

JUNE 2006: 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/>

NEWS

26 June 2006

To mark the **anniversary** of the **G8 Summit in Gleneagles**, DFID has published a **short booklet**: '**G8 Gleneagles: One Year On**' that highlights progress by the international community in twelve areas – from aid and debt cancellation to fighting disease and promoting business.

- Read G8 Gleneagles: One Year On: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/g8-2006.pdf>
- Africa - turning promises into action: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/g8/africa-2005.asp>
- Questions and answers on Africa: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/g8/qa.asp>

15 June 2006

DFID has published its **first progress report** on its **Maternal Health Strategy** 'Reducing maternal deaths: evidence and action'. The UK is the first developed country to produce a progress report tracking government supported efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal on maternal health.

The reduction of maternal mortality is higher on the agenda of many governments than ever before since maternal health was included in the millennium development goals. It has also proved to be the most difficult of the eight millennium development goals to reach largely because progress within the area of maternal health depends on people's access to basic public health services. DFID has worked to advocate the need for national finance ministries in developing countries to prioritise maternal health and recommends in the report that maternal mortality reduction is used as a 'tracer' for the successful functioning of health services.

DFID's bilateral expenditure on programmes which contribute towards maternal health has increased by 34 per cent over the last three years (2002 - 2005) from £147.5 million to £198 million.

The report was launched by Hilary Benn, International Development Secretary on June 15th at the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. For more information about the report, please contact: Helle Nordberg, DFID Press Office, tel. 02070230944 or email: h-nordberg@dfid.gov.uk .

- Maternal Health Progress Report 2005: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/maternal-health-progress-report.pdf>
- 2004 Maternal Health Strategy : Reducing maternal deaths: evidence and action: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/maternal-deaths-strategy.pdf>

11 June, 2006

DFID will provide an **additional £1.5 million** to **Niger**, the world's poorest country, to help prevent a repetition of last year's food crisis. The funding will be provided to the UN and NGOs who are working on continuing **relief operations** in the country. Additionally, the wider Sahel region, including Mali and Burkina Faso, will receive a multi-annual budget of £500,000 per year for the next three years to tackle longer-term nutritional vulnerabilities. DFID will continue to monitor the humanitarian situation closely in the countries, where current emergency needs and the risk of deterioration are judged to be more manageable, but where chronic nutritional vulnerabilities pose similar threats to the poorest through the hungry season.

This announcement brings the total UK humanitarian contribution to Niger to £3.5 million in 2006. Last year, DFID committed £3.9 million to the Sahel crisis, making it the 3rd largest bi-lateral donor. DFID assistance to Niger focuses on three main areas – girls' education, humanitarian assistance and debt relief. In January 2006, Niger received 100% debt cancellation from the IMF under the G8's

Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. The UK has also cancelled 100% of Niger's outstanding bilateral debt.

6 June 2006

A **new DFID humanitarian policy** has been **launched**. Speaking at the British Red Cross, Hilary Benn underscored that humanitarian action is a core part of DFID's work, that it will increase its financial support to humanitarian work, and increase its efforts to reduce further people's vulnerability to disasters and conflict. The policy lays out how the UK government will deliver on its commitments to good humanitarian donorship.

Key points are:

- By 2010 DFID wants to ensure there are no more 'forgotten emergencies', crises where the media spotlight doesn't reach and so remain ignored and underfunded by the international community.
- DFID is supporting worldwide efforts to invest in building a humanitarian system fit for the 21st century – one that is well coordinated, has enough capacity and is better able to measure its performance and impact.
- Ultimately relief aid is only part of the solution – it is important to tackle the root causes of vulnerability. Aid alone is also not enough – it is necessary to work for political solutions to the violence and conflict that daily threaten the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world. DFID will therefore continue to work actively to reduce conflict, and strengthen the protection of civilians.
- Humanitarian policy: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/humanitarian-policy.pdf>

2 June 2006

A **further £1 million** was **available** to **British NGOs working** to help those affected by the earthquake on the island of **Java**. The £1 million will be given to relief agencies for work over the next three months, and brings the total UK Government pledge to £5 million. Of the £1 million of funding, initial commitments that have been made are: £400,000 to Save the Children Fund for shelter kits; and £400,000 to Oxfam for relief items.

