



House of Commons  
International Development  
Committee

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**The Commission for Africa  
and Policy Coherence for  
Development: First do no  
harm: Government  
Response to the  
Committee's First Report  
of Session 2004–05**

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**Third Special Report of Session 2004–05**

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## Third Special Report

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On 16 December 2004 the International Development Committee published its First Report of Session 2004-05, *The Commission for Africa and Policy Coherence for Development: First do no harm*, HC 123. On 21 March 2005 we received the Government's response to the Report. It is reproduced as an Appendix to this Special Report.

In the Government Response, the Select Committee's conclusions and recommendations are in bold text. The Government's response is in plain text.

## Appendix: Government response

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### Preface

The Government welcomes the Committee's report and the additional attention that it has brought to the Commission for Africa. We see the Committee's report as a positive and constructive contribution to what is an important issue.

The Commission for Africa (CFA) reported on March 11. The Government strongly welcomes the publication of this report. It is a significant achievement to bring together the views of 17 Commissioners, as well as extensive consultations, to make a well argued case for change.

The Report's recommendations speak for themselves. We agree with the CFA's conclusions that we need a big push for Africa, now; that the international community and Africa need to take responsibility; that the only game in town is partnership, and that rich countries have to support an African-led agenda. We endorse the emphasis on better governance and the call for donors to provide more and better aid.

The Report echoes Government policy in many areas. Some recommendations, such as those on more resources and better aid, are being worked on already. However, there are others where we are thinking carefully about how we respond. The report is an important call to action for all of us.

The recommendations of the Report are recommendations for the world, not just the UK government. We are committed to doing our bit and will give serious and careful consideration to all of the recommendations set out in the report, but it is not for us to do all of them. Our job now, as President of the G8 and EU, is to maintain the momentum of the Commission's report, and to help to ensure that the whole world makes an appropriate response.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Conclusion 1:**

**It is important that the Commission for Africa adds value, playing to its strengths and supporting rather than undermining NEPAD. (Paragraph 12)**

The Commission is clear throughout that it must get behind Africa's efforts, and it supports AU/NEPAD and its work (see for example part 2, Chapter 1, paragraph 13).

### **Conclusion 2:**

**The Commission for Africa's report must include a comprehensive checklist showing what commitments the G8 — collectively and individually — has made to Africa, across a range of issues including aid, trade, debt, agricultural subsidies, arms exports, access to essential medicines, and money laundering, and showing also what progress has been made to date in implementing those commitments. (Paragraph 13)**

The Report is clear and strong on the whole question of broken promises — by both developed countries and Africa and the need to turn this round and act (see part 1, p64, broken promises and squandered opportunities and part 2 Chapter 10 paragraph 1). Steps to add extra momentum to implementation are described in Chapter 10, and set out in a recommendation (see p79).

### **Conclusion 3:**

**We urge the Commission for Africa to press for action on global governance, to ensure that Africa has a louder voice in international organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. (Paragraph 14)**

Global governance is discussed in Chapter 10, section 10.5, and recommendations (p79) address ways to strengthen Africa's voice in the UN Security Council and in the World Bank and IMF.

### **Conclusion 4:**

**Given the fundamental role that the private sector must play in Africa's development, we were surprised that African businessmen and women were not better represented on the Commission. ... We trust that the voice of business — particularly African business — will be sufficiently prominent. (Paragraph 16)**

The Report recognises the fundamental role of the private sector, and discusses that in a number of areas. It is the main focus of Chapter 7, on growth, but also considered in other

contexts (eg Chapter 4 paragraph 63-65 on the role of business in accountability and service delivery, Chapter 5 paragraphs 47-51 on corporate activity in conflict areas).

### **Conclusion 5:**

**The Commission for Africa, in its focus on partnership and the responsibilities of the developed world, must not shy away from addressing the issue of governance in developing countries. (Paragraph 18)**

Chapter 4 discusses governance in detail, emphasising (for example, in the summary box) that improvements in governance are the responsibility first and foremost of Africa.

