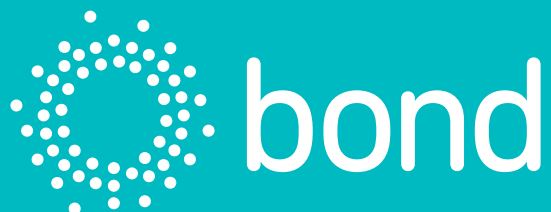


Major development shortfalls and global system failures

Bond manifesto
2024 briefing



Major development shortfalls and global system failures

Over the last three decades, notable progress has been made globally in reducing extreme poverty, increasing access to health and education services, and improving standards of living. The UK has contributed towards these achievements through its Official Development Assistance (ODA), support for debt relief and its role in promoting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, development progress achieved over this period was too slow and inequitable across and within countries to achieve the MDGs by their 2015 deadline, leaving billions of people in poverty, without access to basic services and without their rights being realised. In recent years intensifying conflict and climate crises, the Covid-19 pandemic and a trend of growing authoritarianism have led to development reversals. As a result, the UN has warned that the SDGs are likely to be missed by a large margin in 2030.

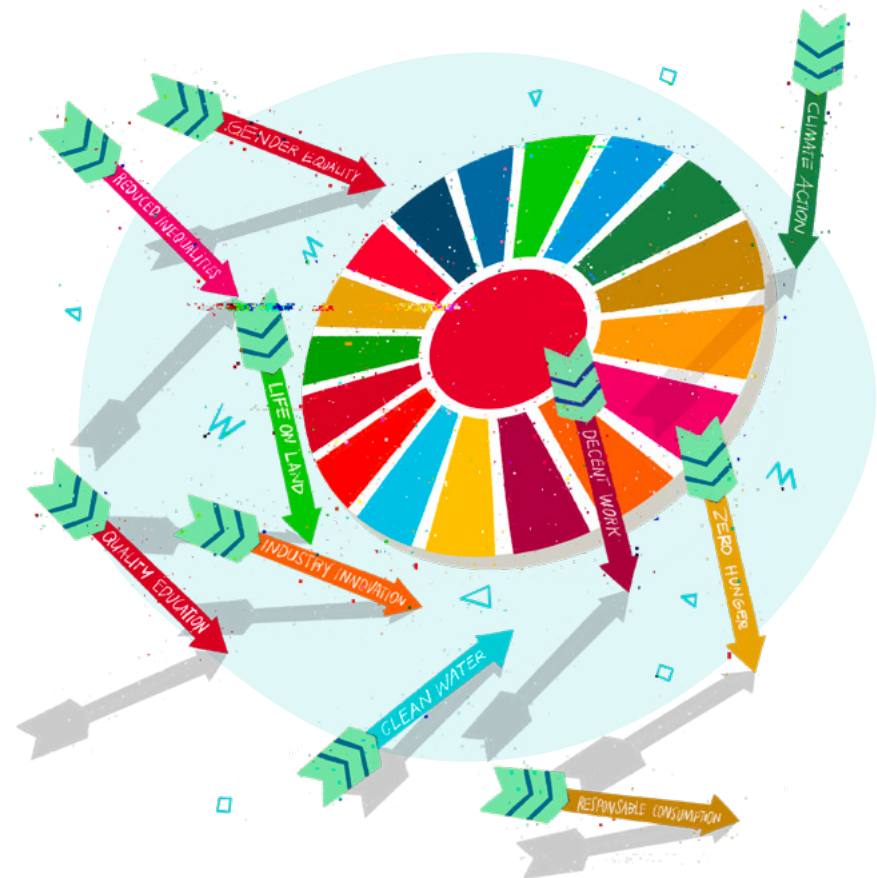
Despite these stark global challenges, the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget was reduced from 0.7% to 0.5% of UK gross national income in 2021, and almost a third of the UK ODA budget was spent in the UK in 2022.

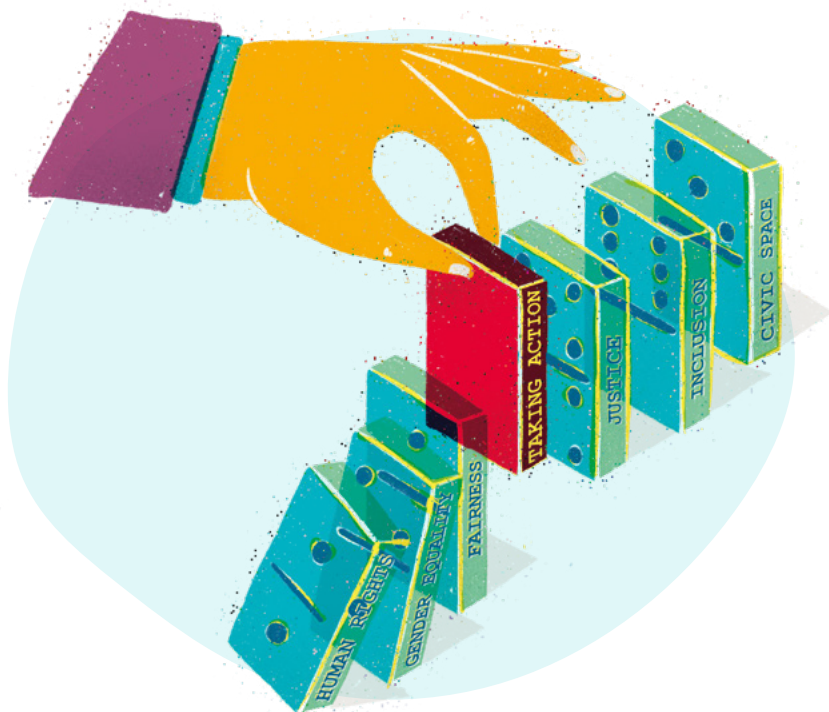
It is also the case that successive UK governments over decades have failed to adequately address global system failures which lie at the root of poverty, inequality, and exclusion, and which the UK has contributed to because of its colonial and economic history.

