



Economic and International Affairs

Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Public Hearing

**Witness: The Minister for
International Development**

Thursday, 19th September 2024

Panel:

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade (Chair)

Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement (Vice-Chair)

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North

Witnesses:

Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin, The Minister for International Development

Mr. E. Lewis, Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid

Mr. D. Melville, Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid

[12:35]

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade (Chair):

Minister, thank you for coming to talk to us today for this quarterly hearing.

The Minister for International Development:

Pleasure.

Deputy M. Tadier:

We will deal with formalities now, so I am Deputy Montfort Tadier. I am the Chair of the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North:

I am Deputy Max Andrews, panel member.

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central:

Geoff Southern, panel member.

Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Karen Wilson, Vice-Chair.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Over to you just to introduce yourselves, please.

The Minister for International Development:

Deputy Carolyn Labey, Minister for International Development and Chair of the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Good afternoon. Edward Lewis, Interim Executive Director of Jersey Overseas Aid.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Afternoon. Doug Melville, I am one of the 3 non-States commissioners on the commission and serve as Vice-Chair.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Welcome to this public hearing; it is being livestreamed. The first thing that I would like to say on behalf of the panel is of course to pass our condolences on for the untimely passing of Mr. Boas. Just from a personal point of view - and I think I speak for the panel - we were very moved by his bravery and the way he was personally. I think that has rightly been recognised in wider Jersey society, but also of course insofar as this panel and your organisation, we know that he will be missed. We did appreciate the way he worked and had such passion for the area.

The Minister for International Development:

Thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. The panel understands of course that life goes on for you and he would be pleased to know that the good work of Jersey Overseas Aid and your wider department, Minister, also continues and is in good hands. Could you talk to us a little bit about the interim appointment of Mr. Lewis, who is with us today, and also can you talk to us about the selection process that will be taking place for the next director?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes. Thank you very much for the opportunity of this forum to acknowledge Simon's work with Jersey Overseas Aid. While commissioners set the vision and strategic aims - guided, it has got to be said, by the director - Simon delivered so much and more than, so yes, he is going to be an extremely hard act to follow. However, J.O.A. (Jersey Overseas Aid) continues with business as usual. Ed was appointed as interim chair during the process we are about to start - we started this week - of appointing a new executive director. We have employed an H.R. (human resources) consultant and we have established the Jersey Appointments Commission and a commissioner appointed to the process. As I say, we are going to start the process ... well, we have started the process this week.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Can we remind ourselves of the changes? Because obviously we have got yourself who is both the Minister and you are the Chair, are you not, of Jersey Overseas Aid?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

We have Mr. Melville, who is the Vice-Chair, with us and there is a position obviously for director and we know that Mr. Lewis is the interim director. Can you remind me, did it used to be the case that there was more than one States Member who would assist the Chair and is that still the case?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes. In the previous government I did have a vice-chair who is a States Member. Yes, I did. That person is still on the commission. He is no longer vice-chair because we were restricted by the numbers of how many we can have in the Executive.

Deputy M. Tadier:

There is one other States Member then who forms part of the ...

The Minister for International Development:

No.

Deputy M. Tadier:

No?

The Minister for International Development:

There is 2.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Could you just remind who they are?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes. It is Constable Philip Le Sueur, the Constable of Trinity, and Deputy Steve Ahier are the 2 States Members and then there is Doug and 2 other non-States.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can you just talk to us quickly about what the interaction is in that structure? What do the 2 other States Members and the 2 non-States Members have in terms of the organisation?

The Minister for International Development:

We all meet as a team and operate as a team. The States Members bring forward certain skills and certain knowledge of what goes on in the States, and equally the non-States commissioners, for example, Doug, who has a significant role outside of his voluntary role for J.O.A., and our other 2 commissioners bring a completely different skillset. We are mindful of the fact that we have got a 2-pronged approach. We are given a grant by the States and we have to distribute it along the lines of our strategic aims in our strategic plan to deliver humanitarian aid and sustainable development and support local charities and volunteers in the field, but also at the same time we are answerable to the taxpayer. Becoming a Minister has made that far more open and transparent.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. I do not know if we have got any questions from the panel on that aspect. No, okay. I am going to hand over to Deputy Andrews, who will ask some questions around your budget allocation.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you, Minister, and your officers for being in attendance today. Minister, could you just explain to the panel what proposals are in the Government budget in relation to international development?

