



Scotland's International
Development Alliance

Scotland and Global Sustainable Development: time to chart a new path?



Recommendations for
Policymakers

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Summary

This paper makes the case for a new Scottish Government (SG) 'Global Solidarity Strategy' that would replace the 2016 International Development Strategy. A new strategy of this kind would sit alongside the new Global Affairs Framework and would set out clearly what it seeks to achieve, why, and how.

It would also attempt to coordinate and align all external affairs, international climate justice, humanitarian action and global sustainable development programming, while setting out how it aims to enhance policy coherence with domestic policy through leadership at the highest level, including its commitment to implementing the SDGs in Scotland through the National Outcomes.

In three broad areas, our 12 practical recommendations on how to improve Scotland's contribution to global sustainable development are therefore necessarily wide ranging. They are:

A. Build a new strategy fit for the future and resource this appropriately, by:

1. Clearly defining what is meant by 'global solidarity' and outlining the scope and scale of what a new strategy aims to achieve.
2. Transparently setting out detail of the processes, mechanisms and progress indicators that will enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, including assigning senior Ministerial leadership and laying out how international trade (i.e., the 2021 Vision for Trade) can meaningfully support global solidarity.
3. Committing to an open, transparent and inclusive consultation process to shape the new strategy.
4. Allocating additional resources to internal Scottish Government capacity in order to support continuity, learning and coordination between all elements of SG's global sustainable development programming and external affairs.

B. Enhance direct contributions to global sustainable development, by:

5. Systematic alignment and learning across the portfolios of international activities, including the Climate Justice Fund (CJF), to improve co-ordination and coherence, and ensuring all global sustainable development policy is actively underpinned by a transformative 'feminist approach'.
6. Guaranteeing transparency in how and why all grants are made to ensure trust and support from all stakeholders including the public.
7. Continuing to support civil society directly and championing a strong, vibrant civil society here and elsewhere as the most effective vehicle for global solidarity.
8. Developing suitable mechanisms to support funding local organisations directly in partner countries.
9. Re-imagining grant-making to support arising need and a broader understanding of who is a 'partner'.

C. Broaden the ambition of Scotland's role, by:

10. Focusing specific SG resources on influencing the national and global context on international issues such as vaccine equity, climate justice and gender equality, building on potential small country influence as demonstrated at COP26 and lead by example through ensuring national policies are fully aligned with international advocacy positions.
11. Pioneering new approaches and solutions to development finance and, in doing so, leveraging support from other national, sub-national and private actors in global development.
12. Supporting holistic SDG implementation and the realisation of related international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement.

Introduction and approach

This paper outlines a number of recommendations on how the Scottish Government (SG) should design and implement its contribution to global sustainable development including, but not limited to, direct financial support to partner countries through its International Development Fund (IDF), climate justice funding and Humanitarian Emergency Fund (HEF).

The paper has been developed after consultation and input from our broad membership, their global partners and other external stakeholders, including from a range of current/recent SG grant holders between April – June 2022. However, all views put forward can only be attributed to the Alliance. Any statement cannot be attributed to any particular Alliance member.

Background to SG International Development funding

The Scottish Government (SG) started funding international development programming, in addition to Scottish taxpayers' contribution to UK Aid, in 2005. This was initially focused on Malawi and was initiated by the then First Minister, Lord Jack McConnell.

From 2007, the work and budget expanded, with £9 million for projects in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Following a consultation in 2016, SG then produced a new strategy and limited the focus of the IDF to Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia, and Pakistan. In 2017, the SG increased the IDF to £10 million a year, and continued to support more initiatives alongside it including the CJF (Climate Justice fund) and the HEF. In the December 2021 Scottish Budget, SG announced that the IDF would increase to £11.5 million from April 2022 – this reflects the pre-election 2021 SNP manifesto and subsequent Programme for Government 2021-22 commitment to start to raise the IDF to £15 million.

SG state that all their international development work contributes to sustainable development and the fight against poverty, injustice, and inequality internationally, within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. More info available on SG website [here](#).

