ActionAid
ActionAid International is a unique partnership of people who are fighting for a better world – a world without poverty.

ActionAid International
PostNet Suite #248
Private Bag X31
Saxonwold 2132
Johannesburg
South Africa,

Telephone. +27 (0) 880 0008
Fax. +27 (0) 11 880 8082
Email. mail.jhb@actionaid.org
Website. www.actionaid.org

International Head Office
Johannesburg

Asia Region Office
Bangkok

Africa Region Office
Nairobi

Americas Region Office
Rio de Janeiro

ActionAid International is registered under Section 21A of the Companies Act 1973. Registration number 2004/007117/10

Content: ActionAid
Design: Real451

ISBN 1-872502-85-7

actionaid international

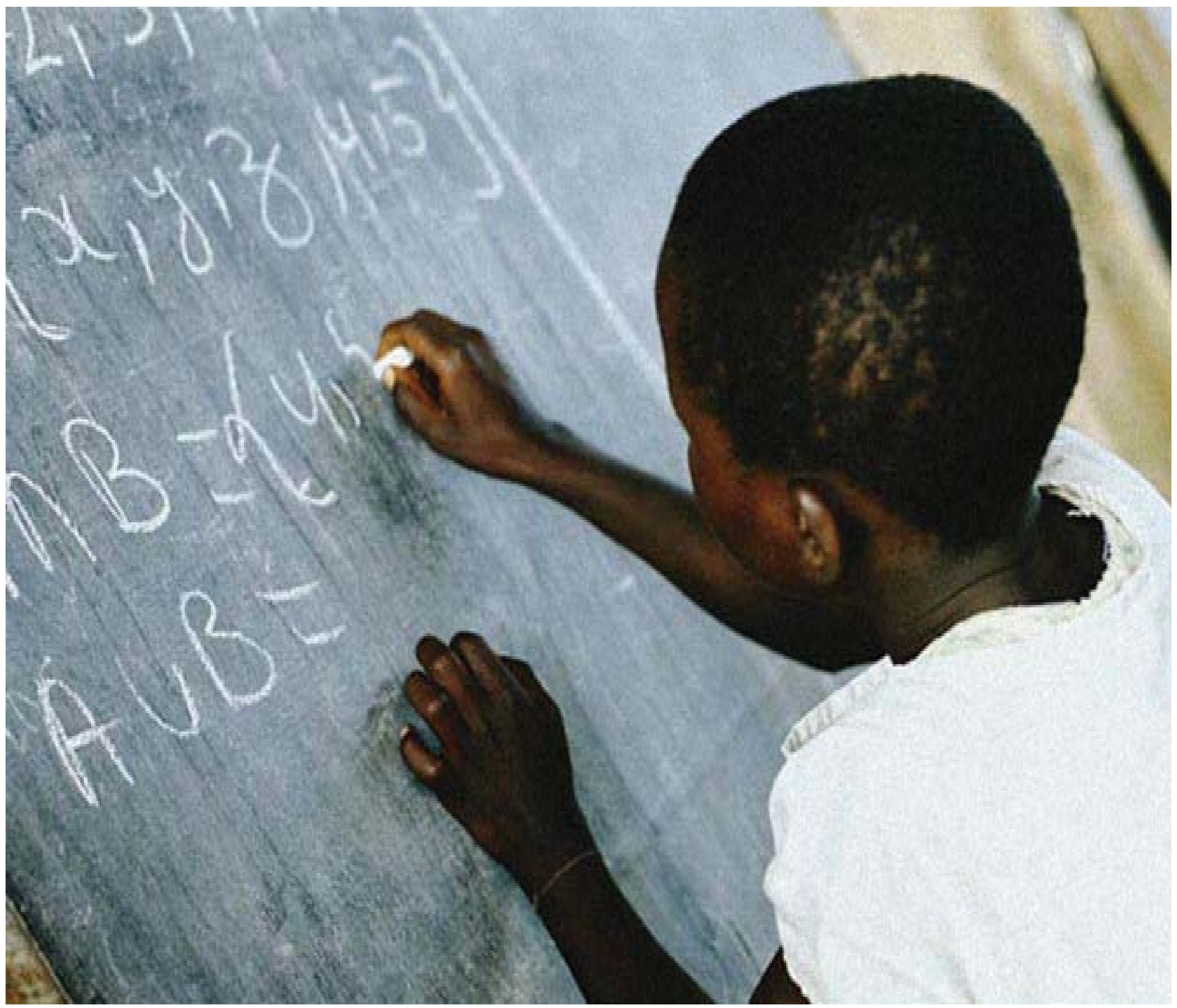
The African Commission for Britain.

actionaid international

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa’s development.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

Contents.



In March 2005, the 'Commission for Africa' will unveil its 'Action Plan for a Strong and Prosperous Africa.' Under the chairmanship of UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, the 17 Commissioners, half of them from outside Africa, will outline their plans for African development. Blair, who will also chair the G8 and the European Union this year, hopes that the Commission report will generate the political will to deliver a new deal for Africa in 2005.

The African Commission for Britain, an all-African panel of ActionAid International staff, has developed its own set of recommendations. We believe that for Britain, the first step in supporting African development must be to do no harm. The UK has yet to take this step. Dumped exports from British farmers still depress farm prices in Africa, putting poor farmers out of business. UK carbon emissions contribute to climate change, causing natural disasters across the region. UK companies continue to violate basic rights and the environment, while arms exports from British companies still fuel widespread conflict.

