

## UK INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHITE PAPER - CALL FOR EVIDENCE

STOPAIDS, GNP+, WACI Health, Frontline AIDS, GFAN, INPUD, VSO, Tackle Africa, and Results UK express their support for the important initiative to develop an international development white paper by the UK government. Leveraging extensive experience and expertise across health and development, we present the following evidence.

### PARTNERSHIP

#### Question 1

- **How do partnerships need to change to restore the credibility of international development and the multilateral system and regain the trust of the Global South?**
- **What role should the UK play in this and what specifically should we do differently?**
- **What should we do to ensure we are listening better to those most in need?**

Restoring the credibility of international development and the multilateral system requires a fundamental shift in approach to partnerships and decision-making. To begin decolonising international development we must acknowledge that many development efforts were and still are rooted in perpetuating power dynamics and maintaining control over resources.<sup>1</sup> Recognising the current complex interplay of historical inequities and outdated narratives, reimagined partnerships must ensure the meaningful and equitable inclusion of all stakeholders who have been previously excluded or under-represented in decision-making and governance - particularly including low- and middle-income country governments and civil society and affected communities. Regaining the trust and engagement of Global South stakeholders demands a significant shift in both the structure and culture of institutions and governance bodies to directly prioritise ending inequalities and centring the voices of those most left behind.<sup>2</sup> Partnerships therefore need to evolve to a collaborative approach that values and facilitates genuine cooperation and knowledge-sharing between nations. One such approach is Global Public Investment (GPI) - a concept that focuses development cooperation on addressing inequalities and promoting sustainable development and fosters greater cooperation among all key stakeholders in a global system where all contribute, all decide and all can benefit.

#### **The role of the UK:**

- The UK should focus its international development work on addressing inequalities and their root causes. This means aligning aid with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and fostering policies that promote fair trade, sustainable practices, and equitable distribution of resources.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [Peace Direct: Time to Decolonise Aid Insights and lessons from a global consultation Full Report](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Oxfam Reimagining equity: redressing power imbalances between the global North and the global South](#)

<sup>3</sup> [OECD Focus on Inequality and Growth](#)

- The UK should promote GPI principles and support global south leadership in developing and implementing them to drive greater equality within and between countries and regions.<sup>4</sup>
- The UK should prioritise local expertise and ownership. The UK should invest in and be a champion for community systems and responses and prioritise, connect and, where relevant, integrate these with primary healthcare facilities.<sup>5</sup>

### **Listening better to those most in need:**

Listening better to those most in need requires a fundamental change in power relations and respect for different, often more marginalised perspectives. This means not just listening more or better but reframing the structure and exchange to be a dialogue of equals.

- The UK should actively involve diverse representatives from the Global South in the formulation and implementation of its foreign policies, specifically including the most affected and/or marginalised communities most often left behind.
- The UK should deliberately listen to organisations in low- and middle-income countries to understand how the UK can better structure its bilateral funding opportunities to facilitate and favour the involvement and leadership of organisations in low- and middle-income countries in funding grants.
- The UK should actively and vocally support the greater and more equal representation of diverse low- and middle-income country stakeholders (governments and civil society and most affected communities) in the decision-making and governance of international institutions and processes. Where this may require structural or mandate change to institutions or processes, the UK should be a vocal supporter of such change. Making such changes would bring unique expert perspectives, knowledge and skills that translate to improved programming and [more positive health outcomes](#)<sup>6</sup> - the evidence for this has been repeatedly [demonstrated](#).<sup>7</sup>

## **BIG IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS**

### **Question 2**

- **What are the specific innovative proposals that can accelerate progress in international development?**
- **What initiatives, policies, partnerships, or technologies could result in accelerated progress?**
- **Are there big ideas on which the UK is particularly well placed to play a role?**

Since 2006, Unitaid has collaborated with the UK government to accelerate access to innovation, tackling HIV, TB and malaria, RMNCH and COVID-19. Through extensive collaboration with UK

<sup>4</sup> [GPI for equality and sustainability](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Health Systems Strengthening for Global Health Security and Universal Health Coverage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) P. 24

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/%20documents/2015/JC2725\\_communities\\_deliver](http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/%20documents/2015/JC2725_communities_deliver)