Recent changes - SG International Development Review, COVID-19 and other new external affairs and climate justice commitments

In 2021, ahead of the Scottish Election, SG published a [summary report](#) of their review of their approach to international development in light of COVID-19. This review set in motion a number of plans including:

- A set of [new principles](#) guiding their overarching approach to global solidarity across portfolios.
- A commitment to establish a Global South Programme Panel that will advise on creating a new Equalities Programme.
- Working towards refocusing different funding streams, and transitioning IDF programmes to meet the revised asks of partner countries on programme themes.

- Creation of new funding streams around ‘Sustainable Recovery’, ‘Institutional Resilience’ & ‘Reducing Inequalities’.
- A decision to support a mix of competitive and non-competitive funding across two of the three streams with non-competitive only for the ‘institutional resilience’ stream.
- Designing a new Equalities Funding Stream into the programme, to promote equality for women and girls.

In January 2021, SG also published its Vision for Trade which acknowledged the need for coherence between trade, climate and environmental objectives but failed to make the link to global equity issues.

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In the 2021-22 Programme for Government, SG then committed to:

- A new Global Affairs Framework to guide Scotland's international engagement, grounded in a value-based approach, and a feminist approach to foreign policy. This has now been published.
- Establishing a new £500,000 International Development Women and Girls Empowerment Fund, funding local organisations in partner countries to ensure women and girls are safe, equal, and respected. It is assumed this is a more explicit articulation of the new Equalities funding stream previously announced.
- Establishing a Peace Institute, with a focus on human rights, that enables SG to develop further understanding of conflict resolution and peace.
- Reconstituting the Ministerial Working Group on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.
- Supporting the establishment of a Scottish Council for Global Affairs– a new think tank which will coordinate Scottish expertise and research on global issues and their impact on Scotland.
- Doubling the Climate Justice Fund to £6 million per year, providing £24 million across this Parliament.
- Establishing a new Global Renewable Centre, working with international development partner countries to exchange knowledge and research in renewable technologies.

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Following the co-operation agreement between the SNP and the Scottish Green Party, there was a further commitment in the Shared Policy Programme to:

- Review approaches to future policy and economic engagement with a view to enhancing Scotland’s global reach and presence over this parliamentary session. This will include an increased focus in the global south including across Africa, Asia, and South America, as we strengthen our relationships with emerging markets and developing countries.

Then, at COP26 in Glasgow, the Scottish Government made a number of climate related commitments, including:

- Announcing that Scotland would be the first developed nation to pledge Loss and Damage finance.
- Signing the Glasgow Climate Pact, committing countries to doubling their collective provision of climate finance for developing countries by 2025.
- Launching the Glasgow Women's Leadership Statement on gender equality and climate change which acknowledges the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls and celebrates the role of women leaders at all levels in addressing the climate crisis.

The Alliance broadly welcomes these commitments over the past 18 months, many of which were recommendations in our own [2021-2026 Policy Priorities Report](#) published in 2020 ahead of the last Scottish Election. However, the practical implementation of most of these commitments is yet to be seen, providing strong motivation and rationale for the development of this paper.

The broader context - Climate, COVID-19, decolonisation, anti-racism and humanitarian crises

COP26 underlined the importance of challenging injustice and inequality in our approach to the climate crisis both domestically and internationally. It helped many of us in Scotland understand that individual action and daily decisions on consumption have a profound effect on the lives of people in different parts of the world. This increased awareness offers an opportunity for SG to build on the leadership shown in Glasgow to determine new, more coherent policies that can potentially encourage change elsewhere.

We have also become ever more aware that international development programming is not separate from broader international relations, external affairs, and humanitarian action. The current Ukraine crisis highlights this acutely, as prices for basic commodities soar, leading to major food insecurity across the world.

Our collective response to the Ukraine crisis has also emphasised the need to build better understanding of, and response to, other humanitarian crises across the world as comparisons are made between those suffering in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen and elsewhere. At least some of the difference is built on lack of knowledge, understanding and information; and it is clear more must be done to support active anti-racism in our approach to welcoming refugees, wherever they come from. Similar to understanding the global nature of climate crisis and the inequities of its impact, there is a space to build on human compassion to extend our notion of global citizenship.

