



Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for International Development

Thursday, 27th February 2025

Panel:

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade (Chair)

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North

Witnesses:

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

Ms. G. Challinor, Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid

Ms. F. Roberts, Administration and Research Officer, Government of Jersey

[15:00]

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

Thank you, Minister, and your officer. Welcome to this panel meeting with the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel. We are live-streaming at the moment, so I will go through the formalities just to introduce our panel. It is just myself, Deputy Tadier, chairing today and my colleague ...

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

Deputy Andrews.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you, and I will just pass over to you for ... we know who you are but I will let you introduce yourselves for the record.

The Minister for International Development:

I am Carolyn Labey/ I am Minister for International Development. I lead on the Island Identity Project, which I guess is relevant if you are asking me questions about that, and I am also Assistant Minister for External Relations.

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

My name is Gillian Challinor. I am interim head of Programme at Jersey Overseas Aid.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Today we are going to have a fairly focused hearing as our quarterly hearing. Essentially, we are going to start off with some questions about the international situation as you see it and how that might be affecting your work primarily in terms of Jersey Overseas Aid and international affairs. Then we will move on to the Island identity questions for the second part of the meeting, if that is okay. If I can start off, just to give some context, we know that the world seems to be quite an uncertain and unstable place in certain areas at the moment. We think primarily of what is going on in Ukraine, what is happening in Gaza, but also there have been some questions raised about the Rwanda-Congo situation. Can you provide us an update on the ongoing aid provided to those impacted by conflict; so generally and international emergencies, first of all?

The Minister for International Development:

We have our International Development budget and we allocate a certain amount ... we earmark a certain amount for emergencies at the beginning of the year. Obviously, that budget can change. Usually later on in the year we might make amendments to it, which have an impact on our other allocated budget areas. We allocate to a pool fund because we feel that allocating for emergencies in that way, it allows the agencies to have certainty. They are the ones that know what is going on in the ground. It is in Yemen, Syria, South Sudan. They have the monies there and they can react readily.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Sorry, can I just ask you a question there? You mentioned about potentially having to utilise funds elsewhere. When you do that, are we potentially looking at certain groups being impacted if you are having to pull funds from maybe projects or is this a case of maybe pulling projects from budgets that are not on the front line?

The Minister for International Development:

Again, at the beginning of the year we go through a process of allocating a certain amount of monies to our sustainable development grants, and we always give ourselves a bit of leeway so we can

respond to emergencies later on in the year. I would not say that we are going to leave ourselves short in those instances.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Could you tell us a bit about these pool funds? What does a pool fund mean? How does it work?

The Minister for International Development:

We give some monies to U.N.O.C.H.A. (United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs), which is the organised - I always forget - co-ordinated humanitarian assistance. They will be working in particular areas of conflict and emergency.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So they essentially choose where the money goes, so does that in some ways help depoliticise? I am presuming that sometimes you would come under pressure as a Minister to fund certain responses or not to fund certain, depending on the politics.

The Minister for International Development:

Indeed.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Does that, therefore, maybe take some of that heat out and you can just say: "Actually, we do not need to make that decision about crisis response" or would you still direct that in a way?

The Minister for International Development:

There are different organisations that do different things. For example, the U.N.H.C.R. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) deal with refugees. We know there is desperate need to help the refugees in Bangladesh and South Sudan. We will allocate a certain amount of monies there. If they are not earmarked for specific things, we know that they are going to help refugees, but we are non-specific as to how.

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Just to add to that, the way that the U.N.O.C.H.A. operates is that they have their own network of local N.G.O.s (non-government organisations) who are on the ground who are vetted. It does take the pressure off in terms of the due diligence because we know the practices and the processes that they will go through to vet those agencies that are working on the ground who have the speediest response in an emergency.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Could you tell us, since the last hearing that we had with you on 19th September, any specific details of work that has been carried out since then? Any examples?

The Minister for International Development:

Emergency work?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes. Or areas ...

