

## CPG on International Development

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**“Climate Justice - Why the Climate Bill must be bold”**

**1pm-2.30pm, Committee Room 3 (The Fleming room)**

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

**Attendees:** Lewis Macdonald MSP (Convenor), Patrick Harvie MSP (Deputy Convenor), Alexander Stewart MSP, Claire Baker MSP, Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP

**Member Organisation list:** Scotland’s International Development Alliance, AIRNODE, Business Friends of Barbados, Christian Aid, International Institute of Environment and Development, International Voluntary Service, Just Trading Scotland, Opportunity International UK, Plan Vivo, Postcode Lottery, Rwanda Scotland Alliance, SCIAF, Scotland Malawi Partnership, Scottish Fair Trade Forum, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, Tearfund Scotland, The Turing Trust, UN House Scotland, University of Edinburgh, University of Strathclyde

**Individual List:** Andrew Bailie, Cathy Baldwin, Chris Cook, Joshua Gordon, Alastair Greig, Alexandra Herdman, Julian Holbrook, Simen Holm, Karolina Kaczor, James MacLean, Shounleit Nandar, Zanna Olestik, Laura Sefton, Galina Toteva, Yukara Weekes

**Apologies:** Andy Wightman MSP, Ryan McQuigg (Oxfam), John Francis (individual),

**Welcome:** Lewis Macdonald MSP welcomed guests and speakers. He then stated that the meeting was also the Groups AGM.

Office bearers were voted in. Lewis Macdonald MSP remains as Convener and Patrick Harvie MSP remains as Deputy Convener. Lewis Ryder-Jones, of Scotland’s International Development Alliance, remains in the role of secretariat for the group. He also welcomed Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, former Minister for International Development, who joins the CPG as its newest member.

Mr Macdonald then introduced the topic and speakers for this meeting. He said speakers will comment on how Climate Change is affecting different countries and explain why urgent and bold action is needed from high-emitting countries like Scotland.

He mentioned that testimonies of some participants in the 100 Voices campaign were displayed on posters around the room. He then gave the floor to the first speaker, Dr Geraldine Hill, Advocacy Manager at SCIAF.

**Geraldine Hill:** Geraldine opened by emphasising that climate change science is telling us we need to act faster, but so are our own experiences, with wilder weather, with droughts and heatwaves close to home and around the world this year.

With the new Climate Change Bill now before Parliament, MSPs have an important opportunity to increase Scotland’s climate action, by setting ambitious targets that increase action over the next decade and eliminate our contribution to climate change by 2050, and by bringing in effective policies in underperforming sectors.

She then went on to give some context to the current Bill. She said that the Climate Change (Scotland) Act was passed in 2009, and followed the UK Climate Change Act passed the previous year. It was ambitious in its time, and set a target in law to reduce GHG emissions (based on a 1990 baseline) by 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. However, by 2016, Scotland had already exceeded its 2020 target, and had reduced emissions by 45% compared to the 1990 baseline.

In their 2016 manifesto, the SNP committed to bringing in new legislation to increase the ambition of the 2009 Act and align it with the Paris Agreement. Then, in May this year, the Scottish Government introduced the draft Climate Change (Emissions Reductions) (Scotland) Bill. This bill included a 90% reduction by 2050.

She then mentioned the importance of the Paris Agreement which committed countries around the world to reduce their emissions to ensure global average temperature increases are kept well below 2°C and ideally limited to 1.5°C, to prevent catastrophic climate change. The 1.5°C limit has been identified as the tipping point for dangerous and irreversible climate change.

If emissions of GHGs continue at the current rate, the best estimates show that global average temperature will increase by between 3 and 4°C this century. To prevent the worst effects of climate change, and protect the most vulnerable people living on the frontline, it is internationally agreed that we must strive to hold temperature increases to 1.5°C. To achieve this requires courage and ambition from Governments in developed countries, but there is no other option.

She highlighted that all countries of the world have different responsibility and capability to act now. The UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on climate Change) enshrined the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) in 1992, which was ratified by all participating countries.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita in the UK are approximately 65 times more than emissions per capita in Malawi. Yet in Malawi, livelihoods and food security are being severely impacted by both drought and devastating flooding. Industrialised countries like Scotland have benefitted most from the processes now feeding climate change (such as the historic use of fossil fuels) and are in a better position than others to tackle the problem.

For any industrialised nation to meet its Paris Agreement commitment requires explicit acknowledgement of its unique responsibility to act.

