



House of Commons
International Development
Committee

**International
Development
Committee: the
Legacy—Parliament
2010–15**

Fifteenth Report of Session 2014–15



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to the report*

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International Development Committee

The International Development Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Office of the Secretary of State for International Development.

Current membership

[Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Bruce MP](#) (*Liberal Democrat, Gordon*) (Chair)
[Sir Hugh Bayley MP](#) (*Labour, York Central*)
[Fiona Bruce MP](#) (*Conservative, Congleton*)
[Sir Tony Cunningham MP](#) (*Labour, Workington*)
[Fabian Hamilton MP](#) (*Labour, Leeds North East*)
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[Mr Michael McCann MP](#) (*Labour, East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow*)
[Fiona O'Donnell MP](#) (*Labour, East Lothian*)
[Chris White MP](#) (*Conservative, Warwick and Leamington*)

The following members were also a members of the committee during the parliament:

Mr Russell Brown MP (*Labour, Dumfries, Galloway*)
Richard Burden MP (*Labour, Birmingham, Northfield*)
Mr James Clappison MP (*Conservative, Hertsmere*)
Mr Sam Gyimah MP (*Conservative, East Surrey*)
Richard Harrington MP (*Conservative, Watford*)
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Mark Pritchard MP (*Conservative, The Wrekin*)
Anas Sarwar MP (*Labour, Glasgow Central*)

Powers

The committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/indcom and by The Stationery Office by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry page](#) on the Committee's website.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Dr David Harrison (Clerk), Chloe Challender (Second Clerk), Louise Whitley (Committee Specialist), Richard Ratcliffe (Committee Specialist), Zac Mead (Senior Committee Assistant), Paul Hampson (Committee Assistant) and Rosie Tate (Media Officer).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the International Development Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 1223; the Committee's email address is indcom@parliament.uk

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1 The Legacy—Parliament 2010–15

1. As the end of the 2010–2015 Parliament approaches, we have taken the opportunity to look back on our work. This Report outlines some of the Committee's work, progress and effectiveness during this Parliament and sets out areas that may be of interest to our successor committee. It has also given us the opportunity to scrutinise what actions the Government has taken with regard to issues and recommendations raised in our reports.

Effectiveness

2. Committee effectiveness takes many forms, including: Government acceptance of policy recommendations and of recommended changes to the administration of the Department for International Development (DFID); and generating public debate in the hope of changing public opinion. A key measure of our success has been our record of influencing DFID policy. Below we briefly consider the different ways in which we have influenced DFID over the course of the Parliament.

Influencing Government policy

3. The Government has frequently accepted and acted upon our recommendations, including:

- Our inquiry and subsequent report on *Strengthening Health Systems*¹ were warmly welcomed by stakeholders as highlighting important but often neglected issues. On the back of the report, the Government made a commitment to ensuring that health systems were incorporated in its post-2015 targets; to developing and promoting a 2016–2020 health systems strengthening Key Performance Indicators for Gavi, the Vaccines Alliance; and to taking the Committee's recommendations into account in setting future research priorities to meet post-2015 development goals.
- Our short inquiry and report on *Responses to the Ebola Crisis*² built on our visit to Sierra Leone and Liberia and subsequent report³ and our inquiry and report on health system strengthening. At a time when the Ebola crisis was at its peak we took oral evidence from expert witnesses, including a doctor who had recently returned from Sierra Leone, and the Minister. Following our report the UK Government pressed for reform of the international approach to health emergencies, as we had recommended, at the Special Session of the WHO Executive Board on 25 January 2015. DFID also committed to providing greater

1 IDC, [Strengthening Health Systems in Developing Countries](#), Fifth Report of Session 2014–15 (12 September 2014), HC 246

2 IDC, [Responses to the Ebola Crisis](#), Fifth Report of Session 2014–15 (12 September 2014) HC 876

3 IDC, [Recovery & Development in Sierra Leone and Liberia](#), Sixth Report of Session 2014–15 (September 2014) HC 247

transparency about resources assigned to tackling Ebola, an issue pursued by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee in its inquiry.⁴

- Our two-phase inquiry on the Future of UK Development Co-operation had a high profile and set the agenda for discussions of development policy in the future. In Phase 1, we considered development finance and recommended greater use of loans and recyclable and returnable capital and consideration of a development bank.⁵ In Phase 2, we recommended DFID go ‘beyond aid’ and ensure the full range of UK Government policies affecting people in developing countries were both ‘development-friendly’ and coherent.⁶ The considerable impact of Phase 2 was demonstrated by the decision by Wilton Park to run a conference–‘Beyond Aid’–partly based on the report (and with a keynote speech by the Chair). The political impact of the inquiry was shown by the Labour party’s decision to name its pre-election international development pamphlet ‘Beyond Aid.’⁷
- Our Violence Against Women & Girls inquiry was also agenda-setting, focusing on a new issue for DFID which required far more effective collaboration between DFID, the FCO, the Home Office, the Department for Education and MoD; the Committee’s recommendation for an integrated national and international approach helped bring about a step-change in the Government’s efforts to address FGM both overseas and in the UK.⁸
- Our report on CDC helped bring about changes to the organisation to ensure it focused more on its development impact.⁹
- Our annual reports on DFID’s Departmental Annual Reports revealed trends in expenditure, encouraged DFID to make changes in programme management, reduce the burden of business cases and make time for DFID staff to monitor projects (these reports are discussed in more detail below).
- Following our Pakistan report, DFID significantly increased its support for tax collection; and agreed to reconsider the expansion of its programme if there were not improvements in tax collection.¹⁰
- Disabled people are amongst the most disadvantaged in the developing world. Our report on Disability seemed to trigger a step-change within DFID, as demonstrated by the Department’s publication of a Disability Framework in response to our recommendation.¹¹