The Minister for International Development:

Since our last hearing we have obviously been given our budget for this year, so we can make contributions to those pool funds. We make them at the beginning of the year, because there is not much point in having them at the end of the year, where they can plan; so we have allocated those monies.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Now can I ask about ... if you can give an update on Jersey's response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. I think in our last hearing it was noted that there was an agreement regarding a pooled fund based in the occupied Palestinian territories, and that was pending with the U.N. (United Nations). Is there any update on what is being done in Gaza and in that area?

The Minister for International Development:

No, there is nothing much more to report. I do not think we have allocated any direct funding since then.

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

There is a pooled fund that we have £200,000 committed to for the occupied Palestinian territories with U.N.O.C.H.A., but it is not direct funding, it is through the O.C.H.A. pooled fund.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Has that been allocated yet?

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It has been allocated. I think the grant agreement is in process, that one, in February. But there was another one last year as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So the one last year went?

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

When did that go, roughly? Is that towards ...?

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I will have to check.

The Minister for International Development:

I will have to come back to you on that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is not of utmost importance, but it would be good to know. There is no hold-up around that £200,000 that is going to go into the O.C.H.A., is there?

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It is just the grant agreement process can sometimes take a few weeks to go through.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Where is the delay? Is that from Treasury?

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

No, I do not think it is from Treasury. It is pencilled to go out in February. I think that one is in process. It is just getting the signatures signed on both sides.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Well, we have only got one day of February left, so do you think it will go out in February, Minister?

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It has been committed in February.

The Minister for International Development:

Commissioners made the decision, so it is just the process.

Deputy M. Tadier:

To clarify, is that money that you already hold? It does not need to be sent to you from Treasury; you have got the money?

The Minister for International Development:

Well, the Treasury hold our monies.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Right, so you have not been ... have you been allocated your budget for the year? Have you been given your budget for the year yet?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, in Treasury.

Deputy M. Tadier:

They just have not released it?

The Minister for International Development:

Well, as Gilly said, it is going through the process of getting all the paperwork done. It is imminent.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But you do not think there is any political hold-up?

The Minister for International Development:

No.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Will you update us when that has been done?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, sure.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If I can just ask now about the conflict that is happening in between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the armed groups, what is sometimes called the rebels - the M23 rebels - who many believe are being backed by Rwanda. I note that there was a question that was written and submitted by Deputy Jeune, which you were down to answer as an Assistant Minister. If I can refer to that, because I do not think it got asked, perhaps because Deputy Jeune wanted to wait for the Minister to return. She asked whether that situation is having any particular impact on the bilateral

relationship between Jersey and Rwanda, which was enshrined in 2016 in its M.O.U. (memorandum of understanding). I know that you are not answering this in your capacity as External Relations, but insofar as it might relate to your J.O.A. (Jersey Overseas Aid) activities. She asked whether or not this was maybe inadvertently supporting or legitimising the actions that may contribute to regional instability. Do you have any concerns, first of all, about what is going on in that area?

The Minister for International Development:

I have plenty of concerns of what is going on in that area, and we are watching it very closely. But speaking for Jersey Overseas Aid/International Development, we are not bilateral donors. Unlike the U.K. (United Kingdom) Government and other Governments, we give no monies to the Rwandan Government. All International Development monies go to N.G.O.s that we work with on the ground to help impoverished people. So as far as that goes we are continuing to monitor the situation, but that does not affect the Government and what is happening allegedly.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Am I correct in thinking that you have 5 target countries that you have relationships with?

The Minister for International Development:

We have 6.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Six. Can you just remind us who they are?

Deputy M. Tadier:

They are Rwanda, Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Nepal. So 5 in Africa.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Five in Africa. In terms of your relationship with Rwanda, can you just describe that to us? What does that involve in real terms?

The Minister for International Development:

So we have always had a good relationship with Rwanda, quite a long one. We started our dairy for sustainable development there back in 2005, I think it was, with one artificial insemination technician that we sent out there to train locals in that field. Since then, we have engaged in programmes with other agencies, including the R.J.A.&H.S. (Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society), and at the minute we have 4 dairy for development programmes in Rwanda.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Have you got any concerns that - maybe this can be for your department or for Government more generally - their relationship with Rwanda, given that Rwanda is increasingly being seen as a bad actor internationally in the conflicts with Congo, have there been any concerns raised around the Council of Ministers about either changing that relationship or using any influence to raise concerns with Rwanda directly?

