

CPG on International Development

Wednesday 9th October 2019

AGM and Agenda Setting

1pm-2pm, 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), Bruce Crawford MSP, Claire Baker MSP, Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Andy Wightman MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP, Jackie Bailie MSP

Member Organisation list: Scotland's International Development Alliance, Carey Tourism, Christian Aid, Corra Foundation, Fijad, IIED, Link Community Development International, Opportunity International UK, Oxfam Scotland, Queen Margaret University, Plan Vivo Foundation, Scotdec, SVL, Tearfund Scotland, Thrive, UN House Scotland, Unicef, University of Edinburgh, Water Witness International

Individual List: David Kenvyn, Otis Orteseh, Kingsley Oturu, Mildred Zimunya

Apologies: Alexander Stewart MSP

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, on behalf of Scotland's International Development Alliance, remains in the role of secretariat for the group. He also welcomed Sarah Boyack MSP and Jackie Bailie MSP, who join the CPG as its newest member. All other members remain.

Mr Macdonald then introduced Graeme McMeekin, acting Director of Tearfund Scotland who presented on the theme of 'Women on the front line: the experience of women during and after conflict'.

Graeme McMeekin: He started off by saying that war and conflict are terms that we normally associate with imagery dominated by men and that this often hides the reality that some of the most affected people by conflict are female.

He has been struck by this recently through two events he has attended - the Edinburgh Book Festival and Scotland's International Development Alliance Annual Conference 2019 which focused on the theme of Gender. At the book festival he went to a special launch of a photobook by photographer Lynsey Addario called 'Of Love and War'. This book shows images from various conflicts around the world of how females have been affected by conflict from the perspective of a female photographer. It shows how women are affected through the lack of healthcare infrastructure, providing water for their families and often being the heads of households in the midst of being displaced.

He was reminded of two specific stories regarding women in conflict. The first is about a woman called Areej who lives in Lebanon as a Syrian refugee and has been living in a tent with her two teenage sons for about 8 years. He said her life is difficult trying to raise two

boys with a range of growing needs. For Areej, responding to these needs is very challenging. He said that Tearfund, along with other agencies, are working in Lebanon to support families such as Areej.

He then went on to speak about his experience working as a volunteer in the Soroti region of Uganda. Whilst he was there he met a lady called Helen. Helen had been deeply affected by conflict having spent a considerable time in an Internal Displacement Camp (IDP) at the time that the LRA had taken over their village. Whilst she was there she developed new skills in providing healthcare for children in the camp. Following her time in the IDP she returned to her village with her children but like many she was returning to land that had not been farmed or looked after and therefore had little to survive on. Helen learned how to use her skills in healthcare to establish a long-term future. She realised that there was a real need in her village for children to have healthcare provision as many children were literally dying because it was too far to travel to the nearest town. Seeing this, Helen applied for and received a grant in which she used part of the money to purchase a bike. With this bike, she rode to the nearest town and purchased pharmaceuticals which she then brought back to the village and started providing localised healthcare. From this she was able to set up a business and develop an income for her family as well as treating the children from the village who previously were too ill to travel to the town.

Graeme said that Helen is a great example of how we should be planning for the future with people like Areej through training now with a view to what can be used after the conflict. Now is the time to act and to invest in training women with the skills that they could use to bring hope to after the conflict.

Graeme finished by saying that whilst women may be some of the most affected by conflict, they are also our hope our future and it is key that we invest in them in their time of displacement.

Discussion: After some questions and discussion relating to Graeme's presentation on issues around the importance of education for successful support of women, how the Scottish Parliament can help, land rights and refugee integration, Lewis MacDonald moved the conversation onto agenda setting for future meetings over the coming year.

The next meeting is 26th November 2019 at 6pm-8pm on the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights.

Mr Macdonald asked members and attendees for themes and topics for future meetings for the next year.

The themes raised were the following:

- Tourism and international development (potentially as part of something more broadly on Post conflict zones) (raised by Benjamin Carey of Carey Tourism)
- COP 26 (which takes place in Glasgow in Dec 2020) (raised by Oxfam Scotland and Water Witness International)
- Water governance (raised by Water Witness International)
- PCSD and new inter-ministerial group announced by Scot Gov Minister for ID at the end of September (raised by Simon Anderson of IIED and the Alliance)
- role of media – how can we approach that given we did it recently? (raised by Individual)
- Brexit and implications on trade policy (raised by Patrick Harvey MSP)
- Inclusion and intersectionality (raise by Sam Ross of Link Community Development)
- GCE in context of Brexit (raised by Oxfam Scotland)

- ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods in relation to COP 26 and Water (raised by Benjamin Carey)

All those who suggested topics and those who wish to suggest further topics are encouraged to contact Lewis Ryder-Jones at Scotland's International Development Alliance to discuss plans.

It was pointed out that it is important that we consider how we can localise the issues and ideas that we develop into CPG meetings to make it relevant to MSPs and the Scottish context as much as possible to ensure that parliamentarians remain engaged.

Close: Lewis Macdonald thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.