PRESS RELEASES

22 June 2006

The Prime Minister announced **new measures to tackle international corruption**, identified as one of the priorities at the Gleneagles G8 summit a year ago, appointing **Hilary Benn** as **Ministerial champion for addressing international corruption**. The new role, complementing Mr Benn's position as International Development Secretary, will see him working with other Ministers across government to tackle corruption wherever it threatens to undermine the fight against poverty. The Government will also establish a new dedicated team for investigating international corruption, including money laundering in the UK by corrupt politicians from developing countries, and bribery by UK businesses overseas. The new taskforce will include members from the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service, and the Department for International Development will provide funding.

13 June 2006

Over 400 school children and their teachers **around the UK** made their **voices heard** today when two young Ghanaians and three schoolchildren from the UK presented Hilary Benn with the **Chocolate Challenge Manifesto**. The Manifesto is the output of a series of Fairtrade Cocoa Summits run across UK for school children over the last week and demands a fairer deal for farmers in developing countries. Raphael Agyapong (13) and Isaac Owusu (13), both from cocoa-growing families in Ghana, and David Williams (12) from Calderstones High School and Samantha Aspinall (11) and Emma Kinley (11) from Barlows Primary School in Liverpool represented children who took part in the Summits and who added their views online at www.dubble.co.uk/chocnchange. The Manifesto makes specific requests to Government regarding the public promotion of Fairtrade, and continued support for its education in schools, and also directs requests at major chocolate companies and UK retailers, demanding a greater commitment to fairer trade.

9 June 2006

The **OECD** says that **DFID** has gone through a **golden age of growth and achievement since 1997**, with clear operational frameworks, an active political leadership and good organisation having placed the UK as a leader amongst other international donors. The peer review of the UK's development assistance, was published in Paris today by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. The report also welcomes the UK's generous financial contributions to worldwide humanitarian disasters and its work improving the world's humanitarian aid system to help the fight against poverty.

- DAC Peer Review of the UK:

http://www.oecd.org/document/43/0,2340,en_2649_34603_36881515_1_1_1_1,00.html

7 June 2006

Hilary Benn called on the international community to support the **new UN humanitarian fund** with long term financing, as the **UK announced a three year pledge of £120 million**. Mr Benn, who led the campaign for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), said: "The setting up of the CERF in March this year was a big step forward for humanitarian relief. The UN now has the money to enable it to get going quickly when disaster strikes. The fund has already helped out in the drought in the horn of Africa. It is also now in a better position to respond to the forgotten emergencies - the ones the television cameras don't cover and people don't talk about – such as Burundi, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire and Democratic Republic of Congo. But the CERF will need funding every year because sadly, we know that disasters – whether from earthquakes, floods or fighting - will happen every year".

5 June 2006

Fighting poverty in **Helmand** must go hand in hand with efforts to tackle the drugs trade and create peace and security, Hilary Benn said during a visit to the south Afghan province today. On his visit, Hilary Benn pledged **£30 million (\$55m) over three years** for a **new programme** to help **improve the economic prospects** of poor people in the province. The money will be provided to the Government of Afghanistan, and will help to expand national reconstruction and development programmes in Helmand. Local community councils in each village will identify what is most needed, but the funding will provide:

- Road or bridge building schemes for isolated communities;
- Improving access to clean water and sanitation;
- Small loans for poor Afghans who cannot access credit – helping them to invest in their future; and assistance for farmers.