The Minister for International Development:

There has not been anything around the Council of Ministers thus far. As I said, International Development deals with the agencies, not the Government, but wearing an Assistant Minister's hat, the M.O.U. that was signed in 2016 was superseded last year when the Minister for External Relations signed a new M.O.U. with the High Commissioner of Rwanda in the Island over here.

[15:15]

That does not have any financial implications. It is more diplomatic and to work with the country and extend dialogue. That would be a means of expressing our thoughts about the situation.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Can I ask, Minister, have you ever found that the Council of Ministers has been in this paradoxical position, for instance, where the Minister for External Relations recognises the legitimacy of a Government that he is in correspondence with, and then from a J.O.A. perspective, of course, then you look at potentially the way how the Government is acting and the impact that is having on some of the people that you are also trying to help as well?

The Minister for International Development:

The whole purpose of setting up Jersey Overseas Aid as a commission in the way it is, is to remove it from that political element. So the governance of Jersey Overseas Aid, it is governed by 6 commissioners; 3 States and 3 non-States. While we recognise that our funding is first and foremost for the beneficiaries, for the people we are trying to help, we are also answerable to the Jersey taxpayer. We have to consider value for money and working with the properly-vetted agencies that we work with to fulfil the aims and the objectives that are set out in our strategic plan. That removes the political influence, if you like, because, as I have stressed, we do not deal with the Rwandan Government. The Minister for External Relations, however, does.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just ask, I have certainly had correspondence from a Jersey person and they have informed me that one of the Parish churches, for example - I will not necessarily name the church - but it has a relationship with an Anglican in a city in the Republic of Congo, which is Goma. We know that

Goma was one of those towns which was recently attacked. We saw on the news there were some terrible scenes where young children have lost limbs - the ones that have not died - and that is at the hands of the M23 rebels. If we have got a situation where either directly or indirectly Jersey is doing business or providing economic support one way or another for Rwanda, which is then funding rebels, is there a moral responsibility to reconsider programmes that involve Rwanda, do you think?

The Minister for International Development:

Commissioners are always looking and considering their countries and indeed their themes. We are due next month to look at our strategic plan to refresh the countries that we are in. But, as I said, we have, for example, 4 dairy food development programmes in Rwanda at the minute. What we really do not want to do is what the U.S. (United States) are doing, is just withdraw everything. Because at the end of the day Rwanda is the 162nd out of 193 countries on the H.D.I. (Human Development Index), that is the poverty scale. They are still a very poor country. However, what is going on we obviously have to consider that aid workers have been killed in Goma and there have been at least 3,000 deaths. But the Minister for External Relations, as I said, they have no financial impact there. Their job is diplomacy and dialogue with the country.

Deputy M. Tadier:

In terms of aid to Congo, do you provide any aid to the Congo?

The Minister for International Development:

It is not one of our chosen countries, so we do not have sustainable development programmes there. However, I am sure we will be looking in the coming weeks on giving some emergency aid and humanitarian funding there.

Deputy M. Tadier:

There is a wider question here. We are talking about Rwanda and Congo; Rwanda is seen as the aggressor here, directly or indirectly. We have the situation in Gaza where tens of thousands have been killed, but more maimed. The situation in Europe has been quite clearcut with Russia, the bad guys; Ukraine, the good guys up until now. Although the U.S. intervention might have changed that. But is it a problem when western Governments, potentially including our own, are supporting maybe the aggressors that are killing and maiming people and then at the same time we are trying to provide aid? Would it not just be better if we stopped supporting aggressive Governments in the first place?

The Minister for International Development:

As far as I can speak as Minister for International Development, our objectives are clear in that we help the impoverished in the world and give humanitarian assistance and assist with sustainable projects.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay, thank you. Max, do you have any questions at this point?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, just one quick question. You mentioned, Minister, that there are 6 states that J.O.A. are working in, but in all of those states are the elections considered legitimate from a Jersey point of view? Are there democratic elections held or is it an autocracy in some of the states that we are dealing with?

The Minister for International Development:

I think they are mixed.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Do they have good turnouts like we do in Jersey?

