



House of Commons
International Development
Committee

**Syrian refugee crisis:
Government Response
to the Committee's
First Report of Session
2015–16**

**Fifth Special Report of Session
2015–16**

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International Development Committee

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Fifth Special Report

The International Development Committee published its First Report of Session 2015-16, Syrian refugee crisis, HC 463, on 5 January 2016. The Government response was received on 3 March 2016 and is appended to this Report.

Government response

Introduction

The UK Government welcomes the International Development Committee's timely and constructive report on the Syrian refugee crisis. We particularly appreciate the Committee's recognition of the leading role which the UK has played in the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Syrian region. We also welcome the Committee's support for our strategy of supporting the largest numbers of refugees to stay near their homes, while assisting some of the most vulnerable to access specialist support and protection through resettlement in the UK.

The Committee underlined in its report the need for the international community to increase its support for the Syrian refugees, both through immediate humanitarian assistance and the promotion of more sustainable solutions. This usefully helped to build positive momentum towards the Conference on Supporting Syria and the Region which the Prime Minister co-hosted in London on 4 February. At that Conference leaders came together to pledge more than \$11 billion of assistance, the largest amount raised in one day for a humanitarian crisis. As the Secretary of State for International Development said in her closing address, the Conference provided an unprecedented response to an unprecedented crisis¹.

During the Conference the Prime Minister announced that the UK will more than double our total pledge to the Syria crisis from £1.12 billion to over £2.3 billion, confirming the UK's position as one of the leading donors supporting Syria and the region. We also continue to lead the way by shaping the response and ensuring our aid gets the best possible results, including disbursing our pledges swiftly and providing predictable financing for our partners so they can plan for long term needs such as education.

We also welcome the Committee's recognition of the role which resettlement can play in helping the most vulnerable refugees, its support for the UK's decision to resettle 20,000 refugees by the end of this Parliament, and its constructive suggestions for making the

¹ Further information on the Conference outcomes can be found on the Conference website <https://www.supportingsyria2016.com/news/>

scheme as effective as possible. Having achieved the initial target of resettling 1,000 refugees by Christmas 2015, we are now seeking to put in place more sustainable and efficient processes and will take full account of the Committee's views as we take this work forward.

We took full note of the Committee's recommendation that we should accept proposals to take 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children from within the EU. The Government has considered these proposals carefully but we do not think this is the right approach. The Minister for Immigration announced in a statement to Parliament on 28 January that we will work with UNHCR to resettle unaccompanied refugee children from conflict zones. In addition, DFID has created a new £10 million fund which will include targeted support for unaccompanied minors in Europe – including safe places for children at risk, counselling and legal advice, and help with tracing children to their families.

2016 will be a vital year for addressing the needs of refugees from the Syria conflict and elsewhere. The World Humanitarian Summit in May provides a unique opportunity to promote a new approach to assistance in protracted crises. And work is underway in the United Nations to produce a progressive roadmap to address large movements of refugees and migrants, leading to a high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly in September 2016. The UK government will play an active and constructive role in these international processes.

Response to the conclusions and recommendations

Host Community Pressures

1. We strongly commend DFID for setting an exemplary standard in its commitment to funding humanitarian assistance to address the Syrian crisis. We are very concerned at the lack of financial support from other donors. Wealthy countries again committed to the goal of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA) this summer at the Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa, but are not being held to account for delivery against this commitment. This is a serious problem in the face of increasing humanitarian needs. Evidence indicates a link between the reduction in assistance and increases in dangerous onward migration from the Middle East to Europe. (Paragraph 13)

Taken with;

2. We urge the Government to apply more pressure on other donors to meet their 0.7% commitment and direct an appropriate proportion of ODA towards the Syrian crisis. Efforts should be focused towards meeting the

full financial requirement of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), in order to support Governments of the region through a coordinated strategy to strengthen basic services in these countries, ease host-community pressures, and help prevent dangerous migration journeys. (Paragraph 13)

Agree

DFID shares the Committee's concern about the need for international donors to provide further funding to meet the needs of vulnerable Syrians and host communities. The relevant UN appeals were only 56% funded in 2015. As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, we cannot allow this trend to continue.

