1. We recommend that DFID Burma’s budget be increased from £60 million to £100 million. If the reform process stalls, the budget can always be reduced. (Paragraph 16)

DFID Burma’s budget for 2015/16 will be determined as part of future DFID-wide resourcing decisions. DFID Burma’s portfolio of work will continue to be flexible so it can adapt to changes in the environment and new development opportunities.

Update

DFID Burma’s budget for 2015/16 is £105m. Future budgets will be determined as part of DFID-wide resourcing decisions.

2. We support DFID’s current wary stance on budget and sector support to the Burmese Government. However it is important that parallel systems of delivering basic services are not created and that Government capacity is enhanced. We are pleased that DFID’s partners are working alongside ministries at the local level to prevent this from happening. (Paragraph 20)

Agree. An example is the UK’s major programme in the health sector, the 3 Millennium Development Goal Fund. The Fund works alongside government health services at the local level, identifying and filling gaps in service delivery. Where services are provided by non-government organisations they are done as part of an overall health plan which includes government, avoiding duplication of services and ensuring that much needed resources for health are used to best effect.

Update

DFID Burma’s approach remains the same. DFID will continue to review how best to support Burmese Government systems to deliver basic services.
3. The UK, working with multilaterals which it can influence, in particular the World Bank, should seek to prevent a proliferation of donors who do not intend to spend significant sums of money taking up Burmese Ministers' time. DFID should encourage smaller development agencies to contribute through multi-donor funds and encourage these funds and the Burmese Government only to engage with donors if they contribute a minimum amount. (Paragraph 24)

Agree. DFID will work as co-chair of the Development Partners Group and the Development Partners Working Committee, and as a member of several Sector Working Groups, to encourage smaller development agencies to engage through multi-donor funds and to do so with worthwhile amounts.

Update

There has been some progress on this. Italy and Luxembourg have joined the multi-donor Livelihood & Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), of which DFID is Chair of the Donor Consortium.

4. DFID should continue to seek to encourage official development agencies such as Japan's and India's as well as NGO and private donors to coordinate with each other and the multilateral organisations to prevent duplication. (Paragraph 25)

Agree. As co-chair of the Development Partners Working Committee (DPWC), which represents donors in meetings with the Burmese Government, and as one of the largest bilateral donors to Burma, DFID will continue to encourage development agencies, NGOs and private donors to participate in the new aid coordination structures agreed with the Burmese Government in January 2013. Japan has been an active member of the DPWC from its inception and is involved in many of the Sector Working Groups. India now attends meetings of the Development Partners Group (open to all official development agencies in Burma) and participated in the Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum in January 2014.

Update

There has been good progress. South Korea and Canada have joined the DPWC. Donor countries, with participation of both heads of development agencies and Ambassadors, have worked well together to coordinate support and advocacy in relation to the peace process (with the signing of a partial Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in October 2015 a significant step) and the November 2015 national elections. DFID has also been instrumental in establishing the World Bank Group Single Country Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Myanmar, to which Australia, Denmark and DFID have made contributions. Many donors are seeking “name recognition” for
their support to Burma, so it will be important that multi-donor funds enable this to happen.

5. We welcome the close cooperation between DFID and the Foreign Office. We recommend that the Foreign Office and DFID be able to access Conflict Pool funds for their conflict related programmes in Burma. (Paragraph 27)

Allocations for the Conflict Security and Stability Fund (CSSF), which will replace the Conflict Pool for 2015/16, will be determined in line with National Security Council priorities.

Update

£7 million of CSSF funds have been allocated to HMG Burma for 2015/16, of which £5 million is allocated to DFID. This contributes to a multi-donor Joint Peace Fund (JPF), which seeks to coordinate and maximise international support to the peace process. DFID Burma was influential in the development of this work as part of a small donor team leading the design of the JPF. DFID and the Foreign Office collaborate closely over implementation. Future CSSF funding will be determined by the National Security Council.

6. We recommend that DFID consider having a simple table on each country programme page on its website to present the basic country projects' data such as duration, allocation of funds, funding channels such as the non-government organisation or multilateral it is going through and a short summary of its intended outcomes. In addition it would be useful if the projects linked with the operational plan expected results for the country. (Paragraph 29)

All Government information is now published on the single Government website, GOV.UK. The website is managed by the Government Digital Service (GDS) who have guidelines as to what content can be included on the GOV.UK pages to ensure they are simple, clear and easy to use. These currently preclude use of graphs, charts and interactive maps. We continue to work with GDS and FCO to improve the worldwide pages, to make sure they meet user needs and contain the most up to date, relevant information.

Alongside the content available on GOV.UK, DFID has created the interactive Development Tracker http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/. Currently, detailed information on nearly 4,000 projects is available. Each project displayed on the Development Tracker details the project start and end dates, the project budget, the implementing organisation(s), and relevant project documentation such as the business case, annual review(s) and the logical framework. Each project in the Development Tracker has a project
description, the project's sector allocation, project budget and expenditure, a breakdown of the project's financial transactions and annual results.

A link to the Operational Plan is available from each relevant country page, which also provides key statistical information on the country, as well as the main sector groups being addressed through projects, and a profile of project budget by year.

Following the IDC recommendation we will more clearly promote the Development Tracker through the relevant GOV.UK country pages.

