

**Cross-Party Group on China
Minutes of Meeting
Date: 13th June 2018**

Attendance

MSP Members

Mary Fee MSP

Jackie Baillie MSP

Dean Lockhart MSP

Colin Smyth MSP

Special Guests

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop MSP

Consul General Pan Xinchun

Consul Lye Yanxia

Consul Xiao Wenbin

Members

Daniel Cairns – Secretary

Alan Salonika – The Royal Edinburgh Society

Sean Sproull – Individual member

Janice Dickson –Scotland China Association

James McColm – Individual member

Dr Meryl James - Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools (CISS)

Dr Nathan Woolley - Confucius Institute University of Glasgow

Nigel Archdale – Anthony Millard Consulting

Siyi Chen – Individual Member

Paul Brown - Anderson Strathern

Jane Grant – Edinburgh College

Edward Siu Ming Tsang – Individual member

Professor Ian Baxter - Scottish Confucius Institute for Business & Communication, Heriot-Watt University

Margie Ogilvy Stuart - Crown & Stone Ltd

Mrs Yuwen Fortune – Jordanhill School

Ross Haston – Individual Member

Christopher Land – Individual Member

Kiren Zubairi – Individual Member

Edmund Hoffie - Eden English Language School

Ruth Taylor - Stewarts Investors

Lyn Mitchell – Scottish Churches China Group

Catriona Llanwarne - Burness Paul

Rebecca Halleron – Glasgow Airport

Peter Kwok – Scottish Chinese Professionals

Cathy Gu – Scottish Chinese Professionals

Jessica Guo - EEB Consultancy Ltd

Emma McMillan - David Urquhart Travel

John Mahoney - David Urquhart Travel

Robert Dalzell – North Lanarkshire Council

Guests

Mr. Jimmy Lin - Scottish Fujian Chambers of Commerce

Ms Awei Lin - Scottish Fujian Chambers of Commerce

Tony Leung - The Scottish Chinese Professionals

Lemon Li - Director of SC Business Gateway Ltd.

Harold Chow - Director of CS Media Glasgow Ltd

Min Zhang - Henan University in China

Fen Zhang - Weihua Crane

Ma Du – Visiting Scholar University of Glasgow

Anjie Fang – Student

Mr. Olivier Yang - UK General Manager Hainan Airlines

Mr. Diogo Castanhiera - Hainan Airlines

Mrs. Louise Mc Clounie - Ayrshire Springs.

Mr. Liu Mohan - student.

Apologies

Simon Macaulay

Rosemary Mitchell

Fiona A Pate

Annie Wells MSP

Alan Simpson - Anderson Strathern

James Trolland

Eric Balish

James Brodie - China-Britain Business Council

CLlr Claire Maitland

Orchid Liu

Ziying Wang

Sandie Robb – The Scottish Royal Zoological Society

1 Welcome and Apologies

Dean Lockhart MSP opened the meeting welcoming members and guests to the latest meeting of the Cross Party Group on China.

He continued by welcoming the special guests who were addressing the group this evening, his Excellency Consul General Pan Xinchun and the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop MSP.

The Cabinet Secretary will be discussing the Scottish China engagement Strategy with us and then taking your questions.

2 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed to.

3 Presentation and Discussion from Cabinet Secretary on Scottish China Engagement Strategy

The Cabinet Secretary began her speech by announcing that the Scottish Government have published the Scottish China Engagement Strategy. Copies of the strategy were circulated to the group.

The Cabinet Secretary then thanked all of the group for the work they do in helping relationship between Scotland and china.

Ms Hyslop then went on to describe the fruitful engagement she has personally had with the Scottish China Relationship since her first visit to China in 2008.

Following this the Cabinet Secretary then began to speak in more detail regarding the relationship between Scotland and China remarking that it has deepened across a number of areas.

This includes business links between Scotland and China where the Scottish Government has taken direct action to support Chinese and Scotland markets. In the previous strategy there was an express aim to support over 100 Scottish business to develop links with China. By 2015 this had increased to 235.