As Africans working with poor people across the continent, we know that change in Africa is urgently needed. Governments must become more accountable and less corrupt. Conflicts must end. Education, health and other basic services must improve, and be made more widely available.

While we know that real change in Africa must be led by Africans, we also know that some of the greatest obstacles to change lie outside the region. Africa has been the supposed beneficiary of no fewer than 10 ambitious development plans in the past three decades, many of them written outside the continent. But grand plans and grand statements rarely work. Too many of the 'African initiatives' have started from the assumption that the 'West knows best.' Donors apply conditions to force African governments into following 'sound' policies. Trade negotiations lock African countries into a free trade model that rich countries didn't follow themselves.

Ultimately, people must be free to choose their own path to development. History tells us that all too often the West does not know best, particularly about what works in Africa. Africa does need external support, including funding, but this must enable implementation of its own development strategies, both nationally and through regional bodies such as the African Union (AU).

The UK government is right to stress that the rich world must take action for Africa in 2005. It is right to show leadership in ensuring that African issues are top of the political agenda. But just as charity begins at home, so does justice. This report sets out 10 things that we believe that the UK must do in order to support, rather than undermine, Africa's development. All 10 are achievable; all 10 could be delivered in 2005. And all 10 are things that we, the African Commission for Britain, believe are essential if we are to deliver justice for Africa in 2005.

Taaka Awori
Country Director, ActionAid Ghana,
On behalf of the African Commission for Britain.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

Introduction.

The UK's relationship with Africa is a long one, stretching back to the establishment of formal trading links in the late 15th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries the transatlantic slave trade, in which Britain took a lead role, transported millions of Africans from their homes while contributing to Britain's economic prosperity. In the 19th century, the UK colonised a large part of the African continent, leaving only in the 1950s and 1960s, and in some cases later. Today, the UK retains important economic, cultural and historical ties with the continent, absorbing 7% of its exports and providing 5% of its aid.

The UK government has indicated its willingness to 'help' Africa in 2005. It has identified the region as one of its key priorities during its Presidency of the G8 and European Union (EU) this year. Both Prime Minister Tony Blair and Chancellor Gordon Brown are pushing for improved access to northern markets for African exports, further debt cancellation and front-loading of aid flows.

Despite these good intentions, however, UK policy and practice continue to severely hinder Africa's development. Conflict continues to be fuelled by arms exports from British companies. Agricultural exports from the UK are still dumped on African markets, with detrimental impacts on African producers and exporters. UK companies abuse human rights and the environment in African countries and collude in African corruption. The UK is still forcing African countries into an unsuccessful and discredited development model, involving trade liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation. And UK carbon emissions are contributing to natural disasters across Africa, undermining the continent's prospects of meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Nevertheless, there is scope for change, particularly in 2005. People in the UK are increasingly aware of the direct effect their actions have on African poverty. There are currently active and vocal campaigns for more and better aid for Africa; debt relief; trade justice; corporate accountability; climate change; an end to the arms trade and for anti-corruption legislation. In general, people are sympathetic to such causes, with almost one in five ranking development issues as an important factor in their voting preferences.

The African Commission for Britain believes that UK politicians must respond to public pressure and bring justice to Africa in 2005. As African Commissioners for Britain, we therefore call upon the UK to:

01. Stop forcing African countries to open up their markets.
02. Stop export dumping.
03. Reach the 0.7% aid target by 2010.
04. Stop tying economic policy conditions to aid.
05. Cancel unpayable debts.
06. Allow all people with HIV access to life-saving treatments.
07. Stop UK corporations from undermining basic human rights.
08. Cut carbon emissions.
09. Work to resolve and prevent armed conflict.
10. Stop supporting bribery and corruption in Africa.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

01. Stop forcing African countries to open their markets.

Ghana's tomato canning industry has been decimated.

African countries are under considerable pressure to allow competition from foreign imports in their own markets. The UK is at the forefront of pushing this trade liberalisation on Africa, and remains one of the most ardent proponents of the 'free trade' model. It continues to press for greater access to the agricultural, industrial and service markets of African countries through World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations.

The European Union is negotiating a new set of trade agreements, so-called 'Economic Partnership Agreements' (EPAs), which will force poor African farmers and emerging industries into unfair competition with British and other European exporters. The UK government is also using conditionality attached to aid, both directly and via other donors such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), to further push trade liberalisation onto poor African countries.

The UK remains wedded to its free trade model despite the fact that no country has ever developed by following such policies. In Western Europe and North America, industrialisation was accompanied by the protection of infant industries. Moreover, trade liberalisation actively hurts poor and vulnerable groups, including small farmers. For example, Ghana's tomato canning industry has been decimated and producers are struggling against cheap imported tomato paste from the EU following tariff cuts. Between 1985 and 2003, the level of formal employment in Zambia declined by over 50% as a result of donor imposed trade liberalisation in the country.

