

NOVEMBER 2005: UK GOVERNMENT NEWS REPORT
JICA UK OFFICE

Sources:

- Department for International Development (DFID) website: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>
- HM Treasury website: <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/>
- 10 Downing Street website (PM's speeches): <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/>

PRESS RELEASES

29 November 2005

Further UK assistance for the development of **Sierra Leone** was announced. The UK will allocate **£26 million** to the budget support programme, the PRSP Trust Fund and electoral reform, while urging the Government to continue work to fight corruption. Significant progress has been made in rebuilding the general machinery of government and in introducing reforms to help sustain peace, stability and encourage further economic growth but Sierra Leone is still a way off some Millennium Development Goal targets such as maternal mortality. Following the announcement, the UK will make an immediate disbursement of £5m to the Government of Sierra Leone, as a result of meeting agreed Action Points on corruption and benchmarks for 2005. In addition, a £15m Poverty Reduction Budget Support Programme (PRBS) will be allocated in financial year 2006-07. The UK Government will also contribute £3m to kick start the World Bank managed PRSP Trust Fund and provide £3m to support electoral reform before the 2007 elections.

24 November 2005

An **extra £25 million** to help the **humanitarian relief effort** in **Pakistan** was announced. The new pledge is in addition to the £33 million already committed for relief and the £70 million announced last week for long-term reconstruction. It brings the **UK's total support** for earthquake relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation in Pakistan to **£128 million**.

Part of this additional funding will pay for helicopters for the UN. DFID will be taking on the contracts for four medium-life Mi-8 helicopters for a 4 month period. These will be able to deliver relief to any location in the affected area throughout the winter.

The Government of Pakistan will also be taking up the Ministry of Defence's offer of a Royal Engineers team. Working in small teams and with Pakistani guides, the British soldiers will help quake survivors in remote villages set up shelters in preparation for the approaching winter.

22 November 2005

European Development Ministers meeting today in Brussels **agreed** for the **first time a common vision for development**. It focuses on eradicating poverty and meeting the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in the poorest countries.

Ministers agreed:

- To deliver commitments to double EU aid by 2010 and to provide more long-term, predictable aid to poor countries, so better helping them to plan for the future.
- The importance of providing aid to help developing countries improve their capacity for trade.
- To formally untie all aid channelled through the European Commission. This will ensure that developing countries receive the most suitable aid possible.

Ministers discussed:

- The new European Union-Africa Strategy to be adopted at the December European Council which sets out how the European Union (EU) will help support Africa's development, with governance, infrastructure, HIV & AIDS, peace and security, migration and the importance of African ownership being priorities.
- The EU's response to the South Asia Tsunami, noting that of the 556 million Euros pledged for humanitarian assistance, 452 million - 80 per cent - has been disbursed.
- Ways to improve the EU's response to disasters like the Pakistan Earthquake.
- **European 'Consensus on Development' webpage** on EU website:

17 November 2005

The **UK** became the **first country** to make a **financial commitment** to a new facility designed to help lower the cost of doing business in Africa and promote a better investment climate across the continent. The UK government will provide **\$30 million over three years** to the **Investment Climate Facility for Africa**. Royal Dutch Shell plc and Shell Foundation also announced that they would contribute a combined total of \$2.5 million over five years, and Anglo American confirmed that they would also contribute \$2.5 million over the same period. The ICF will help bring about more business friendly policies, laws and regulations across the continent, and strengthen the institutions that enable these to be administered. It will help bring about a more effective dialogue on investment climate reform between governments and the business community.

The ICF was recommended by the Commission for Africa and supported by the G8 at Gleneagles. It will be a public private partnership, funded by companies, bilateral and multilateral donors, and working in close partnership with African governments and regional organisations such as NEPAD. It is expected to be launched in Africa and become fully operational in mid-2006, once other donors and companies have also made their commitments.

The ICF has a limited lifespan of seven years. It aims to raise US\$120m for its first three years of operations. It is being established, in Africa, as an independent Trust, and will be governed by a Board of Trustees (the majority of whom will be African).

- **Frequently Asked Questions about the ICF:**
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/pressreleases/investment-climate-facility-faqs.asp>
- **Case Studies reflecting type of work the ICF will do:**
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/pressreleases/icf-case-studies.asp>

14 November 2005

DFID will **treble** its **"aid for trade" support to £100 million pounds a year by 2010** to help poor countries boost their exports to the rest of the world. By increasing this support, the UK hopes to help poorer countries seize the opportunities presented by more open markets. For example, the funding will help countries in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere to speed up their customs reform, get their goods to market and meet European Union health and safety standards. UK support for "aid for trade" has already produced benefits in Mozambique where DFID backed customs reforms which increased revenues from \$70 million to \$250 million a year. The UK government's announcement is aimed at extending these benefits to other poor countries.

11 November 2005

A new report, 'The UK Remittance Market' investigates the £2.7 billion UK remittance market. Leading banks and money transfer companies, as part of the UK Remittances Working Group, have worked with the government to produce the report. It targets over two million people in the UK who last year sent £2.7 billion to family and communities in the developing world. It gives an **overview of the sector** and makes **several recommendations**, which include the creation of a private sector task force to deliver increased competition and choice for the consumer.