4 PAC, [Oral evidence: UK spending to tackle Ebola in West Africa](#) HC 868 (11 December 2014)

5 IDC, [The Future of UK Development Co-operation: Phase 1: Development Finance](#) HC 334 (12 February 2014)

6 IDC, [The Future of UK Development Co-operation: Phase 2: Beyond Aid](#) HC 663 (26 January 2015)

7 [Beyond Aid: Labour’s ambition for a radical development agenda](#) (March 2015)

8 IDC, [Violence Against Women and Girls](#) (4 June 2013), HC 107

9 IDC, [Future of CDC](#) HC 1045 (March 2011)

10 IDC, [Pakistan](#) HC 725 (4 April 2013)

11 IDC, [Disability and Development](#) HC 947 (10 April 2014)

- In our 2011 report on Financial Crime and Development, we criticised BAE Systems for dragging its feet over a £29.5m fine it was ordered to pay the people of Tanzania in 2010 in connection with a radar deal in 2002.¹² Due to pressure from the IDC, BAE Systems agreed to honour its settlement with the Serious Fraud Office and make an immediate payment of £29.5 million to the Tanzanian Government in September 2011.

Key achievement: Parliamentary Strengthening

Our inquiry on Parliamentary Strengthening reviewed the Department’s approach to Parliamentary Strengthening in development. We concluded that strong parliaments bring great benefits in and of themselves, but also help DFID and other development agencies to do their work better, reducing poverty, conflict and corruption and increasing accountability and security. Though difficult with frequent setbacks, strengthening parliaments in developing countries has the potential to realise these benefits at relatively low cost. DFID has made improvements, but needs to go further and make Parliaments more central to its programmes.

We found that there was a demand for expertise from the ‘Westminster brand’, especially from Commonwealth countries, but funds are funneled through large providers in other countries rather than smaller expert organisations. More thought should be given to the supply-side and how to build UK institutions into world class providers. We also recommended that Westminster institutions needed to work more closely together.

The Department has accepted most of our recommendations to consider the role of Parliaments more systematically in its programming. We received a letter from the Chief Executive of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy stating that in response to our report the Westminster institutions were looking to establish a partnership.

Source: IDC, *Parliamentary Strengthening* (27 January 2015) HC 704

Influencing the administration of the Department and its presentation of information

4. The Committee has undertaken an inquiry every year of this Parliament into DFID’s expenditure trends and administration and its Annual Report and Accounts. We have drawn attention to the Permanent Secretary in oral evidence sessions and reports of the need for changes, including: a reduction in bureaucracy, particularly spending less time on gold-plating business cases to allow more for monitoring the implementation of programmes. We have monitored the transition to the use of ‘Smart Rules’. We have kept a close watch on DFID’s programme management skills. We have constantly sought reassurance that the ceiling on administration spending has not adversely affected DFID’s ability to spend cost-effectively its increased budget. We have pressed DFID to put more emphasis on learning and using a foreign language; longer tours of duty and greater understanding of the political context. We have also successfully sought changes in the information included in the Annual Report and the way it is presented.

Inspecting DFID country programmes

5. Each year the Committee has been able to make two or three visits abroad each year, which usually involve an examination of key DFID programmes. In 2010, we went to

¹² IDC, [Financial Crime and Development](#) HC 847 (15 November 2011)

Washington and New York to meet the World Bank and UN organisations, which we considered an ideal way for a new Committee to assess the multilateral system which is so important part of DFID's work. In 2011 we visited: India; DRC and Burundi and South Sudan; in 2012, Afghanistan; Malawi and Zambia; and Pakistan; in 2013, Ethiopia, to examine DFID's programmes to address violence against women and food insecurity; Washington and Brazil (in connection with our Future of UK Development Co-operation Phase 1 inquiry); and Burma (to look at DFID's programme, with a particular focus on governance and health). During our Ethiopia visit, we recorded a short film about harmful practices for women and girls (early marriage and FGM), which we subsequently screened in Parliament in front of an audience including the Secretary of State. In 2014 we visited: Lebanon, Jordan and Israel in connection with DFID's development work in the Middle East; Sierra Leone and Liberia; and Tanzania. In 2015 we visited Nepal, focusing on climate change and corruption.

