



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 11 January 2017

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Wednesday 11 January 2017

CONTENTS

	Col.
PORTFOLIO QUESTION TIME	1
JUSTICE AND THE LAW OFFICERS	1
Gypsy Travellers (Unauthorised Camping)	1
Domestic Abuse Courts (Highlands)	2
Scottish Women's Aid (Meetings).....	5
Access to Justice (Victims of Unethical Undercover Policing)	6
Police Scotland (Integration of British Transport Police)	8
CULTURE, TOURISM AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS	10
Superfast Broadband (Highlands Tourism)	10
Culture (Promotion in Towns and Cities).....	11
Tourism (Highlands and Islands).....	12
"Scotland's Place in Europe" (Communication with United Kingdom Government)	14
"Tourism Scotland 2020"	16
European Referendum Result (Implications for Creative Europe-funded Projects).....	17
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	18
<i>Motion moved—[Dr Alasdair Allan].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Alexander Stewart].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Lewis Macdonald].</i>	
The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan)	18
Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)	23
Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab)	26
Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)	29
Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con).....	32
Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)	34
Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab)	37
Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)	39
Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con)	41
Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD).....	43
Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab)	46
John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP).....	49
Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con)	52
Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP)	55
Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab)	57
Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab)	59
Rachael Hamilton (South Scotland) (Con)	62
Dr Allan	65
BUSINESS MOTION	68
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick]—and agreed to.</i>	
PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTION	70
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick].</i>	
DECISION TIME	71
STEP PHYSICAL LITERACY PROGRAMME	75
<i>Motion debated—[Liz Smith].</i>	
Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)	75
Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)	78
Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con)	79
Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab).....	81
Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con)	83
Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab)	84
The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville)	86

Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 11 January 2017

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

Portfolio Question Time

Justice and the Law Officers

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good afternoon. The first item of business is portfolio question time. Question 1 was not lodged.

Gypsy Travellers (Unauthorised Camping)

2. Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions Police Scotland has had with local authorities regarding the management of unauthorised camping by Gypsy Travellers. (S50-00520)

The Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs (Annabelle Ewing): The policing of unauthorised camping by Gypsy Travellers is a matter for Police Scotland, as are any discussions between Police Scotland and local authorities regarding that issue. When issues arise that concern the wider policy and legislative framework that ministers are responsible for, the Scottish Government will give due consideration to those issues.

Peter Chapman: I have raised the issue previously in Parliament and I will continue to do so until Scottish National Party ministers address the problems, rather than dodging the questions. The police and local authorities have made it abundantly clear that they do not have the powers to deal with unauthorised encampments. Will the minister commit to giving the police the powers and giving local authorities the resources to deal with those sites that cause much distress to settled communities?

Annabelle Ewing: As regards management issues, the lead responsibility lies with local authorities. As far as policing issues are concerned, it is the case that—further to Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service guidance—there is a presumption against prosecution for unauthorised camping. However, the member should be aware that that presumption can be overridden by public interest considerations, such as, for example, on grounds of road safety or a public health hazard. At the same time, the police will investigate any allegations of criminal offences or antisocial behaviour. That is the position as it stands.

The member might also be aware that draft guidance on managing unauthorised camping has been worked up and the draft is currently with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities for its final consideration. I am sure that the member will be interested to see the guidance when it comes out—I think that that is expected quite soon.

The Gypsy Traveller communities are varied and diverse. They have a long and proud history, and a right to exercise their traditional way of life. That right must be exercised with regard to others, just as for any other citizens.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Given that Gypsy Travellers are one of the most discriminated-against groups in our society, can the minister give us any guidance as to whether local authorities, especially in the north-east, have done anything to provide additional recognised sites, which has long been a recommendation?

Annabelle Ewing: Local authorities are required by law to prepare a local housing strategy, which must reflect accommodation needs, including those of Gypsy Travellers, in the relevant local authority area. The decision on whether to provide a particular site is a matter for the local authorities, but I will ensure that the member's comments are passed to my colleagues in the equalities and local government teams.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): Does the minister agree that, instead of prosecution and persecution of the Gypsy Travelling community, we need a much more collaborative approach across all portfolio areas with local authorities and with local communities to ensure not only better site provision for Gypsy Travellers, but a better understanding of their culture and lifestyle, which would help in turn to eradicate the discrimination that they face?

Annabelle Ewing: I know that the member has had a very long-standing and honourable involvement in this matter during many years in the Parliament. Many of the issues that she raises fall within the equalities portfolio, but I will ensure that her comments are addressed and passed to my equalities colleagues. Hopefully, the draft guidance that is shortly to be published will answer at least some of the concerns that the member has raised.

The Presiding Officer: Question 3 has been withdrawn.

Domestic Abuse Courts (Highlands)

4. Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its consideration of the proposal to introduce travelling domestic abuse courts in the Highlands. (S50-00522)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): Sheriffs principal are responsible for court programmes, including those of the domestic abuse courts. That includes assessing whether the volume of domestic abuse cases in a sheriffdom would support either a specialist court or clustering of domestic abuse cases in other court locations. It is the statutory responsibility of the sheriffs principal to arrange the court programme in their areas and the Scottish Government has no locus or control over decisions relating to court programmes.

More generally, it is recognised that domestic abuse courts can play a valuable role as part of an overall effective court programming approach to dealing with domestic abuse cases. Specialist domestic abuse courts, clustering or fast tracking of that type of case is happening at courts around the country. In Grampian and in the Highlands and Islands, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service is working with justice partners and the sheriffs principal to continually review the arrangements for hearing domestic abuse cases and currently favours and operates a fast-track system, ensuring that such cases are being scheduled within the eight to 10-week target.

