



Economic and International Development Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for International Development

Friday, 4th September 2020

Panel:

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence (Chair)

Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary (Vice-Chair)

Senator K.L. Moore

Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

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

Mr. S. Boas, Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid

Mr. P.M. Milbank, Island Identity Programme Manager

[10:33]

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence (Chair):

Morning, Minister. We have not met for a while due to the COVID-19 crisis so it is good to see you. Before we get started we will start with the usual roundtable to say who is here. We will start on our side and I am the chair, Deputy Kirsten Morel. My vice-chair is ...

Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary:

David Johnson, Deputy of St. Mary. Good morning.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Senator Kristina Moore, a member of the panel.

Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour:

Deputy Kevin Pamplin. Apologies not for vision, I am having technical problems, but I am sure you can picture my lovely face.

The Minister for International Development:

Would you like me to introduce myself?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

If you do not mind introducing yourself, yes.

The Minister for International Development:

Carolyn Labey, Minister for International Development and Assistant Chief Minister.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I am Simon Boas. I am the executive director of Jersey Overseas Aid.

The Minister for International Development:

Paul is also in the room. He is out of camera range. Paul Milbank.,

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Fantastic, thank you. We will start off by looking at a general kind of look at Overseas Aid. We will also be going into the Government Plan, as in the future Government Plan, aspect as well. Minister, could you briefly outline what your main workstreams have been over the last 6 months?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, Jersey Overseas Aid, we have been carrying on as usual as best we can. Obviously some of the trips to have a look at projects and monitor them we have not been able to fulfil obviously because of the travel restrictions. But we have been keeping in usual contact, email, telephone and that sort of thing. So things have been progressing steadily in that regard. We have been busy fixing up an M.O.U. (Memorandum of Understanding) with Government between Jersey Overseas Aid. We have been doing a lot of background work with the audit report and the audit report is due out probably in the next couple of weeks so there has been a lot going on in the background in that regard. Also we have responded to the COVID crisis. We have given 530,000 in pooled funds and we have decided to suggest that they go to areas like Yemen, Syria, Rohingya where there are massive refugees because we feel that they need the infrastructure and they need to prepare for

any particular COVID crisis in the camps because that would take on a very serious toll, we feel. We have responded that way. Obviously we have been doing Government Plan work all summer and putting in our bids from Jersey Overseas Aid for the Government Plan. I have also been doing a stream of work on the Island identity and that is more so with Paul, which is why he is here today, my private secretary, and despite not being able to meet for about 3 months the work started in October but it has been progressing reasonably well, especially since May we have been able to resume meetings and put together an interim report.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Excellent, thank you. Were there any workstreams that you had to reprioritise due to the COVID crisis?

The Minister for International Development:

Not especially. No, we have been steady with overseas aid. I would not say reprioritise. No.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

You are right, it is not reprioritise, but obviously with the threat of this global pandemic and perhaps worse, the threat of economic pain, which will be felt by the world's poorest, we have repurposed some of our existing projects both to enable them to continue their planned activities and also to enable them to respond as best as possible to local conditions in the countries that they are working in. Of course we have also had to take quite a proactive view on how this pandemic and the global response to it is affecting the final viability of charities, which we know has had some impact in Jersey and, mirroring that, some impact internationally on our partners. So we have had to up our due diligence and the support we provide our partners. I am glad to say that all our 35 existing international development projects are proceeding strongly, even where we have had to do minor variations in the way that they are implemented. All of our partners also continue to be going concerns, even if sometimes they are having to use their reserves. As Carolyn mentioned, one of the big casualties this year has been the volunteering.

The Minister for International Development:

I had not mentioned that but, yes.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We planned to send volunteers abroad this year and we just have not been able to. Sadly, we have literally just recently cancelled the last one, which was due to go to Nepal in November, and we hope that we will be able to run these trips to Nepal and Lebanon and Kenya next year but travel is just so up in the air at the minute. That of course has also affected, as Carolyn did say, our ability to visit projects and to look at what is happening in the field.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

One thing, Minister, you mentioned the M.O.U. with Government. Is that a new M.O.U. to replace an old one or is this something brand new in that sense?

The Minister for International Development:

This is something brand new because since we went into ministerial government and Jersey Overseas Aid transformed from being a government department into a commission its relationship with Government has never been put in writing. So there may have been misunderstanding but we felt that we needed this with Government so we could set the parameters and everyone was clear on how we work and why we work in a certain way. We recently signed that so we are happy that this new M.O.U. is progressing and hopefully makes our relationship with Government much clearer.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

If I may, it is one of the final pieces of the jigsaw puzzle for accountability. The last few years have been all about clarifying what exactly J.O.A. (Jersey Overseas Aid) is and what is its relationship with Government and improving that line of accountability that you can draw ultimately from taxpayers through the States, through you, of course, and Government, down to our grantees and ultimately the beneficiaries. A lot of things have been put in place and this was one of the final pieces of that clarifying a whole range of things about how we interact with Government on data, freedom of information, training, premises, the Public Finance manual, the principal accountable officer, that kind of thing.

The Minister for International Development:

Because we have been working with Internal Audit recently and, as I alluded to there, their report is due out in the next couple of weeks so this was one of the measures that they wanted to see in place. So they are very happy, we feel, with what we are doing and the measures and controls that we have put in place the last couple of years.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

As the panel know, I have a thing about M.O.U.s. The panel, I do not think, has seen this M.O.U. or had any input to it. If it is not in the public domain as yet could the panel perhaps have a copy to give us an opportunity to comment on it?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, absolutely. It was only signed last month so it is hot off the press. We could furnish you with a copy of that along with the audit report, if you would like, because that, as I say, is out in the next couple of weeks.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Sorry, Chair.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Not at all. All members of the panel chime in when you wish. The difficulty when we are remote like this is I cannot see the usual signals that are given off when we are round the table. Minister, thank you, we would love to see both the audit report and the M.O.U.. Revisiting a question that I know we asked you a couple of years ago when you first took up your position; now that you have been in your post for 2 years are you still of the opinion that a ministerial position dedicated to international development is required? Or do you think having worked this for 2 years that a remit could be undertaken effectively as part of External Relations in an assistant ministerial role, something like that? What are your thoughts on that?

The Minister for International Development:

I feel it should be separate. As I have said in other Scrutiny meetings, aid and trade, to my mind, ought to be separate. That way the aid can focus exactly without any economic considerations.