6. During these visits we spend a week to ten days in the company of DFID officials, who accompany us, and we are able to obtain a good insight into their work. (we discuss this in more detail below)

7. We have also twice visited Scotland, to DFID's large office in East Kilbride, to the Scottish Parliament, and to meet NGOs and other stakeholders in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Our impressions from these visits have informed our short inquiry on the 'Implications for development in the event of Scotland becoming an independent country',¹³ and our Departmental Annual Report inquiries.

Influencing DFID through the sub-Committee on the Independent Commission on Aid Impact

8. At the beginning of this Parliament the Government established an Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI), which reports to Parliament through the IDC.¹⁴ The relationship between ICAI and the IDC mirrors that between the NAO and the PAC. Like the NAO, ICAI undertakes retrospective investigations, up to ten per year. On 31 October 2012, we established a sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI; this has carried out the bulk of parliamentary scrutiny of ICAI in between 2012 and March 2015.

9. The sub-Committee was initially chaired, with great success, by Richard Burden MP, until his promotion to the Shadow Frontbench in October 2013. Since then, it has been chaired by Fabian Hamilton MP with similar success. In early 2014, we introduced the practice of taking formal evidence on each ICAI report, as opposed to the informal meetings we held prior to this. At each session, we have taken evidence from both ICAI (Commissioners and the relevant contractor), and from DFID (usually the relevant Director General plus officials). We have also on occasion taken evidence from the Permanent Secretary and Ministers.

13 IDC, [Implications for development in the event of Scotland becoming an independent country](#) HC 692 (11 December 2013)

14 Framework Agreement Between The Department For International Development (DFID) And The Independent Commission For Aid Impact (ICAI)

10. ICAI's work is overseen by a Board of Commissioners, appointed on four-year contracts. The Commissioners are independent from Government. Unlike the Comptroller and Auditor General, they are appointed by the Secretary of State, but we have a significant input into appointments as was borne out by our involvement in the recruitment of a new Chief Commissioner in late 2014, and three new commissioners in early 2015. The chair of our sub-Committee, Fabian Hamilton MP, sat on the board for both recruitment processes alongside representatives from DFID, the Cabinet Office and a representative from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). This involved longlisting, interviewing and shortlisting appointable candidates for both chief commissioner, and commissioner, posts. We held a pre-appointment hearing for the Government's preferred candidate for the Chief Commissioner, Dr Alison Evans, in December 2014, and published a report immediately afterwards.¹⁵ Our report supported the appointment of Dr Evans, and also made recommendations about improving subsequent commissioner recruitment processes (notably, that candidates be ranked in order of preference before being presented to the Secretary of State).

11. The Cabinet Office's Triennial Review of ICAI in 2013 recommended an even closer working relationship with the Committee. We now monitor and sign off ICAI's work programme. We made considerable input to the 2014 workplan to ensure ICAI evaluations are complementary to our own inquiries. The Chief Commissioner has had regular informal meetings with the Committee and sub-Committee Chairs.

12. ICAI has enabled the IDC to extend its reach and effectiveness. The full Committee took oral evidence on ICAI's 2013, and 2014, Annual Reports from the ICAI Commissioners, and from DFID's Permanent Secretary. Following a critical ICAI report on TradeMark Southern Africa (TMSA),¹⁶ we held an evidence session with the Secretary of State and the Permanent Secretary in December 2013.¹⁷ They announced they would close down the TMSA programme with immediate effect, and have since launched a review of DFID's approach to trade in the region. Following ICAI's report on 'DFID's Use of Contractors',¹⁸ we questioned the Permanent Secretary about improvements to programme management. DFID has since introduced a new Head of Profession to strengthen the work done by the Department's programme management cadre. Following ICAI's report on Anti-Corruption,¹⁹ we followed up their work on Nepal during our visit there. On several occasions we have encouraged ICAI to undertake detailed investigations in anticipation of our broader inquiries, for example into education in Pakistan and health in Burma. We have also asked ICAI to follow up our own work, for example on Afghanistan.

15 Fabian Hamilton MP did not participate in the pre-appointment hearing, in case his involvement in the earlier stages of the process risk a conflict of interest.

16 ICAI, [DFID's trade development work in Southern Africa](#) (December 2013)

17 IDC, oral evidence, [ICAI's report on trade development work in Southern Africa](#) (10 December 2013)

18 ICAI, [DFID's use of contractors to deliver aid programmes](#) (May 2013)

19 ICAI, [DFID's approach to anti-corruption and its impact on the poor](#) (October 2014)

Generating public debate

13. Although international development stories do not regularly generate much media coverage, our reports have attracted some headlines. Examples include: widespread coverage of our Disability report; interviews on Sky News about the Violence Against Women and Girls, and Ebola, reports; our report on Pakistan appearing on the front page of *The Times*; and our report on Global Food Security being featured on the front page of the *Daily Mail*.

14. In view of the difficulty in attracting traditional media coverage, we have given particular attention to alternative media outlets. For our Violence Against Women and Girls inquiry, we produced a film about early marriage during our visit to Ethiopia. This included interviews with young women themselves affected, and analysis of DFID-supported interventions. We disseminated the film using social media, and screened it in Parliament to an audience of 80 including NGOs, academics and DFID staff, as well as the Secretary of State. Viewers told us they found the film very affecting.

