

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Overseas Aid Sub-Panel

MONDAY, 5th FEBRUARY 2007

Panel:

Senator J.L. Perchard (Chairman)
Connétable J. Gallichan of Trinity
Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville
Connétable S.A. Yates of St. Martin

Witness:

Mr. J. Le Maistre

Senator J.L. Perchard (Chairman):

This is the panel that is reviewing Jersey's overseas aid policy and such a very valuable submission to the panel. I think you know everybody but we have Mike Haden, Sam Power, Dan Murphy, Jimmy Perchard, Mrs. Anne Thomson from the Office of Policy Management who is advising the panel, Constables Silva Yates and John Gallichan from Trinity. As I say, your submission was very detailed and very valued by the panel and I particularly found it interesting in that you provided the background which most of it was news to me as to how Jersey developed an overseas aid policy with a mere £14,000 back in 1970 something. I wonder if we could dispense with the formalities. In front of you, Mr. Le Maistre, will have seen a sheet of paper which you will be familiar with, I am sure. It is just to advise you of it. Basically, it indicates that you have some immunity whilst you are in that chair. Are you happy with that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Absolutely.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I wonder if you would be so kind as to give a background about your paper. Having said that the historical element was useful, we must look forward and spend as little time on the history as possible. If you do not mind, we will ask you questions as you are going along and perhaps we can be a bit more liberal with the way we exchange ...

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, thank you for your welcome and, in particular, thank you very much for accommodating me today because as from tomorrow I shall not be available for a little while so I do appreciate the opportunity of meeting you and probably, in particular, to answer the questions you have. As you can imagine, overseas aid has been a subject which has been very close to my heart and it is not just an academic understanding but it is a real feel, I believe, for the principle of playing our part in the world. I certainly do not want to go over the background but I would just like to say a couple of things. First of all, I was very conscious when developing the programme that Jersey should be seen to play its part internationally and, probably even more so to this day, Jersey earns its living from the world and not only from the developed world; it actually earns a living from some of the developing countries as well. So I felt quite strongly in the 1970s and into the 1980s that we should be seen to be responsible and to play a full part as far as at least we could in engaging with those who are committed to helping people in what we all now refer to as the developing world. So that is where I began and, secondly, I felt again that it was an opportunity because there was no template at that time on which one could base activity and financing in developing countries; no template at all. I used to often describe activities in the developing countries and using funds, public money, in developing countries as a little bit like tap dancing in a minefield because you really did not know at that point when something was really going to come back at you. So it was a policy of being extremely prudent and exercising huge care in the way the programme was developed. The one thing that gives me a huge amount of satisfaction is that subsequent committees have, it appears to me, pursued that same policy. But things have developed considerably and full marks, as I say in my submission, to those who have continued to work for and on behalf of those who are, as we call them, in need. Time moves on and things develop and in my opinion there has been a huge change in the aid policies adopted around the world in probably the last 10 to 15 years. We have a particular advantage, I would suggest --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

As donor countries.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

As donor countries, yes, being active in developing countries. We have a particular advantage as a small community in that we are not held, as some of the larger countries are, in trade issues and funded projects. They exist now but they were certainly very prominent in the 1970s and 1980s, projects which were going to engage a country, a community, the donor country, and part of it was an agreement that the trade should come back to that country. We are not involved in that sort of area of activity and whenever - I suspect it has been the experience of subsequent committees - we have approached a new charity, as a government, they have frequently said: "Well, what are the strings? What strings are attached?" As far as Jersey has been concerned, and it has been consistent, the strings are very loose in

the sense that there is no reciprocity, as such in terms of trade and other such activities, but there is, of course, a requirement for reporting and accountability of the projects that are undertaken.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

You spoke of huge change in policies by donor countries over the last 10 years, is that where the huge change is? What specifically do you mean? Is it accountability?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Accountability is definitely one but I think there has been a different view taken on why we are involved in development and helping countries to develop. I think the Brandt Commission set a real marker and I think it was quite visionary. The problem was that it did not find favour, generally speaking, with the major countries.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Just to pin you down on the change of policies that you referred to. Today, people want to know if the money is being well spent. Is there anything else you can ...?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes, I think the general attitude was the benevolent, wealthy countries helping the poor third-world countries. That is the only way I could really describe it. I used to find it quite embarrassing when visiting projects that they treated you like you were the benevolent whites coming in to help them. I think there is much more of a partnership concept now than perhaps existed in those early days. Clearly, I cannot speak for the larger countries because I was not involved specifically in their projects but, looking from afar, I remember a very considerable sugar project in Uganda where the links were that the sugar exported would go back to the country that had funded the project, particularly the irrigation and that kind of thing. I think there has been quite a bit of movement, really. Of course, we have to recognise that following the initiatives and the very recent Make Poverty History initiatives, all building on previous events, Geldof-type of publicity activity, I think has helped to change public opinion and it is now much more the in thing to be supporting, whereas years ago I was heavily criticised for even considering taking volunteers, as it was said, half way round the world to a place of unemployment.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