The heightened attention to institutional and systemic racism across the world following the tragic murder of George Floyd at the hands of police in the USA in 2020 challenged the 'global north' based global development and humanitarian sector to examine more deeply their own practices, organisations, and structures.

Reckoning with the fact that global development work is defined by the historical legacies of colonial rule and shaped by the enduring global inequalities and injustices that it left behind, requires much broader systemic changes to policy and practice. In this sense, [the 2016 ID strategy](#) requires reflection. In our view, it is clearly not fit for purpose in 2022, and does not align to the recent review, the new Global Affairs Framework and other new commitments.

The recent [report](#) on the Scottish Government's International work by the Scottish Parliament's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee (CEEAC) also makes it clear more must be done to ensure alignment across external affairs. It recommends that the Scottish Government ensures strategic alignment across its activities and fosters effective collaboration across government to encourage policy coherence in relation both to external affairs and how this interacts with domestic priorities; be that working towards a wellbeing economy, sustainable development, promoting gender equality, or protecting human rights.

The CEEAC Committee report also recommends that the Global Affairs Framework should set out its values and objectives (linked to the domestic agenda); stipulate a long-term timeframe (e.g., for the remainder of the 2020s); prioritise countries, regions and policy themes; and provide a clear rationale for that prioritisation. The new framework does not set out any detail in this regard.

This all sits against the backdrop of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that has heightened social and economic inequalities globally, slowing and in some cases, reversing progress towards achieving the UN SDGs globally¹. The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the unfathomable health inequalities between high-income and low-income countries and the importance of public services, especially in relation to vaccine access and cost. The pandemic has also underlined the vital need to rethink the care economy, and its reliance on women's unpaid work globally, and has demonstrated the need for new approaches to social security globally to support those in the informal sector.

The UK government has also now published its new International Development Strategy that emphasises national interest alongside trade and investment. It consolidates cuts to UK funding for multilateral approaches whilst retaining a commitment to specific funding to enhance the rights of women and girls.

Recommendations for Policymakers

A. Build a new strategy fit for the future and resource this appropriately

All the contextual changes and the wide array of planned new external affairs activities outlined above, demonstrate to us and our members that it is necessary to build a new overarching 'Global Solidarity Strategy' that would replace the 2016 International Development Strategy. A new strategy of this kind would sit alongside, not below, the new Global Affairs Framework. Importantly, we also make the point that the SG ID Team must be resourced appropriately to deliver on the commitments outlined above and to support coordination and alignment between distinct policy portfolios. The following four recommendations in this section outline what we consider to be the bare minimum for developing a new strategy.

1. Develop appropriate framing and scope for a new strategy

A new 'Global Solidarity Strategy' must first and foremost define what 'global solidarity' means and should be clear about what it intends to achieve. For us, demonstrating global solidarity means:

- changing narratives on what ‘aid’ actually is and what it should evolve into in terms of supporting the global redistribution of wealth and power – helping to shift decision-making and power structures away from the global north
- building truly equitable partnerships with ‘global south’ civil society
- supporting locally led and self-defined sustainable development
- supporting restorative climate justice that empowers people to
 - research, explore, implement, and revive the use of climate resilient traditional/indigenous practices, varieties of crops/livestock, beliefs and customs, and tenure/ownership
 - and/or to combat forces threatening the above, such as destructive extractive industries, logging and agro-industry, and related land grabbing.
- ensuring domestic objectives are supportive of global redistribution and self-defined global sustainable development
- ensuring Scotland’s broader global footprint (social and ecological) is net positive

Furthermore, a new strategy should set out clearly its scope and rationale, and crucially set out how it will achieve its aims and how it will evaluate success. It should:

- set out detailed and clear rationale for partner country(s) selection and the ratio of support for each country
- set out processes, timeframes and rationale for grant-making and other funding mechanisms and commit to full transparency (see further recommendations below)

2. Transparently set out detail of the processes, mechanisms and progress indicators that will enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

In line with longstanding commitments to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, SG should:

- set out how it will coordinate, align and support other elements of external affairs, international trade, international climate justice, humanitarian action and global sustainable development programming to achieve global solidarity, including by ensuring Ministerial leadership sits at the highest level.
- set out how it will enhance policy coherence with domestic objectives (in terms of mechanisms and processes), including through its commitment to implementing the SDGs in Scotland through the National Performance Framework and national outcomes, with leadership by the Deputy First Minister.
- set out detail for the processes, mechanisms and progress indicators that will be used to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, and indicate how and when progress will be evaluated.
- set out how new institutions – such as the Peace Institute and the Scottish Council for Global Affairs – and other existing international networks and offices will support global solidarity.
- set out how they will scale up Fair Trade growth through: public procurement; behaviour change; upskilling key stakeholders; and improving supply chain access to Fair Trade products.

3. Carry out a full, open and transparent consultation to inform the new strategy, and communicate its plans widely

The Scottish Government should carry out a full, open, transparent and inclusive consultation on its new strategy to ensure it is shaped by people and communities in partner countries, as well as people and communities in Scotland.

The consultation process must include a range of data collection methods to ensure inclusivity.

Ahead of the consultation, the Scottish Government should commit resources to support awareness raising of its plans and build understanding on key issues. Communications activities should seek to reach the widest audience possible.

4. Commit enough resources internally to ensure a new strategy can be developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Many of our members and wider stakeholders have repeatedly expressed concern that the SG ID team do not have sufficient human resources to implement comprehensive evaluation and learning mechanisms or to ensure continuity and coordination between all the elements of their international development and wider external affairs programming.

Therefore, SG should commit an increased proportion of its external affairs budget to ensure its own team are properly resourced to develop a new strategy, undertake meaningful consultation and carry out on-going co-ordination, planning, continuous evaluation and knowledge-building in the coming years.

B. Enhance direct contributions to global sustainable development

This section outlines a number of recommendations that can practically improve the co-ordination, implementation, and support for global sustainable development programming. It covers not only how grant making processes could be further developed, but also makes a range of recommendations on the key issues that SG could prioritise, and that more must be done to lead by example and influence the national and global context.

5. Meaningfully align climate action, international development, and humanitarian programming, and underpin with a ‘feminist approach’

This would be an important step in enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development, especially if a ‘feminist approach’ and commitments to zero carbon economy were equally and consistently applied to domestic and external affairs policy.

Alignment of external affairs programming in general, would mean:

- All International Development Fund (IDF) programmes being climate sensitive or “climate-proofed”. Climate adaptation must also be a cross cutting issue and not just something for Climate Justice Fund (CJF) to address.
 - This would mean that IDF spending should demonstrate climate impacts of both grants programming and organisational operations in relation to environmental sustainability.
 - This would mean explicit data collection and publication requirements in all IDF programmes, for both competitive and non-competitive grant awards.
- Education playing a central role in making climate commitments a reality. Funding that recognises the knowledge/experience/resilience of affected communities, utilises indigenous knowledge and that is gender focused would see long-lasting benefits. Drawing upon education focused NGOs/INGOs experience in Scotland could support this.
- Learning from the CJF review should inform the IDF. These two portfolios of activity must not be siloed and must actively support one another as well as being framed by clear gender analysis. The Alliance believes there is value in having these two areas under different ministerial portfolios but, ensuring co-ordination (e.g., not running competing calls for applications or events) and coherent messaging is an important starting point. Collaborative learning from both funds exchanged and built upon transparently is also recommended.
- The Humanitarian Emergency Fund should be complimentary to the new Loss and Damage fund and vice-versa. By clarifying the distinction between the two, SG can inform global work on loss and damage as this gains traction.

Underpinning external affairs programming with a feminist approach is a significant, long-term piece of work and will require a clear and resourced strategy with concrete objectives and milestones, which can be monitored. It would mean:

- Adequate resourcing for programmes as well as the internal capacity of Government, including for staffing, MEL and training. Ideally, programming would be iterative and adaptive, building on ongoing learning.
- Ensuring feminist principles are aligned across domestic policy and foreign affairs– this might include Scotland’s role in the manufacture/storage of weapons and arms and Scotland’s extractive industry as well as legislation on women’s and girls’ rights.