Geraldine concluded her presentation by mentioning the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) coalition of organisations in Scotland campaigning together on climate change. SCCS is calling on MSPs to work to improve the Scottish Government's Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill currently before Parliament, by setting a legal target for net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest and setting urgent targets to increase action to 2030, together with stronger policies for warmer homes, healthier travel and greener farming.

Highlighting their "100 Voices Campaign", that was exhibited around the room, she said that that stories all had recurring themes. Farmers on different continents expressed similar concerns about unpredictable weather ruining their crop yields, families told of the devastation of past natural disasters and their fears of the disasters yet to come.

Together they provided a powerful testimony about the importance of looking beyond our own borders and understanding the international consequences of our actions and inactions.

**Howard Msukwa:** Howard started by introducing himself. He is a smallholder farmer from Karonga in northern Malawi, but is also the Vice Chair of the Kaporo Smallholder Farmers Association (KASFA) in northern Malawi, which supports 7000 smallholder farmers through finance and access to markets.

He is also on the national board of farmer's associations in Malawi, NASFAM, which represents over 100,000 smallholder farmers.

He then went on to say that both himself and those he represents, have seen the very real effects of climate change. He explained that rainfall patterns have become more and more unpredictable in recent years, and this has had life changing effects upon small-holder farmers such as himself.

He mentioned that the staple crop, rice, that farmers like himself grow to sell and feed the local community, takes around 6 months to grow. If rains arrive late in any given growing cycle, then this results, at best, in extremely low yields, and puts many families and farmers into a precarious economic situation.

At worst, he said that entire crops can fail, if rains don't arrive within the first three weeks of planting. This is because the principle water source for farming is rainfall, and without it there is simply not enough water to support the crops.

He said that climate adaptation support is therefore vital, and funding from the Scottish Government helps mitigate changing climate, through support for projects such as the installation of water pumps in regions like this. He emphasised that this support is still not enough, and called on the Scottish government and other historically high-emitting countries to do more, and set an example to the rest of the world by setting truly ambitious climate targets.

**Elisa Morgera:** Elisa is a Professor of Global Environmental Law and Director of the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance at Strathclyde University Law School. She specializes in international biodiversity law and its implications for international climate change, human rights and ocean law.

She presented on why climate change responses matter in terms of international law.

She started off by saying that although opinions on the legal strength of the Paris Agreement diverge, effectively implementing its provisions is also a matter of binding international human rights law (because of the negative implications of climate change on several human rights) and a matter of binding international biodiversity law (because of the negative implications of climate change on the variability of life on earth; and biodiversity loss, in turn, undermines the realization of basic human rights such as the right to life, health, water and food).

She said that climate justice should therefore be based on relevant international obligations on biodiversity and human rights; and climate change response measures (the "how") should be devised with a view to helping fulfilling also international human rights and biodiversity law, or at least not undermine it.

Thus, according to Elisa, an ecosystem-based and human rights-based approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation is an essential feature of any just or leading effort in relation to climate change.

She then highlighted that 169 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the UK, have already agreed upon, by consensus, on a series of guidelines on an ecosystem-

based approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation (including in relation to disaster risk reduction) that focus on environmental impact assessments, invasive alien species, protected areas, migratory species, land and water management, as well as community-based approaches.

These international guidelines should inspire climate justice and climate leadership approaches in detailed and pragmatic ways, both within Scotland and abroad (through Scottish development cooperation efforts, or the control of its investors).

She finished by saying that integrating international human rights and biodiversity standards into climate change initiatives (including effective regulation and monitoring of the private sector, as well as transparent, participatory and accountable decision-making processes) should, according to the 2018 UN Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment, be done "as expeditiously as possible" as best practice.

**Dr. Achala Abeyesinghe:** She is the Principal Researcher and Team Leader of the global climate law, policy and governance team of the Climate Change Group at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

She presented a short overview and the background of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group, and how the LDCs are leading the climate fight both at the global and national level.

She started by explaining that the LDCs are the poorest 47 countries in the world who face serious challenges in lifting their people out of poverty and achieving sustainable development.

She emphasised that research finds that LDCs collectively account for just 1% of global emissions but 99% of the deaths resulting from climate and weather-related disasters happen in LDCs.

LDCs know that keeping temperature rise to below 1.5°C by 2100 is both essential and achievable, but are also aware that it requires early and urgent action to reduce emissions in all sectors.

