

Debate Pack

6 March 2023

CDP-0053 (2023)

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Government role in promoting financial security and reducing inequality in the Caribbean

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1

Background

A debate on “Government role in promoting financial security and reducing inequality in the Caribbean” is scheduled for Wednesday 8 March 2023 in Westminster Hall, from 9.30am to 11.00am. The debate will be led by Clive Lewis MP.

1.1

UK-Caribbean relations

Regional priorities of the UK

In its 2021 [Integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy](#), the UK Government set out its intention to develop partnerships with countries in the Caribbean based on shared democratic values, and to promote inclusive and resilient growth.¹ It highlighted that UK support will also focus on helping the region address climate change and serious and organised crime.

The Review also said [the UK will retain a naval presence in the Caribbean](#).² The presence of a royal navy auxiliary ship from June to November each year is [intended to support any Overseas Territory affected by hurricanes](#).³

In April 2022, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Minister, Lord Goldsmith, said the infrastructure needs of the Caribbean “[provide an opportunity for China to increase its influence](#)” in the region through its [belt and road infrastructure initiative](#). He argued that in this context, “it makes it even more important that the UK steps up its support, and engagement” with the Caribbean.⁴

UK policy towards small island developing states

Many countries in the region are considered [small island developing states \(SIDS\)](#), which are recognised by the UN, UK and Commonwealth as particularly vulnerable to climate change and external economic shocks due to their small size, economies and distance from global markets.⁵

In February 2023, the FCDO [published its new strategy on its approach to SIDS](#) which will run to 2026. This sets out objectives to help SIDS adapt to climate

¹ UK Government, [Global Britain in a competitive age](#), updated July 2021, ‘The UK in the world’

² As above, ‘Defending the UK and our people’

³ Commons Library, [The UK’s Overseas Territories: An introduction](#), January 2023, p17

⁴ HL Deb, [28 April 2022](#), c364

⁵ Commons Library, [Commonwealth SIDS and climate change](#), October 2021

change, protect their biodiversity, enhance their access to external finance, and improve their economic resilience and diversify their economies.⁶

In the Caribbean region, there are 12 member-states of the Commonwealth. These include the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana. The Commonwealth association [has previously supported the states to access funds to address climate change and debt issues](#).⁷

For more information on SIDS, the challenges they face, and related Commonwealth programmes, see the Commons Library briefing on [Commonwealth SIDS and climate change](#), October 2021.

UK aid policy

In 2022, [the UK launched a new, ten-year, aid strategy](#). This identifies two priority regions for UK aid: The Indo-Pacific and Africa. For the Caribbean, the strategy reiterated past commitments to work on development and climate change. The UK's development finance institution, [British International Investment](#), will also support the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure.⁸

There are [five UK Overseas Territories within the region](#): Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.⁹ Only Montserrat is eligible for support from the UK's aid budget, though [the others can receive funding from the cross-Government Conflict, stability and security fund](#) and environmental schemes like Darwin Plus.¹⁰

Sections 3 and 4 of the [Library briefing on Brexit and the UK's Overseas Territories](#) provide more information on UK and EU funding to the Territories.

Future UK aid commitments to the region have not been announced.

Recent UK aid spending in the region

UK aid to Caribbean countries from 2009 to 2021 is shown in the table below.

This shows that UK aid to Montserrat—a UK Overseas Territory—has been the most significant component of UK aid to the Caribbean in the past few years. The overall total has also decreased in the past few years, having peaked at a total of £150.8 million in 2018. This rise was primarily related to greater funding to the Caribbean Development Bank that year.¹¹

⁶ FCDO, [UK SIDS strategy 2022 to 2026](#), 27 February 2023

⁷ The Commonwealth, [Secretary-General will attend Caricom summit in Barbados](#), 14 February 2020

⁸ FCDO, [The UK Government's strategy for international development](#), 16 May 2022, paras 6, 45. The Library's [British International Investment: Aid and trade](#), provides more on the organisation.

⁹ For more on the UK's Overseas Territories, see the Commons Library briefing, [The UK's Overseas Territories: An introduction](#), January 2023

¹⁰ Commons Library, [Brexit and the UK's OTs](#), section 3

¹¹ FCDO, [Statistics on international development](#), various years

UK overseas aid to Caribbean countries													
£ millions, not adjusted for inflation													
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Anguilla	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Antigua and Barbuda	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1
Barbados	0.3	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cuba	0.6	0.2	0.2	1.4	1.1	4.0	1.3	2.7	4.4	4.6	2.1	1.8	1.5
Dominica	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.4	1.1	1.0	0.7
Dominican Republic	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.5	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.9
Grenada	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Haiti	5.1	16.9	9.7	3.3	9.6	4.7	3.9	6.0	4.9	0.2	0.4	0.2	1.0
Jamaica	5.3	2.5	6.4	9.0	12.4	6.2	7.7	6.5	7.8	8.0	9.8	8.6	6.1
Montserrat	23.9	10.7	27.7	21.3	31.2	20.3	33.1	28.5	27.5	26.1	24.8	34.0	27.1
St. Kitts-Nevis	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Lucia	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.3
St. Vincent & Grenadines	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.8
Trinidad & Tobago	0.3	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Caribbean, regional	17.2	16.1	13.4	11.2	10.8	6.5	7.8	61.4	92.1	110.5	28.1	18.2	16.3
Total	52.9	47.1	58.1	49.3	67.4	42.3	56.1	105.1	137.3	150.8	67.8	65.0	55.0

Source: FCDO, [Statistics on International Development](#), multiple editions.