- Mainstreaming gender equality into all international development programming (including climate justice and humanitarian spend). The Government must ensure that it tracks this using the [OECD gender equality marker](#).
- Basing programming on robust and mandatory gender analysis, with women and girls meaningfully participating in programme design and implementation.

6. Ensure fully open and transparent processes for all grant-making, whether competitive or non-competitive

The majority of our members have repeatedly told us that all grant-making should be competitive. That said, full transparency on grant-making, regardless of whether competitive or non-competitive remains the most important factor for ensuring understanding and support for Scottish Government programming. Transparency is also critical for enhancing policy coherence, demonstrating good practice in governance and improving scrutiny of decision-making.

Open and transparent processes would mean:

- Clear, timely and transparent communication to the Scottish public over all spend, including clear rationale and justification of why projects/organisations are selected, particularly for non-competitive grants.
- Setting out a Terms of Reference and criteria outlining the conditions upon which a non-competitive funding allocation might take place is important too. When a non-competitive funding allocation does take place, then an explanation should be given of how the conditions were met. The relevant applications and reports should be published to increase transparency.
- Application processes for competitive grants should be accessible and remain as simple as possible.
- Regular and predictable competitive funding rounds to maximise impact.
- Grant-making should be in line with a coherent strategy based on proper consultation, and set out, at a minimum, for a full parliamentary cycle with inbuilt flexibility and an adaptive approach based on collaborative learning.
- Where possible, planning should be published well in advance with clear timelines and then adhered to – this is important as time/space is vital to provide for proper consultation with communities and partners for proposal design and preparation, which in turn is vital for sustainable and successful projects.
- Publishing clear plans on how the new ‘Global South Programme Panel’ could play an important role in democratising decision making and publicising criteria for appointments as well as the precise role of the advisory panel.
- Following up on the commitment to reporting to the International Aid Transparency Initiative²
- Evaluating, then publicising and regularly reporting on the use of grants and crucially, the impact they have, to increase public awareness.

7. Support civil society (in Scotland and directly in partner countries) first and foremost to drive Scotland's global solidarity

SG's added value to global solidarity continues to be demonstrated most clearly through its small but significant impact directed through civil society. This should be lauded, particularly at a time in history when the civil society operating environment continues to shrink globally.³

This should mean:

- Where possible, all of Scotland's direct financial contribution is spent through open, transparent, competitive calls for funding.
- Ensuring grant-making flows to a mix of different types of large and small NGOs, social enterprises, purpose driven businesses, research institutions etc. Some thought might be given to how to support medium and small NGOs access specific funding. Such commitments appeared in the Climate Justice Challenge Fund criteria but have not been consistently applied.
- Mapping available funding in target countries and identifying gaps through a consultative process that meaningfully involves civil society partners, particularly those who work with underrepresented groups.
- Ensuring the views of local (in-country) organisations and other relevant and representative non-governmental civil society and grassroots groups are prioritised in any consultation process. This should include trade unions, professional organisations, teachers' organisations, local government and village associations.
- Offering specific thematic competitive funding rounds to fill identified gaps that reach underrepresented groups.
- Ring-fencing a proportion of resources for wider capacity development of local (in-country) civil society organisations, who may not necessarily be grantees, to enhance locally led approaches within the Scottish Government target countries.
- Ensuring complementarity with other non-SG programming in targeted countries and/or thematic areas.
- Implementing the learning from past evaluations.

8. Develop suitable mechanisms to support funding local organisations directly in partner countries

In principle, the Alliance sees the desire to fund organisations directly in partner countries as the right thing to do to both support the decolonisation agenda and to support genuine locally led and self-defined global sustainable development. Local and national organisations are often best placed to understand the root causes of inequality and injustice in their contexts and deliver the most appropriate solutions. However, in practice, this needs careful planning and additional resourcing, so it doesn't undermine these objectives.