The Minister for International Development:

There is a point.

Deputy M. Tadier:

You would not necessarily want 100 per cent turnout, I suspect.

The Minister for International Development:

Like I said, they are mixed.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Do you think that potentially has an impact when we are looking at taxpayer funds being used in countries that are autocratic and are the right people receiving the funds that should be distributed for them?

The Minister for International Development:

It could be argued that the stable approach of a Government has advanced it quite considerably in the years that a particular Government has been in power.

Deputy M. Tadier:

This is a valid question. I think lots of members of the public, and it has been addressed before, so I think we understand the answers, but it would be helpful to know about the safeguards. I suppose there is a paradox in the sense that the countries which need the most support are the ones where the government infrastructure is either not there or it is subverted or it is corrupt in some cases. Can

you talk to us about what safeguards there are around making sure that we still help countries where it is possible but that money is directed where it is used on the ground rather than being siphoned off?

The Minister for International Development:

I think it is, especially if you take Ethiopia, for example. There is lots of troubles there at the minute. Gilly has recently returned from there. But we deal, as I say, with the agencies, the N.G.O.s on the ground who assess the needs. Our partners that we are working with, we do all the due diligence on them and we assess the needs in a given place, and those are the people we help.

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

If I might add, I have been in Rwanda recently and Malawi recently, and if you are asking about the safeguards ... so the purpose of the visit that I was on was to carry out project assessments for potential projects. We meet with the international N.G.O. partners but also their downstream partners, which are national or local N.G.O.s that they partner with. We spend many hours, after sifting through the paperwork that they give us, asking them about anti-money laundering, terrorist financing, policies and processes that they have in place and we have to have those on record submitted to us. But not only do we ask to see the policies, we ask the N.G.O.s and the practitioners to talk us through their processes and how they handle money, how they ensure safety of cash, how they ensure safety of their staff members, and many areas that we cover during that assessment.

Deputy M. Tadier:

You presumably follow up to look at outcomes and get regular updates.

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, so that is the assessment that we would carry out prior to any kind of agreement. Once we have carried out our due diligence, that gets written up into a book that is handed to our board of commissioners who review that plus all of the proposal documentation. Once a project has been agreed, then we follow up every 6 months with reports that they send to us that are quite detailed, including financial reports, regular externally audited accounts, as well as external valuations carried out midpoint and at the end of the project.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. I want to ask about the recent developments in the U.K. foreign policy in regard to overseas aid. You will be aware, Minister, that the U.K. has made what they call a tough decision to significantly reduce their overseas aid budget to direct that towards defence spending, not without of course some U.S. (United States) pressure for that. Does that have any implications either for

Jersey in terms of the work that you are doing or just for the wider situation in terms of international development, do you think?

The Minister for International Development:

I think it will inevitably have an impact on us, although the U.K., unlike the U.S., who have demanded a 90-day freeze and have asked for all their humanitarian workers to return home, the U.K. have at least said that they are going to ... while the announcement was yesterday, they are going to reduce their aid budget by 2027 to 0.3. It is going to be a gradual thing. However, I have little doubt that that will have an impact. Indeed, we are seeing that the implications of the U.S. withdrawing is having an impact. We are getting inquiries from humanitarian workers, projects that have just had to stop. The agencies are contacting us to see if we can do anything, any bridging support, and as ...

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Do you think you are in a position where you can provide that support to them?

The Minister for International Development:

We would have to assess each project individually.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Obviously, Jersey cannot make up the shortfall in terms of money. Does it have a knock-on effect, though, on the agencies that you work with in terms of their viability, whether they will still exist in a year or 5 years' time?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, it will undoubtedly. Gilly is just back from Malawi, and it has had an impact on the agencies there, like their core work. There are 2 agencies that we work with that get funding from U.S.A.I.D. (United States Agency for International Development). It has had an impact on them, so we are having to reassess, because we co-fund with them. We are going to have to assess what we do there.

