

THE PARLIAMENTARY AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

AN ASSOCIATE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

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A meeting of the Committee was held on Monday, 12th December 2005 in the Thatcher Room, Portcullis House

“The Importance of Science, Engineering and Technology to a Sustainable Economy on the African Continent”

The invited speakers were as follows:-

Sir Crispin Tickell GCMG KCVO

Former Ambassador to the United Nations

Professor Frank R. Rijsberman

Director General

International Water Management Institute

PO Box 2075

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Professor Richard Carter

Institute of Water and Environment

Cranfield University

Professor Sir Gordon Conway

Chief Scientific Adviser to DFID

Africa has the shortest average human lifespan for any continent, partly attributable to the incidence of HIV/AIDS and Malaria in Sub Saharan Africa. These conditions are aggravated by a generally weak economy and fragile environment that will be further challenged by future climatic and demographic changes. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) these will combine to reduce the average water resources to less than 1700m³ per person, per year, throughout most of the continent by 2025. Current aspirations for the elimination of poverty in Africa are therefore unlikely to be achieved unless underlying factors such as current and predicted water scarcity are addressed now. The combined deployment of Science, Engineering and Technology with Development Aid would therefore appear to be a very high priority if the structural causes of poverty in Africa are to be identified and rectified. Is this on the donors' agenda?

Press Enquiries:

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A full report of the meeting will be published in Science in Parliament – Spring Issue 2006