

WCIA follow-up written evidence for The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee one-day inquiry on international relations on 2nd February 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute supplementary written evidence to this inquiry. As requested by the Committee, this briefing provides some context to support our oral evidence session with the Committee on 2 February 2022.

1. Embedding Welsh values

We are pleased that Welsh values are reflected in the Strategy and that Wales' aspiration to be a globally responsible nation is included as a key component of how we present ourselves to the world. However, we feel more needs to be done to **actively embed understanding and representation of Welsh values among all Cymru Wales ambassadors** including:

- Delivering an actively anti-racist and non-colonial approach in *all* our international relations – trade, investment, sport, arts, education and culture;
- Ensuring ambassadors represent the diversity within our communities;
- Demonstrating that all international staff are well trained in key areas such as safeguarding, human rights due diligence and power dynamics
- Ensuring that international relations are enshrined in the principles of a globally responsible Wales, based on a wellbeing economy that embeds trade justice and delivers for both people and planet.

2. Policy Coherence

As recommended in our joint report with The Learned Society, ahead of the development of the Strategy, there needs to be greater alignment between domestic and international policy to ensure they are consistent and do not contradict values underpinning Wales as a globally responsible nation. In our view, **more needs to be done to embed and demonstrate policy coherence across Welsh Government's international and domestic policy.**

For example, WCIA is concerned that a drive for inward investment to create jobs and prosperity here in Wales will ignore fundamental issues such as the human rights track record of inward investors and how we push for ethical employment in global supply chains as well as those here in Wales. We have some way to go to build understanding of what global responsibility looks like. It is not just about tokenistic gestures but systematically ensuring that actions taken here in Wales do not harm the planet or people anywhere and have positive impacts where possible. Questions around policy coherence include:

- Who is responsible for assessing the export or investment risks (such as impacts on human rights¹) of cybersecurity products and services?

¹ [Human Rights Guidance for Cyber Security Companies | Institute for Human Rights and Business \(ihrb.org\)](https://www.ihrb.org/)

- Who is responsible for ensuring that compound semi-conductor companies receiving Welsh Government investment and support have robust policies and procedures on conflict minerals?
- How is a Higher Education funding model based on the recruitment of international students compatible with Wales' decarbonisation plan and who is assessing the climate change impacts² of this model?
- How is exporting a third of Welsh beef and an ambition to expand beef exports to China compatible with behaviour change plans in Wales to reduce red meat consumption in line with the EAT-Lancet guide to Planetary Health³?
- Does the Welsh Government £10m investment in the Thales Group undermine Welsh values around peace and solidarity and our ambition to become a Nation of Sanctuary? Among other technologies, Thales Group are responsible for the Watchkeeper aerial surveillance system which was developed in partnership with Elbit Systems based in Israel for use in Palestine and it has also been used to monitor refugees crossing the Channel as part of Home Office border control measures.
- How much wealth is retained in communities through the jobs created by Foreign Direct Investment, compared to that which goes to shareholders? Where do these companies pay tax? How is global responsibility communicated to Foreign Direct investors?
- How does the International Strategy help deliver the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act milestone of 'only using our fair share of the earth's resources by 2050'?

3. A life-long learning approach to global citizenship

We are encouraged that global responsibility is a central theme within the Welsh Government's International Strategy, that supporting 'ethical citizens of Wales and the world' is central to the Curriculum for Wales and that active global citizenship has been included as a wellbeing indicator under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Global citizenship is a key element of securing our future economic wellbeing and to foster a globally responsible outlook for generations to come. Education is key to ensuring that Welsh citizens have the knowledge, understanding and values needed to be good global citizens. Global learning enables people to develop their knowledge and skills to enhance their employability for Wales' workforce in the global marketplace and to better understand the role Wales can play in tackling global issues such as economic inequality and the climate and nature emergencies. We are delighted that this approach is already embedded in the Curriculum for Wales, and hope it will also be reflected in the new Qualifications Framework.

A global citizenship approach to climate education is also key to ensuring that learners understand the problem from a holistic viewpoint - we cannot address climate change without understanding equality, economy, power and the systemic change needed to address them. Welsh Government need to support organisations delivering effective global citizenship education through an open and transparent grants process to deliver citizenship activities (including climate education) in the curriculum.