The Minister for International Development:

We set our budget. We tied it to G.V.A. (Gross Value Added) in 2020 because, in reality, our budget was going down and down and down year on year, so we felt if we tied it to G.V.A. and then we agreed that it would be increased by 0.01 per cent per annum, we would try and get it back to increasing ... well, we would get it back to increasing year on year. I mean, obviously the aim at this stage is to reach the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average, which used to be 0.33 per cent, and recently it just went up to 0.36 per cent. So at the moment we have reached 0.29 per cent of G.V.A. The reason for linking it in this way was we felt it was proportionate, and if our economy goes up, our budget slowly goes up with the increments that we have agreed, but equally, if our economy goes down so does our budget. So we felt it is proportionate to the economy. That formula, that agreement, expires in 2025, so we are going to have to negotiate in probably 2025 for the 2026 budget.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Can I just say also the value of tying the budget to G.V.A., it also enables us to benchmark our contributions to other countries and jurisdictions as well, so we have an idea of how we are performing compared to other developed jurisdictions and countries.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, okay. Minister, how confident are you when it comes down to the renegotiation of what you currently have arranged and that there will be benefits for you, as Minister, to maintain funding for all of the states you are supporting and the stakeholders as well?

The Minister for International Development:

Well, I think you can never be 100 per cent confident when you put things to politicians, but I think we have a very strong case. I think what we have got here is a very - what we have now got - good international aid agency.

[12:45]

It is being very well-respected, so reputationally it is good and I would hope to convince ... if I am still sitting around the table at the time, I would hopefully try and convince my fellow Members that we have a responsibility to play our part on the international stage. It might not be a good look for an international centre, as we hold ourselves out to be, to be straying too far away from the O.E.C.D. norms.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Also the panel knows that the Chief Minister has made it quite clear publicly he is looking to secure £15 million in payroll expenditure savings. Do you have any concerns about any cuts potentially happening within your department? If not, why not?

The Minister for International Development:

Currently we have 6 full-time staff, 2 part time and one intern in the office. We were criticised in the 2014 internal audit report that they had serious cause for concern that we were inadequately staffed for the budget that we were looking after. So that was 2014, so we took those recommendations on board and we structured Jersey Overseas Aid in a way and allocated tasks to staff members. I think they are all fully occupied. They are professionally qualified and capable, and what is more, we offer opportunities to local people like the interns and others.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I will just also add to the Minister's point on staffing costs. Our staffing costs represent 4.5 per cent of our overall budget, which is considerably lower than the 7 per cent which most O.E.C.D. countries operate within, so in terms of effectiveness and efficiency and value to the economy, I think we are demonstrating that through what it costs to run Jersey Overseas Aid.

The Minister for International Development:

I have to say, after the restructuring, after the 2 out of 4 scoring from the internal audit in 2014, it has taken some time to get it structured correctly, but in 2022 the internal audit gave us a score of 4 out of 4 and I believe it is one of the only government bodies that has scored full marks.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you very much. Thank you, Minister.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just follow up on some of those stats? So you are saying there is going to need to be a new formula or to revisit the appetite to pay for this again in the next few years, so could you talk us through, first of all, the 0.36 per cent as a potential target? Is that still your initial target, to meet that? If so, by when?

The Minister for International Development:

I do not think we would necessarily be looking for a new formula. I think the formula we have got is a good one and it is making incremental increases, as long as our G.V.A. goes up. Obviously getting to the O.E.C.D. average would be good, but the O.E.C.D. average fluctuates, as we have just seen this year. I mean, it has gone up 0.3 per cent this year. So I think the formula we have got is a good one.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So at the moment, just to clarify, we will be at 0.3 per cent for this year's allocation, is that right, of G.V.A.?

The Minister for International Development:

For next year.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It is 0.29 per cent this year. It will be 0.3 per cent next year.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So in terms of getting ... what is the target that you are looking to get to? Is it the 0.36 per cent or the 0.32 per cent?

The Minister for International Development:

I think achieving the O.E.C.D. average would be good. Reputationally it would be good, but we always say that we do not only offer financial support. The way we have structured ourselves, we also offer expertise and skills in the field.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But there used to be a 0.7 per cent figure that was mentioned as well.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can you talk to us about that?

