



# 10 international development priorities for the UK

Parliamentary  
briefing



Shaping Policy  
for Development

# 10 international development priorities for the UK

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Our first-class research promotes global progress and prosperity by focusing on improving the lives of the world's poorest people.

We work with partners in the public and private sectors, in both developing and developed countries.



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## Introduction: deliver sustainable development



Over the past fifteen years the world has registered extraordinary advances in human development. Poverty has been more than halved. The number of children dying before their fifth birthday has fallen by 4 million. Killer diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria are claiming fewer lives. And more children than ever are getting the chance of an education that could transform their lives. The gains are unprecedented – yet so too are the challenges that lie ahead.

Governments around the world, including the United Kingdom, have signed-up to an ambitious new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals envisage the eradication of extreme poverty over the next 15 years. That target is achievable. But business-as-usual will leave the world far short of the SDG ambition.

The United Kingdom is uniquely well-placed to provide the leadership needed to change this picture. Successive governments have established the UK as a global leader on international development – and the Department for International Development (DFID) is widely recognised as a leading development agency. The commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of GNI to aid reflects the UK government’s ongoing commitment to ensure that Britain remains in the forefront of global efforts to eradicate poverty.

At a time of acute fiscal pressure at home it is inevitable that spending on poverty overseas will attract some criticism. Yet there are compelling, and mutually reinforcing ethical, economic and strategic reasons for the United Kingdom to build on the foundations that have been put in place.

The generosity of the British public in responding to humanitarian emergencies reflects a moral concern that cuts across political divides. At the same time, Britain stands to gain from the trade and investment opportunities that will come with accelerated

economic growth and human development in poor countries. And as the Ebola crisis and the conflict in Syria underscore, Britain is part of an interdependent world facing shared threats to health, prosperity and security. International public health threats, cross-border crime and climate change do not respect national boundaries – and they demand multilateral responses.

As a think tank, we recognise that the case for Britain maintaining a leadership role in international development has to be made and won through public debate. Parliamentarians have a key role to play. Over the years we have worked closely with MPs from all parties committed to international development. We want to strengthen our engagement over the years ahead during this vital period for international efforts to eradicate poverty.

This briefing identifies what we see as 10 priority areas for engagement and set out some practical approaches. You'll find more detail and background research on our website ([odi.org](http://odi.org)). And our experts would be delighted to meet with you to discuss any of these issues in further detail.

I wish you every success for the parliamentary term ahead and we look forward to working with you.

**Kevin Watkins**  
Executive Director

 [@kwatkinsodi](https://twitter.com/kwatkinsodi)

Over the past fifteen years the world has registered extraordinary advances in human development... The gains are unprecedented – yet so too are the challenges that lie ahead.

# 01 Leave no one behind

In 2015, UN member states adopted a new set of global goals and targets, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to eradicate global poverty and ensure environmental sustainability.

The goals will set the agenda for the next 15 years and beyond. They will also for the first time cover both developing and developed countries, like the UK.

In every country, it is the poorest and most vulnerable people who, more than anyone else, need these goals to be achieved. They should be prioritised by leaders to ensure that no one is left behind by progress.

📖 Read our briefing: *Leaving no one behind: how the SDGs can bring real change* at [odi.org](http://odi.org)

📖 Read our report: *The data revolution: finding the missing millions* at [odi.org](http://odi.org)

## Recommendations

**Ensure** that in all countries the poorest and most marginalised people are prioritised.

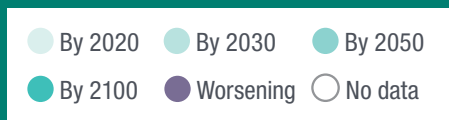
**Push** for an annual review to track and monitor progress on leaving no one behind.

**Press** for every country to set ‘equity targets’ aimed at narrowing unacceptable disparities between social groups in areas such as child survival, maternal health and access to vital basic services.

**Support** a ‘data revolution’ in development, with a specific focus on the generation of data on marginalised groups.

**Focus** aid efforts on practical, achievable and affordable programmes for combating extreme disadvantage, including action on child labour.