The UK is not just pushing for the liberalisation of goods. It is also pressurising African countries into opening up their service sectors through agreements such as the General Agreements on Trade in Services. But liberalisation of services will make it more difficult for African governments to manage their national development strategies. It is also likely to increase the prices charged for services such as water. Evidence from Guinea and South Africa, for example, has shown that the take-over of water systems by multinational companies has resulted in water prices being raised well beyond the reach of poor communities.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Work to radically change Economic Partnership Agreements and provide pro-development alternatives.
* Stop forcing African countries into negotiations on service liberalisation.
* Accept that poor African countries have the right to protect domestic industrial and agricultural sectors that are important for poverty reduction and food security.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

02. Stop export dumping.

Dumped EU confectionery has led to the loss of 36,000 jobs in Swaziland.

Export dumping – the sale of products at less than the cost of production – is an integral part of UK and EU agriculture. Dumping has three main negative effects – it depresses world prices, displaces developing country exports in third country markets, and undermines domestic production in developing countries, as local producers are unable to compete with cheap imports.

The UK is a major agricultural exporter. At present, UK wheat exports are being sold at 30% less than the cost of production, while white sugar is being sold at 40% below production costs. Across the EU as a whole, skimmed milk powder is also sold below the cost of production. In 2003, the UK exported some 24,000 tonnes of milk powder to Africa. In each case, dumping is only made possible by agricultural subsidies from the taxpayer, which developing countries are prevented from providing to their own producers. Dumping also occurs through the actions of companies who export unsubsidised yet unsellable products from the EU – such as poultry to west and central Africa.

Swaziland, for example, produces sugar at less than half the cost of the EU, yet is unable to compete with EU confectionary products (which contain subsidised EU sugar). Southern African outlets have switched to cheaper, dumped EU confectionary leading to the loss of some 16,000 jobs in the Swazi sugar industry directly and 20,000 related jobs, such as packaging and transport.

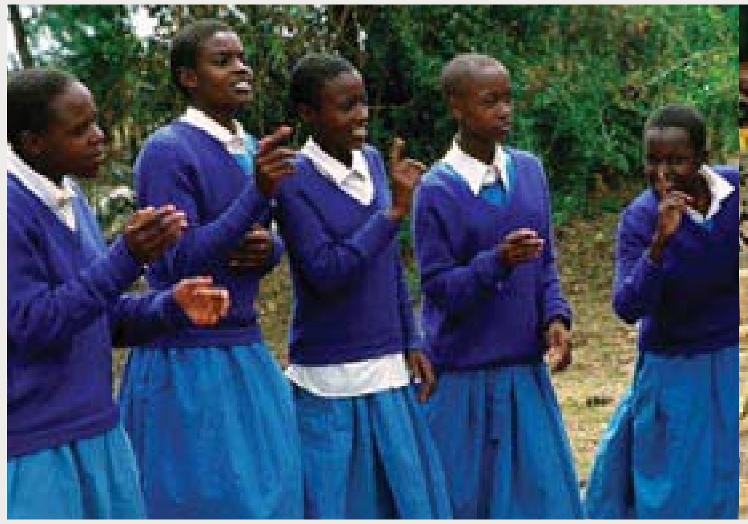
The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Prohibit the dumping of all goods.
* Call publicly for the right of all countries to protect their economies against dumped products, without having first to prove injury to farmers, industry or other groups.
* Support measures to those developing countries dependent on cheap food imports so that they are able to meet their food security needs.
* Ensure that the EU agrees to an early end date for direct export subsidies.
* Push the EU to bring forward further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to ensure that domestic support is re-oriented to deliver sustainable farming, environmental protection, support to small-scale farmers, and the development of local food economies.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

03. Reach the 0.7% aid target by 2010.

If the UK achieved 0.7% this year, two million lives could be saved in sub-Saharan Africa.



In 1970, the UK government pledged to give 0.7 per cent of its national income in overseas aid. It has never reached that target. In 2003, 33 years later, UK aid was at only 0.34% of national income, ranking the UK only 11 out of 22 donor countries. Moreover, UK aid figures include debt relief, often on loans that were taken out for purposes unrelated to poverty reduction. If debt relief is excluded from aid calculations, UK aid actually fell between 2000/01 and 2002/03 as a share of national income. Despite its expressed intention to reach the 0.7% target by 2013, it has so far failed to adopt a firm timetable.

If the UK reached 0.7% during 2005, an additional £4 billion would be made available to fund basic services in Africa. According to the WHO, this sum would save two million lives a year in sub-Saharan Africa if spent on basic healthcare. The UK has proposed an alternative to direct increases in aid – the International Financing Facility (IFF) – which will bring forward future aid flows to fund development now. While we welcome aspects of this proposal, it should not be used as an excuse to delay increases in aid. Money raised through the IFF must be repaid from future aid flows, meaning that aid flows will sharply fall from 2015 onwards unless the UK and other donors move rapidly towards the 0.7% target.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Make a firm commitment to reach the 0.7% target by 2010.
* Ensure that the aid budget does not include funding for debt relief. Debt relief must be additional to aid spending.

04. Stop tying economic policy conditions to aid.

In return for aid, African countries are required to meet conditions to deregulate and open up their economies. Aid conditions have a dismal track record in terms of their impact on poverty, and are also widely criticised for undermining national 'ownership' and democratic accountability. Yet they continue to be justified by donors as a way of improving the policy environment and thereby fostering 'aid effectiveness'. Most conditionality is devised and applied by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, that together operate as the linchpin of the aid system.