The Minister for International Development:

Many of the Scandinavian countries reach that and go beyond. The U.K. (United Kingdom), their budget is 0.5 per cent now, spending 30 per cent of their budget in the U.K. with asylum ...

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

And military.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, with asylum seekers, so there is all different ways. You know, you can look at a graph and see all the figures, but I think you need to understand the stories behind all those figures.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, the 0.7 per cent target was one that the U.N. (United Nations) established and it is one that, yes, as the Minister said, Scandinavian countries in particular regularly meet those. But I think 0.7 per cent in this, for us I think as we get to 0.3 per cent ... I think trying to get towards the O.E.C.D. average would be a great milestone, but I think 0.7 per cent realistically would be something that is unachievable.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Of course we know the fact that the O.E.C.D. average can fluctuate. If we say it is at 0.36 per cent and that is the target, how long would it take to get to that, do you think?

The Minister for International Development:

If we use the same formula of 0.01 per cent per annum, it will take 6 years.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Then after that is there a ... you just leave it like that?

The Minister for International Development:

No, I think a week is a long time in politics, Deputy, let alone 6 years.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I mean, I could ask why do we need to do it incrementally? Why could we not just always give the average? So we say: "Last year the O.E.C.D. average was 3.6 per cent, so therefore we will make sure we match that year on year"?

The Minister for International Development:

Well, I think it gives us the opportunity as well if we are taking on bigger budgets, then we have got to ensure that we have the capacity to deal with the monitoring and evaluation of projects, to scoping and all that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just look at it another way as well? The G.V.A. is one thing, but of course the Government, in terms of their allocation of new budgets or any growth, will look at it in percentage terms, so it seems to me that the - correct me if this is wrong - budget from 2024 into 2025 is going up by 10 per cent.

It is going up from £20 million to £22.2 million, but then every year after that it seems to be going up by around about 3 per cent. Does that sound right to you, give or take?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, give or take, but ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

So is there an argument that says that the formula maybe should be linked to government spending rather than to ... we have no control over G.V.A. in the economy, but we do have control ... well, we know what the Government spending is going to be in one given year, and so could it not be that you are allocated a certain percentage of overall government spend?

The Minister for International Development:

That is a formula you secured for the arts. I prefer my formula because I think it is proportionate with what the economy is. I hear what you say, we have got control over our expenditure, but I think ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

What would happen if a part of the economy went up, but say it is a part of the economy which was not necessarily reflected in the tax receipts that Government had, so G.V.A. might go up but Government's budget, for whatever reason, was being cut? Would that pose a problem in a year where a government wanted to make savings but G.V.A. was saying that your budget had to be increased?

The Minister for International Development:

I am not sure. I would have to speak to the economist about that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay. We will leave that for now, but thanks for answering those questions. I am going to hand over to Deputy Wilson.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Okay, thank you. Minister, can you just please outline what the additional grant increases will be used for?

The Minister for International Development:

We will put out calls to ... there is nothing in particular. As commissioners, we sit around the table every month, but every year anyway we consider what is going on in the world, how much we should

allocate to emergencies, how much we have already committed; if there is a 2, 3-year grant, how much we have already committed in sustainable development. Yes, if we could take on more projects, then ...

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It enables us to fund potentially more multiyear international development grants, but the majority of that budget is already committed to existing multiyear programmes as well as unallocated funds for humanitarian disasters, which we do not know when or if they will happen, but it is important to have that resource available to distribute when it is needed as well. So ...

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Do you keep a proportion of that back, do you ...

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, we do.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

... for that particular concern?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, we do.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

What percentage of your budget do you keep back?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Well, our humanitarian budget represents about 25 per cent of our overall budget, of which we will keep back around about 30 per cent un-earmarked in order to respond to rapid onset emergencies, manmade or conflict.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

As you describe, a lot of these are already projects or developments in train. Just in the context of the conversation that we have just had about the variation or potential variation about G.V.A., how do you model that? How do you account for that if you have got long-term plans for development and improvement?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, sure. So every project that we fund has a very detailed budget over 3 or 4 years that we are funding them, so we can forecast exactly how much money is committed next year, the year after and the year after that. Through modelling, we know exactly how much money is needed at the end of each year to meet the needs of the project. So we know next year, for example, how much is committed to projects we started last year and the year before and this year, indeed, and we can work out exactly the projection for expenditure on the development grants, and increasingly with the humanitarian grants as well, as we start to - as all good donors should - implement multiyear funding in protracted crises as well, so we are able to identify and allocate exactly where our funds are going, not just this year, but next year as well.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Does that mean that you are constrained, if you like, in-year as to what kind of new developments you may ...