Kate Forbes: Does the Scottish Government agree that having dedicated procurators fiscal and sheriffs who are specifically allocated to domestic abuse would ensure that they had the appropriate expertise and sensitivity to the cases and that there would be consistency in procedures and sentencing?

Michael Matheson: As I said in my first response to the member, there are several domestic abuse courts in Glasgow and Edinburgh. There are also cluster courts operating in Falkirk, Dunfermline, Livingston and Ayr. In areas where there is not the quantity or throughput of cases, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and sheriffs principal tend to fast track such cases.

As part of the work that is being done under the equally safe strategy, the Scottish Government is developing delivery plans that will look at the medium and long-term improvements that can be made to the justice system for all victims of this type of violence, including domestic abuse victims and their children. The delivery plans are being worked through with partners, such as the SCTS, who are represented on the justice expert group on the violence against women and girls joint strategic board. That work will be progressed in the coming weeks and months with a view to addressing the types of issue that the member has raised. I know that the Crown Office is keen to play its part in ensuring that it has the right expertise to deal with such cases when they are brought before our courts.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Although the cabinet secretary is correct to say that the establishment of domestic abuse courts has been led by the senior judiciary that has responsibility for the court programme in its area, can he confirm that it would be possible for the Scottish Government and Parliament to legislate to establish domestic abuse courts if that was felt to be the best way to make further progress?

During the debate in September, the minister raised the issue of training for sheriffs and summary sheriffs. Can the cabinet secretary confirm that, while it is part of the induction training for new members of the judiciary, domestic abuse education is not compulsory for all sheriffs and summary sheriffs?

Michael Matheson: The member raises an interesting point around the suggestion that we could legislate to create specialist courts. Although that might technically be the case, I am not entirely sure whether it would achieve the effect that we are looking for, which is the effective use of court time in dealing with these cases. That is why the SCTS, along with the Crown Office, has tried to take a flexible approach to these matters.

Where it can be done, cases are clustered together so that they can be heard when the special sheriff is there, along with the fiscals who can deal with them for that period of time and the necessary support services for the court. Where the individual courts do not have that throughput of cases, they seek to fast track cases as quickly as possible and to make sure that they also have the necessary fiscals and court support services available when the cases are being heard.

It is important that we take an approach that lets us use a flexible model that will work in different parts of the country and which reflects the different demands of individual areas. Sheriffs principal and the SCTS are keen to make sure that they continue to take that approach.

The member will be aware that the training of the judiciary is a matter not for ministers but for the Lord President, who is responsible for the training and support that are provided to members of our judiciary, including summary sheriffs. The Judicial Institute for Scotland, which is headed by the Lord President, is responsible for those training provisions.

The member is correct to say that sheriffs are provided with training on domestic violence as part of their induction training. There are training provisions for other sheriffs, who can opt into those programmes as and when they choose to do so. I am sure that the member is in no doubt that those sheriffs who have a particular interest and specialism in this area are the very ones who are most likely to make use of that flexible training

regime, which is there to ensure that they are given the right type of support and advice and can access the information that is necessary to enable them to best discharge their duties.

Scottish Women's Aid (Meetings)

5. Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government when the Cabinet Secretary for Justice last met Scottish Women's Aid and what issues were discussed. (S5O-00523)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): Scottish ministers meet key stakeholders such as the Scottish Women's Aid and local women's aid organisations to help to inform thinking around strategies to prevent and eradicate violence against women. Most recently, on 15 September 2016, I met representatives from Edinburgh Women's Aid, and was given a tour of the services that are offered and spoke to staff and service users.

Claudia Beamish: What steps is the Scottish Government taking to ensure that through the forthcoming domestic abuse bill, children will, as direct victims of coercive control, have equal access to justice? Is that under consideration? It has been raised by Scottish Women's Aid.

Michael Matheson: Claudia Beamish has raised an important point. The bill that she mentioned, which we intend to bring before Parliament in the current parliamentary session, is intended to deal with psychological coercive and controlling behaviour that is related to domestic abuse. The bill will give us an opportunity to make additional provision for children, who are often victims of domestic abuse that takes place in the household in which they live. We have engaged with a range of stakeholders, who have expressed a view about making specific provision in the legislation.

I am sure that Claudia Beamish will acknowledge that it would, at this stage, be inappropriate for me to give details on exactly what will be contained in the bill, because it has not yet been introduced to Parliament. However, I assure her that we recognise that it is an issue on which further progress can be made. For example, it might be that an aggravation could be included in the legislation in order to address issues such as she has raised, and to ensure that they are properly recognised by the court when a case is being considered. I assure the member that we are looking to address such issues in the forthcoming legislation.

I hope that the bill will, when it is introduced to Parliament, draw cross-party support, given that it is intended to ensure that the Scottish justice system is one of the leaders in the world in respect

of criminalisation of psychological coercive and controlling behaviour related to domestic abuse.

Access to Justice (Victims of Unethical Undercover Policing)

6. Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that victims in Scotland of unethical undercover policing have access to justice. (S5O-00524)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): The options that are available to any individual will depend on the facts and circumstances of their case. Depending on the particular circumstances, individuals may seek redress via the investigatory powers tribunal, which has jurisdiction to consider certain proceedings for actions that concern the use of investigatory powers. Additionally, individuals may seek redress through the courts, subject to the rules that determine the jurisdiction of the courts.

Mr Findlay is aware that I have directed Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary for Scotland to undertake a review of undercover policing in Scotland. The terms of reference were published today. The review will be essential in gathering facts about existing and historical undercover policing activities over the period during which the Scottish Parliament has had responsibility for the area, and will inform any future decisions that we make.

