australia, was a key partner of BRAC through the Strategic Partnership Arrangement (SPA), which ran from 2011–21:

With the support of the UK government through the SPA, more than 2 million households in Bangladesh have graduated out of extreme poverty. More than 95% of participants continue to improve financially five years after the program ends.<sup>111</sup>

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106 BRAC ([SDG0043](#))

107 [Q26](#)

108 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

109 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

110 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

111 BRAC ([SDG0043](#))

Following the reduction of the ODA budget this funding was cut, resulting in loss of support to more than 2 million vulnerable households.<sup>112</sup>

#### ODA cuts case study 2: Disability-inclusive graduation (DIG) programme in Northern Uganda

Aling Alice's story, Lii, Uganda.

Losing the ability to use her legs at the age of six, Aling's disability has been especially challenging in a place where agriculture is what many families rely upon for sustenance and income. Aling's early memories are particularly painful:

"My mother would curse me to die off because my disability was of no value. I would respond to my mother by telling her: 'If these words are coming from you yet you are my mother, what does it imply?'"

Years later, Aling would be caught in the middle of the devastating atrocities carried out by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in her region of Northern Uganda. When the LRA reached the village of Lii, Aling's neighbors ran for their lives—leaving her behind.

While her story is unique, the hardships and discrimination Aling has faced throughout her life is unfortunately common among those living with disabilities, especially in contexts of extreme poverty. It is for that reason that in 2019, BRAC Uganda, NUWODU and Humanity & Inclusion (HI), with support from BRAC UPGI and BRAC UK implemented a disability-inclusive graduation (DIG) programme in Northern Uganda.

The DIG program adapted the Graduation approach—a holistic set of interventions designed to meet the complex and long-term needs of people living in extreme poverty—to specifically address the unique challenges faced by those living with disabilities. As a participant in the DIG programme, Aling received productive livestock assets, tailored life-skills training, and regular personal check-ins with her designated coach to ensure that she was moving in the right direction and to address any of her questions and concerns throughout the program.

Through installing disability inclusive adaptations like a ramp to her home and specialised additions in her washroom and toilet, the DIG programme empowered Aling through improving her mobility and access to fundamental, everyday necessities.

"Before BRAC came through, I struggled so hard to be accepted and live well among people—[now], I am so grateful for how my life is currently. I feel I am living a life with the opportunities like that of an abled person."

Source: BRAC ([SDG0059](#))

**51. In summary, by weaving a tapestry of the most critical interventions, including cash, capacity-building and financial inclusion, graduation programmes have a transformative and long-term impact on the poorest households, which reap sustained economic and social benefits that far outweigh the cost of initial investment. This methodology originated from a DFID-funded programme in Bangladesh and can play an important role in addressing extreme poverty in other countries.**

## Climate finance

52. Climate change is a driver of poverty. In our 2021 Report, *Global Britain in demand: UK climate action and international development around COP26*, we called for more long-term funding for climate adaptation programmes, recognising the long-term nature of this work.<sup>113</sup> As such funding is categorised as ODA, however, increased levels of climate finance without any increase in budget inevitably means reductions in funding for other projects. Tearfund explained:

Faced with a climate emergency not of their making, low income countries had a reasonable expectation of extra support, and under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, countries such as the UK committed to provide this. However, the cuts to the aid budget now present a double cut in support to low income countries that have not received new and additional climate finance, who will now receive both climate finance and aid from the same, but much smaller, pot. Climate finance was not meant to come at the cost of other critical ODA areas, yet this is now the case, as the UK fulfils its climate finance commitments from an aid budget that it has chosen to significantly cut.<sup>114</sup>

Dr Glennerster made a specific point about mitigation:

For mitigation and adaptation, low-income countries are producing very little carbon. In general, that is not where you are going to get the main sources of mitigation from low-income countries. They can help. They can contribute to the world's mitigation efforts, for example, through agricultural practices or not cutting down trees and things, but if they do that we ought to pay them for it. I feel quite strongly that if we get them to do things to help us, frankly, to mitigate against our carbon production, that is not aid. That is our carbon. That is mitigating our carbon production and asking them to help, in which case we should pay for it. We should pay for it and not pay for it out of the aid budget.<sup>115</sup>

53. Bond agreed that climate finance should be 'new and additional' on top of existing ODA commitments. The Jubilee Debt Campaign called for climate finance to be provided in the form of grants rather than loans, so as not to exacerbate the debt crises many low-income countries (LICs) are facing.<sup>116</sup> ActionAid explained:

Cancelling debt payments is the fastest way to keep money in countries and free up resources to tackle extreme poverty and the urgent and long-term impacts of Covid. Analysis from ActionAid and Jubilee Debt Campaign estimated how much extra finance countries would have had in 2019 if their debt servicing was reduced to the acceptable threshold of 12% of government revenues. Bangladesh and Ghana, for example, would each have had over \$5 billion to invest in public services every year and Kenya would have had over \$4 billion a year in extra revenue. These sums would be transformative

113 International Development Committee, [Global Britain in demand: UK climate action and international development around COP26](#), Second Report of Session 2021–22 (HC 99) 26 October 2021, p.15 para 33

114 Tearfund ([SDG0026](#))

115 [Q22](#)

116 Bond ([SDG0036](#)); Jubilee Debt Campaign, Jubilee Scotland ([SDG0008](#))

if invested in tackling extreme poverty and provision of public services.<sup>117</sup>

The role of debt relief in reducing poverty is clear. The Committee is considering this separately and will make recommendations in its upcoming report on debt relief in low-income countries.

54. We heard that climate finance will be a greater focus for British International Investments (BII, previously CDC) the UK's development finance institution, in the coming strategy period. Diana Layfield, the new Chair of BII, told us:

We are all fully aware of the imperatives that the world faces around climate. In particular, as Nick [O'Donohoe, Chief Executive Officer, CDC] pointed out, the impact of climate change affects the world's poorest and most marginal populations disproportionately compared to others, so it is a terrific move that BII is stepping up its investment and dedicating 30% of its investment to climate finance. It is in the regions that you have mentioned for expansion—the Indo-Pacific and the Caribbean—where that focus will be on climate finance.<sup>118</sup>

We queried whether the focus should be on this region rather than Africa, where most of the poorest live. Mita Samani, Head of the Private Sector Department, FCDO, responded:

Doing mitigation at scale in some of the highest emitting countries in the world, many of which happen to be in Asia, benefits the poorest everywhere, given that they are hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. The second is innovation. It is easier to invest in some of the markets in Asia to test innovative solutions to both mitigation and adaptation finance, which can then be translated into Africa.<sup>119</sup>

**55. Adapting to climate change and building resilience is vital for poverty reduction. Reducing the debt burden allows governments in low-and-middle-income countries to spend more on public health, education and social protection programmes. *The UK Government must maintain its leadership on grant-based climate finance to help countries adapt to climate change without provoking and exacerbating debt crises, deploying finance in a timely manner that matches the urgency of the situation now.***

**56. Although low-income countries are often disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and can play a vital role in mitigation, they are mostly mitigating the emissions of other countries, including the UK. It is right that we invest in mitigation, in line with our own net-zero initiatives, but it should not be at the cost of vital aid programming. *Given the reduced Official Development Assistance budget and pressure from other spending, the Government should carefully consider whether all current climate finance counted as ODA should continue to be categorised in that way, especially if such finance entails mitigation for emissions that low-income countries did not cause. We must ensure that climate finance does not just target the poorest countries, but that it is tailored to benefit the poorest communities within those countries. Listening to the perspectives and priorities of those on the front-line of the climate disaster, and ensuring that the modalities for accessing financing enable communities to adapt their lives and livelihoods, should be the new 'business as usual'.***

117 Action Aid UK ([SDG0021](#))

118 [Q66](#)

119 [Q69](#)

## 4 The UK's role in reducing extreme poverty

57. Shameran Abed explained that “historically, the UK has been the most poverty-focused bilateral [donor].”<sup>120</sup> BRAC also praised the UK as one of the architects of the ‘Leave no one behind’ (LNOB) principle that complements the SDGs.<sup>121</sup> However, there is concern about the ongoing level of commitment to poverty reduction in the FCDO, particularly since the merger between DFID and the FCO, cuts to the ODA budget and the publication of the International Development Strategy (IDS).

### Impact of the merger

58. In September 2020 DFID and the FCO were merged to create the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. At the time of announcement, the Government said:

UK aid will be given new prominence within our ambitious international policy. The Foreign Secretary will be empowered to make decisions on aid spending in line with the UK's priorities overseas, harnessing the skills, expertise and evidence that have earned our reputation as a leader in the international development community.<sup>122</sup>

RESULTS UK, a UK based anti-poverty charity, commented:

The merger has been a major strategic error. It has damaged the UK's reputation, lowered its aid quality, undermined its focus on poverty reduction, compromised value-for-money investments for the UK taxpayer and caused the loss of a Cabinet-level voice for development [...] The merger has seen ODA aligned more closely with diplomatic, security and economic interests, over poverty eradication. As such, the merger has risked denigrating international partners' trust in the quality, independence, and motivations behind UK ODA. The cumbersome merger slowed the UK's international pandemic response, and cost the UK dearly in human resources. DFID housed immense expertise and institutional knowledge the merger has undermined. By September 2021, over 200 ex-DFID staff had already left the FCDO since the decision to merge whilst foreign nationals, with their crucial local knowledge, are now locked out of joining the FCDO as it has become a ‘reserved department’.<sup>123</sup>

Many others, including Action for Global Health, Concern Worldwide, The Leprosy Mission England & Wales, The UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group and Christian Aid, expressed similar concerns, especially a perceived decrease in poverty focus, and the loss of institutional memory due to staff leaving.<sup>124</sup>

120 [Q29](#)

121 [BRAC \(SDG0043\)](#)

122 [HM Government Press Release: Prime Minister announces merger of Department for International Development and Foreign Office](#), 16 June 2020

123 [RESULTS UK \(SDG0002\)](#)

124 [Action for Global Health \(SDG0015\)](#); [Concern Worldwide \(UK\) \(SDG0018\)](#); [UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group](#), [Results UK](#), [STOPAIDS \(SDG0027\)](#); [Christian Aid \(SDG0031\)](#)

59. Dr Glennerster, who was still working for the UK Government at the time of the merger, described both benefits and drawbacks. She discussed bandwidth:

If you are thinking about how to address extreme poverty you have to have a lot of energy and focus on a long-term strategy. There are still people who care about that and there is an understanding that you need a long-term strategy and there is a strategy being developed. I do not think that has changed that much. It is more just the air gets sucked out by immediate crises.<sup>125</sup>