The evidence that we have received would confirm that that is exactly right what you said about the donor countries certainly being held to account a lot more, not only the amounts but the type of aid they are delivering. You are exactly right, there was a lot of trading type of aid. I do not want to talk about what we have heard, I want you to tell us, but has Jersey changed its approach to aid in parallel to what has happened elsewhere?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Not really because we were always there. Our beginning was rooted in community-type development grassroots stuff so we have never been, as far as I am aware, involved in very sophisticated projects, partly because we did not have the money; it was the small projects which were going to maximise the funds that we put into it. But if I may come back to the point where I think we have a great opportunity, it is actually to focus on identifiable projects. Increasingly, and I said this in my submission, I think we should be taking a longer-term view. I certainly do not criticise what has been done because each committee has worked with NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and good relationships, in the main, have been built up but I think we have an opportunity now which, because our projects are bound to be small in relative terms, there is an opportunity to develop a far longer view of the objectives of any project. One can begin to divide that down. I certainly do not see ongoing participation as a means of creating total dependency because that is one of the criticisms, that if you are involved in a project over a long period, all that happens is the community there becomes dependent on you for funding. There is a danger that that could happen. But providing the objectives are clear at the outset, I believe that wherever possible - which is another element of my thinking at the moment - there should be some form of economic activity which could be additional funding. Now, again we have to remember that where you have infrastructure, some countries have better support mechanisms than others. If you went into Ethiopia, I suspect that that is going to be more challenging than going into Kenya, as a basic illustration. So, the type of economic activity, and let us be frank, in most of the rural communities is going to be some form of food production and a range of food. One of the problems which exist is vitamin deficiency. Whether you are working with Sight Savers, which used to be the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, certain vitamins are needed to ensure that you do not get forms of blindness which they tend to. So, much of the focus would be on the rural economy, if you like, but we have seen examples - and I hesitate to mention it because Mike Haden is here and he knows far more about it than I do - but what I would call a visionary, a guy called Brother John Beaudry had a real vision for his people in Northern Zambia. I remember when slash and burn was the type of farming that was popular at the time, because it is probably the simplest form of farming, he would go out and say: "Do not do it. You are killing your children" because once you have slashed and burnt, you have to move on. So there is a need for a focus but, of course, this can be developed with very good aid agencies in which we have partnerships.

Connétable S.A. Yates of St. Martin:

If I can just try and clarify in my own mind, I put the question, or observation, you mentioned agriculture and other economic activity. You have not put this in relation to the ongoing scheme of things which has a target. I do not think - this is my personal opinion - but I do not think that the overseas aid should be money which is dribbled down annually from now until 2054. I just wonder whether you will intend to develop that idea and say that there will be targets.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes, I absolutely believe that there should be targets but I think that, if one is hoping to enable communities to have a degree of self-sufficiency, the concept of helping those schools and hospitals and other similar type of projects is fine but if there is no element of economic activity - which is the only way I can put it - then, frankly, they will be dependent for ever and a day. It is true, and I also I think refer to it, that there are many strands to this. The problem - and I have seen it in Kenya - where a school had been built, not by us but by the Canadians, and was empty at the point that I saw it for 2 years because nobody had worked out who was going to staff it. So, there is a cost. Whether that comes from their own government sources, which of course it can do, that is an option, or whether it comes from the activity within the area or region is another but I think one could easily fall into the trap of suggesting that there is a master plan here which is going to fit every community that one is going to look at. The reality is not going to be like that. Different countries, different climates, different altitudes. If you are talking about Rwanda, for example, it is a totally different ball game. It is a very hilly country; of course it has fertile valleys. But I, personally, would not like to second-guess what each specific project should be.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

That is going to be a problem, though, for the Commission. If the Commission were to take your suggestion of, shall we call it, block funding, 3 or 5-year block funding, if the Commission were to accept that as a principle, how would you suggest that they should, firstly, develop the criteria to enable them to make a decision on that and, secondly, how would they measure the effectiveness of that? I suspect they would not resist the idea; it is very difficult ...