4 June 2006

The **UK urged the international community** to provide **more funding direct** to the Government of Afghanistan, rather than bypassing government channels. Speaking on a visit to Kabul, Hilary Benn extended the UK's commitment to the Afghan Government's budget by a further £60m (\$111m) – and encouraged other donors to do the same. The announcement of the £60m further funding came a day after the Afghan parliament approved the government's budget for 2006/07. The new money is for 2008/09, as part of a rolling three year commitment to improve the predictability of donor funding given to the Government. It is in addition to money the UK provides to the Government's budget for specific projects. Over 70% of DFID's £102m (\$189m) budget will go to the government in 2006/07. Funding provided direct to the Government's budget pays for:

- salaries for civil servants such as teachers, doctors, nurses and agricultural support advisers;
- the basic operating costs of Government, including supplies for schools and hospitals;
- maintenance costs for Government facilities, roads and infrastructure;
- emergency humanitarian support.

1 June 2006

The UK government confirmed that it will invest \$30 million in the Investment Climate Facility for Africa (ICF), designed to help Africa become a better place to do business. The ICF was endorsed by the Commission for Africa and supported by the G8 at Gleneagles. It 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 and will support projects such as streamlining business registration and licensing systems, reforming customs administration and taxation and removing barriers to competition.

SPEECHES

28 June 2006

Ending Extreme Poverty: the Challenge for our Generation

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, USA

The United States and the UK have worked together to agree commitments at Gleneagles; at the UN Millennium Summit that states have a responsibility to protect their citizens from genocide, and where they fail to do so the international community must act; a new Human Rights Commission and a Peace Building Commission have been developed as a result. In March we also set up a new UN fund to speed up our response to humanitarian emergencies. And three weeks ago, we agreed in New York a plan to get AIDS treatment to all who need it by 2010. All of this because we know that without a just world we will not have a stable world. The task now is to turn those commitments into practical help. So what do we need to do ?

1. Recognise that for development to happen there must be peace and security

We know that post-conflict countries have a 50% chance of starting fighting again within 5 years – so we need to work with them for more than just the short term. We know we need to help build long-term stability as a foundation for future prosperity. We know that this involves providing basic services like education and health – creating a sense of hope, and of good government – including through building institutions.

And we know that if we ignore countries – failed states like Afghanistan, Liberia or Somalia – they can become safe havens for terrorism.

2. Invest in helping developing countries to build their own capacity

Our aid can help poor people go to school and stay healthy - both of which is vital to their economic development. But our support needs to be long-term and predictable if governments are to be able to invest in their people

3. Work in a way that helps build this capacity

It is a lack of capacity that is the biggest cause of death and the absence of school places, how much help we give and how we give it, really do matter. Aid currently is not enough. The other issue is how we work. Let me take two examples, the way we give our aid and the fight against HIV and AIDS. In the UK we now ask three questions of our development partners. Are you serious about reducing poverty ? Do you uphold human rights and international obligations ? And do you promote transparency, reform of public financial management, good governance and make sure the money goes where it was intended ? Based on the answers we give our aid in different ways. In Zimbabwe, we don't give aid to the government; but we do provide food and we run an AIDS programme. In Tanzania, on the other hand, we give a lot of our aid in the form of support to the government's budget – to their treasury. To enable them to get on and do the things they want. Fighting AIDS is also an issue of capacity, and it is one where the US has shown great leadership. We are the two biggest donors in the global fight against AIDS.

You, like us, were one of the founders of the "three ones" - vital to make sure that the way we offer help actually assists those fighting this disease on the ground. Like us, you are a big supporter of the Global Fund, which has helped raise more money. You also recognise, like us, that we need to do more to help countries build their healthcare – doctors, nurses, drugs and clinics, if we are to defeat AIDS. It's that lack of capacity that is the biggest issue.

But on some of the other issues – abstinence and condoms - we have a different approach. I agree that there is good evidence that fewer sexual partners and delaying starting sex help reduce AIDS, but the truth is that:

- not everyone can or is able to abstain from sex
- some women sell sex for money or food
- some people inject themselves with drugs
- some men have sex with other men

Now I know that these are difficult and embarrassing issues for some human beings and some societies, but people should not die because human beings like having sex. Embarrassment is

temporary, while death is permanent. And therefore we need to be open and honest, fight stigma, and give people the knowledge and the means to protect themselves, if we are to win this fight.