On current trends,  
it will take generations  
for all children in  
sub-Saharan Africa to  
complete primary school.



Source: Wild, L., Booth, D., Cummings, C., Foresti, M., Wales, J. (2015) *Adapting development: improving services to the poor*, ODI. Authors' calculations based on data from DHS and MICS collected through the World Inequality Database for Education (WIDE) (1998-2012).



## 02 Support women and girls

**D**espite progress in recent years, women and girls around the world continue to face many challenges. Too many women die during pregnancy and childbirth, girls still trail behind boys in education and employment and women's representation in political and decision-making processes remains limited.

Tackling these issues will not only improve women and girls' well-being and that of their families, it will also boost progress within their communities and across their nations.

This once neglected agenda is now gaining some much-needed global traction and the UK has been in the vanguard of action on the marginalisation, exploitation and abuse of women and girls. The UK is well-placed to continue championing of this critical agenda.

### Recommendations

**Lead** international efforts to accelerate progress in tackling neo-natal mortality through improved and more equitable access to ante-natal care and skilled-birth attendants, and provision and uptake of high quality reproductive healthcare.

**Champion** and support a global movement against forced marriage.

**Focus** efforts on unfinished business including enhanced education for girls, vocational training and job provision, and fair inheritance.

**Deliver** a comprehensive age- and gender-responsive programmes to help women and girls cope with traumas in conflict and post-conflict situations.

**Ensure** that funding reaches women's groups that can help to deliver changes in policy and practice at the local level.

**Support** women's movements and leaders advocating for measures that increase women's political power, participation and representation.

# Progress and challenges for women and girls



Every day 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. It remains the leading cause of adolescent deaths (15-19 years) and there is large disparity in risk between regions.



Risk of dying  
**1 in 3300**



Risk of dying  
**1 in 40**



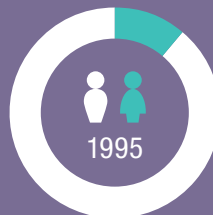
In 1990 an estimated 62.2 million girls of primary school age were out of school, in 2013 the figure was 31 million.

**62.2m**  
1990

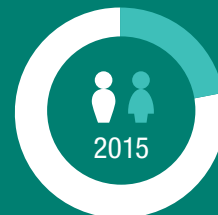
**31m**  
2013



Only 22% of all national parliamentarians were female as of January 2015, a slow increase from 11.3% in 1995.



1995



2015


Sources: WHO factsheet on maternal mortality (May 2014), Girls' education and gender equality, [unicef.org/education](http://unicef.org/education) (2015), Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, *Women in Politics: 2015*.

## 03 Focus on transformative economic growth

The quality of economic growth matters. Economic transformation is needed for growth that leads to poverty reduction – including shifting resources to higher-value uses, and diversification of a country’s productive capabilities, including its exports.

Growth in many low-income countries over the last two decades has often failed to involve significant economic transformation. The risk now is that growth based on commodity prices alone will not be long-lasting. This would put poverty reduction on hold as growth is needed to sustainably pay for improvements in health and education.

ODI’s Supporting Economic Transformation programme explores how countries could put their growth onto a more transformational footing - measuring available data and analysing best policy practise.

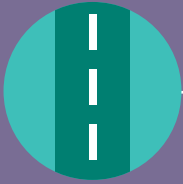
 [Read more about our work on supporting economic transformation at set.odi.org](https://set.odi.org)

### Recommendations

**Review** donor portfolios through an economic transformation lens and support investment in skills development, infrastructure, trade and industrial policy and state-business relations.

**Align** UK’s government departments including trade, finance, environment, and treasury more closely with economic transformation in poor countries.

**Encourage** both UK and domestic private sector to become more transformational in its economic development contributions to ensure it delivers poverty reduction.



