

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT UK AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY: ANNUAL REVIEW

Executive summary

1. In November 2011, the SPCB agreed the UK and International Strategy and also agreed to an annual evaluation to help inform future years of the Strategy. This report considers the activity of the UK and International Relations Office from the start of Session Four to the end of August 2012.

Issues and Options

2. No changes are proposed to the International Strategy as a result of this paper.

Resource Implications

3. There are no resource implications arising from this paper.

Governance issues

4. Governance issues, including equalities issues, were considered when the International Strategy was approved. There are, therefore, no governance issues arising from this paper.

Publication Scheme

5. This paper will be published in line with the SCPB's Publication Scheme.

Next steps

6. The next annual review of the operation of the International Strategy will take place in Autumn 2013.

Decision

7. The International Strategy is a new Strategy which is in the process of being implemented. No changes to the Strategy are proposed at this stage and therefore no decisions are required in relation to this paper.

UK and International Relations Office
October 2012

UK AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY: ANNUAL REVIEW

Introduction

1. The UK and International Strategy was agreed by the SPCB in November 2011. At the time of agreeing the Strategy the SPCB also agreed to an annual evaluation to help inform future years of the Strategy. Given that the Strategy has only recently been adopted this review considers activity undertaken since the beginning of this Parliamentary session (May 2011) until the end of the August 2012. Future reports will be annual in coverage. This report considers the following:

- Some key activities which have been undertaken over the last 15 months
- A quantitative overview of inward and outward visits which have been supported; and
- A discussion of activity which has been supported under each of the geographical strands contained within the Strategy.

Key Activities

2. Some of the key activities which have been supported by UKIRO over the last 15 months include:

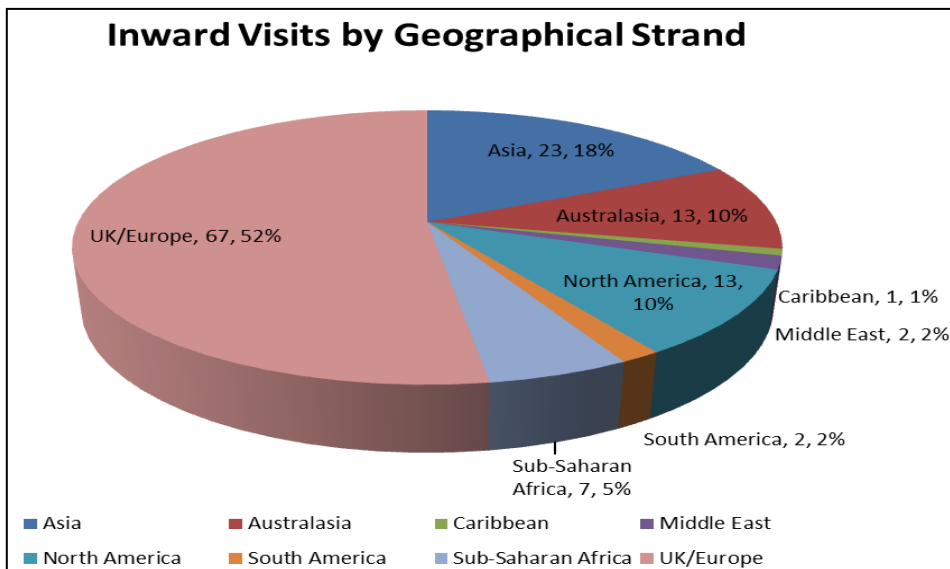
- The hosting of the Presiding Officer's Quadrilateral involving the Speakers of the House of Commons, Northern Ireland Assembly and the Welsh Assembly;
- The attendance of MSP's at the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly Plenary Sessions in Brighton, Cork and Dublin;
- The hosting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's British Isles and Mediterranean Region Conference;
- The visit by the Speaker of the Australian Senate, John Hogg MP;
- The visit by the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, David McAllister;
- The visit by the Economy, Budget and Finance Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro;
- The visit by the Vice-Presidents and Parliamentarians from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia;
- The attendance of one MSP at the United Nations Development Programme Climate Change conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh;
- The attendance of one MSP at a conference on Public Participation organised by the Guateng Provincial Legislature, Johannesburg, South Africa;
- The attendance by one MSP at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly Canada Regional Conference in Quebec; and
- A one month internship for two officials from the National Assembly of Malawi.

