Written evidence submitted by the Scottish Government

Summary:

1. The Scottish Government submits, in summary:

- Following the example set by other smaller European nations, such as Sweden, the Scottish Government has already committed to policy coherence for development, including in Scotland’s Future.
- The Scottish Government is clear that Scotland has a unique contribution to offer the world through its people’s expertise on climate change and energy, education, health improvement and research along with the Scottish Government’s innovative approach to international development.
- The Scottish Government is already working across its Ministerial portfolios to support international aims, in areas such as education and climate justice.
- With the powers of independence, the Scottish Government is clear that it can extend the approach across all of the full policy areas of an independent government, working to ensure that trade; defence and other departments do not undermine Scotland’s work on international development.
- Scotland’s Future sets out the Scottish Government’s ambition that an independent Scotland will seek to be a global leader in the field of international development, championing best practice and innovation: being a global leader in international development is not necessarily just about the size in absolute monetary terms, but the impact that you can make across your Government policy.
- The Scottish Government is delighted that the Committee is leading the way for the UK Government in considering this issue of the importance of providing a cohesive, comprehensive approach to development, across all UK Government policies.
- The Scottish Government recommends that the UK Government explore third party, independent monitoring of any policy coherence for development approach that they may adopt.

Discussion:

2. The Scottish Government welcomes the opportunity to contribute, through your inquiry, to the discussions on the importance of providing a cohesive, comprehensive approach to development, across all Government policies. An example of such an approach might include closer relationships between DFID, UKTI and the UK’s trade bodies to ensure the UK Government’s development work is not undermined by trade policies. A current example of how this approach could work would be for the UK to immediately suspend all arms sales to Israel pending an investigation into whether any UK arms had been used in any violations of international law during the conflict in Gaza. The evidence below provides an overview on the main areas of interest identified by the Committee in announcing the terms of reference on 10 July 2014; on the specific issues for the UK Government, including whether a stand-alone Department for International Development has a long-term future, the Scottish Government does not feel it appropriate to provide a view. We hope that our wider contribution is helpful nonetheless.
3. The Scottish Government is clear that Scotland has a unique contribution to offer the world through its people’s expertise on climate change and energy, education, health improvement and research along with the Scottish Government’s innovative approach to international development.

4. Following the example set by other smaller European nations, such as Sweden, the Scottish Government has already committed to policy coherence for development.

5. Since coming into post in September 2012, the Scottish Government’s Minister for External Affairs and International Development, Humza Yousaf, has continued to champion and affirm the Scottish Government’s commitment to policy coherence for development as an approach across Scottish Government policies. That commitment by the Scottish Government has been set before Scottish civil society, including the conference organised by the Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS) in May 2013 to consider “Scotland 2013 and beyond”.

6. In giving evidence before this Committee last October, Minister Humza Yousaf, set out the Scottish Government’s ambitious vision of the role Scotland could play as a global citizen. Scotland’s First Minister, Alex Salmond, has set out his aspiration that an independent Scotland would be a “progressive beacon”, and that is what the Scottish Government wants to achieve through its international development work.

7. Crucially, Mr Yousaf set out before this Committee last year that being a global leader in international development is not necessarily just about the size in absolute monetary terms, but the impact that you can make across your Government policy. The Scottish Government takes the view that it could be a world leader on international development through its approach to development, no matter the budget.

8. That is clear from respected indices such as the Centre for Global Development’s Commitment to Development Index, which consistently show smaller countries such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark at the top, ahead of the UK in terms of development impact contribution. And of course, countries like Sweden are world leaders in the area of policy coherence for development.

9. The Scottish Government would also seek for an independent Scotland to develop policies that would put it right up at the top of these tables in terms of that overall contribution to development: policies like "do no harm" through policy coherence or development, the idea that the Scottish Government should not undermine the good development work that it does through other Government policies.