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

They have already started it because there are 3-year programmes. Effectively, all that I am suggesting is that I believe that can be extended, potentially can be extended. But it can only be extended with the support, assistance, enthusiasm of the partners. Jersey is simply a funding body. The real work is undertaken by the NGOs. The NGOs will only feed in what the funding body is looking for, that is obvious. The funding body is built up of relationships with the people who actually go out and do the work and they are unlikely to change dramatically because it is a pretty normal pattern that has been established. I think it needs a slightly greater push now to suggest that in certain areas, and I am not suggesting that it should be all of the budget at all because there needs to be a balance as to how the budget is spent, but I think there are opportunities within the budget to develop a reasonably significant part to have the longer-term view. I entirely agree that it is not a dependency culture --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Can you give the panel an indication of what procedures the Commission would put in place to recognise that this is the one that we should back as opposed to that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

It would entirely depend at the end of the day on the NGOs coming forward with projects that meet the various criteria that already are down but have an element which has economic generation as part of it. In other words, if one is looking at a village or an area where the main project is a school or a clinic or a hospital or whatever, there could be some element of that which assists them in developing, whether it is cattle or --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

You are missing my question. The point is, is the criteria sufficiently robust currently to --

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think it is. I think all it needs is extending.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Right, okay.

Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville:

In your part 3 you are, I think, being critical that the Commission do not use the scoring system.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Which page is that?

The Connétable of Grouville:

It does not have a page number on the top.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Page 12, paragraph 2.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Bottom end of paragraph 2 where the reply to your question was: "The Commission do not use a scoring system as such in that the agency is not awarded points against applications." Yet in para 4.5 of the explanatory booklet it says: "The Commission is aware that some outcomes such as the provision of school desks may not score as high as other projects." Do you think that there could be an improvement on the choice or the prioritising of projects?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think that this is a different point. This refers to the presentation of projects to the Commission and the

way the Commission chooses the projects which eventually it funds. I think there is an element of uncertainty as to which projects, or parts of projects, are likely to be acceptable to the Commission. Is an education project likely to be more favoured than health projects? Is an economic project going to find favour at all? In the main, I think it has worked reasonably well but I am aware of areas where it has not worked quite so well and so organisations do not quite understand why some of the projects submitted have not been funded. It is quite difficult because there is a lot of work involved in preparing a project for submission. Everybody accepts that and they accept that they are into a process whether they will either get funding or they will not but it seems to me that over a longer period it is not unreasonable for organisations to know precisely the type of project they should be submitting and, if they do not get any funding, why they did not.

Connétable J. Gallichan of Trinity:

Is there a certain way of applying? If you organise what your application is, is there a way of maybe getting the right thing. Desks may not seem essential but it may be essential if you have a school with no desks in it.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I would hope that the forms - and I have not seen the recent forms - but I would hope that they should be fairly robust in the way the projects are submitted and they have to have proper explanations. I understand from the documentation that those who submit the projects are asked about them and, if they do not know the answer, they refer to somebody who does. I think that it is not a heavy point that I am making but it is a point that is, I think, to do with the relationship with agencies.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Does the Commission use a scoring system to measure the --

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

There is confusion there because I am told that they do and I am told that they do not.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Should they?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think there is no way to do it without scoring, I really do not.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

If they do not, you want to go on record as saying they should be using a scoring system?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes, so everybody knows what they are going for. There is confusion because the booklet clearly states there is a scoring system. I asked the officer what the scoring mechanism was and I received a response to say there is no scoring mechanism and then I read Leslie Crapp's own submission which says that some projects score more highly than others.

