**Policy Committee Meeting Notes**

Monday 8 August 2pm – 4pm

**Committee members**

Tearfund Scotland, IDEAS, Thrive, IIED, Christian Aid Scotland, SCIAF, Carey Tourism, Water Witness, Oxfam Scotland, HALO, Corra Foundation, Jubilee Scotland, ActionAid, CBM UK, Tearfund Scotland,

**Present**

Cathy Ratcliff, Thrive

Simon Anderson, IIED

Chris Hegarty, Christian Aid Scotland

Benjamin Carey, Carey Tourism

Dorcas Pratt, Water Witness

Chris Loughran, HALO

Chrissie Hirst, Corra Foundation

Joanne O'Neil, ActionAid

Mark Barrell, CBM UK

Graeme McMeekin, Tearfund Scotland

Jon Novakovic, Individual

Lewis Ryder Jones, Oxfam Scotland

Louise Davies, Scotland’s International Development Alliance

Frances Guy, Scotland’s International Development Alliance

**Apologies**

Michael Alexander, Individual member (Diageo)

Geraldine Hill, SCIAF

Line Christensen, Jubilee Scotland

Emma Gardner, Trustee IDEAS

**Actions**

* Louise to organise poll to select date for SG ID meeting
* Louise to set up W&SD working group
* Louise to discuss alternative viewpoints on CPG speaker line-up with Sarah Boyack MSP, and ensure she is briefed
* Louise to follow up with SNP & Labour MSPs post CPG for commitments in independence plans/manifesto
* Alliance to suggest process for updated independence report for next meeting
* Alliance to arrange meeting with committee and Saleemul Huq
* Alliance to invite new IIED director to meet committee
* Louise to arrange next committee meeting

**Introduction**

Chris H opened the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves.

Previous minutes: no comments.

**Discussion**

1. **Overview of Alliance activities**

**Global solidary report update**

Frances updated on the response to the Alliance’s [global solidarity report](https://www.intdevalliance.scot/resources/scotland-and-global-sustainable-development-time-chart-new-path) which was published in June. The Alliance received a prompt and fulsome reply from Minister Neil Gray, saying he would arrange a meeting with the Alliance along with Mairi McAllan, which has yet to happen. He also said he would consider reviewing the current international development strategy which, if happened, would require a detailed consultation. An inter-ministerial meeting on policy coherence for sustainable development has now taken place and we await the meeting notes, however it has been confirmed that PCSD will be in the remit of the Deputy First Minister rather than International Development. The Minister also said they would look into funding for advocacy, and they have held focus groups with smaller organisations and partner country orgs about how best to use additional funding of £300k as a follow up to the small grants scheme. The International Development team would also like to meet with the kind of organisations represented on the policy committee to discuss the funding, so there’s a chance to set up a discussion. We also asked about Global South panel but have yet to receive detail of who is on the panel and how it will work.

**Spillover effects report**

Newcastle University have been carrying out some follow up work from the Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Bill work, looking at how we can measure spillover effects. The draft needs more work before sharing and we have time to refine before the NPF review takes place. A UN sustainable development report has looked at spillover effects and the UK comes out at 152 out of 163 countries in their index, whereas in terms of implementing the SDGs the UK comes out at 11 out of 163. This illustrates the problem of spillover effects (although as noted in the meeting, the index is not comprehensive and therefore the ranking is less useful than it might be: [Sustainable Development Report 2022 (sdgindex.org)](https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings/spillovers) ).

Chris H asked for more detail on what the ranking means. Frances explained that it means that the UK is not currently looking at the impact of decision making or measuring properly the spillovers of our carbon footprint, for example.

Lewis added that this is a justification for enhancing PCSD as this reveals that our decisions are resulting in negative impacts.

**Climate reparations**

Frances explained that SCCS International held a meeting with Lumumba Di-Aping, who was the lead negotiator for the G77 countries at the UN climate talks in Copenhagen in 2009. Whilst acknowledging the importance of the loss and damage, he felt that civil society in Scotland could be more outspoken and challenged us to be so, specifically by talking about climate reparations. Global Justice Now have drafted a paper which will be presented to SCCS, and we hope to be able to circulate it this week with a view to the Alliance supporting it.

Benjamin asked if there was merit in looking at wider reparations for slavery and colonialism rather than narrower aspect of climate reparations.

Chrissie mentioned that former minister Ben Macpherson had spoken about reparations in the past. Chris H said that the First Minster had also used the word at COP26.

Lewis supported the idea of talking more widely about reparations.

**Conference**

The Alliance conference information is available online, taking place at Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh and online on 20 September. The overall theme is global citizenship in a challenging world. We will be discussing climate justice and Mairi McAllan MSP, Minister for Environment will be joining the panel.