Neil Findlay: Why will Scottish victims of illegal and unethical undercover policing activity that was carried out in Scotland prior to the year 2000 not have access to any inquiry, yet victims in England and Wales will? The cabinet secretary has the opportunity to remedy that situation by ensuring that the strategic review of undercover policing in Scotland covers the same period as the Pitchford inquiry in England and Wales—that is, back to 1968. Why will the cabinet secretary not do that, and what advice does he have for people who became victims prior to 2000?

Michael Matheson: I have considered the issue carefully and I think that the most appropriate way to address undercover policing—in particular, the activities of the Metropolitan Police units that were involved in undercover operations across the UK in Scotland and in Northern Ireland—is the Pitchford inquiry, so I regret that the UK Government has refused to extend its remit. As Neil Findlay will be aware, it is within the gift of the chair of the inquiry to consider evidence that comes from outwith England and Wales, as long as it relates to an undercover operation that was carried out by a police force from England and Wales. However, there are issues that the UK Government should have addressed, but has failed to address.

In establishing the inquiry, I have asked Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland to examine the provisions that have been in place and the arrangements that the police have had in place during the period in which the Scottish Parliament has existed, and to examine operation of the legislation that deals with undercover policing that was passed by the UK and Scottish Parliaments. The terms of reference that the chief inspector has set out today will allow a detailed and thorough investigation to take place.

If individuals believe that they were subject to some form of undercover policing operation that predates that period, I will welcome hearing about it from them. To date, I have not received information beyond what will be covered by the timeframe that has been set and the terms of reference that HMICS published today.

Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con): I welcome the limited review that has been announced today, but I am concerned about how the Scottish Government can restore and maintain public confidence in the police. In that light, can the cabinet secretary reassure us that sensitive operational techniques and details will be safeguarded throughout the review process?

Michael Matheson: I am sure that Gordon Lindhurst accepts that there is significant public confidence in how Police Scotland operates, as all public surveys demonstrate.

It is for the chief inspector to conduct a detailed and thorough inquiry. I am sure that Gordon Lindhurst acknowledges the background of the chief inspector of constabulary, Derek Penman, who has had an extended and very distinguished career at the highest level in policing in Scotland. I have no doubt that he will understand the need to ensure that information in relation to such a sensitive issue is handled appropriately.

I am sure that all members acknowledge that covert and surveillance operations play an important part in tackling serious and organised crime and other serious threats in our society, and that our police service and force should be able to undertake such procedures appropriately.

Equally, it is important that robust measures are in place to ensure that such procedures are appropriately and effectively regulated. We currently have strong regulation in place, and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 will change and, I think, improve provision—not entirely, but in some areas.

It is important that we give the police service the necessary powers. After we have received the chief inspector's report, we will reflect on his findings. I have no doubt that if there are recommendations for action to provide further safeguards or improvements in relation to how

Police Scotland conducts undercover operations, this Government will be determined to take them forward and Police Scotland will be determined to implement them.

Police Scotland (Integration of British Transport Police)

9. Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what response it has received to its consultation on the integration of the British Transport Police in Scotland into Police Scotland. (S5O-00527)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): An independent analysis report on the responses to the consultation was carried out by the Research Shop and can be found on the Scottish Government consultation hub website. Responses to the consultation have now been published online.

Railway policing in Scotland is now a devolved matter—a decision that was reached with cross-party agreement, through the Smith commission. That means that we need to put in place a framework to deliver appropriate accountability for railway policing to the Scottish Parliament and the people of Scotland.

The Scottish Government has set out why it thinks integration is the most effective means of achieving that and of providing operational benefits, through direct access to a range of specialist support within Police Scotland. The approach will deliver much stronger and more effective accountability than could be achieved within a cross-border public body structure.

Neil Bibby: It is concerning that the consultation did not specifically ask this question: do you support the merger or not? We know from the responses that the Government received that there is significant opposition to and concern about the proposed merger among the rail unions, train companies and police officers. The Minister for Transport and the Islands has claimed that the Government has a manifesto mandate to push through the merger, but it does not. Given the level of opposition among the people who work on our railways and the problems that we have seen with the creation of Police Scotland and other public sector reforms, what confidence can the public possibly have that the merger is a good idea and will be a success?

Michael Matheson: Neil Bibby may be aware that the Scottish Government's view about integrating policing by the British Transport Police into Police Scotland is not a new idea; it is an idea that was set out back in 2011, and which my predecessor also pursued. We also set out the policy in our white paper.

Neil Bibby will also recognise that the Smith commission recommendation—reached through cross-party agreement, including his party—was that responsibility for the functions of the British Transport Police in Scotland should be devolved to the Scottish Parliament. It is appropriate that we put in place a structure to provide appropriate accountability in order to take that forward and to ensure that there is accountability to the Parliament and the Scottish people.

Given the political interest in the matter, I was struck by the lack of responses from any of the other political parties here to our consultation on the issue—there was no response from Mr Bibby's party. Given that he believes it to be such an important issue, I am surprised that he did not take the opportunity to make known his view during the consultation process.

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con): This question time is an opportunity for opposition parties to make their views very clear.

The Scottish Government's own analysis of the consultation responses highlighted the prevailing opposition to full-on integration. Does the cabinet secretary agree that the best way to maintain our high standard of specialist railway policing and to ensure the safety of rail passengers and staff is not to radically alter an established and successful model, and does he agree that that could be achieved under the Smith agreement?

Michael Matheson: So—here we are again. We have cross-party agreement that we should have the responsibility for railway policing devolved to the Scottish Parliament, but we hear no ideas about how that should be achieved. Yet again, we are hearing from a party that failed even to bother to respond to the consultation exercise. Clearly its members view the matter as a high priority, but they are not able to set out how they believe it should be addressed. That is rather telling about the opposition parties on this issue.