² [Time to cut international education's carbon footprint \(universityworldnews.com\)](https://www.universityworldnews.com)

³ [EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report.pdf \(eatforum.org\)](https://eatforum.org)

In order to drive progress in active global citizenship across Wales, a comprehensive education journey is required through school education, further and higher education and through life-long learning opportunities. Such a journey needs to incorporate behaviour change programmes being delivered through the Net Zero Plan and Public Sector Route Map. This could start with the public sector workforce and there are existing training packages developed by WCIA and Oxfam within Public Health Wales, that could be adapted for this purpose. ***Global citizenship education across the life course is essential to start to build a national consensus on the values, behaviours and actions expected from Welsh citizens which includes care and consideration for all people of the world and for the planet upon which we all depend.***

4. Global Solidarity and international development

We are disappointed by the lack of aspiration for Welsh Government to do more on international development particularly given evidence from Carwyn Jones AM (the then First Minister) to the External Affairs Committee in October 2018, stated that ‘The work of the Wales for Africa programme is not constrained by a lack of legal powers.’ This gives Wales significant opportunity to do more to maximise its contribution to secure better futures for the poorest communities globally. We would like to see Welsh Government increasing its investment in the programme, noting that it currently spends a considerably lower proportion of the national budget on Wales and Africa than the Scottish Government does on comparable work and that the Wales budget has remained relatively static for over a decade, not even increasing in line with inflation. ***We would like to see greater clarity on the vision for Wales’ International Development role and how it will be achieved and funded.***

5. Expanding engagement with global diaspora living in Wales

It is encouraging to see the extent to which Welsh Government and partners engage with Welsh diaspora and ‘affinity diaspora’ - nationals of other countries who work or study, or who once worked or studied in Wales’ as detailed in the Diaspora Action Plan. However, this focus seems to exclude global diaspora living in Wales who may not work or study here either through choice or because they are not permitted to do so. Diaspora communities living in Wales contribute significantly to our communities, economy and international profile, help develop civic-to-civic links and remittances from some diaspora communities are an important financial contribution for their home countries. ***We recommend that diaspora engagement is increased and that the needs and sensitivities of diaspora communities are considered more consistently***, for example when visits are planned from government representatives or diplomats. As a Nation of Sanctuary, Wales welcomes people seeking sanctuary who take Wales to their heart and share their love of Wales and the welcome they have felt here with friends and relatives in their home countries. Although, this may not have a significant economic gain to Wales, perhaps more importantly this story of Wales is of huge value in portraying the kind of nation we are. In addition, there are international schemes that could be explored to support work with global diaspora for international development.⁴

6. Trade, investment and procurement

While we understand that Welsh Government must be open to business opportunities, it must take every opportunity to make clear that it wants to work with others who share their values and commitments. ***Wales must put global responsibility at the heart of its***

⁴ Migration and Development - Connecting Diaspora

investment activity. 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 deforestation 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, with the influx of cheaper imports the impact of which is already having a significant impact on Wales' Overseas Land Footprint.⁵ WCIA is part of the newly established Trade Justice Forum for Wales and is encouraged by the proactive and cross sectoral approach to bring in expertise, evidence and support with training to enable Welsh civil society to better understand and contribute to discussions on trade.

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. The Bill could be used to drive sustainable and ethical action by businesses that are supported by public bodies in relation to their activities both domestically and internationally. Ethical and sustainable certifications are available for most of the products which have the biggest impacts on the planet (soy, palm oil, coffee, cacao as well as timber⁶). Labels also offer procurers the ability to ensure that the global supply chains for our food, consumables and raw products do not deplete or undermine the people, bio-diversity, environment and global systems and resources upon which Wales' people rely. This would ensure that action is taken now, to reduce negative impacts of Welsh business and supply chains on future generations and the climate and nature emergency.

We would like the Committee to look at the global impact of Welsh Government supply chains, grants and investments including but not limited to, ethical screening systems use, human rights due diligence, fair work⁷, overseas deforestation, whether pensions and other investments are ethical and consumption emissions of greenhouse gases.

WCIA worked with Oxfam Cymru to undertake a series of workshops with civil society partners to develop a better understanding of what it means for Wales to be a globally responsible nation. A globally responsible Wales toolkit⁸ was produced drawing together action that could be taken.

⁵ https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/wwf_risky_b_wales.pdf

Wales and Global Responsibility, Addressing Wales' Overseas Land Footprint

⁶ Deforestation free beef is organic or grass fed and local.

⁷ For example, Fair Trade certification ensures above market floor price, contribution for community development projects, that there is no child labour and that Fair Trade farmers' children are in school.

⁸ [Big steps to global responsibility in Wales - Welsh Centre for International Affairs \(wcia.org.uk\)](https://www.wcia.org.uk)