The UK is the fourth largest shareholder in both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and has a history of strong board support for economic policy conditions in the Bank and Fund's programmes. A growing share of UK aid is aligned with World Bank structural adjustment programmes. This means that, in the 10 African countries where the UK provides direct budget support, aid is often conditional on compliance with IMF and World Bank policy stipulations. These often include a raft of risky and unproven economic policy reforms, such as unilateral trade liberalisation and privatisation of essential services.

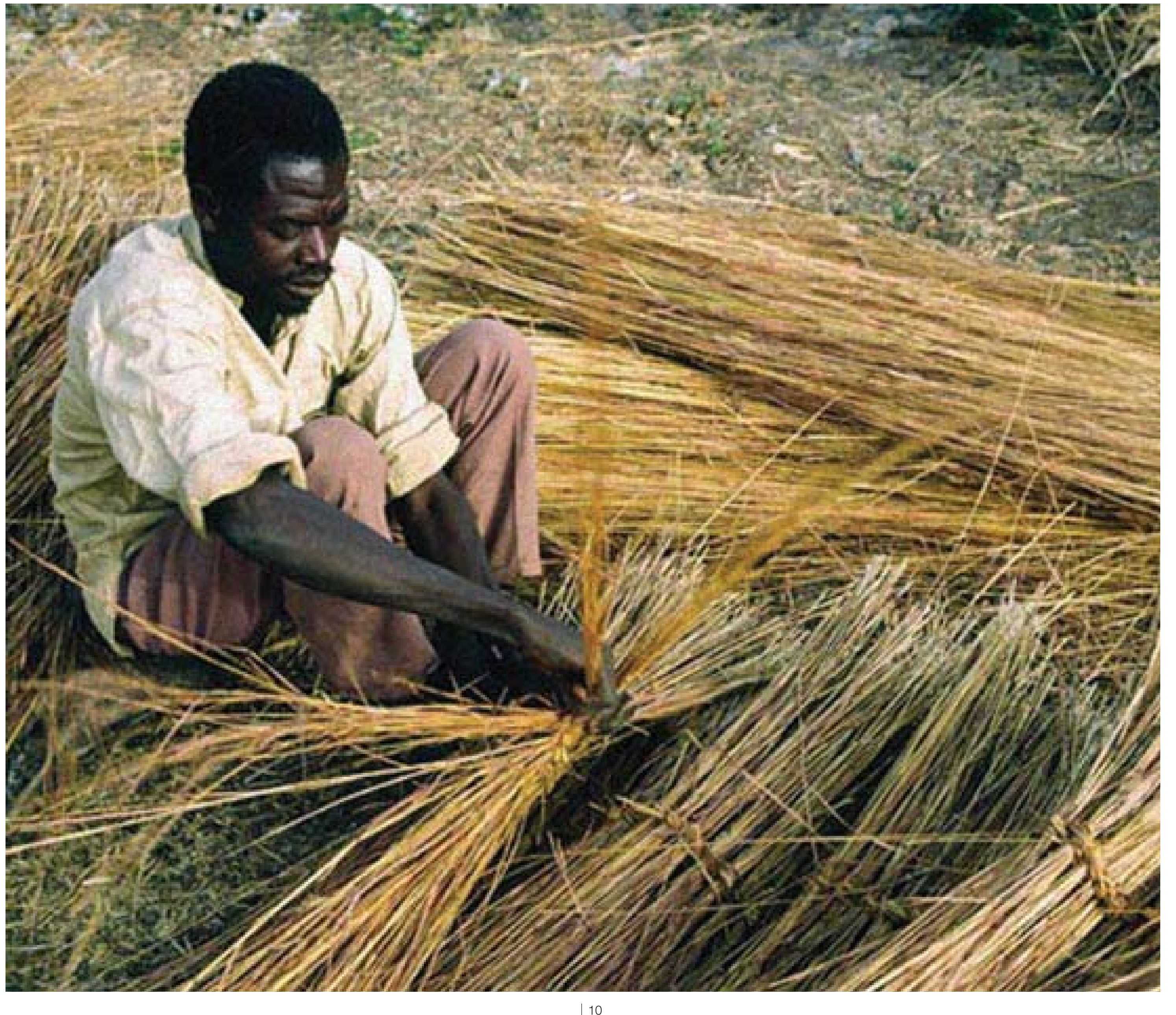
For example in Ghana, when the World Bank recently withheld $100 million of aid because of failure to privatise municipal water, the UK followed suit and froze £7 million, leaving two million urban Ghanaians waiting for safe drinking water. In Uganda, privatisation of the energy and water sectors has been a key benchmark for releasing further World Bank and DFID funds.

The UK government has recently revisited its use of policy conditions, and committed to a more focused and reduced use of conditionality in its aid programmes. However, its continuing 'piggy-backing' on World Bank structural adjustment programmes in Africa begs the question of how far the UK is prepared to go in abandoning economic policy conditions and giving countries the policy space they need to make their own locally appropriate and democratically accountable choices.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* End economic policy conditions in DFID programmes, and confine conditionality to what's necessary to ensure aid is spent accountably, on poverty reduction.
* De-link UK aid from IMF 'trigger conditions' and macroeconomic performance indicators.
* Put pressure on the IMF and World Bank to reduce and reform their own use of conditions.
* Introduce full disclosure of all remaining conditions.

The African Commission for Britain.



Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

05. Cancel un-payable debts.

In Zambia the government spends more on servicing its debt than on education.

Despite recent debt relief initiatives, sub-Saharan Africa still owes almost $220 billion to its western creditors, more than 50% of its combined income. Much of this debt is 'un-payable' – it cannot be repaid without undermining the ability of African governments to perform their most basic functions. Even those countries that have benefited from debt relief under the World Bank and IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative often spend more on debt payments than on health and education. In Ghana, for example, 11% of government spending goes into repaying debts, while only 9% is spent on health. In Zambia, where 8,000 teachers are unemployed and children are taught in classes of more than 70, the government spends more on servicing its debt than on education.

The UK government has already cancelled, or promised to cancel, the bilateral debt owed to it by African HIPCs. It has agreed to pay its 10% share of the debt service paid by selected low-income countries to the World Bank and African Development Bank, based on the UK's shareholdings of those institutions. It is also pushing for the sale or revaluation of IMF gold to fund relief on IMF debts.

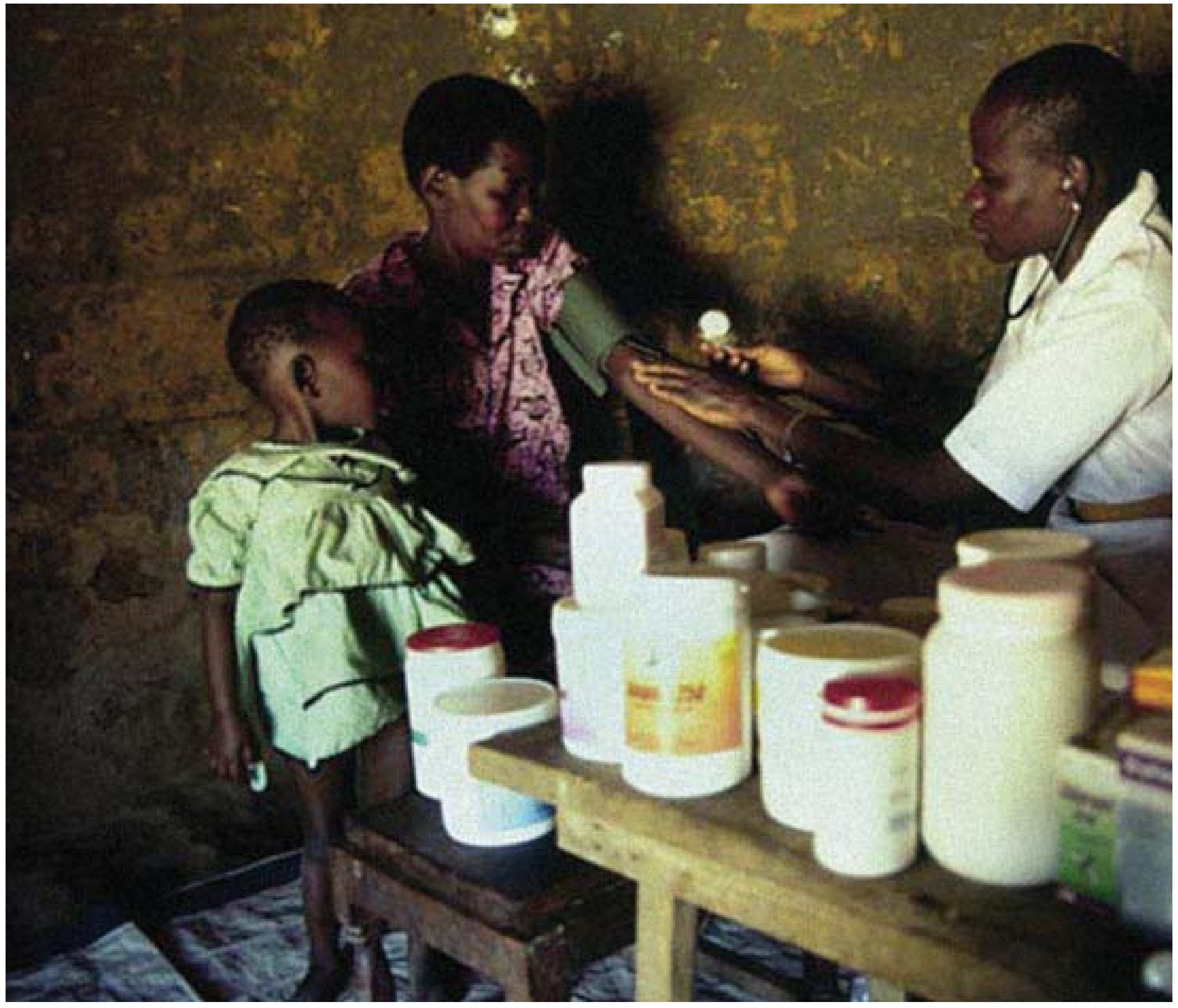
Welcome as the UK's proposal is, it does not go far enough. Firstly, in Africa the offer has only been extended to HIPCs. This excludes similarly indebted countries that are not on the HIPC list. The UK has only promised to cancel debt service as it falls due, rather than writing off debt stocks outright. The offer only stands until 2015, after which time debt service payments will resume.