Of all the aid shown in the table above, 36% was spent on programmes supporting government and civil society. A further 18% went towards economic infrastructure and services, and 10% on humanitarian aid. Education and health each made up a further 8%.

All of the above aid is bilateral (aid provided for a specific programme or purpose). The UK has also made contributions to the core budgets of multilateral organisations — in particular, it has provided a total of £227 million to the Caribbean Development Bank between 2009 and 2021.¹²

Of the UK's Overseas Territories in the Caribbean, only one (Montserrat) is currently eligible to receive overseas aid. Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands were previously eligible but 'graduated' from aid eligibility when their economic development meant they exceeded the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) threshold of gross national income per person. Any financial support to these territories therefore cannot be counted as aid.¹³

¹² FCDO, [Statistics on international development](#), various years

¹³ See Commons Library, [Brexit and the UK's OTs](#), section 3

Past announcements of financial support to Caribbean countries

[Past UK aid support to the Caribbean](#) has focused on supporting local resilience to crises, including natural disasters, improving infrastructure and employment, and supporting stability.¹⁴

In 2021, the UK pledged up to £21 million to 2025 to [fund the Caribbean Development Bank's Special Development Fund](#). The fund works to address poverty, inequality and improve access to education and efforts to adapt or mitigate the impacts of climate change. This follows around £4.5 million in funding in 2020 to support the region's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.¹⁵

In 2015, the [UK Government also pledged £300 million for Caribbean infrastructure](#). This was available to aid-eligible countries in the region. These include: Jamaica, Guyana, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Montserrat (a UK Overseas Territory). Funding would support hospital building, job creation, reforms to public finances, and improve resilience to natural disasters.¹⁶

Further details of specific UK aid programmes active in the region can be found at the FCDO's [Development Tracker website](#).

1.2

Debt insecurity in the Caribbean region

Caricom (Caribbean Community) is a [group of 15 member states and five associate members](#) (all the associate members are British Overseas Territories). It was founded in 1973 and represents a population of 16 million people.¹⁷

Debt data isn't available for all Caricom countries. However, for those included in the World Bank's International Debt Report 2022, stocks of external debt as of 2021 were as follows:

¹⁴ Department for International Development (DFID), [Profile of Development work in the Caribbean](#), 2 September 2020

¹⁵ FCDO, [UK commits to maintain funding share of Caribbean special development](#), 29 January 2021

¹⁶ DFID and Number Ten, [PM announces £300 million fund for Caribbean infrastructure](#), 30 September 2015

¹⁷ Caricom, [Our community: Who we are](#)

External debt in selected CARICOM nations	
US\$, millions, stock of debt	
Belize	1,450.2
Dominica	378.0
Grenada	725.6
Guyana	1,889.7
Haiti	2,604.1
Jamaica	17,701.3
St. Lucia	887.6
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	526.1

Source: World Bank, [International Debt Report 2022](#)

This shows that Jamaica had a much higher level of outstanding debt than any of the other countries, at about \$17.7 billion.

Caricom has said that “significant and broad debt reduction” for low- and vulnerable middle-income countries must form part of the global recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.¹⁸

In 1996, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) launched the [Heavily Indebted Poor Countries \(HIPC\) Initiative](#) in response to accumulation of unsustainable, low-income-country debt in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁹ This initiative has applied to 36 countries since its inception: see the IMF’s [Debt relief under the HIPC](#) for a full list.²⁰

Haiti is the only Caricom country to have benefited from the HIPC Initiative. The initiative is only open to countries classified as low-income economies, while most Caricom countries are classified as middle-income economies.

The UK Government and debt relief

In response to the [growing level of debt and debt payments in many low- and middle-income countries](#),²¹ the UK has supported the suspension of some debt repayment through the [Paris Club](#) (a group of creditor countries, link opens PDF) and the G20.²²

From May 2020 to December 2021, [the UK participated in the G20’s Debt Service Suspension Initiative](#) (DSSI), which resulted in over US\$12.9 billion of debt repayments suspended. The G20’s Common Framework beyond the DSSI

¹⁸ Caricom, [Debt reduction for developing countries must be part of the response to the Covid-19 situation](#), 6 October 2021

¹⁹ World Bank, [HIPC initiative](#), January 2018

²⁰ IMF, [Debt relief under the HIPC](#)

²¹ World Bank, [Debt-service payments put biggest squeeze on countries since 2000](#), 6 December 2022

²² IMF, [The Paris Club](#)

built on this, and to date Chad, Ethiopia and Zambia have requested support under it.²³

The Commons International Development Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into [debt relief for low-income countries](#).