Infrastructure



Skills



Technology



Regulation



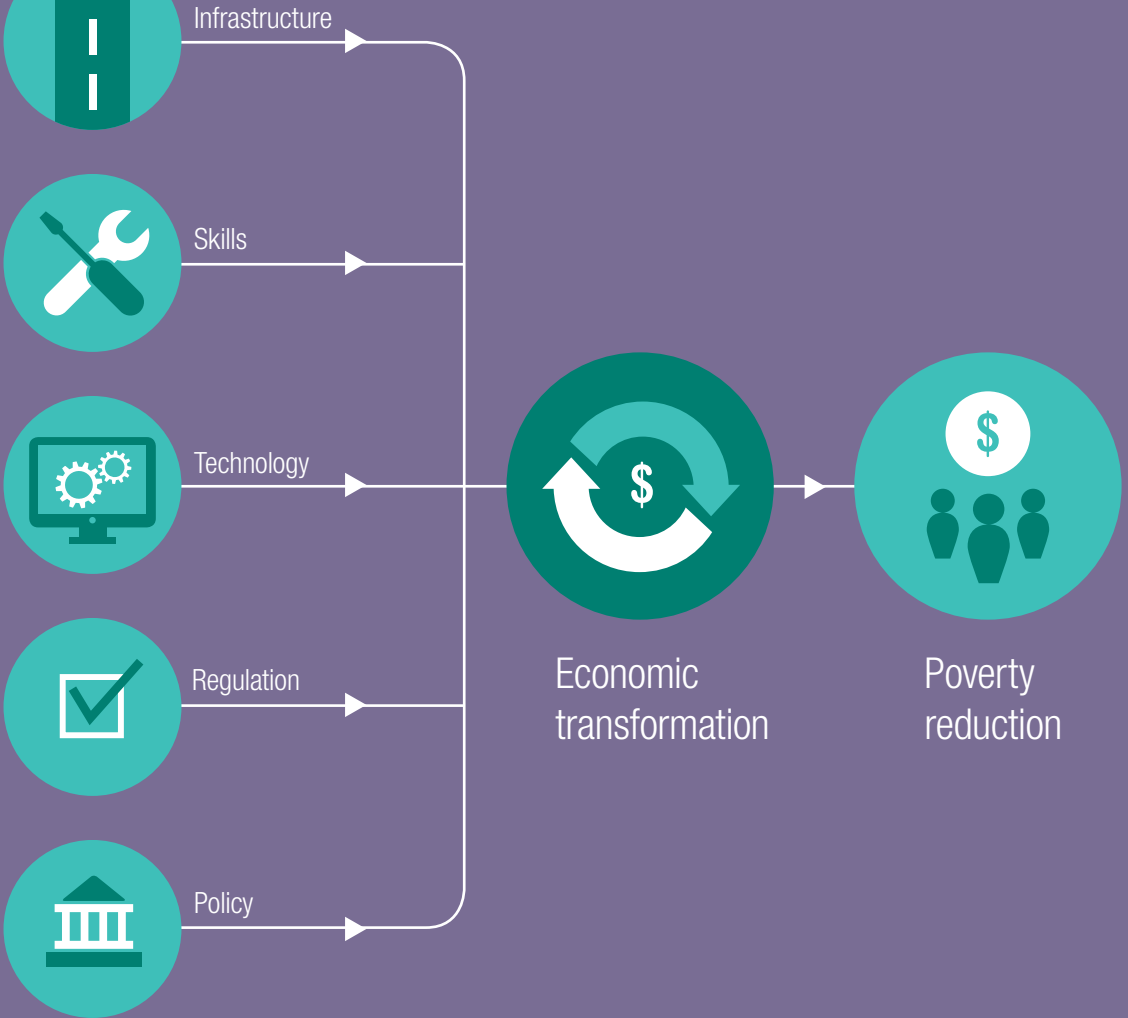
Policy



Economic transformation



Poverty reduction



## 04 Address climate change


**P**oor people in poor countries are hit first and hardest by the impact of climate change although they are least responsible for creating the problem.

Without urgent action to limit global warming to 2°C, catastrophic and irreversible climate change threatens to undo hard-won development gains and push the goal of ending poverty beyond reach. Climate change does not respect national boundaries so a global response is the only option.