She also highlighted positives, including “more ambassadors in low-income countries, and high commissioners who come from a development background and understand the issues of low-income countries.”<sup>126</sup>

60. In our 2020 Report, *Effectiveness of UK aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger*, we concluded that “strong political leadership on poverty reduction is central to maintaining the ongoing effectiveness of UK aid spending.”<sup>127</sup> We recommended that the Government appointed a Minister for Development who would attend Cabinet.<sup>128</sup> The Government responded, saying only that “the Foreign Secretary is responsible for development and aid spend.”<sup>129</sup> In September 2022 however, the Government appointed a Minister for Development within the FCDO, with responsibility for ODA allocations, and confirmed the Minister will attend Cabinet.<sup>130</sup>

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125 [Q30](#)

126 [Q30](#)

127 House of Commons International Development Committee, [Effectiveness of UK aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger](#), Fourth Report of Session 2019–21 (HC 596), 16 July 2020, p24 para.65

128 International Development Committee, [Effectiveness of UK aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger](#), Fourth Report of Session 2019–21 (HC 596), 16 July 2020, p26 para.69

129 International Development Committee, [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](#), Fourth Special Report of Session 2019–21 (HC 820), p6

130 HM Government, [Minister of State \(Minister for Development\)](#) Post held by Vicky Ford MP at time of creation, Andrew Mitchell MP at time of writing [Oct 2022]

### ODA cuts case study 3: Concern programmes, Bangladesh

“Concern’s Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER) programme in Malawi, and ‘Essential Healthcare for the Disadvantaged (EHD) programme in Bangladesh that were both completely cut mid-way through implementation, were targeting over 3.7 million of the poorest communities in these countries.

The PROSPER programme was a UK aid funded multi-stakeholder resilience and climate change programme supporting the Government of Malawi to end the recurrent cycle of crises and humanitarian assistance, and contribute to the reduction in extreme poverty. Funded through its flagship Building Resilience and Adapting to Climate Change (BRACC) programme PROSPER aimed to reach 1.1 million vulnerable people over four years. It intended to reduce the impact of climate shocks, respond to seasonal consumption needs, support the design of social safety nets, and generate evidence and knowledge to inform government policy.

An evaluation of the BRACC/PROSPER programme in December 2021 found that programme participants and households adopted more favourable agriculture practices, increased livestock ownership, and showed a better ability to respond to shocks like drought. Access and use of financial services such as savings and loans also showed an improvement. There was some evidence of positive impact on income and on food security and nutrition status, though the length of programme implementation was insufficient to assess longer term impact.

The Essential Healthcare for the Disadvantaged (EHD) programme in Bangladesh intended to bring affordable, accessible and quality health services to over 2.6 million disadvantaged people in some of the hardest to reach areas, including 140,000 people living with a disability. This programme was an important part of the National Health Strategy of the Government of Bangladesh. This programme did not just address health needs and offer a social safety net to some of the most in need and marginalised populations, it enabled the provision of timely Covid-19 response, and was helping to contribute to greater resilience to climate shocks in these populations.

However, as a result of having to end these programmes at short notice, the ability to continue having positive impact on the lives of the extreme poor, and improving their capacities to resist and adapt to shocks have suffered a serious set-back.”

Source: Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

### *Leave No One Behind*

61. The development sector was confused about whether commitments made by DFID were still priorities for the new Department. Sightsavers noted that the ‘Leave no one behind’ promise had “not been reconfirmed since the merger”.<sup>131</sup> This was echoed by others including BRAC, the Bond DDG Group and Save the Children.<sup>132</sup> The confusion persisted despite the publication of the IDS in May 2022, which contained little about the SDGs or LNOB.<sup>133</sup> Bond SDG Group commented:

131 Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#))

132 BRAC ([SDG0043](#)) Bond SDG Group ([SDG0006](#)); BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#)); Save the Children UK ([SDG0054](#))

133 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [UK government’s strategy for international development](#), May 2022

It is disappointing not to see a recommitment to the Leave No One Behind Promise in the IDS, and that it does not draw an explicit link between Official Development Assistance (ODA), tackling inequality and reaching the furthest behind first.

We raised that point with the then Foreign Secretary Liz Truss MP in May 2022 shortly after the IDS was published, as well as the lack of references to poverty in the strategy. She responded:

I do not think that you can judge the importance of a particular issue by the number of times it is mentioned. I have heard that already during this hearing. As I have said, those are core to what we are aiming to achieve.<sup>134</sup>

We wrote to the FCDO in July 2022 and asked whether the Government was still committed to the LNOB pledge. The Department responded:

Yes. We know what works. People and governments being able to determine their future, adopt good policies and work together to tackle the root causes of problems and leave no one behind. We will use our work on development to support the prosperity, freedom and security of people. Our focus on Women and Girls and humanitarian work will help us meet the needs of some of the most at risk people in the world.<sup>135</sup>

62. Of the 193 countries negotiating the SDGs in 2015, the UK was the leader in pushing for, and securing, the commitment to Leave no one behind, and therefore delivering a normative shift in how we do and deliver development. As recently as 2019 in the Government policy paper *Leaving no one behind: Our promise*, the UK committed “to putting the last first”. Practically, this locked-in a “pledge to ensure that people who are furthest behind, who have least opportunity and who are most excluded will be prioritised”. It also committed the Government to “holding ourselves and each other accountable for designing policies and building inclusive institutions that put the furthest behind first and sustainably address the root causes of poverty and exclusion”.<sup>136</sup> There has been no public announcement or confirmation that this ‘promise’ of the UK Government has been reneged upon. To leave behind the commitment to Leave no one behind is fundamentally and fatally flawed.

**63. In the current global climate, the need to ‘put the last first’ is perhaps even greater than it was at the gavelling of the Sustainable Development Goals. *The UK Government can help catalyse global action, reinstate UK leadership, and ensure coherence with domestic strategy, by creating a deliberate and dedicated Leave no one behind portfolio within FCDO, to put the furthest behind first. Such a commitment would be a timely, and impactful announcement at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Voluntary National Review session in July 2023, demonstrating the power of a UK Government ‘promise’.***

64. We welcome the Government’s decision to appoint a Minister for Development who will attend Cabinet. We also welcome the response to our letter that the Government is still committed to the ‘Leave no one behind’ pledge, but we were disappointed by

134 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q268](#)

135 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([SDG0058](#))

136 Department for International Development, [Policy paper: Leaving no one behind: Our promise](#), March 2019

the lack of explicit mention of that pledge in the recent International Development Strategy. The then Foreign Secretary argued that such an explicit reference was unnecessary, but we disagree; words matter. The UK has historically been a global leader in poverty reduction. Those working in the development space all over the world and other governments will be taking note of the UK's priorities. *To maintain the UK's status as a global leader in tackling extreme poverty, the FCDO should explicitly reaffirm its commitment to the Leave no one behind agenda, including achieving Sustainable Development Goal Target 1.1 of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030.*

### **Fragile states**

65. The link between conflict and extreme poverty is widely recognised. DFID committed in 2015 to spend at least 50% of the ODA budget in fragile and conflict affected states.<sup>137</sup> This target was met. In 2018, DFID spent 56% of its budget on fragile states and regions.<sup>138</sup> Concern Worldwide, World Vision UK, and ONE Campaign were among those who highlighted the importance of the 50% target.<sup>139</sup> UNICEF added that “this investment and leadership has historically been transformational in addressing the needs of women and girls in extreme poverty.”<sup>140</sup>

66. Since the merger between DFID and FCO, however, this target has not been mentioned or reported on. When asked about this departure from the target in evidence to the Joint Committee on National Security Strategy in May, Michael Ellis QC MP, the then Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office said:

[...] the approach we take in the spending of our portfolio and its goals is that we look at where a direct threat is posed to the United Kingdom and we try to address some of those issues. That is how we have always approached it and how we will continue to approach it. We continue to focus on tackling conflict and instability, for example, in places such as Myanmar, Syria, Yemen and some of the areas where there are particularly complex regional contexts.<sup>141</sup>

67. We have recently considered spending on fragile and conflict-affected states in our Report, *From Srebrenica to a safer tomorrow: Preventing future mass atrocities around the world*. We have called on the Government to:

Reassess whether the new International Development Strategy allows for a sufficient share of ODA to reach communities in fragile and conflict affected states, as well as other states it assesses as being at risk of mass atrocities.<sup>142</sup>

**68. We recognise that the FCDO may not have automatically carried over DFID's targets. As the proportion of extremely poor people living in fragile and conflict-**

137 Department for International Development, Press release, [Settlement at the Spending Review 2015](#)

138 Department for International Development, [DFID results estimates: 2015 to 2020](#), 27 August 2020, p.19 According to the previous DFID list of fragile states and regions published in 2017.

139 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#)); World Vision UK ([SDG0034](#)); ONE Campaign ([SDG0040](#))

140 UK Committee for UNICEF ([SDG0038](#))

141 Joint Committee on National Security Strategy, Oral Evidence taken on 23 May 2022, Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, [Q7](#)

142 International Development Committee, [From Srebrenica to a safer tomorrow: Preventing future mass atrocities around the world](#), Third Report of Session 2022–23 (HC 149), 17 October 2022, p.39 para 91

**affected states and regions continues to rise, however, this link must be recognised in targeting Official Development Assistance spending. The FCDO should recommit to DFID's previous target of spending 50% of its ODA budget in fragile states and regions.**

## ODA budget reduction

69. The merger came shortly before the cuts to the ODA budget, announced in November 2020 by the then Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab MP.<sup>143</sup> Save the Children commented that “the impact of the merger cannot be fully assessed in isolation from the significant cut to UK aid from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%.”<sup>144</sup> Women for Women, an international organisation supporting women affected by conflict, described:

[...] the intersecting threats that the merger of DFID and the FCO, cuts to UK Aid and COVID-19 posed to the effectiveness of the UK Government's policies, programmes and strategies to support marginalised women and girls living in extreme poverty.<sup>145</sup>

The FCDO explained:

The cut to 0.5% was not a decision taken lightly, but a necessary and temporary reduction, driven solely by current fiscal circumstances. While we know there will be visible real-world impacts on beneficiaries, we have sought to protect the world's poorest as far as possible by targeting our ODA support to the most fragile and conflict-affected regions of the world. We have scaled back ODA programmes in countries and regions that are better positioned to bounce back from COVID-19.<sup>146</sup>

## Targeting of ODA cuts

70. Analysis by Development Initiatives suggested that cuts were not made in a way that would protect the most vulnerable. For example, cuts were disproportionately made to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs): “Total UK ODA fell by 32% between 2019 and 2021, whilst ODA to LDCs fell by 50%.”<sup>147</sup> It explained:

Across all spending reported to IATI, disproportionately high cuts have been observed in sectors critical to poverty reduction, with total ODA spending on agriculture falling by 59%, education by 46% and water and sanitation by 52% between 2019 and 2021. For LDCs, the cuts to some sectors were even greater, with UK ODA to agriculture in LDCs reducing by 80% between 2019 and 2021.

