

## Local Government and Communities Committee

### Consultation of the Scottish Parliament on the Scottish Government's Revised National Outcomes

#### Submission from Oxfam Scotland

#### **Background**

Oxfam Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Local Government and communities Committee consultation on the revised outcomes of the National Performance Framework.

Oxfam Scotland has been involved in the revised National Performance Framework (NPF) outcomes as a representative on the Scottish Government's NPF Roundtable and last year undertook a consultation in partnership with the Carnegie UK Trust entitled *What sort of Scotland do you want to live in?* involving 20 discussion groups and ten street stalls<sup>1</sup>, providing the opportunity for members of the public to feed into the revised Framework.

#### **General feedback:**

- Oxfam is broadly supportive of the refreshed NPF as a number of outcomes and indicators are improved and the overall structure is more easily communicated. We particularly welcome the attempt to align the National Performance Framework with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- We welcome the revised stated purpose, which now includes reference to wellbeing and sustainable inclusive growth. However, Oxfam is of the view that economic growth (albeit sustainable and inclusive), is not the only way to improve wellbeing, meet the Sustainable Development Goals or the outcomes as revised. As demonstrated by the *Oxfam Humankind Index*<sup>2</sup>, there are other ways to measure the prosperity and wellbeing of the economy and the population.
- We have previously suggested a shift towards targeting inequalities of income, wealth and power in order to re-orientate the activities of the Government, and other public bodies, towards delivering enhanced social justice in Scotland and abroad. We therefore suggested amending the purpose to read: "To focus government and public services on creating a more successful and sustainable country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through reducing poverty and inequality, while being globally responsible".

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<sup>1</sup> This report is available as an appendix to the report on the National Outcomes Review for Parliament

<sup>2</sup> Oxfam, (2012) *Oxfam Humankind Index: the new way to measure Scotland's prosperity*, available here: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/scotland/blog/2012/04/what-makes-scotland-happy>

- The inclusion of the values section is welcome; however, we recommend changing “all our people” to “all people” to reflect our responsibility to treat everyone with kindness and dignity – not just people in Scotland.

## **Feedback in response to the National Outcomes being considered by the Local Government and Communities Committee:**

### ***Poverty***

- We welcome the inclusion of the new outcome “we tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally” but would suggest the addition of ‘income’ and a recognition that poverty takes many forms, so that the wording is changed to: “we tackle poverty in all its forms by sharing income, wealth and power more equally”. This change would fit more neatly with the indicators that underpin this outcome, which measure both income and wealth inequality. Greater equality was identified as a core area within Oxfam’s street stalls. Given the desire for alignment with the SDGs, consideration could also be given to using the terminology of ‘leaving no-one behind’. Currently, neither the outcome nor the indicators reference food security, despite the reduction of hunger emerging as a core priority within the street stalls run by Oxfam Scotland.

### ***Children***

- We welcome the revised outcome which now reads “we grow up loved, safe and respected so that we can realise our full potential”. Previously we noted that the original wording of the outcome: “we live in the best place for children to grow up” was one of the few (other than the outcome focused on the economy) which was framed in reference to other places or nations and therefore welcome the change to an outcome which will better allow the Scottish Government to set a baseline for Scotland and seek to improve on this year-on-year.

### ***Communities***

- The outcome: “we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe” and the indicators that underpin it reflect the issues raised in the Oxfam and Carnegie UK Trust consultation; being part of a connected community was seen as very important to living well and participants gave specific attention to ‘resilience’. Oxfam welcomes the inclusion of ‘access to local green space’ as one of the indicators that underpins this outcome, but based on feedback in the consultation would suggest that community centres and places for people to meet is just as important to the empowerment and resilience local communities, and would suggest that this is included as a measure.

## **Feedback in response to other revised National Outcomes:**

### ***Economy***

- We suggest a small change to the wording, to make the term 'sustainable economy' clearer. We suggest: "We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial and inclusive economy which provides for all within safe environmental limits". This builds on our work in developing Oxfam's [Scottish Doughnut](#), which reflects the need for the economy to provide a social foundation for all within planetary boundaries.

### ***Human Rights***

- We welcome the commitment to Human Rights, and this reflects the findings of the street stalls run by Oxfam Scotland. However, we must avoid a narrow focus on civil and political rights and should aspire to develop a framework that intersects with the SNAP on Human Rights and a broader rights framework.

### ***Openness***

- The proposed National Outcome does not reflect the stated desire for Government and other public institutions to be accountable – despite an indicator being 'Trust in public organisations'. We therefore suggest adding the word 'accountable' to the Outcome itself: "We are open, *accountable*, connected and make a positive contribution internationally". Alternatively, given this outcome appears more focused on Scotland's international connections (which is critical to retain), the accountability and trust elements could be integrated within the 'poverty' outcome, given this references the need for sharing power more equally.

### ***Education***

- We welcome the new wording "we are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society" as it marks a shift away from a narrow focus on attainment measured by literacy and numeracy. Oxfam is keen that this outcome reflects wider educational goals, including a commitment to global citizenship. To that end, we suggest the wording could better reflect the collegiate nature of education by adding 'together' at the end, so it reads: "we are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society *together*".

### ***Fair work***

- We are pleased to see the emphasis on fair work in the outcome "We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone". However, we question whether the word 'business' risks excluding other types of enterprise, including pro-social business models, or the public and third sectors, especially as entrepreneurialism is also captured in the first outcome.

- The emphasis on fair work for *everyone* perhaps ignores the fact that not everyone wants or is able to work, for example those who are too ill or disabled to work or those who have caring responsibilities. We would suggest changing the wording to: “we have thriving and innovative workplaces, with quality jobs and fair work available to all who seek it”.
- We welcome the indicators used to measure this outcome relating to “[a reduction in] employees on less than the living wage” and “reducing the pay gap” (we assume this means the gender pay gap). However, Oxfam’s [decent work research](#) shows there is much more to fair work than pay and additional indicators should be considered, including: job security, levels of discrimination, and progression opportunities. Such changes would also better reflect the Scottish Fair Work Convention’s Framework.

### **Health**

- We suggest adding to the existing wording to reflect the need to support those who are not healthy, for whatever reason. Suggested wording: “We are healthy and active, and support those who need it with compassion and dignity”. Feedback from the street stalls run by Oxfam Scotland highlighted the importance of support for those deemed to be in need, including through the NHS and an adequate social safety net.

### **Environment**

- We welcome the outcome “we value, enjoy and protect our environment” but note that ‘environment’ is a vague term which can be interpreted in different ways, such as local environment and natural environment more generally. We suggest adding “and planet” at the end of this outcome, to reflect the Scottish Government’s commitment to the SDGs and climate change targets. This would also reflect the high ranking of ‘We value and enjoy our environment and protect it for future generations’ within the Oxfam street stalls.

### **Housing**

- We are concerned that an explicit focus on housing seems to have been omitted from the Outcomes despite homes and housing being prioritised in a number of engagement exercises, including the Oxfam Scotland street stalls and the [Oxfam Humankind Index](#). As it stands, a housing indicator is incorporated into the ‘poverty’ outcome in the form of “access to appropriate housing options”, but at a time when housing cost and supply is a major issue, consideration should be given to an outcome that makes explicit reference to this. As a minimum, the indicator should read “access to affordable and appropriate housing options”. However, we previously suggested an outcome: ‘We live in decent, affordable homes and safe, supportive communities’.

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