

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 6:17 pm

Guy Hewitt, who is the Barbados High Commissioner to the UK, [has an article in the Guardian](#) this morning arguing that it is grossly unjust that assistance cannot be provided to the hurricane damaged Caribbean islands out of the overseas aid budget. Taking a swipe at Christian Aid, who have argued that this is an inappropriate use of those budgets, he says:

The prevailing view of the international donor community is that the gross national income per capita of these islands is too high for them to have access to aid budgets designed to relieve poverty, a perspective shared by the international NGO community.

He follows this, saying:

This perspective is premised on two misconceptions. First, the egregious notion that “tax havens” exist in the Caribbean. While the Caribbean contains low tax jurisdictions, they form part of a wider strategy to diversify Caribbean economies. Moreover, the development of international business and financial centres mirrors the practice of many developed countries as shown by a report published by Oxfam last December, in which Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands are ranked among the world’s 10 lowest-tax jurisdictions.

The second fallacy is the limited way in which the deserving poor are identified. DAC rules restrict overseas aid to low- and middle-income countries based on GNI per capita as computed by the World Bank. This classification by economic data alone is both dated and myopic. It ignores the acute vulnerability of small countries, particularly those island states in the Caribbean and Pacific vulnerable to catastrophic storms.

Three thoughts.

First, nothing is [preventing aid](#) by direct grant [or loan](#); it just cannot come from the aid budget. So let's stop the stupidity here: if the UK wants to assist it can do so. It is just untrue to say aid cannot be given.

Second, appealing for aid on the basis that the BVI is not a tax haven stretches credibility beyond any known limits.

Third, these places do have high GDPs because they are tax havens. They have traded on it. Yes they are remote. That's why they are tax havens. But that also required them to raise sufficient funding to manage contingencies and the opportunity was there, and was not taken. Those who have worked so hard in these places to undermine the state do really need to know that this dangerous game that they have been playing has to end as a condition of any support. Nothing less will do.

I suggest His Excellency the High Commissioner changes his negotiating position. The one he's got is not appealing.