

CROSS PARTY GROUP: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

15 SEPTEMBER 2015

COMMITTEE ROOM 4, SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

6PM – 7PM

Attendees: Sarah Boyack MSP, Sarah Watson, Kate Fry, David Kenvyn, David Stevenson, Jacqueline Kimeu, Fiona Halliday, Sheelagh O'Reilly, Lucy Kamande, John Pritchard, Janey Andrews, Keith Bohannon, Agnes Holmes, Phakhawan Gibson, Somchai Kruamuang, Pamela Woodburn, Philippa Bonella, Prince Martin Gyekye, Jim Copland, John Francis, Gerda Siann, Julian Siann, Anne McTaggart MSP, Linda Todd, Paul Mbole, Francis Nderitu, Rachel Campbell.

Apologies: Roger Leakey, Bishop Brian Smith, Lorna McDonald, David Hope-Jones, Hamish Goldie-Scott, James MacLean, Claire Baker MSP, Siobhan McMahon MSP, Irene Mosota, Jonathan Ssentamu.

Welcome and Introduction

Sarah Boyack MSP opened the meeting of the Cross-Party Group on International Development on the Sustainable Development Goals and thanked everyone for attending.

Sarah spoke of how vital and topical an issue Sustainable Development Goals are. A link to the full list of SDGs including the targets can be found here sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

Presentation by Sarah Watson, Public Campaign Manager on Food and Climate Justice at Oxfam GB

Sarah gave some background information on the Sustainable Development Goals, which are to replace the Millennium Development Goals which expire at the end of this year, including mentioning the Summit at the end of September and commenting on how low awareness of them has been so far. While Oxfam looks at all aspects covered in the SDGs, Sarah focusses on food and climate change. Climate Change is one of the biggest contributors to Global Hunger so it is vital all governments work towards combatting one to help eradicate the other. Sarah also drew attention to how climate change hits women hardest, as the primary growers and producers of food and water worldwide.

Please find attached full speech.

Film shown can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfNjzpj4iTE

Question and Answer session

A range of questions were asked following the presentation. Please note that it is not the intention of the minutes to record a verbatim account.

David Stevenson asked if SDGs are from the UN.

Sarah Boyack (SB) answered that they are, and they are the follow on from Millennium Development Goals which run out this year.

Shelagh O'Reilly stated that in 1974, world leaders pledged to end hunger - there has now been 41 years of promises on this topic. Climate Change *is* an important issue in terms of food, but it is not always the primary cause of hunger in developing countries. Focussing on climate change might divert attention away from other causes.

Sarah Watson (SW) answered that climate change is not the only issue that Oxfam is focussing on, it is just the specialist subject for herself. They run a separate project for food (called *Grow*) which is currently developing a new phase which includes a focus on the issue of production.

Janey Andrews asked if Oxfam is asking for any specific targets at the climate change talks at the end of the month?

SW answered that they are, but with 17 goals, and underneath that 169 targets, there are far too many to go through in on CPG meeting. Further details will come out after the official launch of the SDGs at the end of the month.

John Francis said that he works for UNESCO and was part of the process that created the Millennium Development Goals. They were very specific in areas that people were most at risk, like access to water – for drinking and sanitation. This goal hasn't been realised before the MDGs run out so he is keen to see it also a focus in the SDGS. He asked what is being used to monitor the targets timeframe?

SW answered that water is certainly a key topic for Oxfam. The measurement framework will come out of the talks at the end of the month.

Sarah Boyack (SB) commented that the 169 targets under the goals are where the mechanisms for monitoring are located. A recent survey found that only 4% of the Scottish population are aware of the SDGs at all so we need to work out how to communicate them out to a wider audience. Sarah has had only organisations lobby her on the topic so far, no constituents.

Julian Siann commented that the economic rules of the world are very influential. Having worked in Uganda, he learnt that the World Trade Rules meant small countries often struggle to compete due to the more developed countries dumping goods. The World Trade Rules would need to be changed before the SDGs can be achieved. There needs to be a fairer engagement so domestic farmers aren't driven out of business.