Data

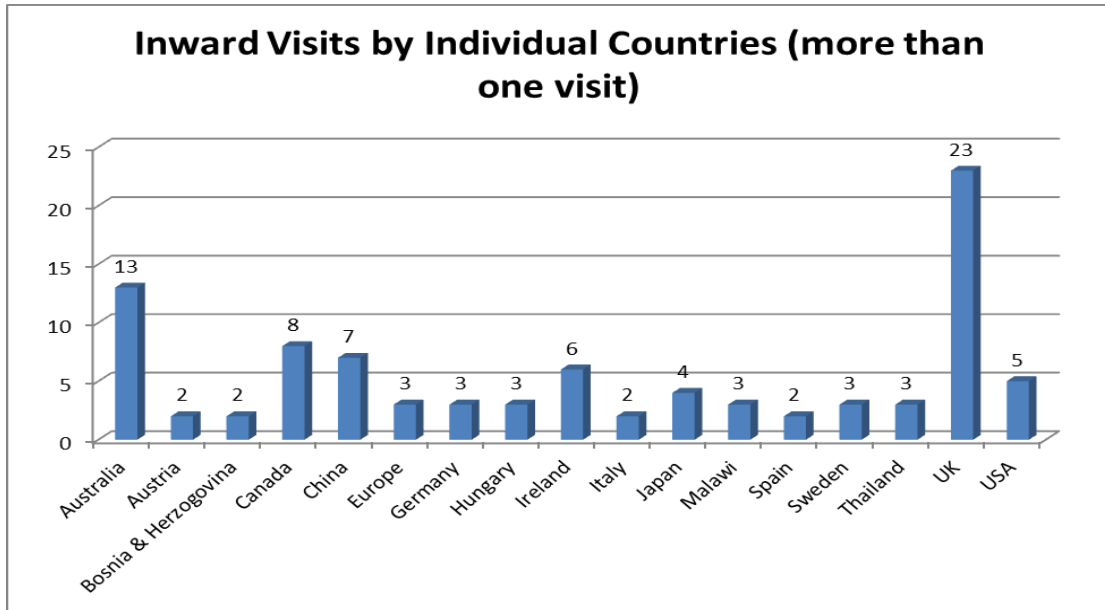
- The quantitative data presented in this review relates to Parliamentary and diplomatic delegations received into the Scottish Parliament. In terms of the outward visit data presented here, the data relates to outward delegations of MSP's and officials to conferences and activities outwith Scotland.

Inward Visits

- Over the last 15 months, a total of 128 inward delegations have visited the Scottish Parliament. Over half of the inward delegations have come from the UK / Europe. Asia, including the Middle East, accounts for 18% of inward delegations. Of the 23 inward delegations from Asia, 14 delegations were from China, Japan and Thailand. Australasia and North America each accounted for 10% of inward delegations hosted between May 2011 and August 2012. The graph below details the number of inward visits hosted by geographical strand and the number of visits by strand as a proportion of the total number of inward visits.

