



A Proposed UK Party Manifesto Section on Global Cooperation

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At some point in the next couple of years, the UK is going to have an election. Before then, political parties are going to be working up their election manifestos. In an attempt to save them time, below is a draft section on international cooperation that I hope they might want to cut-and-paste....

The UK is a major force for global cooperation, and that cooperation is increasingly important to sustain the quality of life of people in the UK. To reflect that reality, we will create a new Department for International Development and Cooperation, with oversight of all UK ODA and multilateral finance; cross-government coordination and oversight responsibilities related to global public goods including climate, biodiversity and pandemics; and coordination for policy coherence regarding sustainable development in areas including aid and climate finance, trade and private investment, migration, global health and governance, and education and technology.

Starting with *aid and climate finance*, we will legislate that at least 0.7 percent of UK GNI will be provided in overseas development assistance every year.

Global development is a collective enterprise, and multilateral institutions leverage UK resources. In addition, overseas development assistance usually has its greatest impact when it is used in developing countries by the people living in those countries. Aid also has its greatest impact on global poverty if spent in the world's poorest countries. Given that, we commit:

- ▶ No less than 50 percent of UK ODA will be delivered through multilateral channels.¹
- ▶ At least 60 percent of UK ODA will flow through recipient-executed projects and programs,² and at least two-thirds will be designated 'country programmable' under DAC rules.
- ▶ At least 50 percent of UK bilateral ODA will be allocated to the world's poorest countries—low-income countries—and 90 percent to low and lower-middle income countries.³

1 The current proportion is 38 percent.

2 In 2020, an estimated 45 percent of total UK ODA is recipient executed (assuming 66% of core and bilateral-multilateral funding).

3 This would be up from 50 and 86 percent in 2018.

The legally mandated focus of UK aid efforts will be to reduce the global burden of poverty including inadequate consumption, malnutrition, premature death, illiteracy and innumeracy, and lack of access to basic infrastructure and services. Aid will not be used to pursue short-term diplomatic or commercial goals. Given the considerable dangers posed to aid workers, development objectives and UK international standing when development assistance is used as part of intelligence operations, our new aid legislation will ban that practice.

Climate justice demands more ambitious UK domestic commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while prioritizing the development and adaptation needs of the world's poorest countries that will suffer the most from climate change. We will exclude low and lower-middle income countries from any carbon tariffs, and will champion ongoing UK and multilateral aid support for transition energy technologies including gas-fired power stations in low and lower middle income countries. At the same time, we will also ramp up international financial support for mitigation, but the government will not make the world's poorest pay twice for climate change: suffering the greatest impacts of a crisis created by the world's richer countries while seeing ODA from those same countries diverted toward mitigation efforts. UK ODA-conforming contributions to mitigation will be additional to the 0.7 percent legislated ODA spend. The UK will also back efforts to ensure at least 50 percent of international climate finance is directed toward adaptation.⁴

Beyond aid funding, we will champion major capital increases at the World Bank and regional development banks to provide below-market rate finance for both adaptation and mitigation in middle income countries: up to \$100 billion in additional annual lending over the next ten years at a one-time cost to the UK of [about one-fiftieth that amount](#). We will work with the World Bank, regional development banks and borrower countries to agree terms and conditions that make this financing attractive to borrowers as well as effective in meeting national and global climate adaptation and mitigation goals.

With regard to both poverty reduction and climate, we recognize the role of the private sector as a vital player in sustainable development. At the same time, it is increasingly clear that the public sector will provide the considerable bulk of spending and investment required to mitigate and respond to climate and foster economic and social progress in areas including infrastructure, health, education and welfare. We will significantly reduce the share of UK bilateral and multilateral ODA used to directly or indirectly subsidize private provision of infrastructure and services, and use our shareholding votes against multilateral use of private sector subsidy mechanisms.

⁴ The UK has currently committed to [GBP 2.3 billion](#) in annual climate finance, of which about half is for mitigation, suggesting an approximately GBP 1.3 billion annual cost of this commitment. This compares to a 2021 figure for 0.7% of GNI of [about GBP 16 billion](#).

In *trade*, we will fully implement the “[Nairobi package](#)” of policies designed to make it easier for Least Developed Countries to qualify for trade preferences and enjoy preferential treatment for the services they export (upon joining a customs union with the EU, we will advocate for this to become EU policy). We will also end arms exports to countries that consistently abuse human rights and DfD&C will take over administration the Export Control Joint Unit responsible for licensing dual-use and arms exports.