Past criticism of debt relief efforts have focused on the lack of participation of private creditors: the UK-based campaign organisation, Jubilee Debt, estimated that [only 0.2% of payments due to private creditors were suspended](#) (PDF) from May 2020 to June 2021.²⁴

1.3

Reparations to account for the UK's historic role in the trade of enslaved people

Clive Lewis MP, who is leading the debate on 8 March, [has said he will raise the issue of reparations to account for the UK's historic role in the trade of enslaved people](#), and call on the UK Government to enter into discussions with Caribbean states on the issue.²⁵

Background

European colonisation of the Caribbean began with the arrival of Columbus in 1492, and until the 1620s the dominant European power in the region was Spain.

From 1624 to 1807 (when the British trade of enslaved peoples was abolished), an estimated [2.3 million enslaved African people were taken to the British Caribbean](#), primarily to work on sugar and other plantations.²⁶ An estimated 450,000 enslaved persons died before reaching the Caribbean and the wider Americas over this period.²⁷

In 1833, [the UK Parliament abolished slavery in the British empire](#), though enslaved people then entered a period described as an “apprenticeship” (a

²³ [Written evidence of the FCDO to the International Development Committee](#), June 2022, para 19-20

²⁴ Jubilee Debt Campaign, [How the G20 debt suspension initiative benefits private lenders](#) (PDF), October 2021, p1

²⁵ [Clive Lewis MP on Twitter as @LabourLewis](#) “I find it disturbing that the British government is yet to enter into serious discussions with the island of Grenada and the Caribbean community in regards to reparations [...] will be raising these issues next week in Parliament”

²⁶ Lambert D, [An introduction to the Caribbean, empire and slavery](#), November 2017. The terminology in this section on enslaved people and enslavers follows that of the [US National Archive](#)

²⁷ Richardson D, *The British Empire and the Atlantic slave trade, 1660-1807*, in Marshall, P.J, ed, *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Volume II, 2006, p441

period of involuntary indentured servitude), where they continued to work for their enslavers. This came to an end in 1838.²⁸

Following the Abolition Act of 1833, the British Government paid £20 million in compensation to enslavers (slave-owners). This was [equivalent to around 40% of the UK Government's expenditure at the time](#).²⁹

A leading proponent of reparations is the Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Sir Hilary Beckles. He cites the past compensation paid to enslavers and has argued that the call for reparations [represents a "renewed call for development cooperation between Britain and the Caribbean."](#) He has suggested the UK establishes a facility similar to that which Germany established for Holocaust survivors.³⁰

A UCL project on the legacies of slavery has found [the 1830s compensation was reinvested in many commercial and other enterprises](#) by former enslaving families and institutions.³¹ Some of the institutions to have benefitted from enslavement, including the Church of England, have [announced new funding as a means of "addressing past wrongs by investing in a better future."](#) Projects to be supported include grants to projects focused on improving opportunities affected by historic enslavement.³²

Proposals to pay reparations are controversial, with some arguing that [foreign aid is better focused on the poorest countries](#); that there are difficulties in establishing which individuals or countries would be eligible; and [European enslavement is being isolated from other events and injustices](#).³³

The position of Caribbean states and the UK is set out below.

Caricom request for reparations, 2014

In 2014, the [15 member-states of Caricom agreed to establish national reparations committees](#) (NRCs) and a regional Caricom Reparations Commission (CRC). Both are tasked with working towards establishing the

²⁸ Lambert D, [An introduction to the Caribbean, empire and slavery](#), November 2017. The terminology in this section on enslaved people and enslavers follows that of the [US National Archive](#)

²⁹ Full Fact, [This is what we know about the government loan to pay slave owners compensation](#), July 2020

³⁰ University of the West Indies, [Seeking justice for all](#), 2016; US Department of State, [The JUST Act report: Germany](#), undated. Beckles makes the case for reparations in his book *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean slavery and native genocide*, 2013. For a review of the book, see [Humanities and Social Sciences Online](#)

³¹ UCL Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British slavery, [Context](#) and [database](#)

³² Church of England, [Church commissioners' research into historic links to transatlantic slavery](#), 2022

³³ The Week, [The arguments for and against slavery reparations](#), 31 March 2022; David Abulafia in the Telegraph, [There's no case for Britain to pay reparations](#), 18 May 2022

“moral, ethical and legal case for reparations” by relevant European governments and institutions involved in colonialism and enslavement.³⁴

Twelve Caricom states have established national reparations committees. These are: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.³⁵

The governments also unanimously agreed a “[Ten-point plan for reparatory justice](#)” for European colonisation in the region. Among the 10 points are a full formal apology from European governments, establishing a legal means for individuals in the Caribbean to return to their homeland (if this is requested), and for debt cancellation.³⁶

In 2016, the then-Prime Minister of Barbados, Freundel Stuart, wrote to the UK Government on behalf of Caricom to [request the UK formally acknowledge Caricom’s request for reparations](#). Caricom also said it was considering appealing to the International Court of Justice for a ruling on the issue.³⁷

As of March 2023, there have been no further updates on a response or initiation or legal proceedings.