We need ambitious and concerted international action – by both rich and poor countries – to tackle climate change and put us on a path towards a sustainable future for all.

 Follow us @ODIClimate

 Read our briefing: *The geography of poverty, disasters, and climate extremes in 2030* at [odi.org](https://odi.org)

 Read our report: *The fossil fuel bailout: G20 subsidies for oil, gas and coal exploration* at [odi.org](https://odi.org)

### Recommendations

**Deliver** a global deal that agrees to achieve peak global emissions by 2030 and zero net emissions by 2100, showing leadership through strong domestic greenhouse gas mitigation policy.

**Build** the resilience of poor and vulnerable people by preparing for and adapting to climate change impacts, especially climate extremes and disasters.

**Provide** new and additional public investment in climate finance to support developing countries, and ensure that all financial flows are compatible with deep decarbonisation and are resilient to climate impacts.

**Lead** efforts at the EU, G7 and G20 to phase out subsidies to fossil fuels.

**Support** off-grid solar technologies in the pursuit of universal sustainable access to electricity by 2030, a priority for poverty reduction and an easy win for climate change.

# Subsidising unburnable carbon

Fossil fuel exploration subsidies



Private company investment  
by top 20 global oil and  
gas producers



G20 government  
support

Source: Bast, E., Makhijani, S., Pickard, S. and Whitley, S. (2014) *The fossil fuel bailout: G20 subsidies for oil, gas and coal exploration*, ODI/Oil Change International.

## 05 Finance the future

**D**evelopment finance is no longer just about international aid. We need a comprehensive approach that includes public and private flows, both domestic and international. However, public finance will remain a critical source of resources for the poorest countries and those affected by conflict. The UK, having delivered its 0.7% aid promise, is well-placed to demand high ambition from other countries and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda sets a good framework for progress.

The UK should lead the push for new approaches that deliver the finance and policies needed to end extreme poverty and support the achievement of the SDGs. This means a stronger focus on the quality and delivery of aid, with DFID at the forefront of more flexible, innovative approaches to development.

 [Read our report \*Financing the future: how international public finance should fund a global social compact to eradicate poverty\* at \[odi.org\]\(http://odi.org\)](#)

### Recommendations

**Support** a new ‘global compact’ that delivers a basic package of support for the world’s poorest people: access to healthcare, quality education, water and other crucial social protection services.

**Ensure** that at least 50% of development aid is allocated to the poorest countries and fragile states where the majority of poor people live.

**Maintain** a strong focus on effective aid that is long term, flexible, supports countries’ own development strategies and ensure coherent politics are in place to achieve results.

**Maintain** the UK’s commitment to spend 0.7% of national income on aid.

A new global social compact that delivers a basic package of support for the world's poorest people.



Social protection for the poorest

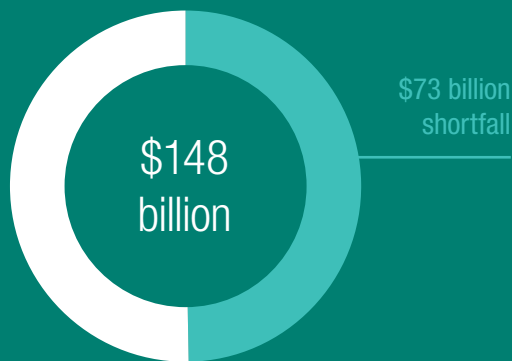


Free basic universal healthcare



Free primary and secondary education for all

What will this cost low income countries per year?



Even if developing countries raise taxes and use existing aid, there will still be a shortfall of \$73 billion.

But if governments fulfil their existing aid pledges, we can meet these costs.



The UK should deliver 0.7% and allocate 50% to the poorest countries.

Source: Greenhill, R., Hoy, C., Carter, P. and Manuel, M. (2015) *Financing the future: how international public finance should fund a global social compact to eradicate poverty*, ODI.