<sup>7</sup> [STOPAIDS 2018: 'HIV, UHC and the Future of Global Health Architecture'](#), page 35

industry and academia, Unitaids' partnerships have increased the cost-effectiveness and availability of health innovations with a cross-portfolio estimated return on investment being between £7 - £20 for every £1 invested.<sup>8</sup> These investments have saved hundreds of young lives through malaria prevention, introducing child-friendly TB treatment in over 120 countries and making 11 million more people aware of their HIV status through self-testing kits.<sup>9</sup> **The UK should strengthen its credibility and leadership role in accelerating progress through sustained financial support to the pathfinder Unitaids which will further leverage British science on the global level and accelerate access to innovative health tools whilst saving money.**

Unitaid maximises the effectiveness of the overall global health response, with its products reaching over 100 million people every year.<sup>10</sup> Reducing the cost and improving efficiencies in health will generate over US\$7 billion in savings by 2023 - accelerating progress whilst saving money to be invested elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> The UK, as a donor to both the Global Fund and Unitaids, should recognise the strong interlinkages and added value between the multilaterals with Unitaids' investments maximising the impact of the Global Fund's investment in accelerating the response and reaching global targets three years faster.<sup>12</sup> **The UK government should re-establish itself as a leading funder of these institutions to ensure meaningful and sustainable progress in global health and the eradication of HIV, TB and malaria.**

Additionally, prioritising health and community systems will enhance innovation and international development outcomes. UK investment into the Global Fund ensures that community systems strengthening is a central pillar to ensuring Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH) in the response to global response to HIV, TB and malaria. Community-led responses, which are championed by the Global Fund, ensure programming is specifically informed and implemented by and for communities themselves and the organisations, groups and networks that represent them.<sup>13</sup> **The UK should recognise that stronger engagement with and investment in communities and civil society in key decision-making processes is critical to developing innovative solutions that are effective and respond to the needs of those most affected, thereby accelerating progress in international development.**

Specifically, the UK Government is well-placed to engage with partners, like Unitaids, in the transformation of health and international development through digital technologies. The digital technology and AI landscape is rapidly shifting and it is critical that such technologies are used to advance, not harm, human rights and the achievement of the SDGs. Hosting events such as the AI Safety Summit positions the UK as a key leader, however it is critical that the UK's approach

---

<sup>8</sup> [Unitaid: Translating the UK investments in Global Health into Ground-breaking Innovations \(page 3\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [https://unitaid.org/assets/Unitaid\\_InvestmentCase\\_Report.pdf](https://unitaid.org/assets/Unitaid_InvestmentCase_Report.pdf) (page 25)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid (page 2)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid (page 2)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid (page 2)

<sup>13</sup> See: [https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2019/PCB45\\_Community-led-Respon](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2019/PCB45_Community-led-Respon)

does not repeat historical harms; **the UK Government must include civil society, communities and marginalised populations, including young people, in all UK and global processes it leads on digital technologies and AI.** These groups must be meaningfully consulted and involved in all processes including in the design and development, governance and regulation of new technologies.

### Question 3

- **What new ideas for development cooperation would make the biggest impact in, or for, low-income countries?**
- **What are the best ideas to accelerate progress for middle-income countries that still have large numbers of poor people?**

**The UK should explore innovative development strategies that focus on ensuring the participation of low and middle-income stakeholders in decision-making processes and broadening the criteria beyond GDP when making global financial decisions.** This effort should be guided by the transformative principles of Global Public Investment (GPI), which offer significant potential to address the unique challenges faced by both low and middle-income nations.

For low-income countries, GPI offers a promising pathway towards sustainable development. The core idea of GPI lies in promoting collective global efforts for public investment in crucial areas such as health, education, and infrastructure. By channelling resources through this mechanism, low-income countries can experience a substantial injection of funding that complements their domestic efforts. This infusion of capital can bridge critical gaps in healthcare access, education quality, and essential services, catalysing development and providing a foundation for equitable growth.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, GPI's emphasis on cooperation among governments fosters a collaborative spirit that transcends borders. This approach recognises that many challenges, such as climate change and global health crises, require concerted action beyond individual nations. In the context of low-income countries, this means that the burden of tackling complex issues is shared, and resources are allocated based on need rather than solely on economic prowess. This cooperative model can unlock the potential for these countries to leapfrog developmental stages and accelerate progress toward meeting the SDGs.<sup>15</sup>

