

Cross-Party Group on International Development

16 January 1800 - 1930

Minute (draft)

Present

MSPs

Sarah Boyack MSP (convenor)

Invited guests

David Osborne, Head, Development Strategy, FCDO
Dan Haydon, University of Glasgow
Mary Balikungeri, Rwanda Women's Network
Frances Guy, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Huw Owen, Disasters Emergency Committee

Non-MSP Group Members

Abel Ukoko
Abieyuwa Ufuoma, Robert Gordon University (Student)
Abigail Akporhwarho, Robert Gordon University (Student)
Adam Wilson, Office of Sarah Boyack MSP
Aliandra Barlete, University of Edinburgh
Anne Callaghan, Policy & Public Affairs at Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)
Blessing Ayodole
Blessing Ohaka, Robert Gordon University (Student)
Cathy Ratcliff, EMMS International
Cathy Crawford
Chad Morse, Scotland Malawi Partnership
Chinchu George
Chrissie Hirst, Corra Foundation
Claire Duncanson, University of Edinburgh
David Cunningham, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Dihang Shen, University of Edinburgh
Emily McDonnell
Emmanuel Fianko, Robert Gordon University
Emmanuel Izegaegbe
Eszter Vlasits, Student
Gillian McMahon

Grace Buckley, National Justice & Peace Commission
Holly Greer, NHS
Ibijoke Fola-Yusuf, Robert Gordon University (Student)
Joanna Pearce Zambia Therapeutic Art
Juliana Riano, University of Edinburgh
Kamo Sende
Karen Downard, Individual Member | SIDA
Katelynn Kirk
Kevin Simpson, Malawi Fruits
Kholood Alam
Lewis Ryder-Jones, Oxfam
Louise Davies, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Lucinda Rivers, UNICEF
Mark Chadwick, CBM Global Disability Inclusion
Mark O'Donnell, Inclusive Development Consulting Ltd
Metin Catar, University of Edinburgh
Okeoghene Idi, Robert Gordon University (Student)
Philippa Ramsden
Princess Etim, Robert Gordon University (RGU)
Ricci Downard, Individual Member | SIDA
Rilke Ballero, EFP
Rosa Balliro, Tiyeni
Seth Odei Asare, Robert Gordon University
Tracy Morse, University of Strathclyde
Yuchong Zhang, University of Edinburgh

Apologies

Karen Adam MSP
Alasdair Allan MSP

Agenda item 1 - Introductory remarks

Sarah Boyack noted the sad passing of Saleemul Huq and sends the groups condolences to his family and friends.

Sarah also thanked Jubilee Scotland for their work on debt relief over the years and was saddened to hear they had closed down.

Agenda item 2 - Previous minutes

Minutes were approved – proposed by Lucinda Rivers, seconded by Sarah Boyack.

Agenda item 3 - White paper on international development

David Osborne, head of development strategy at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office began by talking through the white paper process and findings. He outlined five key points:

1. Context has shaped the white paper and we are working in a challenging environment, including the challenge of tackling poverty which is concentrating in fragile and conflict effected states
2. The goal is to end extreme poverty and tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. These are interlinked and need to be treated together
3. The paper is a call to be innovative, creative and bold and use every tool that we have. We need to use ODA well but also use other tools and levers
4. The government is clear that how we work needs to change, with an emphasis on mutual respect in partnerships
5. There are seven areas for action:
 1. Going further, faster to mobilise international finance and increase private sector investment in development
 2. Strengthening and reforming the international system to improve action on trade, tax, debt, tackling dirty money
 3. Harnessing innovation and new technologies, science and research for the greatest and most cost-effective development impact
 4. Ensuring opportunities for all, putting women and girls centre stage and investing in education and health systems that societies want
 5. Championing action to address state fragility, and to anticipate and prevent conflict, humanitarian crises, climate disasters
 6. Building resilience and enabling adaptation for those affected by conflict, disasters and climate change, strengthening food security, social protection, and disaster risk financing
 7. Standing up for our values, for open inclusive societies, for women and girls, and preventing roll-back of rights

Presentation available [here](#).

