

## **CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

### **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS INQUIRY**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM SCOTLAND'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE**

##### **About the Alliance**

Scotland's International Development Alliance (the Alliance) is the membership body in Scotland for everyone committed to creating a fairer world, free from poverty, injustice and environmental threats. Our membership brings together a diverse range of organisations and individuals including over 150 NGOs, businesses, academic institutions and public sector bodies that operate in over 100 countries.

This submission focuses on particular questions in this inquiry that are relevant to sustainable development globally. The Alliance consistently argues that all aspects of external affairs policy should be underpinned by a commitment to creating a fairer world, free from poverty, injustice and environmental threats.

##### **On engaging with the EU**

The principles and universality of creating a fairer world through sustainable development should underpin the Scottish Government's external affairs policy with regard to the EU. The EU is the largest donor to overseas development assistance programmes in the world, and the largest donor to climate change mitigation and adaptation action.

The development trajectory of developing countries is affected by a range of policies including migration (facilitating remittances), international tax and trade policies and rules. It is therefore vital that the EU and its member states seek coherence of policies to ensure that the efficacy of their development assistance is not undermined by contradictory policies.

The Scottish Government should therefore aim to influence the EU to be more policy coherent through a number of routes:

- Use the Scottish Government's office in Brussels as an outlet for Scotland to work to influence EU international development policy
- Engage in the areas of international development that the EU focuses on and make the case why the EU should seek Scotland's participation, as a pro-EU, pro-development, internationalist small country with expertise and unique experiences to offer to the EU and to international development.

- Support civil society to maintain strong links with European organisations. By doing this Scotland can influence specific sectors through EU forums.
- Make Scotland a policy coherence case study and through that seek to influence the EU to implement policy coherence – continuing to develop or sustain a strong Scotland-EU relationship even in the face of Brexit.
- Consider how other Scottish Government directorates outwith External Affairs can link with EU networks. For example, the Education Directorate should join GENE – Global Education Network Europe – the network of Ministries and Agencies with national responsibility for Global Education in European countries. This network involves both EU and non-EU countries.

## **On engaging the rest of the world**

1. *What principles should inform the Scottish Government's international engagement? For example, should economic priorities be the key priority or cultural / 'soft power' priorities?*

As one of the first nations to sign up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is right that a commitment to SDGs underpins the Scottish Government's international engagement. The SDGs include 17 interlinked goals that are both universal and indivisible from one another. In other words, progress towards one goal cannot be separated from progress on any other across space and time.

We see all aspects of external affairs policy as inextricably linked in this same way, particularly in terms of how they affect our ability to contribute to tackling global challenges such as poverty, inequality, injustice and climate change.

Achieving policy coherence means considering all our actions holistically through a sustainable development universality lens.

The Scottish Government must put solidarity with the poor and equality at the heart of its external relations, and take a sustainable development approach at all times.

The economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development must be considered holistically by all parts of Scottish society, including government and the private sector when deciding our approach to any external affairs decision. For example, trade and investment strategies should not be decided upon based solely on the economic benefit for Scotland or Scottish business alone, and must consider environmental, economic and social outcomes elsewhere, particularly in developing countries, even in those that are not priority countries in the International Development Strategy.

The trade and investment that we promote, the subsidies our government provides to specific industries and the strategic objectives we focus on should be systemically assessed against a variety of sustainable development indicators.

Promoting the concept of ‘Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development’ (PCSD) (SDG 17.14) should therefore underpin and inform all external affairs decisions on the basis that by enhancing policy coherence the Scottish Government can add significant value to its global citizenship goals.

PCSD is defined as:

**“An approach and policy tool to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making.” (OECD 2016, 2018)**

2. *How should the Scottish Government prioritise its international engagement – for example, should the locations prioritised be based on a geography or policy focus?*

The Scottish Government should prioritise its international engagement through both a thematic and geographic focus.

This should include maintaining a partnership approach to its international development work given the limited funding that it receives, and the positive outcomes of the partnership approach, which was highlighted in the Scottish Governments inaugural Contribution to International Development Report in 2018<sup>1</sup>.