I have no doubt that we can deliver effective and specialist policing on our railways by having it integrated within Police Scotland, as Police Scotland has already set out. It intends to continue to provide specialist railway policing once that function has been integrated into the service. That will allow Police Scotland to access the specialist assets that it has as a national force. In addition, it will provide accountability to the Scottish Parliament, and to all the parties that are represented in the chamber, for how policing on our railways is delivered.

It is disappointing that none of the other parties here bothered to take the time to make known their views during the consultation exercise.

Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

Superfast Broadband (Highlands Tourism)

1. **Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how important it considers superfast broadband is to tourism in the Highlands. (S5O-00529)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The Scottish Government considers superfast broadband as very important to businesses in the Highlands and Islands, and to tourism in particular. Commercial coverage provision by the United Kingdom Government would have reached only 21 per cent of the Highlands and Islands. That is why we are investing £400 million in the digital Scotland superfast broadband programme to extend fibre access to at least 95 per cent of premises by the end of 2017. We have committed to delivering 100 per cent coverage by the end of this parliamentary session.

Edward Mountain: I am constantly asked in the Highlands when broadband will be provided, especially for the last 5 per cent. Will the Government, as part of its R100 programme, let businesses know the likely roll-out dates for superfast broadband? That will allow businesses to commit to alternative broadband provision until the terrestrial broadband that has been promised by the Scottish Government is available.

Fiona Hyslop: There is already extensive coverage, but the member is quite right to identify the last 5 per cent. On the communication of the procurement process for that final 5 per cent, which we are embarking on using the additional funding that is part of the budget for 2017-18 and throughout the parliamentary session, it is key that we can plan and respond. That is critical not just for knowing when the service will be available but also for skills and training, as the use of digital marketing is a vital part of the tourism offer.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I welcome the cabinet secretary's comments on the final 5 per cent. However, even those businesses that currently have a broadband service can be adversely affected by weather disruption at this time of year, and it can take many weeks—if not months, in my part of the world—to get those faults fixed. That has a huge impact on tourism and other businesses, not to mention the impact on households.

Will the cabinet secretary undertake to have the Scottish Government make representations to British Telecom to make sure that it has the resources that it requires to ensure that such faults are dealt with far more speedily than appears to be the case to date?

Fiona Hyslop: I am afraid that I am not responsible for the weather, but Mr McArthur is right to identify the disruption that it can cause, in particular to connectivity. Although connectivity is not my direct responsibility, I will make sure that Fergus Ewing, who is the cabinet secretary responsible, ensures that business needs and opportunities, and the losses that can accrue because of such disruption, are brought to the attention of BT in particular. As the tourism secretary, I will also ensure that those points are raised in my discussions with BT.

Culture (Promotion in Towns and Cities)

2. **George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it is promoting culture in towns and cities. (S5O-00530)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The Scottish Government promotes culture in a wide variety of ways across many portfolios, not just my own—for example, in education. We promote culture through our support and guidance to national cultural bodies in letters of grant and guidance, which they deliver in towns and cities—for example, through Creative Scotland's place partnerships or the outreach work from our national performing companies and collections. The cultural strategy that we are preparing will provide more opportunity to explore that, and the cultural conveners in local government meetings that I have initiated, which are jointly chaired with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, will help to identify other opportunities for our towns and cities.

George Adam: Would the cabinet secretary agree with me that cultural activities can be a key factor in town centre and city regeneration, in particular for a town such as Paisley, with its vast iconic cultural background? Even Edinburgh's world-famed Hogmanay party was taken over by Paisley acts last year. Is that yet another example of why Paisley should be the UK city of culture in 2021?

Fiona Hyslop: The member is a great champion for Paisley's case to be UK city of culture. As he will know, I strongly believe in the regenerative powers of culture, not only in a social and individual sense but economically. We are seeing that in towns and cities throughout Scotland, not least in Dundee.

I point out to the member, as he is part of the campaign for Paisley, that on Monday night I spoke at a Creative Industries Federation event where I met the award-winning fashion icon Pam Hogg, who was advocating Paisley's case to the many hundreds of people who were there.

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): I join Mr Adam in his support for Paisley's bid to become UK city of culture; we on this side of the chamber share that aim—at least, I do.

A big part of the culture of our towns and cities in Scotland consists of our historic castles and ancient monuments. What is the cabinet secretary's response to this week's analysis by Historic Environment Scotland, which shows that up to £65 million will be required to maintain those sites in satisfactory condition? Given that there is a 4.5 per cent cut for our country's national collections in this year's budget, how confident can members be that this Government will protect our historic sites?

Fiona Hyslop: I welcome the report, which I commissioned, because it is the first time in hundreds of years that we have had a proper survey of the demands and requirements. The member will be aware that, on Monday this week, I announced £6.6 million of capital investment for Historic Environment Scotland precisely to invest in work to restore and conserve our properties in care. That will help with skills and training, and it will also help local contractors, as Historic Environment Scotland spends around £3 million a year with local contractors on such work.

On the member's point about investment, Historic Environment Scotland has had an increase precisely because of the £2.4 million of additional capital investment, and its position is much better than it has been for many years. I strongly and firmly believe that, if we are going to put tourism at the heart of our economy, and as our historic environment, including buildings and castles, consists of places that people want to visit, we have to invest in it. That is why I made the announcement this week, and why I commissioned the report to which the member referred.