Highlighting historic responsibility, Achala said that LDCs believe that Developed and other high-emitting countries taking a leadership role in increasing climate ambition is a matter of justice and fairness.

It is their view that If countries like Scotland do not increase their ambition to close the emissions gap and provide resources to poor and vulnerable countries, LDCs will become even more vulnerable, increasing the cost of adaptation, and loss and damage suffered in their countries.

She said that the LDC group is campaigning ahead of COP24. Even though the Paris Agreement sets out clear goals and obligations, there remains much work to be done to finalise the rulebook of the Paris Agreement by COP24, this year. We need to ensure that the final rulebook is robust, comprehensive, fair and ambitious and will address needs of the poorest. The success of the Paris Agreement depends on it.

Achala finished by saying for LDCs, as well as for Scotland, long term policies and legislation can set the long term direction of travel and present an inspiring vision for the future, as well as give clear guidance to short term actions.

The Paris Climate Agreement was a landmark of international diplomacy, but it is not self-executing. Fulfilling its objectives will require ambitious domestic actions in all countries.

**Discussion:** Lewis Macdonald opened the discussion to the room. Questions and comments covered a range of issues.

Chris Cook from University College London, told the CPG about an example of progressive policy in Denmark aimed to reduce oil use, and suggested that this kind of policy could be emulated in Scotland. He also raised the importance of new financial technologies, such as bitcoin, as a route to new forms of finance for a de-carbonised economy.

Another group member asked the speakers what they think can be done to prevent multi-agri corporations moving into the developing world for the production of palm oil and other crops that contribute to environmental degradation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Geraldine responded by saying that this is very difficult because businesses are generally not legally bound to climate related action, and most agreements, such as the business pledge are generally voluntary. However, Elisa pointed out that the Scottish Government, and others, are in a position to act within their reach, such as looking at imposing stricter rules on Scottish-based investors in foreign markets.

Group Deputy-Convenor, Patrick Harvie MSP, then asked the wider group how they think the climate justice agenda can help put pressure on the Government with this Climate Bill, explaining that he feels there is less urgency and noise around this bill compared to 2009.

Achala responded by saying that human rights must underpin climate change responses, not only here, but everywhere.

Elisa stated that the climate justice rhetoric must include an economic argument around public purse savings, with Denmark again cited as an example. There are clear longterm economic savings for the economy, especially by linking legislation to private sector activities.

Geraldine responded by saying that the Policy Coherence argument must be defined better, and challenged herself and the sector to do so better.

Another attendee mentioned the need to support small holder farmer, highlighting that they are the dominant food production model throughout the world (75% of food comes from such farms) and the work of La Via Campesina that represents (81 countries, 182 organisations, 200 million peasant farmers). Elisa responded by saying that many of the international frameworks recognise this, so it is down to national governments to do the same.

Simon Anderson of IIED said it was disappointing to hear that momentum not with this bill, but emphasised that the bill is more important than ever. Devolved nations have opportunity to lead the way, and bill should reference the Paris Agreement rule book, as pointed out by Achala.

Patrick Harvie MSP said that the opportunity does exist to make this bill high on people's agenda, although he still believes energy levels lower than 2009 – other issues perhaps crowding this one out.

However, he was happy to see that Jeremy Corban has committed to 0% by end of century as this meeting got underway.

Gender inequality and climate justice were also raised as an important argument. The two are inextricably linked, and the argument should be raised more. LDCs are constrained, but want to do more on this issue, so Scottish Government should also do more. John Riches cited an FAO report that says gender and climate justice heavily linked.

The meeting finished with a discussion around how to make best use of CPG meetings and getting arguments heard outwith the room to other MSPs and the wider public.

Patrick Harvie said that public engagement and CPGs go hand in hand, but that bringing MSPs to their constituents is most powerful. He believes that we must not drop the public engagement side of things.

The Alliance, as secretariat will create briefings on the topic with other co-organisers of the meeting in order to engage MSPs not present and disseminate the key messages of the day.

Patrick Harvey, who took the chair for the final minutes of the meeting, concluded by thanking all speakers and guests. He said the next meeting is to be confirmed – but likely towards the end of the year/start of next.

Upcoming potential topics include suggestions by members last year:

- The role of the private sector in international development
- International trade & Brexit
- A look at the UN Sustainable Development Goals—focusing on the Leave No-one Behind agenda

Please contact secretariat, via Lewis Ryder-Jones, with any further ideas for upcoming meetings.