The UK therefore continues to encourage the international community to make generous pledges and to take an ambitious new approach towards longer term support for vulnerable Syrians. At the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference in London on 4 February 2016, leaders pledged nearly \$6 billion towards the 2016 UN-coordinated inter-agency appeals, with a further \$5.4 billion for the coming years until 2020. In total more than \$11 billion was pledged, the largest amount raised in one day for a humanitarian crisis. We welcome the generous pledge of \$2.5 billion in immediate and long-term funding from Germany. All this additional money will save lives, build hope and give people a chance for the future.

For the UK's part, the Prime Minister announced that we will more than double our total pledge to the crisis from £1.12 billion to over £2.3 billion. This confirms the UK's position as a leading donor supporting Syria and the region. We also continue to lead the way by shaping the response and ensuring our aid gets the best possible results, including disbursing our pledges swiftly and providing predictable financing for our partners so they can plan for long term needs such as education.

3. We are gravely concerned about the increased tensions between host communities and refugees, particularly given the risk that such tensions might further contribute to regional instability. We have received strong evidence about the need for a new approach to humanitarian assistance. Research suggests that cash programming may provide a valuable means of delivering support in a way that offers dignity for refugees and facilitates peaceful co-existence with host communities by benefitting local economies. (Paragraph 18)

Taken with;

4. We recommend that DFID build upon its existing efforts and scale up the use of cash-based assistance in the region. It should use the recommendations of the High Level Panel on Cash Transfers as a blueprint for how to do so, and strive to make cash its default means of delivering humanitarian assistance. This is particularly important for targeting the most vulnerable, as refugees with specific needs will have a better understanding of how to meet these needs than aid agencies. We

are also gravely concerned about the overall impact on the economies of host countries, and urge DFID to work with the World Bank and other institutions to ensure that they receive the necessary long-term support which is vital to their economic survival. (Paragraph 18)

Agree

DFID agrees that we should make effective use of cash-based assistance in response to the crisis. Refugees are exhausting their savings and are increasingly in debt, and millions remain in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The majority of refugees are not allowed to work in Lebanon, Turkey or Jordan, and while some work illegally, they risk arrest and exploitation. Local host communities are also under considerable strain as basic services are overstretched, and unemployment rises.

DFID funds a number of NGOs and UN agencies in the region to undertake cash or voucher programming. Cash assistance can provide better value for money and allows beneficiaries dignity through choice, enabling refugees to choose how best to meet their needs.

The UK is committed to working with international partners to end the conflict and reduce the negative impacts of the crisis. We are scaling up our support for longer term stability and resilience-building work inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. For example, the UK is funding Lebanese and Jordanian municipalities for the running of essential public services, such as waste management, water and sanitation, recreation facilities and education. In addition, we are providing longer term funding to our partners to give them the certainty they need to plan ahead, and are calling on other donors to do the same.

As noted above, at the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference other international donors also pledged significant longer-term funding. In addition, Multilateral Development Banks and donors announced a further \$40 billion of loans to refugee hosting countries in the region, some on concessional terms, to increase access to sustainable lending. World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced that the World Bank Group would triple its commitment to the Middle East and North Africa region in the next five years to nearly \$20 billion to support development in these countries for generations to come.

Support in the Region

5. Whilst the UK Government strategy has focused on helping refugees in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East, many of the British public appear unaware of the extent of this. The Government should ensure that the public are aware of both the extent of its support and the benefits of supporting refugees in their own country. (Paragraph 19)

Agree

The Government agrees that we should further enhance public awareness of our assistance. It is vitally important that the public are aware of the UK's significant support – our biggest-ever humanitarian response.

Our communications aim to demonstrate how UK aid reduces extreme poverty, tackles global challenges, and is in Britain's national interest. We use a range of approaches to do this – working with the media, visiting the region with journalists, communicating our work through partners and using the power and reach of our digital channels.

