Introduction

1. Oxfam has a wealth of experience on migration issues in Scotland, including issues of labour rights, public attitudes, asylum seekers and refugees and particular vulnerable groups such as Roma people. This response outlines some areas of research and information that the Inquiry may find of interest, as well as broad trends that Oxfam has observed in Scotland over the past few years. In June 2010 Oxfam will present verbal evidence to the Inquiry and will include more detailed analysis and evidence of these trends and this response should be seen in conjunction with that submission.

About Oxfam

2. Oxfam is a British development agency working to end poverty both internationally and in the UK. Oxfam works to overcome poverty in the UK in three ways: we develop projects with people living in poverty to improve their lives and show how things can change; we raise public awareness of poverty to create pressure for change; and we work with policymakers to tackle the causes of poverty.

3. The focus of our work is ensuring that everyone in the UK has a secure livelihood and income which gives them enough money to live on. We also tackle the discrimination which makes women, ethnic minority groups and others more vulnerable to poverty, and we work on public attitudes to ensure that people experiencing poverty are treated with dignity and respect.

4. In Scotland, Oxfam has initiated and supported the Asylum Positive Images Network, the development of the Scottish Migrants Network (SMN) and work with partners in Glasgow to support the Roma Community. Additionally, Oxfam works with Karibu (the refugee women’s organisation) and Amina: Muslim Women’s Resource Centre in their activities to advance equalities and improve livelihoods.

5. Due to the above partnership work Oxfam has a strong interest in the present inquiry. We hope the Scottish Government finds our response useful and would be happy to expand on any of the points raised. Contact details are provided at the end of this document.

What are the trends in migration to Scotland?

6. Migrants constitute a diverse group. Forced and economic migrants have had significantly different needs as they settle in Scotland but also there are
significant differences amongst these groups even from the same country – Slovak Roma compared to their compatriots for example. Additionally there are equalities and gender issues to consider within these communities.

7. Over the past decade Scotland has seen a sharp increase of new migrants as part of the Dispersal of people seeking asylum from 1999 and since the accession of Eastern and Central European countries, which saw a significant number of migrants from these countries come to Scotland. Due to the recent increased migration from Europe in particular there are significant differences in terms of service support in parts of Scotland with challenges in some areas that have had little experience of migration, as well as rural and urban differences.

8. Oxfam is concerned that due to the increase of arrivals in some areas over a short space of time new migrants are at risk of exploitation and experiencing a dearth of services to support migrants accessing their rights not just as workers but also as new residents of Scotland. Oxfam also draws attention to the experience of both direct and institutional racism, and the lower level of access to information and awareness of their rights by female migrants.

To what extent does reliable data on migration exist to inform public policy-making?

9. The data on the number of people seeking asylum in Scotland is generally reliable given Dispersal from 1999. Data relating to those refused asylum and or granted refugee status is however difficult to ascertain, as is that of Third Country Nationals where little data exists. Recent European migration data also remains problematic due to a reliance on the Workers Registration Scheme that leaves significant gaps in data for A8 countries and does not apply to A2 countries. Lack of availability of reliable data on European migration has been a constant problem for planning and delivery of services.

10. Some improvements have been made in the use of migration data recently with the inception of the General Register Office (GRO) Reports, but more work needs to be done on this. A lot has been said in the media Eastern and Central European nationals returning home, but it is hard to confirm this, particularly in Scotland. Partners in the Scottish Migrants Network note movement of migrants, but also new European arrivals coming from Europe as well as from England. There are local networks, voluntary/migrant community organisations and service providers in some areas that could provide information, but the experience of our partners shows that they are seldom or not adequately consulted.

What is the contribution of migration to the Scottish economy?

11. All studies on the contribution of migrants to the UK (including Scotland) have shown that they are net contributors to the UK economy. Migrants are a

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significant proportion of the workforce in some sectors of the Scottish economy such as health, agriculture, food processing, fisheries, hospitality and the care sector. As Scotland seeks to grow its population the contribution of migrants, and whether they choose to settle becomes more important. Equally important is how Scotland supports new migrants settlement, ensuring that their rights are upheld and measures implemented to retain and support them to settle and integrate.

What is the contribution of migrant communities to Scottish culture, society and civic society?

12. Migrant communities have contributed in numerous ways culturally to Scotland. It is likely that the newer Refugee and European Migrant communities will evolve to contribute as previous migrant communities before them such as the Polish during and after the war and Pakistani migration from the 1950s and before.

13. New Migrant Community Organisations (MCOs) are beginning to emerge in areas of Scotland without previous experience of migration. The development of organisations is not dissimilar to the evolution of longer established Asian communities. Many of these organisations established initially for social support, to meet with other migrants, discuss problems and provide support. In some areas local authorities and voluntary sector organisations have assisted with the establishment of these groups.