UK Government response and position

In response to the 2014 statement, a Foreign Office spokesperson told the Guardian newspaper that neither Caricom nor individual Caribbean governments had made a request to the UK Government or issued any legal proceedings at the time. They also stated that while the Government regrets and condemned the slave trade, [it did not see reparations as the answer](#).³⁸

In response to a 2020 e-petition, “[Pay Slavery Reparations to all Caribbean & African Descendants](#),” the UK Government said reparations are not part of the Government’s approach, and is instead working to address racial and ethnic inequalities and [modern slavery](#):

While reparations are not part of the Government’s approach, we feel deep sorrow for the transatlantic slave trade, and fully recognise the strong sense of injustice and the legacy of slavery in the most affected parts of the world. We also believe that we have much to do today and in the future to address the reality of slavery in the UK and around the world.

The Government is committed to ensuring that slavery has no place in today’s world and that future generations do not forget what happened. The UK co-sponsored the UN resolution, initiated by Caribbean countries, to designate 25

³⁴ Caricom Reparations, [About us](#)

³⁵ Caricom Reparations, [About us](#)

³⁶ Caricom, [Ten point plan for reparatory justice](#), March 2014

³⁷ Caricom, [Barbados PM writes Britain on reparation on behalf of Caricom](#), 2 March 2016

³⁸ The Guardian, [UK sternly resists paying reparations for slave trade atrocities and injustices](#), 24 February 2014

March as an annual international day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.³⁹

The full Government response can be found on the [e-petition's webpage](#).

The issue of reparations and calls for the British monarchy to apologise were [recently raised in the visits of the royal family to the region in 2022](#).⁴⁰

Commonwealth analysts [expect these debates to continue](#) and to [inform debates on potential moves towards republicanism in the Caribbean Commonwealth](#).⁴¹

³⁹ UK Parliament E-Petition website, [Petition: Pay slavery reparations to all Caribbean and African descendants](#), 4 August 2020

⁴⁰ Reuters, [Charles' succession stirs Caribbean calls for reparations, removal of monarch as head of state](#), 9 September 2022

⁴¹ Commonwealth Round Table, [Reparations for slavery becomes a Commonwealth issue](#), 29 September 2020 and Sue Onslow, [King Charles and the Commonwealth: Confidence and concern](#), 20 September 2022

2

Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[How reparation efforts in Barbados found an international spotlight](#)

NPR

Jaclyn Diaz

7 January 2023

[No 'free pass': Antigua and Barbuda PM tells Cop27 India and China must pay for loss and damage](#)

Independent

Stuti Mishra

8 November 2022

[Barbados to refinance debt, help protect ocean in rare deal](#)

AP News

Dánica Coto

21 September 2022

[Caribbean Debt](#)

First Citizens

8 August 2022

[What to know about calls for reparations for Britain's legacy of slavery in the Caribbean](#)

PBSO News Hour

Kenichi Serino and Justin Stabley

16 September 2022

[Netherlands to apologise for role in slave trade](#)

The Times

13 September 2022

[There's no case for Britain to pay reparations](#)

The Telegraph

David Abulafia

18 May 2022

[Sorrow and regret are not enough. Britain must finally pay reparations for slavery](#)

Guardian

Kenneth Mohammed

29 March 2022

[The arguments for and against slavery reparations](#)

The Week

31 March 2022

[Pressure grows for Scotland to pay slavery reparations](#)

The Sunday Times

5 December 2021

[Is it time for the UK to pay reparations and finally balance racial inequalities?](#)

The Voice

Samuel Brooksworth

23 July 2020

3

Press releases

[UK to step up help to combat Caribbean crimewave](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

11 October 2022

- UK government will increase support to ensure the safety of people in the Turks & Caicos Islands
- the British Overseas Territory has seen a major surge in gang violence, with 15 fatal shootings since 3 September 2022
- UK has sent a ship and agreed a deployment of 24 firearms officers from the neighbouring Bahamas

The UK government is sending a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship to the Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI) – and has agreed a deployment of specialist police from neighbouring Caribbean islands – to ensure the safety and security of people, amid a surge in gang violence.

TCI is a British Overseas Territory with a population of less than 50,000. The UK is responsible for the safety and security of people there.

A detachment of 24 highly-trained specialist firearms officers from The Bahamas arrived on Friday and are now on active duty on the islands. Discussions are underway with other neighbouring states on additional support. In parallel, the UK is providing a package of longer-term support to build local capacity on areas including intelligence gathering, firearms training and border control.

The Royal Navy has deployed RFA Tideforce, which is on the way to the islands. The ship is a Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker and will be used as a platform for operations, bringing with it a Wildcat helicopter, which offers a surveillance capability and can support security operations.

Alongside this, a package of maritime surveillance support has been agreed from the US, over October, to include a fixed-wing aircraft and a Blackhawk helicopter.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

“The UK has a moral and constitutional responsibility to support and protect the people of the Overseas Territories, who are a valued part of the UK family. We had to act following the terrible violence we’ve seen in the Turks & Caicos Islands these past few weeks.

“I’m grateful to the brave men and women of the local police force, as well as those from the Bahamas who are providing invaluable immediate support. The Governor and Premier are also working tirelessly to protect communities. Together, we will ensure that violent crime is stamped out in the TCI in the long term.”