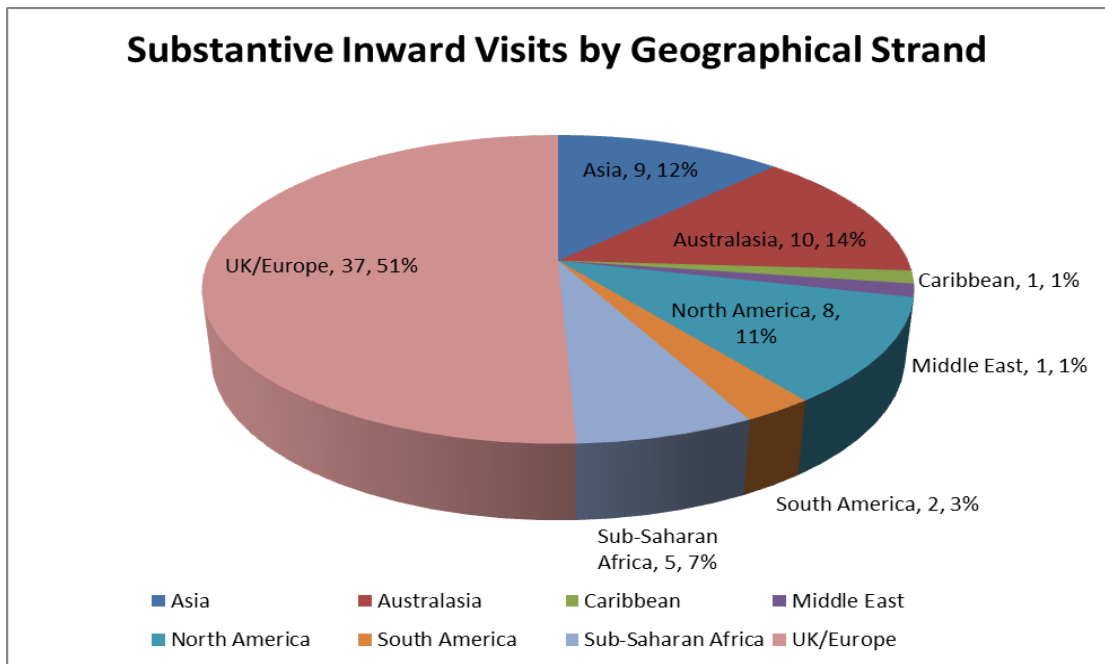


- The table overleaf details the individual countries which have made more than one inward visit to the Scottish Parliament. Visits from the UK account for 23 inward delegations. Australia constituted the second largest number of inward visitors of which roughly half of the 13 inward Australian delegations consisted of individual Members' of Australian legislatures who were visiting Scotland. In a similar vein, inward visitors from Canada formed the third largest country of origin for inward visits. This included the visit of the Speaker of the Canadian Senate, Noel Kinsella MP.
- The category 'Europe', whilst clearly not an individual country, refers to inward delegations which comprised visitors from a number of European countries such as, the John Smith Fellows.