15. We also use Twitter to communicate our work to the public, and to generate discussion about our inquiries. We have 1350 followers. Announcing inquiries on Twitter helps to solicit written evidence. We often receive useful comments about inquiries and sessions, for example from a Harvard Professor on our Global Food Security inquiry. A number of NGOs blogged about our inquiry into disability and twitter provided a useful means of communication about this inquiry. Live tweeting sessions has been an excellent innovation, with a key benefit being that followers are directed to our audio feed.

Failures

16. DFID has chosen not to implement a number of our recommendations. We draw attention below to some of our 'failures', recommendations which the Government has rejected. We hope that in the longer term, Government will change its policy.

Sierra Leone & Liberia

17. As part of our inquiry on DFID's work in Sierra Leone and Liberia we were very disappointed to find out that although

- Sierra Leone is one of DFID's largest bilateral programmes;
- the ending of violence against women and girls is a DFID priority; and
- Sierra Leone has one of the highest prevalence of FGM in the world;
- On our visit we met an FGM survivor and champion of the struggle to end the practice who urgently sought DFID's support.

Sierra Leone was not one of the countries included in the DFID funded UN Joint programme on FGM, Towards Ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Africa and Beyond.

18. In DFID's response to the Committee it said that "as long as the practice remains legal with little political or civil leadership for change, the UK can only take limited steps".²⁰ We believe that the UK and DFID holds considerable influence in Sierra Leone and it should be putting far more pressure on the leadership to end this practice.

We were also disappointed by the response to our call for evidence. Clearly, Sierra Leone had ceased to matter to the development community.

Afghanistan

19. A major focus of our inquiry on Afghanistan was the position of women and girls.²¹ We saw this as being the 'litmus' test of whether the work DFID and other donors had done in the country had improved the daily lives of Afghans. We were concerned that although DFID and the UK Government have spoken at length about women's rights in Afghanistan, it had not been followed by adequate and specific action and funding. We recommended the creation of a joint donor-government plan for women and girls during transition, to encourage donors to commit to specific programmes and ensure that women and girls were not forgotten in the process. We also asked DFID to exert pressure on other donors and the Afghan Government to back up their previous commitments to Afghan women. It is to our great regret that DFID rejected these recommendations and we are now receiving reports from Afghanistan that women are being kept out of peace negotiations—a 2014 study by Oxfam found that in 23 rounds of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban since 2005, one woman from the government was present on two occasions. No women were ever included in discussions between international negotiators and the Taliban. Without women and women's rights activists being included in the process there is a risk that their hard won rights may be lost in a peace settlement. We hope that our successor committee looks again at the position of women in Afghanistan.

20. We were also concerned about maintaining an institutional memory in DFID's office in Afghanistan due to the high turnover of staff. DFID has taken some measures to address the problem since we raised it, but have not done as much as we would have wished. More generally, we recommend the employment of

- more local staff; and
- more nationals from developing countries on DFID's international staff

Humanitarian Relief in the Middle East

21. Both in this report,²² in other inquiries, we questioned DFID's seemingly infinite contingency budget, and recommended that DFID set an upper limit on what it could spend on humanitarian disasters. Unfortunately, DFID has refused to do this. We remain

20 IDC, [Special Report: Recovery and Development in Sierra Leone and Liberia: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of 2014–15](#) HC 863 (11 December 2014)

21 IDC, [Afghanistan: Development progress and prospects after 2014](#) HC 403 (12 September 2013)

22 IDC, [UK support for humanitarian relief work in the Middle East](#) HC 248 (25 June 2014)

concerned that as a result less money is available for DFID's vital bilateral development programmes in sub-Saharan Africa

Burundi

22. In 2011 we published our report on 'The Closure of DFID's Bilateral Aid Programme in Burundi'.²³ In the report, we recommended that DFID reconsider its decision to withdraw its bilateral aid programme from Burundi, one of Africa's poorest countries. However, the Government has refused to accept our recommendation, saying that Burundi will continue to benefit from DFID-funded multilateral organisations, especially the African Development Bank.²⁴ We do not consider the decision to close the bilateral aid programme was rational or consistent. We urge our successor Committee to maintain a focus on DFID's portfolio of priority countries in Africa, including Burundi, and to ensure the smallest and poorest countries continue to receive the bilateral support that they need.

