

## Member Meeting with Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart MP

26/05/2021

### Chat Log

- **Heather Cubie:** Welcome everyone from Heather Cubie, Chair of SMP. I am delighted to see so many Kent faces joining the call.
- **SMP Host:** Please find a copy of the agenda here: <https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/assets/documents/Minister-Iain-Stewart-MP-Roundtable-26-May-AGENDA-v2.0.doc>
- **Paul Garside:** Advisory Group on African-European Research and Innovation Cooperation is launched on 4 May  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/advisory-group-african-european-research-and-innovation-cooperation-launched-4-may-2021-may-04\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/advisory-group-african-european-research-and-innovation-cooperation-launched-4-may-2021-may-04_en)  
DG INTPA - DG for International Partnerships  
Considering recent announcements regarding EU interactions with Africa how will UK/Scotland engagement with these programmes now work post-brexite?  
[https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/organisation/dg-intpa-dg-international-partnerships\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/organisation/dg-intpa-dg-international-partnerships_en)
- **Benjamin Carey:** A question for the Minister. HMG has massively reduced its ODA budget, including for Malawi. Given the importance of partnership, to what extent is FCDO aligning its country strategy with partners in Scotland, including the Scottish Government? What are the UK's priorities in Malawi?
- **Mark O'Donnell:** Firstly; Thank to the Minister for his attendance today. Greatly appreciated. A question - What will the relationship be between the UK Government's Edinburgh office and the FCDO in East Kilbride?
- **Charles Howie:** Malawi's population is forecast to rise from 19 million in 2019 to 29 million (UNDP). Much agriculture is rained, a single rainy season, and like many countries, much food is lost between harvest and consumers' plates. Will the Minister please enquire to what extent the challenge of Malawi's food security is in the sights of the D part of FCDO?
- **alistair\_tough@yahoo.com:** Let me join Mark in welcoming the Minister - it is much appreciated that he should take the time to engage with us. I should like to ask if the UK Government could support efforts to get direct flights from the UK to Malawi? Malawi has terrific tourist attractions (including the Lake and the Nyika and Mulanje plateaus) but is not included in travel agents African packages. Travel to Malawi is both slower and more expensive than to Zambia or Tanzania. This issue is particularly acute in the context of the Build Back Better agenda which generally seeks to reduce air travel. If Malawi's lack of direct flights is set in concrete as part of this initiative then long-term damage to the tourist industry will follow.
- **Tracy Morse:** Would welcome a further discussion on the Turing scheme particularly the support of incoming students to the UK and not only the opportunity for students to travel out of the UK

- **Benjamin Carey:** But would Malawian students be given visas by UK? Poor record historically!
- **Emma Wood:** The SMP s vital in my experience of getting visas for Malawians without enough money to pay extra for the gold service
- **Heather Cubie:** The link between travel and exchange visits is critical so will the Minister's office consider these together rather than their very different silos?
- **Mark O'Donnell:** The £6bn reduction in ODA budget between 2019 and this year (2021/22) to £10bn is less than a penny in the £ of UK government spending. It really is a drop in the ocean of the £1 trillion that the UK Government spend in the year ended 31 March 2021.
- **Mark O'Donnell:** The Minister's support for ODA is very welcome. Thank you.
- **Tracy Morse:** Thank you for the responses
- **Dorcas, Water Witness:**With the 0.7% of GNI - as said earlier, the amount would shrink as the economy shrinks..... What are the clear criteria for returning to 0.7%?
- **Tracy Morse:** Some work we have done with health workers in Blantyre health centres has shown there is a degree of vaccine hesitancy in the population but they are seeing the messaging making difference and an increase in uptake. This is also influenced by the number of cases seen in the country as Susan mentioned as they have gone down they have become less concerned. However with the increased number in Uganda etc there is a fear of another wave. Last point is that there are many young women concerned to take AZ vaccine and as this is their only option right now (I think) then they are hesitant
- **Heather Cubie:** Hesitancy even amongst healthcare workers which is where additional messaging and understanding of research would be helpful.
- **Mark O'Donnell:** Thank you Minister and SMP for hosting
- **Ciara:** Thanks all
- **Tracy Morse:** @Heather - let's chat and I can share what we've found so far it's really interesting