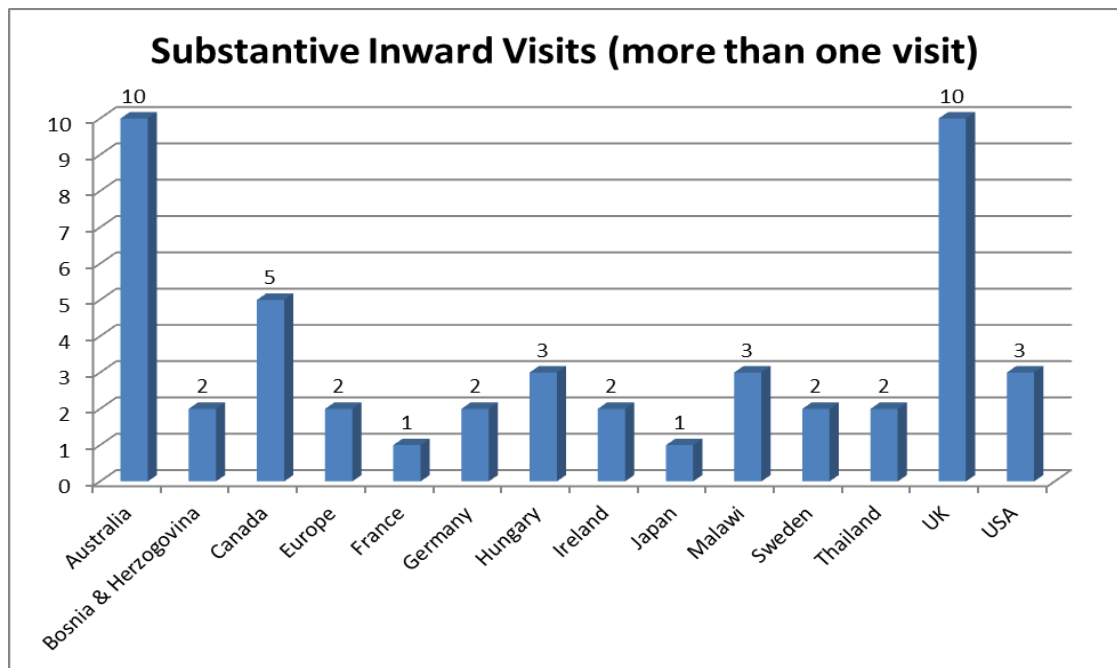
Substantive Inward Visits

7. Substantive inward visits refers to inward delegations where UKIRO have provided a substantive programme of support as opposed to where an inward delegation have visited the Scottish Parliament but received no formal UKIRO support. In total, 73 inward visits received a formal programme of support from UKIRO. Again the pattern of support is similar to that for all inward visits supported with 51% of substantive inward visits coming for the UK / Europe, 12% from Asia, 11% from North America and 10% from Australasia (see graph below).

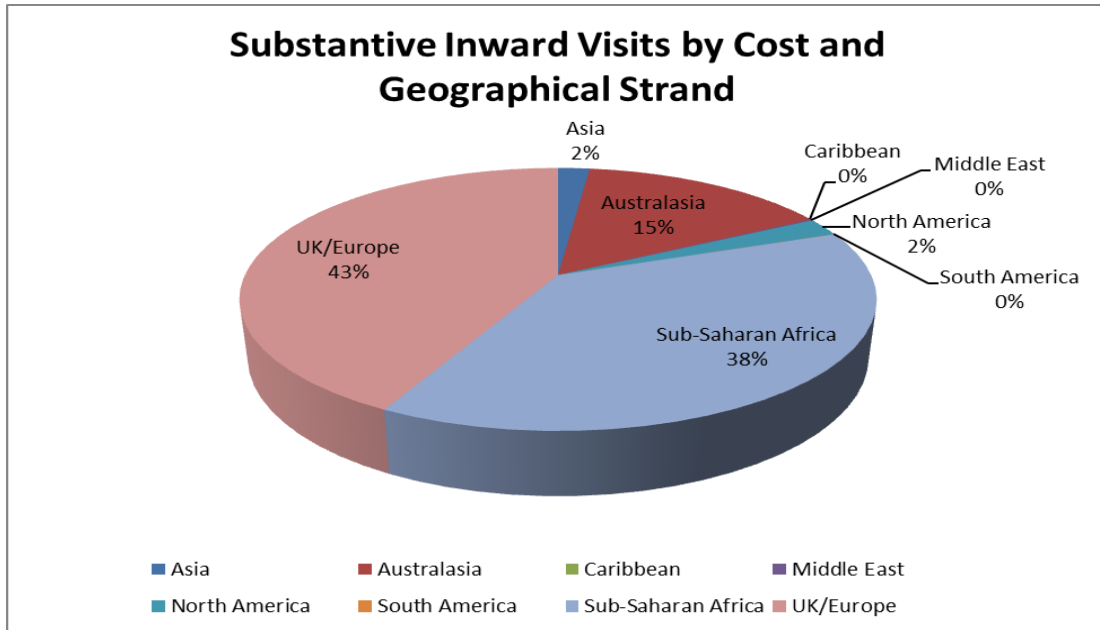


8. In terms of substantive programmes of support for visits the graph overleaf, details those countries which made more than one visit.

