

**Notes of Meeting of**  
**Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Racial Equality**

**held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

**Present:**

Bob Doris	MSP
Jamie McGrigor	MSP
Humza Yousaf	MSP
Drew Smith	MSP
Jim Eadie	MSP
Jatin Haria	Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER)
Mohammed Razaq	WSREC
Harriette Campbell	WSREC
Naeem Khalid	Frae Fife
Nazerin Wardrop	STUC Black Workers' Committee
Davidson Chademana	UCU
Anna Publico-Ong	EMCC
Pakhawan Gibson	Thai Women's Assoc Scotland
Shaben Begum	SIAA
Eleanor McKnight	CEMVO Scotland
Graham Campbell	Bemis
Naren Sood	
Sandra Deslandes-Clark	Semperscotland
Dirk Rosseau	Bob Doris's office
Sarah Chase	Sandra White's office
Gina Netto	Heriot Watt University

**MSP Apologies:**

Hanzala Malik	MSP
Patrick Harvie	MSP
Clare Adamson	MSP
Stuart McMillan	MSP

**Welcome**

Bob Doris, MSP welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the group in the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scottish Parliament.

**Elections for Office Bearers**

Bob Doris MSP was elected as Convener of the Group.

Hanzala Malik MSP, Jamie McGregor MSP and Humza Yousaf MSP were elected as Vice-Conveners. Election of a fourth vice-convener was deferred.

After discussion, Jatin Haria, CRER was elected as Secretary of the Group. It was noted that other organisations wished to contribute more to the working of the group, and ways for meaningful involvement from the wider membership would be found.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would complete the necessary paperwork for getting the Group registered as an official Cross Party Group with the Scottish Parliament authorities.

### **Review of the Work of the Group in the Last Session:**

A report summarising the issues discussed in the seven meetings of the group in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of Parliament was circulated. The inaugural meeting had been held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008, and this was followed by meetings on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept 2008, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2009, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2011. Issues discussed / debated had included a presentation from Professor Kay Hampton on the historical and contemporary issues relating to racism in Scotland, the workings of the Scottish Government's Equality Unit, the EHRC's work on racial equality, race equality in the NHS in Scotland, a discussion with the Minister for Housing and Communities, the rise of the EDL/SDL, race issues in the criminal justice system in Scotland and race and mental health issues in Scotland.

Attendance at meetings had varied between 10 MSPs and 2 MSPs, and from 12 others to 31 others.

It was agreed to try and hold the next meeting over lunchtime to see if this would result in a greater attendance from MSPs.

### **Issues for Possible Discussion at Future Meetings:**

All present were asked what their thoughts were on topics that could be usefully discussed at future meetings of the Group. Suggestions made included:

Support for individual cases of racial discrimination;  
The proposed new Equality Duty Specific Duties for Scotland;  
Housing issues;  
The current economic climate and its impact on black / minority ethnic communities in Scotland;  
Human Rights education;  
Health inequalities, including issues relating to sickle cell and thalassemia;  
Educational issues, including participation and achievement, and issues relating to apprenticeships;  
Monitoring, data collection and the need to set targets for change;  
Immigration issues, including the impact of immigration policy on universities, families and businesses;  
Employment issues, including the need for job creation and fairer participation (including in relation to Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government staff as well);  
Issues relating to equality in procurement.

As well as agreeing to timetable issues as appropriate for future meetings, it was agreed that formal letters would be written to the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment to ascertain what measures the Government intended to take to ensure equality and fair employment in work resulting from public sector procurement contracts, and to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth to ascertain the Government's position on ensuring racial diversity as part of its strategy to provide 25,000 modern apprenticeship places over the course of this parliament.

### **Poverty and Ethnicity in Scotland:**

Gina Netto, from Heriot Watt University, gave a presentation on the recent review she and her colleagues had carried out relating to the main trends and policy implications in relation to poverty and ethnicity issues in Scotland.

Gina outlined how poverty interacts with ethnicity in complex ways, and related that the data showed that all minority groups in Scotland appeared disadvantaged on one or more of the indicators, although there was considerable diversity between and within the groups. There was some evidence that levels of employment did not reflect levels of educational qualification, and levels of unemployment were not entirely reflected in the benefits claim data. In terms of education, some groups were persistently marginalised by the education system, and there was evidence that children from some ethnic groups were outperforming their Scottish counterparts, even in areas of deprivation.

The review had led to a number of conclusions, including some indication that conventional routes out of poverty (e.g. through better educational attainment or access to social housing) may be blocked, inappropriate or have little beneficial impacts for some minority groups.

### **Dates of Future Meetings:**

It was agreed that a lunchtime meeting would be organised for late September / early October, and a decision on whether to hold further meetings at lunchtimes would be made once the success or otherwise of this next meeting was determined.

An evening meeting would be arranged for mid-December 2011, and a schedule of dates for meetings in 2012 would also be agreed.