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Perhaps I can talk to that. From the perspective of commissioners when we sit around the table, that is exactly what it feels like. So in a sense it is like checking out at Waitrose: if the conveyor belt is full, you have got to leave some stuff in the cart until there is room. So every year we work with management to say: "How big is the envelope for this year to put new multiyear programmes into year 1 and to start new ones?" So we always have to have a portfolio of prospective projects that have been worked up and evaluated and scored against the criteria that we set as a board, and then those that pass that threshold - subject to how big the envelope is for that next year - to commit. But we are also mindful that when we commit to them in year 1, there is an expectation on their part that there will be funding available for years 2 and 3, always conditional, of course, on continued funding of the commission. We understand that and so do our partners, but it is run as a multiyear conveyor belt of programmes so that we are always putting high-quality new stuff in the front and managing the inventory that is already there through to conclusion and then through evaluation phase and to feed that learning back into the front of the conveyor belt so that we are always doing better.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Thank you, Doug. Does that mean that for some of those projects that you select that you have to develop some selection criteria that will determine what is viable, even though you may well have had a decision point in time? How do you manage some of the variation; how do you manage some of the difference around your commitment?

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

That is interesting. We are always looking from a few perspectives. One is the mix, and the mix is multidimensional. It is a bit of a Rubik's Cube. You may have noted in our strategy a few years ago

we focused much tighter in terms of the recipient countries that we work with as a commission. That was a very deliberate strategy to create a better focus for the limited resources that we are injecting into this global enterprise of providing this international support. On top of that, the other dimension is the 3 themes that we have developed that very much leverage what Jersey is great at and a bit of its history and traditions as well. So you are always looking to find the right balance. If we are short in a certain jurisdiction, we can see that a couple of years ahead. We are actively looking to develop great new programmes for that jurisdiction. If we are going to be light on dairy - and we never want to be light on dairy, given the history of this jurisdiction - we are actively working up dairy programmes so that we are ready to put enough dairy in this year so that the programme, as it moves through, appropriately represents the countries, the focus, the themes of focus, but at the same time leaves management with the room to manoeuvre on things like humanitarian so that intra-year, when something unexpected happens - and it always does - that we are able to sit and have some room to manoeuvre for that responsive-type funding. Does that answer your question, Deputy?

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

It does. I think really what I was trying to establish was whether you have what I would call an order book, which is that you have got a recurrent programme of work that you would ...

[13:00]

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes. Management is very good at keeping an order book there for us to choose from and approve as needed, yes.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Maybe just to touch on also that that is an area where we have been bolstered enormously by being able to appoint a head of finance and compliance as well, so that has really bolstered our capacity in terms of the financial oversight that is required to have that pipeline in order.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Okay, thank you. The panel also notes that under the service level analysis for the full-time equivalent staff that you have, it has remained constant over the course of the budget. Given the Chair's comments on: "We are in control of our budget and our own internal money" and there has been an efficiency drive, was any consideration given to any reduction of the number of those staff or whole-time equivalents in the international development space at all?

The Minister for International Development:

No, in a word. We feel that we have just reached the capacity where we want to be for our budget allocation. We have got professional staff, but we are also training staff and training people to go out in the field, and the staff are now becoming specialised in our thematic areas and taking particular responsibility for each one. Ed, at this moment in time, oversees everything and the humanitarian budget.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

So you do not anticipate any increases or decreases over time, particularly up to 2026?

The Minister for International Development:

Over time I could not answer because I do not know, but at this point, other than recruiting an executive director, no.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just ask about the 3 themes you talked about? What are they?

The Minister for International Development:

They are Dairy For Development, Financial Inclusion and Conservation Livelihoods. We deliberately chose those themes because we feel we can add the most value; we can bring something to the financial grant. In Dairy For Development, we bring the expertise in the dairy industry here, the R.J.A.&H.S. (Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society). Conservation Livelihoods: we work very closely with Durrell and other N.G.O.s (non-governmental organisations). Financial Inclusion: obviously we work with Jersey Finance Limited and other financial institutions here because they have the expertise, but it is rather nice to be able to give financial services to the poor and not just the wealthy, so ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

What would some of those finance services look like? What does financial inclusion mean in terms of your programme?