### **Conclusion 6:**

**If governance in Africa is to be democratic, providing a supportive environment for locally-owned development strategies, rather than simply "good" by the standards of the International Financial Institutions, then the Commission for Africa must ensure that parliaments are not marginalised. Shortcuts to effective governance do not exist. If developed countries want to see sustainable and effective governance in Africa they must, whilst encouraging moves towards good governance, ensure that they do not undermine emerging systems of local accountability. (Paragraph 21)**

Chapter 4, paragraphs 51 to 54, discusses the role of parliaments and recommends the establishment of partnerships to strengthen parliaments in Africa. These should go beyond short exchanges and study visits to become practically focused long-term partnerships based on mutual learning.

### **Conclusion 7:**

**By committing themselves to policy coherence for development, and establishing an administrative process for resolving rather than tolerating policy incoherence where it exists, governments can become more effective and cost-effective, and — by encouraging debate about competing priorities — more accountable too. (Paragraph 28)**

(See combined response)

### **Conclusion 8:**

**Initiatives on policy coherence for development such as those underway at the OECD and at the Global Development Network, can play an important role in helping countries to develop best practice in this area. Governments with a real commitment to development, and to policy coherence for development, should support such initiatives. The Commission for Africa should encourage G8 governments to do so. (Paragraph 34)**

(See combined response)

**Conclusion 11:**

Governments could learn a great deal from the OECD's work on institutional mechanisms to enhance policy coherence for development. The Commission for Africa should encourage the UK and other G8 governments to consider whether and how they might adopt practices employed by other countries, as presented in the OECD's work on policy coherence for development. (Paragraph 45)

**Answers to conclusions 7,8 and 11**

The key message of the Report is the need for a coherent package of actions that goes beyond aid to cover matters such as trade (Chapter 8), peace and security (Chapter 5), corruption (Chapter 4). The Report does not treat these as competing priorities, but believes that action on all is necessary.

**Conclusion 9:**

The reports by the UK and the European Union on their contribution to meeting the MDGs must pay sufficient attention to MDG8, and be sufficiently detailed, so as to enable stakeholders and parliaments to hold individual governments, as well as the EU as a whole, to account. (Paragraph 43)

The UK has produced its report on the MDGs and this incorporates details of progress on MDG8.

**Conclusion 10:**

Countries' own MDG8 reports are an important first step towards more systematic and independent analysis. The Commission for Africa should encourage the G8 to produce such reports, as a move towards building a real partnership for development, based on two-way accountability between the developed and developing world. The UK and EU need to show leadership on this issue, demonstrating to other members of the G8, and to the United Nations, that they are happy to be held to account for promises made about MDG8. (Paragraph 44)

(See combined response)

**Conclusion 13:**

The Commission for Africa should encourage the G8 to design mechanisms of mutual accountability, so that not only do developing countries have to show that they are making good use of the aid they receive, but so that the developed world also has to show that it is working hard to ensure that its development objectives and policies are not undermined by policies relating to other issues. (Paragraph 52)

### ***Answers to conclusions 10 and 13***

Chapter 10 discusses the importance of mutual accountability and of the importance of monitoring actions and outcomes. It notes that existing mechanisms are partial, and lack ‘teeth’ to ensure implementation and recommends establishment of an independent mechanism.

### ***Conclusion 12:***

**Coherence in support of misguided policies, or in support of policies around which there is no consensus, is counter-productive. Policy coherence must not become a way of depriving developing countries of their policy space, their right to formulate laws and regulations suited to their own contexts and needs, based on their analysis of the evidence. This risk can best be avoided by ensuring that developing countries have an equal role in shaping the agenda, and ensuring that policy-design is driven by evidence, rather than by ideology. (Paragraph 51)**

The need to ensure developing countries are able to shape the agenda is a major theme of Chapter 10, for example on p374 in relation to conditionality, p377 in relation to fiscal space and section 10.5 on African voice. Chapter 9 (eg paragraphs 56–58) make similar points. Chapter 4 discusses the importance of good data for evidence-based policy making.

Department for International Development  
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