In middle-income nations facing persistent poverty, GPI enables more inclusive growth, addressing unequal economic advancement that often disadvantages marginalised groups. GPI directs public investment towards poverty alleviation, strengthening social safety nets, enabling skill development, and improving access to healthcare and education. This empowers these countries

---

<sup>14</sup> [Re-imagining UK Aid Through Global Public Investment](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Aid transformed: towards Global Public Investment](#)

to uplift vulnerable populations and stimulate economic growth. Within the GPI framework, these nations benefit from fair resource-sharing, avoiding dependency linked to traditional aid models. Active global decision-making involvement and equitable resource contributions empower them to accelerate progress while shaping their development paths according to their unique circumstances and aspirations.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned in the Latin American Economic Outlook 2021<sup>17</sup>, this new approach to finance could be a strategic tool, especially for middle-income countries as many are reaching the upper-middle-income and high-income thresholds. Instead of “graduation” from ODA, which would affect progress, GPI proposes **the UK Government should endorse a "gradation" approach, providing ongoing financial support tailored to their specific needs, rather than transitioning them away from ODA.** This new approach would also allow lower-middle-income countries to create forms of wealth redistribution to tackle the enduring problem of inequality.

**The UK Government should prioritise the strengthening of community systems, recognising their essential role in international development and health in low-middle-income countries.**<sup>18</sup> This involves supporting existing government plans, reinforcing transparency and accountability, and acknowledging community systems as fundamental to health systems.<sup>19</sup> A substantial increase in global investment is urgently needed to strengthen community systems, promoting informed, capable, and coordinated structures, processes, and actors. This investment is pivotal for ensuring the provision of safe, accessible, and high-quality services and infrastructure, which are essential for combating pandemics and fostering resilient and sustainable international development systems.<sup>20</sup>

## **LEVERS: ODA AND ‘BEYOND AID’**

### **Question 4**

- **How can Official Development Assistance (ODA) be most effectively targeted and built upon?**
- **How can non-ODA financing be mobilised to ensure ambitious, innovative, and transformational international development?**

To most effectively target and build upon ODA, a paradigm shift is imperative. Rather than solely concentrating on poverty reduction, development efforts must centre on ending inequalities. This means acknowledging that poverty is intrinsically linked to systemic disparities that perpetuate social exclusion, and limited access to education, healthcare, and basic services.<sup>21</sup> ODA should prioritise programs targeting the root causes of inequalities, aiming to dismantle the barriers that

---

<sup>16</sup> [Global governance needs reshaping if we're to achieve the SDGs](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Latin American Economic Outlook 2021 \(page 220\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> Health Systems Strengthening for Global Health Security and Universal Health Coverage (publishing.service.gov.uk) P. 15

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.health.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Kenya-Community-Health-Strategy-Final-Signed-off\\_2020-25.pdf](https://www.health.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Kenya-Community-Health-Strategy-Final-Signed-off_2020-25.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> [Technical Brief: Community Systems Strengthening. Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. 2019.](#)

<sup>21</sup> [OHCHR New global development goals must fight inequality and discrimination](#)

disproportionately impact marginalised communities. This entails fostering equitable opportunities, eradicating discriminatory practices, and addressing the structural inequalities that prevent individuals from realising their full potential.<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, the decriminalisation of marginalised groups is paramount. Many marginalised communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals, sex workers, people who use drugs and prisoners and other incarcerated people, face discrimination and criminalisation that hampers their access to essential services, education, and employment opportunities. It's also essential to develop equitable partnerships with local communities, strengthen community systems and build the capacity of community-led and community-based organisations to manage funding and implement programmes. For example, **the UK must continue to invest strongly in The Robert Carr Fund**; multi-year support from RCF in 2019-2021 saw 35 unique civil society networks report achieving positive policy or legal changes to protect the rights of inadequately served populations as a result of their advocacy. **The UK should direct ODA towards initiatives that advocate for the rights and well-being of these groups can lead to transformative change, especially in moments of crisis.**<sup>23</sup> Funding legal reform, social awareness campaigns and support systems can empower these communities, contributing to a more inclusive and just society.