We also draw on insights from a survey carried out by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which tracks UK public attitudes towards aid and international development, to inform our campaigns and communication activities. This ensures we are putting out information about UK aid efforts through channels and messengers that our target audiences trust and use the most.

The extensive media coverage of the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference has undoubtedly helped to raise awareness of UK assistance. During January and early February DFID Press Office helped secure at least 171 separate pieces of coverage about the Syria crisis and the conference in the UK press (27 were TV and radio interviews), with an estimated total circulation of 220 million. We will continue to look to use every opportunity we can to show how UK aid is delivering results and supporting thousands of people to rebuild their lives through investment in health, education and jobs.

6. We commend the Government's support within the region for three reasons. Firstly, evidence suggests that despite the operational challenges of delivering assistance in the Middle East, it is more cost-effective to support refugees in the region than it is to direct resources towards resettling them in the UK. Secondly, we heard that it is actually in the best interests of the majority of refugees to stay closer to home, though they require adequate funding to support this. Thirdly, one of the key factors driving refugees towards dangerous trips across the Mediterranean is cuts to humanitarian assistance, which in turn is driven by insufficient funding from donors. This suggests that sufficient funding to help humanitarian organisations support an adequate standard of living in the region will deter many more refugees from risking their lives in this way. As John Ging of UN OCHA wrote, it is only the prospect of a better future that will prevent refugees from leaving the region. (Paragraph 20)

Agree

We agree that our focus should remain on assisting vulnerable refugees in the region. Given the scale of displacement in the Middle East, and with many millions of people in need, our priorities are on continuing to provide humanitarian assistance to those most in need in the region and actively seeking an end to the crisis. Compared with aid in the region, resettlement can only ever support a comparatively small proportion of those in need.

The Government recognises that just providing for the basic needs of refugees is not enough. We must give Syrians hope and opportunities: allowing them to feel they can plan for their future and making the prospect of staying in the region more appealing. Accordingly, our longer term programming aims to give people opportunities to build stable, safe and prosperous lives in their home country.

Possible Solutions

7. We welcome the Minister's statement that he hoped to bring forward a proposal early next year, and emphasise that such a proposal must move beyond short-term employment responses towards finding areas of economic growth that can create sustainable employment solutions. This should involve the provision of education beyond primary school age to include skills training. We see a coordinated and carefully planned effort to address this issue as essential to the long-term sustainability of refugees' presence in host countries. (Paragraph 25)

Taken with;

8. As the refugee crisis has become increasingly protracted, the need for legal employment opportunities for Syrian refugees has grown. Evidence suggests that they want to work, yet legal restrictions mean they are forced to remain reliant on humanitarian assistance or find work in the informal sector. This model is unsustainable in the long-term and has a particularly negative effect on child refugees. DFID can help develop employment opportunities in host countries and put the Syrian refugee crisis response on a more sustainable development footing. (Paragraph 27)

Agree.

At the historic and groundbreaking Supporting Syria and the Region Conference significant progress was made towards allowing refugees to work. Pledges by participants and commitments by refugee hosting governments to open up their labour markets will create an estimated 1.1m jobs for refugees from Syria and host country citizens in the region by 2018.

There were bold commitments at the Conference from King Abdullah of Jordan, President Salam of Lebanon and Prime Minister Davutoglu of Turkey to ensure all children in their countries have access to education, and to open up their economies to attract new investment and create new jobs for refugees and host communities alike. In Jordan, the Government will undertake the necessary administrative changes to allow Syrian refugees to apply for work permits in sectors where there is low Jordanian participation (e.g. construction, agriculture, service industry), which could provide roughly 50,000 job opportunities for Syrian refugees over the next year.

To support this process DFID will continue to work to ensure children and young people from Syria and host countries have increased access to appropriate skills, training or higher education opportunities.

9. Given that other countries are making considerable investment commitments in Jordan, we recommend that DFID engage with the Jordan Investment Commission and other partners to explore opportunities to leverage these projects to create jobs for refugees. We recommend that DFID use its expertise in the field of economic development and works with suitable partners to identify and develop opportunities for investment, economic growth and sustainable job creation to the benefit of Syrian refugees and host communities alike. Specifically it should extend its inclusive growth diagnostic exercise to refugee hosting countries in the Middle East. (Paragraph 27)

Agree.

