

Scottish Parliament CPG on International Development

Tuesday 7th March 18:00-19:30

Virtually and in-person

Grounding Scotland's Global Impact in Law

**Please note that it is not the intention of the minutes to record a verbatim account.*

MSP Attendees:

Sarah Boyack MSP, Maggie Chapman MSP, John Mason MSP

MSP Apologies: Foysol Choudhury MSP, Karen Adam MSP, Mark Ruskell MSP, Alasdair Allan MSP, Graham Simpson MSP, Liam Kerr MSP

Member Organisation list: Scotland's International Development Alliance, Oxfam Scotland, Scottish Fair Trade Forum, ACTSA, Leprosy Mission Scotland, UN House Scotland, Link Education International, Secure Scotland, Christian Aid Scotland, Clean Water Wave, Comfort International, Corra Foundation, IIED, Jubilee Scotland, SCIAF, Tearfund Scotland, Thrive, Unicef UK, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, Water Witness International, Catherine Currie Consulting Limited

Member Individual List: Hamish Goldie-Scot

Non-member Organisation attendees: Tagsa, University of Aberdeen, Scotland Israel, Heroica Coffee, Postcode Lottery

In attendance (speakers): Martin Rhodes, Scottish Fair Trade Forum; Graham Long, Newcastle University; Claire Duncanson, University of Edinburgh; Ben Thurman, Carnegie UK

Welcome: Sarah Boyack opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Sarah gave apologies for Masangwi Mangandale who was unable to join us. She also gave apologies for Huw Owen from Disasters Emergency Committee who had hoped to join to give an update on the Turkey/Syria appeal.

Sarah introduced the topic of the meeting which was to discuss her private members bill on wellbeing and sustainable development, and how that links with other

legislation and proposals such as the feminist foreign policy, national performance framework outcomes review and procurement legislation. The aim is to understand how these pieces of legislation can improve our understanding of our global impact.

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed. Sarah updated that the CPG had written to Minister Neil Gray MSP, Minister Andrew Mitchell MP, and BlackRock. Sarah also met with Preet Gill MP in UK Parliament. She will follow up with reminders.

Wellbeing and Sustainable Development

Sarah then introduced her private members bill, which draws on the experiences of the Future Generations Act in Wales, and the work that Scotland's International Development Alliance has done in outlining potential priorities for the bill.

Sarah's bill has three key aims: firstly to define wellbeing and sustainable development, secondly to establish a commissioner, and thirdly to set out public sector duties.

Sustainable development is referenced in 10% of acts in parliament but there is no definition. Wellbeing is increasingly being used but also has no clear definition.

Sophie Howe has had a real impact giving advice in Wales, and a commissioner could help build policy coherence. They could work with Audit Scotland to understand the impact of decisions made.

In Wales public sector bodies have a much more joined up approach and understand their impact. Sarah sees the legislation being about Scotland on the world stage and understanding how we spend our money and what works.

So far 40 submissions have been received for the consultation and it closes on 24th March.

Sarah introduced the other speakers:

Claire Duncanson, University of Edinburgh & Scottish Council on Global Affairs

Graham Long, Newcastle University

Martin Rhodes, Scottish Fair Trade Forum

Ben Thurman, Carnegie UK

Discussion

Sarah asked the panel **how new and improved legislation or frameworks help Scotland make a positive global contribution?**

Claire Duncanson: Claire talked about the proposed feminist approach to foreign policy which is a government commitment. The Alliance and Scottish Council for Global Affairs have been organising workshops to hear from a range of organisations, particularly from the global south, on how this could be defined and to consider practical actions. The report will be released by the end of March.

Claire explained that this approach should be about tackling the root causes of insecurity for women and girls. Insecurity means both physical and economic. A

feminist approach is not just about the participation of women, but about tackling global economic systems which transfer wealth from the global south to the global north, i.e. tackling the systemic drivers of inequality. It could make a hugely positive global contribution. It also fits well with other approaches being discussed. It is in close synergy with wellbeing and sustainable development, and initiatives like the fair trade network.

Graham Long: Graham spoke in support of a wellbeing and sustainable development bill. Definitions help give substance to ideas, and this will result in them being more impactful. A commissioner can help provide an institutional home for sustainable development, and someone who can advocate for it as well as support others. It sends a signal about how serious this issue is taken. Public body duties are a way of putting this on agendas in an unavoidable way, and would deliver accountability. So all aspects of the bill are worthwhile.

The three aims of the bill are mutually reinforcing, as a commissioner will help public bodies to deliver.