Effectively harnessing non-ODA resources necessitates a strategy in harmony with the overarching emphasis on addressing inequalities. Global Public Investment (GPI) serves as an avenue for directing impact investments towards projects that prioritise social and environmental outcomes, all while yielding financial returns. It offers a solution to systemic barriers that disproportionately impact marginalised communities by establishing a framework where the social policy efforts of all states are encouraged, mandated, and incentivised to protect the human rights of citizens without facing repercussions from global markets.<sup>24</sup>

The need to mobilise private finance is central to discussions on financing the SDGs. High financial leverage ratios are at the core of the arguments for investing ODA in blended finance, but research demonstrates real leverage ratios are very low, on average, for every \$1 of MDB and DFI resources invested, private finance mobilised amounts to just \$0.37 in LICs, \$1.06 in LMICs and \$0.65 in UMICs.<sup>25</sup> In some countries non-ODA resources can add additional burden or risk to the public sector. **The UK should seek to better understand the real development impact and value for money of mobilising non-ODA resources for health and poverty reduction and effectiveness in reaching marginalised and vulnerable communities.**

**The UK should ensure that ODA-funded private sector engagement in global health must not undermine public healthcare provision and must be driven by patient-centred needs and social accountability for health rather than commercial interests, with demonstrated**

---

<sup>22</sup> [Oxfam Hitting the Target: An agenda for aid in times of extreme inequality](#)

<sup>23</sup> [UKAID Inclusion of marginalised groups in social assistance in crises](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Global Public Investment. Redesigning international public finance for social cohesion](#)

<sup>25</sup> <https://odi.org/en/publications/blended-finance-in-the-poorest-countries-the-need-for-a-better-approach/>



**public health impact, a strong evidence-based and adherence to principles of equitable access to services.**<sup>26</sup> There must be strong transparency and accountability mechanisms in place, aligned with principles of aid effectiveness with support and promote human rights, workers' rights, the rights of women and girls and all marginalised groups. This must not be used to promote private sector investment in health in countries where there is no effective regulation of the private health sector.<sup>27</sup>

## Question 5

- **How should scientific and technological expertise, private finance and the private sector, trade and investment, civil society networks and diplomacy be engaged to support global development action and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?**

**The UK Government should actively promote the GPI principles of 'all contribute', 'all decide' and 'all benefit' to engage scientific and technological expertise, private finance, the private sector, trade and investment, civil society networks, and diplomacy in accelerating SDG progress in an inclusive and equitable way.**<sup>28</sup>

Collaborative efforts to mobilise resources, align agendas, and tackle shared challenges resonate with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Diplomacy's role within GPI lies in fostering multilateral cooperation, coordinating efforts, and promoting policy coherence to maximise impact.

**The UK Government should support and vocally advocate for the meaningful inclusion and engagement of civil society and communities at global, regional and national decision-making institutions and processes.**<sup>2930313233</sup>

**The UK Government should support and adopt globally agreed principles to carefully guide the engagement with and role of the private sector in investing in and supporting global development action, building on principles such as those developed by STOPAIDS.**<sup>34</sup> By incorporating private sector investment principles into its development strategies, the UK government can leverage the influence and resources of the private sector to create meaningful and lasting change on a global scale. This would exemplify a forward-thinking approach that

<sup>26</sup> [See STOPAIDS 2022: Principles for ODA-funded Private Sector Engagement in Public Health](#)

<sup>27</sup> <https://stopaids.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/PRINCIPLES-FOR-ODA-FUNDED-PRIVATE-SECTOR-ENGAGEMENT-IN-GLOBAL-HEALTH.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> [The Future of Aid, Global Public Investment page 334-335](#)

<sup>29</sup> ['The Right to Participation in Global Health Governance', 2021, Sara Davis, Mike Podmore, Courtenay Howe.](#)

<sup>30</sup> [BMJ article: 'States cannot negotiate a pandemic treaty alone', 2022, Tim Fish Hodgson, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, Mike Podmore](#)

<sup>31</sup> ['Recommendations for the Financial Intermediary Fund \(FIF\) for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response \(PPR\)'; 2022, STOPAIDS, Joepe Lange Institute, GNP+, Equal International, WACI Health, GFAN, Frontline AIDS, Platform for ACT-A Civil Society and Community Representatives](#)