In Jordan, the preferential trade access being granted to EU markets will give designated development zones the potential to provide over a hundred thousand jobs to Jordanians and Syrian refugees over the coming years. The Jordan Investment Commission is integral to this effort and the UK will continue to work closely with them during the development of these zones. This requires harnessing a wider range of actors, including the World Bank, the private sector, and host governments themselves to change policy to enable refugees to work. All of this will require a long term sustained and scaled up commitment from donors.

Inclusive Growth Diagnostics will provide a solid evidence base for economic development programming across DFID. We are currently learning from this process so that we can enhance the way DFID carries out and uses diagnostics more broadly. We are sharing the lessons learned on how to do diagnostics well with partners who are or will be running programmes in non-DFID countries hosting refugees. We are also working with international partners, including the European Union, to build up a strong country-level evidence base on the root causes of displacement and migration including in countries where DFID does not have a presence. This evidence base will help inform the government response to migration. And we will continue to explore how diagnostic approaches and tools can help address the broader regional opportunities and issues presented by the movement and settlement of refugees.

10. We see the identification of long-term opportunities to create jobs in countries hosting refugees as a key response to the crisis. (Paragraph 28)

Agree.

The UK will continue to encourage the international community to take an ambitious approach to provide longer term support for vulnerable Syrians and create jobs in host countries. See also response to recommendations 7 and 8.

11. DFID should make use of CDC Group's expertise in private sector investment and should discuss CDC's remit with the CDC board and allow it to invest in countries hosting refugees. In addition, DFID should provide CDC with specific funds for it to

invest on DFID's behalf in sustainable job-creating businesses in those countries. (Paragraph 28)

Partially Agree

Under CDC's current Investment Policy, which covers the period 2012-2016, CDC is permitted to invest only in Africa and South Asia. Countries in the Middle East are currently not eligible for CDC financing. This policy, including the range of geographies in which CDC is able to invest, will be reviewed as part of a wider CDC Strategy Review that is currently underway and which is expected to be completed by the end of the year. The outcome of this review will inform the setting of CDC's next five year strategy.

We have noted the recommendations made by the IDC. In setting CDC's next five year strategy, we will carefully consider the merits of expanding the geographical scope of CDC's portfolio and the role that CDC might usefully play, to include those countries that host refugees in the region as part of our wider response to the Syrian refugee crisis. This would include a discussion with CDC of appropriate financing strategies and modalities.

The global humanitarian system

12. *The global approach to protracted crises should be a key topic at next year's World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. We are concerned about the lack of a comprehensive, long-term strategy to deal with such crises and shift funding from a reliance on humanitarian assistance towards a more development-centred approach. (Paragraph 32)*

Taken with;

13. *We recommend that DFID focus its efforts at the Summit on this issue in three respects. Firstly, promote early investment in public services and economic infrastructure which can yield long-term dividends that a narrow focus on immediate humanitarian needs cannot. Secondly, negotiate commitments to provide humanitarian and development funding over multi-year timeframes, enabling the response to be better managed and more strategic. Thirdly, focus on developing areas of economic growth which will create sustainable employment solutions and ultimately help a country from aid dependency. (Paragraph 32)*

Agree

The Government has four priorities for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), set against the need for a better international response to forced displacement and protracted crises:

- Build resilience to natural disasters
- Smarter financing and reform of the humanitarian system

- A strong focus on women and girls throughout the Summit
- A focus on the protection of civilians and International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

Underlying all UK priorities for the WHS is a new vision for a 21st Century Humanitarian System. This needs to include more efficient and effective responses, driven by collaborative UN leadership and sustained by strong participation from local communities and actors. Development and humanitarian activity should be joined up through coherent and longer-term approaches, using development instruments where more appropriate. It is also essential that we enable the people affected by crises, civil society and, where possible, national and local governments to play a greater role in defining their needs and allow them to drive and deliver the response.