FCDO, as expected, further prioritised health spending into 2020, with an increase of 14%. In 2021, the health prioritisation decreased but has not reverted entirely to pre-pandemic levels. However, for LDCs there was a year-on-year decrease in health spend observed across the period 2019–

143 HC Deb 26 November 2020, [col 1018](#), [Commons Chamber]

144 Save the Children UK ([SDG0022](#))

145 Women for Women International ([SDG0012](#))

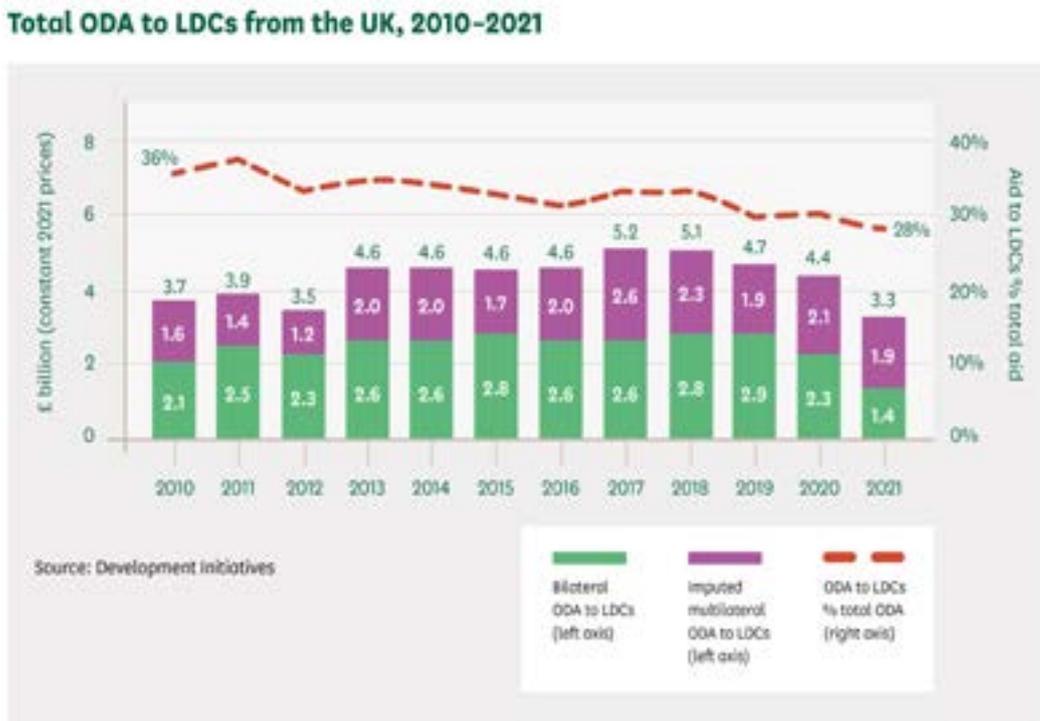
146 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([SDG0051](#))

147 Development Initiatives ([SDG0046](#))

2021 with 18% of disbursements going to health in 2019, but only 13% in 2021. Governance also saw considerable decreases across the period whereas business sector spending to LDCs increased.<sup>148</sup>

Figure 4 shows the proportion of ODA going to the LDCs from 2010–2021.

Figure 4: Total ODA to LDCs from the UK, 2010–2021



Source: Development Initiatives, [UK aid: Trends in the quality and quantity of UK ODA](#), 11 May 2022

71. Concern Worldwide noted that despite the commitment to ongoing support for Africa made in the Integrated Review, the ODA cuts did not reflect this.<sup>149</sup> It added: “Africa is home to 64% of those who live in extreme poverty, but in 2021–22 the FCDO’s share of regionally allocable ODA to Africa will fall below 50% for the first time in 15 years.”<sup>150</sup>

72. The then Foreign Secretary told us in May that “support to Africa will increase over the three-year spending review period.”<sup>151</sup> The provisional figures supplied shortly afterwards confirmed that this was the case, but support is only increasing marginally, and from a very low point, as Figure 5 shows. Even by 2024/5, spending on Africa will be less than 40% of what it was in 2020, despite the increasing concentration of poverty there.<sup>152</sup> Since these figures were provided, the FCDO has said that it “and other ODA spending

148 Development Initiatives (SDG0046)

149 HM Government, [Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#), March 2021, p46

150 Concern Worldwide (UK) (SDG0018)

151 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] Q263

152 Correspondence with Elizabeth Truss MP, then Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary, [17 June 2022](#)

departments will need to revisit those allocations.”<sup>153</sup> As the reason for this is in part unexpectedly high spending on refugee costs associated with Ukraine and Afghanistan, it may be more likely they are revised down, rather than up.

Figure 5: UK bilateral ODA spending on Africa

Year	Spending (2020/1)/ Allocations (2022–5) (millions)	Percentage of 2020 spend
2020	£2,610	100
2021	£1,365 (FCDO only)	52.3
2022/3	£883	33.8
2023/4	£948	36.3
2024/5	£1,029	39.4

Sources: Statistics on International Development: final UK aid spend 2020; Statistics on International Development: Provisional UK Aid Spend 2021; Correspondence with Elizabeth Truss MP, then Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary, 17 June 2022

73. When the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) released its rapid review in May 2021, *Management of the 0.7% ODA spending target in 2020*, it found that “when it came to the additional funds programmed in 2020 for COVID-19 response, the greater share did indeed go to countries classified as ‘highly vulnerable.’”<sup>154</sup> However, highly vulnerable countries were not protected from cuts to other programming. ICAI continued:

Our analysis of DFID/FCDO post management data suggests that in 24 of the 40 countries classified as highly vulnerable where DFID/FCDO had a post, DFID/FCDO spending in these 24 countries in 2020 fell by £753 million (compared to 2019), equivalent to around one-fifth of 2019 spend and an average of £31 million per country. These reductions in spend were on average six times greater in value than the reductions in DFID/FCDO spend in countries not classified as highly vulnerable where DFID/FCDO had a post, a finding partly explained by the fact that only sizeable programmes [...], could make a significant contribution to cuts. Only one highly vulnerable country, Sudan, received an overall increase in aid in 2020 compared to the previous year.<sup>155</sup>

74. In March 2022, we took evidence from organisations impacted by the ODA cuts, shortly after we published a leaked copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA), that the Government had refused to make public.<sup>156</sup> What we heard confirmed what the EIA predicted. Women and girls, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups were hit the hardest by the ODA budget reduction. Some examples of programmes that were cut can be found in the case studies included in this Report. Since these groups are more likely than most to be in extreme poverty already, it was likely that they would be significantly impacted by cuts to aid spending. However, the analysis by Development

153 Correspondence from the FCDO Permanent Under-Secretary of State regarding Reporting Future Programme Allocations - 19 July 2022

154 Independent Commission for Aid Impact, *Management of the 0.7% ODA spending target in 2020*, May 2021, p.19

155 Ibid

156 Oral evidence, 22 March 2022, Future of UK aid; [HC 100], *Equalities Impact Assessment*, March 2021 (published by International Development Committee on 8 March 2022; Correspondence with then Foreign Secretary, November 2021-February 2022

Initiatives suggested that cuts were made with little regard to impact on the poorest or most vulnerable.<sup>157</sup> ONE Campaign’s analysis showed reductions in allocations to Yemen, South Sudan and Ethiopia of more than 50% from 2020–21 to 2021–22.<sup>158</sup> In July 2022 “non-essential aid spending” was suspended, as in-country refugee costs put pressure on the spending target, raising the threat of yet further cuts to come.<sup>159</sup> The Centre for Global Development estimated that “up to £3 billion, a quarter of the UK’s annual aid budget, [will be] spent on hosting refugees in 2022.”<sup>160</sup>

**75. The Government said in its response to our inquiry that it scaled back programmes in “countries and regions that are better positioned to bounce back from COVID-19”. It is not clear what the basis was for the reductions of allocations by more than half in, for example, Yemen, South Sudan and Ethiopia. What is clear, not least from the cuts to programmes in Africa, is that impact on poverty reduction was given far less consideration than it should have been, given that that should be the primary purpose of UK ODA. *The FCDO must urgently review the methodology used when making these cuts, and explain in its response to this report how it will avoid any such failures in future. In addition, as the FCDO “revisits” its allocations for the coming years, poverty alleviation must be the primary priority in determining where to focus and protect spending.***

### Classifying ODA spend

76. Some organisations highlighted UK ODA spending that, although undoubtedly compliant with OECD rules, ought not to be categorised as ODA. Such spending included donated vaccines, which the UK had already ordered for domestic supply and would have paid for regardless, and climate mitigation measures that are used to offset emissions from richer countries. Stefan Dercon, former Chief Economist at DFID 2011–2017 and Development Policy Adviser at FCDO 2020–2022, recently addressed the APPG on Extreme poverty. In a subsequent series of Tweets, he explained that Departments “tried to make almost all spending in low and middle income countries ‘aid’.”<sup>161</sup>

77. Romilly Greenhill gave some examples:

There are some programmes that do not clearly demonstrate poverty focus, things like front-line diplomatic activities that are funded under the aid budget, the Chevening Scholarship programme. [...] By all means continue Chevening but we do not think it should be coming from the ODA budget, which is a very precious resource. Similarly, on front-line diplomatic activities, clearly we should be doing diplomacy. That is an incredibly important area for the UK to be engaged in, but we do not think that it should be funded out of the ODA budget as it currently is, some of it, in developing countries.<sup>162</sup>

157 Development Initiatives ([SDG0046](#))

158 ONE Campaign ([SDG0040](#))

159 Financial Times, [UK Treasury blocks ‘non-essential’ overseas aid payments](#), July 25 2022

See also written Parliamentary Question on the definition of “essential”: PQ [45823](#) [on Development Aid] 20 September 2022

160 Centre for Global Development, [Projections of UK-Hosted Refugees, and the Implications for the UK’s Aid Budget and Spend](#), September 22 2022

161 Twitter, [Stefan Dercon](#), 11 August 2022, 16/n

162 [Qq14–15](#)

One of the concerns we heard about relating to the merger was that the development budget would be reduced to being a foreign policy tool, with Action for Global Health suggesting “development objectives and the focus on poverty reduction have been diluted in favour of foreign policy objectives.”<sup>163</sup>

## Predictable funding

78. Providers working in development need long-term and predictable funding to maintain momentum and progress.<sup>164</sup> With the recent budget cuts, and the prospect of more to come, organisations do not have such certainty, which harms outcomes. Dr Gitahi explained:

I run an organisation that spends money from bilateral and multilateral donors like yourselves, and the biggest challenge is project-based financing. The money comes in. You start a programme, you discover new things, you research and you get new data. The data is not always quantitative; it is also lived experiences, hearing from the communities, seeing them, and seeing what is and is not working. Then the project ends. The next donor comes and says, “We want to focus our money on something different,” and there is no incremental value.

