DRAFT REPORT OF THE VISIT TO MALAWI BY SARAH BOYACK MSP AND THE RT HON ALEX FERGUSSON MSP: 16-21 MARCH 2013

Background

1. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Scotland Branch agreed to fund a delegation of 2 Members and one official to visit the National Assembly of Malawi for 6 days from Saturday 16 March 2013 to Thursday 21 March 2013. This overall purpose of this visit was to strengthen the on-going relationship between Malawi and Scotland at parliamentary level and mark the next stage of the second Technical Assistance Programme (TAP2) between the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly of Malawi.

2. The visit was planned to co-incide with the 200th anniversary of the birth of David Livingstone.

3. The delegation comprised, Sarah Boyack MSP, the Rt Hon Alex Fergusson MSP and the Senior Assistant Clerk to the Finance Committee. Details on the work undertaken are provided in Annex A and Annex B.

4. A copy of the programme is attached at Annex C.

Aim and objectives

5. The aim of the visit was to continue to develop the relationship between the National Assembly of Malawi (NAM) and the Scottish Parliament (SP) by implementing key components of the TAP 2 agreement as set out in the Scottish Parliament’s International Relations Strategy for the current session.

6. The objectives were to:

   • strengthen the parliamentary pairing initiative between Members of the NAM and the SP by visiting the constituencies of Malawian Members involved in the initiative
   • develop and deliver a workshop on the budget scrutiny process in the SP.
26 June 2013

- discuss the role of parliamentarians in relation to scrutinising the policies of the Scottish Government on climate change
- celebrate the David Livingstone bi-centenary by attending events in Lilongwe
- promote the SP and Scotland more generally, to the wider world
- discuss with the Speaker of the NAM the next stage of TAP 2 which is due to be delivered at the end of August 2013.

7. We consider that the aims and objectives for the visit were met. However given that the Speaker of the NAM was not in the country during the visit, we were unable to discuss the TAP2 with him. Nonetheless, feedback from MPs was sufficient to provide, we hope, a useful steer to the CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee when considering the next technical assistance project with the NAM.

8. Due to the intense interest and questioning around budget scrutiny, there was insufficient time to touch upon the parliamentarians' role in developing Climate Change policy.

**Conclusion**

9. Overall, we consider the trip to have been extremely useful and beneficial. The meetings with our respective partners were useful in sharing experiences and ideas and learning of the different approaches we take to our respective roles and of the support provided which allow us to carry this out.

10. We have continued to communicate since we arrived back in Scotland and will continue to keep in touch.

11. There were a number of specific recommendations to emerge from the budget workshop as outlined in Annex B. There may be scope for further work in this area under the TAP2 in consultation with the NAM post-election.

12. A set of documents relating to the Scottish budget has been sent to the NAM library to assist their understanding of the Scottish process from start to finish.

13. Similarly, it will be interesting to see what changes come about regarding the political empowerment of women, ahead of, and after the 2014 NAM elections.

14. The other engagements were very useful in helping to visualise the very real problems which exist in the country and seeing the work which is carried out by organisations such as TIF through direct funding or how such small amounts of money (in the case of Charity Salima) can make such an important difference and can save lives.
15. The delegation received some very good media coverage involving newspapers and online media outlets.

Recommendations

16. One specific proposal we were asked to address on return to Scotland, was the question of transparency of donor aid and development projects.

17. Malawian MPs expressed interest in knowing how funding allocations were made by the Scottish Government and the expected outcomes of projects in their constituencies. This would be a useful test of the value of the Scottish Government’s priorities in Malawi and would shed more light on the objectives of the Scottish Government in allocating funding. It would also help by drawing into discussion the variety of civic organisations which are involved in the process too. We therefore recommend that the CPA Scotland Branch Executive raises this matter with the Scottish Government.

18. The point was also made by Malawian MPs in relation to the timing of the delivery of the workshop so close to the run up to the NAM elections in May 2014. The Members were concerned that, realistically, it would be difficult to effect changes to the current system in the timescale of the current parliamentary session. Nonetheless, Members were clearly enthusiastic about the content of the workshop and did discuss whether they would be able to take forward some of action points they had highlighted.

19. There was a desire and a commitment by the Members to make progress in developing the scrutiny role of the committees and enhance their ability to hold Government Ministers and others to account. It is recommended that no further workshops should be carried out prior to the NAM elections in May 2014. However it is further recommended that the CPA Scotland Branch should consider, in consultation with the Speaker, post-election workshops on budget scrutiny, legislative scrutiny, the role of the MP and any other topics that may be identified by the NAM.