1. **Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill report next steps**

Louise updated the committee on W&SD work so far. The Alliance report was published at the start of June and was launched at SCVO’s Gathering. Minister Patrick Harvie spoke at the event. The Alliance have a follow up meeting with Patrick at the end of August. Positive feedback has been received from the NPF team and the policy lead on W&SD.

We need to keep up momentum on the bill, ensure recommendations are included, and consider any other input during consultation phase.

An influencing plan has been circulated to the committee. Sarah Boyack MSP has a members bill with consultation paper due to be published mid September, using our report as a basis which is an opportunity to raise the profile of the bill.

Human Rights Bill is up for consultation in Autumn and presents an opportunity to link human rights with the wellbeing agenda and a possible joint event has been discussed with Prof Alan Miller at Strathclyde.

Louise asked for volunteers to join a working group to support implementation of the influencing plan.

Jo asked what the legislation would achieve. She also offered to join working group but would want to focus on the gender equality aspects.

Louise explained that the report recommends that existing legislation is updated to be more consistent and, for example, to reference sustainable development rather than climate change. The Bill would put a duty on public bodies to consider the impact of decisions they’re making, which has proved to be a challenge to evidence in Wales.

Jo said that the feminist foreign policy work should align with this and asked how that is being brought together.

Lewis volunteered that Oxfam would join the working group. He described the Bill as a framework Bill, designed in order to bring about changes in broad areas. We can see important changes around definitions for example and this will support clarity in implementation. It also provides a hook for how we hold government accountable on global impact.

Lewis mentioned Claire Duncanson’s recent paper on feminist foreign policy and felt that we may be able to encourage a shift in culture which links to an understanding of feminist foreign policy through the Bill.

Chris H talked about the potential impact of a clear duty on public bodies and the need for the framework approach, and felt that the Bill has a real possibility of creating positive outcomes. He also thought that the responses received from the Scottish Government justified the decision to get the work produced at an early point.

Lewis said we should work on the assumption that this will be published in the next programme for government.

Lewis thought membership of the working group should reach outside of the Alliance to continue to push for global rather than domestic focus of Bill.

Chrissie suggested the Global Affairs Council could be involved in the working group.

Louise will move forward with setting up the working group with a view to a first meeting before the Alliance meet Patrick Harvie.

1. **UK overseas aid programme cuts**

Frances gave an update following the news of potential cuts to development funding. Home Office spending on refugees is accounting for up to 25% of the capped ODA budget of 0.5% so there is concern that overseas development spending will have to be reduced. Ideally the cap would increase. It seems likely that ‘essential, lifesaving and legally binding’ spend would be safe. The new government will also shortly need to consider replenishment of the global fund to which the UK has contributed significantly in the past (up to £7 billion over 5 years). Bond will look to lobby sensitively on these issues.

Jo had heard that humanitarian funding would be exempt from the pause in funding but has had no confirmation.

Mark pointed out that calling for a return to 0.7% has been politicised and it would be unhelpful to call for this given the Conservative party leadership contest, as it would likely result in a race to the bottom. So, there is a need to wait until we have a new prime minister and cabinet before pressing for the increase.

Jon echoed Mark’s points and supported Bond’s approach to avoid pushing for 0.7% at this point.

Chris L outlined his understanding of this situation which correlated with others.

1. **CPG meeting on debt & AGM**

Louise introduced the next CPG meeting topic of global debt injustice with a focus on Zambia. Thanks to Line at Jubilee Scotland for contributing to the topic.

Jo picked up on the proposed call to actions and asked whether SNP MSPs could be followed up with a request to consider global debt in independence plans. Similarly, Labour MSPs could be asked to request something on debt in the Labour UK manifesto. Louise agreed to follow up.

Lewis asked whether we could get any unofficial contribution from a private creditor to participate, and to therefore support the call to actions. Louise responded that Jubilee have said it is unlikely that anyone would get involved.

Jon suggested that the Scottish Financial Enterprise, which represents the Edinburgh financial scene and are quite influential, may be interested in having a conversation about this topic and may have insight on how best to present this issue to their members.

Chrissie asked that we ensure diversity of views and not just have campaigning speakers. Louise confirmed that the IMF had been approached who were handling the debt relief negotiations in Zambia and agreed that we need alternative perspectives in the meeting.

Chris H said he had experience in bringing together debt fund managers from abrdn with the team at Christian Aid. The fund managers had strong rebuttals and it would be a challenging viewpoint to bring in. He offered to make introductions if we wanted to pursue this sort of debate at the meeting.

Lewis explained that feedback from a past CPG on business and human rights was that more of a debate was needed, so he also supported a more balanced line up.

Jo mentioned that corporates already have access and influence and that we should focus on ensuring that our colleagues in the global south are given the space.

Chris L supported the view that a debate would be good, he said that it’s unusual for NGOs and corporates to be brought together in this way and we should try to overcome a ‘them and us’ approach.