Tourism (Highlands and Islands)

3. **Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent assessment it has made of the tourism sector in the Highlands and Islands. (S5O-00531)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Tourism, as one of our key growth sectors, is vital to all of Scotland's economy. The latest Scottish Government statistics for the Highlands and Islands show an increase in tourism employment and gross value added, together with an increase in visitor numbers and spend. Figures from the Office for National Statistics that were published on VisitScotland's website on 10 January show that, between 2014 and 2015, the number of people employed in the sector across Scotland grew to 217,000. The 11 per cent increase in

Scotland is above the 4 per cent rise in Great Britain as a whole. The 217,000 employees in the Scottish tourism industry represent 9 per cent of the country's total employment, which is the highest tourism level since the business register and employment survey records began in 2009. The 15,700 tourism workers in the Highlands make up 14 per cent of the region's total number of workers.

Douglas Ross: The cabinet secretary will be aware that today, 11 January, is the day of the burning of the clavie at Burghead, which attracts thousands of tourists and local people to the village. As clavie king Dan Ralph and his crew prepare to carry the flaming wooden clavie barrel filled with tar on their backs round the village, stopping at several doorways to hand out the burning embers before it is finally wedged on Doorie Hill, will the cabinet secretary join me in praising the tradition and the interest that it generates locally and from further afield? Will she also join me in praising the enthusiasm of younger members of the clavie team, such as Jamie Davidson, Scott Crawford and Keir Irwine, who are following in the footsteps of their ancestors in being part of the clavie crew?

Fiona Hyslop: I congratulate the clavie king and all those who are involved in what I understand is a vibrant and inclusive event that pays tribute to the long-standing heritage of that place and of Scotland. We are now in 2017, which is the year of history, heritage and archaeology, and it is not just our built environment that we want to celebrate; we also want to celebrate the intangible heritage of our country, which includes the traditions that the member has just referred to. Those are very much part of Scotland's heritage as well.

Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): The number of tourists going to the Isle of Skye is growing exponentially year on year, which is contributing to Scotland's national economy but putting huge pressure on our infrastructure. Will the cabinet secretary meet me to discuss ways to ensure that our services and infrastructure can meet that rapidly growing demand?

Fiona Hyslop: Clearly, tourism is growing. I have talked about the employee numbers, and Rough Guides has pointed out that Scotland is the number 2 place in the world to visit this year, although we have to make it the number 1 place. However, that demand creates tensions relating to infrastructure in a number of places. Particularly in the Highlands and Islands, including on Skye and in other areas, that is creating real challenges. I am more than happy to meet the member to discuss the issues in her constituency, as I have offered to do with other members in relation to the north coast 500.

“Scotland's Place in Europe” (Communication with United Kingdom Government)

4. Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on any communication it has had with the United Kingdom Government regarding the publication of “Scotland's Place in Europe”. (S5O-00532)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The First Minister spoke to the Prime Minister upon publication of the document, when Theresa May repeated her pledge made in July that the UK Government would give full and fair consideration to our proposals, which are designed to mitigate the risks for Scotland of being taken out of the European Union. In addition our Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe spoke with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union and the Secretary of State for Scotland and highlighted the need for full and constructive debate of our proposition.

The Scottish Government will formally table our proposals at the joint ministerial committee (EU negotiations) next week and I hope that discussions take place in the spirit of agreeing a UK approach. The UK Government has emphasised the need for Scotland's full engagement and an agreed UK-wide approach before the triggering of article 50, and we welcome that commitment.

Ben Macpherson: Does the cabinet secretary agree that, at those discussions, there is a need to emphasise the deep concerns of not just me but people in my constituency and across Scotland that, as well as clarity on the position on the paper, we need clarity for the EU nationals in our community on their rights and ability to stay in Scotland, as they still have not had any clarity from the UK Government on that?

Fiona Hyslop: I absolutely agree. The Scottish Government has been clear from day 1 that the position of EU nationals who live and work in Scotland and contribute to our economy and society has to be secured. It is essential that we do that sooner rather than later, and I am concerned that the United Kingdom Government has not chosen to do it, not least because it will be required to do it at some point. As the UK Government goes into negotiations with other EU countries and the EU itself, it is important that those people are not used as pawns. Good will, good faith, confidence and respect for each other's citizens must lie at the heart of whatever solution can be realised in the overall negotiations. Having confidence, faith and trust in the people who are working here will give other EU countries great confidence in approaching the negotiations in good faith and with good will.

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): On behalf of the Scottish Conservatives I thank again the Scottish Government for the publication of "Scotland's Place in Europe". I acknowledge that it is a substantial document and I note that certain recommendations in it enjoy all-party support.

Does the cabinet secretary share the disappointment of some at the fact that the document has been dismissed out of hand by the Governments in certain European capitals? In the face of that, given that the unanimous support of all the capitals of Europe would be needed for the provisions to proceed, how would she advocate that the UK Government takes things forward?

Fiona Hyslop: I will gently correct Jackson Carlaw. The document has not been dismissed out of hand by certain capitals and countries. I have spoken to a number of Governments, at either ministerial or ambassadorial level. Jackson Carlaw may be referring to remarks that the Spanish European minister made. They are the same comments that he made three months ago, in which he recognised that the UK would be the negotiator and that he would expect that the position that is put forward will be put forward by the UK as a whole.

If he listened to my first answer, Jackson Carlaw would have heard that I was quite clear, as the Government has been, that it is as part of a UK negotiation that we are putting forward the proposals in the paper, which he said has been well regarded and which has a number of substantive points that can get cross-party support.