[10:45]

We are focused on the aid and responding to our international obligations in that regard. So I feel it is better kept pure, if you like, whereas External Relations is more focused on the economy, is getting business into Jersey and you can just imagine, if you are focused on getting business into Jersey, how responsibility for aid could ... there could be fuzzy lines. I just feel that it is clear, our remit is clear, we know our areas of responsibility. Especially with 3 lay people on the Commission who bring different kinds of expertise with them, plus 3 States Members, we feel it gives us the controls and the ability just to focus on what we are there for without being tarnished in some other way, trying to boost our own economy.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Thank you. Obviously we see in the U.K. (United Kingdom) they are ending, I think, the Department for International Development and putting it into the ... and tying aid to trade, which I appreciate is what you are trying to avoid doing entirely.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

As you know, that will be the third time in the U.K. that they have joined them up and possibly they will split them up again. Certainly my experience, even working in developing country governments, is that countries that tie their aid to their diplomatic objectives often end up achieving neither particularly well and, as Carolyn said, there is always that danger of fuzzy lines. You can think back to the sort of Pergau Dam scandal and many other things of the U.K. where aid money has been used to pursue diplomatic objectives and then has neither been effective aid or has crossed the line into implementing in not a positive trade. I would just like to add your first question: do we need a Minister? When I am in Lusaka or Freetown or Addis Ababa, when we are talking to the U.N. (United Nations) or the World Bank or the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Jersey having a Minister for International Development is extremely well-received and it really helps us fly a flag for the Island, which is one of our purposes. I think that independence also helps us fly a flag because in addition to the tens of thousands of lives we change we are also building up the reputation of Jersey and changing the narrative, as Carolyn often says, and I think if it were then tied to our diplomatic arm, or indeed to Government itself, we run the risk of losing some of that.

The Minister for International Development:

I was probably focusing on the External Relations but being a Minister in this role it is much better, because when I was in Rwanda last I was able to speak to the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Finance whereas going over just as chair of Jersey Overseas Aid or Assistant Minister for External Relations, I do not think it would bring the right people round the table.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is really interesting. One of the things that has happened the last 2 years is speaking directly to the U.N., speaking directly to other organisations like that, so I can understand how that would work. When we last met for a public hearing, Minister, Overseas Aid was kind of developing itself further. I believe you moved into new offices and I think, if I remember rightly, were hiring new staff. How has that development progressed and can I ask what levels of staffing are you at now?

The Minister for International Development:

We have got 4 permanent members of staff. I had to think about that because the offices seem very full lately because we have had an intern and we have had work experience for 2 weeks as well, so we try and do our bit with young people. We are delighted that one of our own interns applied for a permanent position. After she had worked in the field she decided to come back to Jersey and she applied for one of the positions and we gave it to her. I mean she was the best candidate for that particular role. So we now have Simon, who is director, we have a programme manager, we have our intern that has just come back to the Island, who is now in a permanent position, and we have the office manager who has been with us for 5 years now. We have moved office. We are now in

the loft in the Town Hall, which has windows, unlike these offices here. The Constable of St. Helier had some spare office space. We do pay rent but it is a very modest rent, we feel.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is not the Constable that you feel it is a modest rent.

The Minister for International Development:

That works very well for us.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

If I could just comment on the make-up of the staffing. The intern that we hired, the new position that we created, is called a monitoring and impact officer. That began in July. That is kind of indicative of also this direction of travel, of trying to not just improve our accountability but our effectiveness and that, of course, entirely relies on measuring what we achieve and what our partners achieve. So we are really putting a huge amount of renewed effort into monitoring and evaluating the results of our funding and what we are doing. So we are creating a permanent post whose primary role is to look at the impact of what we have done and how we can improve it speaks to, I think, the way we are going as an aid agency.

The Minister for International Development:

Because we have upped our outreach work so Ed, our programme manager, goes into schools a lot and teaches a part of the S.T.E.M. (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects and international development forms part of that. So obviously the young people in schools develop an interest in that so they apply for work experience and obviously they know something about us when we are offering intern positions.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We are just about to hire a new intern, which will be our fourth, and that will be an opportunity with one of our partners hopefully, when travel starts again, also to work in the field in Ethiopia, which is our kind of next target for our dairy work. But it was really pleasing, both the standard of the applicants and the number. We had 25 applications within the deadline and a good number beyond it, which if you translate that into ... in the U.K. that would be equivalent of 1,500 applications for a position, say. Which is really good. It just shows, I think, that some of this outreach work as well is paying off but there is the renewed interest among young people and recent graduates that a career in international development is now being seen as a possibility for Jersey.

The Minister for International Development:

Lauren, our first intern, where is she now?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

She's with Farm Africa.

The Minister for International Development:

So it is still in the field ...

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

In London but with an N.G.O. (non-government organisation).

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, so they spend some time with us so we can ensure that they are suitable for the workplace, if you like, and then they do some time in London, and then they go into the field for about 6 months and come back to London. Then they have gained experience in international development and it is up to them to then apply for a permanent role, usually with the N.G.O. that they have been working for, and so far we have had 100 per cent success rate in them being employed in an N.G.O.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think it is really important that, like you said, you are creating the opportunity to have a career in international development for Islanders, which I know I go back far too many years, when I was a student, that was something you absolutely could not do through Jersey. It was an impossibility and so to give Islanders that opportunity and root them in Jersey I think is really important. So thank you for that.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can I add on here? Forgive my ignorance but when I you say the intern, for instance, is in London, who she is working for? Is she still under your umbrella, as it were, or through another organisation?

The Minister for International Development:

The first intern, Lauren, she's come back from the field now and she is in London and she works for an N.G.O., Farm Africa.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It is a different one to the one she did her internship with, which is ... it has shown that we have helped prepare our interns to a level, and the internship is designed to make them employable. For us success is that they can get a job in a very competitive labour market for international development organisations. That seems to be working. Our second intern is working for HelpAge. She is working from Jersey at the minute but still working for them. Our third, as Carolyn said, is

now back working for us, which also shows that one of the goals eventually is to produce a whole cadre of Jersey people who can do this, who can do my job and who can run J.O.A., and it is great that we are already feeling the benefits of it. We are about to employ the fourth who will work with SendaCow.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Sorry, I was in no way challenging that. I just wanted to know who they were working for when they were out of your reach, as it were, but obviously it is an arrangement whereby they get to come back afterwards. So that is fine, thank you.