In 2017 China became one of Scotland's largest export markets as the value of direct exports increased by 30% to £61 million compared to 2016 levels. This is directly on the back of the strength of strong Scottish brands such as Scotch Whisky.

In turning to education links the Cabinet Secretary cited that over 9000 Chinese Students currently study at Scottish Universities. This is mirrored with over 500 young scots travelling to China for Immersion visits since 2012 and with the strength of the Confucius hubs across Scotland.

The Cabinet Secretary then remarked that the relationship between two countries is young but there is exciting cultural connections being created. For example, there was an exhibition of the Terracotta warriors in Stirling castle in 2017.

Cultural connections are being strengthen through co-operation agreements such as the one between Shanghai province and Scotland.

The Cabinet Secretary then began to discuss the new strategy for engagement between Scotland and China. The new five-year plan will help business, education and cultural links grow and deepen further.

In developing the new strategy, the Scottish Government spoke with key stakeholders in Scotland, members of the Chinese community, Human Rights organisations and stakeholders in China. It was through this that the context and rationale for the relationship was developed.

The new engagement strategy is an opportunity to galvanise all of Scotland to benefit from the relationship. It is a high level strategy which feeds into the Scottish Government's international framework promoting values and shared experiences. All countries in which Scotland engages must be carried out in the most open and understanding way. A lot of challenges in which Scotland faces are global and there are significant opportunities to work together.

The new strategy will continue to develop business, cultural and education links between Scotland and China.

The Cabinet Secretary then went onto say that there is much to celebrate in recent years. For example, this week there has been first direct flights between Scotland and China and the First Ministers recent trip to China.

Scotland's enthusiasm and commitment has been reciprocated by the Chinese Government and the Collaboration and friendship is benefiting both countries.

The Cabinet Secretary concluded by welcoming comments and suggestions from the CPG on how to drive this strategy forward.

4 Address to the Group from Consul General Pan Xinchun

The Consul General started his address to the CPG by taking the opportunity to thank the Cabinet Secretary for her warm words and the work to cultivate the relationship between Scotland and China.

He continued that Scotland and China have a good relationship where new progress has been achieved over the past five years. The Consul General outlined high points in the relationship including frequent senior official exchanges citing Chinese Delegations visiting Scotland and the First Ministers recent trip to China in April. This also includes China has becoming a major trading partner for Scotland as imports from Scotland has massively increased. Confucius Institutes also continue to promote Chinese language and culture in Scotland.

The Consul General continued by stating that cultural exchanges remain dynamic. During the Chinese New Year there many celebrations in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth. This also included an Authentic Chinese Pavilion in the Royal Botanic Gardens. All events are strong symbols of the Friendship between China and Scotland.

The Consul General then went onto discuss the establishment of the first direct air links between Scotland and China mentioning that representatives of Hainan Airlines were with the group this evening. This represents a major step in the relationship between Scotland and China.

The Consul General then went on to discuss China's ambitions and its place in the world. He stated that China was going under ambitious development with the aim of becoming a strong and rich country by the middle of the century. China currently has the second largest economy but it is still a middle income country. By the middle of the century China will provide a good prosperous life to all of its citizens. He continued that China wants to promote Global peace and prosperity based on the values of mutual respect.

The Consul General then explained that China will import goods worth 8 trillion dollars over the next year and also host an import/export exhibition in Shanghai. He said that he will encourage Scottish businesses to attend and take part.

Also 100 million Chinese tourists travel overseas on yearly basis and many shall be looking towards Scotland as a holiday destination.

The Consul General concluded by remarking that he was optimistic about the future of our relationship. The publication of the Scottish China Engagement Strategy comes at the right time for a strong and public message. He looks forward to working with the Scottish Government and Scottish society to create a good future.

5 Question and Answer Session

1. Dean Lockhart MSP asked a question regarding the Scottish Affairs office in Beijing. He was on a visit with the Scottish chamber of commerce and was encouraged by the interaction with Chinese business leader. He asked what are its plans going forward?

