

## The Conservative Christian Fellowship

### NO LOST GENERATION: Tackling the refugee crisis & ending violence against children

Speakers: Theodora Clarke, Director Conservative Friends of International Development (Chair); Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne MP (invited); Gareth Wallace, Executive Director, Conservative Christian Fellowship; Peter Keegan, World Vision UK; Rory Stewart MP;

Clarke discusses the trip to Uganda that she took recently, and explains the refugee crisis which is affecting Uganda due to the situation in Sudan. She explains that this is a “children’s crisis” and that the vast majority of new arrivals at the refugee camp they visited were children. Says that it is an extremely underreported and underfunded crisis, and has received a fraction of the funding that is needed to support the number of displaced people that are there. Clarke discusses the scale of the crisis, the lack of food and water at the camp, and the experiences of many refugees who are there. Many only receive 6kg of food for a full 30 days. Clarke goes on to explain the work of the Ugandan government to try to address the crisis, as well as the programmes that World Vision runs. But she says they need to address the root cause of the crisis, and the scale of the problem is huge. But while other countries such as America may have taken a step back, the UK needs to start leading from the front.

Keegan begins by discussing the scale of the refugee crisis across the world currently, and says that the crisis in South Sudan and Uganda is a major part of this. The conflict in South Sudan has expanded and fractured, and a huge number of those affected are unaccompanied children. He explains that these children are driven from their homes by violence, and in this kind of context there is no such thing as a child who isn’t vulnerable. Keegan then explains the role of World Vision in terms of the work they do with children and food distribution, alongside the UNHCR. He says the underfunding of the crisis is a real challenge, and the whole area of child protection makes this even harder. People often talk about how important children are, but very rarely does anyone put their money where their mouth is and pay the small amount which is needed to tackle violence against children and their safety with regards to the refugee crisis.

Swayne discusses the 0.7% aid target, and the pride it should give to the Conservative party to have maintained that target when policies of austerity were taking place. He says it will be constantly challenged, but that if all of the G7 countries who had pledged that money had actually paid it, the scale of the crisis may not be what it is now.

Stewart talks about the different approaches to providing assistance to refugees. Sometimes this will be cash assistance, to allow people to have choice in what they buy and to keep local economies going. He describes the differing approaches to refugees in places such as Uganda or in Lebanon – treated as a citizen in Uganda, but as a terror threat in Lebanon. He wants to remind people of the huge variety of things which are dealt with under the name of “refugees”, and the very different situations which exist around the world. Some are shanty towns, some are better. He says the question we need to pose to ourselves is the question of how we spend the money, and to have an awareness of the sheer forms of misery that people are going through away from their homes. We need to think practically and technically about the solutions to those problems – have a moral obligation to do what you can do, not what you cannot do.

