



NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTING FEDERATION GATHERING CALLS FOR CROFTING AND LAND REFORM

A packed Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) Gathering in Fort William, on the theme 'Revival: Crofting and Its Role in a Sustainable Scotland', concluded that crofting is an ideal model to help meet many of the challenges of the 21st Century, if Scottish Government wakes up to it.

"The enthusiasm shown by all participants was tangible", said Donald MacKinnon, chair of the SCF. "The challenges we face regarding climate change, biodiversity loss, declining population, the lack of affordable housing and so on, the list is long, were met full-on in the discussions. However, there was an abundance of solutions that involve crofting from those taking part. Crofters want to contribute and feel that crofting is an ideal model that addresses so many aspects of a healthy, sustainable Scotland. It was felt that Scottish Government perhaps don't really get this and are dragging their feet on how to address agriculture, crofting and land reforms."

Four participatory sessions were led by speakers Donald MacKinnon of SCF, Kirsten Gow of Aberdeen University, Magnus Davison of UHI and Helen O'Keefe, Assynt crofter and past recipient of Young Crofter Award.

Mr MacKinnon continued, "There was a lot of support for a more radical approach, for example the creation of regulated, tenanted small holdings across Scotland; the support for locally produced food, including horticulture; small-scale energy generation; measurable initiatives delivering public goods; getting students out on to crofts and crofting into the classroom; community and collective working. With the Committee of Inquiry on Crofting having reported 14 years ago, it was agreed that there is a need for a full review of crofting in the light of the challenges we face.

"It was great seeing agencies such as the Crofting Commission, the Scottish Land Commission, NatureScot and HIE well represented, participating and fully committed to discussions and action with crofters", Mr MacKinnon concluded. "Unfortunately, no one from Scottish Government came to talk with crofters; I guess this speaks for itself. But as is widely recognised - you have to be the change you want to see. Crofting has persisted this long despite adversity, and now has the chance to really flourish. We will do it."

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