The Connétable of Trinity:

Is that just a talking point? That is much better, I mean, that would score high on my book because it has not been scored on a piece of paper.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

The only point I am making is that I think that it would help; it would give clarity.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

You have been quite positive there and I think that is very useful.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think, if I can just conclude it, if the Commission, and it is up to the Commission to determine, if part of the criteria was that a project which was seen as a whole, an entity, which had an economic generation element, is likely to score more highly than one which has not. That is not to say the others will not score at all --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

If you are putting a submission in as a prospective recipient of aid to the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission and there is a transparent scoring system, you will know what buttons you need to push in order to be a likely recipient of aid.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Correct.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Are you satisfied that the Commission has sufficiently highlighted the areas where it wishes to support?
Is there any lack of clarity?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think there are good general guides but I am not sure that they are necessarily as specific as they could be.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Is the criticism that we are receiving of the Commission that people are a bit unsure as to what buttons they need to push to receive aid? Would you echo that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I would tend to echo that.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Tend to or do you?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I do not want to be over critical.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Either they do make it unfair or they do not.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

In fairness, though, I am not involved at the sharp end of it so I think it would be unfair for me to say: "Yes, absolutely, that is a strong criticism" but I have to say that I get the impression from those who I speak to - and I am in contact with a whole range of charities in the UK - they will not themselves be critical because, frankly, they do not want to rock the boat.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Just to go back to my original question on this, these 2 paragraphs on page 12. We can say that you believe that clarification is needed on this system.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I do not think anybody is going to argue with you.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think it would be very helpful, that is the approach I would take.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Without criticising.

The Connétable of Trinity:

Would it also be an idea if the Overseas Aid Commission said that if anything generates income to support it, it would have a higher value, maybe, than others? I have sat on panels with numbers, and I am sure you have, and I have said it before, you end up with 2 at 25 and you wondered how they both got to 25. Before you start, you have an inkling that that one might score 29. Now, if you have an added value because it was income generated, that would be the point that would win it.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

It would tip the balance.

The Connétable of Trinity:

But you would have to have that maybe as a guideline for the Overseas Aid to say: “Right, we are going to have a level playing field but anybody who has an income-derived benefit to the aid that we are giving would get plus one”, because you have to make your mind up before you start looking at things, have you not?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes, I think that would be helpful but there are no absolutes in this. There is a danger, I would not want it to be misinterpreted that I am suggesting that every project that comes forward has to have an economic driver to it. What would be nice, great and really welcomed would be a movement - you cannot do it overnight, it has to be a gradual movement - which says: “We would want to pursue this kind of policy but we do not expect you to do it overnight” but it could be over a 5-year period, whatever, and that a percentage, whether it is 30 per cent of our funds, eventually that is the aim, will have some kind of economic generation in it.

The Connétable of Trinity:

Yes, all those economic advantages could be judged together. One out of 5 might get money and then you would look at all the others.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I also make the point, if I can add to that, and I have seen this actually happen where particular agencies have a yo-yo - high amount one year, slightly lower amount the next year, high amount the following year and so on - and whilst there will always be an element of that, I think that - again, maybe this part of it links into it - that it would be helpful to the partners to have a reasonable explanation, unless they really mess it up in which case I would have no sympathy with them at all. But if they are in the process of bidding and, historically, for the last 5 years they have had £50,000, all of a sudden to get £10,000 is quite a shock to them and then you cannot tell them why they have only got £10,000. It is pretty demoralising. That does not mean to say that because they request £50,000 they should get it but at least

there should be some logic to it and I think that would equally --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Are you suggesting perhaps that a longer-term budget proposal could be put in place so you would have a provisional 2010 budget being drafted now by the Commission or is that too restrictive?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

There are 2 points here. As you begin to engage, if that is the choice of the Commission, if that is a policy development, into a longer-term partnership then of course that becomes easier to do but there will always be projects which are very difficult to look 3 years ahead. I am involved in 2 or 3 charities and that is what they are aiming to achieve, but when you are working with the people on the ground who do not have lots of days to think and so on, they have work coming at them from every direction at the same time they are trying to develop a plan for next year's funding. So the longer-term would be helpful.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Can I just move you on about the effectiveness, particularly the effectiveness of aid if one did introduce more block aid, measuring the effectiveness and the administration of that aid? At the moment, with annual payments the Commission really does not have a lot of administration. If you are linking up with a project, it gets administratively a little bit more, perhaps, top heavy, would it not?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I do not see that because the administration is largely undertaken by the NGO itself. Whether it is funding a project for one year or for 5 years, it will have the same level of administration on an annual basis. It could be argued that in an ongoing project, the administration requirement is slightly less than spread-shot stuff which is falling all over the place.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

So effectiveness ...

