

Cross Party Group on Malawi

Wednesday 11th June 2014

17.30-19.00

Scottish Parliament, CR3

MINUTES

Attendees:

1. Maureen Watt MSP
2. Sarah Boyack MSP
3. Dr Richard Simpson MSP
4. Kevin Stewart MSP
5. Gerhard Anders, The University of Edinburgh
6. Janey Andrews, Strathclyde University
7. Charlie Bevan, Scotland Malawi Partnership
8. Keith Bohannon, Scotland Malawi Partnership
9. Colin Cameron, SMP Member
10. Murray Duncanson, Sue Ryder
11. Geoff Earl, SMP Member
12. Jackie Farr, Scotland Malawi Partnership
13. Brian Ferguson, Sue Ryder
14. Andrew Goudie, SMP member
15. Rev Rona Harding
16. David Hope-Jones, Scotland Malawi Partnership
17. James Johnstone, Malawi Fruits
18. Brian Kerr, SOKO Fund
19. Derek MacLeod, The University of Edinburgh
20. John McCracken, SMP Member
21. Alice Musamba Purves
22. Joyce Nicol
23. Kevin Simpson, Malawi Fruits
24. Tom Smith, Dunblane-Likhubula Partnership
25. David Stevenson, SMP Member
26. Peter West, Honorary Consul

1. Welcome and minutes from previous meeting

Maureen Watt MSP (MW) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from: Claudia Beamish MSP, Liam McArthur MSP and Alex Fergusson MSP

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the 5th February were noted as correct and approved.

3. Post-election analysis and views

Dr Peter West, Malawi Honary Consul

PW gave outlined some of the reasons why Joyce Banda was perhaps not elected as President, including the impact of the devalued currency, the lack of an established political party and minimal authority in parliament. This will have come as a surprise to some who felt as the incumbent and through an intense rural campaign, she should have been in a strong position to win the presidency.

PW highlighted some of the unique features of this election including:

- Most transparent ever
- Lowest number of null and void votes
- The impressive patience of the people of Malawi in the confusion post-election day
- That, despite a few anomalies, the election was considered credible and transparent
- Very minimal funds available to the MEC
- Challenge of logistics, including transport issues

PW also passed on a message from the Malawi High Commissioner to the UK who was keen to emphasise that there is no change in the Malawi Government's opinion of Western donors, especially its relationship with Scotland, and will look to continue the good relations.

Dr Gerhard Anders, The University of Edinburgh

GA offered a review of the results of the elections, and how these fit in with past and recent trends in Malawian politics. Click here to download the presentation:

www.slideshare.net/scotlandmalawipartners/malawi-postelection-analysis-may-2014

4. Q and A and open discussion

Following the presentation the discussion focused on the reduction in female representation in the parliament, and low numbers in local government, the role of the courts in constitutional crises and the strength of an army that supports the constitution. The group also discussed the process of decentralization through local government and questioned how this structure would complement traditional leaders.

5. Governance partnerships between Scotland and Malawi

David Hope-Jones outlined some work the SMP are doing to strengthen partnerships between Scotland and Malawi, particularly in the area of governance. He highlighted that in the 2013 Scottish Government funding round no civic governance projects were funded. The SMP is looking to identify, and perhaps try to address, some of the challenges to funding projects in this area. The SMP is launching a Governance Forum, to which all members of the CPG were warmly invited.

6. AOB

Date of next meeting: 24th September 2014, 5.30-7pm, CR4.

The meeting will be the CPG's AGM and include health presentations on the work of Enable and VSO in Malawi.