DFID, the World Bank and UNHCR are co-hosting a Forum on Protracted Forced Displacement in April. The discussions at the Forum will help build consensus on a new approach to the global challenge of protracted displacement and will contribute to the outcomes of the WHS.

Addressing the increasing gap between humanitarian need and available resources will require a new way of financing crisis response. We agree on the need to focus on medium term financing, which takes into account displacement. Tackling protracted crises requires better social protection and support for host communities, particularly better access to basic services such as education, and a focus on jobs and livelihoods. We need to harness the collective resources of humanitarian and development sectors in parallel to address the medium and long-term challenges that we are facing. The transformative power of market-based approaches, including much greater use of cash-based approaches, should help to drive change and put those affected by crises in the driving seat.

The needs of the most vulnerable refugees

14. The challenge for the Government and its partners, chiefly UNHCR, therefore lies in ensuring that the processes for identifying and assisting the most vulnerable refugees are robust enough to reach those most in need. (Paragraph 34)

Taken with;

19. The risks faced by anyone that has been forced to flee their home are substantial. However, in the context of the Syrian crisis, certain groups are affected in ways that heighten their vulnerability. For these people resettlement is an appropriate and durable solution. We commend the UNHCR and their commitment to ensuring that processes for identifying the vulnerable are robust in an extremely complex environment with significant operational challenges. Yet evidence indicated non-registration by certain vulnerable groups, who prefer to stay outside official UN camps, is occurring and that, despite best efforts, it appears that under-registration may well also be an issue. (Paragraph 52)

Partially Agree

Only 23% of the Syrian refugees reside in formal camps, and there are no such camps in Lebanon or Egypt. UNHCR assistance and protection activities have therefore had to encompass support outside the camps, resulting in significant availability of and access to, registration and other services here too. At present, the vast majority of UK referrals have come from non-camp settings.

Across the region, there is limited evidence on the numbers of unregistered potential refugees, their reasons for non-registration or their vulnerability status and any differences in vulnerability between camp and non-camp populations. However, we recognise that for reasons of stigma or fear of repercussion, some groups may be less willing to identify and/or disclose their status and/or go through the in-depth screening process needed for resettlement. Others may subsist in remote areas where partners are fewer, or in areas where security limits access for the provision of assistance.

We understand that over time, increasing numbers of unregistered refugees have sought out UNHCR's assistance and protection services as their resources have dwindled and coping mechanisms become stretched. There are some groups however, including some minority groups, who may not see a need to register either due to their own resources or due to reliance on community or social networks.

We are in regular dialogue with UNHCR over their identification processes and systems for resettlement. We are providing financial support to scale up UNHCR resettlement and protection personnel and operations in 2016, including for community outreach, and have earmarked further funding for future years.

We have also increased our discussions with NGO partners about (i) their awareness of, and connection to, the wider humanitarian coordination system in each of the hosting countries and (ii) their awareness and experience of the referrals process. Partner outreach is critical to supporting UNHCR to identify the most vulnerable cases in some of the refugee-hosting countries. We are working with UNHCR and NGO partners to improve outreach to all communities and ensure that all those in need of support feel able to register where the Government permits.

The most vulnerable among those left behind in Syria

15. We note the Resolution of the House (2 December) supporting action against Daesh in Syria, including through air strikes. We warmly welcome the House's support for the Government's humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees. The recent escalation of military efforts will have an impact on conditions faced by civilians in Syria, and may well make it more difficult for DFID and other agencies to deliver humanitarian aid. (Paragraph 39)

Taken with;

16. The UK must do all it can to mitigate the risk of worsening the humanitarian situation. The potential humanitarian consequences of protracted military engagement must be a driving force for The UK Government in pressing for ceasefire and political settlement through the vehicle of the Vienna talks. (Paragraph 39)

Agree

Coalition airstrikes have been in progress in Syria since September 2014. Coalition partners do all they can to minimise the risks of civilian impact of coalition military action in line with international humanitarian law. The UK observes a rigorous targeting protocol with regard to air strikes in Syria. This is founded in the principles of proportionality, military necessity, the capability of our precision weapons systems and, above all, the skills and experience of our military personnel. In Syria, the UN carries out regular humanitarian contingency planning exercises including preparing for the impact of military operations. Our assessment is that UK involvement in airstrikes should not measurably impact our ability to deliver humanitarian aid. UK aid in Syria is usually unbranded to protect both partners and Syrians receiving assistance.