The Minister for International Development:

There is the unbanked people in Africa, which 70 per cent are women, so we work with N.G.O.s so that they have got access to micro-loans and financial support so they can take out loans to buy some seeds, for example, to grow crops.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Essentially, yes. Absolutely, it is giving access to basic financial services for populations that are often marginalised and would not ordinarily have that ability to survive shocks, to build resilience to climate shocks. It could be a death in the family; it could be they do not have access themselves to have the control of their own money. A lot of it is to do with financial literacy. Again, it is reaching communities that do not often have the ability to understand the very basic premises of what savings are and what that can do for you and your family as well, but then it is engaging with financial services providers, micro-credit organisations or others, which do not necessarily have products that serve these populations because they think that often there is no real money or profit to be made in serving the poor, but the data shows time and time again that the rate of default is not nearly as high as people assume. So it is tailored products - it could be insurance, it could be credit, it could be savings products - that enable these people to get a step on the financial ladder. Once that is established, they can then lead on to engaging with more formal services so they can open bank accounts, they can invest in their small businesses, they can get access to loans so their children go to school, they can cover the basic needs of a household and they can have insurance, again which means they can survive shocks, which means when something does happen, they are not brought down into levels of poverty and they can survive that shock.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Who provides those banking services and the loans?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Different financial service providers, sometimes formal banks as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

In Jersey or in Africa or wherever the ...

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

No, these are in countries that we operate, yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So if we are talking about an African country, how does Jersey's intervention change them from not providing services to providing services for people?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Well, I think it demonstrates that there is a viable market and a profit can be achieved, so that is an incentive for these organisations to be involved. It is not us engaging directly with these financial service providers, it is us through a specialist financial inclusion organisation. They are the

implementing agency, so with our grant that we give to them, they will then go and implement in-country through their networks and through their relationships with the relevant financial service providers.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just ask a general theme? This is not meant to come across in any way confrontational, but I know that the Minister has been very clear about the barrier between trade and aid, so you do not deal with trade, you are on aid, you are there to provide aid, but to what extent could these themes be seen as being quite close to the trade that Jersey might wish to engage in with certain countries? In fact, if we develop that in terms of if we consider countries in which ... we might take Rwanda as an example, so where you might be involved from an aid point of view but where the Government might be involved from a business point of view and in trying to encourage business links which hopefully benefit both sides, is there anything that you need to be aware of when dealing in those countries where aid and trade might be going on?

The Minister for International Development:

I think we are very clear, and it is the beauty of having an independent organisation such as J.O.A. with independent commissioners. I mean, we have a clear strategy. We do not go into countries because our Government wishes to do trade there, we go into our countries. Our countries are chosen strategically around the commissioners' table because we can support them with our chosen themes. That is how we deal. If then External Relations want to point to our projects or Economic Development want to point to our projects if they are in-country to say: "This is the investment that we have made and this is what we do in Sierra Leone" or whatever, then that is up to them. So it is like we will run our show, but if they want to use it to showcase what Jersey does, our contributions, then that is just fine, but not the other way around.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I think it is worth stating that we engage with External Relations on a monthly basis and we talk about our different programmes and where there might be touchpoints. It is not an official bind, it is just to know where other organisations that represent Jersey are present, so we do have monthly meetings to discuss that.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

There is no question what we do is about the reputation of the Island, and to the extent that an enhanced reputation internationally creates business opportunities, that is welcomed and wonderful, but it is not the criteria that we use in the selection of our programmes, which are really - very tightly on the criteria that we use, Deputy - intended to have the greatest impact of Jersey taxpayers' money

on development impact. But if there is collateral reputational benefit, we welcome that. In fact, we leverage that to the extent we can.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Chair, could I just pick up on the point around impact, because I think very often Government and the Assembly can be quite insular in terms of reinforcing the fact that we have made an impact in some shape or form. How do you intend to broaden that communication such that the wider public really get this and really understand why the investment and why the connection between economic development and the financial services industry is really important?

