

## **Cross Party Group on Malawi:**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November, 5.30-7pm

Scottish Parliament, Q103

### Attendees:

1. Maureen Watt MSP
2. Liam McArthur MSP
3. Alli Coyle (The University of Edinburgh)
4. Andrew Gilmour (Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth)
5. Brian Dornan (Scottish Government)
6. Brian Kerr (SOKO Fund)
7. Charles Orpwood (Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth)
8. Charlie Ager (Scotland Malawi Partnership)
9. Claire Martin (SMP Director)
10. David Hope-Jones (Scotland Malawi Partnership)
11. Derek Young (SMP Director)
12. Eileen Henderson (Global Concerns Trust)
13. Helen Sims (Scotland Malawi Partnership)
14. Jacqueline Rae (Scottish Government)
15. Jacqui Bell (The University of Aberdeen)
16. Joyce Nicoll (Psychologist)
17. Julie Gunn (SMP)
18. Katie Stellard (Scotland Malawi Partnership)
19. Kevin Simpson (Malawi Fruits)
20. Louis Fell (Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth)
21. Malcolm Jack (Venture Trust)
22. Malonje Phiri (The University of Edinburgh)
23. Peter West (Hon. Consul for Malawi)
24. Walter Dunlop (Scotland Malawi Partnership)

**(1) Maureen Watt MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the speakers.**

**(2) Apologies were noted from David Stevenson, Colin Cameron and Julie Gemmil.**

**(3) The minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 meeting were accepted as accurate by the group.** It was confirmed that Siobhan MacMahon MSP, Liam MacArthur MSP, Alex Fergusson MSP and Christina McKelvie MSP have all agreed to take on the role of Vice-Conveners.

**(4) Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for External Affairs and International Development**

From the beginning of his post as Minister, Humza Yousaf explained how he has seen the importance of Scotland's relationship with Malawi. HY has since met with many SMP members and others involved with Malawi and seen first-hand the range of activities between Scotland-Malawi.

HY particularly noted the role the Scotland Malawi Partnership plays in supporting these activities, which is very much appreciated. HY expressed his pride that the funds for Malawi through IDF have been ring-fenced. The Scottish Government recently announced the recipients of funding from the Climate Justice Fund; four out of five of which are going to Malawi-based projects. The Scottish

Government also recognises the valuable work of small projects, which is highlighted by the government's decision to launch the small grants scheme in the autumn of 2013.

The Bi-Centenary of Livingstone's birth next year is also a great opportunity to raise awareness of the special relationship between Scotland and Malawi and deepen existing links. The Minister hopes this event will continue the legacy of Livingstone. The Minister mentioned Martha's Payne fundraising work for Mary's Meal which is a great symbol of the relationship between the two nations today.

HY expressed his eagerness to hear from those attending the meeting and invited all those present to ask any questions.

#### **(5) Questions, answers and discussion with Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for External Affairs and International Development**

It was highlighted that the growth of the private sector is a priority for the Malawian government in order to reduce the reliance on foreign aid for economic growth.

HY said there are investment opportunities for Scotland to help. President Banda's promotion of trade and investment is welcomed; this builds the capacity and knowledge base for the Malawian government and people to build on and create a lasting legacy. The importance of building on Fair-trade in Scotland was discussed with HY stating that it was imperative that Scotland gains status as a fair-trade nation; this could be utilised to build stronger trade links between Scotland and Malawi. While economic circumstances in donor countries can be a challenge to meaningful development in recipient countries, Scotland continues to invest in Malawi; with widespread support from the population.

Furthermore it was noted that it is so important to have young people (aged 15-25) involved. They are at an age where they can offer volunteering skills and become real champions for organisations. HY commended the youth engagement work of the SMP in promoting youth links between Scotland and Malawi.

In terms of issues for HY to raise with the High Commissioner, a number of members raised the point of issues with visas; many Malawians, including MPs, find important trips cancelled at the last minute due to the loss of visa applications; lack of guidance given as to what information to include in visa applications etc. Most of these issues are due to the fact that the processing of visa applications are outsourced to a private company, making governments less accountable to this issue. It is imperative that the system is improved and made more transparent.

#### **(6) Malawi Update**

Peter West: The Malawian High Commissioner plans to visit Scotland in January and the Minister, Humza Yousaf MSP, is scheduled to meet with him in the first week of December.

David Hope-Jones: DHJ spoke about the recent debate on 7<sup>th</sup> November on Malawi, in the Scottish Parliament. He welcomed the unanimous cross-party agreement that Scotland should continue to support Malawi; it is part of Scotland's role as a good global citizen. There was praise for the new Gender Matters campaign; it is timely with Joyce Banda becoming President, only the 2<sup>nd</sup> female president on the African continent. President Banda should also be congratulated for raising new issues in Malawi – particularly her campaign to fight gender inequality.

### **(8) Topics for future meetings**

The idea that was proposed that there could be an additional meeting scheduled to coincide with the David Livingstone Bi-centenary in March 2013.

The next meeting is on the 6<sup>th</sup> February. The Active Learning Centre will be speaking about their project. It was proposed this meeting could focus on the “Gender Matters” campaign, of which the Active Learning Centre could be affiliated to.

### **(9) Any Other Business**

Maureen Watt MSP was thanked for hosting the SMP’s YEWO! event at the parliament two weeks ago.