Delegations from Australia and the UK, which accounted for 10 visits each, amount to over 40% of the substantive programmes of support provided by UKIRO for inward visits.

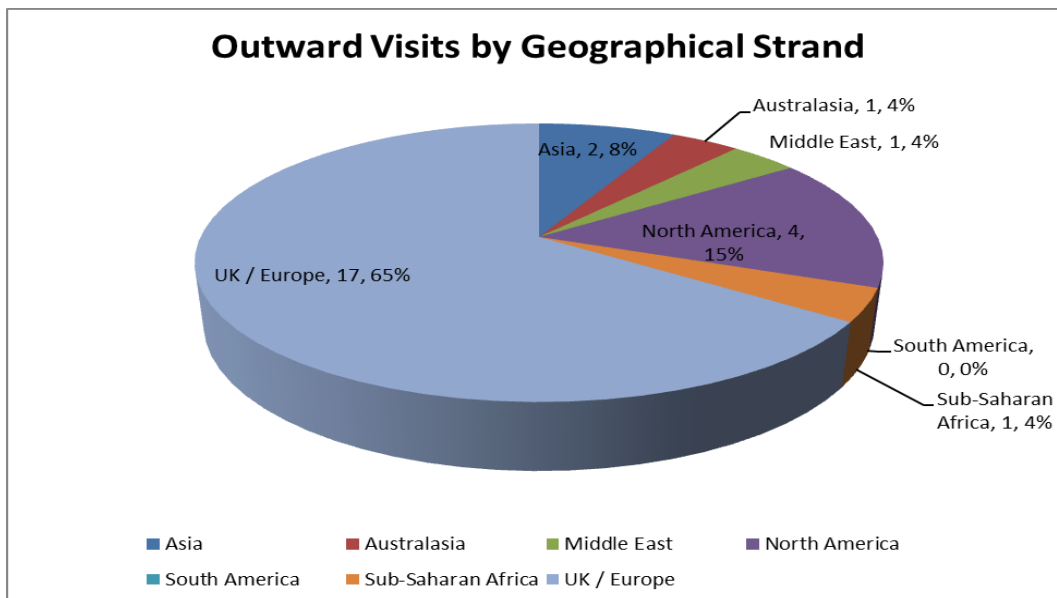


9. Expenditure on substantive inward visits indicates that the volume of visits from a particular region does not necessarily determine the pattern of financial spend. The pie chart overleaf, indicates that whilst the UK / Europe accounted for 51% of visits this equated to 43% of total expenditure on inward visits. More significantly, the 7% of inward visits from Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 38% of expenditure. This reflects the cost of hosting two Interns from the National Assembly of Malawi within the Scottish Parliament for a month. Expenditure on Australasia primarily reflects the cost of hosting a programme for a high-profile delegation, the visit of the President of the Australian Senate, John Hogg MP.