The Bilateral Aid Review (BAR)

23. The decision to close the bilateral programme in Burundi followed the BAR which was published in 2011; a different methodology could have led to a different decision. We believe that

- the bilateral aid review methodology should be improved
- decisions should be able to be made to extend bilateral aid to additional partner countries on the basis of objective criteria; and in response to changed circumstances such as the challenge of Islamic extremism
- the BAR should be rerun regularly, for example, after each General Election

Disappointment regarding some NGOs responses to the Sierra Leone and Liberia inquiry

Unfortunately, our inquiry on Sierra Leone and Liberia was affected by the poor response to our call for evidence. Evidently, Sierra Leone and Liberia had ceased to be of interest in the first half of 2014, although the situation changed as the Ebola outbreak refocused international attention on the country. We initially received fewer than ten written submissions; in other inquiries we received closer to a hundred. We subsequently wrote to all organisations receiving funding from DFID in Sierra Leone and Liberia, but even that did not generate much response; it was disappointing that such organisations did not consider they had an obligation to account for the public funding they received. In addition, a number of organisations which were invited said they were unable to provide oral evidence. We were grateful to those who gave evidence and the useful insights they provided, but the consequence of the poor response was that much of the Report was based on what we saw and from testament of the people we met during our visit to Sierra Leone and Liberia in June 2014. Nevertheless, despite the limited amount of evidence we received, we believe that we were able to reach valid conclusions.

23 IDC, [The closure of DFID's bilateral aid programme in Burundi](#) HC 1134 (28 October 2011)

24 IDC, [Ninth Special Report: The Closure of DFID's Bilateral Aid Programme in Burundi: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2010–12](#), HC 1730 (February 2012)

Core tasks

Legislation

24. DFID has not introduced any Government legislation, but we continue to question officials about the interpretation of the International Development Act 2002. We have had meetings with the OECD to discuss proposed redefinitions of ODA and the implications for the 2002 Act. We have also questioned officials about the target of spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA, the mechanics of achieving this and the desirability of legislation on the issue.

25. The International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Bill 2014–15 received its third reading in the Lords on 9 March 2015, and is due to receive Royal Assent before the 30 March dissolution. A number of IDC Members sat on the public bill committee, and contributed to debates.

Appointments

26. We held a pre-appointment hearing in respect of the Chief Commissioner of ICAI when he was appointed in 2010. We were concerned that the only decision we were able to take was to assess whether the Secretary of State's candidate was suitable, which he was; we would have preferred to have been able compare him with other candidates. As outlined above, we held a pre-appointment hearing for the new ICAI Chief Commissioner in 2014.

Support for the House

27. We have held debates in Westminster Hall on a large number of our reports. We have tagged our reports to other debates, for example debates on: Afghanistan; Violence Against Women and Girls; and the Post-2015 Development Goals. We welcome the new system of enabling select committee Chairs to make Statements about reports in the House. We have used this procedure to announce our reports on Afghanistan and Burma; we were pleased that interventions on the Burma statement were made by members who were not on the Committee.

28. Our work also influences the House in a variety of other ways. For example, Members of the IDC play a prominent role in International Development Questions and on all debates on international development. In their participation they bring to bear the knowledge and understanding they have gained from their committee work.

29. We continue to hold a large number of informal meetings with senior figures from international organisations such as the UN and the World Bank, including a useful discussion with the President of the World Bank shortly after his appointment. We have also met Ambassadors and Ministers of foreign states. We are aware of our role in representing the House on these occasions.

Examination of expenditure and administration

30. The Committee sets great store by the scrutiny of expenditure and administration. We hold an annual inquiry with a report based on an analysis by the NAO of key trends in

expenditure over the previous year and looking at patterns of spending month by month. We have expressed concern about the extent of spending at the end of the year. In this inquiry we also look at important aspects of administration (see above). We have been fortunate to have two NAO staff members seconded to the Committee Secretariat for one-year periods and we are grateful to the NAO DFID team for their detailed work on DFID's spending and other matters for regular reports on DFID's Annual Report.

31. In addition, many of our inquiries are based on an examination of the value for money provided by DFID's spending. This includes all our investigations of DFID's bilateral country programmes and of multilateral spending as well as many of our thematic inquiries. We have not been afraid to argue for reductions in expenditure, for example recommending that proposed spending in Pakistan should not go ahead without reform to the tax system in the country.²⁵

Ways of working

Setting a work programme

32. In the autumn of 2012, the Committee held an Away day to consider its manner of working and strategy for the future. This was a useful exercise. Our major inquiries have always been a mix of investigations of DFID's country programmes and thematic studies. At the Away day we decided to increase the proportion of thematic studies we undertook and planned our inquiries to the end of the Parliament, allowing space to react flexibly to unforeseen events, which has led us to holding a one-off session on the Central African Republic. Since 2012 our thematic studies have included Violence against women and girls, Global food security, disability, health system strengthening, parliamentary strengthening and jobs and livelihoods. We also decided to look at the future of development cooperation, considering what the situation might be in 10 years' time and how DFID should change. This inquiry was undertaken in a number of phases. We held another Away day in autumn 2013 to examine progress and decided to maintain our programme. Setting a programme was useful in a variety of ways: ensuring we have a balanced programme, providing more time to scope the inquiries, to alert interested parties and experts to our work and to decide on and organise visits to the most relevant locations. We recommend our successor Committee hold an away day early in the next Parliament.