<sup>32</sup> ['The Case for CSO Representation on the Financial Intermediary Fund for PPR'; 2022: Health Poverty Action, STOPAIDS, HealthGap, Frontline AIDS, Transparency International, Platform for ACT-A Civil Society and Community Representatives;](#)

<sup>33</sup> ['Pandemics start and end in communities: Why civil society participation in the governance of the Pandemic Accord is critical; 2023: STOPAIDS and Save The Children;](#)

<sup>34</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZTVKVwgYV-qkB2T\\_cq2vDlxj4I2ocGB/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZTVKVwgYV-qkB2T_cq2vDlxj4I2ocGB/view)

recognises the interconnected nature of today's global challenges and the need for collective action to overcome them.

## MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL ACTION

### Question 7

- **What are the top priorities for strengthening multilateral effectiveness in international development?**
- **What are the issues and challenges most suited to bilateral cooperation (considering all levers)?**

The vaccine nationalism demonstrated during COVID-19 and the resulting extreme global vaccine inequality highlights how low and middle-income countries face the consequences of the breakdown in effective multilateral cooperation in global health. The UN Summit of the Future must deliver on reinvigorating multilateralism in an inclusive manner and boost the implementation of existing commitments, including the SDGs.<sup>35</sup>

An inclusive form of multilateralism that recognises the importance and value of different stakeholders and, crucially, the role of civil society and communities in global governance, is essential to ensure a more robust and resilient global reaction to future health threats. **The UK can play a key role by championing civil society and community participation across global health multilateralism mechanisms including permanent representation in governance structures, with equal voting powers and funding to support engagement with broader civil society and community networks.**<sup>36</sup>

More effective multilateralism coincides with acknowledging that funding multilateral initiatives that have strong track records in addressing current epidemics is essential to preventing future pandemics whilst recognising the impact of climate change on the spread of disease and weakening of health systems. The UK's role in strengthening multilateral efficacy should therefore revolve around bolstering funding for proven multilateral initiatives that accelerate progress in global health (such as The Global Fund, Unitaid, UNAIDS and WHO). **The UK government can reaffirm its role as a credible global player by promptly and adequately fulfilling its funding commitments to these multilaterals and reinstating 0.7% ODA to be exclusively used in LMICs as opposed to domestically.** These actions would support the rebuilding of trust - an essential cornerstone for fostering robust global collaboration in health.

The divergence from robust multilateral funding for organisations, such as Unitaid and UNAIDS, proves not only cost-ineffective but also obstructive to advancing the objectives outlined in the UK's own International Development Strategy. The UK's investment into multilaterals like The Global Fund, Unitaid and UNAIDS over the past two decades has significantly expedited the global

---

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.un.org/pga/77/2023/08/15/letter-from-the-president-of-the-general-assembly-summit-of-the-future-co-facilitators-letter-draft-decision-silence-procedure/>

<sup>36</sup> [STOPAIDS, Aidsfonds, Frontline AIDS, & Civil Society Sustainability Network. 'HIV, Universal Health Coverage, and the Future of the Global Health Architecture: A civil society discussion paper on key trends and principles for evolution'](#)



response to HIV, TB and malaria. The significance of the UK's financial backing for these multilateral efforts should not be underestimated, given the complementarity between them in tackling some of the most pressing global health challenges. Deviating from multilateralism could potentially not only cost lives but also squander valuable time and resources required to eradicate many of the issues central to the UK's International Development Strategy and the SDG goals.

If bilateral cooperation occurs, it should always recognise the vital role of civil society and communities in shaping effective international development strategies that reflect the genuine needs and aspirations of affected communities.<sup>37</sup> The right balance of bilateral and multilateral aid packages needs to be found to deliver the best international development outcomes, and both must be conducted transparently, as these two different aid modalities serve different purposes and have different added value. When developing the future approach to international development it is of key importance to root in the principles of Paris and Busan aid effectiveness principles to which the UK has developed and led.

---

<sup>37</sup> <https://stopaids.org.uk/resources/jeopardising-progress-impact-of-the-uk-governments-aid-cuts-on-hiv-aids-worldwide/>