Dear Convenor,

ECCLR Committee Evidence Session on Climate Change Bill – International Context

Congratulations on your appointment as Convenor of the ECCLR Committee in Parliament. As Scotland’s civil society coalition working on climate change, we very much look forward to a positive working relationship with you.

Part of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS)’s work is to bring together a range of organisations working on the impacts of climate change overseas; to highlight the effects of climate change around the world; to promote examples of Scottish climate leadership to international audience; and to amplify international voices within climate change debates here in Scotland.

SCCS is particularly keen that the voices of those most affected by climate change are heard during the upcoming parliamentary process for the new Climate Change Bill. For too long, people suffering the impacts of climate change have been silenced and ignored. We believe their voices must be heard in political decision-making which affects their lives.

In committee evidence sessions before the 2009 Act, organisations including Christian Aid, SCIAF and Oxfam gave evidence regarding the effects of climate change on the communities with which they worked. Those same organisations (and others) would be well-placed to give similar evidence again, but we feel that - in conjunction with contributions from those of us based in Scotland - it is of fundamental importance to hear from those with more intimate, first-hand experience of these real impacts.

This new Climate Change Bill comes at a critical time as countries across the world step up to deliver what has been agreed on in the Paris Agreement. In the nine years since the previous Scottish Climate Act was passed we have seen global temperatures continue to soar, emissions continue to increase, and many devastating extreme weather events in places like Pakistan, Ethiopia and Haiti. The moral imperative to act on climate change must not be forgotten, nor lost sight of, in the development of this important piece of legislation.

We note that an evidence session on 30 October will take evidence on the ‘International Context’. In recent months both Gail Wilson of SCCS and Jo O’Neill of SCIAF have suggested to Committee clerks that that Committee Members hear evidence (either in person or via video link), during this oral evidence session, from people in other countries who are affected by climate change impacts.
We understand that this suggestion was discussed in a session on June 26th, at which time there was insufficient support amongst Members. Yet from our perspective it seems natural and imperative that people, or people speaking on behalf of communities, who are most affected by climate change are heard in this session. If there are people whose voices are more relevant to the ‘International Context’, it is not obvious to us. We are writing to ask Members to reconsider and include people affected by climate impacts in your evidence session/s.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hegarty
Board member of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland