

## **CPG on Human Rights**

**Meeting on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 5.30pm, Scottish Parliament**

### **Meeting Note**

#### **Present**

John Finnie MSP - Convenor  
Roderick Campbell MSP  
Patrick Harvie MSP  
Alison Johnstone - MSP  
Sarah Nash on behalf of Marco Biagi MSP

Lucy Blackburn - Howard League for Penal Reform Scotland  
Elaine Webster – Strathclyde University

Paul Wheelhouse – Minister  
Alan Miller – Chair, Scottish Human Right Commission

#### **1. Welcome**

John Finnie welcomed the membership to the meeting and extended that welcome to the two speakers, Mr Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for the Environment and Climate Change and Professor Alan Miller, Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

#### **2. Apologies**

Bill Walker MSP  
Maureen Falconer - Information Commissioner's Office  
Kurt Mills – Glasgow University  
Marco Biagi MSP

Alison McInnes MSP

Carole Ewart – Co Convenor

Lisa Mackenzie –Policy/Public Affairs Manager, Howard League for Penal Reform

Brandi Lee Lough Dennell -Policy and Participation Manager, LGBT Youth Scotland

Alexa Anderson - Edinburgh and Lothian's Regional Equality Council – ELREC

John Welford – Coordinator, NO2ID Edinburgh

Nancy Louks – Families Outside

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

- a. The previously agreed call for subscriptions was issued by the Secretariat.
- b. A letter was sent to the SHRC and the request that SNAP considers HR in Mental Health settings was subsequently discussed with SHRC.

### **4. Discussion Climate Justice**

Climate Justice is a field of human rights in which it is acknowledged that those who suffer most from climate change had the least involvement in its cause. Professor Alan Miller, Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission described a visit to Malawi during which he'd heard that "*Eight per cent of the country had regular access to electricity*" and that food security was at risk as "*Farmers could no longer predict when to plant crops because of climate driven, fluctuating weather patterns*".

Acknowledging the First Minister, Scottish Government and Scottish technology industries' positive contribution to "*the greatest human rights issue facing the world*", Professor Miller anticipated Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights, (scheduled for publication December 2013), being used to further focus Government on firm commitments.

The Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Mr Paul Wheelhouse went on to describe how the Scottish Government is using its world-leading Climate Justice Fund to ensure "*countries can develop with the benefit of modern technologies without going through the dirty phase that boosted the world's industrial economies such as our own*".

He went on to describe Scotland's cutting-edge technology industries working in this area and the First Ministers efforts to highlight issues in the Climate Justice debate during missions to China and more recently to North America. Mr Wheelhouse identified that Climate Justice issues are not confined to the international stage, noting the relationship between poor social and economic outcomes for some Scots who live in homes on the margins of existence due to flooding.

Both speakers at this meeting described how thinking about the issues from a human rights perspective has been instrumental in developing Scotland's climate

policy. This approach has led to trusting relationships developing between the world's rich and poor, between business and communities and between governments and citizens.

A round table discussion followed and Mr Wheelhouse left the meeting after its conclusion.

## 5. AOB

### a. **Prisoner Voting in the Scottish Referendum**

The Howard League Scotland (HLS) Committee member Lucy Blackburn brought the group's attention to their current campaign to allow prisoners the vote in next year's independence referendum. HLS along with five other organisations and individuals submitted evidence to the Referendum Bill Committee, which can be found here:

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_ReferendumScotlandBillCommittee/Howard\\_League\\_and\\_others.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ReferendumScotlandBillCommittee/Howard_League_and_others.pdf)

The meeting agreed to circulation of a short briefing note provided by Howard League Scotland, setting out more detail about the campaign and indicating how members of the Cross Party Group could get involved if they wished.

- b. It was agreed at the request of the Secretariat that Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights be a standing agenda item for future meetings.
- c. The Secretariat extended an invitation to Members to join in the planning for the next meeting which will focus on Business and Human Rights
- d. DONM 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at 5.30 Ct Rm 5