

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF OVERSEAS AID  
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. JOHN  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29th MAY 2012**

**Question**

Will the Chairman confirm whether the principle of the Overseas Aid fund is to help the many people who are poor and needy across the world suffering from famine, drought, storm and other perils?

Can he advise whether funds have been given to Durrell and, if so, how this relates to the principles of Overseas Aid, particularly as the Trust has received States funding from the Tourism Development and Fiscal Stimulus Funds?

Will the Chairman consider bringing this year's list of charitable donations to the Assembly for endorsement?

**Answer**

JOAC's strategy is driven by a clear mission that it is committed to joining with others in reducing poverty in poorer countries by making a sustained contribution towards the provision of basic health care, medical care, effective education, safe drinking water and sanitation projects to assist self sufficiency and food security and emergency and humanitarian needs. The Commission currently gives preference to projects located in countries in Africa, Latin America or South-East Asia which fall within the bottom 50 countries on the current Human Development Index.

**Durrell 2012 Projects Supported by JOAC**

The Commission is supporting three projects this year with Durrell. All are located in Madagascar which is ranked by the United Nations Development Programme as a country within the lowest human development, with a GDP per capita of £172. 70% live in rural areas on less than \$2 per day and 55% of the population without sustainable access to an improved water source. All projects supported are providing the means and skills to adapt the use of natural resources to maintain future productivity to improve health, access to education and clean water.

Information on the individual projects is noted below:

**Project One - £29,200**

Baly Bay is an isolated area where people live in small scattered villages relying on subsistence agriculture, cattle herding and small-scale artisanal fishing, while using small remaining patches of native forest and raffia forests for weaving, construction and fuel wood. Durrell links its community work with the villages surrounding the Baly Bay National Park with the conservation of the critically endangered ploughshare tortoise species and its habitat with the main issues to be addressed in the region of lack of food security, high illiteracy, lack of fresh water, and the marginalisation of women.

Cattle are predominant across the extensive savannahs that surround Baly Bay. Despite its importance cattle farming remains mostly non commercial. JOAC is supporting vaccination programmes to both improve animal productivity and increase the market value of the animals (non-vaccinated animals cannot be legally sold so they fetch a lower price in the non commercial sector). As a result of a national lack of knowledge of modern equipment, intensive agricultural training is being provided with a proposed focus in 'agricultural technology'. Additionally raffia weaving will act as an important income to women's groups.

All proposed activities are aimed at long term implementation. Both the cattle and raffia activities will establish markets and outputs that should be financially viable well beyond the project period.

### **Project Two - £30,000**

Lake Alaotra is located in the North-east of Madagascar approximately 120km from the capital Antananarivo. The Alaotra region is the breadbasket of the country and supports a population of over 500,000. Water resources have been greatly reduced from climate change and over-exploitation and habitats are being degraded. As a result food and fibre resources are being diminished and a rapidly increasing pressure has been placed on remaining natural habitats. The government is trying to address these pressures by increasing the sustainability of food production primarily through agro-ecology.

This project supports and expands the government's efforts to mitigate these pressures through small-scale agro-ecology and fishery initiatives in villages around the lake. Lake Alaotra covers an area of 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is a wildlife refuge of global importance. The area is Madagascar's most important rice growing zone and one of the largest inland fisheries. Sustaining over 500,000 people for food, fuel, building materials and income, both the biodiversity and the productivity of the lake are threatened by over-fishing, siltation, invasive exotic plants and marsh degradation.

The project will focus on support to fish farming, small-scale vegetable gardens, poultry farming and continued support to primary education. The local fisheries services has started a new policy to encourage small-scale fish farming (carp) and JOAC funded activities in 2009 and 2010 have already shown the potential for this approach. The project will provide additional training and equipment to fish farming to increase yields and income, while reducing pressure on native fish stocks. The provision of materials and training for small-scale garden produce, chickens and geese is aimed at improving diets and supplement incomes, as well as providing direct support to local women, a marginalised group, as they are primarily involved with small-scale enterprises. Further support is being given to local women towards developing weaving products, especially to improve product quality and the development of markets for the products. Additionally Durrell is able to continue to support the development of local schools that were started with JOAC's support. Having focussed on 'walls and roofs' Durrell is installing cement floors as well as supporting the development of school kitchen gardens, both to start agro-ecology at the grassroots and also to provide food supplements for school meals is being implemented.

### **Project Three - £27,000**

Durrell has been active in the Marolambo area since 2003, drawn to the site because it still harbours a remarkable native fish fauna, with 19 species endemic to Madagascar of 3 which are not even found anywhere else in the country. Madagascar is renowned for its exceptional diversity of plants and wildlife, which is increasingly threatened by the progressive degradation of the native forest and wetland habitats. Durrell has been very well received in the Marolambo area and villagers along the Nosivolo river have already developed local initiatives demonstrating their commitment to work together to maintain the quality of the river habitat. They were

particularly concerned about the decline in catches of fish which is an important source of protein and are also interested in conserving their endemic fish. Measures already adopted include a closed fishing period during the spawning season and planting vegetation along river banks as protection from erosion and sedimentation. They have created associations in 80 villages, organised into 19 Federations that cover the 130 km along the river.

In 2007 through previous JOAC assistance, development aid concentrated on organising a major treatment campaign to reduce the parasitic water-borne disease schistosomiasis, and to support agricultural and school projects in 23 villages. In 2012 Durrell is continuing to support this through the establishment of piped water to schools and their villages as diarrhoea is a chronic ailment in the riverside villages from drinking the river water.

**The decisions of the Commission will not be presented to the Assembly for endorsement as it was the Assembly who endorsed the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission (Jersey) Law 2005 (P.14/2005) its approval for the Commission to manage and administer the monies voted annually by the States of Jersey for overseas aid.**