The Minister for International Development:

They do not always come back. Once they have finished their stint in London it is up to them to apply for a job in an N.G.O. It might be the same one but we have been lucky enough to have one back.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

For me, ideally, they do not come back. For some of them they should go off and do their 5 years in Burkina Faso, or wherever, and get even more experienced in the field.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I understand all that and thank you for that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Still about staffing, did you have a role of policy officer or a similar kind of policy role? It was not mentioned in your list of staff, and so if you did have that and now do not, how has this affected the development of J.O.A. and planning for the future?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We did have a role of policy officer, which no longer exists as a role, for a variety of reasons. We had initially thought that some of the work in supporting the Minister as Minister, rather than as chair, would require additional help from that sort of policy perspective. What we found, partly thanks to Paul, who is sitting patiently listening in the room as Carolyn's private secretary, is that a lot of that support is provided really well by the ministerial support unit. So there is much less of a role for a policy person and what we really needed was someone with much more field experience that we could send to Addis Ababa or rural Zambia to conduct a focus group for beneficiaries, that kind of thing, and to really focus on our impact measurements. So it is a kind of reorientation. It has kept our number at 4. I think we have mentioned before, this is an ongoing conversation between Carolyn and myself about the optimum number of staff. We have expanded gradually over the years from

literally one essentially secretarial role to now 4 staff plus an intern. I think the future holds some more expansion in terms of developing our own expertise and reputation in these 3 areas that J.O.A. is specialising in: dairy, conservation, financial inclusion. But this is something that I think will happen gradually. We still spend a lot less than most other donors and a lot less than the average on admin and staffing.

The Minister for International Development:

Our current spending on admin and staffing is just below 4 per cent. The O.E.C.D. average is 7 per cent.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

They have the advantage of economies of scale, they are monthly billion-pound donors.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Thank you, that is the perfect link. You could not have done that more perfectly if you had tried to go from admin spending to questions about the Government Plan from Senator Moore, so I will hand over to Senator Moore.

[11:00]

Senator K.L. Moore:

As the chairman says, this section focuses on the budget. The agreed budget in the Government Plan for this year for your department was just shy of £12.5 million. Has any of that sum been reallocated to cope with the COVID crisis please?

The Minister for International Development:

On the budget that we have received? Our budget for this year, we have given £530,000 as our response to COVID. We anticipate in the latter part of this year giving more. But that was our initial response and we gave that to pooled agencies: the U.N., Start Network, British Red Cross and we focused on areas where there is a high proportion of refugees. So our emergency aid we have given about, like I say, £530,000 initially but we will be looking to give more at the end of the year.

Senator K.L. Moore:

But that £530,000 was still and is still being used in the area of international development? It has not been repurposed for test and tracing in Jersey, for example?

The Minister for International Development:

No, absolutely not.

Senator K.L. Moore:

The budget for this year of course was a significant increase on the previous year to reflect the desire that you held as Minister to increase the percentage of Jersey's donations to International Development as a percentage of gross value added. Will that continue at a similar rate next year or has your budget been placed under pressure to reduce?

The Minister for International Development:

All budgets have been put under pressure understandably in this crisis. However, what we did this year, and this was agreed last year, is we were giving 0.21 per cent of G.V.A. (gross value added), which was a similar level to what we had in 2015. So we have not been going up, in fact we have been going down because our percentage increase had not increased. So our budget was going down. What we had agreed for this year was we would get it up to 0.26 per cent. We have agreed that we will take the same percentage against G.V.A. for next year for 2021, and then it will go up by 0.01 per cent year on year so that we are seen to be increasing our budget closer to the O.E.C.D. average, which is 0.31 per cent. Obviously we have still got a way to go before we get to the point.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I think, if I may, this whole COVID crisis of the economic crisis and the pressure it has placed on our Island's finances has shown the value of pegging to G.V.A. When we wrote the Government Plan last year with this, first of all reversing the decline and then this incremental increase towards the average, as Carolyn said, we had no idea that G.V.A. would decline. The figures at the time showed a really quite healthy increase year on year. But what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander and we have stuck to the projection, this 0.26 per cent, for next year and the latest Fiscal Policy Panel figures, which are the ones we are using for the Government Plan, show that we will get about £1 million less than we had thought this time last year because of the decline in G.V.A. But it is automatic and it is proportionate. If the economy contracts further we will get less and if it increases then we will get more. But I hope in most people's minds that will seem fair. It takes it out, in a way, of political discussion and just becomes a percentage of Jersey's wealth.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Yes, but as you rightly say, that decline in G.V.A. that is predicted for next year due to the current situation, will have an impact on your budget of £1 million. There will be an impact internationally and how will you go about deciding where that budget cut will come from and what projects will not be able to go ahead next year as a result of those?

The Minister for International Development:

We will take a view at the time but we have £6.6. million allocated to grant aid, which are long-term projects, usually over the course of about 3 years. That is what we know and that is part of our planning. We have £200,000 for outreach, which is the work that we were talking about before, both our intern and our community work projects. Things like that we might have to cut our cloth. We normally send 3 groups of volunteers overseas. If that meant that we could only send 2 we would have to look at that and consider it. Obviously emergencies, we can only spend what we have got.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

But just to clarify because, as Carolyn said, we have these long-term projects, the development grants that they tend to be 3, 4, occasionally even 5 years, each year some projects will be finishing, which is then money which is not yet allocated. So if we have to cut our costs accordingly it will not mean cancelling any existing projects. It may just mean starting fewer new ones.

The Minister for International Development:

Because our aim obviously every year is to get to zero because if we have still got money at the end ... that is our aim. It does not quite work like that because we have long-term projects over 3, 5 years but that is the aim of our ...

Senator K.L. Moore:

Understood, thank you.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can I come in, Kristina, before you move on, on a general point? Yesterday's *F.T. (Financial Times)* had an article under the heading of overseas budget related to the U.K. situation and the opening words were: "Boris Johnson has been urged not to 'balance our books on the backs of the poorest women and children in the world', as the Treasury eyes a raid on the overseas aid budget to help pay for the pandemic economic fallout." Now I heard all what you said about reallocating and downgrading but can I ask how hard do you have to fight for maintaining your own budget or the modest increases you are talking about now?