We recognise that airstrikes may cause some local level internal displacement and disruption. However, it is the conflict that is the main cause of suffering of civilians in Syria. Consequently, we agree with the Committee that political transition by mutual agreement of the Syrian parties, supported by the international community, remains the only way to guarantee civilian safety and bring about sustainable peace in Syria. We are helping to lay the foundations for an inclusive political settlement by working with partners to help strengthen moderate opposition institutions to provide governance and services and to build resilience against extremists and the regime.

The UK continues to play a key role in diplomatic efforts, pressing for an agreed international approach through the Geneva conferences and providing funding and support to successive UN Special Envoys. On 18 December the UN Security Council adopted UNSCR 2254, consolidating the outcomes of the ISSG discussions. The Council endorsed a road map for a peace process in Syria, reconfirmed its endorsement of the 30 June 2012 Geneva Communiqué, and endorsed the “Vienna Statements” as the basis for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict. Critically, humanitarian access and respect for International Humanitarian Law are not up for negotiation; they are requirements of any political transition.

The International Syria Support Group (ISSG) meeting on 11 February 2016 in Munich agreed that there should be a Cessation of Hostilities and humanitarian access to named locations in Syria. Since then, the US and Russia have agreed at the highest levels on the terms of a Cessation of Hostilities. This agreement was codified in UN Security Council resolution 2268 on 26 February.

The Cessation of Hostilities, which came into force on 27 February, is an important step towards ending the terrible violence in Syria and bringing a lasting political settlement. Since then, we have seen a reduction in violence, which is of course a huge step forwards. But we need to see this sustained, and to see a reduction in the number of reported violations.

We look to Russia in particular to use its influence with the regime to ensure that the Cessation endures, and that there are no further violations. It is crucial that the opposition see action being taken in response to allegations of violations to ensure their commitment – and that of their Syrian constituents – to the process.

It is essential that the cessation of hostilities supports the wider political process. We support UN Special Envoy de Mistura’s plans to resume peace negotiations on 7 March. These negotiations must deliver a political transition away from Asad to a legitimate government that is able to support the needs and aspirations of all Syrians and end the suffering of the Syrian people.

At the same time, we call for complete and unfettered humanitarian access across Syria, and an end to all violations of international humanitarian law, as set out in UN Security Council Resolution 2254. We are relieved that desperately needed aid convoys are now arriving in some besieged areas of Syria, including those named in the ISSG agreement of 11 February.

The international community and particularly Russia, which has unique influence, must put pressure on the Asad regime to lift sieges and grant full and sustained humanitarian access.

There must be a political solution to the crisis in Syria. The UK is working strenuously to make this happen and will continue to do so.

Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in camps and host communities outside Syria

17. We welcome DFID's approach of directing approximately 75% of overall humanitarian assistance towards host communities. However, major aid agencies such as UNHCR, which are a conduit for much of the UK's financial support, should be doing the same. (Paragraph 43)

Taken with;

18. DFID should press all UN agencies and NGOs, particularly the major UK aid recipients, to ensure that vulnerable refugees outside of camps receive an appropriate level of support. This must include directing resources towards refugees in host communities because they are the most vulnerable and have disproportionately suffered from cuts to humanitarian assistance. (Paragraph 43)

Partially Agree

It should be noted that only 23% of refugees reside in formal camps: these include 17% of refugees in Jordan, 38% of refugees in Iraq and 14% in Turkey. There are no formal camps in either Lebanon or Egypt.