20. It is recommended, subject to agreement with the Speaker of the National Assembly, that the parliamentarians’ role in developing Climate Change policy and scrutinising bills for environmental impact should be considered to dovetail with the Scottish Government’s work in this important policy area.
I had travelled north to Mzuzu from Lilongwe (following arrival there on the Saturday) to spend the Sunday with my partner, the Hon. Rev. Prof. David Mphande MP, in his constituency. This started with a morning church service at the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (CCAP) Synod of Livingstonia, Kawiya Congregation Thipura Church in Bandawe.

During the service a number of speeches were made about the work of David Livingstone and of the early Scottish missionaries to Bandawe. Following the church service I was shown around the old church next door which had been built by early Scottish missionaries including Jack Martin (who was buried in the graveyard along with his wife and child). I have subsequently made contact with the Mamie Martin Fund through Falkirk High School to alert them to my visit.

I was then shown round the facilities within the vicinity of the church and which it funds including the:

- local clinic serving the local area (around 15,000 people);
- Bandawe Girls School (twinned with Falkirk High School) which provides education and accommodation for around 150 pupils of secondary school age. Issues raised with me around the lack of funding for school materials and an extension to the accommodation;
- school for hearing impairment where I met with the teacher and pupils and was shown the work carried out in training the children in sign language and skills which would assist when they left school e.g. sewing, poultry farming, carpentry; and
- new kitchen facility being built through support from St Nicholas church in Ayr. I have subsequently made contact with the church to alert them to my visit.

I was then driven to David's home where I joined him, his wife and the church Minister for lunch. This was followed by a chat about his life and work as a MP and of the challenges he faces within the constituency (lack of funding to support community projects, debt issues, small scale farming etc.). Following lunch I was shown round various places/projects in his constituency which included:

- a visit to the village where he was born;
- a meeting with the chief, elders and pupils at a school where the discussion was about the challenges faced with regard to lack of funding, equipment etc;
- a visit to meet with locals at a river crossing. The current crossing (a ford) can be impassable in the wet season and the village can be cut off. The locals said they had been asking for a proper bridge for several
years but there was no funding through either the constituency or local development funds;

- an area of land which was to be developed as a sugar plantation by a UK based businessman. We discussed the potential for agricultural development in the area and for small and medium sized enterprises setting up in his area. The area is used mainly for the growing of sugar and maize, with a little coffee and with potential for bee keeping. However, there was nothing on a scale which would produce high yield incomes;

- a small business/social enterprise where ladies would knit sweaters, hats etc. which they could then sell using the wool from recycled woollen articles);

- a visit to another school to meet with teachers, pupils, the local chief and village elders who spoke of the need for a water filtration facility to work with the water pump in the village;

- An orphanage which was run by the local village which accommodated around 60 children.
Report by Sarah Boyack MSP

I visited the Lilongwe Mapuyu North constituency of Hon Christina Chiwoko MP. My first engagement was a visit with her to a day secondary school. This state school has 400 students and four classrooms but no dedicated accommodation for students, many of whom have to walk long distances to attend classes. After meeting the chiefs, the PTA and teachers at the school I was given the job of cutting the ribbon on the new house that has been built for the Head Teacher through the Mapuyu North Constituency Development Fund.

I then visited a new market at Msundwe, also been built with support from the constituency development fund to provide stalls for farmers and traders to sell their produce.

The next day I met with the staff of the Joyful Motherhood project which aims to support the development of young babies who have been orphaned or who have lost a mother at childbirth. The project is based at Bwaila Hospital and has over 100 babies at any given time. Although Malawi’s maternal birthrate has improved, there are still many children whose mothers die while giving birth. HIV/AIDS is prevalent and women in villages often live many miles away from hospital with no transport.

After the briefing we met the family of a newborn who had been born two days earlier. Her mother had been admitted with complications and during the transfer to another hospital, had died in the ambulance. When we arrived at the village, the mother's female relatives were still grieving and what should have been a joyous occasion, the birth of a baby, was very emotional and a time of sadness for everyone. Luckily the baby has a family and the father was on hand to hear what the foster mothers could do to care for the child.

I had a discussion about smallholder farmers who, although they are growing enough food to feed the family in a good year, are too far from markets to be able to get a decent price for their produce and are not able to earn any money or develop the range of products they grow. They are unable to add value to their produce, are vulnerable to bad weather affecting their crops and have no other source of income. The previous day Christina had informed me that tackling rural poverty is a key issue for the Women’s Caucus.