Secondly, the UK proposal uses money from existing aid budgets, rather than providing genuinely new money to fund debt relief. This means that debt relief will not necessarily free up funds for health and education, and effectively deprives other countries of new aid resources. It also absolves creditors from taking any responsibility for bringing about the debt crisis through irresponsible lending and poor conditionality.

Most importantly, the UK proposal continues to require poor countries to implement risky and unproven economic policy conditions, such as privatisation, trade liberalisation and fiscal austerity in order to access debt relief. Countries that fail to stay 'on-track' with their IMF programmes, or do not negotiate conditionality-heavy adjustment programmes with the World Bank, will not be eligible for relief. Conditions attached to debt relief through HIPC include cutting budget deficits, privatising water and liberalising trade.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Cancel its share of all un-payable debts from African countries.
* Fund debt relief using new money, rather than that taken from existing aid budgets.
* Stop requiring poor countries to implement economic policies, such as privatisation and liberalisation, as a condition for granting debt relief.



Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

06. Ensure access to free and comprehensive treatment for all people living with HIV and AIDS.

The WHO's '3 by 5' antiretroviral drug therapy initiative to enrol three million people by the end of 2005 faces a funding shortfall of more than $2 billion.

In sub-Saharan Africa 6,300 people die every day as a result of HIV and AIDS. This is a human rights scandal that has long-term negative economic impact. British government policies on access to treatment are fine on paper but, in reality, the UK is not doing enough to reduce the level of illness and death.

The UK Government has announced that it will contribute £500m a year to for the fight against HIV and AIDS from 2005-2008, making it one of the highest ranking donor countries. It is, at last, increasing its annual contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. However, the UK will contribute less this year to the Fund than either France, Germany or Italy. Well documented hostility to the Global Fund has prevented it from gaining momentum and has made it easier for the US to get away with slashing its own contributions.

The UK government states that it "supports efforts to provide increased, and eventually universal, access to treatment and care for people with HIV and AIDS," an important shift from its previous strategies focusing solely on prevention. Currently the WHO's unprecedented initiative to enrol three million people on antiretroviral drug therapy by the end of 2005 ('3 by 5') faces an alarming funding shortfall of more than $2 billion. An additional $60 million is still needed to fund WHO's technical support to developing countries. The UK gave WHO £5 million towards technical assistance, dwarfed by Canada's donation of $100m. The G7 Finance Ministers' meeting in February 2005 failed to address the financial requirements of scaling up crucial AIDS treatment.

The pharmaceutical sector is seen to have political influence in the UK, and through this influence the ability to shape regulatory systems to the disadvantage of developing countries. The UK must follow up the recommendations of its Commission on Intellectual Property Rights to ensure that health, not wealth, determine levels of patent protection.

A final area requiring action is UK policy on recruitment of health staff from developing countries. This continues to undermine the ability of countries such as Malawi and South Africa to provide basic health services.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Commit additional funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and take leadership to ensure stable resources so that the Fund is better able to support developing country AIDS programmes.
* Provide urgent financial support to secure the achievement of '3 by 5' and urge the G8 to set a timetable for universal access to anti-retrovirals.
* Actively oppose EU and US 'TRIPs plus' agreements, which place greater restrictions on developing countries' use of intellectual property regulations than the WTO. The UK should use their presidency of the EU to speed up this process, pushing for approval of the regulation and its quick implementation at national level for member states.
* Invest in human resources in the health sector to include sufficient salaries and working conditions for healthcare workers to reduce their migration to work in the UK.

The African Commission for Britain.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

07. Stop UK corporations from undermining basic rights.

Multinationals are using their market power to force down prices paid to African farmers.

Tony Blair has called for a huge increase in private sector investment in Africa. Properly regulated, private enterprise can help to reduce poverty, realise people's rights, increase employment opportunities and generate economic growth. Yet the actual track record of overseas companies in Africa tells a very different story.

Britain accounts for 40% of Africa's inward investment in extractive sectors such as minerals, timber, precious metals, oil and gas. In many cases, these companies have either directly or indirectly benefited from the violation of peoples' basic rights; including expulsion from tribal lands, militarisation, violence, harassment and dispossession. Where complaints have been brought against British companies under the OECD Guidelines, such as in the case of companies fuelling conflict in the Congo, the UK government has thus far failed to investigate, let alone sanction, the companies involved.

At the same time, multinational agribusiness firms are undermining the fight against poverty by using their considerable power within domestic markets to force down the prices of agricultural commodities, upon which millions of Africans depend for their livelihoods.

For example, in Côte D'Ivoire, three companies control 95% of cocoa processing, while just one company manages virtually all of Ghana's palm oil processing industry. Such high levels of market concentration enable companies to dictate the terms of trade with smallholder producers and contract growers. Meanwhile, prices paid to farmers for cocoa have fallen by 6.9% a year, and palm oil prices by 3.4% a year over the past two decades.

With earnings from these and other major commodities such as coffee and sugarcane in sharp decline, the quality of life for farmers and their families in Africa has worsened, with millions no longer able to afford school fees for their children, medical treatments, or even a healthy diet.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Make company directors legally accountable for the social and environmental impacts of their businesses' activities overseas.
* Support the UN Human Rights Norms for Business.
* Take action to prevent the abuse of market power by UK agrifood companies in Africa.

The African Commission for Britain.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

08. Cut carbon emissions.

Rich countries spend £50 billion a year subsidising fossil fuel industries, but only £300,000 helping poor countries adapt to climate change.