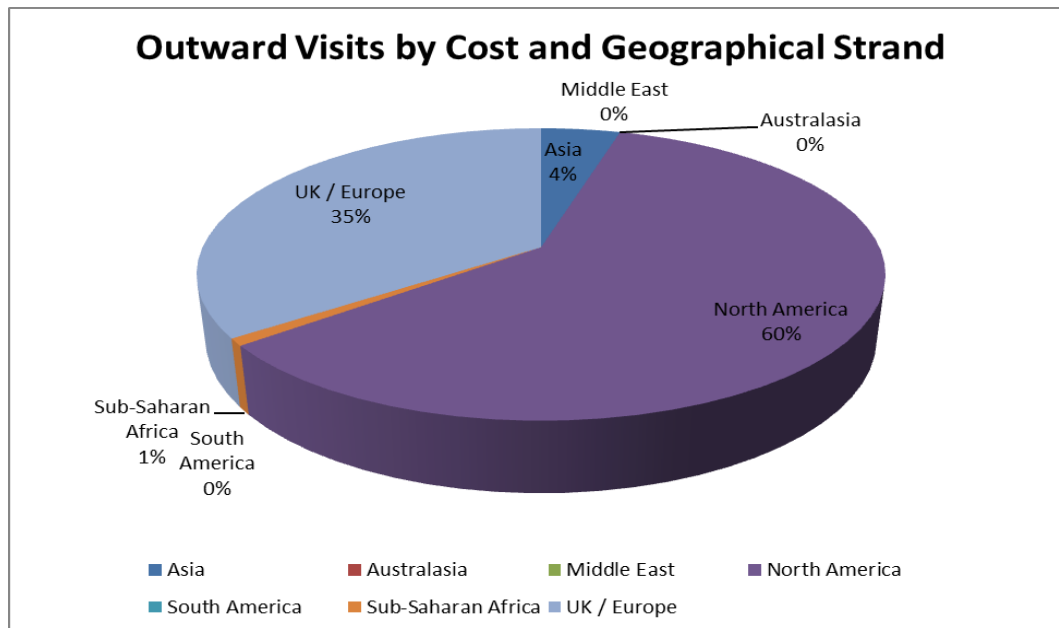


Outward Visits

10. The pie chart below depicts the outward visits, supported by UKIRO, by geographical strand. Outward visits to the UK and Europe form the majority of visits (65%). Of these 17 visits, 15 outwards were within the UK and Ireland including activity to support Scottish Parliament membership of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA). The outward visits to North America includes activity associated with Scotland Week.



11. The financial cost of supporting outward visits is detailed in the pie chart below. North American outwards accounted for 60% of the cost of outward visits, the vast majority of which reflects the cost of participation in Scotland Week.



Overview of Activity Supported by Geographical Strand

12. The remainder of this paper provides a qualitative overview of activity which has been supported, between the start of Session Four and the end of August 2012, in order to provide an indication of progress which has been made against the objectives set out in the UK and International Strategy. UKIRO does collect feedback from participants on inward visits, that are of more than one day in duration, supported by UKIRO. However, due to the limited number of inward visits (of more than one day) supported during the reporting period the feedback collected is not capable of aggregation and reporting upon in this paper. Accordingly, UKIRO intend to review the feedback data it collects that will enable the data that is collected to better reflect the key activities supported by UKIRO and thereby also inform the future direction of this Strategy.

UK / Europe

13. The Scottish Parliament has continued to play an active role within the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA). This has included participation in three BIPA Plenary sessions, in Cork, Brighton and Dublin, by the Scottish Parliament delegation led by Deputy Presiding Officer, John Scott MSP. In addition, individual Members of the BIPA delegation are involved in the BIPA Committee's dealing with European affairs, economic matters and environment and social affairs. The Strategy indicates that we intend to support stronger links between the work of BIPA and its governmental equivalent, the British-Irish Council. To date, limited progress has been made in this area albeit discussions have taken place at official level with regard to how information sharing can be improved between officials.

14. UKIRO have provided support to the Presiding Officer in her meetings with counterparts across the United Kingdom. Most recently, this involved

support around hosting the Presiding Officer's Quadrilateral in the Scottish Parliament in June 2012.

15. Building on relations with the Houses of the Oireachtas is greatly assisted through participation within the BIPA. No direct bi-lateral relations have been developed during the reporting period for this year, however, the Presiding Officer has been invited, by the Ceann Comhairle, Sean Barrett T.D., and it anticipated that this visit will take place before the end of 2012. UKIRO have continued to monitor the work of the Conference of Presiding Officers of Regional Legislative Assemblies of Europe (CALRE) and have contributed to the work of this organisation as appropriate. Another area of on-going monitoring has been the European Union forward work plan. When a Member State assumes the six-month Presidency of the European Union this tends to be accompanied by a courtesy call with the Presiding Officer by a diplomatic representative from the relevant Member State and associated activities which are implemented in partnership with the European and External Relations Committee.
16. Lastly, the Scottish Parliament hosted the 42nd conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This brought together fifty-seven delegates from the following jurisdictions: Alderney, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Malta, Northern Ireland, Scotland, St Helena, United Kingdom and Wales. The report of the conference proceedings can be accessed at:
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/POandUKandIRO/BIMR_Conference_Report.pdf