My only answer here is, please let us work on long-term programming, so that we can adapt, learn, adapt, learn and adapt for a long time. It is better to have a small amount over a long time than a huge amount for just three or four years, because you do not actually gain incremental value.<sup>165</sup>

Kathleen Spencer-Chapman, Head of Policy, Advocacy and Research at Plan International told the Committee in March that when the ODA budget was reduced:

There was no real attempt to consult with anyone to work out how to do this in the least harmful way possible. That was one of the most shocking and painful things about the whole process of the cuts—that speed and lack of consultation at the time.<sup>166</sup>

79. The Charities Aid Foundation, which supports small charities working in development, explained that “applying for repeat funding every year can soak up resources and exclude charities lacking in administrative expertise or experience.”<sup>167</sup> BRAC and Concern Worldwide also observed that the graduation and social protection programmes that have proved so successful in tackling extreme poverty need multi-year commitments.<sup>168</sup> Dr Glennerster told us that one of her biggest concerns about the merger was its impact on long-term focus:

If you are thinking about how to address extreme poverty you have to have a lot of energy and focus on a long-term strategy. There are still people who care about that and there is an understanding that you need a long-term

163 Action for Global Health ([SDG0015](#))

164 See for example: British Red Cross ([SDG0020](#)); Action Aid UK ([SDG0021](#)); Amref Health Africa ([SDG0053](#))

165 [Q135](#)

166 Oral evidence, 22 March 2022, Future of UK aid, [Q216](#)

167 Charities Aid Foundation ([SDG0007](#))

168 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

strategy and there is a strategy being developed. I do not think that has changed that much. It is more just the air gets sucked out by immediate crises.<sup>169</sup>

She added that the UK “needs a lot more work on focusing on a few things and doing them at scale.”<sup>170</sup>

**80. Cutting funding mid-programme and awarding short-term contracts may help the Government to stay within its 0.5% GNI target, but it risks undermining previous investments and undoing hard-won progress. *The most effective programmes should be scaled up and allocated long-term funding.***

**81. Classifying all spending in low-and-middle-income countries as ODA may meet the letter of OECD rules, but it contravenes their spirit. *Programmes that may contribute to foreign policy objectives, but that do not have a measurable effect on poverty, should not be classified as ODA spending.***

**82. *The UK Government must trust and fund what works. Policy and spend must be dedicated to interventions that deliver, at scale, to and with those most in need. Investing in long-term partnerships provides the key to long-term change. Should ODA levels stagnate, the requirement to ensure that assistance is well-spent becomes more critical than ever. The UK Government must be evidence-led in terms of spend, focusing on independently and internally assessed ‘best buys’, such as extreme poverty graduation, that deliver the most significant and sustainable returns on investment. On this basis, extreme poverty should represent more, not less, of official ODA spend.***

## International Development Strategy

83. The majority of the evidence to our inquiry was submitted before the FCDO published the IDS in May 2022. Many of the organisations that submitted evidence hoped that the IDS would set out a renewed focus on poverty and provide clarity for those working in development after the previous year’s cuts. The Bond SDG Group recommended that “the upcoming International Development Strategy should be clearly aligned to the SDGs and support the process of SDG implementation in low-and-middle-income countries.”<sup>171</sup> Sightsavers added:

The Strategy should also outline how the UK government will recommit to the principle of ‘leave no one behind’. It must also cover UK ODA spent by other government departments, ensuring that they meet the requirement to contribute to a reduction in poverty and reducing gender inequality.<sup>172</sup>

84. After it was published, Bond SDG Group told us many aspects were welcome, including the commitments on women and girls, climate change, addressing structural problems, monitoring, decentralisation, global health and debt sustainability.<sup>173</sup> However, it argued that the strategy:

169 [Q30](#)

170 [Q36](#)

171 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0006](#))

172 Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#))

173 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0056](#))

marks a radical change in direction and although it is welcome to see a commitment to the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is a lack of detail and clarity on how this commitment will be practically met. [...] It is disappointing not to see a recommitment to the Leave No One Behind Promise in the IDS, and that it does not draw an explicit link between Official Development Assistance (ODA), tackling inequality and reaching the furthest behind first.<sup>174</sup>

Save the Children expressed similar concerns. It explained that the “strategy represents a step back from the UK’s historical leadership on ODA to tackle extreme poverty and inequality, including its commitment to Leave no One Behind.”<sup>175</sup>

### **Multilateral vs bilateral funding**

85. In the IDS, the Government set out its plans to do “proportionately more through country and bilateral programmes”, rather than through multilateral institutions.<sup>176</sup> It aims to spend “three-quarters of its funding allocated at the 2021 Spending Review through country and bilateral programmes” by 2025.<sup>177</sup> The then Foreign Secretary Liz Truss MP told us that this would be achieved by cuts to multilaterals, such as moving from being “the World Bank’s top funder to the World Bank’s third-largest funder.”<sup>178</sup> She added that multilateral contributions would decrease from £3.7 billion in 2022–23 to £2.4 billion in 2024–25.<sup>179</sup> Both the then Foreign Secretary and Nick Dyer, Director General of Humanitarian and Development at the FCDO, declined to elaborate on which other multilaterals may face cuts, including the Global Fund.<sup>180</sup> Figure 6 shows how UK aid has been divided from 2010 to 2021.

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174 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0056](#))

175 Save the Children UK ([SDG0054](#))

176 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [UK government’s strategy for international development](#), May 2022, p.6

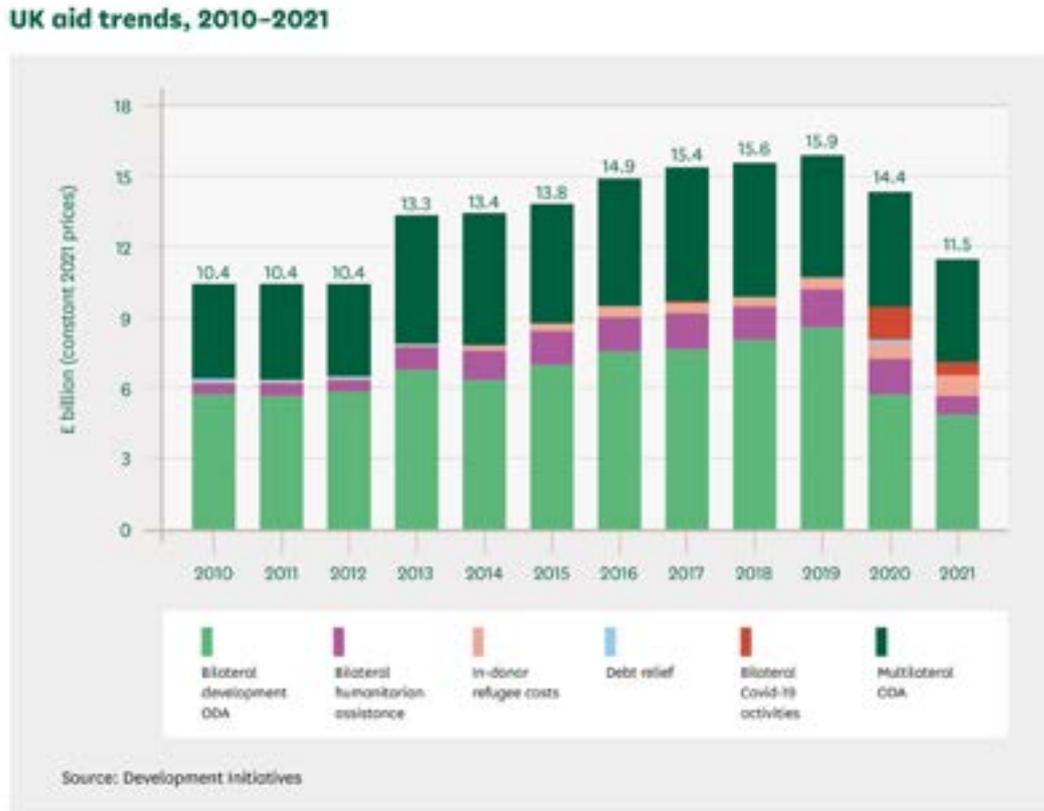
177 *Ibid* p.22

178 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q300](#)

179 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q302](#)

180 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q307](#)

Figure 6: UK aid trends 2010–2021



Source: Development Initiatives, [UK aid: Trends in the quality and quantity of UK ODA](#), 11 May 2022

86. The planned shift towards bilateral spending in the IDS drew a mixed response. Concern Worldwide explained:

In shifting funding from multilateral to bilateral, there is an opportunity to ensure spending is specifically targeted towards the people most in need, and invests in approaches - like social protection - that are most effective at sustainably lifting people out of poverty.<sup>181</sup>

Some expressed caution. Dr Glennerster said that during the COVID-19 response:

It is quite slow to get money out through a bilateral agency in those sorts of situations. It takes much longer to get a programme going. Instead, multilaterals found it much easier to respond very quickly and use programmes that already existed. Therefore, we do have to think about the bilateral versus multilateral programme in terms of who is the best able to respond rapidly to these kinds of crises. The World Bank was able to push an awful lot of money out the door very quickly in response to the falls in income as a result of Covid.<sup>182</sup>

87. Romilly Greenhill added that “in general multilaterals tend to be very well targeted at poverty reduction.”<sup>183</sup> She highlighted particularly the World Bank, The Global Fund and

181 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))

182 [Q29](#)

183 [Q11](#)

Gavi. ONE Campaign said that “the UK’s global influence and reputation can be credited to the key role it plays within the world’s largest multilaterals.”<sup>184</sup> This influence may be diminished as the UK’s status as a donor is reduced, as BRAC noted in relation to cuts to the World Bank’s International Development Association.<sup>185</sup>

