Building on the Inheritance: The UK’s Role in Global Poverty Reduction

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Summary points

- International development is a golden inheritance for the coalition government. The UK is widely recognized as one of the world’s most effective aid donors – and its influence has pushed poverty up the international agenda.
- Global financial and food crises, climate change, unmet aid commitments, outdated global governance structures and China’s emergence as a major player in international aid pose challenges and opportunities for Britain’s development policy.
- Although a political consensus regarding Britain’s continued role in global poverty reduction efforts has been built, the government and the development community must still argue effectively that continued action remains an integral part of the UK’s overall international priorities and its foreign and security policy.
- Most poor countries are not on target to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Addressing this situation should be at the top of the UK’s agenda, incorporating international leadership on aid, pressing for decisive EU action, and responding to the negative effects of the global financial crisis on progress towards the MDGs.
- At a time of cuts in government spending, the ‘cash-on-delivery’ framework has received significant attention. However, DFID’s experience has shown that problems of incentives and implementation with this approach cannot be ignored and some recent successes would not have been possible via such a framework. Ultimately, effective national systems will remain crucial to the delivery of aid.
- The UK should be leading Western countries in engaging China over aid to Africa in the coming years. It is through a dialogue with China that the UK and others could address their reservations about certain Chinese practices. A more dispassionate review and constructive engagement will be crucial to future development progress.
Introduction

International development is an area in which the UK punches well above its weight. The Department for International Development (DFID) enjoys a reputation as a progressive, innovative and effective donor agency, with a strong voice across the government. Its core mission of reducing poverty is enshrined in legislation. Over the past 13 years, British aid spending has tripled in real terms and doubled as a share of national income, and the UK is now the world’s fourth largest donor. Beyond aid, the UK has played a catalytic role in pushing poverty up the international agenda. British influence is evident in the consensus around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the international development targets set for 2015, in aid commitments undertaken by G8 countries, and in the policies of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. In the words of one recent review, ‘the UK is a recognized international leader in development’.

For the new British government, international development is a golden inheritance. The contrast with the situation in the mid-1990s, when development assistance was inadequately funded, organized as a sub-agency of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), and widely used to support UK commercial interests, is striking. This paper looks at how the new government can build on this inheritance in a rapidly changing and, from a global poverty reduction perspective, deteriorating international environment.

There is a strong political consensus in favour of Britain maintaining a leadership role on global poverty reduction. As Andrew Mitchell, the Secretary of State for International Development, has put it, ‘the imperatives of creating wealth and tackling misery, exploitation and poverty are hard-wired into the British DNA’. International development policy provides a vehicle for projecting ideas about fairness, social justice and moral responsibility beyond national borders – and for projecting to the rest of the world what Britain stands for. But the international development consensus is also an expression of a broader sense of national interest. In an increasingly interdependent world linked by flows of trade, investment, people and information, no country is an island. Serious security threats confronting the UK today – terrorism, organized crime, climate change, health epidemics and the instability associated with violent conflict and fragile states – do not respect national borders. International development policy provides a vehicle for addressing the mass poverty, the extreme global and national inequalities associated with current patterns of globalization, and the problems of state fragility that fuel many of these threats. And it is part of the toolkit with which Britain can support the development of a multilateral international system with the capacity, remit and legitimacy to underpin shared prosperity and security.

In charting a course for continued British leadership on poverty reduction the government can draw on three key resources. The first is finance provided through aid. The second is influence, with the UK at the hub of global governance and having the capacity to leverage policies that affect finance, trade and aid through international institutions. The third resource is political leadership in setting agendas and shaping global priorities. Much of what has been achieved over the past 13 years has involved a mix of these factors. At the same time, the UK’s effectiveness as an agent for international development will be conditioned by policy coherence, or the degree to which poverty reduction goals are integrated into wider government policies aimed at influencing the international environment. To take one illustration, aid


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strategies aimed at supporting rural poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa will be diminished by a failure to use the UK’s wider influence to secure a better deal for Africa’s farmers on international trade, by weak engagement in international processes aimed at securing a multilateral agreement on climate change, or by a failure to support efforts at conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

International development is not a stand-alone enterprise. Foreign Secretary William Hague has spoken about the development of foreign policy as an activity that ‘runs through the veins of the entire administration’, coordinating the activities of all departments in the pursuit of broadly defined national interests – including the national interest in human rights and poverty reduction.5 Just as the UK’s diplomacy has to respond to the challenges posed by the shift in economic power to the East and the South, to the emergence of more complex multilateral negotiating processes, and to emerging national security threats, so international development policy has to chart a course for achieving poverty reduction goals in the new world order. Aid is one strand in this policy. It has a key role to play in improving the lives of the world’s poor. But development assistance can also contribute to building a positive reputation for the UK – and in a highly networked global society reputation is an important asset for wider influence.

There will be strong elements of continuity in British international development policy. The government has pledged to adhere to spending targets set by its predecessor. There are no proposals to downgrade DFID’s status as an independent department. And the Secretary of State for International Development has made it clear that poverty reduction and the MDGs will remain its core business.6 The decision to embrace ambitious aid spending targets during a period of deep fiscal retrenchment is a statement of intent.

Yet there are limits to the international development consensus. It is one thing to set a target for aid, but another to enshrine it in real budgets. The case for increasing development assistance amid deep planned cuts in public spending is not automatic. The government – and development NGOs – will have to win over public opinion for aid. The broad consensus on development does not extend to acceptance of aid increases on the scale envisaged. The development assistance budget will come under intense public scrutiny. The government will be expected to show that taxpayers’ money is delivering results. Recognizing these pressures, the new Secretary of State has identified a strengthened commitment to ‘value-for-money’ as a priority. In principle, few people would contest that goal. Fiscal austerity puts a premium on cost-effectiveness in public expenditure across the board. But translating the value-for-money principle into practical policies is not a straightforward task, and the choices could have far-reaching consequences for aid effectiveness.

The rest of this paper is divided into two main sections. The first looks at the backdrop for the UK’s international development strategy, focusing on the gap between ambition and achievement on progress towards the MDGs, emerging threats linked to climate change and food security, the disappointing record on aid, the shift in the locus of power in the global economy, and China’s emergence as a donor to Africa. The second section then turns to UK aid policy. It identifies how the UK can strengthen its MDG efforts and galvanize international support for them, and reviews key challenges for British aid. It underlines the critical role of political leadership in building public support for aid in a period of fiscal retrenchment, while cautioning against ‘value-for-money’ approaches that may limit aid effectiveness.