14. New migrants are gradually becoming involved in Scotland’s political structures. Many MCOs are involved in the SMN sharing and learning with other organisations as well as advocating for migrant rights in various fora. The Scottish Refugee Policy Forum has advocated for refugee input into policy and to support these communities. The Scottish Parliament recently established a Cross Party Group on Poland with the support of representatives of MCOs. Oxfam partners such as Karibu and Amina: The Muslim Women’s Resource Centre have been strong advocates locally and nationally for refugee and migrant women’s rights and concerns.

How does the media portray the contribution of migrant communities in Scotland?

15. Oxfam has had significant experience of working to influence public attitudes around asylum in Scotland through working with journalists, supporting refugees to speak for themselves, and undertaking activities to build better understanding.

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4 Oxfam, Forward Together: Ideas for working with asylum seekers, refugees, the media & communities, Oxfam (2007);
16. Media coverage in Scotland has been better on asylum and refugee issues compared to UK wide coverage. However, on migration the media continue to focus on numbers and costs of migrants generally as well as conflating different categories of migrants e.g. refugees, asylum seekers, EU nationals, “illegal immigrants”. Members of the public become confused by this and often do not understand the differences between people who have come here for humanitarian purposes or economic purposes, or the differences in rights between different categories of migrants. The capacity of the media to engage with and explain complex contexts around migrants and migration in a shrinking media landscape are acknowledged. However, in terms of asylum the situation has been somewhat better through targeted initiatives like supporting refugees to speak to the media, journalist’s guides on asylum and media awards for good reporting on asylum as well as work with and in communities. These methods could be applied to support work with communities, journalists and or campaigns of the Scottish Government in its desire to ‘grow the population’. (Oxfam has agreed to share its experience with the Inquiry on June 29th, 2010).

17. Media coverage often focuses on reports pertaining to the UK and the perceived difficulties experienced in the South East of England where population density is higher and there is more pressure on services both from recent migrants and from long established communities. The situation in Scotland is very different and migration makes an essential contribution to our aging, declining population, but this is not highlighted enough. Politicians in Scotland recognise this, which does reflect in more positive reporting in terms of politics of the issue.

18. The danger of negative and/or poor media coverage that focuses on numbers without contexts and fails to report on real people is that it may exacerbate community tensions and reinforce myths about migration. Targeted initiatives by the Scottish Government and local authorities as well as supporting work by the voluntary sector and Migrant Communities at the local level could, as with asylum, help to influence the media as well as local communities to reflect stories of migrants’ lives and their contributions.

How can positive messages regarding the contribution of migrant populations to Scottish society be effectively disseminated?

19. Work done by Oxfam with the Asylum Positive Images Network demonstrated that by coming together organisations could have stronger impact through networking as well as to influence journalists. The SMN initiated a workers rights poster as well as conferences on new migrants issues despite very limited capacity and resources. Working with the Glasgow Integration Networks in promoting contact and activities between communities

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is a good example of how these issues can be shared and real attitudinal change be effected.

20. Through the work with refugees in Glasgow much has been learned, but there have been limited fora to share this. The SMN developed partly to advocate for new migrants rights as well as concern over negative attitudes towards them. Experience of these initiatives have helped inform, share and learn, but this could be done more effectively with more targeted resources. Learning has also demonstrated the need to be careful in disseminating information about migrants in areas like myth-busting which, if done badly, may actually reinforce negative myths.

21. The Scottish Government has also managed to disseminate information related to migration through the One Scotland and Fresh Talent initiatives, but this has been limited and more could and should be done. Political leadership in discussing these issues and especially migrants’ contributions to Scotland supports positive media coverage that is likely to have wider impact.

**What is the degree of alignment of Scottish public services with migrant populations?**

22. Oxfam has been involved in Govanhill, Glasgow over the past four years where there has been a progressive response to address new migrant issues by the Glasgow Southeast Community Health Care Partnership and other partners. Through work with the SMN and other partners, however, we know that in many other areas services have been slow to respond to the needs of new migrants – with limited advice and service provision, adequate interpretation, and ESOL provision in many areas.

23. This is improving and the new toolkit of the COSLA Strategic Migration partnership will help to some degree. There is still a need for stronger guidance on issues such as Housing/Homelessness and No Recourse to Public Funds from the Scottish Government.