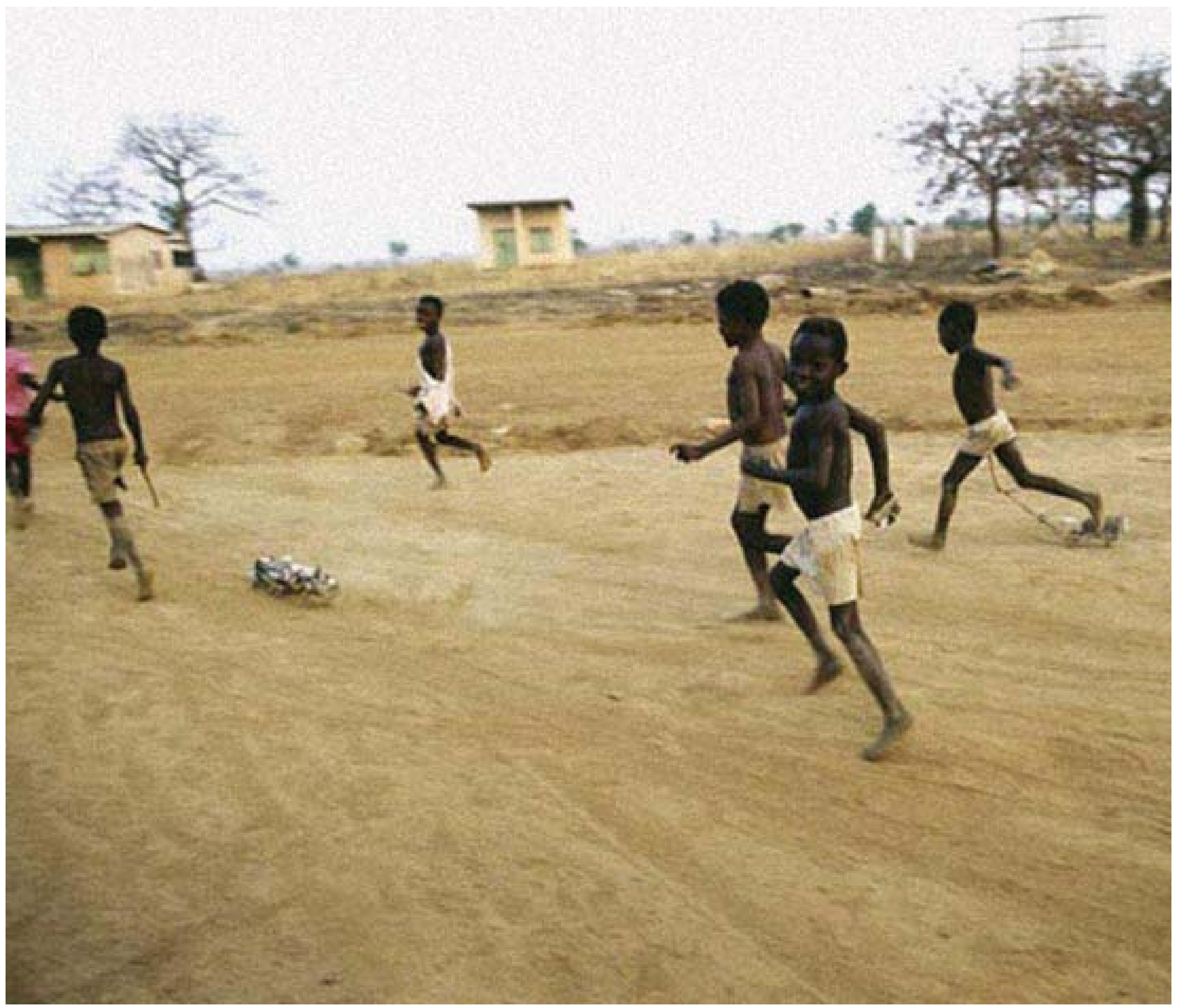
Climate change poses massive development challenges to Africa, which stands to be one of the worst affected regions from changes in rainfall and temperature. Industrialised countries such as Britain, which accounts for less than 1% of the world's population but 3% of global emissions, are chiefly responsible for the problem. The average Briton accounts for 47,000 Kwh of energy a year, 168 times what the average Ethiopian consumes. Despite the UK promise of a 20% cut in carbon emissions by 2010 (on 1990 levels), between 2002 and 2003 the UK's emissions of carbon dioxide from energy rose by approximately 3%. UK companies create carbon emissions not only in Britain, but also within Africa, for example through oil flaring.

A projected rise in average temperatures of two degrees Celsius and a drop in rainfall of 10% could spell disaster for over 400 million Africans who rely on rainfed agriculture for a living. One recent study estimates that an additional 65-95 million people in the region will be placed at risk of hunger by 2080. Global warming is already contributing to increasingly frequent droughts and other natural disasters: the devastating floods from tropical cyclones in 2000 cut Mozambique's annual growth rate from 8% to 2%. Climate change could also have knock- on effects in terms of disease incidence, with an increase in the area suitable for malaria.