Evidence

33. As a development committee we are particularly conscious of the advantages of finding a diverse group of witnesses. For example, no one could have brought home to us the horrors of FGM than witnesses representing the Daughters of Eve, including FGM survivors. In our inquiry into disability, we benefited greatly from hearing from disabled people from developing countries.

34. In seeking witnesses and evidence, we traditionally relied on a relatively small number of regular contributors. We have sought to extend our reach. Our staff now hold meetings with a number of groups: BOND (the umbrella organisation for many development

25 IDC, [Pakistan](#) HC 725 (4 April 2013)

NGOs), private contractors, and think tanks, including ODI and Chatham House: to inform them of our future work, to encourage them to contribute to our inquiries and to gain feedback from them.

35. In addition to formal evidence sessions, we gain a good deal of useful information gathered informally from people working in developing countries, including NGOs, UN special representatives, and others. These discussions greatly increase our understanding and often lead to the person we have met submitting formal written evidence.

Reports

36. It is our view that our reports should be firmly based on evidence and thoroughly researched within the tight limitations of time. Many of our inquiries are connected with field visits where we are able to spend long periods questioning senior and junior staff to test the evidence. We strongly support the Liaison Committee's plea for shorter reports. This is particularly useful in the field of international development where reports are often very lengthy.

Following-up reports

37. Like many Committees, we hold debates on our reports after the Government response has been published, which provides an opportunity to question the government and to press them on the implementation of recommendations. We were conscious that that could be the end of the story unless an issue was sufficiently important to justify returning to it. Now we have instituted a system whereby DFID sends us a memorandum one year after the publication of its Response, updating us on the implementation of our recommendations which it accepted. These memoranda are published on our website.

Government co-operation

38. We see ourselves as a critical friend of DFID. We share the same goals, encouraging development and alleviating poverty, but we are prepared to criticise when we believe DFID has made mistakes.

39. We realise that our effectiveness is more dependent than most Committees on the Government's co-operation. Our inspections of DFID's programmes in the field are dependent on the work of DFID officials to make arrangements. We are extremely grateful for the time and effort they put into making our work possible. This does mean that we are in DFID's hands to a greater extent than we would ideally like, but on a week's visit it is impossible for all failings to be hidden. We also talk to a range of non-DFID individuals and organisations and seek to spend time entirely away from DFID officials. In general, we find DFID extremely forthcoming and helpful during our visits. However, we should not allow ourselves to become too dependent on DFID staff for arranging our in-country programmes. Naturally, they steer us towards their successes rather than their failures. We recommend that our successor Committee makes sure that in future visits we spend time with other donors, NGOs and local beneficiary groups to seek an objective appraisal of DFID's strengths and weaknesses.

40. We make many requests for information, which we channel through the helpful offices of the parliamentary clerk and his team, whose work we much appreciate. In general, we are pleased with the responses we receive to our requests for information and find DFID usually willing to provide the factual information which we require. Inevitably, the situation is not perfect: on visits we have discovered significant ODA spending we had not been told of before. Our greatest concern are the Government papers which are not made available to us, especially the very broad category covered by advice to Ministers.

41. Despite these reservations, we are pleased that DFID engages with us constructively. Responses to our reports are timely and in general recommendations have been addressed in full. We are given the impression that our reports and work are taken seriously. We suspect that DFID performs well in comparison to many other Government departments.

Resources

42. We have a staff of six to monitor a Department which is extremely complex and has bilateral programmes in 27 countries. It would be impossible to do our work with fewer staff. With the establishment of the ICAI Sub-committee our workload increased significantly; we have benefited greatly from the NAO secondments detailed above. Though this has been an excellent short term solution, it is not sustainable. We urge the House to devote a greater share of expenditure to front-line services and to see select committee staffing as a priority. Select committees are at the main tool for Parliamentary scrutiny and are seen by many as the most effective instruments in Parliament.

43. The budget for overseas travel by select committees has been reduced in recent years. However, for a number of committees, overseas travel is an integral part of their work: we cannot assess DFID's work without them and these visits are a key part of our scrutiny of DFID. We are grateful to the Liaison Committee for giving priority to us and other Committees which need to travel as part of their work. We also recognise that in austere times it is necessary to reduce the cost of visits, for example by booking semi-flexible or inflexible fares.

Looking ahead

44. We are proud of the work we have done during this Parliament and would like to highlight a number of issues as priorities for our successor Committee.

Women and girls

45. We have maintained the pressure on the Government to keep women and girls as a central focus of DFID policy. We signalled this intention in our Violence Against Women and Girls report (2013), in which we recommended that DFID scale up its work on harmful practices such as FGM and early marriage, and that it work more effectively across Whitehall to this end.²⁶ We maintained the pressure on gender in subsequent reports, including: Disability (2014); Sierra Leone and Liberia (2014, in which we returned to the subject of FGM); and Jobs and Livelihoods (2015, in which we addressed women's

26 IDC, [Violence Against Women and Girls](#) (4 June 2013), HC 107

economic empowerment). Our Chair asked the Secretary of State about FGM in Sierra Leone in the last International Development questions of the Parliament. She informed him that following the Ebola, outbreak FGM had stopped because it was one of the main ways in which the disease could spread and that she was having discussions about how to prevent it becoming back.²⁷ We urge DFID Sierra Leone to make this a priority.