We must be very careful not to put words in the mouths of other Governments, as that is undiplomatic and does not help Scotland's case. Let us try and identify the areas that we can agree on and take them forward as part of the new negotiation. That is the spirit in which we published the document. We will take forward the proposals in discussions with the UK Government.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): The cabinet secretary said that she intended that the proposals will be tabled at the joint ministerial committee meeting next week. In that context, will she tell us what discussions she or colleagues have had with other devolved Administrations such as the Welsh Government to ensure that the proposition of a joint UK approach has broad support?

Fiona Hyslop: I say to Lewis Macdonald that the reason why Michael Russell is not answering these questions himself is that he is engaged in discussions on this issue with other Governments.

We have had bilateral discussions in Scotland with other jurisdictions and discussions at the British-Irish Council. In both formal and informal

contexts at the British-Irish Council I spoke to the Welsh Government. I spoke to the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and the other ministers who attended.

We are very conscious that at a lot of the discussions there will be common interests and different approaches. We are now getting on to something that is essential, which is the importance and centrality of the single market in whatever proposition the UK negotiation puts forward. How we express that collectively, across the jurisdictions and in this chamber, will be very important in influencing the final result that we get.

"Tourism Scotland 2020"

5. Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how it is implementing the strategy, "Tourism Scotland 2020". (S5O-00533)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The Government economic strategy identifies tourism as a key growth sector. The Scottish Government is therefore assisting public bodies to support the tourism sector right across Scotland, via the industry-led Scottish Tourism Alliance strategy, "Tourism Strategy 2020". That is taking place collectively across the public agencies, especially VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Development International and the relevant local authorities.

Dean Lockhart: Given that tourism is one of the Government's key growth areas and, with increasing tourist numbers last year, is an increasing contributor to the Scottish economy, and given all the opportunities that the cabinet secretary highlighted, why, at such an important stage in implementing the strategy, has the Scottish Government decided to cut resources for tourism by 10 per cent in the draft budget, and why have critical agencies such as VisitScotland faced a 20 per cent real-terms reduction in funding over the past eight years?

Fiona Hyslop: I will correct the member's understanding. If he refers to last year's budget and this year's budget, he will see that there is a flat-cash settlement for VisitScotland. Indeed, if he had paid attention to the evidence that was given by the chief executive of VisitScotland at the budget session, he would know that he specifically said that VisitScotland welcomed the flat-cash funding that was available for it to spend.

If the member looks at last year's budget, he will see that VisitScotland's contribution to the strategic forum was identified in last year's budget; this year, we have made it clear, up front, what the resources are, so the flat-cash settlement for

VisitScotland has been very much welcomed not only by the organisation but by others in the tourism sector, which he would hear if he had the opportunity of speaking to them.

European Referendum Result (Implications for Creative Europe-funded Projects)

6. **Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what the implications are for creative Europe-funded projects in light of the European Union referendum result. (S5O-00534)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The creative Europe programme has been of significant value to the Scottish cultural sector. Following the EU referendum result, the Scottish Government was concerned about the future of that programme. I am very conscious of the time, so I simply indicate that, since its foundation in 2014, there have been 33 projects, with funding of more than €11.5 million.

Sandra White: Several projects in my constituency—YDance, in particular—have received support from creative Europe. Does the cabinet secretary agree that it is very important that projects such as YDance and creative Europe funding continue? Does she agree that it would be one of the worst things to come out of Brexit if that funding were not to be continued?

Fiona Hyslop: Absolutely. So much of the value of the creative industries and culture is in the exchange of ideas and experience, and creative Europe certainly does that and facilitates that. Being able to develop a practice with international connections is as important as the grants and skills themselves. As part of our on-going work on the EU, first, we will be encouraging people still to work with the creative Europe desk—they certainly have the opportunity still to do so—and, secondly, we want to make it clear that that is one of the organisations that we expect that the funding streams in the UK will either replace or, preferably, continue after the EU referendum result, because some of those relationships are vital to the heartbeat of our cultural sector.

International Development

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-03303, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on welcoming “Global Citizenship: Scotland’s International Development Strategy”.

I ask members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak buttons now. I call Alasdair Allan, Minister for International Development and Europe, to speak to and move the motion. You have 13 minutes or thereabouts, please, Dr Allan.

14:43

The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan): It is a great pleasure to lead this debate and to introduce members to “Global Citizenship: Scotland’s International Development Strategy”. That is, I believe, a dynamic new strategy that brings greater focus and direction to our international development work. It recognises recent developments in international theory and practice, such as the new United Nations global goals. I will set out the contents of our new strategy, which was published on 21 December 2016, and also how Scotland might continue to make a global impact through international development. Before I do any of that, I reflect briefly on our international development work to date.

As many members may remember, the Scottish Government began working in this area in 2005, with a modest budget of £3 million per annum. However, Scotland’s own tradition of humanitarian work overseas, of course, goes back much further into our history, with principles of global solidarity lying behind much of the work of Scots around the world. For over two centuries, Scotland has forged a distinctive tradition of seeking to tackle poverty by working in partnership with local people to improve the lives of those who do not have access to the basic resources that we take for granted.

As the inheritors and trustees of that tradition, we have developed our own distinctive approach to international development work that is built on partnership and mutual respect. That is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in Scotland’s special relationship with Malawi, where our development first began in 2005 with a fund of £3 million. Scots and Malawians have been collaborating with each other to improve health and education for more than a century and a half, since Dr Livingstone first sat down with local chiefs by the shores of Lake Malawi to discuss how they would end the regional slave trade.