So far, climate change has not been properly integrated into development policy and planning, and the response from rich countries has been grossly inadequate. Rich countries spend £50 billion a year subsidising fossil fuel industries only, but around £300,000 a year helping poor countries manage their emissions and adapt to climate change.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Urgently scale up its support to the Global Environment Facility and to other programmes designed to help Africa mitigate the impact of climate change.
* Cut its own carbon emissions and intensify efforts to get other major industrialised nations to follow suit.
* Actively support African efforts to manufacture energy generation systems that do not depend upon oil, including micro- and meso-hydro, solar power and wind generation.



Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

09. Work to prevent and resolve armed conflict.

Ten countries currently involved in conflict in Africa have made recent military purchases from the UK.

Africa remains one of the most conflict-affected regions of the world, and since the end of the Cold War is estimated to have accounted for 90 per cent of all conflict-related deaths. In 2003, 15 African countries were affected by armed conflict – in five cases these were major conflicts claiming more than 100,000 casualties. In the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, the estimated death toll runs to almost four million people.

Conflict entails a devastating loss of life, but also affects survivors. Conflict often leads to the collapse of public services, damaged infrastructure, the loss of skills through emigration, and environmental destruction. As a result, conflict is estimated to lose Africa over 2% a year in terms of economic growth.

The UK plays a direct role in many of Africa's conflicts, both through its colonial legacy and through its more recent commercial and political activities in the region. In particular, the UK is the world's second biggest arms exporter, with $4 billion of annual sales, or 20% of the global market, while UK arms sales to Africa totalled £200 million in 2003. In ten of the current conflicts in Africa, the countries concerned have made recent military purchases from the UK. In some cases, UK corporations also fuel conflicts through their corporate policies and practices, playing local communities against one another while degrading the environment and destroying community livelihoods.

In its capacity as a Security Council member, major aid donor and economic and geopolitical power in Africa, the UK has a particular responsibility to help address the wider root causes of conflict in Africa, including state collapse, inequality and the misuse of natural resource wealth. Policy coherence between aid and foreign policy and the proper regulation of UK investment in Africa are key in addressing these causes. The UK also has the capacity to help resolve conflicts, by financing and promoting peace talks, peace building and peace-keeping operations and by applying consistent pressure through diplomatic channels.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Support an International Arms Trade Treaty.
* Support the African Union's peacekeeping and peace building capacity.
* Engage the private sector in furthering development and conflict prevention objectives.
* Ensure that aid doesn't worsen conflict, in line with OECD guidelines.

Ten actions Britain must take to support Africa's development.

10. Stop supporting bribery and corruption in Africa.

$1.3 billion of the money looted from Nigeria by the Abacha family found its way into London banks.

The UK government requires African countries to take measures against corruption in order to qualify for financial aid. Yet UK government agencies use taxpayers' money to support British companies that continue to bribe their way into winning contracts from African governments. Of the 37 allegations of overseas corruption currently registered against UK companies, 14 have come from Africa – by far the largest number for any region. Poor people are hit hardest by bribery and corruption. It is estimated that contracts signed in corrupt circumstances can add 20–30% to the cost of government procurement – money desperately needed for investment in basic services. Corporate corruption also diverts resources away from essential public services because bribery returns are generally higher in construction, defence, oil and gas projects.

Corruption in Africa has been facilitated by policies and money laundering in rich countries that enable capital flight. A recent study estimated that total capital flight from Africa stood at $285 billion in the mid-1990s, and Britain, together with its overseas territories and dependencies, has been cited as a 'magnet' for stolen wealth. For example, around $1.3 billion of the money looted from Nigeria by the Abacha family found its way into London banks. Only $30 million of the Abachas' money has ever been frozen in UK bank accounts, and the UK government has consistently failed to respond to requests for help from the Nigerian government for financial documents and for the return of the money. Stringent new measures on reporting by banks of suspicious transactions have been introduced in the UK. However, the government appears to be focused solely on tracking terrorist financing, with few resources remaining for tracking the proceeds of corruption.

Britain is a signatory to the 1997 OECD Convention on Bribery, yet the UK government has been reluctant to investigate corruption overseas, and no cases have been brought in the UK since the Convention came into effect. Of the major British businesses that responded to a 2004 survey, 51 per cent indicated that the UK should establish specialist units to fight economic crime. Yet despite being a major exporter to African countries in which corruption is widespread, Britain is not putting enough resources into investigating and prosecuting cases.

The African Commission for Britain therefore calls upon the UK to:

* Establish a special unit to investigate and prosecute cases of bribery and other serious economic crimes overseas.
* Implement urgently all the recommendations of the OECD Phase 2 review.
* Debar companies convicted of corruption from obtaining export credit support for three years.
* Introduce mandatory requirements on due diligence for banks handling money from government officials abroad.

Conclusions.

Africa needs to change. Governance must be improved, corruption reduced, conflict ended. But such efforts must be led by Africans. Rich countries like the UK can help to support reform, by backing regional initiatives such as the African Union and by making sure that African governments have sufficient resources to implement their development strategies. The UK does not have all the answers. Its priority should be to ensure that its policies serve to help, rather than hinder, African efforts to promote development.

The UK Government believes that 2005 could be a breakthrough year for Africa. It is right. It is also right to be putting pressure on other G8 countries to deliver a new deal for the continent. But pressure on others is not enough. We, as African Commissioners for Britain, have identified 10 areas where we think the UK must change its own policy and practice in order to support African development. By following these recommendations, the UK will be taking the first step towards delivering justice to Africa in 2005.