Louise agreed that this could be a valuable approach and will take it to Sarah Boyack, convenor, for feedback.

Graeme suggested we set a non-polarising question to all speakers. Benjamin suggested: “Given that in due course you're going to be forced to pay for historic reparations, what can be done now by corporates to demonstrate that they're not myopic and do in fact have a modicum of humanity?” Graeme suggested the question looks at “What does Corporate Social Responsibility look like for private creditors of international debt”?

Simon suggested the approach may encourage more MSP attendance, and he proposed Prof Ulrich Volz from SOAS who works on sovereign debt and climate risks as a speaker who would provide an analytical viewpoint. He also said Sarah would need a robust briefing.

Chris H asked whether there were other ways of addressing this topic, as the CPG can be ineffectual.
Louise suggested this could be a springboard for future event, and that the debate approach and relevance/timeliness may secure a stronger attendance for the meeting.

Chris H also asked about future CPG meetings and whether the committee can input. Louise suggested that the next committee meeting could consider future topics and encouraged members to consider the CPG as a platform for MSP engagement.

**Independence report**

Chris H introduced the item and explained the potential timings and challenges reflecting the possibility that the supreme court will not agree to referendum, and possibility of an early general election which SNP & Greens want to use as de facto referendum. In 2014 the Alliance produced a report with an 18 month lead time.

Lewis felt that a report that builds on the 2014 one is essential, and it can incorporate much of the content from the Alliance’s recent global solidarity strategy report.

Jon suggested that we wait until the October decision. He felt that an early general election is unlikely, but if it does happen and is used as de facto referendum in Scotland, we should be careful about being early voices in giving credence to that approach, as it is yet to be seen whether it will be taken seriously.

Louise commented that the 2014 report had a useful structure in being clearly impartial.

Graham said that there would be merit in updating the 2014 report, as the concept of ‘Scotland’s Place in a Just World’ is still needed and it could stand in its own right.

Benjamin suggested we ask the membership if and how Scottish independence would enable Scotland to make a greater contribution to international development (whilst remaining neutral).

Others discussed the need for the Alliance to remain impartial.

Lewis suggested we do the groundwork now given the last report took 18 months but agreed we should not publish early. Chris H asked whether we should start work now or wait until October.

Lewis asked who would do the work and whether it would require an external consultant.

Louise suggested that the existing GSS report content could be pulled into the 2014 report format as a starting point.

Simon prompted Cathy and Frances to respond.

Cathy reiterated the need for impartiality. She asked that we find out when the supreme court decision will be made public.

Frances said the Alliance would come back to the next policy committee with some ideas on the process for report development.

Chris H pointed out that in 2014 the debate was focused on domestic issues, and the Alliance aimed to encourage a global perspective and ask politicians to explain their positions with regard to international development.

**Circular economy consultation response**

Louise introduced the item and explained that we are encouraging consideration of global impacts.

Chrissie suggested Turing Trust and similar orgs could be encouraged to respond.

Lewis suggested that impact assessments could be included, and that existing sustainable development impact tools are not being used.

**Climate reparations policy**

Louise will circulate the paper when ready and reiterated that the committee would need to approve the reparations policy. She will feed back to Global Justice Now that the committee would support a wider reparations approach beyond climate. Louise explained that the Alliance conference would provide a platform for promoting any reparations policy, so we are working to 20 September for confirmation.

**AOB**

Simon shared the news that LUV+ founder Nigel Harper has sadly passed away and his funeral is on Monday. He suggested the Alliance might pass condolences to his family.

Simon also said that Saleemul Huq is coming to the Scottish Government Loss & Damage conference and would like to meet the committee.

IIED’s new director, Tom Mitchell, would also like to meet with the committee.

Chrissie asked about the Scottish Government conference, and for an update on loss and damage funding. She also suggested we engage with Tessa Ferry’s replacement to get updates.

Simon explained that the conference would have a policy day and a practical experiences day on how to address loss and damage. He said the funding was for the length of the parliament so there is unlikely to be more allocated. Simon explained that Tessa’s replacement is Jemima Gordon Duff who was in the team previously.

Lewis added that Jamie at Oxfam met with Jemima and discussed loss and damage and sources of funding. Oxfam are contributing to a fiscal levers paper which will be published ahead of the October conference.

Louise mentioned that some of the loss and damage funding has been allocated to SCIAF and the recipient partner organisation from Malawi will be speaking at the Alliance conference.

Chris H flagged the upcoming joint event from SCCS, SCVO and the Alliance on communicating the climate crisis, taking place on 23 August. Details available [here](https://www.intdevalliance.scot/events/communicating-climate-workshop). Members are asked to share details with any media contacts.

**Next meeting**: likely to be end of October, Louise will send round a doodle poll.