



## **Priorities for the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Submitted by Size of Wales**

### **1. What is the current impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your sector, and what further support is needed from the Welsh and UK Governments both to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and enable the post-pandemic recovery?**

A combination of the COVID-19 pandemic (including extended periods of furlough) and the implication of UK Government cuts to the overseas aid budget, have had a significant impact on the capacity of the international NGO sector in Wales and the support they are able to offer to overseas partners. Thanks to funding from the Welsh Government via the Wales and Africa programme, and other donors, Size of Wales has been able to continue to operate its programmes overseas and support partners and local communities.

We congratulate Welsh Government, the NHS Wales and their partners in Wales on their collaborative effort to build the infrastructure to deliver a world leading mass vaccination programme and the support provided to Namibia in terms of PPE provision. However, as global citizens, we know that in a global pandemic, we are not safe until everyone is safe and are desperately concerned that many low-income countries are suffering devastating impacts from COVID-19. We are also particularly concerned about the worrying impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous People and the need to ensure that they are specially included in economic and social recovery plans and policies.

### **2. What issues should the committee prioritise in planning our work programme for the immediate and longer term?**

Despite over 5 years since the passing of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, there is a lack of understanding around the delivery of the globally responsible Wales goal. We are encouraged that global responsibility is a central theme within the Welsh Government's International Strategy, but there remains a significant gap in policy coherence across Welsh Government and the wider public sector.

Ensuring supply chains are fair, ethical and sustainable is important for a number of reasons, including Wales' obligation to establish itself as a Globally Responsible Nation. Wales has a responsibility to consider how its practices impact global habitats, but Wales also has an opportunity to demonstrate global leadership towards driving sustainability across commodity supply chains around the world.

One of the key factors driving the global climate and nature emergency is deforestation and habitat loss. The International Panel on Climate Change is clear that without our



forests, we will fail to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Wales needs to play its part by changing what it buys, consumes and invests in, since these choices can drive unethical practices and environmental degradation overseas.

More than 70% of tropical forest loss and land conversion is attributable to the production of just a handful of agricultural commodities and forestry products demanded by consumers. Precious habitats like the Amazon are being burnt to clear land - rainforests are being destroyed to produce just a handful of commodities. Wales imports significant quantities of agricultural and forest commodities, some of which are driving deforestation and habitat destruction overseas. Whether that is commodities for the production of soymeal for livestock feed in Wales, palm oil used in everyday supermarket items, beef imported into Wales, cocoa used in Welsh confectionery and desserts, or even rubber used to produce latex or car tyres.

Size of Wales, along with WWF Cymru and RSPB Cymru and Size of Wales have formed a Deforestation Free Nation Partnership. We have commissioned research which is due to be published in October to provide data, for the first time, of Wales' deforestation footprint. The research confirms that

- **An area equivalent to 40% of the size of Wales (823,000 hectares)** was required overseas to grow Welsh imports of cocoa, palm oil, beef, leather, natural rubber, soy, timber, pulp and paper in an average year between 2011-2018.
- Crucially, **30% of the land used to grow Welsh imports of commodities is in countries categorised high or very high risk for social and deforestation issues**. This means commodity supply chains supplying Wales in these countries risk deforestation, conversion of natural ecosystems and/or social issues, such as child, forced labour or abuse of Indigenous People's rights.

Wales possesses significant levers which can be used to address our Global Responsibility. These include:

- Introducing mandatory ethical and sustainability requirements for public sector procurement in Wales;
- Monitoring our consumption emissions and setting targets to reduce this in Wales' carbon budgets and low carbon delivery plans
- Ensuring that the Welsh Government's Economic Contract, which aims to strengthen a relationship with business and drive inclusive growth and responsible business behaviour, is strengthened so that signatories to the contract commit to ethical supply chains that protect human rights and the environment.
- Introducing sustainable farming practices via the Sustainable Farming scheme that do not contribute to human rights abuses and environmental degradation overseas. For example, this includes ending the reliance on imported soy animal feed that originates from forest risk areas and adopting nature and climate-friendly farming methods such as organic farming, agro-ecology and agroforestry.



- Ensuring vulnerable countries and communities, especially women and Indigenous People suffering the effects of climate change, nature loss and deforestation are supported to help them adapt and prosper as part of Wales' ambition to be a globally responsible nation through the Wales and Africa programme.

We would welcome committee scrutiny in relation to Wales and its global responsibility and ethical supply chains.

### **3. How does Brexit and the new UK-EU relationship affect you or your organisation? What support have you received to respond to the changes? What further support, if any, is needed from Welsh and UK Governments?**

Wales must work with the UK Government to ensure that new trade agreements guarantee high environmental and human rights standards, accompanied by strict enforcement measures. For example, new trading arrangements could see an increase in forest risk commodities coming into Wales, such as beef, soy, palm oil, coffee and cacao, thereby driving deforestation even higher. These imports could also undermine local economies in Wales, such as cattle farming with the influx of cheaper imports.

Welsh Government has prioritised the Social Partnerships and Procurement Bill as part of the legislative programme for year one of the Senedd term. More needs to be done to better understand Wales' performance as a globally responsible nation and how this could be improved through the Procurement Bill. This could be undertaken in collaboration with the Economy, Trade & Rural Affairs Committee.

### **Size of Wales**

Size of Wales is a Welsh charity that brings people together in Wales and beyond to protect two million hectares of tropical forests (the size of Wales) and help reduce deforestation as part of Wales' response to the challenge of climate change. We also support tree growing initiatives around the world and raise awareness about how vital tropical forests are for us and our climate as well as for the wildlife and people who live in them. We work in schools and colleges to engage children and young people in understanding and sharing responsibility for the protection of the world's forests. We work with businesses, government and communities in Wales to bring about changes in policies and practices to tackle our overseas deforestation footprint. Our work is funded by the Welsh Government, trusts and foundations, corporate partners and individuals.

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