4. Progress in developing countries will depend above all on good governance

Good governance is about the capacity of governments to ensure security, to be able to get things done, to give people the chance to be heard and to respond to what they want. It's about creating a climate in which people – local and from abroad - will want to come and invest their money. It's about ensuring the rule of law and effective policing. And it's also about fighting corruption. Walking away from our responsibilities to poor people is not the right thing to do.

5. Economic growth is the best way to reduce poverty

It's how we did it in our own countries. It's also the best way to end the dependency of poor countries on aid. Poor people are the private sector – they are the farmers, the entrepreneurs, the shopkeepers – and they are also the people we are trying to help. But it is very hard to trade when the rules are unfair. That is why Doha is so important and why I'm pleased that President Bush has said that the US is ready to eliminate all tariffs and subsidies to trade. I share his view that the time has come for all of the world's richest countries – including those in Europe - to make these tough decisions.

6. We have to act to stop climate change

Climate change and depletion of natural resources will be the ultimate test of global good governance. Sea level rise, too much or too little rain – you know all about this in Washington this week! And more frequent storms will lead to mass migration, fragile economies being undermined, water and food shortages, and potentially wars. Agreeing a stabilisation target – what rise in temperature the earth can cope with – and then dividing up the CO2 emissions we can absorb will be the greatest challenge of all.

28 June 2006

Triesman speech - China and Africa Conference

Lord Triesman, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, at China and Africa Conference, London

Let me make clear from the start that Britain welcomes China's increased engagement in Africa. I believe there is significant potential for a strong partnership between Britain and China in Africa. It is very encouraging, therefore, that China has decided to make 2006, in the words of Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs He Yafei: 'major year for China in Africa'.

China has always had close links with Africa. Its connections go back over a thousand years. Today China has extensive commercial interests in Africa. The development of China's future relations with Africa is set out in a comprehensive Chinese government paper, published in January, including political co-operation, economic development, education, health and environmental issues and peace and security. These are issues which are fundamental to Africa's future development. In many of them we share common aims and interests. So I would like to explore how we might work in partnership to help achieve our mutual objectives. I know that China is keen to demonstrate that its relationship with Africa is more than just an economic relationship, important as this is. In this context we welcomed Premier Wen's recent commitment to helping African countries to improve democracy, the rule of law and social justice. But it has to go beyond words. We have to look to working with China to promote positive change in these areas in a number of African countries.

Sudan is one country where China has significant interests and where we could do more to work together. The UK has worked closely with the Government of Sudan, with the African Union and with our partners in the UN Security Council to try to find a lasting solution to the conflict between the North and the South and in the Darfur region. Representatives of all Security Council members, including China, recently visited the region to get a clearer picture of the impact of the conflict on the region as a whole as well as the full extent of the humanitarian catastrophe.

Zimbabwe is another country where China has extensive economic interests. Zimbabwe is rich in natural resources and has the potential to be a major producer and supplier of minerals and agricultural commodities. But the policies of the Zimbabwean Government are destroying the economic base of the country and ruining people's lives. Both bilaterally, through the African Union, the EU and UN we have urged Mugabe to change direction. And we have made it clear that should he do so the UK and the EU will provide significant support to the rebuilding of Zimbabwe. But I hope and believe it is possible to work with the Chinese to get Mugabe's government to change direction.

China has emerged as a leading international member of the international community. As the world's fourth largest economy, now surpassing the UK, what happens in China will have an impact across the globe and its responsibilities grow with it by the day. China will have a growing need for Africa's resources as much as Africa will need China's markets for their mutual growth. The challenge is how to manage that growth in a sustainable way. Managed successfully we all benefit.