North America

17. The Scottish Parliament participated in the annual Scotland Week activity, in New York, in 2012. The delegation's activities, which comprised of the Presiding Officer, Tricia Marwick MSP, and Elaine Smith MSP, were grouped around the following four themes:
 - To highlight the impact of Scottish charitable and philanthropic activities both in Scotland and the United States;
 - To place an emphasis upon showcasing and promoting Scotland's cultural and creative strengths as part of a wider set of activities for the 'Year of Creative Scotland 2012';
 - To strengthen the connections which exist between the Scottish Parliament and organisations representing the Scottish diaspora in New York, and
 - Participation in the Tartan Day parade, and events associated with it, as the key focal point event for Scotland Week activities in New York.

18. Participation in Scotland Week has been the primary area of engagement with North America over the course of the reporting period. However, in July 2012, Alison McInnes MSP attended the 50th conference of the Canadian Regional Conference of the CPA which considered best practice in Parliamentary practice and procedure. The Strategy highlights the importance of engagement with federal and state Parliaments in Canada and this is an area where progress is anticipated in 2013.

Sub-Saharan Africa

19. Engagement with sub-Saharan Africa is principally focussed upon Malawi. The Technical Assistance Programme (TAP 2) which the Scottish Parliament has agreed with the National Assembly of Malawi underwent a hiatus due to political developments in Malawi. Engagement was therefore limited to the Scottish Parliament hosting two Interns from the National Assembly of Malawi (NAM) for a one month period in March 2012. Following the recent resumption of diplomatic relations, between Malawi and the United Kingdom, discussions have been on-going with officials in the NAM regarding agreeing a set of activities under the TAP 2 programme which can be taken forward in the remainder of 2012-13.

20. In March 2012, the Scottish Parliament hosted a number of events surrounding Commonwealth Day 2012. This included a Members' debate on Commonwealth Day and an address by the CPA Scotland Branch Special Envoy, Annie Lennox OBE, at a reception in the Parliament, which focussed on the impact upon women and children in Africa of living with the effects of HIV / AIDS.

21. Lastly, David Stewart MSP was supported by UKIRO to attend a conference, on the topic of public participation, at Guateng Provincial Legislature in South Africa where he gave a presentation on the Scottish Parliament's petitions system.

Asia and the Middle East

22. Engagement with Asia and the Middle East has been limited. In June 2012, the Presiding Officer hosted a private meeting between the Dalai Lama and Scottish pastoral leaders. Sarah Boyack MSP attended a conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which was jointly organised by the Bangladesh Parliament and the United Nations Development Programme, of Parliamentarians from countries most vulnerable to Climate Change. Sarah spoke on the topic of legislative action in Scotland to tackle climate change. Margaret McDougall MSP attended the 22nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar, in New Dehli, at which she spoke on the topic of financial scrutiny. Lastly, a range of inward visits from Asia and the Middle East have been supported including, in April 2012, the Deputy Presiding Officer, John Scott MSP, meeting with 15 Ambassadors representing Arab League countries.

Australasia

23. Engagement with Australasia, during the reporting period, has been primarily related to the hosting of inward visits by delegations from Australia and New Zealand. Ten inward delegations have been hosted including, in December 2011, a visit by the President of the Australian Senate, Senator John Hogg.

Conclusion

24. The International Strategy is in the early stages of being implemented and some of the activities reported here pre-date the agreement of the Strategy. Despite the relative infancy of the Strategy, it has to date provided a key means of planning activities and co-ordinating budget management. At this stage, reflecting the recent adoption of the Strategy, it is not proposed that any changes are required to the priorities contained within the Strategy.