The Minister for International Development:

This part is quite an uphill struggle, trying to get people ... and we are going to start with States Members hopefully in the autumn, but certainly at the beginning of the year. Simon and I gave a presentation a few years ago. We have recently - well, not so recently, about 3 years ago - set up J.I.D.N. (Jersey International Development Network). We have newsletters going out and people sign up if they are interested in international development. They sign up and we get speakers over, international development speakers, or they might talk about emergencies or why giving cash is better than goods and so on and so forth. They usually sell out events.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Last week was.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We touched on this, I think, at the last Scrutiny meeting, about how we, as an organisation, engage with the public to infer the impact that we are having and that we are good value for money. I think, as the Minister said, the J.I.D.N. network is one. We try and aim to do 3 or 4 a year. In fact, I think the Minister has one just in time for next week, when we are talking about women's empowerment through financial inclusion, so members of the public can come and hear from leading experts who deliver programmes on behalf of Jersey Overseas Aid in Jersey and the difference that they are making to women in these low-income countries. It is not an opportunity for us to bandstand and just talk about how great we are. It is genuinely an opportunity for the public to ask difficult questions of us, for exactly that: how do we measure impact; how do we know that the money that we are distributing is being used for the purposes and it is reaching its intended goal? So we have nurtured that forum very carefully because we really look forward to engaging with the public and having those difficult conversations because we are confident that we can demonstrate exactly why we are good value for money and why we are very impactful as well. Just to go on to how we are measuring or reaching high numbers of the population, we launched our community work projects just last week and we had almost 200 people, which I think is almost double what we had the year before. There

is genuine traction that we are enjoying enhancing and amplifying now. Again, that comes down to the staff and the fact that we have a communications and outreach officer, who is able to invest in that. Doug, sorry.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

But that is the getting the word out. There needs to be a word to get out and I think it is something that ... Ed, perhaps you are being very modest. You have a specialist on your team that is about monitoring and impact ...

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, absolutely.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

... which is something we, as a strategic decision, made to resource a few years ago because you needed to have the credible content to share with everyone on the question of impact. I think we have come a long way on that.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Absolutely.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Now we see, as a board, the actual impact feedback on the programmes that we are funding, which feeds back into our selection criteria. It is part of that feedback loop that keeps us continuously improving what we think we can do with a modest-sized team.

The Minister for International Development:

Also with our outreach work we go into schools and contribute to the LEAF programme. We stand on the trade fair or whatever ...

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

The skills show, yes.

The Minister for International Development:

The skills show, that is it, not trade. We have had 1,000 volunteers take part over the years in our community work project, probably more than that now. We have opened up ... we have secured places, annual places, at the U.N. for local people to apply and they can go and work in-field for the U.N. for 2 years, and we have our interns, and we are up to 11 now.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I bring in Deputy Southern, unless you want to ask another question?

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

There was just one very quick question, if I could, which is in terms of measuring impact. Do you measure that in outcome terms or activity terms?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

In outcomes.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Great question.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I mean, we do obviously measure how many activities and outputs have taken place and the targets are set every year, but we measure outcomes. That is very clear from the beginning of giving a grant to an organisation in a clear, logical framework where they very clearly and very comprehensively outline what they are going to measure and how they are going to measure it and how they are going to verify it. We receive those updates every 6 months from the multiyear projects and an independent evaluation is mandatory for every grant that we issue in the development theme.

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

Which you illustrated in your account last time. Thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am just going to pass over to Deputy Southern. I am mindful we have got 15 minutes left, but we would like to focus now on the international development goals of the U.N. and how that influences your work.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, sure.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I just draw your attention to the description of international assistance contained in the Ministerial Plan 2023 to 2027?

[13:15]

So it is the last one, which states: "Standing with Ukraine in its struggle to survive the Russian invasion, adding to the £3.4 million of humanitarian assistance already provided by Jersey, balanced with responding to other global emergencies" such as Sudan, perhaps. How do you achieve that balance between what is an emergency and what is day-to-day business?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

As I said, we allocate 25 per cent of our annual budget towards humanitarian relief, so that is ring-fenced for providing life-saving assistance for affected populations. In the Ministerial Plan we had highlighted the need - the ongoing need - to address the conflict in Ukraine and that is something that we have continued to do this year and since its outbreak in 2022. That has been achieved through a tripartite agreement through the Government of Jersey, who allocated an additional £1 million to us, a public appeal through the Bailiff's fund and our own allocation from our humanitarian budget. We oversaw that, and I think that was £3.5 million. I can say we are just under £4 million now in terms of humanitarian assistance that is being directed to Ukraine. So we will maintain that as long as the population is in need and we will continue to use the partnerships we have established with humanitarian agencies like the United Nations and the Red Cross and others. So that 25 per cent is ring-fenced for humanitarian relief and we have an idea of the proportion that is needed for long-term development grants as well.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I just ask how the Bailiff's fund works in conjunction with your organisations?