The global context

The coalition government has taken office at a critical juncture, and there is a strong possibility that it will be in office when the 2015 deadline for achieving the MDGs arrives. This deadline is of more than symbolic importance. The targets set by the MDGs include halving extreme poverty, cutting child and maternal deaths, achieving universal primary education, and expanding access to clean water and sanitation. The previous government made a considerable effort in securing the endorsement of these targets by 149 heads of state at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. The September 2010 MDG Summit in New York gives the international community an opportunity to take stock, set an agenda for accelerating progress over the next five years, and look to the human development challenges beyond 2015. Given the UK’s role in forging the international consensus behind the MDGs, it is important that the coalition government demonstrates continuing leadership in galvanizing international action behind the targets.

The MDGs: progress and priorities for action

The MDGs provide a benchmark for assessing progress in combating human deprivation. They also highlight the extreme inequalities that provide the wider rationale for a values-based approach to international development. Britain is in the richest part of a deeply divided world. While the one-fifth of the world’s population living in extreme poverty accounts for just over 1% of global wealth, low-income countries account for 15% of the world’s population, but just 1.8% of global income and 0.8% of exports. Some of the biggest global disparities in opportunity are in education and health. As Britain adjusts its foreign policy to focus on the world’s rising economic powers, it should not lose sight of the countries and people being left behind.

Overall progress on poverty has been impressive by historical standards. Starting from a low base, many of the world’s poorest countries have registered remarkable advances. Most countries are making progress on most indicators. Over the past decade, the share of the world’s population living on less than $1.25 a day has fallen from 58% to 51%. Progress has been heavily concentrated in East Asia, but sub-Saharan Africa has experienced the first drop in the number of people living in extreme poverty in over a generation. This, however, should not hide the fact that most of the world’s poorest countries will not meet the 2015 targets. While the world as a whole is on track to achieve the 2015 goal of halving extreme poverty (largely because of China’s economic growth), most poor countries are not. Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to miss the 2015 target by around 118 million people. The MDG of halving malnutrition by 2015 is now out of reach. There are just over one billion malnourished people in the world today and the

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11 Calculated from data in ibid.
number is increasing. Child mortality rates are falling far too slowly to achieve the targeted two-thirds reduction by 2015. More than 70 countries are not on track to meet the target and on current trends the world will fall short of the MDG promise by around four million deaths. Progress on reducing maternal mortality lags far behind the target rate needed to achieve a reduction of three-quarters by 2015. Few countries in either sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia are on track to achieve that MDG. On current trends, the target of universal primary education by 2015 will be missed by 56 million.

Global MDG overviews tend to obscure what is happening within countries. This is important because the biggest barrier to accelerated progress is national inequality and the structured disadvantages that limit life-chances for sections of society. Evidence from many countries indicates that the most disadvantaged are being left further behind. Overcoming inequalities in opportunity linked to gender, wealth, ethnicity and location is a matter of social justice. It is also a fundamental requirement for changing what is currently a bleak scenario for prospects of achieving the international development targets.

Deeply engrained social disparities hold back progress towards the MDGs at many levels. For example, extreme income inequality impedes growth by preventing individual from connecting to markets, restricting entrepreneurial activity, and limiting the development of human capital, as well as reducing the rate at which growth is converted into poverty reduction. Moreover, wealth-based disadvantages do not operate in isolation. Disadvantages linked to income, health, education and gender create mutually reinforcing patterns of deprivation.

Inequalities in opportunity on the scale recorded in many countries are counterproductive for economic growth, social cohesion and progress towards the 2015 MDG targets. Yet the MDG framework, which encourages governments to report national averages, has tended to deflect attention from the imperative of breaking down inherited inequalities and reaching the marginalized. That is why greater equity in the MDG framework and strengthened public-service provision should figure prominently in Britain’s agenda on international development.

Conflict and insecurity also need to figure with far greater prominence. Around one third of the 1.4 billion people living on less than $1.25 a day live in fragile states – countries affected by violence and with governments unable or unwilling to deliver basic services. Conflict-affected countries have some of the world’s worst human development indicators and in many cases war has reversed development. There are 31 low-income countries that have experienced high levels of conflict over the past decade. While they are among those with the greatest need for international support, they are often last in line for aid.

The UK is well placed to provide international leadership in addressing the challenges posed by conflict. In Sierra Leone, Britain underpinned a fragile peace settlement with international aid and – critically – a security guarantee, providing a foundation for reconstruction. Similarly, in countries such as Liberia, Rwanda and Mozambique the UK has pooled resources with other donors to back complex processes of national reconstruction. With Britain’s armed forces currently involved in armed conflict, an obvious concern is that aid flows will be skewed towards the pursuit of national security objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Against this backdrop, it is important that DFID brings a poverty-focused approach to the strategic review of defence and security needs and that ‘forgotten conflicts’ in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) figure more prominently on the UK’s foreign policy agenda.

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16 See, for example, UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010.
Triple jeopardy: financial crisis, food crisis and climate change

For much of the past decade, the global economic environment has been conducive to MDG progress. Developing countries registered higher growth rates, linked in many cases to increased trade, higher levels of aid and expanded financial flows. The food crisis and the global economic downturn that started in 2008 changed this picture, rolling back development gains. Britain’s strategy for the MDGs has to consider the near-term threats posed by a slow and uncertain global economic recovery, and by further hikes in food prices, along with the longer-term threats posed by climate change and ecological pressures.

World Bank estimates suggest that the financial crisis pushed 64 million more people into extreme poverty in 2010. Any assessment of the implications for the 2015 target of halving poverty is highly dependent on assumptions about the pace of economic recovery. However, the fallout from the crisis could mean 53 million fewer people escaping poverty over the next five years. The impact of the economic downturn was compounded by the sharp increase in food prices. Over 100 million people were pushed into poverty as a result of higher food prices in 2008 alone.