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think effectiveness could be enhanced in those projects but there is also --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

How do you measure that? How does the Commission measure, physically measure, so --

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think at the outset, in fact what they do now, I hope, is that on the 3-year projects which they have a

limited number of projects that they undertake on a 3-year period, I would imagine the reporting back is equal on an annual basis to those which are funded just for one year. But, clearly, if you are looking for a longer commitment, then the targets have to be in place. I think it comes back to your point that the Commission will need to know what the end time is and what the stages are of development along the way.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

So that is administratively more demanding. As you said, a timescale, a programme, and you have to measure to see if you can come up with them. "It is September, did you finish the water by September?" It becomes more administratively demanding.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

The organisations, in the main, have field staff so whether they are administering a one-off project or an ongoing project I think is 6 of one and half a dozen of the other. As I say, the one-off can actually be slightly more administratively demanding because there is a process to go through, there is a finishing off, et cetera. So, I think one could argue both ways.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Just from your experience of the Overseas Aid Commission for many years, do you get rose-tinted reporting back from the NGOs as to how successful the --

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

No, my experience is that they are pretty clear in their reporting, to the extent that I know when projects have not got off the ground, they return the money or they have informed the Commission that it was not going ahead, and in a number of cases the money has come back. Equally, I think that the Commission and the committees previously were well aware that in developing countries the opportunity for failure is much, much higher than in a sophisticated western world situation. You can have weather patterns which change, you can have all sorts of matters, civil unrest, all these things. In my experience in the past, folk have been really very upfront with us and said: "Look, we had a project in that particular area and frankly we came under pressure. We are going to complete it but it will not be finished in a year, it will take 2 years."

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Can I put to you a very blunt question? The Commission proudly boasts that its administration costs are very low. Could it be penny wise, pound foolish to say that the administration costs are very low when in fact the bigger picture is being ignored?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

No, because the administration costs of the Commission do not relate to administering projects. I make the point in my submission that there should be a greater honesty about what is being said. I am not suggesting they are dishonest but it is not absolutely the full picture; it is a half-truth. The administration of the Commission relates to the submission of projects to the Commission, the sifting through the projects and the acceptance of the projects. The Commission itself does not administer the projects. All projects are administered by the NGOs who have submitted them and, as part of the project cost, there is an administrative cost and I think it would be far more upfront if it was actually stated that there is administrative cost. I will give you an example where recently I was involved with a charity locally raising funds for a school in Pakistan. The agency that submitted the project, which happens to be the Red Cross, said: "You need to be aware that between the Red Cross in the recipient country, who will be doing the final overseeing administration, and the Red Cross in the UK, there is a total of, I think it was 12.8 per cent, administration charges. That is included in the total project cost." But that does not reflect the cost of the Commission's work. The Commission's work is separate.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

You make that point in your submission. Can I just ask you a very blunt question? Should the Commission independently carry out some analysis of some projects?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think as it is structured now, it would not be fair to ask them to do that unless they employed somebody who had specialist knowledge in project assessment. I happen to know a guy who has married a Jersey girl and is shortly coming back to Jersey in a year's time, he has been a project officer for very major aid agencies and he would be the sort of person who could do that.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

But should they?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think you need to ask what would be the benefit. The benefit would be further transparency and further accountability. My belief is that if you enter into a partnership with an organisation you either trust them or you do not. Frankly, I think it would be churlish, I do not know, to start going in and second-guessing an area which maybe somebody is not familiar with, and the effectiveness of a project.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Given the scenario of Jersey reducing the number of those that receive with a view to beefing up in areas where we are so there will be bigger sums of money possibly, would you say it may be necessary then to independently assess the success of this block funding?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

No, the projects are not sufficiently large, in my opinion, to justify the very high cost that that would carry. Having said that, one of the advantages of getting committed to a longer term, particularly if you bring in the work projects into those areas, then a relationship is built up between the Island and different parts of the developing countries. Now, that would not necessarily cover them all but it would give you probably a more personal commitment in the way that projects are being carried out and the effectiveness of them. The real joy is to go back after 20 years and to see something flourishing which was funded in the 1970s, early 1980s or whatever, and I have been very fortunate to see some of those projects. I visited a hospital in Uganda a couple of years ago and they had some real problems, as you know, in Uganda, and yet that place was doing incredible work. The Houiillebecq family were involved and so it had Jersey connections. It is actually desperately in need of another uplift and it would be nice to do that. The links with Jersey - I just brought it as an example because I received it the other day - St. Francis Hospital in Katete is one with which the Island has had long links. Ralph Vibert's daughter was there. She gave birth to her first baby there. There was no resuscitaire unit and that is why she had her first link with Zambia. They issue annual reports. You cannot expect to get these from every unit, we would be swamped, but it illustrates very well the kind of activity, and Jersey is mentioned, as it turns out, a number of times, the people involved and the level of volunteer service that goes on. Jersey has been involved with Katete now for 25 years probably and it is that kind of ongoing relationship --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Yes, that is right. Perhaps we could move on, because I have seen the time and we have only really discussed one area of our terms of reference, to talk about the level of funding that Jersey provides and the mechanisms we adopt to measure that level of funding, Jean. I know you had some views in your submission, perhaps you could expand on them a bit.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