Update

A link to the Development Tracker has been added on each relevant GOV.UK country page. DFID is committed to driving up the quality and amount of information published – data on the Development Tracker is refreshed each month and it has a feedback facility for people to ask questions about the data we publish.

7. DFID, MoD and FCO should work closely together to put pressure on the Burmese Government for an effective outcome to the peace process. This should include pressure to push forward negotiations for a political settlement while continuing to seek and maintain a nationwide ceasefire. The UK should be prepared to increase its spending to support on the peace process. (Paragraph 38)

Agree. DFID, MOD and FCO already work closely in this area. DFID and other British Embassy staff, including the Defence Attache, regularly discuss the peace process and a nationwide ceasefire with the Burmese government, the Tatmadaw, and ethnic armed groups, both in Burma and in Thailand. DFID has just allocated an extra £8 million for the peace process. UK support for the peace process in Burma will be determined as part of future DFID resourcing decisions and National Security Council decisions regarding the Conflict Security and Stability Fund (CSSF).

Update

DFID-funded programmes have provided high-level advice and technical support to all sides in the peace process to encourage progress. A Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed on 15 October 2015 by the government and 8 of the Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs). This has paved the way for the monitoring of the NCA and planning for the formation of a political dialogue process. DFID, FCO and MOD will continue to advocate that the process is inclusive, to encourage participation from those EAGs who have not yet signed the NCA.

The DFID-backed Peace Support Fund has provided financing for 22 projects supporting the peace process and addressing inter-communal
violence. DFID is developing continued support for the peace process, for peace building in conflict-affected areas, and for addressing inter-communal violence.

8. **DFID should continue to engage with the armed ethnic groups converting them to civilian administrations that can help build up health and education in the ethnic regions and ensure service delivery during the peace process period.** (Paragraph 42)

Partially agree. It is important that service delivery in ceasefire areas continues throughout the peace process and political dialogue processes. This includes areas that are administered by the Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs). It is for the Government and the EAGs themselves to decide upon whether, and when, the EAGs should all convert into civilian administrations - other possibilities and options for transition exist. In some cases, EAGs are the armed wings of associated civilian organisations.

**Update**

The new multi-donor Joint Peace Fund, including funding from the UK’s CSSF, allows for support for the implementation of agreements in the peace process. Examples may include interim arrangements and long term solutions for administration and service delivery in areas that have been affected by the conflict.

9. **Rape has been widespread in Burma as part of the conflict. UN resolution 1325 stresses the need for women’s equal participation and full involvement in peace and security efforts. We call on the Government of Burma to develop a national action plan on 1325 to ensure that women are involved in the peace process. We also call on the Government of Burma to support the participation of women in reform, including increased representation in Parliament and in developing provincial and local government.** (Paragraph 47)

Agree. Burma is a focus country for the new UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

**Update**

Positive progress is being made on implementation of the UK National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in Burma. There are signs of increased women’s participation in politics. In the November 2015 elections, there was an increased percentage of women candidates (800 of 6,072 or 13% compared with 127 of 3,069 or 4% in 2010), the highest in Burmese elections so far. DFID-funded health and livelihoods programmes are ensuring that women gain representation and voice in community and
village level development committees, and we are supporting greater awareness of the need to engage women in the peace process and political dialogue.

HMG continues to engage with the Government, the military and Civil Society Organisations, including through the visit of FCO Minister Hugo Swire, on the need to end sexual violence against women and to put in place strong legislation to enable perpetrators to be brought to justice and end impunity.

10. We support the training given by the UK Armed Forces to the Tatmadaw to encourage a better understanding of human rights and better working with civilians. The MoD should work further on military to military advice about governance reform and democracy building as soldiers listen best to other soldiers. (Paragraph 50)

Agree. HMG will look for opportunities to encourage improved governance, reform and improved human rights within the security sector. This will involve the continued use of HMG’s Stabilisation Unit expertise, and the ongoing delivery of educational courses such as the Managing Defence in a Wider Security Context course.

Update

CSSF funding has allowed the recruitment of a full-time Security and Justice Adviser within the British Embassy Rangoon. HMG continues to deliver educational courses such as the Defence Academy’s Managing Defence in the Wider Security Context course and the Senior Strategic Leadership Programme, and to draw on the Stabilisation Unit’s expertise.

HMG also continues to facilitate the engagement of serving and retired senior British military officers with the Tatmadaw and wider Burmese government. The delivery of English language training at the Defence Services Academy in Burma equips junior and mid ranking officers with the linguistic skills to access information originating from the wider international community.

Human Rights are central to all HMG engagement on security sector reform and defence. Our policy is compliant with EU sanctions, and prohibits any engagement with the Tatmadaw on areas that may directly or indirectly improve combat effectiveness.

11. The violence in Rakhine, in particular the plight of the Muslims there, and the extension of violence to the rest of Burma is very worrying and could cause the reform movement to unravel. The UK Government must acknowledge the concerns of the majority of the
population with a large Muslim country to its west and the world-wide threat posed by jihadists. However, while we acknowledge that the situation is highly charged, delicate and complicated, we urge the UK Government to maintain its pressure on the Burmese Government to improve the situation of the Rohingya and allow humanitarian access to the internally displaced people camps. (Paragraph 62)

Agree. We fully share the Committee’s concerns regarding the situation in Rakhine State and will continue to raise these concerns at the highest levels of the Burmese government. We will continue to push the Burmese government to take swift and decisive action to protect the lives and rights of the Rohingya and all people in the country who are vulnerable to discrimination and violence, and to address the underlying causes of ethnic and religious discrimination. We will continue to make it very clear to the Burmese government that they must allow unhindered access for humanitarian assistance in all parts of the country.