### *Trade and investment*

88. Trade and investment featured heavily in the IDS as means to drive economic growth and reduce poverty. The Government will increase investment through BII, seeking to “mobilise up to £8 billion of UK-backed financing a year by 2025 including from the private sector.”<sup>186</sup> In May, the then Foreign Secretary told us the FCDO was working on other joint investment projects, including with Japan, Australia and India, and described “a G7 democratic alternative” to China’s ‘Belt and Road’ initiative.<sup>187</sup> Nick Dyer explained that in the third year of the strategy there would be “additional resources for direct investments from the Government”, adding that this investment “is more within our control, in terms of the sectors and places where we wish to deploy that.”<sup>188</sup>

### *CDC/BII role in poverty reduction*

89. In March 2022 we asked BII (then known as CDC) about its investments’ ability to alleviate poverty, particularly extreme poverty.<sup>189</sup> Diana Layfield responded that “poverty and poverty reduction remain an absolutely core part of CDC’s mission.”<sup>190</sup> Mita Samani explained the importance of job creation, economic transformation and climate finance in poverty reduction, key features to CDC’s strategy.<sup>191</sup> We pressed, however, on how well targeted investment could be to help those in extreme poverty, given that their Impact Framework, used to assess potential investments, used the higher \$5.50 a day measure to identify low-income populations.<sup>192</sup> Nick O’Donohoe, Chief Executive Officer at CDC Group, replied:

The \$5.50 is a score within our scoring system. In deciding what the right number was, we had to try to reconcile two things. On the one hand, we had to reconcile a desire to reach the poorest members of the country; on the other hand, we had to be clear that we need to back sustainable businesses. If you put money into a business that goes out of business, you are not creating any impact.

In trying to find the right balance, we looked at the distribution of income in the various countries in which we invested, with a view to making sure that at least 40% of the poorest people in that country would be benefiting. That is where the \$5.50 came from. In Africa, for example, more than 80% of people live on incomes of less than \$5.50.

184 ONE Campaign ([SDG0040](#))

185 BRAC ([SDG0043](#))

186 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [UK government’s strategy for international development](#), May 2022, p.8

187 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q291](#)

188 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q297](#)

189 CDC was renamed as BII in April 2022. As the evidence session took place the previous week, quotations largely refer to CDC.

190 [Q67](#)

191 [Q67](#),

192 BII, [Impact Score 2022–26 Strategy Period](#), p.8

We are trying to find this balance. We recognise that there are lots of great programmes that FCDO runs around cash payments or other humanitarian programmes that reach the poorest of the poor. We have to balance reaching those people, because we are, as Mita said, part of the solution, not the whole solution by any means.<sup>193</sup>

Mita Samani added that “CDC’s own recent research shows that increasing investment in Kenya by \$10,000 lifts one additional person out of extreme poverty”.<sup>194</sup> After we suggested this seemed like quite a high figure, the FCDO clarified that this referred to “an average private sector investment, not targeted to reach those people living in extreme poverty.”<sup>195</sup>

90. In 2019, ICAI awarded CDC an amber/red score, finding that

CDC has made progress in redirecting investments to low-income and fragile states, but has been slow in building in-country capacity to support a more developmental approach. CDC has not done enough to ensure or monitor development results, or to progress plans to improve evaluation and apply learning.<sup>196</sup>

ICAI noted that in 2018 DFID had set “progressively more ambitious goals for achieving development impact in low-income and fragile states, and has reduced its financial return targets to facilitate this.”<sup>197</sup> It also acknowledged that the process of change was ongoing. Nick O’Donohoe told us that

It has been an enormous cultural shift for the organisation. If you were to ask me what I am proudest of over the last five years, although it started in 2012, from 2017 to 2021 we really accelerated that shift towards an organisation that is really driven by impact.<sup>198</sup>

We have recently launched an inquiry into the UK’s strategy towards Development Finance Institutions.<sup>199</sup>

### *Trade policy*

91. In line with the IDS, the Department for International Trade launched the Developing Countries Trading Scheme, which comes into effect in 2023. That scheme will offer trading preferences, such as reduced tariffs and simpler rules of origin requirements, to “improve access to the UK market for developing countries.”<sup>200</sup> The Government said that “the scheme helps countries to diversify their exports and grow their economies, while British households and businesses benefit from lower prices and more choice.”<sup>201</sup>

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193 [Q71](#)

194 [Q76](#)

195 British International Investment ([SDG0052](#))

196 ICAI, [CDC’s investments in low-income and fragile states](#), 26 March 2019

197 Ibid.

198 [Q67](#)

199 International Development Committee, [Investment for development: The UK’s strategy towards Development Finance Institutions](#)

200 Department for International Trade, [Policy paper: Developing Countries Trading Scheme: Government Response](#), 16 August 2022

201 Ibid

92. Mansour Ddiaye explained that the UK has provided financial and technical support to the process of establishing the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), including committing £35 million in March 2022.<sup>202</sup> He added:

With Covid-19 impacts on the continent and the ongoing supply chains disruptions resulting from Ukraine war, Africa needs more than ever to diversify its economies and produce more of what it consumes. The AfCFTA, if effectively implemented, will contribute to this aspiration for the continent while creating business and job opportunities for its booming population.<sup>203</sup>

93. Some witnesses highlighted that trade must be combined with other measures to support sustainable development. The Institute of Development Studies noted the link between climate change and extreme poverty. It recommended pursuing “trade policies that protect livelihoods, create equal outcomes, ensure labour standards, prevent harmful child labour and adhere to commitments on climate change and environmental standards.” Mansour Ndiaye explained:

Trade and investment are considered integral engines for speeding up economic recovery from COVID-19 pandemic shock, besides holding many opportunities for progressing on national developmental goals including extreme poverty eradication. However, it is critical to consider how trade and investments are conducted and allocated (ideally to the most productive sectors of the economy) and what capacities are needed to have greater impacts on poverty, inequality and decent job creation, **as growth does not automatically trickle down to the poorest.**<sup>204</sup> [emphasis in original]

Bond DDG was similarly concerned by what it saw as a reliance on “trickle-down development”, which does not target the most marginalised.<sup>205</sup> Save the Children agreed that “trade and investment are of course important, but they must be geared explicitly to contribute to poverty reduction rather than assumed to do so by default.”<sup>206</sup>

94. **Trade and investment are proven means of reducing poverty, but the Government cannot rely on “trickle-down development”. Policies based on trade and investment must include the world’s poorest people. As the Government increases ODA spending through development finance, it is vital that such spending targets the poorest and is not just invested in middle-income countries where returns may be higher. *The BII Impact Framework should be updated to include scoring based on the new World Bank definition of extreme poverty of \$2.15 a day, in addition to its current metric of \$5.50 a day. The BII annual report should set out the proportion of investments meeting the new metric, which would ensure that BII investments support the world’s poorest communities. Other investment partnerships, such as those planned with G7 partners, should also establish clear frameworks targeting poverty reduction in low-and-middle-income countries.***

202 UNDP Mansour Ndiaye ([SDG0055](#))

203 UNDP Mansour Ndiaye ([SDG0055](#))

204 UNDP Mansour Ndiaye ([SDG0055](#))

205 BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#))

206 Save the Children UK ([SDG0054](#))

95. *The FCDO must work with the Department for International Trade to ensure that trade policy is predicated on creating inclusive, sustainable growth and supporting economic diversification, particularly in countries facing food insecurity and/or climate threats.*

96. Throughout this inquiry, we heard how budget reductions had affected programmes tackling poverty. The Government has stated that it knows what works in addressing extreme poverty, but it has not consistently demonstrated that insight in its funding decisions. *We recommend:*

- *The FCDO must ensure that its focus on trade and investment, and the rising costs associated with Ukraine and Afghanistan, do not lead to further decreases in funding for poverty reduction programmes, such as health, nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), education, social protection and graduation programmes.*
- *The focus must be on the entrenched poor, alongside those who have more recently slipped into extreme poverty as a result of the pandemic and global economic crisis. We need a restoration of the 0.7% of GNI target for development spending in order to effectively support the poorest people.*
- *The FCDO should use the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) to assess need and to direct funding accordingly.*

## 5 Strategy, reporting and transparency

97. The UK Government has made a key contribution to reducing poverty in the past. However, its current and future contribution is obscure. The recent Aid Transparency Index stated that “the FCDO has performed significantly worse in the 2022 Index compared with DFID’s performance in 2020.”<sup>207</sup>

### Strategies

98. One cause of the lower score awarded to the FCDO in the Aid Transparency Index was the absence of a departmental strategy at the time of assessment. This was subsequently published in May 2022. Although some of the broad sentiments and commitments were welcome, the lack of detailed targets and plans was noted by many, including Bond DDG:

Despite a recognition from the IDS “that global challenges have pushed millions into poverty”, it fails to deliver a coherent plan to eradicate poverty and improve the lives of the most marginalised.<sup>208</sup>

The then Foreign Secretary Liz Truss MP told us this was a “10-year strategy”.<sup>209</sup> She added:

This is very much the first step of taking our development strategy in a new direction. We are bringing out a women and girls strategy soon, which will go into more detail on that subject. We are bringing out a prevention of sexual violence strategy, which will go into more detail on that subject. [...] Yes, it is the overview of the direction. Last year we launched British International Investment. We gave a clear sense of direction on that, but there will be more to come—I mentioned women and girls and PSVI—including, I hope, on a G7 investment offer for low and middle-income countries. Some of these parts of the strategy will be with other partners; they will not just be for the UK.<sup>210</sup>

99. We asked in July 2022 for timescales and information about any other forthcoming strategies. In response, the Government listed the Women and Girls Strategy, the preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the International Climate Finance (ICF) strategy and the G7’s Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII). When asked about timescales, the FCDO said that all those strategies would be published “in due course”.<sup>211</sup>

207 Publish What You Fund, [Aid Transparency Index 2022](#), FCDO, Analysis [accessed 13 October 2022]

208 BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#))

209 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q282](#)

210 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q331](#)

211 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([SDG0058](#))

## **Disability inclusion and rights strategy**

100. The FCDO's disability inclusion and rights strategy was published in February 2022. It was received positively by organisations such as Sightsavers, Humanity & Inclusion UK and Bond DDG.<sup>212</sup> However, Bond DDG noted the lack of focus on disability and inclusion in the IDS.