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, one of the organisations that I have been speaking to recently, which is less impacted by U.K. aid but more U.S.A.I.D., is Mercy Corps. We have a programme with them currently in Ethiopia, but that is in its final year. Our project is separate to the U.S.A.I.D. project. However, there are a lot of staff and core costs that are covered by U.S.A.I.D. They have assured us that they can continue because we are in the final year. We are fortunate in that sense that the work will not be lost. But

obviously it is very devastating for them as an organisation. Whether or not they will be able to continue in Ethiopia long term, I do not know.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Minister, you touched on about the 2 agencies just a moment ago. What do you think the solution is to support those agencies, obviously when they are in a position now where there is uncertainty about funding?

[15:30]

The Minister for International Development:

It will depend how much we are looking at and what will be required to bridge the gap, if indeed it is a gap. It is meant to be a 90-day freeze, but who knows? We are just going to have to monitor and assess, see what it would take, whether we took over the project. But it might be too big for us. Let us not forget the U.S.A.I.D. is worth 71 billion dollars.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am guessing that ultimately we want to live in a world where, although there is inter-dependency between countries and co-operation, it would be ideal to get to a situation where countries can stand on their own 2 feet and ideally not need international aid or it is vastly reduced because they have internal systems that work. To what extent did the U.N. sustainable development goals seek to achieve that? Where are we with the support that you are giving for those goals in certain countries? Can you give us any examples?

The Minister for International Development:

I think we have given you our huge "sift" document at one stage. I do not know if you have it, but these are the sustainable development goals. With each of our projects, when we go out to assess them and decide whether we are going to support the projects, the officers go through a very in-depth look and assessment, but they also assign the sustainable development goals, whichever of those goals these cover.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Are you prioritising any of these 17 goals in particular in the next year?

The Minister for International Development:

No, that is not how we do it. We choose the countries and the themes. As you will see, we have put here which ones are dairy for development, financial inclusion and conservation livelihoods. So which themes will be touched by each of our projects.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I know you mentioned in the previous hearing about wanting to increase the number of dairy programmes. I just wanted to know whether you could update us as a panel on that?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, so we wanted to. We put out a call for interested agencies that had projects to fund last year, and that is what the assessments are happening now. We will be looking at probably more dairy for development projects than we have recently. But at the minute, we have got 9 dairy for development projects in 5 countries - not Sierra Leone - and they are multi-year projects.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Have you set the tangible targets for this year to achieve those goals? How would you monitor the progress of those?

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

The sustainable development goals?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes.

Interim Head of Programme, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We have what we call the standardised indicators, which I think we maybe have mentioned, where we are asking all of our partners now to report against specific targets. Prior to that, each partner would deliver us a log frame with their own outcomes and indicators, which would all be measuring slightly different things in terms of food security or income generation, number of partners worked with, or number of training days happening. We have now asked them to complete our standard indicators as well as completing their log frame. We do not set targets because every single project will be different. A dairy for development programme will have a different number of beneficiaries and be supporting people in a different way to say a financial inclusion programme. But there are some which are common across all. So increasing incomes of people and women's economic empowerment are 2 areas. This will be the first year where we will have enough data to be able to put that into our annual report.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So you are monitoring that; that is good to see. Do we have any questions in this area?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Not at the moment, no.

The Minister for International Development:

That is quite a handy chart because the team have put together each of our themes in the boxes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I attended the event at the Arts Centre, I think last year; was it in the autumn? I was quite impressed by, in particular, about getting more women included financially and having bank accounts or credit. Can you remind me which country that was in? Where the project is.

The Minister for International Development:

Opportunity International was Malawi and C.A.F.O.D. (Catholic Agency For Overseas Development) was Sierra Leone.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Are you seeing some tangible benefits and some great success stories from that?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, absolutely. In fact, both of those projects have now completed and they have applied to us for a phase 2, to go to different regions and expand on some of those wins.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is proper grassroots, is it not? So you have villages and towns.

The Minister for International Development:

Absolutely. We have got another J.I.D.N. (Jersey International Development Network) event coming up tonight actually. I know you are busy, but...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Might be too short notice for me, but it looks ...

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, but Deputy Andrews might fancy going along. It is the same format, but this time it is about disability and inclusion.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Great, thank you. Nothing else you want to add on this? Feel free if we have missed anything.