Looking ahead, demographics, ecology and food production patterns are creating the conditions for a ‘perfect storm’ of poverty and hunger. By 2050, the world will have to feed another three billion people, especially in poor countries. On the supply side, food production will be affected by the loss of land to urban development and diversion to non-food crops. Ecological stress is mounting, with water scarcity, land degradation and a loss of biodiversity among the most visible symptoms. Despite this, in 2008 just 3% of international aid went to agriculture, less than one-fifth of the level in 1980.

Climate change poses another layer of threats. Long-term temperature projections suggest a resulting reduction in food production in sub-Saharan Africa by between 16% and 27%, and in parts of Asia by up to 40% by 2050. Such projections arguably deflect attention, however, from immediate climate change threats in the shape of more intense droughts, floods and storms. For many people, even small incremental shifts in risk levels can start a downward cycle of poverty.

It is important, therefore, to look beyond the 2015 MDG target date. Because the effects of carbon emissions are cumulative and irreversible, the consequences in the poorest countries will be felt throughout the twenty-first century. They could include the unraveling of gains achieved under the MDGs. The same applies to the threats posed by what the United Nations Environmental Programme depicted in 2009 as the looming ‘environmental food crisis’.

This has to be a priority for Britain’s international development strategy. Action is required in two broad areas, mitigation and adaptation, which are discussed in more detail below.

Falling short of commitments on aid levels

The UK’s aid budget has more than tripled since 1997. Britain has also used its influence to leverage wider aid commitments. The UK-chaired G8 Gleneagles summit agreed to double aid for Africa and to provide additional debt relief. Parallel pledges were adopted by the EU. The importance of global aid commitments for the MDGs should not be under-estimated.

21 Ibid.
Development assistance is a powerful complement to effective national strategies. Aid provides countries with a resource that can close financing gaps, build capacity and deliver results. That is why it is part of the MDG framework for a global partnership on poverty reduction.

The UK has adhered to the Gleneagles commitments, but it has been less successful in persuading others to follow suit. Donors collectively pledged to increase development assistance from $80 billion in 2004 to $130 billion in 2010. While aid levels rose by just under one-third in real terms between 2004 and 2009, they are set to fall around one-third – or $18 billion – short of the pledge.24 With aid donors facing acute fiscal pressures the projected gap between pledges and delivery could widen. Moreover, because the 2005 pledges are stipulated in terms of aid-to-GNI (gross national income) ratios, slower growth could translate into lower real transfers.

Countries in sub-Saharan Africa are furthest away from the 2015 targets. Given the central importance of development assistance in financing their national poverty reduction strategies, and the mounting fiscal pressures facing governments across the region, donor underperformance is likely to have particularly damaging consequences.

Action by the international community to protect the poorest countries and insulate the MDGs from the impact of the global financial crisis was limited and piecemeal. The IMF was given new resources to boost global liquidity and shore up emerging markets, but most of the support provided through the World Bank to low-income countries came from existing budgets, or from the front-loading of aid scheduled for coming years.25

As a result, many of the poorest countries have emerged from the financial crisis with higher levels of poverty, diminished growth prospects and lower levels of budget revenue. While the IMF has drawn attention to the fact that low-income countries receiving its support have not been required to cut priority budgets, this only provides a partial picture. The more relevant question is whether or not countries are able to finance the pre-crisis poverty reduction strategies as planned.

International leadership on aid and development finance should be a central element in the UK’s strategy for the MDGs. The G8 members continue to provide over 70% of international aid, and this is arguably the only area in which the G8 retains a global relevance. Unfortunately, the post-Gleneagles summits have failed to deliver and initiatives have repackaged old commitments. G8 governments have avoided accountability for acting on the pledges made in 2005. The 2010 summit in Canada appeared to mark a distinct retreat from the 2005 commitment. The UK should have opposed this down-grading of what was supposed to be a binding pledge, and should use the coming MDG summit to secure a renewal of that pledge.

The EU is another obvious focal point for Britain’s role. Under a proposal developed by the European Commission as part of an EU Action Plan in support of the MDGs, member states would be required to legislate on aid targets. However, the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 14 June 2010 stopped far short of endorsing the Commission’s approach, adopting instead a request for member states to ‘share information’. With national legislation of its own already in place, Britain should be forging alliances with like-minded governments to press for more decisive action.

Leadership on aid is also about responding to changed circumstances. The financial crisis has diminished the financing capacity of many countries that were already not on track to meet the MDGs. Britain should press for the World Bank, the IMF and UN agencies to develop a country-by-country assessment of their post-crisis MDG financing requirements. Given the fiscal pressures on aid donors, it is unlikely that traditional aid spending alone will suffice. Innovative financing will also be required. This is an area in which the UK

has a strong record. For example, Britain developed the International Finance Facility for Immunization (IFFIm) – a mechanism that issues bonds in capital markets to finance child immunization. With the MDGs facing a large financing gap, there is an urgent need for the international community to broaden and deepen innovative financing initiatives. An obvious starting point, not least given the damage inflicted by the financial crisis on the MDGs, is to consider the potential role of financial transaction taxes and levies on financial institutions to support global poverty reduction efforts.

Matching global governance structures to new realities

The bipolar North–South narrative often found in the international development discourse does not reflect the transition towards a multipolar world economy. This transition has far-reaching implications for the UK’s international development strategy. In 2000, developing countries accounted for just over one-third of world output; their share now stands at just under 50%. Almost two-thirds of the increase in world output over 2000–08 occurred in developing countries. Since these countries are providing the growth pulling the world economy out of recession, the developed world’s share of worldwide GDP will continue to shrink.

The shifting locus of economic power has already left its mark on multilateral negotiating processes. In stark contrast to the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations (1986–94), when the agenda and processes were dictated by the EU and the United States, the Doha Round (begun in 2001) has been marked by a dispersion of power and influence. The rise of the G20 has accelerated the demise of the G8. Negotiations on climate change saw the emergence of the BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) as a countervailing force to the major developed countries.

Yet wider global governance structures are changing far more slowly. Voting arrangements in the Bretton Woods institutions are still based on the importance of countries in the post-1945 world economy. The deadlock in the Doha Round, the ongoing stalemate in negotiations on climate change and the fragmented response to the global financial crisis all point to a failure to develop multilateral processes that reflect the emerging multipolar world. Britain’s international development effort must addressing that failure.

