



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Ann Phoya
Chair
Malawi Scotland Partnership

By email phoyaann@yahoo.com
c.c. Stella Masangano
smasangano@malawiscotlandpartnership.org

3 March 2021

Dear Ann,

Coronavirus (COVID-19): review of international development programme

On 2 March, we had invited you to a further meeting to discuss the above review. I look forward to meeting with you, and the other core funded bodies, next week. Ahead of this meeting, I am pleased to tell you that I have now provided an update on the results of the review through a Government Initiated Parliamentary Question (GIPQ).

Please find my answer to the Scottish Parliament via the GIPQ here [SG International Development COVID Review - GIPQ 3 March 2020](#) and our “*Summary Report on the Review of the Scottish Government’s International Development Programme in Light of COVID-19*” here: <https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-80004-734-1>.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges of our times. Even in the period since we announced this review, in light of COVID-19, the disease has spread quickly to all corners of the world with new virulent strains mutating and spreading by the end of 2020. Our decision in summer 2020 to pause, reflect and take stock, in order to future-proof against the threat of COVID-19, therefore feels right.

Responding to the results of the Review, we are going to implement a range of cross-cutting changes to how we work in future and to take a more targeted approach in certain partner countries. This Review, necessitated by unprecedented change at a global scale, is the start of the process of aligning our programme with our new Principles to realise our ambitions to have the best impact possible for our partner countries.

I have attached for your information a copy of that final set of Principles in the Annex to this letter. I was grateful to all who contributed feedback on our drafts during the Review process, including the Malawi Scotland Partnership and its members, and look forward to an ongoing discussion on how organisations that we fund under our programme, including the core funded bodies, align with them.

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At this initial stage, there will also be four key cross-cutting changes implemented as a result of the review:

- **Build Back Fairer and Stronger** – in an evolution of our funding, we will restructure our current funding streams to focus on sustainable economic recovery and institutional resilience within the key priority areas highlighted by our partner-countries, together with a new Equalities Programme.
- **Global South Programme Panel** – we will establish a panel of ‘experts by experience’ who principally work and reside in the global south along with representatives of our partner countries’ diaspora who reside here in Scotland. This panel will be overseen on the part of the Scottish Government at Ministerial level and will help us ensure that global south voices continue to be heard beyond this Review, at the highest level.
- **Updating our Funding Criteria** – we will adjust our funding criteria to enable more partner-country based organisations to apply direct for funding, by removing the current requirement that Scottish Government international development funding only ever be accessed via a Scotland based organisation.
- **Focusing our Offer** – we will further refocus our international development offer, taking account of the constitutional and financial arrangement within which we currently operate and addressing the ongoing concern that we are trying to do too much given the available resources. In pausing and reflecting on where we can best contribute to our partner countries as they build back fairer and stronger from COVID-19, we want to ensure a focused approach that best matches needs and asks. The main changes in our programme in terms of thematic focus will be in Rwanda and Zambia, in response to the prioritisation by representatives of those countries Governments and civil society.

In addition to the immediate scope of this Review, there will be further ongoing changes to our international development offering. For example, this key area which I know will be of particular interest to the Malawi Scotland Partnership:

- **Small Grants Programme:** as you know, this programme was established as a pilot in 2013 to help grow the international development sector in Scotland to support some of the world’s most vulnerable communities, by providing funding for smaller Scotland-based organisations to deliver international development work. In line with the findings of the independent review of this programme, we have decided to refocus the budget currently allocated to our existing Small Grants pilot programme towards promoting equality of women and girls, including seeking to provide more funding directly in-country to smaller local civil society organisations, as part of our new Equalities Programme.

As I set out in the GIPQ today, I am clear that this COVID-19 review of our approach to international development is a start, rather than an end point, to a change process. Our Programme will therefore progressively align with the new Principles over the coming months and years, with programme themes and design decisions reflecting them and to the outcome of the review, as we future-proof our Programme in relation to COVID-19 and climate change. We will also continue to provide support to strengthening key areas underpinning our Programme, such as safeguarding. This continuing alignment and adjustment of our Programme will take place incrementally as an ongoing process of improvement and change, and will include a focus on the balance of spend – between Scotland and our partner countries,

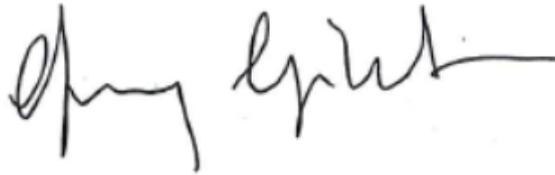
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and amongst our partner countries. I will expect too that all organisations wishing to receive funding from the Scottish Government under the IDF or our separate Humanitarian Emergency Fund will clearly align with, and be held accountable to, the Principles.

I would like to thank you for your support throughout this process and I look forward to meeting with you next week to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,



JENNY GILRUTH

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(Finalised) Principles of the International Development Review

Context and Application:

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a re-refresh of the Scottish Government's approach to International Development. Coupled with that, the demand for change by the Black Lives Matter movement has raised serious questions to which all Governments should consider their response. This refresh of the Scottish Government's International Development offer is to ensure our programme is future-proofed against an ever-changing global outlook.

Vision (2016 ID Strategy)

The Scottish Government's vision remains that through embedding the UN Global Goals, Scotland will contribute to sustainable development and the fight against poverty, injustice and inequality internationally.

Overarching Ethos: International Solidarity in an interdependent world means embedding a human rights approach in all our work. We speak out with clarity of purpose and compassion, in support of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Our programmes support:

1. Partner-country led development: we recognise that countries prioritise their own needs and lead their own development, therefore we fund work that is aligned with national / local plans and other in-country development partners. In supporting partner-countries we make sure we have sufficient expertise and skills to form a partnership and add value, and also support them to move beyond aid to sustainable development, including adapting to the global climate emergency.

2. Equality: we recognise the enduring and intersectional inequalities that exist and we ensure reducing inequalities is central to how we work. We oppose racism in all its forms and aspire to be anti-racist in our work. We prioritise the rights of women and girls, their advancement and equality.

3. Amplify global-south voices: we encourage advocacy by and in support of the global south including the poorest and those living in vulnerable situations.

4. Inclusion and Diversity: we question whose expertise we value, who we listen to and who holds the levers of power. We support new and innovative ways to break down barriers, to harness a diverse range of new voices and new ideas to drive change.

5. Collaboration and partnerships: we build partnerships with a shared ethos and vision that benefit from expertise across partner countries to foster joint learning and co-create solutions to further our commitment in our 2016 International Development Strategy to the "Beyond Aid agenda".

6. Innovative, adapting and sustainable: we design programmes that are: flexible, resourceful and capable of responding to changing circumstances; are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, with interventions that consider long-term aims, and take account of risk. Recognising that we are facing a global climate emergency, we will support increasing resilience to climate change and to transition to becoming, as appropriate, net-zero economies in a way that is fair, just and leaves no one behind.

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7. Embrace technology: we support innovation to progress human health, wellbeing and environmental sustainability, such as improved access to digital services and using technology to reduce the need to travel, while acknowledging that technology can be a barrier to participation for some people in the global south.

8. Accountable, Transparent and Safe: the Scottish Government and our delivery partners are transparent and accountable to local communities and the general public in our partner countries and in Scotland; we ensure, that all of our work has appropriate safeguarding policies and practices in place.

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