This help forms part of a wider package of support from the UK government to tackle violent crime on TCI, which includes:

- the UK government is also working to recruit and fund a new serious crime team who will sit at the heart of the TCI police force, building a permanent capability to tackle gang crime
- UK police are engaging with local TCI counterparts to finalise a contingency plan for additional specialist support to deploy, if needed
- this is in addition to a series of deployments of UK police to provide longer-term support for operations and to build capacity in the TCI to tackle gang crime. These include firearms trainers, detectives and border force agents
- the UK is procuring a permanent maritime surveillance aircraft to help secure TCI’s borders
- the National Crime Agency is deploying staff to the TCI, working closely with local police intelligence teams, to support the development of additional intelligence capability within TCI, including advice on lawful intercept legislation
- ongoing support through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund has included a secondment of a Border Security lead, a programme of training and capability building to the TCI police, as well as support for a project of customs and border transformation

TCI has seen a surge in violent crime in the past few months, which is believed to be linked to the arrival of organised criminal gangs from elsewhere in the Caribbean.

The security situation has rapidly deteriorated in TCI over the past weeks, with 11 fatal shootings in September and a further 4 in October.

[Alok Sharma visits Caribbean to build support for COP26 climate goals](#)

Cabinet Office

5 July 2021

- Will see devastating hurricane damage and the threats of climate change faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- Following the G7, attention turns to G20 countries and how they can help support action against climate change and COP26

The COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, will travel to Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados to ensure the islands' climate priorities are reflected at the crucial UN climate change summit in Glasgow later this year.

He will meet with leaders from government, business and civil society to hear the huge challenges they face in the fight against climate change and how they can help ensure COP26 is both inclusive and successful for everyone. He is expected to stress the importance the UK COP Presidency places on mobilising finance for climate action, keeping 1.5 degrees in reach, and protecting people and nature from the worst effects of climate change.

These Caribbean islands play a vital role in making sure climate vulnerable nations are heard on the world stage. Antigua and Barbuda is the chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) negotiating group in the UNFCCC. The moral authority of Small Island States is a powerful reminder to G20 countries of the urgency of taking ambitious climate action.

During his visit to the island of Barbuda, the COP President will also see how communities there are building back from the devastation of Hurricane Irma in 2017.

Ahead of his visit Mr Sharma said:

“We know that so often it is the countries who contribute the least to climate change who feel the worst of its impacts. These Island States are on the front line, and many have been doubly hit with the effects of COVID-19 crippling their economies. As COP26 President I will ensure their voices are heard and people understand the unique challenges they face.

“It's now four months until COP26 which is our best chance of safeguarding the planet for everyone, building a brighter future and keeping the 1.5C target alive. There is no time to wait, G20 countries must respond to the moral authority and leadership of these countries.

“Ahead of this vital summit I am looking forward to meeting with representatives from Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados to hear their priorities and discuss how we can work together to ensure COP26 is a success.”

His Excellency Dr. Walton Webson, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States said:

“Small Island Developing States often feel the brunt of the effects of climate change, and so their interests must be taken into account if COP26 is to be a success.

“I welcome the COP President’s important visit to the Caribbean this week, and his commitment to ensure the needs of these islands are central to the agenda in Glasgow.”

UK commits to maintain funding share of Caribbean Special Development
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
29 January 2021

During a pledging conference on 29th January, the UK committed to maintain its share of funding to the Caribbean Development Bank’s Special Development Fund, pledging up to £21m over the next four years to continue supporting life changing projects in the Caribbean.

The Special Development Fund provides loans and grants to support projects in the most vulnerable countries in the region to tackle poverty, inequality and global challenges such as climate change and access to quality education.

For example, in Haiti, the Caribbean Development Bank has worked alongside the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank to improve primary school outcomes. The provision of tuition waivers, which allow students between 6 and 12 years old to access primary education, have supported over 260,000 children to complete their primary education.

The fund is replenished every four years and the UK’s pledge cements its position as one of its largest donors.

Countries that will continue to benefit from the fund include Haiti, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.

This commitment follows the announcement of £4.5 million additional funding from the UK Government to the Special Development Fund in September 2020 to support countries in the region with their COVID-19 recovery.

The pledged funding will help Caribbean countries better cope with the COVID-19 crisis, help mitigate the wider social and economic impacts, increase funding to tackle climate change, strengthen resilience to disasters, and protect the most vulnerable.

4

PQs

Caribbean: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

02 Feb 2023 | 132292

Asked by: Fabian Hamilton

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his G7 counterparts on the engagement of Caribbean countries with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Answering member: David Rutley | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The OECD has a well-established Regional Programme which includes countries of the Caribbean (the Latin America & Caribbean Regional Programme - LACRP). The UK is co-chair of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Working Group at the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and is in regular contact with G7 members on the breadth of issues that affect the region.

In 2022 the UK, Belize, Fiji and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) launched a new 'Friends of SIDS' group that will also link to wider issues of concern in the Caribbean. That group will work to promote the recommendations of the Call to Action on SIDS Access to Finance.

Topical Questions

30 Jan 2023 | 727 c21

Asked by: Amanda Milling

Will my right hon. Friend set out what preparations his Department has made for supporting overseas territories in the Caribbean during this year's hurricane season?

Answered by: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

I enjoyed working with my right hon. Friend when she was Minister for the Overseas Territories. She is right to care about the matter. She will know that the Department has done a lot of work over the past few years to develop the resilience of the overseas territories, as well as maintaining naval assets in the region and more at-readiness to assist if required.