The launch event also saw the launch of a new, easy to use, consumer section on the DFID-supported Send Money Home? website (www.sendmoneyhome.org/) which allows customers to compare money transfer providers on the basis of cost and speed. This is expected to bring lower prices and better service to consumers as a result of increased choice and transparency in the market.

The report also highlights how technology like mobile phones, Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) and point of sale devices offer the potential for a growth of remittance services. DFID has supported the rollout of these technologies in Africa and Asia, for example the development of mobile phone banking in East Africa and the use of debit cards in South Africa. Remittances are amounts of money - typically between £50 and £500 - sent by people working in the UK back to families and friends in other countries. The largest developing country recipients of remittances from the UK are India, Pakistan, Jamaica, China and Nigeria.

Global remittances to developing countries are estimated at over £100 billion. They are the second largest global financial inflow to developing countries after foreign direct investment, exceeding international aid.

- **UK Remittance Market report:**
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/uk-remittances-report.pdf>
- **Sending Money Home? – Remittances to Developing Countries from the UK:**
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sendmoney-summary.pdf>
- **Sending Money Home? – A Survey of Remittance Products and Services in the United Kingdom:** <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sendmoneyhome.pdf>

NEWS

23 November 2005

A group of **Nepal's development partners met** in **London** on Friday, 18th November to discuss development in the country.

The group **discussed:**

1. Outcomes of recent donor reviews, including future directions, plans and prospects.
2. Aid effectiveness, the humanitarian situation, peace, civil liberties and human rights.
3. The approach of the international financial institutions and other multilateral bodies.

The meeting **agreed:**

1. That peace is a prerequisite for progress towards development
2. Donors are willing to provide support to a democratic and inclusive peace process.
3. That there are continuing concerns at violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by both sides to the conflict.
4. Concern over the continuing erosion of civil liberties and its implications for development
5. That the government of Nepal has publicly committed to the Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs), but also to that the government needs to ensure that they are respected.
6. That development assistance effectiveness is being increasingly jeopardised by the conflict.
7. To acknowledge emerging issues of humanitarian concern especially protection, access and the need for preparatory steps.
8. On the need to continue efforts at co-ordination, collaboration and sharing of information among development stakeholders in order to promote a coherent approach.

Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank, IMF and Asia Development Bank were represented.

The Basic Operating Guidelines for the Implementation of Development Activities provided a framework of good practice for development programmes and set out the minimum conditions required for safe delivery.

21 November 2005

Following the **Gleneagles** Summit and the **Millennium Review** Summit, **DFID** and the **Treasury** have prepared a **paper** called "**From Commitment To Action**". This **sets out** some **key actions for donors** to ensure that the commitments made in 2005 will make a difference in poorer countries. The paper has been sent by Hilary Benn to the World Bank, WHO and UNESCO as a contribution to the High Level Forum on Health and the Education for All High Level Group.

The key findings and action points of the paper are:

- if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we **must accelerate progress dramatically** in the coming decade
- the G8 has committed to **write off immediately** the **debts** of 18 of the world's poorest countries, 14 of them in Africa
- by 2015 **all children** should have **access** to quality primary **education** and should receive basic **health care**
- the international community have committed to making **substantial progress** towards universal access to **HIV/AIDS treatments** by 2010 and to give more support to implementing the G8 water plan agreed at Evian

- within developing countries, the **political commitment** to accelerating progress **needs to be shared** at the highest levels. Developing countries will have to make their national plans and policies more ambitious
- none of these changes will take place unless developing countries are convinced that donor commitments will be realised and sustained over the long term

The paper focuses on what donors need to do now to enable developing countries to make more ambitious plans, based on their own needs and priorities, to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Overview paper: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/g8-outcomes-overview.pdf>

Paper on Education: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/g8-outcomes-education.pdf>

Paper on Health: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/g8-outcomes-health.pdf>

Paper on Growth: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/g8-outcomes-growth.pdf>

9 November 2005

A **new Bednets programme** was **launched in Mozambique** supported by DFID to coincide with the South African Development Community (SADC) Malaria Week. The **Malaria Consortium Partnership** will promote a **sustainable market for insecticide-treated mosquito nets** in Mozambique. Distribution of low-cost nets will start through the health sector to pregnant women in Inhambane province, as well as support to Mozambican commercial companies to set up a distribution and retail system for nets in Nampula province. This is a different approach from previous social marketing programmes of nets. The programme is supporting the real private sector instead of replacing it. Support goes directly to commercial companies to allow them to set up sustainable systems for distribution and retail of nets. This way the population can buy nets quality and reasonable price in a shop or market stall near their home. Media campaigns will pass the message to families that nets are now available at health centres and in shops. Increasing demand for nets will sustain the commercial market for nets in Mozambique.

3 November 2005

DFID released its **second Institutional Strategy (IS)** with the **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** covering the period **2004 to 2007**. It focuses on DFID's relationship and priorities with UNIFEM and sets out how the partnership can be maximised to support UNIFEM in strengthening its impact on, and strategic contribution to, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. UNIFEM has an important role to play, particularly through its innovative contributions to the development and implementation of national Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS), Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs).