Frances Guy, chief executive, Scotland's International Development Alliance

responded focussing on areas that the Scottish Government (SG) might pursue. Her key points were:

- SG could follow the commitment to end extreme poverty but through a feminist and decolonial perspective
- Domestic policies and leadership could join up with global issues, for example acknowledging that reducing carbon emissions domestically would help achieve overarching goals
- UK should commit to reporting to the UN on the SDGs. Scotland could also improve on measuring and reporting implementation of the SDGs
- Funding women's rights organisations is positive but funding networks would increase impact, both UK and Scotland could do this
- Mobilising finance is an area where Scotland could be more vocal, and both governments could engage with the Global Ethical Finance Initiative
- Inequalities in academic partnerships are hampering research partnerships

Other points that SIDA would like to have seen in the paper include:

- Measuring spillover effects, both the negative and positive, to truly understand how we are implementing the SDGs
- Commitment to UN convention on tax
- Equality of access to vaccines

Dan Haydon, director, Glasgow Centre for International Development shared his views on the white paper. Key points included:

- Positive on change of tone and direction, the focus on partnership, localisation, local leadership and centring core democratic values
- Lack of ambition to reform tax, trade and debt
- Agrees with points about science and research partnerships and the key is long term predictable commitments and secure funding. More can be done to make partnerships equitable - the terms of contracts from UKRI are burdensome and unfair. Wellcome Trust are leading with positive changes
- Scientists in Scotland value the partnerships that Universities have in the Global South
- Commonwealth scholarship programme brings about 150 scholars to Scotland and more could be done to draw more scholars to Scottish institutions. Relationship building, and future partnerships, is the real value of this programme
- Domestic relationships between universities and NGOs could be improved, and more funding could be put into this interface which the Scottish Government might want to consider
- Recognition of One Health was welcomed and acknowledging the link between human, animal and plant health
- Using the tools we have wisely is arguably as important as discovering new ones. Implementation is key.

Mary Balikungeri, founder and director of Rwanda Women's Network joined the meeting remotely, and shared her views. Her points included:

- Pleased to see that localisation is now the focus of the conversation, donor recipient approaches need to be considered. Partnerships should drive us towards ownership. References to mutuality and transparency are welcome
- What is going to happen next? How do we make sure that organisations like Rwanda Women's Network are involved in developing the delivery plan. We need a clear road map to ensure we don't lose sight of the key principles in the document, and that grassroots organisations don't get lost in the process
- Community centred, action-oriented research is important, and grassroots and women's rights organisation must be involved in development of research to enable ownership
- We must deal with the inequalities that women are living with in their communities such as gender-based violence
- We need to strengthen conversations around SDG5 and bring other actors in to address the cross-cutting issue of gender across all SDGs. The SDGs could have been emphasised more in the paper
- We need to find ways to connect community groups with regional, national and international decision-making. Women's issues must be represented round the table

- Safe spaces for women are essential for healing, empowerment, solidifying relationships and transforming women's lives

Q&A

Cathy Crawford spoke about CEI which is a good example of equitable partnerships. It was set up by a Bangladeshi academic in Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government to support education in Bangladesh.

Mark Chadwick, CBM identified some gaps in reaching those most left behind, particularly around health, water and climate, and asked for clarity in how the UK Government will support inclusion in these areas.

David responded to say the white paper provides a stronger platform to build upon and deliver our strategy on disability inclusion. Questions around implementation are being addressed and prioritisation is taking place. The Outcome Delivery Plan is being rewritten to be based on the white paper with short and medium term priorities.

Seth Odei Asare, Robert Gordon University, asked how technology was being deployed to boost agriculture in least developed countries.

Abigail Akporhwarho, Robert Gordon University, asked why reducing carbon emissions domestically wasn't addressed in the white paper.

David said that investment in agri-tech is a part of our approach and there are some great examples of work, for example of higher yielding, drought resistance crop varieties. David said there tackling climate change was in the paper, including work on mitigation and emissions. Conversations on policy coherence are rich and strong and the effective implementation of the white paper will require good cross government working.

FCDO are keen to continue to be challenged and informed and look forward to engaging with the group further.

Agenda item 4 – Humanitarian Emergency Fund update

Huw Owen, Disasters Emergency Committee/Humanitarian Emergency Fund gave an update on current crises.

Huw gave the following updates from the DEC:

- There is no current DEC fundraising appeal for Gaza due to the inability to get aid in effectively.
- Turkey and Syria – first anniversary coming soon, £15m raised in Scotland to support.
- Ukraine conflict – supporting the whole region

Humanitarian Emergency Fund

- Sudan: £250,000 shared between British Red Cross and Oxfam as civil war continues

- Afghanistan: £250,000 shared between SCIAF and Christian Aid following October earthquake
- Libya: £250,000 shared between Islamic Relief and BRC following flash flood in Derna
- Additional £1 million has been allocated to HEF members from SG Climate Justice Fund for projects in Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia and Pakistan
- Global humanitarian needs remain at all time high – just under 300 million people in 2024

Presentation available [here](#).

Agenda item 5 – CPG inquiry

Sarah introduced the process and timeline for the proposed inquiry on Scottish Government transparency in decision making and spending.

There were no comments in the room, so any feedback was requested by email to Louise Davies, CPG Secretariat, by 26 January.

Agenda item 6 – closing remarks

Sarah thanked the speakers: David, Frances, Dan, Mark and Huw and encouraged attendees to stay involved in the group.