The myriad of connections between our two countries that have resulted from that history have

become central to our development programme. If we harness the links to Malawian hospitals that Scottish health workers have, the links to old Scottish missionary schools that teachers have and the links to the National Assembly of Malawi that Scottish parliamentarians have, it will be easier to get things done, to achieve greater value for money and to bring about culturally sensitive development that is guided by practical needs on the ground. We believe that it is a new model for development that is unique in world terms and, in the past 11 years, it has enabled Scots to achieve a disproportionately large impact in partnership with Malawian individuals and organisations.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I am grateful to the minister for taking an intervention and for focusing his early remarks on the relationship that we have with Malawi. As the co-convenor of the cross-party group on Malawi, I am well aware of the excellent work that civic society in Scotland is doing to provide the foundations for that relationship. There is, however, concern that the core funding for some of those civic networks has not yet been clarified. What reassurances can the minister offer in the discussions that he is having with those groups to assure them of their future funding so that they can continue to carry out the excellent work that he has highlighted?

Dr Allan: The member rightly points to the importance of networking groups in Scotland working with civic society, churches and others. The funding decisions to which he refers have not yet been made, but they will be made soon—the groups concerned will not have to wait overlong for those decisions. I am conscious of the important role that they play.

We have brought energy access to over 80,000 Malawians in rural areas; we have established the national educational standards that are being used to assess education for millions of schoolchildren there; Education Scotland is working closely with the Scottish Government and partners, having developed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Malawi; and we have helped to quadruple the annual number of medical graduates from Malawi's only public medical school.

We have also provided the Scottish charity Mary's Meals with over £1.8 million over the past decade to feed tens of thousands of school pupils across Malawi. I congratulate the founder of Mary's Meals, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, on being awarded the prestigious Livingstone medal by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. Magnus received that honour in recognition of his contribution to feeding more than a million children in Malawi and thousands more in other countries.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I agree very much with what the minister has just

said. Does he agree that we need both the longer-term investment to enable other countries and the shorter-term stuff such as the meals provision that he has just referred to?

Dr Allan: The member is right in saying that the constant challenge in international development is to ensure that we both respond to immediate need and think about long-term international development. The countries that we are working in have ambitions like any other country, and in the future they will be in a position to be more self-sufficient than they are. However, that does not take away from the urgent need to help them now.

Although what we do in Malawi is for Malawi's sake, in many cases our partnership working has created real benefits for Scottish people. In that context, I am delighted to announce over £1 million in matched funding, over five years, for the Blantyre-to-Blantyre clinical research project. Observant people will be aware that there is a Blantyre in both Malawi and Scotland. We are linking clinicians at the University of Glasgow with clinicians in Malawi in order to study the increasing incidence of cardiac and inflammatory disease in the Malawian population, but the results of that collaboration will contribute to research into the Glasgow effect and studies into the health of the Scottish population. As with all our work in Malawi, the project is being carried out under the terms of the bilateral co-operation agreement, ensuring that our work dovetails with the Government's wider priorities and long-term vision.

Our manifesto promised to renew our agreement with the Malawi Government and we will progress that in the coming year. We will also continue to ring fence £3 million a year for initiatives in Malawi.

As I mentioned, the mobilisation of Scottish civil society is central to all this work, and the organisations involved include the Scotland Malawi Partnership. Recent years have also seen large civil society involvement in fair trade activities. In 2013, Scotland became the second country in the world to achieve fair trade nation status.

Scotland's capacity to help the developing world is not limited to one country. In 2008, the Government added several other countries to our programme across sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, and increased the international development fund to £9 million, with a global footprint across seven countries. The work has received invaluable support from the Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland—NIDOS—which has supported the growth of that sector and enabled our sectoral colleagues to come together to share best practice.

In Rwanda, the Scottish Government is working with Tearfund to deliver a project called ending poverty one village at a time. It aims to empower communities to end poverty, hunger and disease through developing self-help groups and focusing on those needs identified by people on the ground.

In Zambia, through our funding of the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund's Kulima programme, we are able to ensure that the project can help to address the impact of soil degradation by working with more than 1,300 smallholder farmers to increase food production levels. The result has been an improvement in the fertility and the resilience of their soil to climate change.

In Pakistan, the Scottish Government has provided £670,000 from the international development fund to run highly regarded scholarship programmes. The funding will enable 400 women from disadvantaged backgrounds to study for masters degrees and more than 3,000 children from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete one year of primary and secondary schooling.

The past couple of years have been a good time to reflect on our international development work and to think about how to maximise its impact. In November 2015, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of that work.

The First Minister has announced that the intended framework for domestic implementation of the global goals will be the national performance framework. To align our work with the commitment to the global goals, we launched a nationwide consultation on our international development policy. I believe that our new strategy will achieve those ends. We have brought greater geographic focus to our work by reducing the number of countries that we work in. Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia will form our new sub-Saharan African project base, and we will continue our engagement with Pakistan through our highly successful focus on scholarships for educational benefit. Those are four countries with which Scotland shares extensive historic and contemporary links and where the Government can focus its efforts for maximum impact.

In working to the spirit of the global goals, we will concentrate our efforts as a Government on four distinct priorities. The first of those priorities is to encourage new and historic relationships with the developing world. The second is to empower our partner countries and increase their capacity for development. The third is to engage the people of Scotland across all levels of society in the process of achieving global sustainable development. Finally, we will enhance our global citizenship by showing leadership on tackling poverty and injustice at home and abroad.

I turn briefly to the amendments. I am happy to support the Labour amendment. I have looked carefully at the Conservative amendment and there is much in it to commend. I am happy to confirm that we work closely with the United Kingdom on many projects and to agree with the points that are made about promoting the rights of marginalised minorities. Indeed, the new strategy embeds human rights in all our development work, and I am happy to confirm our commitment to eliminate all discrimination and to work actively for the inclusion of women and girls, the disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and other marginalised groups.