Reform of the Bretton Woods institutions is a priority. Despite recent changes in the voting arrangements at the World Bank, high-income countries still have over 60% of voting power in both the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA). Ultimately, it is the bank’s development mandate, and not economic weight alone, that should determine how shares are allocated. The UK should press for more seats to be allocated on the Board of Directors to sub-Saharan Africa, for example. Britain should also seek to strengthen coordination between EU member states on the boards of the World Bank and IMF, working towards the immediate goal of a shift in voting power in the IDA from Europe to Africa, and towards the ultimate goal of a single European seat. There are also strong practical grounds for reform. The IMF’s ability to respond to, or prevent, future financial crises, and the capacity of the World Bank to protect poor countries, would be greatly enhanced by increased financial contributions, in particular from China. Yet these are unlikely to materialize without far-reaching governance reforms.

Climate change – the threat of development reversals

Climate change is another area in which there are strong practical grounds for more effective engagement

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26 At purchasing power parity.

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with emerging developing countries. In per capita terms, emissions from rich countries far outweigh those of emerging developing countries. But it is aggregate emissions that drive climate change, and China is now the world’s largest source of CO₂, with Russia third and India fourth. Developing countries will account for around 90% of the projected increase in emissions to 2030.30

These countries have to be part of a global agreement to cut emissions. Rich countries point to projected CO₂ growth in developing countries as grounds for insisting on binding commitments from them. Major developing countries respond by highlighting the historical responsibility of rich countries for accumulated carbon stocks, along with their own pressing need to expand access to energy. The resulting stand-off is reflected in the Copenhagen Accord, which defines the parameters of an agreement on broad goals but no consensus on strategy.

Britain must lead efforts to break the impasse. The Copenhagen outcome reflects a failure to engage in advance with countries such as China, India and Brazil over the timing and terms of their entry into a binding multilateral agreement on mitigation. Developed countries sought strong commitments from them without offering credible incentives to share the financial burden of supporting a low carbon transition. Similarly, the concerns of poorer developing countries over the costs of adapting to climate change were not adequately addressed. These issues are not readily amenable to resolution in negotiations between 192 countries. If a repeat of Copenhagen is to be avoided at the summit in Cancun, Mexico at the end of 2010, agreements will have to be developed in advance through strategic partnerships. Britain is well placed to support the development of such partnerships. Given its previous influence through the Stern Report on climate change, the UK should be at the forefront of climate diplomacy aimed at reaching a multilateral agreement.

There are two priority areas for action:

- Multilateral cooperation to support the transfer of low carbon technologies could create incentives for developing countries to undertake mitigation commitments. Britain could make the case for a single multilateral framework to finance low carbon technologies, integrating both public and private sources of capital.31

- Pressing for greater climate change adaptation financing, while ensuring that the interests of the world’s poorest countries in adaptation support are not sidelined and that donors avoid double-counting existing aid commitments as climate change assistance.

Climate change illustrates the importance of coherence across domestic and international policies. Strategies have to span issues ranging from support to small farmers in drought-affected areas, to financing for energy sector reform in developing countries, the development of carbon markets, and carbon mitigation at home. These strategies will have to be forged through coordination across the FCO, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and DFID.

Dialogue with China over aid to Africa

China has emerged as an important donor, investor and trade partner for some of the world’s poorest countries. Like other developed countries, Britain has been slow to respond. The resulting policy vacuum constitutes a lost opportunity for strengthened cooperation on poverty reduction, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Many Western donors view Chinese aid with deep suspicion, highlighting the limited conditionality in

areas such as human rights and transparency. They see the blurring of lines between development assistance, loans and commercial investments as a threat to OECD efforts to focus aid on poverty and place a firewall between aid and trade. Conversely, many African governments welcome Chinese aid because it comes with few strings attached and is often linked to investments in areas, notably transport infrastructure, that Western donors have neglected.

The starting point for a dialogue with China is a more dispassionate look at its engagement with Africa. China has a central aid agency and a concessional assistance programme that disburses grants and zero-interest loans, located in the Ministry of Commerce. Transfers that meet the OECD’s criteria for aid amounted to about $1.4 billion in 2004, which would have made China the world’s seventh largest donor to Africa. Not all Chinese aid is linked to natural-resource extraction; in 2007 China signed 154 aid contracts in 48 African countries, ranging from agricultural production to basic health care and education. Many of the large financial transfers reported for countries such as Angola, Nigeria, Sudan and the DRC are not aid, but loans guaranteed against future mineral exports.

A constructive engagement with China is key to development progress because China’s involvement with Africa will increase as it competes with Europe and the United States for access to oil and mineral resources. There are arguably areas in which OECD countries could learn from China. Chinese aid prizes fast delivery of ‘turnkey’ projects within budget and with far lower transaction costs than much Western aid. It also stresses national ownership. Under a standard Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement, African governments submit projects for financial and technical assistance, and Chinese teams submit implementation and delivery plans for approval by recipient governments. While Western donors may emphasize national ownership in their rhetoric, in many cases they micro-manage in dictating the terms for delivery.

Yet current Chinese practices also raise some concerns. The lack of transparency that often surrounds commercial loans and investments has wide-ranging implications for public finance systems. Moreover, China’s overwhelming focus on project-based financing, rather than broader programme support, comes with potentially high transaction costs. Viewed from China, Western concerns over human rights and transparency look like double standards – and many Western governments with companies operating in countries such as Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad and Angola do have questionable records. Yet China’s support for the regime in Sudan, for example, raises legitimate concerns. So do the limited reporting requirements attached to Export-Import Bank loans and to investment joint ventures, which are potentially damaging, not least in limiting the accountability of African governments to their citizens through audit bodies. One area of concern for DFID has been the willingness of Chinese companies to operate outside of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a global standards framework aimed at reconciling company payments with government reporting through transparent accounting.

Britain should be leading efforts to develop an international dialogue with China that addresses these issues. The aim should not be to secure Chinese compliance with OECD principles, but to integrate Chinese aid into a more transparent reporting system and to draw lessons from Chinese approaches to national ownership.

Making the case for effective aid – delivering value for money

The UK’s leadership role in international development has been hard-won. It is the result of a clear vision, strong and consistent political leadership over a decade, a focus on poverty, institutional reform of DFID, increased financing and a commitment to ambitious aid targets. The new coalition government faces the challenge
of building on this legacy in a challenging environment. If Britain is to remain at the forefront of the global poverty reduction effort, political leaders need to demonstrate that aid is effective. They also have to set clear objectives and develop strategies for influencing wider processes. There are three priority areas:

- Galvanizing support for the MDGs;
- Protecting the 2013 aid commitment;
- Focusing on results-based aid.

