

## CROSS PARTY GROUP: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

24 January 2017

COMMITTEE ROOM 5, SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

6PM – 8PM

*Please note that it is not the intention of the minutes to record a verbatim account.*

**Attendees:** Alexander Stewart MSP, Patrick Harvie MSP, Ash Denham MSP, John Mason MSP, Alasdair Allan MSP

**Member Organisation list:** Ryan McQuigg (Oxfam Scotland), Jamie Livingstone (Oxfam Scotland), Jane Salmonson (NIDOS), Lynne Paterson (Tearfund), Professor Pamela Abbot (Centre for Global Development at the University of Aberdeen), Linda Todd (The Leprosy Mission Scotland), Geraldine Hill (SCIAF), Daniel Sweeney (Justice and Peace Scotland), Paul Johnston (Tearfund), David Hope-Jones (SMP), Alastair Seaman (International Nepal Fellowship)

**Individual list:** David Stevenson, Brian Smith, Atishay Mathur, Andrew Dickie, Lorna Ross, John Mooney (Scottish Government), Joanna Keating (Scottish Government), Thierry Claudien Uhawenimana, Alison O'Connell (CBM UK), Roger Leakey (International Tree Foundation)

**Apologies:** Lewis Macdonald MSP, Joan McApline MSP

**Welcome:** Patrick Harvie MSP welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new year of the CPG. Patrick noted that he was convening the meeting as usual convener Lewis Macdonald MSP and Joan McApline MSP along with the External Relations Committee where in Brussels on Committee business. Patrick asked if the Group agreed with the minutes of the last meeting, meetings were then agreed to. Patrick introduced the Minister for International Development, Alasdair Allan MSP to speak to the Group.

**Alasdair Allan MSP:** The Minister thanked the Group for inviting him to speak about the Scottish Government's new International Development strategy. Highlighted that a consensual debate on the topic had recently taken place in Parliament, the minister went on to highlight the role that the UN Global Goals will have on the Government's future domestic as well as international work. The new goals offered more scope to end poverty and inequality than MDGs, the Goals are realistic and achievable, and he looks forwards to the Group's discussions on these.

Minister then outlined the historical achievements of Scotland's International Development work, noting Scotland has always been an outward looking nation with a vibrant civil society. Scotland forged a 'tackle poverty approach' to international development but one always based on mutual respect. Again underscored Scotland's special relationship with Malawi, praised SMP and their engagement work. Stressed work in Malawi will focus on 'Malawi's national interest'.

Stated Government will continue to fund core bodies like SMP, Fairtrade Forum, NIDOS etc to raise awareness, engage and network with the people of Scotland, wants to inspire good global citizens. Minister outlined the strategy's four priorities, (i) new and historic relationships, (ii) empower partner countries, (iii) engage people of Scotland, (iv) enhance global citizenship by showing leadership along with three new funding streams, (i) Development Assistance, (ii) Capacity strengthening and (iii) Investment. Aid is important and central but is only part of the toolkit to ending poverty.

The Minister pointed out Scotland's Climate Change/Justice work, mentioning five years of Climate Justice Fund (CJF), the FM visit to the Paris COP and stated CJF support will continue throughout this parliamentary term. Minister finished by highlighted need to do more with regards to policy coherence and the guiding principles the Scottish Gov will follow with regards to Aid.

**Questions then asked to the Minister** including how will the Scottish Government cooperate with other Government's and donors given Brexit and the outcome of the USA Presidential vote and the effects on policies like climate change, sexual health etc, question regarding process with new funding rounds and application process, question on Scottish NGOs and the small grants geographical limit, the issue of media attacks on Aid, a point was raised about the balance between trade and Aid and the role of the private sector, a question was asked about how the IDF could help with value adding to enterprises in partner countries. The session finished with questions regarding human rights and the SDGs and how can Scottish Gov ensure 'it leaves no-one behind'?

### **Presentation by Professor Pamela Abbot on Rwanda:**

Professor Abbott highlighted the influence Scotland has had on Rwanda, like the fact its higher education framework is based on the Scottish example, noting there is a Memorandum of Understanding between Universities Scotland and Rwanda's Ministry of Higher Education. Revealed that the Vice Chancellor of the University of Rwanda is Scottish, and that Burns suppers have also be observed in Rwanda. In the Capital Kigali there is even an Aberdeen House hotel. Prof Abbott feels that the Highlands of Scotland look a lot like Rwanda.

Rwanda is still dependent on Aid as more than 10% GDP comes from this source, difficult to estimate the unofficial true figure, maybe 20% of GDP? While 40% of Government budget comes from Aid. It was pointed out that USA, Sweden and Scotland do not give their Aid to the Rwandan Government. Aid is beginning to decline resulting in a 6% funding gap, which trade has not filled.

Professor Abbott stated that Rwanda is probably best known for its devastating 1994 Genocide, one in which the world stood by, outlying how it left the country it destroyed the fabric of society, who could one trust? So Rwanda's recovery should be seen in that context.

Economic Development from agriculture to service and manufacturing Rwanda now wants to be an IT hub. It has good IT conductivity. Its sustained economic growth is pretty spectacular; Rwanda is one of fastest growing economies in Africa. However there is a skills shortage that has resulted in other East African workers coming to Rwanda for work. While looking a primary education (which DFID is a major funder), good news that there is 100% net enrolment, not so good news this often means its quantity over quality as only 50% complete their primary education. Tourism is a niche market Rwanda hopes to take advantage of due to its high end nature of birds and gorillas etc.

Gender equality: Rwanda has a fairly good record on this; more than 50% of its elected representatives are women, was this solely due to quotas questioned Prof. Abbott?

Rwanda has been praised for its fight against corruption although issues still remain over Human Rights and political rights, due to the reconciliation progress and the need for consensus if a political agreement can't be reached difficult decisions are often 'parked'. And issues have been raised about Rwanda's role with neighbouring countries in particular the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### **Presentation by Paul Johnston**

Tearfund have been working in Rwanda since 1994 post the Genocide, in 1995 Tearfund ran a successful Rwanda Appeal, this enabled work to begin on reconciliation projects. In 2006 Tearfund started more development work and in 2008 opened an office in Rwanda.

Tearfund works in partnership with local organisations to help communities to help themselves, they currently work with five Rwandan partners delivering projects linked to areas as diverse as community empowerment, peace building, agriculture value adding and environment.

Paul outlined the 'ending poverty one village at a time' programme, this was a three year project extended by a further two years, and it has reached over 35000 people. It is funded by the Scottish Government. Tearfund have also established Self Help Groups, (SHG), where members regularly save money and can access loans to start small-scale business ventures. They have over 1,200 such groups in Rwanda. Paul then gave some personal stories from some of the people who have benefitted from the SHG, like Katherine who had six children and was now able to access money, land, crops and livestock, said this has changed her life learning different farming techniques to combat climate change. Paul also stated these groups were open to all from different backgrounds as another aim is to help with the reconciliation process. Paul ended by stating there were still challenges facing Rwanda like bringing trust back to people and reforming communities, unrest in the great lakes region, climate change and the prevalence of gender based violence.

### **Questions were asked**

**Patrick Harvie concluded the meeting by stating next meeting will be held on 19<sup>th</sup> April at 1pm in CR1. Patrick also asked for suggestions for next topics to be covered by Group.**