The Minister for International Development:

No, I would just like to say that I had a meeting with Sarah Champion, who is a Labour M.P. (Member of Parliament). I had a meeting with her last week. She is on the International Development Committee and they are doing a value for money look at the F.C.D.O. (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) international development programmes. She asked me lots of questions and I set it out in a letter to her how we do aid, how we implement our aid budget, and we have been asked if that letter can form part of their records, their evidence for their review, so I think that is quite good for Jersey.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thanks. I think what we will do is just ask quickly about the appointment that has been made, are you okay to lead on that?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes. Obviously the panel notes that Edward Lewis has been appointed and I just wanted to know what is Edward intending to do, as he is not here to respond to the question, what are his main goals in his new role?

The Minister for International Development:

Obviously I do not want to pre-empt his answer but I think ... and Ed would be here but he is just returning from Nepal. He has been assessing some programmes there. I think this year is going to be very much business as usual because obviously last year was an extremely difficult year for all of us, for staff and commissioners, with Simon dying. Ed has now been appointed as director, so it is going to be very much him getting used to the role, I think, and we will take it from there.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just ask more generally, were the appointments put out to a wider ...?

The Minister for International Development:

Indeed. Yes, it was advertised internationally and we were overseen for both this appointment and the new commissioner.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Ms. Yun Hulme.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Did it attract many applicants, these roles?

The Minister for International Development:

The commissioner less so because they have to be ... well, both appointments have to be in the Island. But less so the commissioner. The commissioner is an honorary position. Unlike a lot of independent organisations that are funded by the States, my commissioners do not get paid, so less so. But that is not why they do it. Those that do it do it because they really want to. But both appointments are overseen by the Jersey Appointments Commission.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If we have any other questions that we have not got to on this we will send them through, is that okay?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, absolutely.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think we have covered the broad themes so we thank you for your responses. We are going to turn to the also important areas but in terms of much more local focus of course. Can you talk to us briefly about the consultation that you have just completed about the national day and the anthem for Jersey?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, as you know, Deputy, I am very keen to pursue the aims of the Island Identity Project. We had 3 overarching objectives, 7 specific goals, and the Policy Development Board made more than 50 recommendations to various departments; 2 of which were to have a national day and to adopt an anthem for the Island. Bearing in mind we had those 2, so we did a survey to ask members of the public what they felt about Liberation Day, because you are damned if you do damned if you do not. If you do not suggest anything people cannot say yes, no or whatever. The States have been criticised about holding referendums and putting various options to people, so you get various options back. We decided to take the bull by the horns and suggest a day. We suggested Liberation Day, but we also chose to highlight the various alternatives that we would thought of in the Island Identity Report, the 200-pager; the long report, not the summarised document. In that report we had 9 other possible days it could be, but if somebody wanted to come along and suggest something else, that was up to them. We had a very good response to the survey, 2,400 people responded, which on Jersey standards is a good result. I was heartened by the fact that 1,200 were from students, so it shows that young people are engaged or were engaged in the process.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Can I ask, was it put to students in schools that there was a survey and they potentially had the opportunity to respond or was it a case of them just doing it on their own accord?

The Minister for International Development:

No, it was highlighted and the forms were given out and it was up to them if they handed them in.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Did they do them on the form or online or mixture?

The Minister for International Development:

No, most of them did it on the form.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay, and was it primary, secondary, or both?

The Minister for International Development:

Both.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Did you find with the results that you received there was a differentiation between the older age group compared to the students?

The Minister for International Development:

I have not actually analysed that because we did not ask for people's age.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay, so there is no demographic breakdown, is there?

The Minister for International Development:

I am not entirely sure. I would have to ask Freya that.

Administration and Research Officer, Government of Jersey:

We did do a demographic breakdown of results however we can say that over 49 per cent were under 18 because they were from students in school, but we did not want to bias it towards any demographic data.

Deputy M. Tadier:

No, but you could presumably, if you wanted to, extract and say this is the under-18s' response versus the remainder, which may also include under-18s, of course.