24. Public services need to better recognise and act on the equalities duties that they are responsible for and apply to these new communities. Importantly there needs to be recognition that the migrant population is not homogenous and particular groups (such as refugees due to their forced exile and the Roma due to their historical persecution and discrimination in Central Europe) are particularly vulnerable. Public services need to pro-actively recognise minority ethnic status as well as race and equalities duties in practice of new communities settling in Scotland.

**What is the effectiveness of public sector responses to changing migration patterns?**

25. Public services are responding, but are often too dependent on data and statistics before acting. Multi-agency/cross-sectoral partnerships such as have developed in Govanhill have led to more progressive and effective change on the ground and by working collectively have managed to respond more
quickly. Through work with the SMN we have also seen that these types of partnerships have helped support public sector responses.

26. The recession has affected A8 and A2 countries’ economies and some migrants are choosing to remain here if they lose employment whereas in the past they would have returned home. The public sector needs to ensure that people that have access to rights and support to which they are entitled such as social welfare support and homelessness assistance.

27. Work with our partners indicates that new migrants continue to come to Scotland and, once established, are presenting with new needs as they settle. As already mentioned there are different needs among the different groups. Unfortunately many services, often limited in some areas, are being cut and migrants are becoming more vulnerable without support.

28. In 2011 A8 nationals will no longer need to register for work in the UK and will have the same rights as other Europeans, and services need to account for this. Additionally, they will gain full rights in all EU countries so may choose other locations to work and live in rather than the UK. This process will occur for A2 nationals in 2014. Scotland will need to consider this in terms of the provision of services as well as additional initiatives to attract and retain migrants to grow the population.

What is the degree of awareness of the rights of migrants?

29. New migrants to Scotland have been covered in theory under *Race Relations Act and Equalities Duties*, but in practice this has not always been acted upon via support and service provision. Communities such as the Roma should have these rights addressed more proactively as an ethnic minority and as Local Authorities public duty applies, not because of their numbers or the disadvantaged areas they settle in.

30. Migrants from A8 and A2 countries have had restrictions imposed on them by the UK Government and are often unaware of the restrictions due to a lack of publicity around them. Awareness levels will also differ between and among communities. Equally, service providers are often unaware of the rights of different groups within the migrant population and there needs to be training and understanding of the implications that they have on migrants’ access to employment, social welfare and to local authority services such as housing and homelessness assistance. Through our partners and the SMN we know that migrants are often given the wrong advice and end up vulnerable, exploited and sometimes destitute.

31. Furthermore, awareness of rights does not mean that migrants will have the confidence to access or pursue their rights. Limited employment rights enforcement often deters migrants from pursuing claims against unscrupulous employers, for fear of losing their job and/or being deported. Oxfam advocates for more resources to be allocated to employment rights bodies, such as the
Gangmasters Licensing Authority and Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate as well as dissemination of these bodies’ remits in Scotland.  

32. Many local authorities have produced welcome packs for new migrants that provide useful local information on rights and services, however, these are often not disseminated effectively and need to include migrants themselves in order to ensure they are used effectively.

33. As has been done previously with other migrant communities in the past and recently in Govanhill, public bodies should be recruiting new migrants to deliver and support services to the communities that they serve. Employing bilingual staff reduces spending on interpreting and translation, makes migrants more comfortable and confident about accessing services, and demonstrates that the public body is serious about reflecting the community it serves and meeting the needs of all local people.

34. Initiatives like those of the SMN can help to share information relatively cheaply and prevent duplication across geographic areas of Scotland as well as raise awareness about and amongst new migrant communities.

What is the scale of the trafficking issue, in terms of the number of people involved and the geographical areas which people trafficked tend to be sourced from?

What is the nature of the problem? Are people trafficked primarily for reasons related to sexual exploitation or with regard to false labour?

Given the degree of criminality that tends to be involved in human trafficking what problems does this present for public sector agencies seeking to assist the victims of this activity?

35. The scale of trafficking into Scotland is unclear, but there has been evidence of trafficking for both sexual and labour exploitation. Oxfam acknowledges this as an important issue that needs to be addressed in terms of: enforcement to prevent and prosecute, awareness raising for public authorities, as well as services for victims of trafficking.

36. Oxfam is concerned that the linking of these issues has the potential to damage public attitudes to migrants by linking trafficking to migration. For example in England we have seen Roma linked to child-trafficking by police and in media stories which has proven unfounded on numerous occasions but has significantly damaged community relations. In Scotland, due to partnership working and sensitivity in working with communities, Oxfam is pleased to see this has not arisen but feels that there needs to be continued

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6 Oxfam, *Turning the Tide: How best to protect workers employed by gangmasters, five years after Morecambe Bay*, Oxfam (2009)


http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/31164935/5
work with communities and service providers to address issues around trafficking and the complexities that may arise.

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