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Press Release

BENN ANNOUNCES NEW INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE TO ADVISE ON EVALUATION OF UK AID

A new independent committee is to be set up to help DFID evaluate the impact of UK aid, Hilary Benn, International Development Secretary told parliament today.

The Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI) will:

- Determine which programmes and areas of UK development assistance will be evaluated and when. It will do this by approving the evaluation programme and priorities for evaluation identified by DFID's Evaluation Department;
- Identify any gaps in the planned programme of evaluations and make proposals for new areas or other priorities as required;
- Determine whether relevant standards (e.g. of the OECD Development Assistance Committee) are being applied; and comment on the overall quality of the programme of evaluation work carried out against these.

Hilary Benn said:

“The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK's aid budget is used effectively to make a difference to the lives of the world's poorest people and that it represents value for money.

“As we increase levels of overseas aid, we must be rigorous in assessing the impact of that aid in helping to reduce poverty and change the lives of poor people for the better. “

Members of the Committee will chair the steering groups responsible for major DFID evaluations, and act as an independent voice, to ensure that standards of evaluation have been met. The Chair of the IACDI will write an open letter to the Secretary of State every year, providing an overview on lessons learned and giving advice on how evaluation efforts can be improved. To ensure further transparency and openness, the minutes of all IACDI meetings will be published.

To ensure independence, the Chair and the six members of the Committee will be appointed under Nolan procedures. The selection process will look for respected experts on international development and evaluation, both from the UK and developing countries. Members will be chosen by the Chair of the IACDI to avoid any conflicts of interest. DFID will also invite the National Audit Office to participate in the work of the Committee so that it can draw on the lessons learned, and the National Audit Office have agreed to carry out a review of DFID's performance on evaluation and to repeat this every 3-4 years

DFID, the Department for International Development: leading the British government's fight against world poverty. One in five people in the world today, over 1 billion people, live in poverty on less than one dollar a day.

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Hilary Benn went on to say:

“The new IACDI will be an important step forward. It shows that the Government is committed to independent, open, and transparent scrutiny of our development assistance.”

Notes to Editors

- *The IACDI will assess the amount of effort and level of resources being devoted to different types of evaluation work by DFID, other parts of the UK Government and if appropriate, by NGOs using DFID resources;*
- *DFID’s international development assistance is currently subject to external scrutiny in the UK by Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee, the International Development Select Committee and the National Audit Office. The international mechanisms include monitoring of aid effectiveness under the Paris declaration, and peer review of donors within the OECD Development Assistance Committee;*
- *DFID also has its own evaluation, audit, and reporting under the International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Act. DFID also engages actively with civil society to discuss new policy and the lessons arising from of our operational experience;*
- *The NAO review will complement the work of the IACDI and will focus more broadly on performance management systems across DFID. However, the IACDI will get directly involved in the strategy and work plans for evaluation work and in ensuring that the recommendations from evaluation work are followed up.*

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For further information, contact Marcus Chrysostomou on 020 7023 0821 or 020 7023 0600, e-mail pressoffice@dfid.gov.uk or call our Public Enquiries Point on 0845 300 4100.

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