Update

Around 140,000 Rohingya are still displaced from the violence in 2012 and many are living in camps for internally displaced people run by the international NGO community. DFID is one of the major funders of these camps. HMG continues to raise concerns about ongoing constraints on freedom of movement, which make it hard for Rohingya to earn a living and gain access to schools, healthcare and places of worship.

Burma’s refusal to recognise the citizenship claims of the Rohingya has further restricted their rights. The UK continues to call for a permanent solution to the issue of citizenship rights for Rohingya, which meets international standards. Most of the Rohingya were disenfranchised from voting in the November 2015 elections as they were not deemed to be citizens.

The UK raised the Rohingya situation with government in Rakhine and Naypyidaw during DFID Director General Joy Hutcheon’s visit to Burma in June and FCO Minister Swire’s visit in July.

12. It is worrying that violence has spread beyond Rakhine state, but from our visit it seemed that resolution of the conflict may be easier in central Burma. There may not be ready solutions to end the violence both in Rakhine and the rest of Burma, but DFID can help facilitate dialogue between the different faith groups, with the use of experts to help meditate and bring communities together — to encourage interfaith understanding and to help build cohesive and peaceful communities. The UK Government can also advise on integration for example in supporting Muslims to become members of the police force. (Paragraph 63)
Partially agree. DFID and FCO will consider the opportunities to encourage inter-faith understanding.

The UK is already providing serving police officers to support an EU policing project, which will train up to 4,000 Burmese police officers on effective and human rights compliant crowd management, and on community policing. A trial is being run by a former PSNI officer in an area where there is a large Muslim community. However, given the lack of clarity on the extent of Burmese political appetite for wide ranging policing reform at this stage of the peace process, there are no specific plans for the British Government to take a lead and advise on integration of Muslims into the police force. Integration on a religious basis has proved to be a contentious matter in other jurisdictions and the UK would wish to be more certain of how such a proposal could affect the political process amongst other things before assisting in such a measure.

Update

HMG continues to urge the government to work towards a long-term solution that brings peace and reconciliation and protects the human rights of all communities, including in Rakhine. We are concerned about the four new ‘Race and Religion’ laws which put restrictions on interfaith marriage, religious conversion, polygamy and population control. HMG is closely monitoring the application of these laws, which could harm religious tolerance and respect for diversity in Burma.

Since June 2014, the DFID-backed Peace Support Fund – now co-funded by Australia – has provided £1.4 million to projects addressing inter-communal violence in Rakhine State and other troubled areas across the country. The projects provide advice, mediation, and expertise in rebuilding relations between different religious communities and addressing hate speech through the media.

13. Without progress in dealing with the inter-communal violence, we have concerns that it could spread further. There is potential for the violence against Muslims in Burma to radicalise Muslims there, who have traditionally been moderate, and attract Islamic extremists to the country. Historical accounts reveal that Muslim communities have lived in the country for centuries. (Paragraph 64)

Our analysis suggests that the Muslim population in Burma remains for the most part moderate and has not been radicalised, though of course there is a risk of further radicalisation if the situation is not addressed. We will continue to take an approach that seeks to address the grievances of the Muslim and other communities, through dialogue, political reforms and development, thereby seeking to reduce the likelihood of communities resorting to radical means to address them.
Update

Whilst there have been no major incidents of inter-communal violence so far in 2015, HMG continues to closely monitor this issue in Burma. The new four “Race and Religion” laws, which put restrictions on interfaith marriage, religious conversion, polygamy and population control, will disproportionately affect ethnic minorities and women. HMG is concerned about the impact that these laws will have on communities such as the Rohingya who are already persecuted.

14. We support DFID’s commitment to the nationwide population census as it is needed for future planning in Burma. It is important to get an accurate measure of the ethnic and religious diversity of the country but DFID, with the Government of Burma, should consider how ethnic and religious classification contribute to future planning without inflaming tensions or whether simpler data on just sex and age would be sufficient. (Paragraph 68)

Agree. Preliminary feedback from the international census observation mission is that the 2014 Burma Housing and Population Census was one of the most successful census processes they have observed - except in Rakhine State. We are deeply disappointed that the Burmese government has gone against its long-standing assurance that all individuals would have the right to self-identify their ethnic origin. We have made it clear to the government that the decision not to allow people to self-identify as Rohingya is in contravention of international norms and standards on census conduct. We are engaging in further discussions with the government and UN on this issue. We continue to push the government to commit to a clear process of sustained engagement with ethnic groups to address ethnicity and national race classification issues after the census, and to release the data in a sensitive way. Despite the situation in Rakhine, the census has been a better process for our involvement.