The Minister for International Development:

You have to fight very hard and that is what I have been doing most of the summer with the Government Plan discussions. So you have to fight very hard to maintain it. But hopefully the formula we have worked out of an increase in our percentage against G.V.A. can be seen as fair. I know with this the decrease last month in our G.V.A. returns means that our budget will go down but in the good times it will come up again. So we feel that is fair to our economy, our Island, to do it in this way rather than just aim for a number and have that slashed.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You are selling to a willing audience in C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) are you on that basis?

The Minister for International Development:

In certain quarters, yes. But I do feel I think quite successful. The end result I am satisfied with what I have got.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We presented this to C.O.M. in July having worked with Treasury all year looking, for example, at this year's budget, and we were able to ... when there was a liquidity issue we were able to say: "This is the amount of money we definitely will not spend until a certain date, bring it up." We looked at how much unallocated budget that was this year, as to whether how much could be returned to Treasury. When Carolyn presented that to C.O.M. in July it was very encouraging. Every single Minister who spoke, the Chief Minister, External Relations, several Ministers basically made exactly your point, David, that we should not be balancing our books on the backs of the world's poor, and that this work that we are doing, not even just the humanitarian work but for example increasing the dairy work and the presence of the Jersey cow in Africa, should not suffer as a result of this, which was really encouraging.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Thank you, that is reassuring and thank you for that.

Senator K.L. Moore:

If we could just move on quickly to another aspect for which we believe you will have responsibility, Minister, and that is the Island identity programme. Could you tell us how this work is progressing please?

The Minister for International Development:

Obviously when lockdown happened ... we started our work last October and then lockdown happened so it kind of ground to a halt but we have resumed that in May and we have now got a draft interim report, which we are hoping will be available in the next few weeks. The work has been progressing steadily and, like I said, this is the interim report. This initial interim report for offers about 60 recommendations to various departments because what we were very keen on was to get to this stage, so we could feed the recommendations into the Government Plan because obviously the policies that have got to be derived from this is up to the various departments to take on board these recommendations. Some they may accept, some they may not, but those that they are accepting they have now got to ensure that they have adequate budget and it is up to them to write the policies surrounding recommendations. Then over the course of the next 6 months we are then

hoping to do more public consultation because obviously we were thwarted quite a bit in lockdown. We were not able to do as much consultation as we wanted to so we formulated this report and we will now consult on it. This next piece of work is more about, and I hate using this terminology, a branding exercise, an actual Island identity, so that on international and external relations, when we are travelling away from the Island, we have an identity. We are all singing from the same hymn sheet. Not just us travelling away. When athletes go and represent the Island we have a more cohesive understandable Island identity. They can be our ambassadors, if you like.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Can I just check that you said 60 recommendations have been made to various departments?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Could you give us a flavour of what they might be please?

The Minister for International Development:

Well we have got 6 chapters in the report. The first is on constitution. We are making several recommendations to the Parishes. We have a section on education, sport and social cohesion. We have a chapter on culture, heritage, literature and the arts; environment and the public realm; the economy and connectivity; and international personality. So those are the actual subject headings and in them we make various recommendations. For example, we have made a recommendation to the Comité des Connétables that they should try and reinvigorate their Parish Assemblies in some way because it would be an awful thing if that were to sort of lose their momentum and their importance. We feel they are very important and it is up to the Constables to try and think of ways to get more people interested, especially young people interested, in how grass roots politics works.

[11:15]

So we are making various recommendations to them. We are making recommendations to various departments, in fact, about rolling out a Jersey ambassador's initiative, and that, as I say, is for sports people, it is for people working in hospitality, people travelling abroad, that sort of thing.

Senator K.L. Moore:

So that we have a unified message, is that what you are saying?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Okay. Often it is felt, I think, particularly when we see the Island Games and such, art events where many Islanders join in, that we already have a strong sense of identity as Islanders and are able to express that and share that with those who we meet overseas. I am quite interested to understand in what way the findings have found there is a lack of that identity, particularly in the way Jersey people express themselves when they travel overseas.

The Minister for International Development:

To take that example, when athletes travel abroad, when they are standing on a podium what is played when they win something? You know, what is our national anthem? What flag are they flying? Is it the crest? Is it the Jersey flag? An example is the Isle of Man, for example, they seem to have a far stronger identity than us. Other jurisdictions do. So it is just taking what we have got and enhancing it for the best part. The anthem I mentioned, that would be about sort of endorsing something as our anthem, so athletes know what they are standing to, they recognise the tune that is being played when they have won first.

Senator K.L. Moore:

It is Beautiful Jersey.

The Minister for International Development:

Well, what is it? It is various recommendations like that.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Okay, thank you very much. I will hand back to the chair.

The Minister for International Development:

On that point, on the Island identity, I have offered the interim report to Scrutiny and I did not know whether it was something that you wanted me to share with you or if ...

Senator K.L. Moore:

Very much so.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Very much, yes. I did not realise an offer had been made.

The Minister for International Development:

Okay, certainly in the next month we will have the draft because, like I said, we were on a bit of catch-up with the consultation because we were unable to do as much consulting as we wanted to do in lockdown. As you know, it is not always easy to consult in this kind of environment. So we are handing it out and we are waiting for the feedback to come back. But, again, in the next phase we will probably rewrite it, bring it up to a final version.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have had conversations with people outside the Government who have the report already so I was intrigued as States Members do not have the report, other people do. I am definitely looking forward to seeing what you have in there because it has been quite difficult to understand what work you have been trying to do. I know we have had conversations, Minister, but I have always felt until I see the report I will not really understand what you are aiming at. So, yes, the sooner we get that the happier I will be.

The Minister for International Development:

Sure, we are happy to share that with you. Obviously the remit, Island identity, national identity, if you like, that we are now calling it, the remit is so broad and it was quite difficult to know where to stop.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I can appreciate that and that is why I think it is only when we see the report that we will have a real sense of what you were aiming for. We were having a discussion here whether this sits better with Corporate Services or Economic Affairs and International Affairs from a Scrutiny perspective, so I think both panels will appreciate seeing that. But definitely looking forward to it, thank you. I am going to move on now, Minister, to look a bit closer to some of the COVID responses. I know we have touched on these already. In response to a recent written question that I asked in the States, your response advised that the J.O.A. had repurposed existing programmes to tackle COVID-related crises. Would you mind elaborating on how existing programmes or which programmes have been repurposed and how they have been repurposed?