Regarding *finance and investment*, we will limit and revise provisions in UK bilateral investment agreements that [restrict the economic policy space of counterparts to pursue their development objectives](#) or that impose restrictive intellectual property rights standards beyond WTO TRIPS. We will ensure UK engagement with the Financial Action Task Force is focused on minimizing the impact of regulations on access to financial services in poorer countries. We will introduce stronger legal frameworks to enable the automatic exchange of ownership and tax information and support greater international tax cooperation through the United Nations. We will also ensure future bilateral investment agreements state that signatories cannot mandate covered investments deny employment or equal opportunity on the grounds of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

To fight global gender apartheid—laws that are specifically designed to prevent equal participation in the economy and society covering areas including freedom of movement, financial access and job restrictions—new UK legislation will encourage UK multinationals to mitigate the impact of local discriminatory legislation to the extent possible within the host country’s domestic laws by following a code of conduct regarding women’s employment. The code of conduct will mandate that, as far as is legal, UK-owned firms will guarantee equal employment, pay, promotion and training, and make all reasonable attempts to ensure women can apply to and hold employment positions in order to mitigate the impact of laws and regulations that specifically discriminate against women’s rights. In addition, UK companies will be banned from providing products or services that materially abet violations of women’s fundamental rights in countries practicing gender apartheid.

Regarding *migration*, as the UK domestic population ages, migration will play an increasingly important role in ensuring Britain’s economic dynamism. Migration is also the most powerful single force for global development. Maximizing the benefits of the movement of people to the UK, developing countries and migrants themselves will be a key priority of our government. DfD&C will work with the Foreign Office, the Departments of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Communities and Local Government, the Home Office and others to put in place strategies and policies which will greatly expand the flow of migrants into the UK with the skills required to restore and sustain UK economic dynamism, skills including research and development, management and entrepreneurship, care and health, and green technology.

The government will agree large-scale global skills partnerships with developing countries that will provide support for training in these skill areas as part of new and expanded bilateral migration agreements designed to increase migrant flows with partner countries. These agreements will meet ILO guidance for good practice in bilateral labor agreements. In addition, the government will fully ratify and implement the Migrant Workers Convention and the Migration for Employment Convention, and increase funding to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority to reduce abuse and exploitation of migrant workers. We will revise and simplify the UK's work visa points system to remove the mandatory requirement of a job offer and focus on needed skills and education qualifications. Additional points will be given to women seeking to migrate from countries practicing gender apartheid as well as applicants from least developed countries.

The UK will embrace its international obligations toward refugees, ending third-country relocation programs. It will expand refugee resettlement programs including those for Afghanistan and Ukraine, aiming to at least double the annual rate of asylum grants (which will still leave the UK granting *less than half the per capita average of its European peers*). The government will ensure that 90 percent of initial decisions on asylum are made within six months,⁵ creating asylum processing centers in Calais and other European destinations as part of that effort.

In addition, the government will work to significantly streamline and simplify the visa application process for short-term business and leisure visas with a focus on LDCs, wherever possible allowing for visa-free travel and, where not, ensuring the process can be completed at low cost to applicants and within two weeks.⁶

In *global health* we will support strengthened World Health Organization and International Health Regulations that provide the Organization with the budget and oversight powers to monitor outbreaks and prevent future pandemics while limiting harmful and discriminatory travel restrictions. We will also seek to agree an international treaty on the responsible use of antibiotics.

To strengthen *global governance*, we will support reform of international institutions including the shareholding structure of multilateral finance institutions and membership of the UN Security Council so that they better reflect current global economic and demographic realities. In addition, we will make continuing commitments to the Open Government Partnership in order to ensure the UK is a world leader on government transparency, and provide support to other countries to implement openness reforms. The UK government will convene an international conference to create a Global Gender Equality Partnership, which would focus on generating voluntary, specific and monitorable commitments to policy change from member governments in areas from public sector employment and regulation through childcare. The UK government will advocate for reform of the governance

5 The proportion was 87 percent as recently as 2014.

6 The current service standard (not being met) is three weeks.

of global sporting bodies as well as international participation bans for countries which are clearly contravening the Olympic Charter that “every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind.”

Finally, with regard to *education and technology*, we will mandate fee caps on undergraduate students from LDCs studying in universities in England and Wales set at parity to domestic fees.⁷ We will also significantly increase government support for UK R&D in areas related to global public goods including pandemic vaccines, antibiotics, clean energy and transport, and require that government financed research in these areas is open access/unpatented.

⁷ In 2019 there were approximately 9,000 LDC students enrolled in tertiary education in the UK, many in graduate programs. Domestic undergraduate fees are capped at GBP 9,250, foreign students pay between around GBP10–30,000, although concentrated at the lower end of that distribution. Assume conservatively 6k * GBP7k annual cost, this comes to about GBP 40 million/yr.

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