Update

The publication of census data has proven to be valuable in many regards; correcting erroneous earlier estimates of many indicators, including the total population and the scale and variation of maternal mortality across Burma. Some sensitive data has not yet been released - the Government of Burma has committed to release the religious and ethnic data after the November election. Details of the manner of the release are yet to be decided. The UK has expressed concern regarding risks to the peace process and potential for unrest if this is not carried out in a sensitive and consultative manner. HMG is closely monitoring the situation in collaboration with other census donors.
15. We urge the UK Government to support reforms to the constitution that ensure ethnic groups are treated fairly and equally. It should also press for a reduction and eventual elimination of the role of the military in Parliament and Government. (Paragraph 79)

Agree. The Prime Minister has stated that constitutional change will be necessary for Burma to continue on its reform path and to ensure democratic elections can be held in 2015. The British Government makes clear its support for constitutional reform to the government, parliament and all parties within Burma, and is actively engaged with international partners to build support.

As we continue to make clear in Burma and internationally, we strongly support reforms to the constitution that enshrine equal rights for ethnic groups and reflect the issues around federalism that will arise from the peace process. This will be crucial for sustainable stability. President Thein Sein has also stated his view that the peace process may necessitate constitutional change.

We also want to see independence for the judiciary and the role of the military normalised in Burma's executive and legislature. Burma's constitution is one of the hardest to amend in the world: changing the constitution's amendment clause will be critical to enabling future constitutions to reflect the views of the people of Burma. All of these changes will be crucial to Burma's longer term democratic transition.

Update

The long-running parliamentary process to reform the constitution was brought to a close at the end of June when the military 25% parliamentary bloc vetoed significant change. The NLD, which has been consistent in calling for constitutional change, won a significant majority in parliament in the November 2015 elections but at the time of writing no timetable has been put in place for constitutional issues to be revisited.

16. We support the UK Government's view that the presidential eligibility clause 59f should be removed not just because of Aung San Sui Kyi but because there should not be a qualification targeted at one individual or group. (Paragraph 80)

Agree. As the Prime Minister has said, it would be un-democratic for the 2015 elections to be held under a constitution that was designed to exclude a key political figure from being able to fairly contest the Presidency. The people of Burma should be able to free to choose their own president.

We welcomed President Thein Sein's speech on 2 January 2014 stating that a healthy constitution must be amended from time to time and that he would not want restrictions on the right of any citizen to become the leader
of the country. It is hard to see how Burma’s democratic transition and the elections in 2015 could be seen as credible and fair without reform of the presidential eligibility clause.

Update

The military 25% parliamentary bloc vetoed significant change to the constitution at the end of a long-running parliamentary process in June. Full reform of clause 59(f) was not under consideration in this vote. The NLD, which has been consistent in calling for constitutional change, won a significant parliamentary majority in the November elections. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has invited the President, Speaker and Commander in Chief to participate in national reconciliation talks but at time of writing no timetable has been put in place for constitutional issues to be revisited, including eligibility for the Presidency.

17. Most leading politicians, including Aung San Suu Kyi, are associated with the Burman Buddhist majority. It is essential to build a state that gives equal rights to all citizens and ensure that ethnic minorities have a say in federal and especially provincial government. (Paragraph 81)

Agree. The constitution needs to enshrine equal rights for ethnic groups and reflect the issues around federalism that will arise from the peace process.

Update

The NLD’s electoral victory in November 2015 included substantive wins in ethnic regions. The NLD won a majority of elected seats in regional parliaments in all states except Shan and Rakhine, as well as both houses of the Union parliament. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has invited the President, Speaker and Commander in Chief to participate in national reconciliation talks. At time of writing no timetable has been put in place for transitional discussions on issues including federalism although we expect these will develop in due course, including in the context of the peace process.

18. The UK should put more pressure on the Burmese Government to divert spending away from the military to the provision of basic services such as health and education for its population. (Paragraph 84)

Agree. The UK has worked with the World Bank to analyse public expenditure in the health and education sectors. This analysis has been reported to the Burmese government to demonstrate how social sector spending is low in comparison with most other low and middle income countries, and to encourage further increases in Government expenditure in
these areas.

**Update**

In the final budget before the 2015 election, the Government of Burma significantly increased allocations to health and education. Education received 1.9% of GDP (6.8% of the budget total and a 20% increase compared to 2014-15), with plans to recruit around 50,000 additional teachers and make higher education free. Health received 1% of GDP (3.6% of the total and a 6% increase), with plans to train over 3,000 medical staff, and allocate substantial funds for free medical treatment of government workers. However, in the same budget there was a rise in the proportion allocated to defence spending from 11% of the budget in 2014/5 to 13.3% in 2015/6. The World Bank’s public expenditure review will help support the case for further increases in budgets for social sectors, as Burma’s levels of expenditure are low compared to its neighbours.

19. **DFID should continue its support for civil society in Burma, but it needs to ensure that small, local organisations, based outside Rangoon also have access to funds.** (Paragraph 88)

Agree. DFID already provides funding and advice for a wide range of civil society work throughout the country through its existing programmes. DFID’s civil society programme ‘Pyoe Pin’ is providing advice and funding to many civil society networks and organisations throughout Burma. For example it has funded HIV networks, comprising over 400 local organisations and self-help groups covering all states and regions, to develop their networks and successfully advocate for change. In Kachin State, Pyoe Pin funded the establishment of forest user groups. DFID funding for local committees in all states and regions is also providing civil society with a voice in the Burmese Government’s current negotiations to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

**Update**

DFID Burma has increased its Civil Society Programme budget by £3.9 million (to £16 million) and extended it until December 2016 to ensure continuity of support to civil society in the post-election period.