46. We noted in our report on 'DFID's Performance 2013-14' that despite the London Summit on Family Planning in 2014, spending on Reproductive Health had declined in that year.²⁸ We recommended that work and spending in this important area be significantly increased and urge our successor Committee to press DFID on this issue.

47. In our report on Violence Against Women and Girls we recommended that there should be a Women's Advisory Committee in each bilateral partner country to guide our bilateral work. We also urge our successors to keep this under review.

48. Both major parties have said gender will be a priority if they form the next Government. We recommend that our successor Committee continue our practice of ensuring a focus on gender across all activities (reports and visits), where appropriate, as well as undertaking standalone inquiries.

Disability

49. We are proud of our forthright and well-received report on Disability (2014).²⁹ As we have said, it seemed to trigger a step-change within DFID, as demonstrated by the Department's publication of a Disability Framework in response to our recommendation. We urge our successor committee to hold DFID to account for the pledges made in its response to our report, and to bring pressure to bear on those responsible for creating the post-2015 development framework.

ICAI

50. Another area in which we have broken new ground is the establishment of our sub-Committee on ICAI. We have maintained a steady focus on the Commission's work, especially since we introduced the practice in early 2014 of holding formal evidence sessions on each evaluation. This has enabled rigorous scrutiny of each ICAI output. We exhort our successor Committee not just to re-appoint the sub-Committee, but to continue to hold evidence sessions on each ICAI report.

Parliamentary strengthening

51. We have pressed DFID to see the vital role that Parliament's play in development and to recognise the importance of engaging with politicians. We welcome DFID's positive response to our report. We have received a letter from the CEO of WFD outlining plans for improved co-operation between 'Westminster' institutions and proposals for a new

27 Commons Hansard, 18 Mar 2015 : Column 745

28 IDC, [DFID's Performance in 2014-15](#) HC 750 (18 March 2015)

29 IDC, [Disability and Development](#) HC 947 (10 April 2014)

partnership.³⁰ We welcome the letter. We urge our successors to continue to monitor DFID's work in this area, to ensure that parliamentary strengthening is a priority and that DFID make use of Westminster institutions where there is a demand for their work.

DFID expenditure trends

52. We believe we have done valuable work in our annual examinations of DFID's expenditure and administration. We recommend our successors maintain this line of work. We have benefited greatly from the NAO's assistance and its annual analysis of DFID's expenditure on our behalf. We have also had an NAO secondee, who managed the inquiry which reported in March 2015. We recommend that the links with the NAO be maintained and that the successor Committee seek to increase the amount of accounting expertise it can draw on across the range of its work.

53. In our reports, we have noted changing expenditure trends. An increasing share of ODA spending has been undertaken by non-DFID Government Departments, and an increasing share of DFID's budget has been spent through multilateral organisations, centrally managed programmes and on humanitarian relief. A shrinking proportion of the budget has been spent on LDCs.

54. During the Parliament we have become concerned about co-ordination between DFID bilateral programmes and centrally managed programmes. In Sierra Leone, we were alarmed to discover that there were centrally managed programmes the DFID country office was unaware of.

Institutional memory and long term working

55. Over the last 20 years the UK Government has spent very large sums on ODA. Two key issues arise for us. First, has DFID done sufficient analysis of the legacy of ODA expenditure over 20 years? Is it aware of what has been really effective and what not? Secondly, has sufficient acknowledgement been given to the importance of long term commitments such as we saw in the community forestry programmes in Nepal which has had an impressive impact? At times we have been concerned by the lack of institutional memory and the short period that many programmes run for. We urge our successors to keep these issues under review.

Sierra Leone

56. In its response to our report on ebola, the Government noted that a conference was to be held on 3 March 2015. The Government informed us that following this Conference, it would continue to work with the international system to ensure that focus on the response and recovery was maintained.

57. As the UK and other donors begins to assess the way in which they address development in Sierra Leone in the future, we recommend not only that they take advantage of the opportunities which have arisen in Sierra Leone such as initiating a

³⁰ [PAS0040, Westminster Foundation for Democracy Annex A](#)

programme on FGM, but also consider a long term governance programme (lasting perhaps 10 years). This should include parliament strengthening and might be an excellent opportunity to involve the UK Parliamentary Partnership for Democracy - along the lines that WFD's CEO, Anthony Smith, wrote to us about following our report on parliamentary strengthening.

Scotland

58. As we have seen, DFID has a large office in East Kilbride where about half of its UK-based staff work. He have visited the office on several occasions and held meetings in Scotland with NIDOS and Scottish MSPs. We urge our successors to maintain these links.

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 24 March 2015

Members present:

Sir Malcolm Bruce, in the Chair

Sir Hugh Bayley
Fiona Bruce
Fabian Hamilton

Pauline Latham OBE
Jeremy Lefroy

Draft Report (*International Development Committee: the Legacy—Parliament 2010-15*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 58 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifteenth Report of the Committee to the House.