David Osborne, FCDO
 Dan Haydon, University of Glasgow
 Mary Balikungeri, Rwanda Women's Network
 Frances Guy, Scotland's International Development Alliance
 Huw Owen, Disasters Emergency Committee

Non-MSP Group Members

Abel Ukoko
 Abieyuwa Ufuoma, Robert Gordon University (Student)
 Abigail Akporhwarho, Robert Gordon University (Student)
 Adam Wilson, Office of Sarah Boyack MSP
 Aliandra Barlete, University of Edinburgh
 Anne Callaghan, Policy & Public Affairs at Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)
 Blessing Ayodole
 Blessing Ohaka, Robert Gordon University (Student)

Cathy Ratcliff, EMMS International
Cathy Crawford
Chad Morse, Scotland Malawi Partnership
Chinchu George
Chrissie Hirst, Corra Foundation
Claire Duncanson, University of Edinburgh
David Cunningham, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Dihang Shen, University of Edinburgh
Emily McDonnell
Emmanuel Fianko, Robert Gordon University
Emmanuel Izegaegbe
Eszter Vlasits, Student
Gillian McMahon
Grace Buckley, National Justice & Peace Commission
Holly Greer, NHS
Ibijoke Fola-Yusuf, Robert Gordon University (Student)
Joanna Pearce Zambia Therapeutic Art
Juliana Riano, University of Edinburgh
Kamo Sende
Karen Downard, Individual Member | SIDA
Katelynne Kirk
Kevin Simpson, Malawi Fruits
Kholood Alam
Lewis Ryder-Jones, Oxfam
Louise Davies, Scotland's International Development Alliance
Lucinda Rivers, UNICEF
Mark Chadwick, CBM Global Disability Inclusion
Mark O'Donnell, Inclusive Development Consulting Ltd
Metin Catar, University of Edinburgh
Okeoghene Idi, Robert Gordon University (Student)
Philippa Ramsden
Princess Etim, Robert Gordon University (RGU)
Ricci Downard, Individual Member | SIDA
Rilke Ballero, EFP
Rosa Balliro, Tiyeni
Seth Odei Asare, Robert Gordon University
Tracy Morse, University of Strathclyde
Yuchong Zhang, University of Edinburgh

Apologies

Karen Adam MSP
Alasdair Allan MSP

Agenda item 1 - Introductory remarks

Sarah Boyack noted the sad passing of Saleemul Huq and sends the groups condolences to his family and friends.

Sarah also thanked Jubilee Scotland for their work on debt relief over the years and was saddened to hear they had closed down.

Agenda item 2 - Previous minutes

Minutes were approved – proposed by Lucinda Rivers, seconded by Sarah Boyack.

Agenda item 3 - White paper on international development

David Osborne, head of development strategy at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office began by talking through the white paper process and findings. He outlined five key points:

6. Context has shaped the white paper and we are working in a challenging environment, particularly regarding peace and security issues, and the fact that poverty is concentrated in fragile states
7. The goal is to end extreme poverty and tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. These are interlinked and need to be treated together
8. The paper is a call to be innovative, creative and bold and use every tool that we have. We need to use ODA well but also use other tools and levers
9. The government is clear that how the work needs to change, with an emphasis on mutual respect in partnerships
10. There are seven areas for action:
 8. Going further, faster to mobilise international finance and increase private sector investment in development
 9. Strengthening and reforming the international system to improve action on trade, tax, debt, tackling dirty money
 10. Harnessing innovation and new technologies, science and research for the greatest and most cost-effective development impact
 11. Ensuring opportunities for all, putting women and girls centre stage and investing in education and health systems that societies want
 12. Championing action to address state fragility, and to anticipate and prevent conflict, humanitarian crises, climate disasters
 13. Building resilience and enabling adaptation for those affected by conflict, disasters and climate change, strengthening food security, social protection, and disaster risk financing
 14. Standing up for our values, for open inclusive societies, for women and girls, and preventing roll-back of rights

Presentation available [here](#).

Frances Guy, chief executive, Scotland's International Development Alliance responded focussing on areas that the Scottish Government (SG) might pursue. Her key points were:

- SG could follow the commitment to end extreme poverty but through a feminist and decolonial perspective

- Domestic policies and leadership could join up with global issues, for example acknowledging that reducing carbon emissions domestically would help achieve overarching goals
- UK should commit to reporting to the UN on the SDGs. Scotland could also improve on measuring and reporting implementation of the SDGs
- Funding women's rights organisations is positive but funding networks would increase impact, both UK and Scotland could do this
- Mobilising finance is an area where Scotland could be more vocal, and both governments could engage with the Global Ethical Finance Initiative
- Inequalities in academic partnerships are hampering research partnerships