The Minister for International Development:

We have not repurposed any of the long-term grant projects. What we have done, we have given £535,000 and that has come out of our emergencies budget. We have put them in the pooled funds of British Red Cross, Start Network, U.N. and International Health Partners. Several of these agencies applied to us and we felt doing pooled funds, like I say, where there is a huge amount of people, refugees, we felt that that was the best response at the moment, until we could really evaluate what was going on and which areas were going to be the most severely hit.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The figure you have mentioned so far is £530,000. In your response to the question I asked, it does talk about ... it says: "J.O.A. allocates part of its humanitarian funding through responsive and accountable pooled funds, grants worth £1.05 million to the U.N. and the Start Network." Additionally, you then go on to say: "J.O.A.'s £200,000 contribution for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is helping them." When you talk about the £1.05 million and the £530,000, are they separate amounts? Was the £1.05 million the initial amount that were sending to the U.N. anyway?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Exactly.

The Minister for International Development:

It was they that may have been repurposing with that amount but then we sent an additional £535,000 specifically for a COVID response.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Exactly right. Some of the detail in the numbers, so here we are looking at our humanitarian budget. As you know we have got 4 spending programmes: development grants, humanitarian, Jersey charities and volunteering, and the 2 biggest are the humanitarian and the long-term development grants. Under that humanitarian budget we had already allocated just over a million to these pooled funds, which I think we had discussed with this panel before about the advantages of ... we had also already allocated £200,000 towards the Rohingya refugee crisis with U.N.H.C.R. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), the refugee camps in Bangladesh. We then subsequently made a funding round, this is where the £535,000 comes in, to 4 new grants specifically for COVID. Although in our response to you we noted that this pooled funding mechanism, which allows a very responsive and rapid allocation of resources according to changes of situation on the ground, was already responding to COVID because that is how it is set up. The £200,000 in Bangladesh was already responding to the outbreak of COVID in Cox's Bazar refugee camp. This £535,000 was extra and we will make some more allocation with the remaining humanitarian budget in the next month, also specifically for groups worst affected by COVID. The repurposing comes under the existing long-term development grants, which has not been repurposing as in sort of tearing up the objectives and starting from scratch, but it has basically been allowing programmes to continue under the new set of circumstances. So for example, you cannot run training courses where countries have imposed social distancing. You cannot get 100 recipients of a dairy cow together to teach them about nutrition and supplementation. You have to find another way of doing it, perhaps using smaller groups, perhaps using technology. Our partners have not been able to send their experts travelling around. How can you find ways to ensure that there is a continuity of programming and of the delivery of expertise at different places? Again, often using technology. So what we have

tried to do in pretty much all of our programmes is support our partners to make variations to the way they deliver their activities within the budget that is already allocated - we have not allocated additional funds to them - but allowing them to vary how they are spending the funds that have been allocated to achieve the same objectives in that sort of way. Does that make sense?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It does to some extent. I am still a little confused because, if I may, in your response you also said that you were delaying 2 dairy projects worth £530,000. So obviously that seems to match up with the £530,000 you are spending on COVID. Is the link clear there? If so, what is happening with those dairy projects?

The Minister for International Development:

We made a decision to delay those until next year until we were in a better position to assess whether they should start ... whether there was sufficient personnel to be able to work on them. So we decided to put them back and hopefully they will be starting in 2021.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Within ongoing projects we have accepted delays to things and allowed no trust extensions to projects. One or 2 projects that were in the pipeline, we have had to delay until next year or we have had to only partially achieve what we had hoped to achieve. So those 2 specific ones, for example, are opening up our dairy work in Zambia and creating a genetic hub for Jerseys in Rwanda so that we are not always just sending semen and embryos from here or from the U.K. but having Rwanda start producing them and then supplying its needs with other countries. So we had to put a pause on that because we simply cannot get people out there to scope them and start the project. But they are still very much in our pipeline and we are about to agree with the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society exactly what can be done this year. So they have not been totally stopped. In fact, they will go ahead. We have reallocated some of our budget from development projects, i.e. the new ones that we were about to start, over into that humanitarian budget, which gives us more leeway to make short-term emergency response-type grants, which reflect the reality of COVID in developing countries. But we have not stopped any project, we have not repurposed any project to the extent that it has had to be ripped up and started from scratch. We have stayed within the envelope that we were given, in fact may even have slightly reduced the envelope we were given, to adapt to the changing circumstances. I think we have done that pretty nimbly.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sorry, for my ignorance, but just to put simply, is the £530,000-odd that was going to go on those 2 dairy projects, is that the £530,000 that you are using for COVID? Is that the same or is it just coincidence it happens to be the same amount of money?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

That is coincidence it happens to be the same amount of money. There was also an amount of money allocated, for example, for the Liberation 75. We had planned to do a project with the British Red Cross where Jersey would donate the same number of food parcels that it received during the war to the Red Cross. This is something that we will postpone but it is something that we have been exploring with Connétables and things. Our budget is essentially fungible. We move money from one heading to another depending on the circumstances. Even within our planned budget within development projects we can say pretty much that we are spending £330,000 on one particular project but we make payments according to expenditure done by our partners. So even within each budget line there are variations, and that is something we have worked out with Treasury. It is not exact to say these very pounds that were allocated for dairy are being now spent on COVID. It is more accurate to say that we have reoriented some of our programming so that there is more money in the humanitarian pot but we have not stopped any of the development projects. We just have to take a bit longer on some of them.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The thing that confuses me is that in the answer to that question you said that: "J.O.A. will delay the start of 2 planned dairy projects worth £530,000 to enable us to use these funds for immediate humanitarian needs."

[11:30]

So you can see why I think that that is the same £530,000 that you are using for COVID.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I suppose you could call it the same. I mean, it is money that we have moved from development to humanitarian and when we wrote that response those were 2 of the 3 projects that had been identified that could be repurposed.