Rather than have targets based on proportions of financing for camp and non-camp refugee support, the humanitarian system should aim to ensure an equitable threshold standard of well-being for camp and non-camp refugees. This is not to say that all refugees should receive the same support. Some have more of their own resources and capacity than others, and so are able to contribute themselves to obtaining a basic threshold standard. We anticipate that achieving this basic standard will require slightly larger financial allocations to camp-based than to non-camp refugees.

In Jordan, approximately 15% (£5.5m) of DFID's total funding through humanitarian partners is being spent inside of the camps in the current financial year. This leaves a total of approximately 85% being spent in the host communities.

However, UNHCR estimates that it spent 32% of its 2015 financing for Jordan in camps. UNHCR is responsible for ensuring a full range of services to refugees in the camps where it takes on provision of accommodation, water, lighting, education and other vital services. This makes the cost per head greater than outside the camps. Therefore it is reasonable that the proportion of UNHCR financing spent inside camps is greater than the proportion of refugees in those camps.

DFID is funding measures to make refugee camps in Jordan more cost-effective. The simplest way to reduce the cost of camps would be to make it easier for people to leave them, though there would be a marginal increase in the cost of the support to refugees in urban areas, borne by donors and the Jordanian Government. However, the criteria

that refugees need to fulfil in order to relocate from the camps are quite difficult for many.

Vulnerable groups

20. We recommend that the Government continue to carefully monitor the profiles of cases referred for resettlement including, where possible, demographics, sexuality, religion, disability status and the location from which refugees have been selected, and whether from within or outside official UN camps. Such monitoring outputs should be fed back to UNHCR to identify any groups that are underrepresented in referrals and establish and execute action to remedy this, thus ensuring that UNHCR's principle of equal access is realised.

Agree

We agree that the Government should continue to monitor the profiles of cases to ensure that the UK welcomes the most vulnerable persons across all seven criteria including those affected by stigma and/or unequal opportunity. It is difficult however, to know what numbers actually exist for some categories of person as only a primary vulnerability needs to be identified to support a referral, and additional vulnerabilities do not have to be disclosed.

Nevertheless, we will continue to monitor closely the demographics of those referred for resettlement, and ensure any concerns about over- or under-representation are raised promptly with UNHCR and actioned as necessary. We have increased our outreach to specific interest groups in the UK and are undertaking field visits to monitor and follow-up with UNHCR and partners.

See also comments on recommendation 14.

21. We are concerned about the ban that has forced the UNCHR to stop registering new refugees in Lebanon and the implications this has for refugees' access to support. (Paragraph 55)

Taken with;

22. We urge DFID to press the Lebanese Government harder to allow the resumption of registration processes. Given that it has ordered the ban until a new registration mechanism is established, DFID should consult with Lebanese authorities to identify any objections to the previous processes and ensure that solutions are identified so that registrations can resume as soon as possible. (Paragraph 55)

Agree.

The UK recognises the refugee presence in Lebanon is placing great strain on the country. It is important however that those who seek refuge from the conflict in Syria

are able to do so, and after fleeing are able to register as refugees in order to gain access to essential basic services.

To date, the UK has allocated £46 million to UNHCR's operations in Lebanon, of which a proportion will go to funding registration. DFID is also providing over £8 million to the Norwegian Refugee Council, a proportion of which will go to funding information, counselling and legal assistance to refugees in Lebanon to ensure they are aware of their rights and are able to access services. The UK also continues to work with Government of Lebanon and UNHCR to ensure that all refugees and persons of concern are registered and receiving the help they need.

23. *We are gravely concerned about the situation for Syrian child refugees and we commend DFID's commitment to helping them, both within the region through the No Lost Generation Initiative and through resettlement. However, we are very concerned about the plight of unaccompanied refugee children in Europe, particularly as reports suggest they are falling prey to people traffickers. (Paragraph 63)*

Taken with;

24. *We urge the Government to come to a quick decision on the proposal by Save the Children as this is a matter of utmost urgency. We would welcome a decision by the Government in favour of resettling 3,000 unaccompanied children, as recommended by Save the Children, and in addition to the current commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees from the region. (Paragraph 63)*

Partially Agree

As announced on 28th January the Government has carefully considered how best to provide assistance and protection to unaccompanied refugee children from Syria, other regions of conflict, and those in transit in Europe. We share the Committee's concern about the plight of Syrian child refugees, but do not think resettling unaccompanied children from within Europe is the right approach. Instead, the Government will work with UNHCR to lead a new initiative to resettle unaccompanied children from conflict regions, where this is in their best interests.