Promote the SP and Scotland more generally, to the wider world

On Tuesday 19th we made a courtesy call to the two Deputy Speakers of the NAM followed by a tour of the NAM and a discussion with NAM protocol officers (including Harvey Chigumula who we both knew) about the work and operation of the NAM.
Celebrate the David Livingstone bi-centenary

On the evening of Tuesday 19 March 2013, we attended the David Livingstone reception at the British High Commission where Alex Fergusson MSP and I, both made short speeches. There was a good turnout of guests including staff from other consulates, officials from the Department for International Development (DFID), members of the Malawi Scotland Partnership Board and Scots living and working in Lilongwe.

Develop and deliver a workshop on the budget scrutiny process in the SP

On Wednesday 20 March 2013, we attended the workshop on budget scrutiny. Attendance was extremely encouraging with members of the NAM Budget and Finance Committee. Other attendees included Chairs of other parliamentary committees. Both Deputy Speakers were in attendance as were a number of Committee Clerks.

Fergus Cochrane, Senior Assistant Clerk to the Scottish Parliament’s Finance Committee gave a detailed overview of the Scottish budget process followed by a Q&A session. A good number of questions were asked arising from this presentation and there was clear interest in why the Scottish budget process worked the way it did, the involvement of the other committees in budget scrutiny, and in the accountability of Scottish Government Ministers and the ability of committees to gather evidence from key organisations.

Following lunch the Q&A session continued. Later that day, the attendees broke into smaller groups to discuss specific issues.

The following lists illustrates some of the similarities and differences between the 2 systems. Members of the Scottish Parliament should consider these points to inform further engagement work between the two legislatures. The main points to emerge were—

- the committees of the SP are very much involved, and indeed lead, the budget scrutiny process while the NAM has little influence or involvement
- it was important that the budget was relevant to the national priorities of the Malawi Government (MG) and that, if it was a budget for growth, then there must be scrutiny by the NAM of whether the necessary funding was supporting the right sectors to promote growth
- was there a case for protected budgets for certain areas in order to measure against targets?
- A possible call for some form of enabling Act which would better define the budget process and set out the role and responsibility of the NAM and its committees
there were three arms of government – government, legislature and judiciary, although the view expressed by one individual was that only the government and the judiciary were effective

the process of the Parliament, agreeing by motion, the appointment of Ministers was of great interest and could increase the role of the NAM in better holding the MG to account

there was a need for better scrutiny of revenue by the NAM and not just of the expenditure (where better monitoring of how the money was spent was also needed)

a need for better involvement and input in the budget process from other committees in the NAM (to then feed in to the Budget and Finance Committee) and for them to hold their respective MG Ministers to account

pre-budget consultation should be undertaken by the Budget and Finance Committee

Improved line by line scrutiny of the budget was necessary

better examination by the BFC (and committees) of how money is distributed and whether the distribution is fair and targeted at the right areas

better examination of how the public were benefiting from the budget

We also gave a presentation on the legislative process. There was great interest from the NAM Members in the Scottish experience. Again, we offered practical examples of how our legislative process works. **Actions points to emerge from the discussion groups were**—

- better timetabling of Bills by the NAM with the designation of lead committees
- more efficient timetabling of Bills so that committee work does clash with Plenary
- a requirement for Bills to actually go to a committee for scrutiny rather than a Bill proceeding through all stages in Plenary
- more resources to allow the committees to be more independent and operate more frequently and with proper support
- better engagement and interaction with key/interested bodies and the public

**Other engagements**

**Theatre for a Change (TfC)**

On Tuesday 19 March we met with representatives from Theatre for a Change which seeks to equip socially and economically marginalised communities with the communications skills, knowledge and awareness to transform their lives and the lives of others personally, socially and professionally; provide child-centred training to pre-service teachers as a unique tool for positive behaviour change; and empower young people to protect themselves from HIV and advocate for their gender and human rights.
Its current focus was on student teachers, sex workers police officers and members of the armed forces, who were considered to be the main cohorts for HIV/AIDs. We were driven to a project run by the TfC in the south of Lilongwe, where we met project workers/volunteers. The TfC operates in areas such as this by talking to the local people about safe sex, the correct use of condoms (which they distribute), violence against women i.e. the sex workers. The TfC offers a mobile HIV testing clinic which operates from the back of a van.

The ‘main event’ was an interactive role play in the middle of the village where the TfC volunteers act out scenarios (based on their personal experiences) around becoming a sex worker. Through this role play, they are able to actively involve members of the audience. It was noticeable how the attitude of the audience (about 150) would change as different scenarios were acted out.

Active Learning Centre workshop

On Thursday 21 March 2013, we attended the Active Learning Centre workshop on Exploring the role of women MPs in building an effective democracy which took place in the NAM. A series of key speeches were delivered by, for example, the Chair of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and the Minister for Gender in the MG. Alex Fergusson MSP and I both gave speeches on political empowerment of women towards 2014 (when elections to the NAM will take place) and the role of a constituency MP in a multi-party democracy.