- **UNIFEM Institutional Strategy 2004-07:** <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/unifem-is.pdf>

SPEECHES

17th November 2005

Address to Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) rally

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, Manchester

If you think back 40 years ago John F Kennedy said that the purpose of the 1960s trade round was and I quote from him the opportunity to help developing countries like Japan. And so it did as Japan grew to become a mighty economic power and we must now do the same for today's developing countries.

- First, tackling distorting tariffs and subsidies. Because we know that every dollar paid in aid to help the poor is cancelled out by \$6 paid in trade subsidies to the rich. Nowhere is the need for reform more urgent than in agriculture.
- Second, country owned trade plans. Because we know even with fair access it will take time for poor countries to compete globally and that trade reforms must fit with a country's own development programs, our test will be agreeing there can be no forced liberalisation, but instead to allow poor countries the flexibility to decide, plan and sequence their reforms.
- And third, help for poorer countries to develop their capacity to trade.

CAFOD and its partners are at the centre of the work to support those affected by the recent earthquake in south Asia, the landslides in Central America, as well as continuing to support partners working in tsunami-affected countries. The UK has been one of the most generous donors and has pledged £33m and 3 RAF Chinook helicopters have been operating in the affected area transferring casualties to Islamabad.

Our priority must be to reform the UN's Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). There is a need for a new humanitarian world fund into which donors pay and from which humanitarian coordinators can immediately draw funds when a crisis threatens. The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will later this month make detailed proposals for a reformed CERF. It should be a sizeable fund - of around \$500 million.

11 November 2005

Human rights and development in the real world

Hilary Benn, Leeds Metropolitan University, School of Applied Global Ethics, Global Ethics Series

Human rights are often associated with civil and political rights, such as the right to life and to liberty. But they are more than that – as I am sure you all well know. This year, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the UN published his “In Larger Freedom” report – a report that set out an ambitious case for ensuring all the people of this world can experience freedom – freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity. In it he said “Humanity will not enjoy security without development, it will not enjoy development without security, and it will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.” He’s absolutely right. Now, there are some who argue that poor countries will only take human rights seriously when they have managed to reduce poverty. Or that political freedom comes after prosperity. They are wrong.

We will only end poverty if poor people have the freedom to make their voice heard in the decisions that affect their lives. The freedom to be active citizens with rights, expectations and responsibilities. In countries where citizens are oppressed and rights denied, progress is not possible.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out a common vision of human dignity and values that we all share. It establishes the indivisibility of rights – in that violation of one right affects the achievement of others, and universality – in that all people have equal rights. These rights were agreed in 1948 and have been reaffirmed in UN and regional human rights treaties over the last 40 years. They include economic and social rights, such as the right to a standard of living that provides for shelter, food and water; the right to social protection in times of need; the right to the highest standard of physical and mental health, and the right to education.

If we are to advance development we need to respect these rights, based on three overlapping principles:

- Participation – enabling people to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- Inclusion – building inclusive societies based on the values of equality and non-discrimination
- Fulfilling obligations – strengthening institutions and policies which ensure human rights are realised by states and others

How does this work in practice? Where we are working closely with governments, we are also helping to advance human rights. Aid is not effective when it is used to force governments to do things they don't want to do. Our new approach is about making partnership work, through a shared commitment to reducing poverty, financial accountability and respect for human rights. So respect for human rights is at the heart of our decisions on providing aid. Ethiopia is a recent test of our approach. Earlier this year, following a government crack down on demonstrations that led to a number of deaths, we gave the government a warning that we might reduce our aid. Recent events - more deaths and the detention of opposition politicians - are unacceptable and undermine our partnership principles. We are urging the government to respect human rights – I spoke to the Ethiopian Prime Minister myself, over the weekend. And we, and other donors, are also reviewing our aid programmes. We need to give a firm signal that we care about rights, but with actions that do not penalise poor people in Ethiopia. As you can imagine, this is an extremely difficult process, and we are carefully developing this

approach to our aid conditions. Stop-Go aid harms poor people – governments can't deliver improved health care or education if their budgets go up and down every time there is a problem.

We are challenged even more when we work in countries affected by conflict. What can we do when states commit gross abuses against their own people? What do you do when you see someone being mugged on the street? Do you cross on to the other side of the road? No. We know we have to act, but it is not easy, and we have not yet got it right. These are profound challenges that we face, but we are not helpless.

On the 60th anniversary of its foundation, at the UN Millennium Review Summit, the UN for the first time resolved that the world has a responsibility to protect citizens from genocide or crimes against humanity when their own states cannot or will not protect them – or are committing these crimes themselves. And this largest ever gathering of world leaders also agreed the creation of a Human Rights Council. The Council will be responsible for promoting universal protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and will address violations of human rights and make recommendations, including to the Security Council. The next step is to agree its mandate, size, composition and working methods. Also agreed was a new Peacebuilding Commission – to help countries recover from conflict.

We will only make progress if we help the citizens of the world's poorest countries hold their governments to account for their human rights obligations. And that's why human rights are at the heart of DFID's work.