Delivering results on the Millennium Development Goals

With five years to go to the 2015 target date for the MDGs, there is a real prospect that the world will fall far short. Working to prevent that failure should be a first-order priority for the UK government. The September 2010 MDG summit in New York provides an early opportunity to demonstrate leadership. Yet the ground has not been prepared for a meaningful outcome. There will be six plenary sessions and six closed roundtables over eight days, involving over 180 countries in an exercise aimed at taking stock and forging a ‘global action agenda’. This is not a results-oriented business model, and there is little evidence of pre-summit diplomacy producing the ingredients for a breakthrough. The danger is that the summit will produce a communiqué devoid of content, along with a shopping list of principles reaffirming the importance of the MDGs. The UK could help to change this picture by forging strategic partnerships in key areas and by using the summit to set out an ambitious programme for 2010–15. It should concentrate its efforts on four priorities:

- **Lagging MDGs.** Britain should concentrate its MDG diplomacy on child and maternal health, nutrition and education. Accelerated progress in these areas is vital because of their multiplier effects in other areas. The UK cannot achieve breakthroughs by acting alone but it can play a leading role in framing partnerships, and its aid programme can be used to inform policies, exert influence and leverage change. Building on its current expertise, DFID is well placed to lead a concerted effort to speed up MDG progress through access to improved basic services and stronger social protection.

- **Leadership vacuum in education.** Progress in education holds the key not just to faster economic growth, innovation and employment, but also to advances in health and gender equity. Each additional year of education can raise lifetime earnings in poor countries by around 10% and an additional year of education for girls can cut infant mortality by 5–10%. However, progress in education has been held back by chronic under-financing on the part of aid donors and far weaker partnerships than have emerged in health. Given the absence of an effective global leader in this area, Britain is well placed to fill the gap and to engage with other donors in framing a global strategy for education.

- **Conflict-affected states.** Most conflict-affected countries or those in the early stages of post-conflict reconstruction receive limited support. The previous UK government recognized this problem and set a target of allocating half of future aid to conflict-affected and fragile states. Looking beyond the aid programme, what is required is a multilateral response through which donors pool resources and create flexible delivery systems for working in fragile states. The UK has considerable experience, gained in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and the DRC, that it can use to help frame new approaches for supporting the MDGs in conflict-affected countries.

- **A stronger focus on equity.** The UK government has pledged to put equity and social justice at the centre of its domestic agenda for combating multi-dimensional deprivation, even though the pledge currently lacks a substantive policy framework. The same principles should be extended to the MDGs. One of the problems with the current reporting system on progress towards the MDGs is that governments report on national averages. While this is important,
it deflects attention from those who are marginal-
ized and from the structural inequalities that fuel marginalization. Introducing MDG targets for wealth, gender and other disparities would help address this and devise policies targeting marginalized groups. Drawing on experience in the UK, where equity-based targets have been set in areas such as child survival, education and child poverty, DFID could work with governments in developing countries to establish goals and monitor progress towards greater equity within the MDG framework. An agreement in this area could be a tangible outcome of the MDG summit, with the UK agreeing to pilot an equity-based monitoring framework in a small group of countries.

There are strong grounds for the UK to make improved access to good basic services a more central theme in its MDG strategy. Many of the inequalities holding back progress in the MDGs can be traced to unequal access to basic services. Improved health, nutrition and education are among the most effective means of breaking cycles of poverty across generations. They also empower vulnerable people to share in economic growth and participate in political processes.

Breaking down these inequalities requires action on many fronts. Financing is critical. In the case of maternal and child health care, another $30 billion a year will be needed by 2015 to bring the MDGs within reach. Increased domestic resource mobilization by developing countries and greater equity in public spending could close part of this gap but increased aid will also be required. In education, estimates by the United Nations put the financing gap for achieving the key education goals at $16 billion after low-income countries have scaled up their efforts. Current aid financing for the world’s 47 low-income countries is less than $3 billion.

While finance is just one part of the equation, much more money is needed to ensure that health and education systems can deliver for all citizens. Much of the investment needs to happen upfront. Fifty-seven countries, most of them in Africa and Asia, face a severe health workforce crisis. The WHO estimates that at least 2.36 million health service providers and 1.89 million management support workers are needed to fill the gap. The deficit is largest in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for 24% of the global burden of disease but has just 3% of the world’s health workers. There are parallel shortages of teachers holding back progress in education; an additional 1.9 million will have to be recruited by 2015 to achieve universal primary education. Putting in place the policies, financing and support systems needed to close these gaps in the poorest countries will require an increase in aid aimed at strengthening national systems. The UK could play an important role in this area by using the MDG summit and post-summit diplomacy to establish clear aid financing requirements and stronger accountability mechanisms for donors.

In some cases, good basic services are available but unaffordable to the poor. In other cases, wider social barriers are the limiting factors. Low family income can push children out of school and into work. Droughts and other economic shocks can force parents to cut spending on health and nutrition. Social preferences can mean that boys are given schooling priority in periods of hardship. Changing this requires a clear commitment to greater equity in service provision.

The UK is well placed to use its finance, influence and leadership to shape a progressive public service provision agenda. One striking illustration of what can be achieved comes from maternal and child health care. Following the principle on which its own National Health Service is based, i.e. that care should be free at the point of use, the UK has led international efforts to eliminate charges on basic


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health services. In 2009, then Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the Director General of the World Health Organization and the President of the World Bank endorsed the principle of free services at the point of delivery for child and maternal health care. In addition, sustained dialogue with Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Nepal and Sierra Leone led to the announcement that these low-income countries would extend the benefits of free provision, with Britain and other donors pooling resources to increase public spending. The results have been striking. In Nepal, the use of health facilities more than doubled in the year following the abolition of user fees, while the proportion of babies born in centres with skilled attendance increased from 22% in 2005, when fees were withdrawn, to 59% in 2009.40

DFID programmes in education have also incorporated a strong commitment to equity.41 They have been instrumental in removing user fees from basic education in countries such as Mozambique, Tanzania and Sierra Leone. In Bangladesh, DFID has helped to finance stipend programmes for girls that have contributed to the elimination of gender gaps at the primary education level. The Girls Education Project in Nigeria has played a similar role in extending opportunities to girls in the northern part of the country, one of the world’s most educationally disadvantaged regions. Here, UK aid has helped to support the training of more than 700 women from rural areas where there are very few female teachers.