The event was the culmination of a three year Scottish Government funded project on empowering women. The walls were covered with posters outlining the work that had taken place with women MPs and local communities in their constituencies. This in itself was groundbreaking because as with all aspects of life in Malawi resources are scarce and limit the capacity of community involvement and engagement. The MPs were very positive about the local workshops in which they and their local communities had participated. One of the developments that the NAM is planning would see parliamentary offices being established which would support more local engagement with constituents.

The workshop was a chance for the parliamentarians to debate how to empower women and discuss strategy with NGOs and donor government representatives. The event was open to the media and I did interviews with Malawi TV and the Press.

We had a lively discussion with some practical recommendations for attracting new women into politics and on retention of existing women Members. For retention it was argued that NGOs should be working with women on practical projects in constituencies and that the women MPs would also have to work
harder at communicating what difference they had made to the lives of their constituents.

We were delighted to get feedback following the Women’s Caucus event, that in a subsequent meeting involving all Malawi’s political parties, a commitment to stronger support for women candidates was given. Whilst next year’s elections will be the acid test, this is definitely a positive sign.

**Charity Salima**

On Thursday 21 March 2013, we visited a maternity clinic in the south of the city run by Charity Salima who set up her clinic (in Area 23) a few years ago with a $600 loan and her pension from University of North Carolina. Charity has successfully delivered (no loss of life of either mother or child) more than 4,000 babies using the most basic of equipment. Charity runs the clinic, assisted by two of her daughters and volunteers.

Charity escorted the delegation around the facility. It was clear that the Clinic was extremely well organised in terms of what it does (despite the lack of equipment). The clinic was not in receipt of funding from any of the main NGOs (Charity said they were not “sophisticated enough”!) so funding would come from voluntary donations (there may have been some funding through the National Organisation of Nurses and Midwives of Malawi) and charges for some treatment e.g. HIV tests. The clinic offered free consultations and follow-up checks on mother and baby.
Annex C

CPA (Scotland Branch) Visit to the Republic of Malawi

Friday 15 March to Saturday 23 March 2013

Programme

Friday 15 March

2.45pm  Arrive Edinburgh Airport

Saturday 16 March

11.00am  Arrive Kamuzu International Airport, Lilongwe

Programme A: Sarah Boyack MSP – Lilongwe

Meetings with Scottish volunteers working/based in Lilongwe

Programme B: Alex Fergusson MSP – Nkhata Bay West

1.45pm  Depart Lilongwe and travel to Mzuzu

Sunday 17 March

Programme A: Sarah Boyack MSP – Lilongwe

• Visit to the constituency of Hon Christina Chiwoko MP
• Constituency visits

Programme B: Alex Fergusson MSP – Nkhata Bay West

• Attendance at CCAP service in Nkhata Bay area
• Visit to the constituency of Hon. Prof David Mphande MP

Monday 18 March

Programme A: Sarah Boyack MSP – Lilongwe

Meetings with individuals with links to Scotland

Programme B: Alex Fergusson MSP – Nkhata Bay West

AM  Continue constituency visits

1.00pm  Depart Nkhata Bay
6.00pm Briefing with Kirk Hollingsworth, Deputy High Commissioner and Governance Manager, Department for International Development

7.30pm Meeting with Susan Dalgety, Danny Philips and Karen Gillon project workers (Active Learning Centre) to discuss final arrangements for their event

Tuesday 19 March

8.45am Arrive at the National Assembly of Malawi

9.00am Courtesy call with The First Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi

Tour of the parliament building

Depart National Assembly

Programme A: Sarah Boyack MSP – Lilongwe

3.00pm Meeting with members of the Board of the Scotland Malawi Partnership

Sunbird Capital Hotel

Programme B: Alex Fergusson MSP

12.30pm Meeting with Theatre for Change representatives

Area 23

6.00pm The David Livingstone reception hosted by Kirk Hollingsworth, Deputy High Commissioner

British High Commission

Wednesday 20 March

8.45am Arrive at the National Assembly of Malawi

9.00am Workshops on budget scrutiny

Audience (Approximately 40) to include Members of the Budget and Finance Committee and Committee Chairs

5.00pm Workshop ends
Thursday 21 March

10.00am  ALC event

A table to set out material promoting the Scottish Parliament will be provided. A small number of leaflets, CPA Scotland Branch pens, CPA Scotland Branch memory sticks lapel and badges available for distribution at the event.

PM  Visit to Charity Salima Clinic

Friday 22 March

8.30am  Arrive at Kamazu International Airport

Saturday 23 March

10.10am  Arrive Edinburgh Airport