

Cross-Party Group on International Development

19 September 2023, 1800 - 1930

Minute

Present

MSPs

Karen Adam
Alasdair Allan
Sarah Boyack
Maggie Chapman
Foysol Choudhury
Christina McKelvie

Non-MSP Group Members

Hannah Clyne, Scotland's International Development Alliance
David Cunningham, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Catherine Currie Browne, Catherine Currie Consulting Limited
Louise Davies, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Fatoumata Drammeh, Unicef
Sophie Emerson, University of Edinburgh
Frances Guy, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Chrissie Hirst, Corra Foundation
Katelynn Kirk, Jubilee Scotland
Jamie Livingstone, Oxfam Scotland
Yuchen Liu, University of Edinburgh
Yunhan Liu, University of Edinburgh
Hazel MacIver, Tearfund Scotland
Dorcas Pratt, Water Witness International
Lucinda Rivers, Unicef UK
Lærke Salhaug-Rasmussen, UN House Scotland
Dihang Shen, University of Edinburgh
Will Smith, University of Edinburgh
Conor Snowden, University of Edinburgh
Andrew Tomlinson, Christian Aid Scotland
Chris Walker, Scotland's International Development Alliance

Other attendees

Rashid Ali

Pamela Abbot, University of Aberdeen
Philippa Bonela
Grace Buckley, National Justice & Peace Commission
Carolyn Burch, Quakers
Benjamin Carey, Carey Tourism
Mark Chadwick, CBM UK
Philip Chidwati, Challenges Worldwide
Stephen Cooper, Signpost international
Nina Coy, Mary's Meals
Shen Dihang
Karen Downard, Results Scotland
Ricci Downard, Results Scotland
Aniket Gon
Sarah Jane
Joanna Keating, Scottish Government
Emma Levison
Paige Linnel, Child in Need
Rian Matsui
Chad Morse, Scotland Malawi Partnership
Dorothea Nelson, Scotland Malawi Partnership
Joanne O'Neil, Action Aid
Joanna Pearce, Zambia Therapeutic art
Tom Quayle
Richard Ragget
Philippa Ramsden, Individual member of SIDA
David Renvyw
Jane Salmonson, Firefly International
Vera Steele, Zambia Therapeutic Art
Archippus Sturrock, Karen Adam MSP's office
Isma Tahir, Sight Relief
Gordon Thomson, University of Bath
Jo Vallis, Friends of Chitambo
Sadie Watson, IODParc
Adam Wilson
Gail Wilson
Yingke Zeng

Introduction

1. Meeting notes from May were agreed
2. Sarah Boyack MSP introduced the meeting and welcomed Minister for International Development, Christina McKelvie, to discuss the current international development strategy and priorities, followed by questions from attendees.

Minister McKelvie Presentation

The Minister gave a presentation, making the following points:

- Expressed a strong passion for equalities, both in Scotland and overseas, emphasising the importance of Global Citizenship.
- Noted that the (former) First Minister had made a dual commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015: to address poverty and inequality in Scotland; and support fair and sustainable growth in other countries.
- Highlighted the SG's continued dedication to the SDGs over the past 8 years, both in terms of financial support and position of international solidarity.
- Discussed the significance of the halfway mark now for the SDGs and the stalled progress, with the First Minister recently representing Scotland in New York on the international stage. Mentioned the announcement by FM in New York of a new SG partnership with the WHO, allocating up to £2.5 million in international development funding to support partner countries in addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- Emphasised the impact of compounding crises on Global South countries, including climate change, economic fluctuations, conflict, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Know this is being felt particularly acutely in the Global South.
- Noted SG position that all parts of society working together are required to support sustainable development action and achieve the SDGs – communities, organisations and governments must work together.
- Clarified the SG's approach to SDGs, that all parts of society working together are required to support sustainable development action and achieve the SDGs, highlighting the importance of collaboration between communities, organisations, and governments for sustainable development.
- Stressed the importance [for the SDGs] of states meeting their commitments. Noted that in its response to the UKG Call for Evidence on its White Paper on International Development, the SG has again called on the UK Government to accelerate progress and restore the 0.7% aid target as part of urgent action to accelerate progress on the SDGs.
- Outlined existing contributions from Scotland through taxation and development financing, and that SG goes above and beyond this with its own additional development financing. Through both the International Development Fund and Humanitarian Emergency Fund in her own portfolio. SG recognises its moral responsibility to the Global South. Therefore imperative that Scotland continues to play its part, not only through financial investments but by reigniting passion and commitment for the SDGs – why groups such as the CPG are important.
- Highlighted SG's approach to international development [following its review]: the leadership that can be provided jointly with its partner countries in how development relationships can work better. And how, led by partner countries, spend can be focused more effectively.
- Wanted to explain more at this meeting how the SG approach and spend is changing, in line with its commitments from its 2021 Review: supporting partner countries in post-Covid recovery; and addressing systemic racism and inequality, often referred to as “white gaze” – a key driver behind SG work to “shift power”, to equalise its international relationships. Noting that “we

collectively – must now ensure that change in our approach to international development is achieved, to put partner countries, not Scotland, in the driving seat now”.