## 06 Respond to humanitarian emergencies

The frequency and severity of global emergencies is increasing and armed conflict is at the root of most of today's crises. From Syria to South Sudan, millions of people are affected and displaced, and civilians are paying the price. The global humanitarian system is struggling to respond and is in need of radical reform.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit is an opportunity to address these challenges and build an effective global system that is fit for purpose and reflects today's realities. Increased political accountability is urgently needed to uphold international humanitarian law and ensure that civilians are protected.

 Follow us @hpg\_odi

 Read our Working Paper *International and local/diaspora actors in the Syria response: a diverging set of systems?*

### Recommendations

**Call** for increased monitoring of IHL compliance through the UN Security Council and push for the appointment of an UN Special Representative with a mandate to investigate violations.

**Promote** an initiative to push the five permanent members of the UN Security Council to suspend the use of their veto in cases of mass atrocities.

**Champion** the application of mechanisms for IHL compliance in international armed conflict to non-international conflicts that account for most of today's wars.

**Push** for robust outcomes from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit that can radically transform the humanitarian system to make it more inclusive and effective.

**Press** for a reform of the international financing architecture to provide long-term funding to respond to long-running conflicts.

Syria's conflict has raged for four years, and humanitarian needs have escalated.



Source: Svoboda, E. and Pantuliano, S. (2015) *International and local/diaspora actors in the Syria response: a diverging set of systems?*, HPG/ODI.

## 07 Support conflict-affected countries

Conflicts halt efforts to reduce poverty and reverse progress. It is also extremely challenging to work in fragile states, where risk is high and security concerns hamper attempts to provide basic services and reach the poorest and most marginalised people.

By 2030, it is expected that absolute poverty will be increasingly concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected states. The challenges facing these countries including resource constraints and high vulnerability to shocks such as those posed by climate change, should be prioritised for action.

### Recommendations

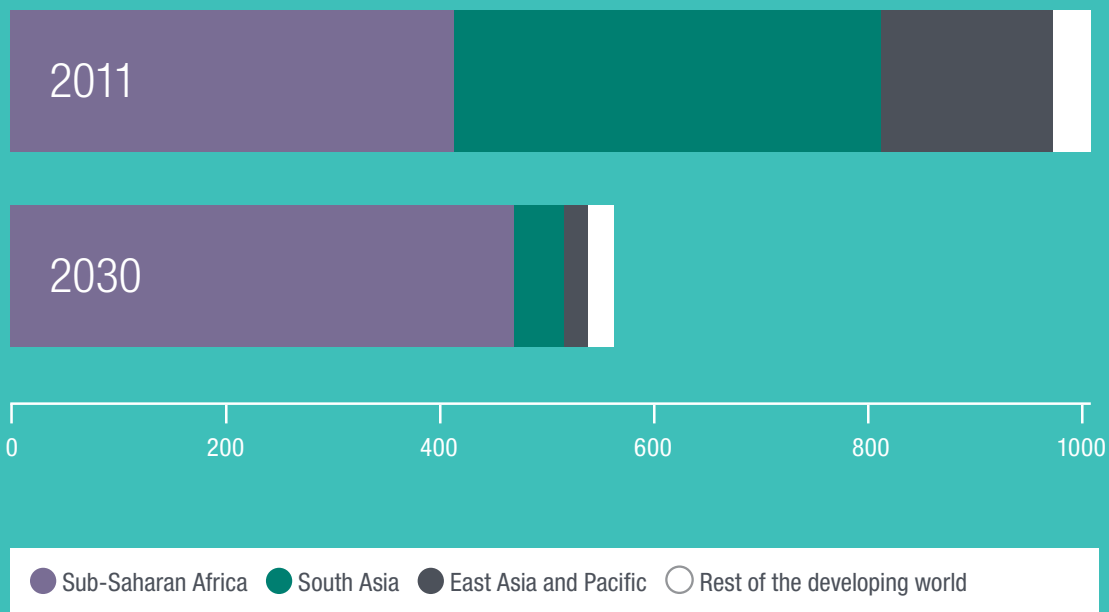
**Provide** increased and on-going bilateral support to fragile states directly, as well as through multilateral institutions.