Response: The Cabinet Secretary replied that she welcomed the cooperation between Chinese business leaders and the Scottish office and stated that the First Minister was recently involved in some of the meetings. Fiona Hyslop continued by saying that in terms of the future the Scottish Office in Beijing will seek to create more business opportunities, it will help with delegations from public and private sectors and focus on providing help to the Scottish chamber of commerce. There is also potential to open up more international offices, perhaps in Shanghai.

The Cabinet Secretary also outlined that she would like to see not just large companies but SME's engage with the Scottish Office. Experience can be shared to help develop and co-ordinate more opportunities. It will also be used to share expertise on certain area such as the different culture of social media used in China.

2. Dean Lockhart MSP asked how can Scotland best take advantage of the new direct flights between Scotland and China?

Consul General Pan responded that it will make a big difference, not only in people to people exchanges but also facilitate co-operation. Chinese investors think about London but now they will also think about Edinburgh and Glasgow. Many of the Chinese Community will take advantage of this opportunity to visit Scotland.

Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop MSP added that it was a game changer. A number of new opportunities for co-operation and tourism will be explored.

3. Ross Haston asked a question focusing on tax free shopping. He stated that proposals should be created around tax free shopping in stores rather than at airports. This would leave businesses various platforms for charging customers at the point of contact instead of passing the incentive onto airports.

The Cabinet Secretary responded that customs are a reserved matter however with the growth in tourism numbers the Scottish Government could lobby for improvements. All culture ministers now in the United Kingdom now meet regularly to discuss issues and the Cabinet Secretary said she raise this issue at the next meeting and hopefully collaborate across the UK.

4. Jane Grant from Edinburgh College stated that some of their challenges are developing education relationships in China and Scotland and also keeping these links long term.

The Cabinet Secretary responded stating that education links were very important. There needs to be a cross party understanding for the needs of education establishments in Scotland and working with cultures away from home. Scotland needs passionate people to get involved and collaborate across both cultures. The Cabinet secretary stated that the cap on students was concerning and she stated to the Home Secretary that she would like to see longer term tier two visa's for students

5. A final question was asked by a student from the University of Glasgow (name not stated). He asked how do we keep Chinese students in the UK after graduation?

The Cabinet Secretary responded by saying that the opportunity stay can be a big incentive for some foreign students. The Coursework visa previously provided the opportunity to stay for two years after graduation however the regulation has now changed. The visa system is a reserved issue and the UK sets the targets. The Cabinet

Secretary stated in her opinion students should not be part of those targets as they are not a drain but an asset to society. They bring in international experience which is a value premium.

6 AOCB

Sandie Robb of the Royal Zoological Society asked for a statement to be distributed to members at the meeting.

Statement from Sandie Robb - The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland

This year RZSS launched the first science specialist Confucius Classroom in the world! Four specialist Confucius Classrooms have been announced this year with the others in the areas of art and sport - Scottish Opera, Royal Conservatoire and the SSFA.

The RZSS Confucius Classroom is another element to our already successful Beyond the Panda education programme. Beyond the Panda now comprises of:

- China Mobile Library (loan of 'panda boxes' and expert visits)
- Chinese outreach sessions
- Science Specialist Confucius Classroom

Our Classroom should be fully operational by the end of 2018. We will be offering free after school family sessions 'Zoo Fun with Mandarin' and some free youth group sessions 'Go wild with Mandarin'. RZSS staff will also be offered lunch time Mandarin sessions.

The library and outreach sessions for schools do have a nominal charge. This charge has been significantly reduced and is now just to cover postage of our 'panda boxes' - full of games and activities and a contribution to some of the travel expense.

We are extremely grateful to our sponsors - Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools at the University of Strathclyde, the Confucius Institute for Scotland at the University of Edinburgh and Arnold Clark for the donation of a vehicle to deliver the outreach.

We also work closely with the Scotland China Education Network (SCEN) and with the Confucius Institute at the University of Aberdeen.

Details of the full programme of activities and many other free resources for schools are available at beyondthepanda.org.uk

Any questions regarding the Beyond the Panda education programme please contact srobb@rzss.org.uk

Date of Next Meeting: 28th November 2019