Sheelagh O'Reilly asked what Oxfam and other NGOs are doing to get both UK and Scottish Parliaments to have transparent reporting to the public? The climate emissions reporting brought that issue into the public domain, allowing people to compare to gains internationally and lobby missed targets nationally.

SW answered that the public were engaged in calling for the climate emissions to be reported, so the public need to continue lobbying to get the SDG reporting made public as well.

Philippa Bonnella commented that the Scottish Government have taken the targets and mapped them across to the already existing National Reporting Framework to hopefully allow for ease of reporting. Big wins can often be domestic, rather than international, as *all* countries need to hit the same targets, and then make sure they are contributing internationally as well.

Agnes Holmes – Is the National Reporting Framework mapping available to the public?

SB – Will ask the Scottish Government for it. Faith groups got together to ask for the targets on emissions, but a united lobby on SDGs hasn't emerged so far. The SDGs don't only look at climate change or international development, but also health policy, rural and agricultural policy, and so on. We need to get awareness of the top level issues of the SDGs out before we can discuss specifically "what next?" The International Development CPG is an ideal to start that discussion.

Jim Copland – He was involved in the drawing up of SDGs. Originally it was thought that 17 was too many, but the authors struggled to cut down any further. Science is going to be highly beneficial in many of the issues, including food, for example, including using particular seeds or rainwater silos. The SDGs are a massive undertaking so the monitoring will need to be ongoing and the goals readdressed over time. The SDGs come out officially on 25 September 2015 so we need to start promoting straight away. It is the responsibility of everyone to take this information back to their organisations and help raise awareness.

Pamela Woodburn – As an NGO, VSO have been looking at how to take goals and enact them. Because poverty is such a complex issue, the goal of strengthening the global partnership is vital. A new "fourth sector" has been created referring to new forms of group ventures. In terms of food and looking at the private sector's influence on the supply chain, business need a profit so how best to involve them in humanitarian issues like this?

SW – Oxfam ran a "Behind the Brands" campaign in South America and the UK. The concept was a race-to-the-top for the biggest food and beverage companies, in terms of who could improve their policies in areas like climate change, water, fairer trade prices, and so on. It was an interesting campaign model and they learnt a lot about how to work with the private sector.

SB – It's also important to keep profit investment local. There is an agriculture debate in the Parliament next week, and one main focus is on how to keep smaller farmers in with the supply chain. There is currently not a good or reliable deal in rural Scotland. If there is trouble here, it must also be an issue in the developing world where they will have fewer or harder networks and choices. Replicating our set up in developing countries might not be the right answer – we need to look wider at alternative ideas.

John Francis – There was an announcement this week from NFU that the grain usage had dropped hugely. Scotland is now producing twice as much as it can accommodate or use. Oxfam have a wide reach so could it use those links to use produce like grain more productively? Better distribution is needed to use resources more effectively.

SW – Agree. It's great to hear these conversations on SDGs are happening. Urge to continue to challenge on these issues.

SB – It's clear from the Scottish Government that the SDG framework is a work in progress. We need to work to achieve the SDGs locally, nationally and internationally.

Approval of Minutes from Annual General Meeting

No matters were raised regarding the AGM minutes – held 16 June 2015. David Kenvyn moved that they were an accurate depiction of the meeting, Anne McTaggart seconded and the minutes were passed.

Any Other Business

Sarah encouraged all members to continue networking with each other as well as externally and offered to include a link to the Sustainable Development Goals in with the minutes to help members continue thinking about their impact domestically and internationally.

Sarah then put forward an appeal for secretariat support. All other CPGs receive secretariat support from external organisations except International Development which is picked up by Sarah's office. Any interested parties should contact Sarah to discuss.

Forthcoming meetings of the CPG:

Tuesday 17 November – Refugee Crisis

Tuesday 19 January – Children in Conflict

Tuesday 15 March – Topic TBC

All meetings are held in the Scottish Parliament and commence at 6pm until 7pm.