Martin Rhodes: Martin spoke about public procurement. We can put a lot of effort into persuading one person to change their purchasing decisions whereas if you can make institutional change, such as organisational procurement, you will have much more impact. The current legal framework has a sustainable procurement duty but it doesn't explicitly include fair trade. There is a requirement for reporting on fair and ethical trade policies. SFTF published a report looking at public sector body spending policies, and found a wide range of approaches. Organisations used the term fair trade differently and recorded the information differently so couldn't be compared effectively. Something that assists public bodies to record useful information would be welcomed. If we don't have a common understanding and baseline to work from we can't measure progress.

Ben Thurman: Carnegie's mission is to improve collective wellbeing, so that everyone has what they need to live a good life now and in the future. The ways that we would look after the wellbeing of current and future generations in Scotland would also enhance Scotland's global contribution. The wellbeing and sustainable development bill is an opportunity to align these missions. The legislation could create clarity and strengthen the duties on public bodies. We can also learn from the best international examples of where wellbeing and sustainable development have been embedded in decision making, and push boundaries on citizen engagement, wellbeing budgeting, and the role of a commissioner.

Sarah asked: **What sort of impact could we see with a stronger focus on our global role?**

Martin Rhodes: A lot has been achieved already, but more could be done. There is emphasis on the positives such as the fairtrade premium and the impact on social development, but there are broader issues around transparency about how business is done. We should see trade as more complex and mutually beneficial. Market access is hugely important and that's what we hear from producer groups. How can we create situations where those on the margins have been given access to markets

they wouldn't otherwise have? Masangwi could have explained more about the need for long term relationships to create markets.

Claire Duncanson: Claire emphasised the need for systemic change as Martin had outlined. Scotland, even as a small sub-state, still has huge potential for impact by focussing on a feminist approach. We have more room for manoeuvre, for example our role in framing loss and damage funding as reparation not charity. We could do similar things around other issues such as fairer trade, debt cancellation, fairer tax systems, more arms controls. These are all the drivers of gendered insecurities and inequalities. We can showcase alternative models of development and promote these overseas.

We should also stop undermining our role as a beacon, for example oil and gas exploration and arms manufacturing. We could be supporting models that shift power and resources to women's organisations in the global south.

Sarah asked about the recent expose on Unilever and abuse at James Findlay tea farms and what models would prevent this. Claire talked about tracing global supply chains and ensuring that human rights principles are adhered to throughout, paying attention to women and other marginalised groups.

John Mason MSP said the Finance Committee have been reflecting on the role of commissioners. There are plans for about 14 commissioners, and there is a question about the democratic side of these roles, and how they relate to those who have been elected. The other question is around cost. The more money put into commissioners, the less there is for front line services. He asked what the panel's thoughts were on these issues.

Ben Thurman: Carnegie have published their response to Sarah's bill which addresses this. A Future Generations Commissioner (their preferred option) would be representing the interests of people who aren't currently represented, i.e. the interests of those not yet born. This would be a voice to advocate for generations to come, and has had a real impact in Wales. It should be seen as an investment rather than cost, embedding long-termism into policy making.

Graham Long: There is a question about the model of governance and how commissioners fit into the existing model. A commissioner is one plausible way of creating a home for this work, and because it costs money, has powers and budget, it is a sign of how seriously it is taken. The question is what needs to be done, what oversight and role is needed, and whether the commissioner is cost effective. They should be independent and represent interests that don't currently get heard.

Sarah Boyack: Sarah referred to the sense of urgency around climate change and how a commissioner will be able to act more quickly, and can influence from outside government. The Christie Commission, for example, is still yet to be acted upon - action likely to be 14 years after solutions presented. Although there is a Childrens Commissioner the intergenerational aspect would be better reflected by this new role.

Sarah: How do you link up the outcomes when it comes to domestic and international policy making?

Graham: Graham introduced some work he had done for the Alliance to consider how we could measure Scotland's contribution. The NPF has an outcome on measuring Scotland's global role but it isn't currently well captured in the International Outcome. There are other elements found elsewhere in the Framework, for example carbon footprint and research & development. We could track 'spillovers', how decisions made here affect other countries. Research on spillovers shows that the UK is doing very badly, in terms of global impact it is 253rd in the world. We don't have data for Scotland, but it would seem as though Scotland would not be performing well either. This is a very difficult part of data science. Quick wins include using the data already produced on Scotland's material footprint which helps our understanding of our consumption. We could also add indicators on fossil fuel extraction and arms manufacturing which would be relatively easy to track. Beyond these, access to data and disaggregating it to Scotland, is a challenge. There is a parallel question about the role of indicators and how they help you get to where you want to. Indicators can also help inform debate without making value judgements. Measuring compliance could be a proxy where data is not available, e.g. fair trade initiatives. This could be an indirect measure of harder to track areas.