British Overseas Territories: Development Aid

22 Nov 2022 | 86426

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the provision of joint aid in the Caribbean region to respond to extreme weather phenomena impacting British Overseas Territories.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The United Kingdom works closely with partners across the region, including the US, to coordinate multinational responses to major disasters affecting the Caribbean and British Overseas Territories. The UK Government supports the Overseas Territories to prepare for and respond to the impacts of major natural hazard events.

The Royal Navy supported the US led response to hurricanes in Central America in 2020 and the Haiti earthquake in 2021. UK-US cooperation here is primarily coordinated through our military partnership, and through the Multinational Coordination Cell for the Caribbean.

Climate Change: Caribbean

13 Oct 2022 | 59465

Asked by: Fabian Hamilton

To ask the President of COP26, whether he has had recent discussions with his Caribbean counterparts on their call for a loss and damage funding facility to help tackle the impact of the climate emergency in that region.

Answering member: Alok Sharma | COP26

Throughout the UK's Presidency I have engaged with all parties, including my Caribbean counterparts, on the issue of loss and damage. During my time in New York this September, in the margins of UNGA, I engaged with the High Ambition Coalition. Addressing loss and damage will continue to be a priority for the UK Presidency in the run up to and at COP27.

Bilateral Relations with Caribbean Countries

28 Apr 2022 | 821 cc362-6

Asked by: Lord Bellingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand and improve bilateral relations with Caribbean countries.

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, the UK and the nations of the Caribbean have strong and enduring relationships based on mutual respect, trust and shared values. Through increased ministerial engagement and the UK's diplomatic network in the Caribbean, the Government continue to develop modern partnerships across the region that deliver on our priorities, including the rules-based international system, climate change, advocacy for small island developing states, development, trade and security.

Asked by: Lord Purvis of Tweed

My Lords, the UK's trading relationship with the Caribbean is under a rollover European Union agreement—an EPA. The European Union has subsequently updated its Cotonou agreement so there is now a new deep and comprehensive relationship with the 15 CARIFORUM nations. Looking forward, does the Minister agree that we should move at pace for a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with all 15 CARIFORUM nations that goes beyond simply tariffs, trades and history and looks forward to a new trading relationship that includes sustainability and closer people relationships?

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The noble Lord is absolutely right: the Caribbean is a region of huge importance and potential to the UK. We have asked Darren Henry MP, our Caribbean trade envoy, to focus specifically on building the pipeline of UK capability. We are keen to better engage the diaspora on trade and investment opportunities in the region. We look forward to the continued implementation of the CARIFORUM-UK EPA trade agreement, which covers the largest number of countries—14, plus Haiti as an observer. In fact, it is the largest agreement we have apart from the trade and co-operation agreement with the EU. It is our most comprehensive trade agreement with developing countries and covers areas ranging from goods and services to public procurement and sustainability.

Asked by: Lord Howell of Guildford

My Lords, is my noble friend aware of the considerable—and increasing—Chinese involvement and engagement in the Caribbean states? It is happening not only in the Caribbean but in the South Seas as well. Is he aware that this is about not just trade agreements, double taxation agreements and loans, which often cannot be paid back, but weapons training and officer training? We have now reached a point where the Chinese are seeking to establish in another Commonwealth realm a full naval maintenance base, including a police and military presence. This has gone very far indeed. Will my noble friend remind his colleagues in the Foreign Office that, while we are neglecting many parts of the Commonwealth, other countries—notably China—are realising the strategic value of these states

and moving in fast? We need to have a better understanding of the vital security nature of the Commonwealth and give it proper attention.

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My noble friend makes an extremely important point in relation to the Caribbean which could just as easily be made in relation to small island developing states in the Pacific, for example. The 2021 integrated review noted very clearly that China's increasing power and international assertiveness is likely to be the most significant geopolitical factor in the 2020s. China now has one of the largest diplomatic presences in the Caribbean after the UK, US and Brazil. China continues to expand its engagement in the region as part of its broader strategy to secure support for its belt and road initiative and to reduce support for recognition of Taiwan. Unfortunately, the Caribbean's infrastructure needs, which are significant, provide an opportunity for China to increase its influence, and much of that comes through Beijing's loan strategy, which my noble friend just alluded to. All this makes it even more important that the UK steps up its support for, and partnership and engagement with, countries across the Caribbean and, for the same reason, the Pacific region.

Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury

My Lords, can I touch on the issue of influence and values that the Minister mentioned? Human Rights Watch has reported that seven countries in the eastern Caribbean still maintain anti-LGBT laws, a relic of British colonialism, as Theresa May once said at a previous CHOGM. Can the Minister tell us, ahead of CHOGM 2022 in Rwanda, what steps the Government are taking to encourage them and others to end this appalling discrimination?

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The noble Lord makes a hugely important point. I cannot say is it true of all the engagements that we have on a bilateral basis with members of the Commonwealth, particularly those countries that take the regressive views that he has outlined in relation to LGBT issues, but certainly in most of those exchanges this issue is raised and the UK has always stood up internationally, as we do domestically, for the rights of LGBT communities.