20. **DFID should consider supporting Aung San Sui Kyi’s rule of law centres only following a full assessment of the pilot projects and alternative options.** (Paragraph 92)

Agree. Funding for DFID programmes is only agreed after a thorough analysis that covers such issues as value for money, the likelihood of the proposal delivering strong development results, sustainability, the need for
funding and alternative options.

**Update**

Following an evaluation that indicated that the pilot projects had been successful, DFID is co-funding, with other donors, an initial phase of the project for one year. This will enable further assessment of the approach.

21. **We welcome the current projects which the UK Parliament and UK Government are undertaking to support the Parliament of Burma, but we believe that a more sustained programme is required over a long period, especially as the Burmese Parliament is likely to lose many of the newly trained MPs in the elections in 2015. We urge DFID and other donors to continue to encourage the Burmese Parliament to establish a strategic reform plan to coordinate the work of donors. We also recommend support to existing women MPs as well as encouraging more women to become involved in politics and at all levels of Government. (Paragraph 98)**

Partially agree. DFID Burma’s staff and financial resources for parliamentary reform from 2015/16 will be determined as part of future resourcing decisions. DFID has requested that the Burmese Parliament establish a strategic reform plan to coordinate the work of donors. The Parliament intends to produce such a plan in 2014 with support from UNDP.

**Update**

The Burmese Parliament completed its Strategic Plan in 2015 with support from UNDP, part funded by DFID. DFID is continuing to co-fund UNDP’s programme of Parliamentary support, and is co-funding a secondee from the UK House of Commons to help the Burmese Parliament improve its research capacity.

DFID is also funding work to encourage more women to be involved in politics including through the “She Leads” programme implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

Approximately 13% of candidates in the November 2015 elections in Burma were women. Whilst this figure is very low it represents a significant increase on the 2010 elections where only 4% of candidates were women.

22. **We recommend that DFID and the Foreign Office give more emphasis to, and provide more funding for parliamentary strengthening. We further recommend that as part of sector programmes, for example in health and education, DFID country teams**
**routinely fund work to improve the effectiveness of the relevant parliamentary committees.** *(Paragraph 112)*

Partially agree [on more emphasis and funding parliamentary strengthening]. DFID and the FCO will continue to work together to support parliamentary strengthening, including through funding as opportunities arise.

Agree [on support to parliamentary institutions at sector level]. The draft DFID/FCO How to Note on Parliamentary and Political Party Assistance recommends working with parliaments in sector programmes more routinely. It also advocates political economy analysis at the sector level, including understanding the role of institutions such as parliamentary committees that operate in the sector.

**Update**

DFID and the FCO continue to work together as part of an ongoing commitment to strengthening parliaments in the countries where we work. In 2013/14 DFID spent approximately £22.5m on parliamentary strengthening. In 2015 DFID and the FCO made the decision to renew our centrally-managed support to parliaments and political parties through the Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

Globally, DFID is doing a great deal to support parliamentary committees to strengthen sector accountability. For example, last year, three DFID programmes supported public accounts committees in Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tajikistan, one programme supported the health committee in South Africa, two programmes helped strengthen security committees in DRC and South Sudan, and two programmes supported legislative committees in Burma and Somalia. There were a further thirteen programmes supporting cross-parliament committees (including public accounts, women’s, petroleum, and legislative committees) in eleven countries (Bangladesh, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania).

DFID is encouraging more such support. The draft How to Note on Supporting Parliamentary and Political Party Development is being revised following the IDC Inquiry on Parliamentary Strengthening and emphasises the importance of linking sector support with support to parliaments and oversight committees.

23. **Unfortunately, too often parliamentary strengthening work has not been well done. We are pleased that DFID recognises this and has published a draft ‘How to Note’, which points to the need to understand political sensitivities, the motivation of politicians, to establish regular contact with parliaments over several years and to**
**respond flexibly to a changing environment.** (Paragraph 113)

Agree. We welcome the IDC's positive comments on the draft DFID/FCO How to Note on Parliamentary and Political Party Assistance. While there are examples of success such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy managed work with the Women's Parliamentary Association in Uganda, which resulted in the passing of four progressive gender bills, there is room for improvement. It is in this context that the draft How to Note was conceived.

**Update**

The draft How to Note on Supporting Parliamentary and Political Party Development is being revised following the IDC Inquiry on Parliamentary Strengthening in order to incorporate the Committee's comments and advice. The draft note acknowledges that understanding the politics is central, and the section on monitoring and evaluation is being further strengthened.

24. and 25. The 'Westminster brand' is strong and there is considerable demand for Westminster expertise. However, DFID commonly uses non-UK bodies. We recommend that DFID make more use of Westminster-based organisations. We recommend that the UK Government establish an organisation with the attributes listed below. It could be a reformed Westminster Foundation for Democracy and could expand its work if it proved to be effective:

- a permanent staff, including a significant number of people with extensive parliamentary expertise, for example who have worked, or served in, Parliament and have experience of politics; the organisation should consider seeking to secure secondments from the House of Commons, the Foreign Office and DFID; and
- the establishment of a larger group of people with a knowledge of Parliament to draw on to work overseas; this might include people who have experience of parliaments outside Westminster.