The new government will inevitably review current approaches to basic service provision. Public service reform figures prominently in its ‘Big Society’ vision. Prime Minister David Cameron has emphasized the importance for the UK of introducing ‘the dynamic of competition to make our public services better’. Allowing parents more choice in health and education, backed with public money, is an important strand of Big Society thinking. Choice and competition have a resonance in debates on public-service provision in developing countries. The failure of public services to provide quality access for all is widely used as evidence of the need for a transfer of resources to non-state providers. However, this is unlikely to prove a cost-effective route for reaching marginalized groups, or for strengthening the capacity of weak states to provide all of their citizens with good public services.42 This is an area in which policy should be based on evidence rather than export of rich-country models, selected on the basis of their perceived relevance for the UK, to poor countries facing different problems and constraints.

Social protection has been an expanding part of DFID’s portfolio and here too the UK has used its influence to achieve wider change. The 2009 White Paper set out an ambitious agenda for reaching 50 million people in 20 low-income countries through social protection over the next three years. DFID’s influence is also evident in the rising profile of social protection programmes at the World Bank, which plans to triple spending in this area over the next two years to $12 billion. The Bank’s Rapid Social Response Programme created during the 2009 London G20 Summit was supported by a £200 million commitment from DFID.43

Social protection is not just about providing welfare support to vulnerable groups; it is about equipping people with the assets and capabilities to withstand shocks and escape poverty. There is now extensive evidence from countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua and Cambodia that conditional cash transfer programmes linking payments to children’s attendance in school or health clinics can dramatically reduce child labour, improve nutrition and increase enrolment.44 Other programmes operate by providing forms of social insurance. In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Programme, which has been supported by DFID, is an employment-based scheme that provides small cash and food transfers to 7.5 million chronically food-insecure people in rural areas, enabling them to protect spending on health and education and avoid the distress sale of assets during drought periods.
Effective social protection programmes can prevent short-term economic shocks trapping people in long-term cycles of poverty. They can also provide an effective response to the threats posed by rising food prices and climate change. Yet while social protection provision is growing, it remains patchy, especially in the poorest countries. One survey of 49 low-income countries found that only 19 had a safety net programme in place and even fewer had cash transfer programmes. Moreover, most programmes provide limited coverage. Given that hikes in food prices can be predicted with some confidence, it is important that the international community moves swiftly to support the development of a more effective safety-net system. Working with the World Bank and other donors, the UK could use the MDG summit as a springboard for strengthening social protection programmes as part of the wider strategy for accelerated progress towards the MDGs.

The 2013 aid commitment

There is broad-based public support for aid in Britain. However, the previous government’s commitment to global poverty reduction was, in some respects, running ahead of public opinion. With deep cuts in public spending in prospect and the aid budget coming under increasing scrutiny, support for the ambitious aid targets set by the previous government and embraced by the new one cannot be taken for granted.

Fiscal adjustment will dominate British politics for the foreseeable future. Public spending plans point in the direction of the longest, deepest sustained cuts in public spending in over half a century. Beyond the protected areas of the National Health Service and overseas aid, spending could be reduced by 25% in real terms over the lifetime of this parliament. While any new government would have faced tough budgetary choices, the decision to favour more rapid budget adjustments than previously envisaged, and the increased weight attached to public spending cuts rather than tax increases, will add to the near-term fiscal pain.

This has important implications for the aid programme. ‘Ring-fencing’ does not fully capture the preferential treatment accorded to DFID’s budget. In 2009, DFID spending amounted to £7 billion, or 0.51% of GNI. If the government adheres to a commitment to increase aid to 0.7% of GNI by 2013, real spending will have to rise by around 63% over the next four years (see Figure 1). These figures show the government’s ambition for its aid programme.

Increased spending on aid at a time of budget austerity is likely to create a public opinion backlash. The case for ring-fencing any departmental budget is at best contentious. Critics have already questioned the rationale behind the protection of NHS spending and it would be naïve to assume that DFID will escape critical review. While aid represents just 2% of government spending (hence limiting the potential for budget savings), increasing spending on poor people overseas at a time when the poorest sections of society in Britain are being hurt by spending cuts will inevitably attract censure. The case for adopting the 0.7% aid-to-GNI commitment has already been called into question. Some commentators argue that such targets are arbitrary and a diversion from a focus on results. Others have called into question the wider rationale for aid, maintaining that it harms poverty reduction efforts by distorting developing country economies, promoting corruption and undermining accountable governance.

These claims are not new and the evidence behind them is not compelling. While the 0.7% target is arbitrary in the sense that it is not linked to specific MDG financing plans, the same could be argued of any other area of public spending. The real value of the target is in signalling the importance of development assistance and poverty reduction, and in

46 This estimate is based on IMF economic growth projections for the UK economy through to 2013.
47 Michael A. Clemens and Todd J. Moss, The Ghost of 0.7%: Origins and Relevance of the International Aid Target (Washington, DC/London: Center on Global Development/International Policy Network, 2010).

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strengthening the UK’s capacity for leadership and influence. Similarly, while aid has a mixed record in delivering results, pessimistic conclusions are unwarranted. Development assistance has played an important role in many of the MDG success stories, supporting strategies that have delivered life-saving medicines, put children in school, built national capacity and supported economic growth.

Yet public support for aid is fragile at best. On a positive note, over 70% of people interviewed in a 2008 MORI poll agreed that the UK had a moral duty to fight poverty, with over half feeling that the country should be doing more in this area. However, the same survey revealed that overseas poverty did not figure in the public’s top ten priorities. More worryingly, when asked whether money should be spent in the UK rather than in poor countries, there was a clear majority in favour of a domestic focus – and this was before the prospect of public spending cuts.

There is already evidence of a ‘fiscal crisis effect’ on attitudes to aid. DFID has conducted research on aid attitudes annually over the past decade in an effort to chart public perceptions. The latest surveys confirm a high level of concern over global poverty. However, the share of the public supporting the decision to increase aid fell from 50% in 2007 to 42% in 2009, and an increasing proportion of people think that most financial aid to poor countries is wasted. It appears that support for poverty reduction is broad, but that it may be too shallow to defend aid spending at a time of fiscal retrenchment.