- In terms of new SG international development programmes “what” SG funds: SG is refocusing its development investment to certain key sectors. This does mean change, change guided by its partner countries.
- Referred to SG’s recent Programme for Government, with commitment to launch new programmes: co-developing through a participatory approach a new Women and Girls Fund to provide funding to support women and girls in Malawi, Zambia, and Rwanda; towards being a global champion in tackling NCDs by developing new programmes in partnership with African countries to tackle NCDs; and champion for change by co-developing new programmes with partner countries to support inclusive education with a focus on marginalised groups, including girls and learners with additional support needs.
- Highlighted SG’s plans to continue supporting global citizenship in Scotland, including through funding for civil society networking organizations.
- Emphasised the alignment of funding, health education, and equality programs with new international development principles, promoting partner-led development and inclusion.
- In terms of “how” SG funds: noted that SG’s international development approach is now guided by three underpinning approaches: the SG’s new International Development Principles, taking a feminist approach, and pursuing an equalising power – or “shifting power” - agenda.
- Noted that UKG is now, through its Call for Evidence on its White Paper on International Development, considering the need to engage more seriously with Global South expertise and experience. And looking at how it can develop long-term, principled approach, based on solidarity, patience and mutual respect. And that UKG also considering how it might learn and reflect that learning in a set of principles and priorities for effective development cooperation.
- In SG’s response to the UK government’s Call for Evidence, it had highlighted strong examples SG has already taken toward equitable and partner-led development, including: new SG International Development Principles; the establishment last year of a Global South Advisory Panel to the SG; and new funding streams that will provide direct funding to its partner countries, eg its new Women and Girls Fund..
- Recognised that need to do more though – taking a feminist approach and equalising power means that need to be actively anti-colonial and anti-racist approaches to shift power and resources for equitable, partner-led, development.
- Highlighted the necessity of inverting power dynamics in international relationships, development, and trade to address structural inequalities, climate change, conflict, and injustice. That this is also a key part of what SG can do in the “beyond aid” space – through its trade policies, climate targets eg.

Q&A with CPG

1. Sadie Watson, 10D Parc asked how will SG ensure effectiveness in outcomes it is aiming for?

Minister said that working closely with partners to develop robust monitoring process would be vital.

2. Dorcas Pratt, Water Witness asked whether Scotland's international strategy be matched with its aspirations for wellbeing as described by the wellbeing bill that's currently under discussion?

Minister noted that the FM has made equality a key plank for this Parliament, that this is a whole government approach. Noted that development of the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill means that it is open to all to contribute. Minister encouraged participation in any future consultation. Likewise, the SG was taking forward its Human Rights Bill.

3. Jamie Livingstone, Oxfam, expressed concern that discussions around international development too often focus on international aid rather than wider changes that need made. He was encouraged by SG focus on a feminist foreign policy. How does SG plan to take that forward, with particular reference to the coherence between domestic and international policy, including influence on SG's energy strategy and at the UK level in relation to defence policy.

Minister said that SG had taken steps to take advice from its Global South Panel to understand global impact of local actions. SG intend to link domestic policy with international efforts to tackle discrimination and inequality.

4. Mark Chadwick, CBM, noted how climate crises disproportionately effects people living in world's poorest places. In these contexts, people with disabilities disproportionately impacted by disasters, including those induced by climate change. Asked how SG will assure people with disabilities are involved at all stages of the planning and implementation of the climate development programme.

Minister said that SG had outlined how it is developing a new equalities programme focussed on empowerment and targeting specific areas of inequality, with a particular focus on the intersection of gender to such disparities. Also responding to the asks of partner countries, eg on inclusive education. Taking an intersectional approach, in developing new equalities programme and then looking ahead dot learn for any future disability work. Minister also referred to work on mainstreaming gender equality through the rest of the SG's programme, noting this is an iterative, organic process, to ensure this is led by those in partner countries.

5. Phillip Chidawati - asked how SG is planning to help Malawi with issues around food support.

Minister said that Malawi Government hasn't contacted SG regarding this issue. Earlier this year, SG had provided emergency funding to SCIAF and Save the Children for immediate support after Cyclone Freddy. Minister offered a follow up meeting between SG officials and Philip to explore food security issues further.

6. Carolyn Burch, Quakers in Scotland, asked how Scotland is operationalising finance for loss and damage.

Minister drew attention to First Minister's recent announcement, with SG committed to addressing loss and damage, using limited power and money to ensure that it plays a part. Minister is open to further correspondence around this issue.

7. Katelynne Kirk, Jubilee Scotland, asked whether Minister has spoken to UK Government regarding engagement in discussions with creditors around debt relief.

Minister has requested a meeting with UK Government Minister Andrew Mitchell during her upcoming trip to London. Minister encouraged ideas from CPG members for approaches to meet with creditors. Highlighted bilateral meetings and importance of debt relief to SG partner countries in Global South. Minister keen to support, noting an important issue of justice.