If this organisation is to be a reformed Westminster Foundation for Democracy, there will need to be improved governance arrangements in relation to political party and parliamentary strengthening work. (Paragraph 114)

Partially agree. These issues are currently being considered as part of the DFID-funded independent mid-term evaluation of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and the Cabinet Office mandated Triennial Review of WFD.
Update

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) underwent an intense period of review in 2014 with the Mid-Term Evaluation and Triennial Review. The recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation and the Triennial Review were broadly in line. The Triennial Review recommended maintaining WFD’s present status but addressing five key reform areas: strategic direction, closer alignment with HMG priorities and country needs, greater integration between parliamentary and political party programmes, greater programme impact, and a more strategic Board role.

WFD adopted a new strategy, programme framework, monitoring and evaluation system, and staffing plan in 2015. Political party and parliamentary strengthening work is becoming more integrated with five joint parliamentary/political party programmes in place or under development.

An independent review commissioned this year will focus on the extent to which WFD has taken steps to address the Triennial Review’s recommendations and the Value for Money baseline for the programme.

26. The organisation described above, whether or not a reformed Westminster Foundation for Democracy, will need time to settle in. Moreover, it does not make sense to create a monopoly supplier. We recommend that DFID facilitate greater use of smaller organisations, which should be able to bid directly for parliamentary strengthening contracts from DFID. We further recommend that DFID establish a small central fund to support travel and accommodation costs where its country offices believe there is a need for a speedy intervention. (Paragraph 115)

Partially agree. DFID promotes open competition for UK Aid contracts, ensuring suppliers are selected on their merits. We recognise the demand for ‘Westminster expertise’ and in the draft How To Note on Parliamentary and Political Party Assistance we have included a list of suppliers that offer this, alongside international suppliers.

DFID country offices already have the flexibility and authority to fund travel and accommodation costs where there is a need for a speedy intervention. We would expect the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (or its successor, if any) to fulfil the role of ensuring any additional central funding.

Update

DFID values a vibrant, healthy market of suppliers providing expertise in parliamentary and political party support. As part of an ongoing commitment to stakeholder and supplier management in this area, DFID held a roundtable of parliamentary and party support organisations in September 2015. The purpose was to help the organisations to better understand
DFID’s procurement processes and requirements and how to bid for Conflict Stability and Security Funds.

A new democracy-strengthening Community of Practice was launched in parliament in September 2015 at an event hosted by the new Chair of the International Development Select Committee. The core group of the Community of Practice includes the Commons Overseas Office, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and WFD.

27. Finally, we recommend that DFID improve its capacity in its UK offices; it should: (Paragraph 116)

*Increase from one to two the number of governance advisers working on parliamentary strengthening and ensure that these advisers remain in post for longer periods;*

*Ensure that governance advisers make parliamentary strengthening a focus of their annual meeting in the near future work; and*

*Establish a parliamentary advisory panel in DFID, which should include serving and former MPs and parliamentary officials.*

Partially agree. We will consider the number of advisers working on parliamentary strengthening.

The new How to Note on Parliamentary and Political Party Assistance will be a focus at the next DFID Governance Advisers’ professional development conference.

We would expect the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (or its successor, if any) to fulfil the role of a parliamentary advisory panel.

**Update**

There are more than 200 country-based governance and social development advisers working on accountability issues, including parliamentary strengthening. DFID is best placed to determine the staffing resources we need to work on parliamentary strengthening at country level. In some cases where parliamentary support is being provided through sector programmes, health and education advisers’ skills in this area are also crucial.

DFID supports professional development of its staff through lesson learning sessions, conferences, seminars and guidance notes. For example, the 2014 Governance Advisers’ Professional Development Conference included a session on parliamentary support which brought in parliamentary and democracy experts.
DFID has also developed a network of advisers working on these issues to share advice and ideas, and advisers have access to WFD as needed. A new programme of research will further build experience of what works.

28. **Effective work on governance depends on understanding political context and making contacts. We recommend that DFID stress the importance of its staff engaging in the politics of Burma and continue to work closely with the UK Embassy staff.** (Paragraph 120)

Agree. DFID recognises the importance of understanding the political nature of Burmese development and DFID Burma will continue to work closely with British Embassy in Rangoon staff on this. Through its work on civil society, parliament, and the peace process, DFID has developed an understanding of Burmese politics and links with a wide range of Burmese politicians, ethnic leaders, and civil society groups.

**Update**

DFID Burma continues to develop its understanding of Burmese politics, and to make links with a wide range of stakeholders, working closely with UK embassy staff. DFID Burma’s approach to using political economy analysis to inform its strategy and identify areas for action has been shared within DFID as an example of best practice. DFID Burma has recently consulted with a wide range of stakeholders in Burma, including political parties, ethnic leaders and local Civil Society Organisations, on its bilateral aid review which will set its strategy for the next 5 years.

29. **In view of the importance of the next few years to Burma’s future, we recommend that DFID staff, particularly in important sectors such as health, remain in post for longer than they might in other offices.** (Paragraph 124)

Partially agree. There is flexibility within DFID's current system to set varying posting lengths to meet specific business needs, and capacity to extend postings if necessary beyond the standard 3 years. There is no maximum posting length - e.g. the previous DFID health adviser in Burma stayed for nearly 5 years. Posting lengths are shorter for staff working in fragile environments with a particularly high degree of hardship, but Burma is not currently one of these. DFID needs to make sure that we continue to get the balance right between the individual and their career development, the needs of a particular Country Office, and the needs of DFID's wider activities.