**Invest** in new approaches to supporting countries' transition out of conflicts. This means moving away from grand designs to programmes that involve state and non-state actors at both a national and local level.

**Ensure** that the UK's programmes are in line with the approaches that have been shown to be effective in these dangerous and complex environments.

Between now and 2030, extreme poverty will fall, but those people living in extreme poverty will be concentrated more and more in sub-Saharan African fragile states.

Number of people living in extreme poverty (millions):



Source: Greenhill, R., Hoy, C., Carter, P. and Manuel, M. (2015) *Financing the future: how international public finance should fund a global social compact to eradicate poverty*, ODI.

## 08 Support the private sector

**T**he private sector can play a critical role in reducing poverty and has been the main engine of job creation in many developing countries. But in many cases, it has been excluded from development planning and domestic policies hamper inclusive and sustainable growth.

Governments have an important role to play in creating an enabling environment for businesses to increase their productivity and create jobs. The private sector must also play an active and positive role in ensuring that their operations do not have negative social, environmental or human rights impacts.

### Recommendations

**Encourage** developing countries to reform their business environments to support the growth of their domestic private sectors, greater productivity and job creation.

**Support** developing country governments to regulate and support business to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and protect the environment and human rights.

**Engage** directly with businesses to achieve development results by supporting innovation, research and development, inclusive and responsible business practices, information sharing and linking markets, with the involvement of UK companies and government departments.

The World Bank predicts that at least 600 million people will be entering the jobs market in the next 15 years.



## 09 Bring trade and development together

There has been major progress on trade negotiations at the regional level over the past decade, but many of these ‘mega-regional’ trade agreements are excluding the world’s poorest countries, putting them at a major disadvantage.

The 10th World Trade Organisation ministerial in December 2015 is a chance to respond to calls from poor countries for an ambitious outcome on global trade rules and global trade that delivers poverty reduction.

### Recommendations

**Ensure** that the global trade system puts poor countries at its core and promotes an ‘open trade’ approach.

**Enhance** opportunities for poor countries to participate in the global trade system by placing more emphasis on trade logistics, non-tariff barriers and revisit rules of origin for products to reflect the reality of modern multi-country global production.

**Support** a coherent approach to trade within the new Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on reducing the costs of trade for poor countries.





# 10 Build a DFID of the Future

**D**DFID is a committed and effective international development organisation with a long-standing focus on development challenges such as poverty reduction in the poorest countries.

Faced with a rapidly changing development landscape, DFID will need to transition from its focus on aid delivery to greater emphasis on the much broader development agenda. This transition will mean working more closely with other government departments and influencing cross-Whitehall policies to ensure that they uphold the UK's support for international development.

 Follow us @ODIdev

 Read our report *Adapting development: improving services to the poor* at [odi.org](http://odi.org)

## Recommendations

**Ensure** a coherent and cross-Whitehall approach to international development and outline a new UK global strategy that spells out the cross-government institutional arrangements, ways of working and the role of DFID.

**Introduce** mechanisms for this new way of working, such as a reporting requirement to Parliament on policy coherence

performance and the replacement of the International Development Act with a cross-government Global Development Act to promote a whole-of-government approach.

**Ensure** that DFID takes a lead among development organisations in committing to more adaptive and flexible programming.



## Timeline of key dates

### 2015

EU Presidency: Luxembourg  
Africa Union Chair: Zimbabwe  
ASEAN Chair: Malaysia

#### September

The Sustainable Development Goals agreed

#### November

G20 summit, Turkey

#### December

Climate Change negotiations (CoP 21), France  
WTO Ministerial Conference, Kenya

### 2016

EU Presidencies: Netherlands and Slovakia  
ASEAN Chair: Laos  
G20: Chinese Presidency  
G7: Germany Presidency

#### January

SDGs implementation commences  
World Economic Forum, Switzerland

#### May

World Humanitarian Summit, Turkey

#### July

BRICS summit, India

#### September

UN General Assembly and new Secretary General



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