The Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP)

Chad Morse, Deputy CEO

Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) is a non-profit umbrella organisation that coordinates the activities of Scottish individuals and organisations with existing links to Malawi. Its mission is to foster further connections between both countries. It operates from an office in the Edinburgh City Chambers.

Chad first gave a brief introduction to the human geography of Malawi, especially in relation to other parts of Africa. It is one of the tenth poorest countries in the world measured by GDP/capita. Its economy is largely limited to agriculture, mainly tobacco and tea, with very basic infrastructure. It is often plagued by natural disasters. They had the worst flooding in 40 years last year, and this year a majority of their states have declared drought emergency.

Malawi has enjoyed a long history of relationship with Scotland since the 1700s when David Livingstone first visited that part of Africa. Today, many Scottish organisations, including universities, schools and NGOs have linked up with their Malawi counterparts in many areas, with emphasis on education, health and poverty reduction. Specific examples were cited with Scotland's first minister Jack McConnell's (2001 - 2007) poverty relief visit to Malawi in 2005 and his strong support of the development of the Scotland Malawi Partnership, and with the meeting between the current Scottish first minister Humza Yousaf and the president of Malawi during King Charles' coronation. Further examples were given on the support given by Scottish organisations to Malawi during the Covid pandemic (providing oxygen concentrators), and the Commonwealth Games (technical support to Malawi cyclists). Finally Chad also explained the operation and governance principles of SMP.

The talk was also attended by Mr Stuart Sharkie, president of Rotary Club of Allander that has a specific project this year related to Malawi, and by the lead Trustee, Ms Sarah Black, from Changing Lives Malawi, a charity based in Balfron.

William Ho 3 April 2024