**Update**

DFID has agreed that several of DFID Burma’s senior staff, including the
Head of Office, will extend their postings for six to twelve months beyond the standard three year contract so that they will remain in post for at least 1 year after the November 2015 election.

30. We are impressed by, and strongly support, the Three Millennium Development Goal Fund (3MDG Fund). We welcome its focus on building capacity both in Government controlled areas and in ethnic areas. We are, however, disappointed by the EU which is refusing to provide funding beyond 2016 and hence threatening the future of the 3MDG Fund. We urge the EU to continue to fund the 3MDG Fund after 2016; if it is unwilling to so, the least it can do is find a donor to replace its contribution. (Paragraph 129)

Partially agree. The European Union has determined that health will not be one of the sectors it supports under its new strategy for Burma. However, its current commitments mean that it will continue to provide funding to the 3MDG fund until 2016, which is the final year of the current phase of the programme. DFID, together with other donors to the health sector, will review the post 2016 funding needs and the respective roles of donors.

Update

The 3MDG Fund has been extended to the end of 2017, which will allow sufficient time for the transition of innovative parts of the programme to government ownership and to fully develop maternal and child health programmes in ethnic areas of the country.

The EU has not changed its decision to discontinue funding the 3MDG Fund beyond 2016. Donors to the health sector are jointly beginning to plan future support after the current phase of the 3MDG Fund ends.

31. We have been impressed by the careful focusing of the 3MDG Fund’s maternal and child healthcare programme in the Irrawaddy delta determining what works and what does not and how a small investment can make a big difference. We are pleased that it is being rolled out elsewhere in Burma so that women and children in conflict and ceasefire regions who are desperately in need of care will soon also be receiving it. (Paragraph 133)

Agree. The 3 MDG Fund has based its strategy for maternal, newborn, and child health services on successful experience in the Irrawaddy Delta area. Similar strategies for provision of primary health services, and recruitment of community health workers, are now being rolled out to other parts of the country, including remote or conflict affected states and regions such as Chin, Kayah, Shan, Kachin and Rakhine. The strategies will be adapted to overcome the different barriers to good quality health services faced by
people in those areas, including terrain, conflict, language, and ethnicity.

**Update**

In 2015, 3MDG support to maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) services was expanded to additional conflict-affected areas in Shan State, whilst an innovative programme to deliver health benefits to people living in conflict affected Special Regions (SRs) – Wa and SR4 – began in April 2015. This programme brings together the Ministry of Health and Special Region health authorities to scale-up maternal, newborn, child health and TB services for people living in the areas.

The 3MDG Fund now supports MNCH service provision in Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions, the States of Chin, Kayah and Shan, as well as in Wa Region and Shan Special Region 4. In total, 3MDG support is ensuring access to essential health services for a population of 4.4 million people who live in remote and hard-to-access areas.

32. The evidence the Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN) provided indicates how much needs to be done in the health sector in these areas. We are pleased that the 3MDG Fund seeks to address this but urge DFID to carefully consider its criteria for funding organisations such as SWAN so that they too can receive DFID support. (Paragraph 134)

Partially agree. DFID is already providing SWAN with £448,629 over the period 1 December 2012 to 30 November 2015 for its work on women’s empowerment and education.

DFID funding for maternal and child health is largely provided through the multi-donor 3MDG Fund, which uses an open and competitive process to allocate funds to organisations to implement projects. The 3MDG Fund will be issuing contracts for maternal and child health projects in Shan State at the end of 2014. Proposals from SWAN and other organisations are strongly welcomed and will be considered against transparent criteria.

**Update**

During the first half of 2015, the 3MDG Fund’s work has expanded to include townships in Northern and Southern Shan. The 3MDG Fund now supports townships in Pao and Palaung Self-Administered Zones as well as other remote and conflict affected townships in Shan and Kayah. These programmes were issued through open tender with interested non-government organisations. SWAN did not bid for any of these contracts. However, the selected partners for the work in Shan will develop networks with community based organisations in their programme areas.
33. **DFID should develop a more focused policy on drugs especially the provision of antiretroviral for HIV. They should be administered to patients as early as possible to give the best chance of survival.** (Paragraph 137)

Partially agree. We agree that people with HIV should be able to access drugs for treatment as soon as they need them. DFID assists countries to develop their own policy in line with World Health Organisation guidelines and current best practice.

**Update**

The Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, which is centrally funded by DFID, has enabled 76,000 people in Burma to access antiviral therapy in 2015. This is a significant increase from 2011, when only 7,000 people accessed antiviral therapy through Global Fund funding.

34. **Drug resistant malaria in Burma is of international importance. If it is not tackled it would have a devastating impact on the ability to treat malaria elsewhere, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Addressing this issue in Burma should be a high priority. We recommend that surveillance be stepped up in Burma, in particular in the border areas and amongst the migrant population.** (Paragraph 142)

Agree. The Three Millennium Development Goal (3MDG) Fund (co-funded by the UK) will fund a national survey which will be conducted within the next 12 months. The survey will assess malaria prevalence rates in high risk areas and key vulnerable groups, including migrants, across the country. It will also assess the progress of the Myanmar Artemisinin Resistance Containment Strategy, which focuses on areas at high risk of drug resistance on the eastern borders of Burma. The survey will provide an update to the 2012 Baseline Survey on artemisinin resistance, which was funded by the Three Diseases Fund (the predecessor to the 3MDG Fund, also co-funded by the UK) in collaboration with the Burmese Ministry of Health, the World Health Organisation and the Malaria Consortium.