8. Jane Salmonson, Firefly International, asked whether SG would advocate Security Council with the UK Government to support children impacted by the current humanitarian crisis in Northwest Syria.

Minister outlined complexity of situation and agreed to raise issue with Barbara Woodward in writing if not able to meet – asked Jane to please give details of points that Firefly would like raised.

9. David Kenvyn, ACTSA, asked whether SG can support class-action against mining companies in southern Africa due to the health damage caused by a lack of protective equipment for miners.

Minister responded that suspected SG could not intervene in a court case class action where it has no locus, but would clarify with SG lawyers. Minister also highlighted the Human Rights Defenders initiative which SG supports – some of those HRDs have a climate focus; Minister offered to share details.

10. Lucinda Rivers, UNICEF UK, referred to the announcement by SG that day of its new SG partnership with the WHO. Asked Minister to explain total annual budget for international development fund health programmes, and requested clarification on the timings of applications. Is there an application process for Health4Life fund?

Joanna Keating, Scottish Government official, responded. Explained that new programmes were an ongoing mix of competitive and non-competitive funding, with the WHO funding being non-competitive due to the nature of the WHO. And that there would be other competitive funding to follow. Joanna explained that the new health programme budget is split into 3 parts: multilateral funding via the WHO Health4Life Fund; funding at country level; and the ongoing "Blantyre-Blantyre" research laboratories support in Malawi and now Zambia. On country level programmes in Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda, the SG is being led by each of the partner countries. Zambia had asked for help on NCDs. Rwanda's asks on health were focused on palliative care. The Malawi Government has been keen to ensure there is not fragmentation of funding. Joanna outlined that there will be a mix competitive and non-competitive funding which will be determined on a case-by-case basis, with mixed approach responsive to partner country asks in relation to

health. Noted that UNICEF itself had benefited during COVID from awards of non-competitive funding where they had been the partner country Government's existing partner on COVID vaccines etc. So, SG will continue to be guided by its partner country governments, as in that COVID case.

Lucinda Rivers requested clarification whether this approach would be the same for inclusive education.

Joanna confirmed that it would be a two-pronged approach, with one aspect being scholarships for girls, a high area of interest for its partner countries to support girls back into school after Covid-19. Secondly, there is a focus on supporting education for those with additional support needs in partner countries.

11. Ricci Downard, Results Scotland, asked whether SG has a role in reducing TB.

Minister explained that SG had listened to its partner countries, who had determined SG's focus on NCDs as the biggest killer by 2030. There are other funders for communicable disease, but NCDs is underfunded.

12. Jo Vallis asked about accelerating the availability of SG's proposed Global Citizenship funding.

Minister signalled process required to ensure public money is spent appropriately. Minister apologised that she didn't currently have an answer and signalled intention to retrieve this information and get back to Jo with an answer soon.

13. Nina Coy, Mary's Meals, asked about the balance of spend between Scottish NGOs and Global South organisations, and what this means for Scottish organisations.

SG's Joanna Keating emphasised the importance that SG places on shifting the power to Global South organisations. One area of this how Global South organisation can access direct funding. While Scottish organisations can apply for funding with Global South organisations, this is no longer a pre-requisite. This enables Global South organisations to apply directly for funding from SG. The SG has created specific funding streams which are only for direct access by CSOs in SG partner countries, and Joanna referred to the new Women and Girls Fund as an example. Joanna also referred to the Global Citizenship fund, explaining that this is a dual fund for small CSOs in Scotland and small CSOs in partner countries. Joanna explained that shifting power also means SG looking at its own processes and learning from the upcoming tenders and bidding processes. Joana concluded that shifting power is an approach that we will all want to support, as Minister had set out in her presentation to the CPG.

Presentation by the CPG to Minister

Sarah Boyack presented topics CPG has explored over the last year. Since last June, SB outlined the CPG's discussions around Scotland's international development programming; global debt justice with a particular focus on Zambia; proposals for understanding Scotland's global impact; and funding mechanisms for climate justice.

Sarah Boyack asked for comments from the Minister.

Minister outlined many areas where they are listening to partners and emphasised how the CPG's work will help inform SG work. Noted that SG officials are very busy at the moment with the new programming but once that is further advanced she would like to look at areas such as debt justice.

Action points agreed during the meeting:

1. SG officials to speak with Phillip Chidawati at Challenges Malawi re food insecurity;
2. SG to contact Barbara Woodward re Syria – if not able to meet then Minister would write (Jane S to give details);
3. SG will respond to David Kenvyn re his ask for SG to join South African miners' class action; and send him details of Human Rights Defenders initiative; and
4. SG will revert to Jo Vallis re when its new Global Citizenship funding might come onstream.

Closing

Sarah Boyack thanked colleagues for attendance. The next meeting will be on 7th November with a conversation about 'Beyond GDP and towards a feminist wellbeing economy' with speakers from Oxfam and ActionAid in Malawi.