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## British policy let down by arms sales

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Britain's record on adopting policies that benefit poorer nations is at best only average, according to a new report, despite high-profile rhetoric from Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. The report shows that while the UK comes scores well on environmental policies and investment in developing countries, it is let down by its record on security because it sells arms to authoritarian regimes. Similarly, on migration, the UK has largely sealed its borders to immigrants from poor countries.

The report, compiled by the US-based Center for Global Development and Foreign Policy, ranks the world's 21 richest countries by their policies towards the developing world. Like last year, the Netherlands topped the list, while Britain came 12th. Denmark came second, followed by Sweden, Norway and New Zealand. The US was ranked 13th and Japan came last.

David Roodman, the lead author of the report, said the UK and the Netherlands both scored highly on investment in developing countries. "It could be the countries' histories as major financial centres," he said.

Britain also did well on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing government support for renewable energy sources. "They have been falling while the economy has been growing - not many countries can say that," he said.

However, Britain's black spot is security. While it scored highly in terms of contributing to peacekeeping missions and humanitarian interventions - examples cited were the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo - it fell down on arms exports to undemocratic countries. Mr Roodman pointed to British sales of weapons to the authoritarian regimes of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Jordan. Indonesia slipped through the net because its military spending is below average and any arms sales to Indonesia therefore count as aiding the country's self-defence.

The report concluded that no country is perfect - the top-ranked Dutch are little more than average in four of the seven areas analysed. Japan was the poorest performer because it is the most inward-looking country, Mr Roodman said. "Japan came last by a mile. It gives less aid for its size than other countries." The country also imposes punitive tariffs of 900 per cent on imports, makes it almost impossible for foreigners to get a job in Japan and does not participate in humanitarian international operations.

Countries were assessed in seven policy areas: aid, trade, investment, migration, environment, security and technology. The report found that two-thirds of the countries have improved since it was launched in 2003, though seven slid backwards. Britain has improved by half a point overall.

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