101. We asked how the FCDO would ensure that strategies are integrated in the IDS and do not become siloed workstreams. It responded:

We work closely across FCDO and across government to ensure that the IDS dovetails with other FCDO and XHMG strategies. In addition, we are currently refreshing our cross-government development governance framework to ensure a coherent approach XHMG to implementing the IDS, as well as wider development policy governance.

Our disability inclusion and rights strategy is coherent with the aims of the IDS and captured where the IDS refers to inclusion. We work hand in hand with the teams working on disability.<sup>213</sup>

As Bond DDG suggested however, the IDS does not refer to inclusion. We put this to the then Foreign Secretary, who replied: "it does not mean it is off the table. It is a core part of what we do."<sup>214</sup>

102. Save the Children discussed the risks implicit in pursuing multiple, disparate objectives:

Lack of policy coherence and inadequate efforts to "course correct" have also been evident since the merger and the aid cuts. For instance, spending on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment were negatively impacted by the 2021 aid cuts. The UK Government has since announced new, more narrowly focused funding to address gender-based violence and claims that funding for gender equality has returned to pre-aid cut levels. However, much needed long-term investment is required to break poverty cycles for women and girls.

More widely, the FCDO's approach to policy tends to focus solely on groups based on a single vulnerability, such as people living with disability or women and girls. It would be more effective at tackling poverty if the FCDO focused more on how vulnerabilities intersect. The UK will not be able to achieve its goal of ending extreme poverty if it does not put its work within the framework of a comprehensive "Leave No One Behind" approach.

Bond SDG Group also noted the importance of policy coherence for delivery of the SDGs more widely. They called for "a clear analysis of the impact of the IDS on SDG implementation."<sup>215</sup>

212 Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#)), BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#)), Oral evidence, 22 March 2022, Future of UK aid, [Q244](#)

213 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([SDG0058](#))

214 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q343](#)

215 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0056](#))

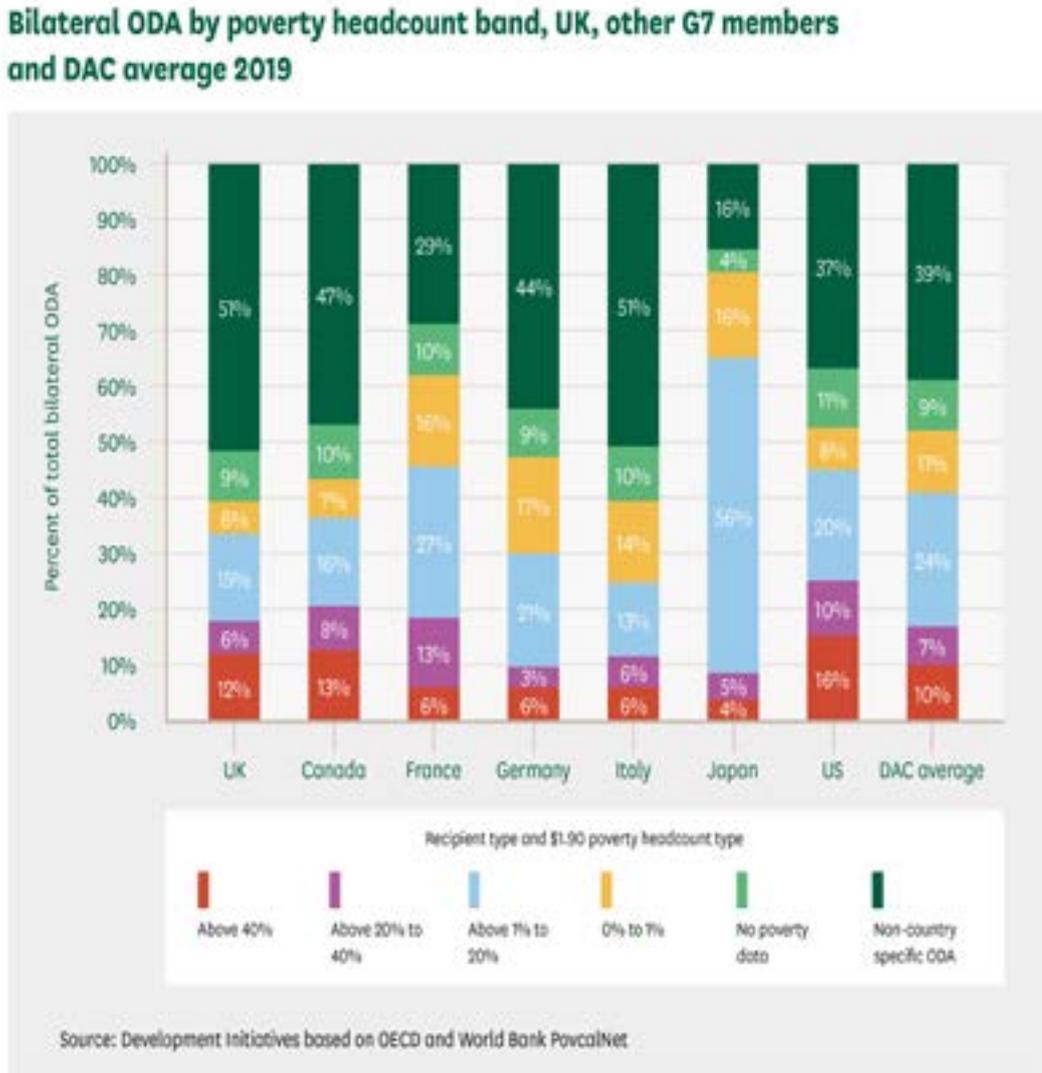
103. A lack of policy coherence can lead to counterproductive actions, such as cutting funding to groups and regions that have previously been identified as priorities. Creating strategies is important, but they cannot exist in silos or fail to consider other previously identified strategic objectives. Furthermore, without clear targets and actions, progress cannot be measured. *As well as contributing to a cross-departmental Global Health Strategy, the FCDO must link its strategies to coherent, published delivery plans, which should include clear targets, timelines and financial allocations. In particular, the disability inclusion and rights strategy 2022–2030 must feed into all the Department’s development work, or it risks becoming an empty promise.*

### Reporting: ODA spending

104. One of the difficulties in establishing the extent of the UK Government’s focus on poverty reduction is the lack of clear data. Development Initiatives explained one issue:

The UK’s share of non-country specific ODA was 51% in 2019, among the highest of the G7 members and notably higher than the DAC average of 39% (Figure 7). This has risen consistently, up from 39% in 2010. A component of such assistance includes regional aid—ODA supporting regional initiatives and multi-country projects. The remainder (83% in 2019), including a range of activities such as costs of hosting refugees, administrative costs, CDC capitalisation, global programmes and global public goods (including research), does not target specific people or places. Whilst aid supporting global public goods may benefit people in poverty, it does not explicitly target nor disproportionately benefit people in extreme poverty.<sup>216</sup>

Figure 7: Bilateral ODA by poverty headcount band, UK, other G7 members and the DAC average in 2019



Source: Development Initiatives (SDG0046) Notes: Extreme poverty is defined by the \$1.90 a day international poverty line. Countries for which no poverty data is available are contained in the “no poverty data category”, this category includes 27 countries. The number of countries in each poverty band are as follows: above 40%: 20 countries, above 20% to 40%: 16 countries, above 1% to 20%: 47 countries, 0% to 1%: 38 countries.

105. The Government stated that its planned shift to bilateral spending will allow it “to focus funding on UK priorities and control exactly how taxpayers’ money is used to support these.”<sup>217</sup> It plans to substantially increase spending on BII to £8 billion in 2025.<sup>218</sup> As more than half of bilateral spending, including CDC (BII) capitalisation, is non-country specific, it may be difficult to scrutinise such ODA spending.

106. The IDS did not include specific funding commitments, but the then Foreign Secretary told us in the same week it was published that forward programme allocations for the three-year Spending Review period had been signed off and would be included in

217 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [UK government’s strategy for international development](#), May 2022, p.22

218 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q254](#)

the departmental report and accounts when those accounts were published in July 2022.<sup>219</sup> However, those allocations were not included in the departmental report and accounts. Sir Philip Barton, permanent undersecretary, FCDO, wrote to us to explain:

The FCDO has been working closely with HM Treasury to support the management of ODA-eligible expenditure within the government's commitment to spend 0.5% Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA. Given the government's response to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, wide ODA pressures including the ODA eligible expenditure incurred through the Afghan resettlement programme and the UK's support to people fleeing Ukraine, the FCDO and other ODA spending departments will need to revisit those allocations. In light of this context, the FCDO cannot publish forward programme allocations with confidence at this time.<sup>220</sup>

At the time of writing, six months into the financial year, those allocations have still not been published.

**107. The 2022 Aid Transparency Index noted the FCDO's deterioration in transparency compared with DFID's performance in 2020, in part due to "inconsistent publication of results, evaluations and objectives." The FCDO failed to publish detailed budgets in its Annual Report and Accounts 2022, which meant that we were unable to scrutinise its spending plans. We understand that allocations are subject to change, but the Department must set out provisional budgets in its annual report. Furthermore, the FCDO must address the issues highlighted by the 2022 Aid Transparency Index and return to the "very good" status previously achieved by DFID.**

## Reporting: progress towards SDGs

### Outcome Delivery Plans

108. The Government's reporting on the SDGs is largely contained in departmental Outcome Delivery Plans. Those plans should provide transparency about how the work of the Government contributes to the SDGs. Bond SDG Group said:

The new Outcome Delivery Plans (ODPs) improve the level of detail with regards to SDG reporting, however, the public plans are very top-level and only provided information on which SDG targets were being implemented by the Government's priority outcomes. We found that the plans were also very inconsistent, with some departments not mapping any SDG targets at all, and a total of 58 targets have not been addressed at all in the ODPs.<sup>221</sup>

Despite referring to the ODPs in its submission to our inquiry, the FCDO made no reference to extreme poverty or SDG target 1.1 in its own ODP for 2021–22.<sup>222</sup> UNICEF noted that "Additionally, there is no mention of poverty in the Performance Metrics detailed within the Priority Outcomes Delivery Plans."<sup>223</sup> When we questioned that lacuna, the FCDO

219 Oral Evidence taken on 18 May 2022, Future of UK Aid, [HC 148] [Q281](#)

220 Correspondence from the FCDO Permanent Under-Secretary of State regarding Reporting Future Programme Allocations - [19 July 2022](#)

221 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0006](#))

222 FCDO, [Outcome Delivery Plan: 2021 to 2022](#), 15 July 2021

223 UK Committee for UNICEF ([SDG0038](#))

told us that the format was set by the Cabinet Office, and directed us towards another report, entitled *Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*.<sup>224</sup> However, this is also high-level and does not detail work specifically relevant to target 1.1.