However, the addition of thematic priorities as well, such as gender equality and climate justice, would help to make sure all elements of our international engagement support one another and do not undermine other areas.

Most countries have bilateral development cooperation and partnership with a limited number of countries (Ireland 9, and soon to be increased; Sweden 35, etc), but the addition of thematic areas of focus, if approached holistically through a PCSD lens, can help drive forward real progress on cross-cutting issues in partner countries.

Furthermore, the inclusion of thematic priorities, and thereby a systemic PCSD assessment of all external affairs policy against specific thematic areas, could help to ensure that we are not only driving forward on that priority with our partner countries more coherently (in our international development strategy for example), but that spill-over effects of our international engagement are not negatively affecting ANY developing country, partner or otherwise.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/contribution-international-development-report-2017-18/pages/4/>

### 3. *How can the Scottish Government's international engagement be evaluated effectively?*

Importantly, the National Performance Framework (NPF) includes an outcome stating that Scotland should 'make a positive contribution internationally'. The term 'positive contribution' should be defined using a holistic PCSD approach, and all evaluation of the Scottish Government's international engagement should stem from that definition. Further to that, evaluation should involve the following distinctive elements:

#### **Internal government mechanisms**

The Scottish Government should develop a range of indicators that assess its international engagement through a sustainable development universality lens, and embed these into the NPF, and publicly report on them regularly.

The three dimensions of the sustainable development agenda must be considered with equal weight when developing any indicators.

A specific PCSD indicator, or set of indicators, should also be developed that estimates how coherent different aspects of external affairs policy are with other areas of government. This would make Scotland a world leader on this issue. For example, using the OECD's indicators<sup>2</sup>, the Scottish Government could review its progress on a regular basis using an internationally recognised framework.

#### **Parliamentary scrutiny**

The Scottish Government's international engagement should also be subject to systematic and regular parliamentary scrutiny using a PCSD approach, perhaps using a screening tool like *OECD Screening tool*<sup>3</sup>.

Such scrutiny might be effectively carried out by a standalone Committee like CTEEA, and this would be a step forward, especially if scrutiny of this kind was built into its remit, and there was a duty to report regularly.

However, we emphasise that a PCSD approach to parliamentary scrutiny should be embedded across all committees to ensure a coherent approach to everything Scottish Government does, as per the PCSD definition above.

This could involve building more time into the current Parliamentary processes to allow existing Committees to scrutinise legislation for policy coherence and reform of parliamentary processes. We support the Commission on Parliamentary Reform's recommendations<sup>4</sup> on committees and changing legislative scrutiny from 3 stages to

<sup>2</sup> [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development-2018/tracking-progress-in-policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development\\_9789264301061-7-en#page4](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development-2018/tracking-progress-in-policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development_9789264301061-7-en#page4)

<sup>3</sup> [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/better-policies-for-sustainable-development-2016/a-new-framework-for-policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development\\_9789264256996-6-en#page5](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/better-policies-for-sustainable-development-2016/a-new-framework-for-policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development_9789264256996-6-en#page5)

<sup>4</sup> <https://spark.adobe.com/page/QKq29aXYqB6mK/>

5. We argue this would allow for policy coherence scrutiny to be embedded into a specific stage.

Furthermore, all new legislation and policy should be systematically 'proofed' against thematic priorities, such as climate justice, gender equality, and fair-trade principles, and publicly reported on and debated in Parliament. This could be done using the NPF and SDG frameworks, and incorporate the use of established SDG interaction typologies, such as Nilsson et al.'s 2016 7-point typology<sup>5</sup>.

### **The Contribution to International Development Report**

The Contribution to International Development Report (CIDR) should be published less frequently (biennially) and widen its remit, reporting on coherence across all policy areas rather than simply on Scottish Government international development funding and activities. international development spend.

The CIDR should challenge the government to do better in other areas. Ideally, it could have a focus on incoherencies, policy trade-offs and gaps in how best to achieve sustainable development universality. This could be done thematically, and have a new focus every two years.

However, at a minimum producing a biennial report as opposed to annual one would allow more time to analyse policies across the external affairs directorate, and better report on policy coherence across a range of priority areas.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11625-017-0470-0#CR25>