First of all, if we are talking about the level of funding that the Island gives as a total sum --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Total.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

-- then I think the mechanism and the methods used currently to compare ourselves are false. To compare ourselves on a per capita population basis does not accept the reality of the different levels of work of the communities which we are comparing them with.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Why do you think the Commission chose to do that in 2005?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I suspect that those were fairly easily accessible figures. It cannot be right in general terms that they are just taking a numerical per head of population without regard to the wealth of that community.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Would you suggest it was because it puts Jersey slightly up the list than if you had found another mechanism?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I produced a sheet, which I should have brought today, at a recent committee meeting locally which showed Jersey rather low.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Depending on the mechanism used for measurement?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes. The per capita, obviously, puts it above ...

Senator J.L. Perchard:

What would be the motivation for the Commission doing that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I do not know, you would have to ask them.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I will.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think that would be more open -- certainly do not disregard the per capita but there has to be an element of income per capita.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Are you aware of how Jersey currently measures its contribution?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes. There was a ... I am not sure how it is measured except that there was a proposition brought to the States quite a long time ago which gave a percentage of States' income.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

1998 and 2002, in respect of both of those. The sum would be 2.4 per cent of Jersey's income from taxation, yes?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes, fair enough. But, actually, if you do a comparison, which I have done, between expenditure, interesting point, Jersey's aid in the 1986 budget, and you compare it with 2007, it has not moved greatly, not in percentage terms.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Is Jersey falling behind?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

If it is, we thought we had it right in 1998 and 2000 but, in reality, we are not better than we were then. So I think it has been an unfortunate result. I am sure the intention was good.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

In 2006, I will just inform you, the promise was made in 1998, in 2002 the date was withdrawn, to meet the 4.5 per cent of taxation revenue. We would be contributing this year £10.7 million, as opposed to the planned £6.3. It appears, would you agree, that Jersey is falling behind its promises?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes. I think there is a general feeling of those who are aware of these issues that Jersey is not really pulling its weight. It is no good saying: "Because we do it differently, our aid is worth much more than others" because that is one of the quotes that I think that Jackie has made, that our aid goes much further. It does but it is marginal.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

In the strategic plan debate, the States agreed to start to measure its contribution of GNI (Gross National Income). Are you aware of that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I was aware that there was a debate on the issues but I was not aware that that decision effectively had been made. There needs to be a reasoned view. Being realistic, I do not think you can jump up from one year to the next. I think that is likely to be remote. I think there should be - and I put it in the submission - a realistic target set and that there should be a mechanism to increase yearly to get to that point.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Would you agree, Jean, that, as a person, the money in your pocket, or your income, goes down, you give less? As an entity, the States of Jersey have hit the buffers in a big way so perhaps they have a - I cannot use the word "excuse" - but a reason for perhaps stalling on any increases for the next couple of years until we sort ourselves out. I know one can use a moral argument that they should be giving whatever but, at the same time, there is this realistic argument that people are going to say that we are really scratching around for money at the moment and perhaps we should cut down on this.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

But you will be saying that in 2 years' time, as well.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, probably.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think you never get out of that kind of argument with people who do not believe we should be giving any more. I think it is a question of measuring what is considered to be fair. Now, I hesitate to put forward figures because I think they can always be shot down, all that I would say is that I think we are falling short. I think that we ought to be doing better. What I would be looking for after this exercise that you are doing is a commitment to say: "Yes, we have got to do better and we believe that it should happen this way."

Senator J.L. Perchard:

A target?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

A target

Senator J.L. Perchard:

As you said just a moment ago. You are, of course, aware that most European countries, particularly, and globally, I think, at the United Nations there is a target of 0.7 of gross national income.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Whichever way you work that out.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Should we be targeting the same or should we have a different target?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I think the target should be similar but we have to recognise the differences that Jersey has because we are a finance centre. Gross domestic product is not quite as easy to measure in Jersey as it is --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

GNI, gross national income. Because we are a finance centre, it does not mean that we are wealthier?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes, it does but there is more money flowing through the Island compared to other communities.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is all very well for you to say that but if you are trying to -- this flow going through, if you try to catch the flow with a bucket with holes in the bottom, then you have --

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

That is another issue.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

That is another issue and that is for the witness to tell us rather than us to tell the witness.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes. I personally would be very disappointed if the States did not recognise the kind of commitment that it ought to have and become realistic.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Jean, you are not prepared to say, with all your wealth of experience, to say that we should be trying, targeting, the same level, an internationally agreed level of 0.7. You are not prepared to say --

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

On that issue there is no question, that is where we should be. Absolutely.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

That is what I am trying to get from you.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

There is no question there but how you get there and what the stages are to --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Timescale.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes. I would be disappointed if somebody said, "Well, it is going to be 2026" because is that just driven, to coin a phrase?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

What would be ... 2020. That is only 14 years away.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

It has to be anything between 10 and 15 years, I would have thought, realistically.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

By the end of 15 years, in your opinion, we should be looking to get up to 0.7 of GNI?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Yes. There should be a commitment to do it. I accept that that it is not easy but it is to do with --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Tell me, how would we pay for it?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

You can ask that question of any service that the Island guarantees, whether it is education or health or whatever. In most countries it comes out of general taxation.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

So, tax. We may have to put taxes up slightly to get a 0.7 per cent contribution.

The Connétable of Trinity:

I think the word "slightly" is wrong, dramatically.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

At the moment we are only giving 5 per cent, £5.5 million.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

But where do those taxes end, that is our biggest point.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

You are not alone to say that we should perhaps put a little bit on tax to do our bit internationally; you will not be alone.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

No, no, and I am not afraid even if I am alone.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Gentlemen, anything that ...?

The Connétable of Trinity:

It is just interesting, all the years you were president, you obviously found it hard to get more money to come into overseas aid. As you say, it only went up really on the same scale as ... as you have pointed out, it has not changed a great deal. Tell me how you actually went about trying to negotiate what you were going to get.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

There were 2 elements to that. First of all, in the early days, I did not feel justified in asking for more money unless I knew it could be what we spent. It is a strange dilemma which is where the London meetings started. Without those meetings we would not have generated the requests for projects. So that was part of that. It took a while to crank up but there was one memorable year when I suspect I was, in the history of the States, the only president to come out of the budget with more money than I was actually asking for. It was mid-1980s and I had been to see the projects. I happened to be president of the Post Office at the time which paid my trip to Australia, but I went to see projects in Manila, the Philippines and in India. The project in the Philippines was one that was linked and eventually David Steiner adopted Oliver from the home in the Philippines that I went to. The actual project we had partly been involved in India was just out of Bombay. Guernsey, interestingly enough, had funded a health visitor there. However, the upshot of all of this was I relayed the experience in the budget speech proposing money for overseas aid. The Philippines had been a home for abandoned children and it was just the most amazing place that you could visit. It would not have been difficult to burst into tears. The largest slum in India was the one I visited just out of Bombay and that made you weep for other reasons. There were people openly squatting and open sewers, it was just a real shock. However, I explained that we had made a difference and I wished everybody could have been there with me and, equally, the desperate situation of these people in this squalor, 80,000 people in the slum just out of Bombay. As I sat down, somebody stood up - I think it was Don Filleul, and said: "We have got to give the guy more money." I think we were just over half a million and he said, "Can you use £1 million, Jean?" I said that in fairness and in reality, we could not have coped properly and it was very tempting to say yes and, in fact, the figure of £750,000, if I remember rightly, was the figure that was adopted.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Yes, I can imagine how some of these experiences have been shocking to the core. Before we conclude, can you perhaps give any advice on the areas that we really must include in our findings, just some areas where you really feel that emphasis must be placed?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I have made it in the submission but I will be happy just to elaborate for a moment. I think there is a great opportunity to enter into partnerships with local organisations who are raising money. These people slog their guts out --

The Connétable of Grouville:

Sorry, do you mean local Jersey organisations as opposed to local organisations in the country?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Local Jersey people. What we are doing with those aid funds is Jersey money, taxpayer money, and it seems to me that there is an opportunity here which has been partly recognised - I have to attribute that - but there is a cap on it; it is a £3,500 ceiling. Furthermore, you cannot apply twice for the same area.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Very restrictive.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