### Voluntary National Reviews

109. For those countries that signed up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the primary mechanism for reporting is through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Member states are encouraged to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven.”<sup>225</sup> Countries are left to decide how frequently to submit these, as ‘regular’ is not defined.

110. The UK produced its first and only VNR in 2019.<sup>226</sup> Our predecessor Committee scrutinised the process and made recommendations on how this could be improved for future VNRs, including greater co-ordination with the devolved Administrations, and clear timelines to allow effective stakeholder engagement.<sup>227</sup> Bond SGD Group noted that many countries have already produced second or third VNRs. It added:

Despite the UK being at the forefront of the negotiation of the SDGs, we are yet to see any meaningful progress on the commitments made in 2019 or the recommendations made by the IDC in 2019, and the UK Government has not committed to producing a second VNR.<sup>228</sup>

We asked the FCDO when it was planning to submit the next VNR. The Department responded that “No decision has been made about a follow-up to the 2019 VNR, however we regularly engage stakeholders on implementation of the SDGs.”<sup>229</sup>

**111. It has only been three years since the last Voluntary National Review. However, a great deal has changed in this time both domestically and internationally. To maintain its reputation as a global leader in development, the Government must commit to completing a Voluntary National Review of progress on the SDGs. Strategically, given the stand-out importance of the forthcoming SDG Summit in 2023, the last opportunity for Heads of State to collectively assess and look to accelerate progress before the SDG 2030 deadline, the UK Government must present its Voluntary National Review in 2023. An honest appraisal of both the challenges and opportunities that the UK Government is facing in terms of delivering SDG progress, married with a renewed promise to leave no one behind and commitment to SDG 1.1, could transform both the UK’s standing on development and the global conversation around these priority agendas. In addition, the Government should review our predecessor Committee’s recommendations in relation to VNRs on engagement and timescales.**

224 FCDO, Corporate Report, [Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 15 July 2021

225 UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, [Voluntary National Reviews](#), [accessed 13 October 2022]

226 HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), June 2020

227 International Development Committee, [UK progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Voluntary National Review](#), Twelfth Report of Session 2017–19 (HC 1732), 16 July 2019, pp.39–41

228 Bond SGD Group ([SDG0006](#))

229 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([SDG0058](#))

## Conclusions and recommendations

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### Extreme poverty: definition and trends

1. The effects of COVID-19, climate change and conflict are undermining decades of progress on eliminating extreme poverty. Extreme poverty drives conflict, displacement and migration. Eliminating extreme poverty is fundamental to everyone's security and prosperity. (Paragraph 23)

### Effective interventions

2. We welcome the FCDO's position papers on health systems strengthening for global health security and universal health coverage, and ending preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children by 2030. *We recommend the Government builds on these, and the disability inclusion and rights strategy, and develops a coherent cross-departmental Global Health Strategy, with clearly defined targets and delivery plans, within six months. We repeat our previous call for this to set out how the UK intends to use levers at multilateral and bilateral levels to achieve its aims, how this ensures progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goal, and how the strategy will reach the most marginalised and vulnerable communities.* (Paragraph 30)
3. Poor health drives people into and traps them in extreme poverty. Withdrawing funding from programmes that fight AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases not only puts lives immediately at risk, but impacts wider objectives on education, gender equity and poverty reduction. While we were encouraged to see the UK Government finally make a pledge to the Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund, we were disappointed that our contribution has fallen by nearly £500 million since the previous cycle. The UK Government must reassume its position as a leader on global health. *The UK Government must prioritise funding for health, both in bilateral programming and support for effective multilateral schemes, as one of the most effective interventions in extreme poverty reduction.* (Paragraph 31)
4. Nutrition is a keystone investment. It builds resilience in health, improves education outcomes and strengthens the economy through labour market participation. Moreover, investing in it represents very real value for money (Paragraph 34)
5. The FCDO's commitment to supporting women and girls, particularly through education, is welcome. However, reductions in aid have been shown to disproportionately affect women and girls. Girls' education is often more vulnerable when families face hardship and particularly during conflict or crises such as COVID-19. Many of these girls will never be able to return to school. Therefore, it is vital that the conditions that allow girls to attend to school for longer are addressed as well as the education systems themselves. General and reproductive healthcare, WASH access, caring responsibilities, child labour and early marriage all affect girls' education, because new schools do not help girls if girls cannot attend them. *Programmes that enable girls to access education must be adequately supported in line with the FCDO's general commitment to supporting women and girls. The FCDO should focus education spending on the most impactful programmes for poverty*

*reduction. This can be enhanced by complementary investments in social protection that reach the most vulnerable households, which are otherwise most likely to take girls out of school when crises occur. (Paragraph 40)*

6. *As well as continuing to use its expertise to train teachers, the FCDO should focus education spending on the most impactful programmes for poverty reduction, particularly early years and primary education. All programmes should be disability inclusive, recognising the additional barriers disabled children face when accessing education. (Paragraph 41)*
7. *The FCDO should continue to use its expertise and influence to champion social protection systems and universal health coverage. The COVID-19 pandemic showed the value of such systems, which are already urgently needed due to the effects of climate change and food insecurity and are likely to become even more important in the future. (Paragraph 45)*
8. In summary, by weaving a tapestry of the most critical interventions, including cash, capacity-building and financial inclusion, graduation programmes have a transformative and long-term impact on the poorest households, which reap sustained economic and social benefits that far outweigh the cost of initial investment. This methodology originated from a DFID-funded programme in Bangladesh and can play an important role in addressing extreme poverty in other countries. (Paragraph 51)
9. Adapting to climate change and building resilience is vital for poverty reduction. Reducing the debt burden allows governments in low-and-middle-income countries to spend more on public health, education and social protection programmes. *The UK Government must maintain its leadership on grant-based climate finance to help countries adapt to climate change without provoking and exacerbating debt crises, deploying finance in a timely manner that matches the urgency of the situation now. (Paragraph 55)*
10. Although low-income countries are often disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and can play a vital role in mitigation, they are mostly mitigating the emissions of other countries, including the UK. It is right that we invest in mitigation, in line with our own net-zero initiatives, but it should not be at the cost of vital aid programming. *Given the reduced Official Development Assistance budget and pressure from other spending, the Government should carefully consider whether all current climate finance counted as ODA should continue to be categorised in that way, especially if such finance entails mitigation for emissions that low-income countries did not cause. We must ensure that climate finance does not just target the poorest countries, but that it is tailored to benefit the poorest communities within those countries. Listening to the perspectives and priorities of those on the front-line of the climate disaster, and ensuring that the modalities for accessing financing enable communities to adapt their lives and livelihoods, should be the new 'business as usual'. (Paragraph 56)*

## The UK's role in reducing extreme poverty

11. In the current global climate, the need to 'put the last first' is perhaps even greater than it was at the gavelling of the Sustainable Development Goals. *The UK Government can help catalyse global action, reinstate UK leadership, and ensure coherence with domestic strategy, by creating a deliberate and dedicated Leave no one behind portfolio within FCDO, to put the furthest behind first. Such a commitment would be a timely, and impactful announcement at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Voluntary National Review session in July 2023, demonstrating the power of a UK Government 'promise'.* (Paragraph 63)
12. We welcome the Government's decision to appoint a Minister for Development who will attend Cabinet. We also welcome the response to our letter that the Government is still committed to the 'Leave no one behind' pledge, but we were disappointed by the lack of explicit mention of that pledge in the recent International Development Strategy. The then Foreign Secretary argued that such an explicit reference was unnecessary, but we disagree; words matter. The UK has historically been a global leader in poverty reduction. Those working in the development space all over the world and other governments will be taking note of the UK's priorities. *To maintain the UK's status as a global leader in tackling extreme poverty, the FCDO should explicitly reaffirm its commitment to the Leave no one behind agenda, including achieving Sustainable Development Goal Target 1.1 of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030.* (Paragraph 64)
13. We recognise that the FCDO may not have automatically carried over DFID's targets. As the proportion of extremely poor people living in fragile and conflict-affected states and regions continues to rise, however, this link must be recognised in targeting Official Development Assistance spending. *The FCDO should recommit to DFID's previous target of spending 50% of its ODA budget in fragile states and regions.* (Paragraph 68)
14. The Government said in its response to our inquiry that it scaled back programmes in "countries and regions that are better positioned to bounce back from COVID-19". It is not clear what the basis was for the reductions of allocations by more than half in, for example, Yemen, South Sudan and Ethiopia. What is clear, not least from the cuts to programmes in Africa, is that impact on poverty reduction was given far less consideration than it should have been, given that that should be the primary purpose of UK ODA. *The FCDO must urgently review the methodology used when making these cuts, and explain in its response to this report how it will avoid any such failures in future. In addition, as the FCDO "revisits" its allocations for the coming years, poverty alleviation must be the primary priority in determining where to focus and protect spending.* (Paragraph 75)
15. Cutting funding mid-programme and awarding short-term contracts may help the Government to stay within its 0.5% GNI target, but it risks undermining previous investments and undoing hard-won progress. *The most effective programmes should be scaled up and allocated long-term funding.* (Paragraph 80)

16. Classifying all spending in low-and-middle-income countries as ODA may meet the letter of OECD rules, but it contravenes their spirit. *Programmes that may contribute to foreign policy objectives, but that do not have a measurable effect on poverty, should not be classified as ODA spending.* (Paragraph 81)
17. *The UK Government must trust and fund what works. Policy and spend must be dedicated to interventions that deliver, at scale, to and with those most in need. Investing in long-term partnerships provides the key to long-term change. Should ODA levels stagnate, the requirement to ensure that assistance is well-spent becomes more critical than ever. The UK Government must be evidence-led in terms of spend, focusing on independently and internally assessed 'best buys', such as extreme poverty graduation, that deliver the most significant and sustainable returns on investment. On this basis, extreme poverty should represent more, not less, of official ODA spend.* (Paragraph 82)
18. Trade and investment are proven means of reducing poverty, but the Government cannot rely on "trickle-down development". Policies based on trade and investment must include the world's poorest people. As the Government increases ODA spending through development finance, it is vital that such spending targets the poorest and is not just invested in middle-income countries where returns may be higher. *The BII Impact Framework should be updated to include scoring based on the new World Bank definition of extreme poverty of \$2.15 a day, in addition to its current metric of \$5.50 a day. The BII annual report should set out the proportion of investments meeting the new metric, which would ensure that BII investments support the world's poorest communities. Other investment partnerships, such as those planned with G7 partners, should also establish clear frameworks targeting poverty reduction in low-and-middle-income countries.* (Paragraph 94)
19. *The FCDO must work with the Department for International Trade to ensure that trade policy is predicated on creating inclusive, sustainable growth and supporting economic diversification, particularly in countries facing food insecurity and/or climate threats.* (Paragraph 95)
20. Throughout this inquiry, we heard how budget reductions had affected programmes tackling poverty. The Government has stated that it knows what works in addressing extreme poverty, but it has not consistently demonstrated that insight in its funding decisions. We recommend:
  - *The FCDO must ensure that its focus on trade and investment, and the rising costs associated with Ukraine and Afghanistan, do not lead to further decreases in funding for poverty reduction programmes, such as health, nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), education, social protection and graduation programmes.*
  - *The focus must be on the entrenched poor, alongside those who have more recently slipped into extreme poverty as a result of the pandemic and global economic crisis. We need a restoration of the 0.7% of GNI target for development spending in order to effectively support the poorest people.*
  - *The FCDO should use the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) to assess need and to direct funding accordingly.* (Paragraph 96)