26 June 2006

A year after Gleneagles

Tony Blair, at King's College, London

I want to talk about Africa and climate change, and I want to do that in the context of the G8 Summit at Gleneagles last July, since this is a year on. We achieved at Gleneagles more than all, I think, but those with the most rose tinted spectacles, thought was possible. The issues before then were not high up the political agenda in the UK, let alone internationally, and now they are. That they are is in no small part down to the efforts of millions of people, mobilised by the Make Poverty History campaign and Live 8, which played quite an extraordinary and magnificent part in mobilising civic society.

On Africa I have learnt two key lessons in the last ten years in Sierra Leone, in Rwanda, in Ethiopia, and now in Sudan. Firstly, that everything is connected, there is no single solution. And secondly, I have seen that if there is real commitment by African governments to progress, then their people are well capable of doing the rest.

My main disappointment at Gleneagles was that we were not able to make more progress on trade. In a way what was most frustrating was that the leaders there all agreed that we needed a good outcome for developing countries from the Doha Round, but the negotiations at present frankly are not reflecting this.

So what have we to do? On climate change in the next 12 months we need to build a global consensus about the scale of the action we need to take and the long-term goal we are all working towards. We need to begin agreement on a framework that the major players - the US, China, India and Europe - put into, and has at the heart of that framework a goal to stabilise temperature and greenhouse gas concentrations. I also believe a clear goal and a strong framework would help spur the technology revolution we need. The investment decisions that are being made now, both within Europe and across the world, will determine what happens to global emissions in the next 15 - 20 years. But we need to go further. That is why within the European Union I believe we need to give a clear strong signal to business that this emissions trading scheme should be extended and strengthened after 2012 and made the heart of a global carbon market. We also need more investment in research into cleaner technology to bring that technology from design to manufacture, and to enable it to be used by households in both developed and developing countries. And finally we need to back all this up with real action to reduce UK domestic emissions.

On Africa there is also much to be done and the commitments made must be reached. So there is an enormous agenda of work to do and I am under no illusions at all that we set very, very ambitious goals for Gleneagles. We have made good progress but it is going to take an

enormous amount of work in the years to come to eliminate poverty in Africa and tackle climate change.

This will take a lot of hard work by governments, it will take an enormous amount of support outside of government. I mentioned the importance of the Make Poverty History campaign, the Live 8 concerts last year, frankly we need that type of public support year in year out in every country if we are to end poverty and stop climate change. So what does this really teach us? Quite apart from the importance of the specifics on Gleneagles there is one other major, major lesson of the past few years. That is that the only sensible view of foreign policy today is one of engagement, is one of preparedness to intervene, is one of recognising that if we have a problem the rest of the world has, that these problems can only be tackled collectively, they cannot be tackled individually, that the best form of foreign policy is therefore a muscular and a strong multilateral intervention on the issues facing us in the world today. Africa and climate change are two such issues that cry out for such an approach. We made progress at Gleneagles, but the hard part of the task is still to be performed.

7 June 2006

An end to forgotten emergencies

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development at the Humanitarian Policy Paper Launch, The British Red Cross

DFID's new humanitarian policy represents a major organisational shift. It sets out three things:

1. We will work hard to improve the effectiveness of what the UK does. We will work across the UK government to do so, reinforcing humanitarian principles. And of course we work through others – the UN must lead globally and at country level, but it must be able to do so. The humanitarian sector has got to become more accountable to beneficiaries, to taxpayers and to parliaments. Working to the highest standards and reporting on them. Involving beneficiaries in the design and monitoring of what we do.
2. We will work hard to become a better donor. By that I mean we will seek an end to forgotten emergencies once and for all. We have a duty to be where the cameras are. But also where they are not.
3. Finally this paper sets out what we will do to reduce the risk of crises – through disaster risk reduction, through conflict prevention. I hope that others will follow our lead in putting 10% of what we provide in relief to a natural disaster, towards measures that reduce the risk of future disasters. We need to be ready to adapt to the emerging threats of the 21st century, like climate change and avian flu.