**Update**

The 3MDG Fund (co-funded by the UK) and the President’s Malaria Initiative funded the first ever Malaria Indicator Survey in Burma, which was completed in September 2015. Full results from the survey will be available by June 2016. The Malaria Consortium are the technical leads and the survey was conducted throughout the country, including in border areas.

In addition, technical assistance is being provided to the Ministry of Health to improve malaria surveillance, including a focus on migrants and mobile
35. Better medical education would bring many benefits and Burmese medics are keen to form a partnership with the UK. Such partnerships will be an increasingly important feature of development in future. We recommend that DFID carefully examine the proposals for University College London, Royal College of Physicians’ and others to improve medical education with a view to providing the relatively small amount of funding they require, either from DFID Burma funds or central funds. We appreciate that DFID does not have the funds to rebuild Rangoon hospital, concentrating rightly on building community health services, but it should consider how it can facilitate the process. (Paragraph 148)

Partially agree. DFID and the UK Embassy have encouraged the parties to discuss how they can work together to support medical education in Burma. These discussions are ongoing, and we will review their outcome.

DFID will provide funds to the Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Committee to help develop a plan for the renovation of the hospital.

Update

DFID has committed £500,000 to the Rangoon General Hospital Charitable Trust (RGHCT) to support planning and provision of architectural advice for the renovation of the hospital building. The programme will also look at how Rangoon General Hospital can be strengthened as the apex body for medical education in the country. The renovation work is proceeding well, and architectural support provided this year has meant that the hospital did not flood during the rainy season for the first time in over 20 years.

In 2015 the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and Addenbrooke’s Hospital were also successful in bidding for funds under the DFID-supported Health Partnerships Scheme, to strengthen training on newborn care and trauma care respectively. DFID will explore the further use of these partnerships as a platform to build a broader UK partnership to improve health services.

36. Burma has a unique problem in that the younger generation is less well educated than their parents. There is an urgent need for education not only for children but also adult education and training if the need for teachers, health workers, administrators and private livelihoods is to be met. We recommend that DFID significantly increase spending on education provided DFID receives an overall increase in its total budget and its number of staff in Burma. We
**Further recommend that teacher training be a priority. (Paragraph 153)**

Partially agree. DFID Burma's staff and financial resources for education from 2015/16 will be determined as part of future resourcing decisions. Other donors’ planned work in education will be an important consideration. Teacher training is already a major focus of DFID Burma's work on education.

**Update**

DFID Burma's staff and financial resources for education from 2015/16 will be determined as part of the current spending and bilateral aid review.

**37. We support DFID’s work with monastic schools in raising the quality of education. (Paragraph 156)**

Agree.

**Update**

DFID has continued to work on raising education quality in monastic schools through the Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC). MEC’s partnership with Burnett Institute and the Monastic Education Development Group (MEDG) has trained 1,408 teachers and 553 head teachers/administrators, 100 schools have received grants to improve infrastructure and sanitation facilities, and Parent Teacher Associations have been established in 170 schools to improve accountability. MEC’s partnership with Burnet Institute ended in June 2015 as planned. MEC is currently developing a new strategy for 2016-2018.

**38. Burma's extractive industries should benefit the people of Burma and make a major contribution to taxation. We welcome DFID's encouragement and support for Burma to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. We hope it signs in the near future. We support DFID's responsible business initiatives helping to set standards for Burma's economic development. (Paragraph 167)**

Agree.

**Update**

DFID continues to be the biggest supporter to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) process in Burma and we are about to sign a new £2 million grant agreement to support this work through the World Bank over the next few years. DFID also continues to support the Myanmar
39. While there have been concerns that funding is no longer necessary for the camps on the Thai border, we do not believe that people should be pushed out of the refugee camps; they should leave voluntarily. However the situation requires monitoring as DFID currently spends over £20 million which could be spent on improving conditions inside Burma. If there is a successful peace process and a stable economy emerges the camps should be closed. The return of the refugees should be carefully handled ensuring that where they are returning to is safe and viable to live in. The Burmese along with aid agencies should be considering and planning for this now. (Paragraph 174)

Partially agree. We will continue to support the peace process and the development of a conducive environment for refugees to return. However, any returns should be voluntary and a variety of durable solutions (including those other than return) should be sought. We will work closely with international partners to assess possible solutions, and to address the concerns of displaced communities who may not feel ready to return. The forthcoming Mid-Term Review of our refugee programme will consider options for DFID assistance.

Update

The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed on 15 October 2015 between the government and 8 Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs) was not fully inclusive of all EAGs who have been in conflict with the government. The main EAGs from Karen State – the state of origin for 70% of refugees in Thailand – signed the deal, but those from other states of origin (Kayah etc) did not. The agreement allows for a political dialogue which is likely to include discussion of the situation for refugees and internally displaced people from Burma’s conflict affected areas. It is important that this dialogue is fully inclusive of all stakeholders related to displaced populations, and not just the groups that have signed the NCA. Also likely to be discussed is the situation on safety and security (including landmines) in the areas of origin for these communities. It is important that the conditions required to allow the displaced communities to decide to return are established. The DFID-funded Joint Peace Fund is ready to assist once the communities themselves and the other stakeholders in the peace process agree that the time is ready for return.