## Strategy, reporting and transparency

21. A lack of policy coherence can lead to counterproductive actions, such as cutting funding to groups and regions that have previously been identified as priorities. Creating strategies is important, but they cannot exist in silos or fail to consider other previously identified strategic objectives. Furthermore, without clear targets and actions, progress cannot be measured. *As well as contributing to a cross-departmental Global Health Strategy, the FCDO must link its strategies to coherent, published delivery plans, which should include clear targets, timelines and financial allocations. In particular, the disability inclusion and rights strategy 2022–2030 must feed into all the Department’s development work, or it risks becoming an empty promise.* (Paragraph 103)
22. The 2022 Aid Transparency Index noted the FCDO’s deterioration in transparency compared with DFID’s performance in 2020, in part due to “inconsistent publication of results, evaluations and objectives.” The FCDO failed to publish detailed budgets in its Annual Report and Accounts 2022, which meant that we were unable to scrutinise its spending plans. *We understand that allocations are subject to change, but the Department must set out provisional budgets in its annual report. Furthermore, the FCDO must address the issues highlighted by the 2022 Aid Transparency Index and return to the “very good” status previously achieved by DFID.* (Paragraph 107)
23. It has only been three years since the last Voluntary National Review. However, a great deal has changed in this time both domestically and internationally. *To maintain its reputation as a global leader in development, the Government must commit to completing a Voluntary National Review of progress on the SDGs. Strategically, given the stand-out importance of the forthcoming SDG Summit in 2023, the last opportunity for Heads of State to collectively assess and look to accelerate progress before the SDG 2030 deadline, the UK Government must present its Voluntary National Review in 2023. An honest appraisal of both the challenges and opportunities that the UK Government is facing in terms of delivering SDG progress, married with a renewed promise to leave no one behind and commitment to SDG 1.1, could transform both the UK’s standing on development and the global conversation around these priority agendas. In addition, the Government should review our predecessor Committee’s recommendations in relation to VNRs on engagement and timescales.* (Paragraph 111)

# Formal minutes

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**Tuesday 6 December 2022**

## **Members present**

Sarah Champion, in the Chair

Mrs Pauline Latham

Chris Law

David Mundell

Mr Virendra Sharma

Draft Report (*Extreme poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 111 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

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

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

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 13 December at 2.00 p.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.

### Tuesday 01 March 2022

**Dr Sabina Alkire**, Director, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford; **Romilly Greenhill**, UK Director, ONE Campaign [Q1–38](#)

**Shameran Abed**, Executive Director, BRAC International; **Rachel Glennerster**, Associate Professor, University of Chicago [Q1–38](#)

### Tuesday 29 March 2022

**Nick O'Donohoe**, Chief Executive Officer, CDC Group; **Diana Layfield**, Chair, CDC Group; **Mita Samani**, Head of Private Sector, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office; **Caroline Read**, Director of Economic Cooperation and Growth Directorate, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office [Q39–124](#)

### Tuesday 26 April 2022

**Dr Githinji Gitahi**, Group CEO, Amref Health Africa; **Bessie Ndovi**, National Coordinator, Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance (CSONA, Malawi) [Q125–139](#)

## Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

SDG numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Action Aid UK ([SDG0021](#))
- 2 Action for Global Health ([SDG0015](#))
- 3 Amref Health Africa ([SDG0053](#))
- 4 BOND Disability and Development Group ([SDG0060](#))
- 5 BRAC ([SDG0059](#))
- 6 BRAC ([SDG0043](#))
- 7 Bond ([SDG0036](#))
- 8 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0056](#))
- 9 Bond SDG Group ([SDG0006](#))
- 10 British International Investment ([SDG0052](#))
- 11 British Red Cross ([SDG0020](#))
- 12 CAFOD ([SDG0019](#))
- 13 CARE International UK ([SDG0037](#))
- 14 CDC ([SDG0009](#))
- 15 Charities Aid Foundation ([SDG0007](#))
- 16 Christian Aid ([SDG0031](#))
- 17 Clark, Mr Simon (Journalist, Freelance) ([SDG0010](#))
- 18 Cole, Mr James (Senior Advocacy Advisor, STOPAIDS on behalf of the UK Civil Society Global Fund Working Group); Revanta Dharmarajah (Lead: HIV & Health Financing, Frontline AIDS); Nasim Salad (Policy and advocacy officer, ONE Campaign); Charlotte Dixie (UK Advocacy Manager, Malaria No More UK); Clare Symonds (Senior Policy Advocacy Officer (Tuberculosis), Results UK); and Natasha Broad (Senior Youth Stop AIDS and UK Campaigns Coordinator, Youth Stop AIDS) ([SDG0029](#))
- 19 Concern Worldwide ([SDG0057](#))
- 20 Concern Worldwide (UK) ([SDG0018](#))
- 21 Development Initiatives ([SDG0046](#))
- 22 Development Reimagined ([SDG0030](#))
- 23 Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) ([SDG0039](#))
- 24 FCDO ([SDG0035](#))
- 25 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([SDG0058](#))
- 26 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([SDG0051](#))
- 27 IAVI ([SDG0033](#))
- 28 Institute of Development Studies (IDS) ([SDG0032](#))
- 29 International Growth Centre, LSE ([SDG0024](#))
- 30 International Partnership for Microbicides ([SDG0045](#))

- 31 Jubilee Debt Campaign; and Jubilee Scotland ([SDG0008](#))
- 32 Kamruzzaman, Dr Palash (Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, University of South Wales) ([SDG0003](#))
- 33 MSI Reproductive Choices ([SDG0042](#))
- 34 Malaria No More UK ([SDG0023](#))
- 35 Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) ([SDG0013](#))
- 36 Met Office ([SDG0048](#))
- 37 Montesquou, Aude de (Senior Advisor, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University.) ([SDG0014](#))
- 38 ONE Campaign ([SDG0040](#))
- 39 Oxfam GB ([SDG0050](#))
- 40 Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative ([SDG0047](#))
- 41 Polish University Abroad ([SDG0001](#))
- 42 Regional Representatives of GAFSP ([SDG0044](#))
- 43 RESULT UK ([SDG0002](#))
- 44 Save the Children UK ([SDG0054](#))
- 45 Save the Children UK ([SDG0022](#))
- 46 Sightsavers ([SDG0028](#))
- 47 Tearfund ([SDG0026](#))
- 48 The Leprosy Mission England and Wales ([SDG0025](#))
- 49 UK Committee for UNICEF ([SDG0038](#))
- 50 UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group; Results UK; and STOPAIDS ([SDG0027](#))
- 51 UNDP Mansour Ndiaye ([SDG0055](#))
- 52 VSO ([SDG0049](#))
- 53 Women for Women International ([SDG0012](#))
- 54 Women for Women International ([SDG0016](#))
- 55 World Food Programme ([SDG0017](#))
- 56 World Vision UK ([SDG0034](#))

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

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st Report	Racism in the aid sector	HC 150
2nd Report	Food insecurity	HC 504
3rd Report	From Srebrenica to a safer tomorrow: Preventing future mass atrocities around the world	HC 149
4th Report	(Fourth Report of the International Development Committee) - Developments in UK Strategic Export Controls	HC 282
1st Special Report	Afghanistan: UK support for aid workers and the Afghan people: Government response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 152
2nd Special Report	Food insecurity: Government response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 767
3rd Special Report	UK aid to Pakistan: Government Response to the Sixth Report of the Committee	HC 829

### Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st Report	Assessing DFID's results in nutrition Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 103
2nd Report	Global Britain in demand: UK climate action and international development around COP26	HC 99
3rd Report	The UK's approach to tackling modern slavery through the aid programme: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 104
4th Report	International climate finance: UK aid for halting deforestation and preventing irreversible biodiversity loss: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 730
5th Report	Afghanistan: UK support for aid workers and the Afghan people	HC 919
6th Report	UK aid to Pakistan	HC 102
1st Special Report	The humanitarian situation in Tigray: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 554

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
2nd Special Report	The UK's Support to the African Development Bank Group: report from the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 555
3rd Special Report	DFID's results in nutrition Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's First Report	HC 780
4th Special Report	Global Britain in demand: UK climate action and international development around COP26: Government response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 1008
5th Special Report	The UK's approach to tackling modern slavery through the aid programme: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1021

### Session 2019–21

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1st Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: the Rohingya	HC 259
2nd Report	Effectiveness of UK aid: interim findings	HC 215
3rd Report	The Newton Fund review: report of the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI	HC 260
4th Report	Effectiveness of UK aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger	HC 596
5th Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: impact of coronavirus (interim findings)	HC 292
6th Report	The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 535
7th Report	Progress on tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries	HC 605
8th Report	Covid-19 in developing countries: secondary impacts	HC 1186
9th Report	The UK's support to the African Development Bank Group: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 1055
10th Report	The humanitarian situation in Tigray	HC 1289
1st Special Report	Follow up: sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector: Government Response to the First Report of the Committee	HC 127
2nd Special Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: the Rohingya: Government Response to the First Report of the Committee	HC 658

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
3rd 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
4th 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	HC 820
5th Special Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: impact of coronavirus (interim findings): Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1160
6th Special Report	The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's Sixth Report	HC 1198
7th Special Report	Progress on tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries: Government Response to the Seventh Report of the Committee, Session 2019–21	HC 1332
8th Special Report	Covid-19 in developing countries: secondary impacts: Government Response to the Eighth Report of the Committee	HC 1351