Asked by: Baroness Hooper

My Lords, in welcoming the Government's plans, which my noble friend has outlined, may I ask him to clarify whether these extend only or mainly to the English-speaking Caribbean, or to other countries such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic or Haiti?

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Obviously, the UK has a particularly strong and valued relationship with those English-speaking countries with which we share a very close history, but our involvement and interest in the region goes beyond them. For example, the Prime Minister had meetings yesterday with a number of leaders of Caribbean countries, not all of them English-speaking. We have many issues in common, not least the question of China but also climate change, which is regarded by most Caribbean countries as literally existential.

Asked by: Lord Boateng

My Lords, small island states of the Caribbean do not qualify for ODA, yet they have real needs. Might not the Government's policy carry more conviction if it addressed more realistically the understandable demands of the Caribbean for reparations for slavery?

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The noble Lord makes an important point about ODA. In the current system, the unique vulnerability of small island developing states to issues such as climate change and shocks such as Covid is not recognised. It was made very clear over the last couple of years that they are uniquely vulnerable, and consequently their economic ranking can change very quickly. That is not reflected in the system of recognition, which means that you have countries which, for all intents and purposes, should be ODA-eligible but are not according to the current rules. This is an issue which we are raising robustly in the OECD. I hope that we can see some changes there. Additionally, the UK is working with Fiji and other countries on a global taskforce on access to finance. One of the problems is that it is incredibly complicated accessing finance from the multilateral institutions. They are bureaucratic, time-consuming and so on. We are working very hard on that too, and that is recognised by the small island developing states in question.

Asked by: Baroness Northover

My Lords, rightly, the Minister has just mentioned the significance of climate change in the Caribbean. The hurricanes in the region are much more extreme and frequent than they used to be, but can be tracked across the Atlantic. The United Kingdom was behind the curve when it came to Hurricane Irma, for example, not holding a COBRA meeting until several days after it had hit. Can the Minister reassure us that the Government are far better prepared to help the overseas territories if and when they are hit by similar hurricanes?

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I can. The United Kingdom, not least through its presidency of COP, has raised the issue of adaptation to climate change. We know that, whatever we do in mitigation, change is inevitable whether we like it or not. Enabling vulnerable

countries to adapt as well as they can and to deal with natural disasters, which are happening with increasing intensity, is a top priority. Although we have not set a forensic target, our view is that the balance of investment in climate change issues should be more or less 50:50 between mitigation and adaptation. Other donor countries are increasingly following us on that.

Asked by: Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton

My Lords, further to that question, I declare my interest as honorary colonel of the Cayman Islands Regiment. Both the Cayman Islands Regiment and the Turks and Caicos Islands Regiment were created by this Government after Hurricane Irma in 2017 to ensure that there is on-island capability to deal with post-hurricane events. I am sure the noble Baroness is deeply reassured by the Government's action, which directly addresses her question. I remind your Lordships' House that there are not only Commonwealth citizens in the Caribbean but British citizens in the overseas territories. I simply ask for reassurance from my noble friend that those citizens are properly consulted when legislation is passed through your Lordships' House.

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I am sure many noble Lords are envious of the noble Lord's job and would be willing to swap, but he makes a good point. I can certainly provide that reassurance.

Coral Reefs: British Overseas Territories

25 Apr 2022 | HL7821

Asked by: Lord Randall of Uxbridge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of stony coral tissue loss disease on the (1) economy, (2) biodiversity, and (3) climate resilience, of the UK's Overseas Territories in the Caribbean.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK Government has been working closely with our Overseas Territories (OTs) in the Caribbean and Western Atlantic in response to stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD).

In 2020/2021, HMG's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) funded a Collaborative Coral Reef Working Group with the Caribbean OTs. This group actively welcomes input from OT government representatives, non-governmental organisations and other key stakeholders involved in coral conservation and SCTLD treatment. This group has met at least once a month since December 2020 to discuss all aspects of SCTLD, including treatment

and management options. Its funding has been secured through to March 2024.

As part of the Disaster Resilience in the UK OTs and the Coral Reef Action Plans projects funded by CSSF, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) are assessing the impact of coral loss and degradation on climate resilience, biodiversity and the economy. The reports, which will include the refined model outputs, risk maps and economic valuation report, will be available in the coming months.

Beyond the Caribbean, the Collaborative Coral Reef Working Group includes Bermuda in all activities due to its proximity to the Caribbean region. Links have also been made to UK OTs in the Pacific and Indian Oceans through other UK agencies to ensure that access to the Working Group's resources and training materials will allow for prevention and early detection of the disease should it spread to these regions.

Overseas Investment

16 Dec 2021 | 91883

Asked by: Ms Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to Building the Network of Liberty speech, published on 8 December 2021, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of funding projects in the Caribbean and South-East Asia by British International Investment on the (a) amount and (b) proportion of funding through British International Investment that funds projects in Africa.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

British International Investment (BII) is a central part of the UK Government's international financing offer to help developing and emerging countries across Asia, Africa and the Caribbean meet their financing needs for infrastructure and enterprise. BII is the largest G7 development finance investor into Africa and over the next five years will support the delivery of the Prime Minister's G7 commitment to invest up to \$80 billion into Africa over the next five years.