The Minister for International Development:

The Bailiff puts out an appeal if he feels it - the emergency, the crisis, the war - warrants it. He will put out an appeal and collect monies via Side By Side, which is a charity that physically collects it. He will then come to us for guidance and support in how and where to allocate those funds like, for instance, in Ukraine or when there was the earthquake in Nepal and things like that.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

The Bailiff needs to sign off on those allocations as well.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, because we will obviously have the contacts with the N.G.O.s who can reach and establish exactly what is happening on the ground.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can I then draw your attention, Minister, to the Sustainable Development Goals that you have signed up to, which include reduced inequalities, prime of which must be income equalities, I would imagine ...

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

... and ask where that has been? It has fallen off the Government's list of aims, so where it fits now in promoting equality in our local society as well as abroad.

The Minister for International Development:

We use our themes in our countries. That is what we do and that is where we can bring value to, so we have done this pie chart. We have got our 3 thematic areas and the 2 top goals, I guess, that we reach with all 3 of them is poverty and gender equality. We can sort of look at the others. We can go through the other goals systematically - and we do when we are looking at each project - which ones tick off various goals, but I would say that the no poverty and gender equality are the 2 that are current in all.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sorry to interject, Deputy, but with your 3 themes, I get that those are a useful starting point, but let us say there is a farming community that just does not do dairy, they have sheep or they are arable.

The Minister for International Development:

Like in Sierra Leone, yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So would you be able to bring other expertise in that area? You would not try and force Jersey cows on to people who do not want them is what I am asking.

The Minister for International Development:

No, absolutely not. If their habitat is not conducive to a dairy animal, absolutely not. In Sierra Leone, for example, we do not have any dairy projects, but we do Conservation Livelihoods, so that is where we would do horticulture, we would do Financial Inclusion because there are many, as I said, isolated areas, especially among women that are unbanked and cannot access financial security.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes. All the projects that we support are done in collaboration with the communities that they serve, so it is highly unlikely that there would be an intervention where a family was not in need of a cow, if that was a cow project, if you see what I mean. It is all done in conjunction with the communities and the local authorities in-country.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Your question hits on the change in this organisation in 10 years: 10 years ago we may have had someone from the Island standing in that field going: "This field needs a cow" and then comes back here and advocates for us to send a cow through a local N.G.O. to that field. We have now pulled it back and said: "No, these 3 themes are about focus, these 6 countries are about focus" and they are specifically determined so that we can magnify the impact of what we do. With every taxpayer pound spent, we are picking that focus, picking the right local partners, who are working to find the fields where what we bring to the table can have that greatest impact. In a way, we are leveraging their expertise in the field, not trying to duplicate it or project it from a position of distant ignorance, quite frankly. I think now, as an organisation, it has totally revolutionised what we do and how we do it and created tremendous leverage for such a small team and a modest contribution. We punch way over our weight. Overused phrase, totally get it. It is true here because we are not trying to do it all ourselves. We are picking our spots and working with the right partners and constantly getting better, to where now we get sought out for expertise in those areas of discrete focus.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sorry, I know I interrupted. Do you want to carry on, Deputy?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister believe that the 17 goals are achievable? If so, can she give an indication how they might be?

The Minister for International Development:

Achievable by us, all of them?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

You can start there.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think it is globally, is it not? How would you monitor in fact whether any of your projects are meeting any or all of those 17 goals?

The Minister for International Development:

We do monitor that. I think we showed you ...

Deputy K.M. Wilson:

You did, yes.

The Minister for International Development:

Did we give you last time our huge book? We relate each project to one of these goals or in many cases several of them.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Going back to Deputy Southern, I think in his original question he touched on the fact - without wanting to be overly political, but I think it is relevant - to what extent do you think Jersey needs to lead by example? If there are any of these 17 goals that we are not necessarily doing or applying as a community ... and we could of course take in number 10, which is "reduce inequalities" and we know that used to be part of the Government's priorities and that has been dropped as a priority now. Do you think it is important that, generally speaking, we lead by example in our own community when trying to promote these U.N. goals elsewhere?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

That was an easy question, was it not? Maybe we can talk in the future about bringing back some of those then. I am mindful we are getting towards the end, but what measurable and lasting contributions do you think that you hope to make towards these goals? Are there any particular goals in there that you are looking at which you might think are either achievable or can be impacted on most in the next 5 years?