Other points that SIDA would like to have seen in the paper include:

- Measuring spillover effects, both the negative and positive, to truly understand how we are implementing the SDGs
- Commitment to UN convention on tax
- Equality of access to vaccines

Dan Haydon, director, Glasgow Centre for International Development shared his views on the white paper. Key points included:

- Positive on change of tone and direction, the focus on partnership, localisation, local leadership and centring core democratic values
- Lack of ambition to reform tax, trade and debt
- Agrees with points about science and research partnerships and the key is long term predictable commitments and secure funding. More can be done to make partnerships equitable - the terms of contracts from UKRI are burdensome and unfair. Wellcome Trust are leading with positive changes
- Scientists in Scotland value the partnerships that Universities have in the Global South
- Commonwealth scholarship programme brings about 150 scholars to Scotland and more could be done to draw more scholars to Scottish institutions. Relationship building, and future partnerships, is the real value of this programme
- Domestic relationships between universities and NGOs could be improved, and more funding could be put into this interface which the Scottish Government might want to consider
- Recognition of One Health was welcomed and acknowledging the link between human, animal and plant health
- Implementation is key and whilst research is important we could do better with what we have, e.g. deploying existing vaccines

Mary Balikungeri, founder and director of Rwanda Women's Network joined the meeting remotely, and shared her views. Her points included:

- Pleased to see that localisation is now the focus of the conversation, donor recipient approaches need to be considered. Partnerships should drive us towards ownership. References to mutuality and transparency are welcome
- What is going to happen next? How do we make sure that organisations like Rwanda Women's Network are involved in developing the delivery plan. We need a clear road map to ensure we don't lose sight of the key principles in the document, and that grassroots organisations don't get lost in the process

- Community centred, action-oriented research is important, and grassroots and women's rights organisation must be involved in development of research to enable ownership
- We must deal with the inequalities that women are living with in their communities such as gender-based violence
- We need to strengthen conversations around SDG5 and bring other actors in to address the cross-cutting issue of gender across all SDGs. The SDGs could have been emphasised more in the paper
- We need to find ways to connect community groups with regional, national and international decision-making. Women's issues must be represented round the table
- Safe spaces for women are essential for healing, empowerment, solidifying relationships and transforming women's lives

Q&A

Cathy Crawford spoke about CEI which is a good example of equitable partnerships. It was set up by a Bangladeshi academic in Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government to support education in Bangladesh.

Mark Chadwick, CBM identified some gaps in reaching those most left behind, particularly around health, water and climate, and asked for clarity in how the UK Government will support inclusion in these areas.

David responded to say things are improving on disability inclusion and the white paper provides a better platform to build upon. Questions around implementation are being addressed and prioritisation is taking place. The Outcome Delivery Plan is being rewritten to be based on the white paper with short and medium term priorities.

Seth Odei Asare, Robert Gordon University, asked how technology was being deployed to boost agriculture in least developed countries.

Abigail Akporhwarho, Robert Gordon University, asked why reducing carbon emissions domestically wasn't addressed in the white paper.

David said there is investment and progress in agri-tech and there is some evidence of increasing yields to be drought and climate resilient. David said there was no intentional avoidance in the white paper and climate mitigation and emissions are recognised as part of the package. Conversations on policy coherence are rich and strong and the effective implementation of the white paper will require good cross government working.

FCDO are keen to continue to be challenged and informed and look forward to engaging with the group further.

Agenda item 4 – Humanitarian Emergency Fund update

Huw Owen, Disasters Emergency Committee/Humanitarian Emergency Fund

gave an update on current crises.

Huw gave the following updates from the DEC:

- There is no current DEC fundraising appeal for Gaza due to the inability to get aid in effectively.
- Turkey and Syria – first anniversary coming soon, £15m raised in Scotland to support.
- Ukraine conflict – supporting the whole region

Humanitarian Emergency Fund

- Sudan: £250,000 shared between British Red Cross and Oxfam as civil war continues
- Afghanistan: £250,000 shared between SCIAF and Christian Aid following October earthquake
- Libya: £250,000 shared between Islamic Relief and BRC following flash flood in Derna
- Additional £1 million has been allocated to HEF members from SG Climate Justice Fund for projects in Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia and Pakistan
- Global humanitarian needs remain at all time high – just under 300 million people in 2024

Presentation available [here](#).

Agenda item 5 – CPG inquiry

Sarah introduced the process and timeline for the proposed inquiry on Scottish Government transparency in decision making and spending.

There were no comments in the room, so any feedback was requested by email to Louise Davies, CPG Secretariat, by 26 January.

Agenda item 6 – closing remarks

Sarah thanked the speakers: David, Frances, Dan, Mark and Huw and encouraged attendees to stay involved in the group.