The Minister for International Development:

I only used the statistic 1,200 because that was handed in by the schools.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It was essentially a very simple consultation, was it not? Apart from the question about whether you represent an individual or an organisation; represent an individual. It is essentially, should Liberation Day be the national holiday - Jersey's national day rather - and should Beautiful Jersey be formally adopted as Jersey's anthem? Do you feel that you have a mandate to present P.6 to the States asking for Liberation Day to be the national day?

The Minister for International Development:

I think so, yes, because 82 per cent came back and said they would like to see Liberation Day adopted.

[15:45]

Deputy M. Tadier:

What we have noticed there, and this maybe applies to both, you did not ask whether Jersey should have a national day, you just you presumed that we should in a sense and said should Liberation Day be the national day.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, because the Island Identity Report made the case for it. I think the U.K. and Denmark are 2 of the very few countries that do not have a national day.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If I were to say that, for example, if we think of Scotland, what do we normally associate with Scotland in terms of their national day primarily?

The Minister for International Development:

St. Andrew's Day and Burns Night.

The Minister for International Development:

I immediately think of Burns Night but then I struggled to think of ... first of all I have to think who is the patron saint of Scotland and I think okay it is St. Andrew, and when is it. I really struggle to remember so I had to look it up and it is in November. But I know that Burns Night is in January and I know that even if you are not Scottish you probably have some neeps and tatties and maybe a wee dram to go down with it. Was there any alternative day that was put forward in the respondents for a potential alternative or additional day?

The Minister for International Development:

In the report there were 9 alternative days. If people were interested they could read the report. But certainly in the feedback that we got ... I am trying to look for the statistics here.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So these would have all been volunteer because there was no suggestion in the survey about a different day, so these would all be people just volunteering an alternative?

The Minister for International Development:

It was yes, no or what do you suggest? They could have referenced, like I say, for inspiration from the report, where there is a selection of 9 different dates.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If there were a suggestion coming forward that there could be an additional date; for example, we know that the Corn Riots has been gathering momentum in terms of local significance. Do you think that is something that you would be open to consider about how that might sit alongside maybe an official day? So we might have Liberation Day as our St Andrew's Day, but you could have your Burns Night as the Corn Riots.

The Minister for International Development:

Absolutely. There are countries that have more than one national day. France, for example, has V.E. (Victory in Europe) Day, they have Bastille Day, and they have Remembrance Day. There are countries ... America has more than one, India has lots, I think.

Deputy M. Tadier:

There is currently an anomaly, I think, which, if I remember rightly, Chief Minister Terry Le Sueur tried to rectify it but he did not get support, was that if Liberation Day falls on a weekend then no bank holiday substitute is given on the Monday. Is that something that you think might need to be given consideration?

The Minister for International Development:

No.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is not central to this.

The Minister for International Development:

No, it is not central to this. That is the difference between a public holiday and a bank holiday. If it is a bank holiday you get one in lieu, whereas Liberation Day is a public holiday, so it has to be on 9th May. Indeed we have not consulted Chamber of Commerce about having an additional day, so at the minute it is a public holiday.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But you could theoretically have a new day, but it would not have to automatically be a bank holiday or public holiday if we had the Corn Riots?

The Minister for International Development:

You can have both.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Two holidays potentially. We heard it here first. Shall we move on to the national anthem section, if that is okay? They are similar questions really. This was slightly more problematic. You did not get 50 per cent, or you only got 50 per cent saying that that they wanted Beautiful Jersey or Man Bieau P'tit Jèrri, as we might want to call it as well, as the national anthem. Do you think you could have gone ahead and suggested that anyway?

The Minister for International Development:

I did not have the backing from Council of Ministers to go ahead based on those results. However, I did get confirmation from the Council of Ministers that we should issue guidelines because it is an embarrassment when our sports people are collecting medals on the podium and nobody knows what to play. The Council of Ministers have confirmed that they will be issuing guidelines to sports clubs, cultural organisations that if the moment warrants a local anthem to be played then it would be Beautiful Jersey and the chorus.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I suppose the question becomes: what mandate does the Council of Ministers have to issue that guidance? Would it be better to just have a definitive States decision on it after all this time? Is that something you would be open to consider?

