



Briefing

How the UK Government can really 'shift the power' towards global justice

As global crises escalate and new threats emerge, we must focus on the root causes of inequality and injustice to build a better future. Now is the time to redefine our approach towards building a genuinely just world that benefits all who live in it. This briefing provides a snapshot of 10 key policies that could help catalyse this new approach in the near term, based on over 55 recommendations set out in our flagship new research paper, 'From Talk to Transformation'.

This work, from the 200 strong membership of Scotland's International Development Alliance (SIDA), explores the idea of 'shifting the power' to achieve global justice. It provides a powerful vision for transformative change based on four intersecting approaches of inclusivity, feminism, anti-racism and decolonisation, and calls on politicians to rethink how the UK engages globally. It argues that investing in transformative change at the global level and in the 'how' of relationships with countries in the Global South will positively contribute to justice at home and abroad.

Undoubtedly, finance is vital, and our members overwhelmingly call for the immediate reinstatement of spending at least 0.7% of Gross National Income on Official Development Assistance, with a view to increasing this percentage during the next Parliamentary term. We take this as a given for any progress to be made in the UK's contribution to global justice. Furthermore, limits must be set on the proportion of ODA spent within the UK and all ODA must have a clear poverty and inequality reduction aim.

Additionally, we call for the next UK Government to:

What? Take steps to acknowledge and redress historic and ongoing injustices

Why? Action is needed to help to address the complex and enduring effects of colonialism. This might include an acknowledgement of historical injustices; the offering of sincere apologies; engagement in cultural reparations and other material redress; and the fostering of open conversations and broader knowledge sharing and education to learn lessons to stop and prevent ongoing injustices as a result of colonialism.

How? **Recommendation 1:** Actively and meaningfully engage and work with communities harmed to identify ways forward and collaboratively develop plans for reparations, reconciliation, and commemoration.

Recommendation 2: Establish an independent commission to interrogate the impact of the UK's colonial legacies, including colonialism's continued manifestation in current policy making and decisions.



What? Promote feminist and decolonised alternatives for economic activity and measurement

Why? Dominant economic practices are failing people all over the world, especially in the Global South where so many continue to be trapped in the cycle of poverty. Traditional economic thinking and practices are driving the destruction of the planet whilst fuelling intersecting and deep inequalities. A new approach is needed to repurpose economic policy towards the realisation of human rights and climate justice that takes account of wellbeing and quality of life (rather than GDP growth alone) and recognises and values the critical importance of all forms of unpaid care and domestic work.

- How?**
- ▶ **Recommendation 3:** Urgently and proactively participate in global discussions to restructure and cancel the debt of countries facing debt distress, and legislate domestically to require private lenders to take part in coordinated international debt relief.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 4:** Support calls for a [UN convention on tax](#), the creation of a UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights, and calls to create a Global Asset Registry of all wealth and assets.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 5:** Bring forward a [Business, Human Rights and Environment Act](#) to prevent environmental harms and human rights abuses in supply chains by UK-based companies.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 6:** Enact a range of progressive wealth taxes, greater windfall taxes on fossil fuel companies and new progressive taxes on high carbon emitting activities and pollution

What? Improve policy coherence to drive global justice commitments

Why? There are numerous areas of policy that exist in marked contradiction to ideals of justice-focused approaches to international affairs, as well as areas of inconsistency between departments. We need to see an overarching, cultural shift where all policy areas integrate goals of equity, human rights and justice into their actions and budgets. We outline here some specific interventions which would begin to support more joined-up thinking.

- How?**
- ▶ **Recommendation 7:** Immediately cease issuing any arms licences to Israel, Saudi Arabia or any other country that violates international humanitarian law.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 8:** Immediately cease issuing any new licences or permitting the expansion of coal, oil and gas exploration, extraction, or processing, and remove any government investments, including FCDO investments, from fossil fuel companies.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 9:** Cancel all plans to send asylum-seekers to a third party country, and instead establish safe routes for refugees to the UK, including but not limited to broadening family reunion options.

What? Provide more direct support to movements, human rights defenders and take action to enhance strong, independent and progressive civil society internationally and domestically

Why? Evidence shows that funding for movements, such as feminist, disability and environmental justice movements, is the most effective way of creating long-term and sustainable change for women and girls and marginalised groups. But this funding must be flexible, long term and unrestricted to have the most impact.

- How?**
- ▶ **Recommendation 10:** Ensure more funding is provided to support Civil Society Organisations across the Global South, with a particular focus on women's organisations, disabled peoples' organisations, Indigenous groups, environmental justice organisations and LGBTQI+ organisations.

Our full report gives substantial further detail on pathways for potential action, along with a range of tangible policies to help deliver them. This briefing is a snapshot of our ideas – to read more visit: <https://intdevalliance.scot/our-work/influencing-policy/shifting-the-power/>

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