The Minister for International Development:

It might be at the end of the year that we still have not ... some grant aid projects might not have taken place or we might not have been satisfied with where they have got to so, as I was saying, at the end of the year, we could then put some of those monies into emergencies or humanitarian, call it emergency, so put it back into those and if there is a huge demand then for COVID we could use

some of those monies there. It is a decision that commissioners take. Rather than sitting there 1st January anticipating what is going to happen in the world, you cannot do that. You can do it to a point. You can do it without grant aid and want to allocate a certain amount of projects, want to allocate a certain amount to our volunteer projects, et cetera, and local charities, but emergencies have always got to be a moveable feast. Sometimes grant aid is moveable as well. Certainly this year, for example, the community work project, all 3 have not taken place. So we will have a certain amount in that budget that we can allocate to emergencies.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I can share some of the budget documents with you. I am not sure I have explained it. I mean essentially what you are saying is right; we are pausing 2 projects and that has allowed a reallocation but those are not the only 2 projects that have changed. Those were 2 we identified and the reason we highlighted when we wrote to you, I think along with the Red Cross project, was because those were the projects we highlighted to Treasury as currently being in our budget but unallocated. There was no grant agreement behind them. There was no obligation or anything like that. But as Carolyn said, there are variations going on in almost all of our expenditure across our 4 different main budget lines all the time, so the amount we are able to allocate for humanitarian or emergency stuff has increased this year. In part, yes, by pausing or going a bit slower on those 2 particular dairy projects, although we are able now to go a bit quicker on an Ethiopian one that we had not felt we would, for example, and we are looking at a new co-ordinatory dairy project with the R.J.A. (Royal Jersey Agricultural) which are principal to commissioners over the next 2 weeks. So there is more detail and nuance to it than just to say ... I think that is why I want to clarify that it is not J.O.A. cuts dairy projects to support COVID but this is part of a sort of larger picture.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

At the beginning of the year how much do you have set aside for emergency funds? Because the one thing you can guarantee, in any given year, there will be emergencies somewhere around the world of some sort?

The Minister for International Development:

There will be emergencies. I think 1.8, but that has gone up because of COVID.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, exactly.

The Minister for International Development:

Last year it was 1.9 but this year, because of COVID, we are, like I say, reallocating a certain amount.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

So commissioners approve a budget just before the beginning of the year and we base that on what are the obligations ... the longer-term projects that we have already agreed that there will be payments for in the coming year. So 70 per cent or so of our budget we kind of know in advance because they are commitments. Mostly those are in the development grants but a few on the emergency side too. Commissioners then decide how much of our budget should go towards emergencies. As Carolyn said, we often start off with a figure. We have started off with a figure of about £2 million to £2.5 million and ...

The Minister for International Development:

For this year.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

This year we will probably end up spending closer to £3 million or even slightly over on humanitarian side, mostly in response to COVID. There are a few things that we had planned to spend, particularly on volunteering, work projects. Also our own travel budget will not be anything like as big as we thought it would be. All of that money will get reallocated to the emergency side of things. But also, as Carolyn was saying to Senator Moore, the idea ... it does not really make sense to talk about savings in our budget because, as you know, the point, in a sense, is for J.O.A. to spend the amount allocated to it by the States on international development. There is an imperative and the needs are essentially infinite to make sure that the budget is spent effectively as possible of course. But we cannot say we have saved £30,000 on travel therefore that goes back to Treasury. We say we have saved £30,000 on travel or £200,000 on volunteering projects, reallocate that now towards emergency.

The Minister for International Development:

One of the projects that was meant to be starting this year, one of the farm projects in Rwanda, was on Songa Farm, was it not, and they just would not have, in this COVID crisis, been able to put the project together down there.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We will not spend that, but we will spend a bit on it because almost certainly it is agreed by commissioners. Because the R.J.A. will be able to do some preparatory work for that project without having to go there. So it will start this year, as we planned, but it will not cost as much as the amount we budgeted for originally.

The Minister for International Development:

It is not so much us that are reallocating. It is circumstances and so we are adapting our projects. It is not saying: "Right, we are not doing that because we have taken all your money from Rwanda and given it to COVID elsewhere." It is the circumstances of that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I appreciate that. Thank you. With these kind of COVID response funds, so to speak, are they all being donated via pooled funding, whether it is the U.N. or other emergencies, or are you making any direct grants yourselves to particular communities?

The Minister for International Development:

We have made a response to the British Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement, and that is specifically for COVID. We have made a response to Start Network of £150,000.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

That is the one pooled fund.

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, that is pooled. To U.N.H.C.R. £150,000 for global appeals, the refugees; and International Health Partners £85,000 for the disruption of the medical supply chain caused by COVID in Palestine and Gaza.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So it is all going via third parties? You have not kind of ... let us say there is a village that you work with and have done for 10 years you have not said: "Right, we are going to help that village directly" it has all gone via a third-party agency?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Everything we do really goes via a third-party agency. Some of the Jersey charities which are working on a sort of village level have also repurposed some of their programmes. Obviously it is in a much smaller way but, in a sense, it kind of mirrors what the huge international N.G.O.s are doing, for example, as well. For example, there is a great little Jersey charity that supports a particular school in Kenya and we had agreed a grant for them to help refurbish the staff accommodations so it could attract teachers and things like that. They now want to repurpose some of that grant to build a perimeter fence around the school so they can control access and for remote thermometers and for P.P.E. (personal protective equipment). Here we are talking a few thousand

pounds but it is much the same in some ways as allowing budget revisions of tens of thousands of pounds to much bigger existing projects as well.

The Minister for International Development:

Sometimes we do not know that particular village or school but with some of our agencies that we work with, like the Gurkhas in Nepal, we know of the areas and the villages where they are building the community centre or things like that. They have applied for funds.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We are not big enough to have a presence at the ground obviously in places like this whereas the F.I.D. (Finance for International Development) or the U.S.A.I.D. (United States Agency for International Development) would do. So we always pretty much rely on our partners, not just as the people to implement but as our eyes and ears in these countries. I think that is right too because they are the ones who really know best about what the situation is and how best to respond to it.

The Minister for International Development:

Then we are employing locally rather than us imposing ourselves on a country thinking we know best.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No problem, thank you. We will return to that written question, the response again. It stated that J.O.A. had requested specific proposals from 8 partner agencies, and commissioners would be meeting back in late May to discuss those options. Minister, you just read a list of kind of agencies. Was that the result of those ...

The Minister for International Development:

Yes, that was absolutely.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Brilliant.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I was just going to say that we are going to conduct a similar exercise in the next month or so, so we will ... we open a grant call or a window to selected agencies that we think can respond and we will set them various parameters and they will send us short proposals, and then commissioners again will make an allocation based on a range of options. They do not just sit there thinking: "Here are 4 good agencies." For example, these 4 were chosen from 8 possible responses and we will do a similar exercise between now and about mid-October.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am going to hand over now to Deputy Johnson to ask a few questions about Beirut and Lebanon.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

We touched on Beirut already, and I appreciate it is one of your many projects, but is one of the most recent. To start off with, in relation to the recent explosion, how much did J.O.A. contribute to the relief effort?