Comment from David Kenvyn, ACTSA. We need to make sure that our intentions don't lead to negative impacts. For instance in transferring to carbon neutral fuels, there are 10,000 people who work in Mpumalanga province in South Africa in coal mines. They need to be consulted with otherwise they will be unemployed, bringing unemployment levels to over 50% in this province. We need to build in consultation process with foreign policy development.

Ben Thurman: The NPF is Scotland's articulation of what a country that prioritises wellbeing looks like. It's not perfect, but if we were able to implement it properly we would be further on in terms of sustainable development than we are now. Sarah's bill links with the NPF, and would provide clarity for public bodies on how to implement the NPF. The bill would bring everything in one place and provide a vision for public bodies. It would also strengthen existing duties. We currently need to 'have regard to' the national outcomes but this is not enough to drive decision making. The bill would mean a more positive and proactive duty on public bodies to deliver wellbeing and sustainable development and can be measured using the national indicators. The commissioner would provide the really clear guidance and support.

Graham Long: In 2019 we did some work on the indicators in the National Outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals. It's often said that the NPF is Scotland's way of localising the SDGs. We found that 15 out of 81 indicators were closely aligned to SDG indicators, 29 had some relevance, and the rest were not aligned. Around 50% are directly aligned or close.

Sarah Boyack: FPAC report said that the NPF is an important vision but there needs to be more sustained progress to achieve that vision. The first ambition is to create a more successful country, no one would disagree with that but it would mean something different for everyone.

Sarah: How can we increase interest, both politically and publicly, of our global impact?

Martin Rhodes: It's quite easy to excite and motivate people, it's not as hard a sell as some people think. If you have a positive story to tell then people tend to respond. People will also respond to challenge, for example the report mentioned about the tea industry.

Graham Long: The proposed commissioner will have value as a focal point, with perhaps a yearly report to reinforce positives and challenges. It can be an awareness raising role.

Ben Thurman: National Outcomes review is coming out next week and there's an opportunity to put a conversation about wellbeing and sustainable development out to everyone to consider.

Claire Duncanson: We need to stress the interdependence of policies – everything we do domestically has an impact overseas, and international dynamics influence prospects in Scotland.

Comment from Dorcas Pratt, Water Witness: The Glasgow declaration for water footprints provides accountability to the public, but we need government and private/public bodies to implement the legislation they have.

Sarah summarised that the bill is an opportunity for us to step up to our global commitments, whether that's across water, trade, education or health, we can do more to join up thinking and it's in our collective interest. We could lead the way, learning from Wales and other countries.

Sarah thanked speakers, attendees and secretariat.

The next meeting is scheduled for 23 May and Minister Neil Gray has agreed to attend.

Anyone with suggestions of topics or speakers for future meetings should contact louise@intdevalliance.scot.

Relevant links from speakers:

Sarah Boyack's members bill consultation: <https://sarahboyack.com/wellbeing-and-sustainable-development-bill/>

Graham Long's research for the Alliance on measuring Scotland's global impact in the NPF: [Measuring Scotland's Global Impact in the National Performance Framework :: Scotland's International Development Alliance \(intdevalliance.scot\)](#)

Graham Long's research on NPF indicators and SDGs: <https://globalgoals.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SDG-Discussion-paper-February-2019.pdf>

Carnegie's paper on putting wellbeing at the heart of decision making: [National Performance Framework Next Steps - Carnegie UK Trust](#)

Carnegie response to the wellbeing and sustainable development members bill consultation: [Submission from Carnegie UK backing Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill - Carnegie UK Trust](#)

Scottish Government background note on Feminist Foreign Policy:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/background-note-scotlands-feminist-approach-foreign-policy/pages/1/>

Claire Duncanson co-authored opinion paper:

<https://scga.scot/2022/07/25/opinion-paper-feminist-foreign-policy/>

Intro from SPICE about feminist foreign policy:

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2022/02/09/a-feminist-approach-to-foreign-policy-what-could-it-look-like-for-scotland/>

Scottish Fair Trade Forum procurement report:

<https://www.scottishfairtradeforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Fair-Trade-Expenditure-and-Policy-Commitments-Public-Sector.pdf>

Presentation from Huw Owen:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fr9r6kij0mrqmnt/AAAd2kKRf2nQ6Wsspa0LItkda?dl=0>