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

The Committee Adjourned.

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/indcom.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2014–15

First Report	UK Support for Humanitarian Relief in the Middle East	HC 248 (673)
Second Report	Scrutiny of Government's UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2012, the Government's Quarterly Reports from October 2012 to September 2013, and the Government's policies on arms exports and international arms control issues	HC 186
Third Report	The UK's Development Work in the Occupied Palestinian Territories	HC 565 (756)
Fourth Report	The Independent Commission for Aid Impact's Performance and Annual Report 2013–14	HC 523 (812)
Fifth Report	Strengthening Health Systems in Developing Countries	HC 246 (816)
Sixth Report	Recovery and Development in Sierra Leone & Liberia	HC 247 (863)
Seventh Report	Appointment of the Chief Commissioner of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact	HC 741
Eighth Report	Responses to the Ebola Crisis	HC 876 (1108)
Ninth Report	Parliamentary Strengthening	HC 704 (1125)
Tenth Report	The Future of UK Development Co-operation: Phase 2: Beyond Aid	HC 663
Eleventh Report	Scrutiny of Arms Exports and Arms Controls (2015): Scrutiny of the Government's Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2013, the Government's Quarterly Reports from October 2013 to June 2014, and the Government's policies on arms exports and international arms control issues	HC 608

Twelfth Report	Jobs and Livelihoods	HC 685
Thirteenth Report	Department for International Development's Performance 2013–14: the Departmental Annual Review 2013–14	HC 750
Session 2013–14		
First Report	Global Food Security	HC 176 (626)
Second Report	Violence Against Women and Girls	HC 107 (624)
Third Report	Scrutiny of Arms Exports and Arms Control (2013): Scrutiny of the Government's UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2011 published in July 2012, the Government's Quarterly Reports from October 2011 to September 2012, and the government's policies on arms exports and international arms control issues	HC 205 (CM 8707)
Fourth Report	Multilateral Aid Review	HC 349 (694)
Fifth Report	ICAI's Annual Report 2012–13	HC 566 (946)
Sixth Report	Implications for development in the event of Scotland becoming an independent country	HC 692
Seventh Report	The Closure of DFID's Bilateral Aid Programmes: The Case of South Africa	HC 822
Eighth Report	The Future of UK Development Co-operation: Phase 1: Development Finance	HC 334
Ninth Report	Democracy and Development in Burma	HC 821
Tenth Report	Department for International Development's Performance in 2012–13: the Departmental Annual Report 2012–13	HC 693 (522)
Eleventh Report	Disability and Development	HC 947 (336)
Session 2012–13		
First Report	DFID's contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	HC 126 (609)
Second Report	Scrutiny of Arms Exports (2012): UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2010, Quarterly Reports for July to December 2010 and January to September	HC 419 (CM 8441)

	2011, The Government's Review of arms exports to the Middle East and North Africa, and wider arms control issues	
Third Report	The Development Situation in Malawi	HC 118 (641)
Fourth Report	Tax in Developing Countries: Increasing Resources for Development	HC 130 (708)
Fifth Report	DFID's programme in Zambia	HC 119 (759)
Sixth Report	Afghanistan: Development progress and prospects after 2014	HC 403 (862)
Seventh Report	UK Aid to Rwanda	HC 726 (949)
Eighth Report	Post-2015 Development Goals	HC 657 (1065)
Ninth Report	Department for International Development's Annual Report and Accounts 2011–12	HC 751(1098)
Tenth Report	Pakistan	HC 725
Session 2010–12		
First Report	Appointment of the Chief Commissioner of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact	HC 551
Second Report	The 2010 Millennium Development Goals Review Summit	HC 534 (HC 959)
Third Report	Department For International Development Annual Report & Resource Accounts 2009–10	HC 605 (1043)
Fourth Report	The World Bank	HC 999 (1044)
Fifth Report	The Future of CDC	HC 607 (1045)
Sixth Report	Scrutiny of Arms Export Controls (2011): UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2009, Quarterly Reports for 2010, licensing policy and review of export control legislation	HC 686 (CM 8079)
Seventh Report	The Humanitarian Response to the Pakistan Floods	HC 615 (1435)
Eighth Report	The Future of DFID's Programme in India	HC 616 (1486)
Ninth Report	DFID's Role in Building Infrastructure in Developing Countries	HC 848 (1721)
Tenth Report	The Closure of DFID's Bilateral Aid Programme in Burundi	HC 1134 (1730)
Eleventh Report	Financial Crime and Development	HC 847 (1859)
Twelfth Report	Working Effectively in Fragile and Conflict–Affected States: DRC and Rwanda	HC 1133 (1872)
Thirteenth Report	Private Foundations	HC1557 (1916)
Fourteenth Report	Department for International Development Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2010–11 and Business Plan 2011–15	HC 1569 (107)

20 Legacy Report

Fifteenth Report	South Sudan: Prospects for Peace and Development	HC 1570 (426)
Sixteenth Report	EU Development Assistance	HC 1680 (427)