This would involve:

- Ensuring all information is clear, translated and easily accessible (e.g., jargon and technical language should be minimised), and providing appropriate tailored support to organisations in both applying to and implementing awarded grants
- Ensuring increased staff capacity within SG ID team in order to provide tailored support as appropriate
- Ensure grant-management contractor is staffed with people experienced at working with local civil society partners (in-country) to ensure the entire grant-making process is fully accessible and consultative for low-resource partners, underrepresented groups, and those most marginalised, including women and girls with disabilities.
- Allow applications and proposals to be developed in local/national languages.
- For funding to be most effective it is vital it is long-term, core, flexible and for the self-determined priorities of those organisations, not donor priorities.
- Compliance and due diligence processes should be adapted to the capacity of the organisation and the amount of funding they receive. Proposal requirements should be simplified both in terms of the project narrative and budget. Governments should also consider minimal reporting requirements – setting out realistic reporting deadlines and spreading out reporting periods.

9. Re-imagine grant-making to support arising need and a broader understanding of who is a ‘partner’

The Alliance represents a diverse range of organisations who work on a diverse range of issues with partners in over 100 countries. Therefore, we intrinsically support the idea of broadening the SG understanding of what makes a country ‘a partner’ and how to best support arising need.

This links to our overarching recommendation that Scotland needs a new ‘Global Solidarity Strategy’ which is rooted in an understanding that SG’s relatively small contribution can be greater than the sum of its parts if we work to find synergies and leverage support from other sources, including geographically.

However, this does not mean that we advocate for a wholesale increase in the number of countries SG prioritises in its IDF (a low number makes sense given the sums involved). Rather, we support a blended model whereby some grant-making actively seeks synergies, leverage and learning beyond a severely limited geographical set of countries. Consideration might also be given to how to engage diaspora groups in Scotland when considering priorities for intervention.

In practice this could mean:

- Changing the grant-making model from three-five yearly rounds to more frequent calls for proposals whilst ensuring each grant covers a minimum three-four year period. This would mean a smaller number of awards are made in each cycle (say every two years) but would allow grant-making to be more responsive to arising issues. This is more labour intensive from a grant management perspective and would require increased resourcing within the SG ID team, in line with earlier recommendations.

- Creating some open and competitive funding rounds that allow some opportunity for innovation outside current partner countries (like the Small Grants Programme Pilot), that aims to actively diversify the range of civil society engagement on issues underexplored in our sector, such as decolonisation or the economic consequences of the slave trade.
- Ensuring framing of grants, whether thematic (e.g., gender) or type (e.g., innovation, institution-building, etc.) is directly and explicitly linked to a clearly defined 'global solidarity strategy' and that all programmes are strategically evaluated against this strategy.
- Through the Scottish Funding Council, transparently support research for development and fill some of the gap left by the termination of the Global Challenges Research Fund. A small investment could do a lot to raise awareness of Scottish universities impact in LMICs and our research excellence more generally.

C. Broaden the ambition of Scotland's role

Scotland can and does lead by example on the global stage. It should explicitly aim to do this more on issues related to global sustainable development, not least to ensure that stated positions are backed up with concrete action. This would greatly increase Scotland's legitimacy as a voice for global solidarity.

10. Commit resources to national and international advocacy to influence and leverage support for global solidarity

SG should commit increased resources to UK and global advocacy on issues that matter. This would not only support the alignment of domestic and international priorities, but also support a joined-up approach on cross-cutting issues. In practice, this means taking strong, public positions and actively seeking to influence the UK Government and others on issues where global consensus does not align with Scotland's [International development principles](#). This commitment means understanding and tackling power imbalances, both current and historical.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- Vaccine access inequity. Importantly, this work could, and should, have knock on effects for improved access to other medicines for low-income countries.
- Feminist approaches to foreign policy and gender equality mainstreaming.
- Developing all programming through the lens of understanding and addressing the impact of colonial legacies
- Trade and investment. Supporting Scottish businesses to understand and meet Human Rights and gender equality obligations; ensuring all public procurement is meeting the highest environmental, human rights and gender equality standards, encouraging Scottish based business to sign up to initiatives such as the Ethical Trading Initiative.