A survey conducted by Chatham House and YouGov in mid-2010 provides even more compelling evidence of the need to win over public opinion. The survey is instructive because it compares the views of the public with those of a group of ‘opinion-formers’ in politics, the media, Whitehall and the voluntary sector. Results point to a large divergence between the two groups. While half of ‘opinion-formers’ see increased aid as part of an ethical foreign policy for achieving influence in the world, the public sees things differently. Just 29% of the public endorse the view that the government is right to protect aid from public spending cuts, and 54% (as opposed to 41% of opinion-formers) are inclined towards the view that it should be ‘radically reduced’ and that ‘much development assistance is wasted’; the dominant view is that DFID does less to serve Britain’s interests than either the army or the intelligence services.

These results underline two concerns. First, elite opinion is clearly running ahead of public opinion and the government has not won the case for ring-fencing aid. Second, whatever the achievements of the previous government and DFID, the British public does not share the view that aid delivers results or enhances national interests.

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49 Kevin Watkins, ‘Why Dead Aid is Dead Wrong’, Prospect, Issue 158, 4 May 2009.
50 OECD, United Kingdom (2010) DAC Peer Review: Main Findings and Recommendations.
51 Chatham House-YouGov, British Attitudes Towards the UK’s International Priorities (London: Chatham House, 2010).
The fragility of public opinion on aid highlights two challenges. First, the government has to make the case for increasing development assistance. The case for ring-fencing the aid budget at a time of deep public spending cuts is not automatic and treating it as such is to invite a backlash. This is a task not just for the Secretary of State for International Development, but also for the leaders and senior ministers of the two coalition parties. The government needs to take seriously the challenge of winning over public support. Explaining how aid fits into a wider vision of social justice and fairness is one part of this challenge. Another is the communication of a clear set of priorities and goals setting out how aid fits into the UK’s overall international development strategy.

The second challenge is to frame a more constructive public dialogue. Narratives on aid have become increasingly binary, with the public being force-fed a media-driven worldview in which development assistance is presented either as a guaranteed route to a better world, or as a costly activity generating few returns for the world’s poor. Reality is more prosaic. Britain’s development assistance does a great deal of good and DFID could do far more to communicate what aid has achieved. Yet it has to be recognized that development assistance often underperforms, that it sometimes achieves little, and that under the wrong conditions it can fuel corruption. As part of the wider effort to create an informed public debate, it is important that government and development NGOs acknowledge that results in poverty reduction are often in shades of grey, rather than the black-and-white outcomes favoured by the media.

Demonstrating value-for-money

Ring-fencing the aid budget will not insulate DFID from wider political processes. All government departments will be under pressure to demonstrate that they offer value-for-money and deliver results. But what does an enhanced commitment to these principles mean in practice for the aid programme? And how will the ‘Big Society’ philosophy of the Conservative Party influence that programme?

Aid effectiveness has already emerged as one priority area for reform. Building on an approach set out in his Green Paper, Andrew Mitchell has signalled an intention to strengthen the focus on results: “Increasingly, we will pay cash-on-delivery: giving an agreed amount to a recipient government for every extra child they get into school or every extra person who receives health care. This will give British taxpayers confidence that their aid money is buying successful outcomes.”

This cash-on-delivery framework carries an intuitive appeal in the current fiscal climate and in the debates on aid effectiveness. Payment for results aims at solving a classic principal–agent problem in aid whereby the donor (the principal) wants to pay for outcomes (poverty reduction) that may be a lower priority for the aid recipient (the agent). Aid conditionality and micro-management are possible responses to this problem, though neither has a good track record. The aim of cash-on-delivery aid is to avoid these approaches in favour of simple payments after the event, leaving potential recipients free to determine their own policies. It assumes that tying aid to concrete development outcomes will provide a sufficient incentive to persuade recipient governments to focus on achieving those outcomes.

Cash-on-delivery aid merits serious consideration, but so too do the potential problems that could arise. Other things being equal, the strength of the incentives for delivering results will be linked to the size of the incentive on offer. But if a large share of the aid programme is allocated to cash-on-delivery, how will recipient governments finance the recruitment and training of health workers and teachers, the construction of clinics and classrooms, or inputs such as teaching materials and

52 Conservative Party, One World Conservatism.
Some of the most striking achievements registered by DFID’s own programmes can be traced to the implementation of this broad approach. In Tanzania, support for the national education strategy has helped to finance the construction of 4,000 primary schools and a 40% increase in the number of teachers. These are ‘inputs’ for a national education sector strategy that has reduced out-of-school numbers by around three million. It is difficult to see how a cash-on-delivery model could have delivered comparable results.56 Similarly, the £30m provided to GAVI (the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) between 2006 and 2008 has financed the delivery of inputs and the strengthening of health systems, contributing to an initiative that has saved an estimated five million young lives through immunization.57 Such examples caution against shifting the focus away from upfront financing to results-based financing, and serve to illustrate that inputs delivered through effective national systems can produce results.

Not all effective aid lends itself to simple attribution on the payment-for-results model. This is especially true for general budget support and support for sector strategies in areas such as health and education, where DFID resources are pooled with resources from other donors. In 2008, around one-quarter of UK aid was directed towards general budget support. In Rwanda, DFID was one of the first donors to provide such support during the period of post-conflict reconstruction, along with technical support for the creation of a new revenue authority. Tracing specific outcomes to DFID is difficult. But Rwanda has achieved extraordinary progress in poverty reduction, health and education – and the Rwanda Revenue Authority has increased revenue collection from 8% to 15% of GDP.58 In Mozambique, Britain has played an important role through general budget support and education sector support in financing interventions that increased the primary school net

enrolment rate from 52% to 79% – one of the fastest rates of increase recorded over the past decade. Here too, the emphasis has been on financing the development of systems and capacity, rather than rewarding outputs.39

The underlying point is that results-based aid, as distinct from results-based payments, can be pursued through various channels. Part of the appeal of the cash-on-delivery approach is that it offers a reporting framework capable of demonstrating to the British public outcomes with a high level of attribution. However, there are circumstances in which attribution and effectiveness can pull in different directions – and the ultimate objective of aid is to lift people out of poverty, not to provide ammunition for domestic political communications.