So I think that there are several opportunities being missed here. If an organisation has a project, which is sound because it is with a recognised organisation or whatever, and they are saying: "Look, this is a project of £50,000. Our commitment is to raise £25,000 matched by the Overseas Aid Commission", I think that would be hugely well received. Because: "We are not going to give you any money" the Overseas Aid Commission says to them, "unless you really get off your backsides and do it." It stretches the money; it is the old British Airways Poundstretcher, is it not? But it also creates an element of ownership of projects. People do not sit around raising money unless they are pretty convinced that it is worthwhile. I accept, and I think there are questions about how you verify the organisation, but things I was going to mention drive the requirements, give that sort of guidance and there are ways that one can ensure that an organisation is properly structured and managed locally. Usually a local group will be working with a recognised group in the developing country. So I think there is a great opportunity there.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

We have had a lot of submissions, I would agree, with that sentiment. The Commission will be giving

evidence and obviously they will be asked about this, but I do know from conversations with the president that once a charity has been deemed fairly successful and is making a difference, they do feel that then the money may be better spent back to grassroots. Do you accept that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Let me make sure I understand the question properly. Once a charity has --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

A Jersey-based charity is being reasonably successful, raising a bit of money, making a bit of difference, the Commission have expressed, albeit not formally at this stage but informally, that maybe that charity can manage for itself and there are more urgent cases for them on which to focus. Do you accept that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

No, I think that would be a shame. The Overseas Aid Commission can only work with partnerships. Now, it works permanently, exclusively, even with the disaster money, with agencies that are in the field. The homegrown agencies, because that is what they are, they are quite small most of them, have grown largely, not exclusively, but largely because of the work projects because many people have been out and have been inspired. That, obviously, I have to say is another thing of which I am very proud because little did we believe in the early days that they would develop as they have but fantastic, really. I think that it is not encouraging, I think it can be quite demoralising to be working hard for a charity, to be seeing the results of your work - I am not suggesting it should be easy - but to have the possibility of the Commission coming alongside you, would be a great boost, a huge boost. I happen to know the amount of work that goes on and people are working in all sorts of areas raising funds. Now, I fully accept that it has to be properly structured, you know, raise the money and then we will match it, you have to know what the project is. You then become involved but that is the job of the Commission, surely, and you say: "Yes, we ..." I think if you have people working their socks off to raise £5,000 or £10,000, they have to be convinced that it is worthwhile and it seems to me that it ... This is taxpayers' money so it would be wonderful if ...

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Just a final point. If we did embark down that route, if the Commission did accept that, the administrative measurements that would have to be undertaken, perhaps more in-house now rather than by the NGO itself, you could not just rely on the local charity because they have always been a great success. Am I right, Jean, that you would perhaps be a little bit more flexible than you were half an hour ago, saying that they may need to be a little more ...?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

What I am suggesting, and I really believe that is in the composition of the Commission, this is again not

being critical of any member because I am sure that they are all tuned to the task they have to do, but I think there are opportunities here to engage within the membership of the Commission people who have had experience, considerable experience overseas, who would probably be more easily able to assist the Commission in determining that sort of thing. Otherwise, you pay for it.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Otherwise you pay for it.

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

And that obviously is a route that you could go down but I think there are people around who have quite a lot of experience and knowledge and why not tap into them?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

I find it has been a very, very useful chat this afternoon. Gentlemen, I do not know if you have anything else you want to add?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Can I just conclude? There are 2 documents, there is the Donor's Charter, which is accessible on the web.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Have we got that?

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

I do not know, it is the codes of practice from the Institute of Fundraising and we can pick that up quite easily. That sets a yardstick really as to what donors can be expecting. The other one which you will know about is the SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice), I am sure, which is again set up by the Charity Commission and it is a statement of recommended practice. I think it is excellent. This is the real world, where we want to be. So those are 2 --

Senator J.L. Perchard:

You would recommend these to us for us to --

Mr. J. Le Maistre:

Absolutely, yes. The SORP is quite heavy really and they have just brought out a paper called SORP Made Simpler but that is an internal document for another organisation. I think there is a simple version; SORP Made Simpler is probably the thing that is going to help smaller organisations.

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Okay, Jean, thank you very much. It really has been enlightening and I thank you for your submission as well and the time that you have spent, not only today, but over the many decades doing lots of good work for a lot of people. With that I will declare the session closed, thank you.