The Minister for International Development:

Well, I was considering it. I was considering bringing it forward but with 50 per cent I did not feel it was ... 50 per cent of people coming back saying they considered Beautiful Jersey as the local anthem and 30 per cent said not. I did not feel I had the mandate to put that to the States.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But was there any political opposition, so irrespective of the survey results are there differences of opinion in C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) about an alternative national anthem or the need for one?

The Minister for International Development:

I think everyone recognises the need for one.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If it had been 51 per cent you might have had a technical mandate, it is just that it was not quite enough.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Do you want to carry on with some ... next section? Do you think it is necessary?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Obviously with Beautiful Jersey, it was the former Connétable of St. Saviour who we often hear on Liberation Day, her voice projecting from monitors when we, as politicians, gather outside the Pomme d'Or. I just wanted to have your view on the importance of Beautiful Jersey to you and why you see it being so important to the Island's identity.

The Minister for International Development:

I see us having a local anthem as important to our identity. There are all these little things that make up our identity. If we have nothing, what are we? It sort of helps. The more we harness our identity, the more people can get behind it. It instils a sense of belonging to Islanders, to people who live here. I think these things are good. We ought to be proud of who we are and what we are, and that means people that come and live here too; they can embrace it and feel part of the Island.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In terms of when we are speaking about Island identity, do you think that is covered in terms of Jersey being a cosmopolitan society and that everybody is feeling inclusive with the way how things are?

The Minister for International Development:

You go to somewhere like America and when they play their anthem they all stand up, and they are a cosmopolitan society; they all stand up proud of their anthem.

Deputy M. Tadier:

One of the questions we were going to ask more generally, I think, and Max has touched on it, so this could apply to Liberation Day or whatever the national days are or whatever the sense of identity is. How do we make sure that all of those things are inclusive and representative of all cultures and ethnicities in Jersey? Is it possible to do that?

The Minister for International Development:

If you choose a place to live and work in, I think you go with an open mind to embrace who they are, what they are. If those of us who live here are ... not ashamed but almost feel embarrassed about promoting our own identity, then what do we become?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I guess you call it Island identity rather than necessarily Jersey identity, so people should be able to relate to the fact they live, work in Jersey and in the Island rather than necessarily having to prove they have got generations of roots.

The Minister for International Development:

Quite. No one is asking them to give up their own identity, their own heritage, but I think it is good to embrace where they are living now.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I have got 2 more questions on this. We could talk all day in a sense, we will not though. If Liberation Day becomes a national day, it has been suggested - I think there was a letter in the paper recently - how do we make sure that we do not lose the historical significance of liberation if we repurpose it as a national day?

The Minister for International Development:

I think it will still be called Liberation Day but by being a national day it gives it the significance, in my opinion, it deserves. It is part of our history. Looking forward for younger generations, it instils a sense of freedom and, goodness knows, with everything going on in the world at the minute, I

think it is something that we should be celebrating. The fact that we are a free, democratic society. Sorry, I have forgotten the question as I was rambling on.

Deputy M. Tadier:

No, that is fine. We have seen a note in the accompanying report to the proposition that stated Beautiful Jersey is not taught in all schools, which is I suppose a bit surprising. I would expect it to be taught as part of the Jèrriais programme; I suspect it is. If it were established as Jersey's anthem would this then become part of the Jersey curriculum so at least it would be taught in schools?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, it should be taught. I was reminded last week that people who are now in their 70s, when they went to school over here they had to sing Ma Normandie at the start of the school day. I think we should teach what we are choosing as an informal anthem for now, that ought to be taught, but so could a whole range of other songs be taught. We could have a compilation.

Deputy M. Tadier:

We could have the Internationale in Jèrriais maybe sung, but that might be for the next Government to introduce.

The Minister for International Development:

And Island Home; Badlabecques could put together a compilation of Jersey songs.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. I think that has brought our questioning for today to a close. We may well follow up with some further question areas but I think we have covered the broad themes. Have you got any additional points that you would like to convey to us, Minister?

The Minister for International Development:

No, I am just grateful to anyone ... I should not be grateful, I think we should all embrace Island identity and our culture.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you for attending today, Minister, and Gillian as well. I will ask for the recording to stop. Thank you.

[15:58]