Specifically for Europe, the Government will provide further resources to the European Asylum Support Office including to help in border "hotspots" in Greece and Italy to identify and register children at risk on first arrival in the EU. The Government will continue to meet its obligations under the Dublin Regulation. This includes reuniting unaccompanied children who have arrived in Europe with family members in the UK if it is in their best interests. In addition, the Home Secretary has asked the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, to visit the hotspots in Italy and Greece to make an assessment and provide advice on what more can be done to ensure unaccompanied children and others are protected from traffickers.

Furthermore, DFID is creating a new fund of up to £10 million to support the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children in Europe. The fund will include targeted support to meet the specific needs of unaccompanied and separated children who face additional risks. The support will include identifying children who are in need, providing safe places for at risk children to stay, data management to help trace children to their families, and services such as counselling and legal advice. This fund is in addition to the substantial funding, £46 million, that has already been given to NGOs such as Unicef and UNHCR to provide shelter, warm clothes, hot food, and medical supplies to support vulnerable people, including children, on the move or stranded in Europe or in the Balkans.

These additional initiatives will complement the significant existing aid and assistance the UK has given in response to the Syrian conflict and migration crisis, including our resettlement programmes. The Syrian Resettlement Scheme has already provided safe haven to more than 1000 vulnerable Syrians – around half of them children.

Resettlement in the UK

25. We have heard evidence that a reduction in available funding from international donors other than the UK has reduced the capacity of multilateral organisations to deliver humanitarian protection. In the context of mounting pressure on limited humanitarian resource in the region, there is a case for delivering resettlement quickly. (Paragraph 65)

Agree

The UK is delivering resettlement quickly, as part of our broader response to the crisis. The Prime Minister announced on 7 September 2015 that the Syrian Resettlement Scheme would be expanded to resettle up to 20,000 Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament. We are working quickly and closely with UNHCR to identify vulnerable Syrians that they deem in need of resettlement and whose particular needs can only be met in countries like the UK. The expanded Resettlement Scheme saw over 1000 individuals arrive in the UK in its first four months of operation up to Christmas 2015.

26. The Government should be prepared for the possibility that the speed of resettlements may take on greater urgency. The Government should also explore urgently how to better harness the substantial goodwill and offers of support for Syrian refugees, from local community groups within the UK seeking to support refugees settled here. (Paragraph 65)

Agree

We will build on offers of support to develop a community sponsorship scheme to allow individuals, charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to support refugees directly. This is why we are now working with the individuals and groups who have made offers

on developing a sustainable model for helping vulnerable people settle and integrate in the UK and, where they are able, find employment.

We are consulting international partners to understand how their schemes work, and with partners in the UK to make sure we design a scheme which works well here.

27. We support the Minister's proposal of a skills matching scheme to help refugees transition into working life in the UK, but we are concerned about cuts to ESOL funding. The long waiting lists are evidence that demand already outstrips supply. (Paragraph 67)

Taken with;

28. We urge the Government to reconsider the cuts to ESOL funding as we believe that they are counterproductive to integration plans. (Paragraph 67)

Partially Agree

The Government agrees that ESOL provision is a key factor in integration and transition into working life. Local authorities who are receiving Syrians under the scheme are required to provide them with ESOL training for twelve months and the financial package includes funding for this.

29. We welcome the news that support will continue beyond the first year, particularly given the financial pressures that many local authorities are under. (Paragraph 69)

Agree

Following consultations with local authorities we have agreed a support package to cover the full 5 years during which the Syrian refugees will receive humanitarian protection in the UK. The funding support from the second to the fifth year following resettlement is calculated on a per person basis. It will be paid to local authorities as an unringfenced grant to assist with costs incurred in supporting the refugees.