The Minister for International Development:

£10,000 because this was not the usual kind of emergency that we would support ordinarily but we decided to make a contribution to recognise almost our relationship with Beirut. While 178 people were killed and more than 6,000 injured, we feel that until the emergency has been properly assessed we would not know where exactly to help out. So we gave an initial donation, like I say, because we built up a very good relationship with the Knights of Malta in Lebanon over the last few years and we send our community work projects there for a specific project working with disabled people. So until such time as we can properly assess if more is needed, and we have been looking more so in the refugee camps if this explosion has had a particular impact, which I am sure it will somewhere down the line because it will have an impact on the infrastructure, the water, the medical care, sanitation, schools, et cetera, so we would be looking at the poorest. How it has affected them and how we could help.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I appreciate what you say and why you did it. That £10,000, which is perhaps not over-meaningful, who was it given to in the first instance?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

The Lebanese Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. So that is the Lebanese national Red Cross Society and they were chosen essentially because they are really well-placed both to deal with the short-term response to the explosion, the numbers of clinics and hospitals damaged, the urgent need for blood donations, they are the national organisation, the only one in Lebanon that deals with blood donation. Also, as Carolyn said, they are well placed to ensure that any effect on others not immediately affected by the blast but who can be hurt by, for example, the fact that the grain silos in Beirut have now gone.

[11:45]

They are also involved in caring for refugees and other of the poorest people in Lebanon as well, Lebanese people. So we thought they were a good option. They are one of the national societies with a British Red Cross person embedded in them, which always kind of adds to our confidence that they are a well-run and accountable arm of the Red Cross. Also given Jersey's history with the Red Cross it felt like a fitting way for a rapid response there.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Sorry, I was in no way querying why them and no one else. They are the people on the ground.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It is a good question because why them and not someone else.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Moving forward, are there any other major contributions contemplated or are you waiting to see how the ... I dare not say how the dust settles, but how things evolve slightly?

The Minister for International Development:

That is exactly what we are doing. That will be predominantly because we have a good relationship with them but also because Lebanon houses ... 30 per cent of their population is made up of refugees so they do bear quite an impact on the Syrian crisis thing. So it would be for those reasons rather than any other that we would need to help. Like I say, we would be looking to help if it has an impact on the refugee camps.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It was a slightly more difficult decision than it would otherwise have been for commissioners because Lebanon is a middle-income country. Had this happened in New York it would be easy because we would not respond. Had it happened in Chad one would probably have responded even more. But when it is a middle income country you really have to think very hard about is this the best way to spend Jersey's finite aid budget, and commissioners decided that on balance it was for the reasons Carolyn has given; the connection with Jersey but also the unique situation of Lebanon hosting so many refugees and the really parlous state of its economy and politics.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Just going back to the initial contribution, it is a relatively small sum in the overall scheme of things. That presumably was not a token gesture but just to let them know you very much have their interest at heart, but am I right in thinking that you have got no more planned at the moment, no more contributions envisaged?

The Minister for International Development:

No, nothing planned at the moment.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We monitor the situation as we monitor the situation in Yemen and Ethiopia and Syria and other places. If it emerges that there is a need for more contributions, for example often it is not just the impact of the initial disaster one looks at but then it is how co-ordinated and effective has the response been nationally and internationally. If it seems that there is a real gap still, for example in responding to the 300,000 people who were temporarily made homeless, or that there is going to be a knock-on effect to these other needy groups that Carolyn mentioned, which are not being well served by the international response, then we would look again at making another contribution. But you are right, we do not have an immediate plan to.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Would you mind if I just quickly chimed in with a question? I read a very interesting article which talked about in Lebanon how it was the smaller, local grass roots groups that were best at organising the aid effort and making sure money went to the right places, and that the large international groups were particularly poor at doing that. How do you feel using the kind of Lebanese Red Cross and Red Crescent? Do you feel like you have met that aspect of a local group rather than large international group?

The Minister for International Development:

Certainly. Having worked with them and having seen first-hand the project I feel confident that that is the right place to give money to.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

They are essentially grass roots. They are a membership organisation with community volunteers in every community and spanning all 18 of Lebanon's confessions, so although of course they are part of a huge movement we also consider them a local organisation. The difficulty, as you will appreciate, and perhaps one might say especially in the Middle East, for us without a presence on the ground giving money to grass roots groups is that it is very hard to do due diligence on them and especially if this is in the context of a sudden onset emergency where our response is needed quickly. There might be other small Lebanese N.G.O.s doing great work on the ground but it would be pretty catastrophic if we accidentally funded Hezbollah, for example. So something like the Lebanese Red Cross is usually a pretty good target for that. But it is also going back to why we support the pooled funds because the pooled funds will be able to allocate money to grassroots, to organisations and they do the due diligence.

The Minister for International Development:

In turn they can, if they feel it appropriate, work with people on the ground that they feel the best place.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Thank you.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Sorry, you may have said it tongue in cheek, Simon, but your reference to Hezbollah is very germane to the overall political situation. President Macron's made a second visit there and in no uncertain terms has said: "If you want our help [and I think by saying "ours" he probably means Europe as a whole] you are going to have to sort out your political situation. To what extent are you governed or influenced by political considerations as to their future regimes and obviously the western powers are using that as a leverage possibly to introduce change. I am presuming you would answer that is not your role, you give to the needy and nothing else but perhaps you could elaborate on that.

The Minister for International Development:

This almost goes back to some of your original questions on whether External Relations and International Development should be merged, which is why I am a strong advocate for keeping them apart. But obviously the political stability of a country is very relevant because we have to ensure that whatever aid we are giving to a trusted N.G.O. like this one, is going to get to where it is meant to get to.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Exactly. Somewhere like Lebanon is a really good illustration of an even larger point that you are making, that there are minefields - even literal ones - but minefields about political parties in places in Lebanon. Hezbollah is a designated terrorist entity in America and now Europe to some degree, and yet it is part of the Government. So if you give bilateral support to the Lebanese Government you could potentially be providing material support to a terrorist organisation. We know that the implications for Jersey, particularly as a financial services sector, is extremely grave. If anyone from the Island owns up to supporting terrorism, breaking sanctions or facilitating money laundering, it is why we work with the J.F.S.C. (Jersey Financial Services Commission) and the police on national risk assessments, and sometimes we probably have to err on the side of caution. But I think our approach in devolving decision-making to organisations like the U.N., to sticking with trusted partners that we can do due diligence on in the past like the Red Cross movement, but also not making bilateral grants to Governments. Yes, that reduces our ability to influence Governments because we are not dangling any money to them but it also means we cannot be implicated in

corruption or terrorist financing or anything like that. So unlike most other bilateral donors, we do not support directly any Government.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Yes, although the lines are increasingly hard to decipher, I suspect, in certain cases. I cannot expect you to give any fuller reply than you already have done, thank you. One final question in this area. You visited Lebanon last year as part of a J.O.A. project; are projects underway then, under threat from any decrease in J.O.A. funding, in the course of funds being reallocated?