- Business and Human Rights. Publicly support a UN binding Treaty on business and human rights, taking an active role in promoting good practice in Scottish based business.
- Aid for trade – reaffirm the mutual benefit of ensuring that ODA focuses on eliminating poverty and reducing inequality which would be in the broader UK interest as opposed to supporting narrow business interests. Reaffirm commitments to humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality etc.
- Wellbeing economy principles at global scale.
- Climate justice, including loss and damage funding.
- Improved communications about Scottish Government’s global sustainable development programming.

11. Innovate and pioneer new solutions and approaches to global development finance

Scottish Government’s leadership at COP26 on Loss & Damage demonstrated how Scotland can have a positive impact on the global stage with its relatively modest financial contributions. Future international development programming should take heed of this in recognition that Scotland can maximise its contribution to global sustainable development by innovating and pioneering new solutions, principles, and approaches and build on initiatives such as the Global Ethical Finance Initiative, to enhance objectives that promote the SDGs and financing for climate change.

This could mean:

- Creating a new role in the ID team that specifically focuses on research on innovation in global development finance.
- Exploring and championing concepts such as ‘Global Public Investment’ and working with other national, sub-national and private actors in global development, such as Norad (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) to build consensus on new finance models that support the provision of global public goods.
- Exploring how to ensure all development finance is gender sensitive in line with a new feminist approach to global affairs, including examples of gender bonds and other initiatives instigated elsewhere.
- Recognising the role of the finance sector in Scotland and the notional commitment to ‘global ethical finance’ and actively working to join that up better with global development programming and broader global sustainable development.
- Scaling up Fair Trade commitments, ensuring environmental, ecological and social standards are guaranteed throughout supply chains, including through support for the global living wage initiative.

12. Support holistic SDG implementation and the realisation of related international agreements

COVID-19 has emphasised and highlighted stark global inequalities, and direct support for vaccine rollout and medical supplies remain important.

However, COVID-19 has also slowed, and in some cases reversed, progress on virtually all other areas of SDG implementation. Yet the SDGs remain the best global roadmap for a more prosperous, safe, and sustainable planet, so the Alliance firmly believes the SDGs should continue to underpin all of the Scottish Government's global sustainable development programming, including ongoing COVID-19 recovery.

In practice this means:

- Ensuring programming always supports holistic solutions that seek to address multiple SDGs, and do not simultaneously undermine progress on other SDGs.
- Comprehensively including other international commitments, e.g., on human rights in such a holistic approach, understanding that the implementation of all rights are necessary conditions for the realisation of the SDGs.
- Ensuring direct COVID-19 response includes Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and livelihoods development focus.
- Utilising the SDGs as the benchmark for national performance, through the National Performance Framework and national outcomes, with leadership by the Deputy First Minister. and evaluating progress against SDG targets and indicators
- Commit to reporting two further VNRs before 2030 (in line with UK reports if they are done or separately to demonstrate a commitment to the SDG process e.g., in 2024 and 2027).

Conclusion

We have outlined several practical and systemic changes that we believe are necessary to enhance Scotland's role as a global citizen. Above all, we are clear that a new 'Global Solidarity Strategy' is vital for a more joined up approach to Scotland's contribution to global sustainable development, humanitarian support, climate justice and more.

A new strategy of this kind would sit alongside, not below, the new Global Affairs Framework, and would support coordination between distinct policy portfolios (e.g., C/JF), support better policy coherence, lay out mechanisms to ensure transparency and provide clear parameters on funding criteria.

This new strategy would build on work undertaken and progress already made through the international development review in 2021 but would also reflect more recent changes mentioned above. A full consultation should be carried out to shape this new strategy.

References:

1 [UN/DESA Policy Brief #81: Impact of COVID-19 on SDG progress: a statistical perspective](#)

2 Scottish government joined the International Aid Transparency Initiative in 2013 but has not reported against the standard.

3 [Shrinking Space for Civil Society: ForumCiv Report](#)

About Scotland's International Development 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 over 200 international NGOs, companies, universities, charitable trusts, public sector bodies and individuals that operate in over 100 countries.

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