Wider value-for-money options – improving EU aid quality

The UK could, in addition, be leading a broader value-for-money agenda within the EU. The EU is one of the world’s largest donors and approximately one-fifth of British aid is managed directly by the European Commission.40 Yet while the Lisbon Treaty puts sustainable development and poverty reduction at the heart of the EU’s external relations, performance has been disappointing.

EU aid practices demonstrate that poor governance costs money. Weak coordination, fragmentation of donors and the practice of ‘aid-tying’ are estimated to result in efficiency losses of between €3 billion and €6 billion annually.41 While the UK has abandoned the practice of tying aid to spending in the donor country, 10% of EU aid is still spent in this way – a practice that leads to efficiency losses of €500 million. This is uncomfortably with the EU’s claims to be leading global efforts to strengthen aid effectiveness. The EU cannot afford inefficiency on this scale; nor can developing countries. As part of the current review of DFID aid channelled multilaterally, the government should be pressing for the EU to strengthen aid effectiveness.

One of the most effective ways to increase the impact of European development assistance is through greater coherence between aid and trade policy.42 The EU is sub-Saharan Africa’s largest trading partner and trade is potentially a far more powerful vehicle than aid for expanding opportunity and reducing poverty. While the ‘Everything But Arms’ scheme provides the poorest countries with duty-free access to the EU, supply-side constraints in infrastructure, information and investment limit the capacity of many to benefit, as do Europe’s ‘rules-of-origin’ arrangements that restrict the scope for exporters to use imported materials in adding value.43

Aid could help to overcome these constraints and facilitate entry into higher value-added markets. However, trade-related aid is limited. The current focus of EU policy is in the creation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), i.e. planned free trade arrangements with regional groups. Most African governments have refused full participation in EPAs on the grounds that the EU is making unrealistic demands on trade liberalization while failing to offer an effective aid package, and also cutting across existing regional trade agreements. The upshot is that EPAs have turned into a complex patchwork of trade deals that appear likely to hamper regional integration efforts.44

Conclusion

The UK is strongly placed to help shape the international response to the interconnected challenges of poverty, extreme inequality and climate change. DFID is one of the world’s strongest aid agencies and a growing budget

61 Bjorn Tore Carlsson, Carlos Buhiagas Schubert and Sarah Robinson, The Aid Effectiveness Agenda: Benefits of a European Approach (Hemel Hempstead: HTSPE/European Commission, 2008), http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/AE_Full_Final_Report_20091023.pdf. In 2007, 41% of all sectors in recipient countries received disbursements from three or more EU donors, rising to 14 for Burkina Faso and 17 for the DRC. Another concern is the lack of a key indicator of aid effectiveness, predictability in aid flows, which reduces the value of development assistance by 8–20% a year.
63 European Think-Tanks Group, New Challenges, New Beginnings: Next Steps in European Development Cooperation (Brussels: ECDPM, 2010).
will give it the resources to increase its impact and influence. It is important that a commitment to poverty reduction remains at the core of DFID’s mandate and that it remains a strong voice putting international development at the centre of UK policy.

The global environment in which Britain’s international development strategy will evolve is marked by threats and opportunities. Slow progress towards the MDGs, the effects of the financial crisis, climate change and the wider ecological crisis threatening food systems pose daunting challenges. Yet the UK has a unique set of assets for responding to these challenges. DFID, a strong influence in the World Bank and the IMF, engagement with the EU, and partnerships with developing countries allow the UK to punch above its weight in international development.

In adhering to the aid commitments of the previous government, the coalition government has made an important statement of intent. It should make this, and associated ideas about fairness, opportunity and international social justice, a central theme in how the UK projects itself abroad. At the same time, the case for aid will come under intense public scrutiny. It is not clear that current thinking on value-for-money and transparency provides the basis for an effective response, although important issues have been raised in this regard. A more compelling approach would see the government setting out clear strategies for delivering results that expand opportunities for citizens of low-income countries, backed by a more effective and nuanced message on aid effectiveness.

The new government is right to keep the MDGs at the centre of DFID’s mission. Most poor countries are not on track to meet the MDGs by 2015. Progress has been particularly disappointing in areas such as child and maternal health, nutrition and education, which are foundations for expanding opportunity and supporting human development. With the world economy recovering slowly from recession, there is a danger that MDG progress will slow. Meanwhile, climate change and ecological pressures on food systems threaten to stall or reverse progress in human development.

The government has signalled that it intends to champion the MDGs in international bodies, building on the efforts of its predecessor. At the same time, policy will clearly be influenced by the government’s wider political philosophy. In particular, David Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ vision is likely to influence aid policy. Some of its core themes are already at the centre of policy debates on public service provision in developing countries. Competition to improve public service provision, expanding choice and increasing community involvement in setting priorities could all figure more prominently in development assistance. So, too, could the principle of payment-by-results – another Big Society idea. Currently, UK aid finances, with varying degrees of conditionality, wide-ranging investments in public service delivery. The new government has indicated there will be a change, with more aid provided on a cash-on-delivery basis. There is plenty of scope for innovation and aspects of the Big Society agenda could have wide-ranging and potentially adverse implications for poverty reduction and equity in developing countries.

Building on the UK’s international development inheritance is not a matter of doing more of the same. The UK can point to the considerable achievements of recent years but the next decade will be very different. If Britain is to remain a global leader on poverty reduction, it needs to build new partnerships to forge a more inclusive and effective multilateralism. This means engagement with China, India and other emerging powers over issues such as climate change and reform of global economic governance. The UK also needs to reinvigorate an MDG process that shows signs of flagging. As the new government addresses these challenges there will be changes in many aspects of international development policy. But continuity is also important, and nowhere more so than in providing the high-level political leadership on poverty reduction that the UK has demonstrated over the past thirteen years. It is this continued leadership that will ensure the ability of the coalition government to preserve and build on its inheritance in international development policy.
Rethinking the UK’s International Ambitions and Choices

This major Chatham House project is assessing the UK’s international priorities and the policy choices it faces in matching its ambitions, interests and resources. It is led by Dr Robin Niblett, Director, with the support of Alex Vines OBE, Research Director, Regional and Security Studies, and Dr Paul Cornish, Carrington Professor of International Security and Head of the International Security Programme.

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