The Minister for International Development:

Like I said at the beginning, I think all our themes contribute to the no poverty and gender equality, all of them. I mean, we are not ...

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, I would say gender equality in particular is a cross-cutting theme, like the Minister said, through all of our areas, but I think the financial inclusion theme in particular and the focus we have on giving women more ability to control their income and use that money for their household, and data shows time and time again that they invest in education, they invest in healthcare. It gives them more ability to have their own businesses and have more community capital. We are moving to all 17 of them,

absolutely, but I would say gender equality in particular is one that a lot of our programmes focus on. I would again implore you to come to the talk next Thursday to hear more about exactly how that is being achieved with our funds.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

There is also another aspect to the answer, in that every programme that we fund achieves that objective at the level of the community. It may not show up in the national stats against S.T.G.s (Sustainable Development Goals) in recipient countries, but in the communities that we are supporting, I can confidently say from our board table every programme that we are delivering is alleviating poverty, is alleviating gender inequality and selectively is achieving some of these other S.T.G. goals. But at the level of communities, at the level of families, at the level of local partner organisations, that is our part. There are other agencies around the world, there are other governments around the world picking up their share and doing their own approach and their own focus. We are accountable for ours and I think Jersey can be justly proud of that piece that is rightly ours and how it is developed and how it is grown and, frankly, the confidence that I think the residents here can have in how much we do with what we are given. That is a choice. I mean, what we are given as funding is a choice, a political choice. Whether it is by formula or every year, it is a choice. I think it is a good one. I think there is reputational benefit. Our job is to ensure that you are confident the impact is what we say it is and what it should be and what it can be going forward. If you give us more, we will have greater impact toward those objectives.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Minister, there is a question. It is a different area now, but very quickly before we finish and then we will just sum up and see if there is any other areas. We know that war is proliferating in the Middle East and we know the war in Gaza is continuing, I would say with devastating humanitarian consequences, and we have seen that has extended into Lebanon. Are you involved in any humanitarian aid in that area?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, we are. We have been for many years, but I guess you are asking since 7th October or ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, we have been involved in grants, 5 grants so far.

Deputy M. Tadier:

When was the last one given?

The Minister for International Development:

The last one was given in the last month.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It was given last month. The agreement is pending, and it is to the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs for a pooled fund based in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Do you come under any political pressure either internally in Jersey or externally about allocating in those areas, given the fact that they are politically charged?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, we did, not so much political, but certainly we hear from members of the public who do not necessarily agree with us.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Presumably you do not get those same concerns around Ukraine, for example?

The Minister for International Development:

No, not to that extent.

Deputy M. Tadier:

You do not get pro-Russians saying: "You should not be giving money to the Ukraine"?

The Minister for International Development:

Well, it has happened, but in the conflict in Gaza it has been, yes ...

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We recognise it is a very emotional, very evocative, very difficult and sensitive subject.

Deputy M. Tadier:

How do you deal with that then?

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Well, we stick to the humanitarian principles of which we are guided by and the fundamental one is humanity and every civilian life is worth saving. That is supported by impartiality and neutrality and

independence and we support those agencies that adhere to those principles and are driven by need. That is a binding oath as an agency to serve the most vulnerable people.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is there ever a question of conversations being had with ... I mean, obviously you are not just chairing, Minister, for International Development, you are a Minister in your right. Are conversations had about: "We know this is not within Jersey's gift, but maybe Government should stop supporting conflicts that result in such catastrophic civilian deaths"?

The Minister for International Development:

I have not been privy to those conversations, if they have taken place.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I know I am probably getting into territory which is slightly outside of our remit, so I will stop it there, but I am pleased to hear about the aid that is going into many places, including into the Middle East. Can I just ask my colleagues if they have got any further comments? No. We thank you for your time today. We could have maybe allocated more time for you. I think we have covered everything, but we could have gone into more detail. I thank you again for your time and your energy in these areas today.

Interim Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Thank you very much.

Non-States Commissioner and Vice-Chair, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Thanks for your time.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, thank you very much.

[13:30]