The economic system is driving resource flows from lower-income to high-income countries, increasing in inequality, and deepening climate change and environmental degradation; global decision-making is dominated by wealthier countries and their interests; inadequate resources are being mobilised for sustainable development; and rights aren't being protected and promoted by institutions. Even the

development cooperation system is dominated by actors from high-income countries, reinforcing colonial power imbalances. Simply put, the global system isn't working for people, nature, or the climate.

Playing an active and ambitious role in helping to address these system failures must be an urgent priority for the next UK government, alongside efforts to urgently scale up its ODA and development cooperation. Only through pursuing such action can the UK regard itself as an ambitious, reliable, and equitable development partner.





Priorities for the next UK government on system reform and development cooperation

As the world's 6th largest economy and a central actor in the global financial system, the UK has an opportunity to play a significant role in global efforts to address the systemic failures which are holding back progress on sustainable development. To play this role, the next UK government must commit to take more ambitious action to:

- **Ensure all of the government's actions – including in relation to trade, finance, security, migration and energy – effectively contribute to sustainable development.** *To support this priority, the next UK government should introduce a framework of ambitious commitments on sustainable development for each government department to implement and a process to independently review performance and report to parliament.*
 - **Make the global debt and tax system more equitable and representative.** *To support this priority, the next UK government should introduce legislation to compel private creditors to take part in debt relief processes. It should also support efforts to empower the UN to establish a global debt workout mechanism involving all groups of creditors, as well as a UN Framework Convention on Tax as a representative tax body to drive global tax reforms.*
 - **Ensure that the UK contributes its fair share of the global action required to tackle climate change, limit the global temperature rise to 1.5° and provide additional resourcing for adaptation, mitigation and loss & damage.** *To support this priority, the next UK government should end all investment in new coal, oil, and gas at home and overseas; generate billions in additional public finance for climate action through measures that tax polluters; and commit to provide further climate finance from 2025 that is new and additional to ODA commitments, in line with the UNFCCC agreement, and is reported on robustly, consistently and transparently.*
- As a major development actor, the next UK government can help drive up ambitions on the scale and effectiveness of development cooperation. Firstly, it should **increase the UK ODA budget to 0.7% of gross national income**. Secondly, it should prioritise the following actions which will help to empower and meet the needs of the most marginalised communities:

- **Put the principle of 'Leave No One Behind' firmly at the centre of the UK's ODA, by strengthening its focus on the poorest and most marginalised countries and people.** *To support this priority, the next UK government should ambitiously increase the share of UK ODA focussed on least developed countries and fragile states, on addressing gaps in access to basic services, on supporting women and girls, on addressing disability and age exclusion and on supporting other marginalised groups.*

- **Ensure that UK is adequately funding, improving the effectiveness of and developing anticipatory approaches to crisis responses.**

To support this priority, the next UK government should rapidly increase its levels of ODA for locally led crisis prevention, action and resilience efforts, and work with other donors to create new international mechanisms to promote coordinated, flexible, and anticipatory approaches to crises.

- **Develop equitable and empowering partnerships with national and local organisations in low- and middle-income countries.**

To support this priority, the next UK government should deepen the devolution of development programme resources, decision-

making and implementation to all national and local organisations in partner countries. It should provide support and protection to human rights defenders, including groups representing women, Indigenous communities, the LGBTQ+ community, migrants, people with disabilities, youth, and environmental activists. It must also challenge power imbalances and racism in the development sector, including through engaging diaspora communities.

There is also a wide range of other policies and reforms Bond members believe the next UK government should be championing to secure global progress on sustainable development. These are presented in Bond's manifesto for the 2024 election.



It's not too late for the UK to act.

The UK has already shown it can help drive ambitious global action and reform, due to its past record on mobilising support for debt relief, global health challenges and the SDGs. All that is required is the political will to act.

There is also growing momentum behind a range of global processes and initiatives that the UK can help to champion, including reforms to place the UN at the centre of economic governance, the UN climate talks, the Bridgetown Initiative and the Shift the Power initiative.

It is not too late to mobilise global action to achieve the SDGs, tackle climate change and reshape development partnerships. Inspiring civil society groups around the world are doing their bit and the next government must in turn do its part.

Find out more at bond.org.uk

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