10. That commitment to policy coherence for development was reiterated in Scotland’s Future, published in November 2013. It set out the Scottish Government’s ambition that an independent Scotland will seek to be a global leader in the field of international development, championing best practice and innovation.
11. In *Scotland’s Future* the Scottish Government stated its commitment to policy coherence as one of the key propositions driving its development policy: that Scottish Government policies, on all issues, should seek to do no harm to developing countries, or undermine Scottish Government international development aims and will ideally contribute to international development success. This commitment on policy coherence for development sits alongside the other three stated key propositions that would guide Scotland’s approach to international development: more and better aid; the careful consideration of “unjust debts”; and gender equality. The Scottish Government further commits in *Scotland’s Future* to reporting to the Scottish Parliament on a regular basis on Scotland’s development impact, including on its commitment to “do no harm”. As noted, Sweden are leaders in policy coherence for development with the Government publishing biennial reports on progress. Swedish civil society organisations also jointly publish a shadow Barometer report scrutinising the Government’s record in this area. The Scottish Government recommends that if the UK Government adopts a policy coherence for development approach that they explore third party, independent monitoring of progress as happens in Sweden.

12. *Scotland’s Future* also sets out that, with independence, the Scottish Government will maintain its current, unified structure and not create different, fragmented departments like those of the Westminster Government. This structure has been successful in delivering joined-up thinking and co-operation and provides a firm basis for taking on the full range of policy and functions of an independent national government.

13. The Scottish Government recognises the expertise of civil society and the role it can play in scrutiny of policy. Our approach to international development is one of working in partnership not just with civil society in Scotland but also in our partner countries. In particular, we have developed a unique development partnership model with Malawi, not only through our government to government 2005 Cooperation Agreement but through the civil society links between our two countries as Scottish NGOs work with partners in Malawi. The approach is people led and a reciprocal partnership which we consider key to learning and building on successes and failures in international development. We think this unique “bottom up” and reciprocal partnership approach to international development is a particular Scottish strength, which with independence we would continue to build on.

14. The November 2013 Report by NIDOS, “*Scotland’s Place in Building a Just World: Shaping a coherent international development policy for Scotland*”, which resulted from their May conference, also focussed on policy coherence for development, to ensure that Scotland’s global impact is one that would contribute to tackling the root causes of global poverty. The Scottish Government was pleased that the focus of this important Report chimed with the stated Scottish Government position on policy coherence for development.

15. The Scottish Government is, of course, already working across its Ministerial portfolios to support international aims:

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¹ *Scotland’s Future*, Part 5 Q&A, page 471  
² *Scotland’s Future*, c10, page 366
On education:

16. The Scottish Government is seeking ever closer policy integration in its international development education work in Malawi under its unique 2005 Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Malawi, with an increasing role for Education Scotland in development work. A new formal agreement on inspection and improvement in education was signed in Lilongwe, Malawi, in January 2014 between the Scottish and Malawi Governments, heralding a new and exciting era of strategic engagement, focussing on sharing knowledge and skills to support improvements in Education. The reciprocal element to the Scotland-Malawi relationship is maintained, whereby Scotland will also learn from Malawi in several key areas, including how to develop Scottish learners’ understanding of global citizenship.

On climate justice:

The Scottish Government International Development team is working with International Low Carbon Energy colleagues on both the Scottish Government’s innovative Climate Justice Fund and its work on the UN’s Sustainable Energy for All initiative. This is providing a streamlined approach to both international development and climate change.

Conclusion

Following the example set by other smaller European nations, such as Sweden, the Scottish Government has already committed to policy coherence for development, including in Scotland’s Future.

The Scottish Government is clear that Scotland has a unique contribution to offer the world through its people’s expertise on climate change and energy, education, health improvement and research along with the Scottish Government’s innovative approach to international development.

The Scottish Government is already working across its Ministerial portfolios to support international aims, in areas such as education and climate justice.

However, of course, with the powers of independence the Scottish Government notes that it could extend its approach across all of the full policy areas of an independent government, working to ensure that trade; defence and other departments do not undermine Scotland’s work on international development.