BII plans to increase the amount it invests into Africa, compared to the last five years. The majority of investments will be self-funded by BII exiting existing investments. The FCDO is currently undertaking a business planning process following the spending review settlement. No decisions have yet been taken by Ministers on individual budgets.

Africa and Caribbean: Coronavirus

25 Oct 2021 | 56702

Asked by: Ruth Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support her Department is providing nations in (a) Africa and (b) the Caribbean to meet the World Health Organisation's target for 10 per cent of populations to be fully vaccinated against covid-19.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK welcomes WHO's recently launched strategy for global COVID-19 Vaccination and is working with them and other international partners to support its goals. This includes our £548 million support for COVAX's Advance Market Commitment, which will aim to supply up to 1.8 billion doses to up to 92 low and middle income countries by early 2022. The UK has also committed to share 100 million doses by mid-2022. Over 10 million of these doses have been donated so far.

In Africa, 46 countries are eligible for the Advance Market Commitment and as of 15 October, COVAX has delivered more than 81 million doses to Africa. Over 5.6 million doses have been donated by the UK to 14 African countries. The UK has also provided £20 million in support of the Africa Union's COVID-19 response fund, which includes funding for vaccine supplies. In the Caribbean, 6 countries are eligible for the Advance Market Commitment and as of 15 October, COVAX has delivered more than 2 million doses of vaccines to the Caribbean. Around 500,000 doses have been donated by the UK to the most vulnerable countries in the Caribbean. The UK has also shared lessons on tackling vaccine hesitancy to boost take up in the region.

Caribbean and Latin America: Forests

10 Sep 2021 | 44417

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is planning to take to help safeguard the future of forests in (a) Latin America and (b) the Caribbean.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We continue to be concerned by the rising rates of deforestation in the Amazon and in forests across Latin America. We have a long-established partnership with Brazil and other forest nations in Latin America. We have also committed to double our International Climate Finance across the globe to £11.6 billion over the next five years - and to invest at least £3bn of that in solutions that protect and restore nature.

In addition, through the FACT dialogue, we are bringing together the biggest producers and consumers of the commodities that drive deforestation: cocoa, cattle, soy and palm oil. In this dialogue we will be agreeing actions to protect forests and other carbon-rich ecosystems like the Amazon, while promoting trade and development.

We are also introducing world-leading due diligence legislation through the Environment Bill to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains. This is one part of a wider package of measures to improve the sustainability of our supply chains and will contribute to global efforts to protect forests and other ecosystems.

As part of our COP26 nature campaign heads of UK missions and other diplomats regularly engage countries across the Caribbean region on the importance of protecting forests. We are encouraging Caribbean countries to join the Leader's Pledge for Nature which includes commitments on mainstreaming biodiversity, improving sustainable forest management and tackling deforestation. So far 7 Caribbean countries have done so. The UK also co-hosted a nature based solutions event with CARICOM on 25 May 2021 which was attended by Lord Goldsmith and Ministers from across the Caribbean. The Forest, Governance, Markets and Climate Programme, which is providing £2m of support in Guyana, aims to achieve stakeholder consensus on forest governance reforms, including on regulation, legal frameworks and to secure the rights of indigenous communities.

We will use our role as host of COP26 to increase the international community's focus on further action to safeguard the future of forests in Latin America, the Caribbean and around the world.

[Caribbean: Development Aid](#)

21 Jul 2021 | 32404

Asked by: Sarah Champion

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 19597 on Caribbean: Overseas Aid, of the £456 million of Official Development Assistance in the priority ODA-eligible Caribbean countries, how much was spent on advancing global LGBT rights in (a) Antigua & Barbuda, (b) Belize, (c) Dominica, (d) Grenada, (e) Guyana, (f) Jamaica, (g) St Lucia and (h) St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of LGBT+ people around the world, including in the Caribbean. We have several global programmes that have had specific Caribbean components, not least those supporting the work of The Commonwealth Equality Network. Due to the

classifications set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the regional nature of some of this project work, we do not hold information on country by country spend on LGBT+ rights.

[Caribbean: Development Aid](#)

29 Jun 2021 | 19597

Asked by: Sarah Champion

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance the Government has spent in the Caribbean in the last five years; and how much of that spending was disbursed for the purpose of advancing global LGBT+ rights.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Between 2015 and 2019, the UK Government has spent over £456 million of Official Development Assistance in the priority ODA-eligible Caribbean countries (Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) and over £1.1 billion in the wider Americas region. The UK plays an active role globally in support of LGBT+ rights. We have consistently committed funding to LGBT+ rights programme work across the region.

[Overseas Trade: Caribbean](#)

01 Jun 2021 | 7320

Asked by: Imran Ahmad Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help increase the quantity of trade between the UK and the CARIFORUM trade bloc.

Answering member: Mr Ranil Jayawardena | Department for International Trade

Trade with CARIFORUM states was worth £2.6bn in 2020. The United Kingdom-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) successfully came into effect on 1st January 2021 and provides certainty and continuity for business.

The tenth United Kingdom-Caribbean Ministerial Forum took place in March, where we agreed to further promoting and expanding bilateral trade flows and reducing market access barriers for exporters.

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