The Minister for International Development:

Emergency funding?

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Any existing projects in relation to Lebanon, are they on hold or have they been decreased because of COVID-related matters?

The Minister for International Development:

Only community work projects. We were due to go out, we had one of our biggest parties of Jersey volunteers. We had a group of 30 volunteers that were due to go to Lebanon in May, which we had to cancel because of the circumstances of COVID. So that was really unfortunate because that is our work with the Knights of Malta that I alluded to before in one of the camps, and so that was hugely disappointing for us. We have obviously given monies to emergency aid, which help in the refugee camps, and we have given monies to the Red Cross, which help with the Syrian refugees and the children; there are a lot of Syrian children there being double shifted in the schools, the Syrian children go in the afternoons, the Lebanese in the mornings.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Exactly, nothing is under threat. Nothing that would have happened is now not going to happen apart from the volunteers.

The Minister for International Development:

Apart from the community work projects.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Thanks for that. I know Deputy Pamplin has something arranged, I am not quite sure how in touch he is with us so perhaps I will hand back to the chair to orchestrate where we go next.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Hopefully we will go to Deputy Pamplin but we will just give him a couple of seconds to see if he is able to speak to us. No, it appears not so in which I will just ask the questions. Looking at Jersey Overseas Aid again, the organisation, you have already talked about bursaries and in 2018 J.O.A. launched 2 bursaries for Islanders wanting to work in developing countries. Are these bursaries still available? How have they helped? And are Islanders still able to receive them?

The Minister for International Development:

Yes.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Yes, they are. Yes, they have. Obviously there have been ... so there are 2. As you say, there is a professional bursary to try and deploy people with skills to use those skills in countries and then there is a first taste of volunteering-type bursary, which is a contribution of up to £500 towards someone's trip to go and work with a charity somewhere abroad. We have still been doing them but again those this year have been severely hit by COVID because people just have not been able to go abroad. Encouragingly though, in the pipeline for our recent internship, several people who had received a bursary applied for the internship. That was pleasing because it felt that we are joining up in the whole and these different funding programmes are contributing to the whole, which the Government gets more and more people from Jersey involved in helping others abroad.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Brilliant, thank you. Also in 2018, it saw the signing of an M.O.U. with Skills Jersey that would apparently see 2 Islanders from the Tracker scheme provided with the opportunity to undertake learning trips overseas; is that scheme still operating?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

When we conduct the trips it certainly is, yes. So we interviewed at the end of last year for the trips that we would run this year and we, I think, conducted those interviews in about December ... anyway, end of last year to fill up our trips this year. We liaised with Trackers and we had several applicants from the Trackers programme and we had granted places, which unfortunately have not been able to be taken up, but we very much hope this will continue. We had graduates of the Trackers apprenticeship programme applying for our one-year internship as well.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Do you know off the top of your head how many people have benefited from that Trackers scheme link?

The Minister for International Development:

It was 2 a year.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

I will have to write to you on that.

[12:00]

The Minister for International Development:

I think we started it in 2018, so that would be 4. They couldn't go away this year.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Can I get back to you with the number?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely.

The Minister for International Development:

Between 4 and 6.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

These are quickfire because we are at the end of our time but I have only got 2 questions left. With regard to obviously the declining budget, so to speak, will the bursary scheme be modified as a result of the decline of the Overseas Aid budget?

The Minister for International Development:

It was linked with the budget.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It is a decline from what we had hoped to receive in the Government Plan but it is not declining in real terms or in G.V.A. terms.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

In relative terms it is not declining. In real terms it will, you will have less cash to spend.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

We will have better than we thought we would have but not less than we had in previous years.

The Minister for International Development:

Not less than last year. Last year we were still on 0.21 per cent of G.V.A. This year we agreed that it would be 0.26.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, I appreciate that. Sorry to butt in, it is just all I am asking is: do you expect to spend less on bursaries?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Definitely not, no.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is all I care about.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

To be frank, these are relatively small in percentage terms of our budget and we would happily spend more on them. We are even looking at a new scheme, which we will talk about with commissioners before the end of the year, but we are in touch with a particular U.N. agency, which can offer one to 2-year placements which we could co-fund, which could give someone from Jersey their first taste of working for an international organisation like the U.N. So it is something we want to put as much energy into as possible and, as a percentage of our budget, it is very low. If we had to make cuts it would be among the last things to go as well.

The Minister for International Development:

Because while our work is international, it is so good, the more people on Island that get to know about what we do, what International Development is, the better it is. The better we are as a community, the better Jersey Overseas Aid is, the more people understand and appreciate and acknowledge why we are doing it.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, I completely agree with that. Last question should be a very simple one. When will the J.O.A. annual report for 2019 be published because I do not believe it has been published yet?

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It is sitting here in front of me, honestly.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You have now waved it in public.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

It will be published. We were pleased to receive and to reflect on the recommendations of the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) on organisations' annual reports and we have made a couple of improvements in it as a result of that. But we are also pleased that the C. and A.G. seemed to like the way we are going with our annual report, which you will know have changed quite a bit in the last few years and is much more results focused. The path of this one is to get final approval from commissioners on 15th September and to be published as soon thereafter as we can get it done.

The Minister for International Development:

Then hopefully, now we have Internal Audit and the C. and A.G.'s report, going forward we can produce it much quicker.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Brilliant, I am looking forward to it and I am sure the whole panel is. Minister, Simon, thank you so much for your time. I found that really useful and I am sure the rest of the panel did as well.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Indeed, yes, thank you.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I will bring this hearing to a close.

The Minister for International Development:

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Executive Director, Jersey Overseas Aid:

Thank you, all.

[12:03]