However, I make it clear to members that we support the beyond aid agenda and are implementing it. That means that we still consider aid programmes to be a vital component of sustainable development efforts in the meantime. That is why we have maintained our development assistance funding stream in addition to an investment stream. Perhaps unintentionally, the Conservative amendment does not make it clear that there is a need for both aid and trade, but for that reason I am not minded—I regret—to support the amendment.

I think that it would be helpful for members if I were briefly to highlight some of the further changes to our international development work.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I think, minister, that it will have to be terribly brief.

Dr Allan: It will be very brief indeed, in that case. I conclude by saying that I am delighted to present the Government's—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I did not mean as brief as that, but go for it.

Dr Allan: How brief is brief? [*Laughter.*]

As I said, I will indicate some of the changes to our international development work that will support us in implementing our broad policy aims. In order to facilitate the wide range of engagement that we believe that we can leverage between Scotland and the developing world, we will create three new funding streams within our international development fund. Our development assistance stream will fund Scottish organisations to deliver projects in our partner countries, and the funding will mostly be allocated through a competitive application process.

I am delighted to present the Government's new international development strategy to the Parliament today. Scotland is a nation that is proud of its reputation as a good global citizen at a time when many around the world are questioning the very basis of such principles. I hope that members will agree that our international development strategy gives Scotland the best

chance of playing a vital and distinctive role in addressing the challenges faced by our world.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the Scottish Government's new international development strategy, *Global Citizenship: Scotland's International Development Strategy*, which was published on 21 December 2016; believes that the Scottish Government and the Parliament both have a key role in continuing to provide a voice for humanity, tolerance and compassion as part of an interlinked, global community, including through the expression of the concept of good global citizenship; recognises that the Scottish Government has pioneered a partnership approach to development that has helped Scotland and several developing countries to achieve mutual progress towards the UN Global Goals; welcomes the four priorities under the strategy to achieve its vision, namely to encourage new and historic relationships, empower Scotland's partner countries, engage the people of Scotland and enhance global citizenship; notes that, geographically, the Scottish Government's international development work will be focused on where it can make a real difference and most impact in relation to its budget, in four countries, Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda and Pakistan; welcomes the Scottish Government's stated ways of working to achieve its vision and implement its priorities, namely to invest its International Development Fund strategically and in line with good development practice, to utilise Scottish expertise, to collaborate with others to achieve these ambitions, including its partner countries, civil society and other governments and donors, and to promote the Beyond Aid agenda; recognises the holistic approach necessary to achieve sustainable development through a shared duty to consider in everyday decisions and behaviours in Scotland and the impact that these have on developing countries, and reaffirms the strong cross-party collaborative approach and support for international development in the Parliament, as acknowledged in the strategy.

14:56

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife)
(Con): I am delighted to lead for the Scottish Conservatives on this important issue and to move the amendment in my name.

We in the Conservatives very much welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to international development. The Scottish Conservatives have been the staunchest defenders of the UK's meeting the United Nations target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product on international aid and, through our UK Government, we became the first G7 country to enshrine that commitment in law.

As a developed country, we have a responsibility to play our part in providing aid to people around the world who are less well off than us. We must continue to contribute to the international fight against poverty and provide assistance during humanitarian crises around the world. To that end, we pledged in our Holyrood manifesto—as the Scottish National Party did in its—to increase Scotland's international development fund from £9 million to £10 million to

help to tackle the poverty and inequality that the world's poorest and most vulnerable people face. We very much welcome the fact that that commitment is to be fulfilled.

Although the UK Government plays the biggest role in delivering British humanitarian aid, it is commendable that the Scottish international development fund's budget allocation for the coming financial year includes provision for a Scottish humanitarian fund. That is very much to be welcomed, because it will allow us to better respond to the growing number of humanitarian crises around the globe that are unanticipated and unpredictable.

The international development fund's continued approach of not providing direct funding to the Governments of partner countries is right. The targeting of funds to specific projects ensures not only that our funding is spent where it can achieve the best possible outcome for people in our partner countries but that we get the best value for money for our taxpayers.

Just as important as development assistance and developing ties between Scotland and our partner countries are trade and investment. Targeted investment, along with the crucial involvement of the private sector, will make sure that Scotland's partner countries can make the transition from aid to having sustainable economic growth in the future. It is vital that we continue to support those countries to develop.

Although "Global Citizenship" refers to that, our amendment seeks to put more emphasis on taking a long-term and more direct approach to supporting such countries. Increasingly, we in Scotland are lucky to have so many communities and organisations partnering around the world in order to forge relationships and make progress in developing countries. Civic society plays a vital role in international development, and I very much welcome the fact that the Scottish Government's strategy values the efforts of those groups. They require to be supported and looked after.

As a relatively new member, I am chuffed beyond belief to have got the chance to become co-convenor of the cross-party group on Malawi. I see that as a privilege, because I am astounded by the amount of work that is done and the number of organisations that participate in that, and the interest that hundreds of community projects in every part of Scotland have shown in fostering links between Malawi and Scotland is to be commended. Scotland has a long-standing history of links with Malawi that dates back to the 1850s, with the arrival in Malawi of the explorer and missionary David Livingstone, and the close ties between the two countries have only strengthened in recent years with the signing of the co-operation agreement in 2005.

As I have said, we must commend the many community-based projects throughout Scotland, such as those that are making links with Malawi, and the great foundation that they provide on which to build an international development strategy. We need to use those existing relationships and give encouragement to people across civic Scotland—we can see the talents in our churches, schools, universities, businesses and community groups—to ensure that we get the widest possible support across communities.

However, we must not forget the poor human rights records of some of our partner countries. For example, same-sex relationships have been criminalised in Malawi, Zambia and Pakistan, and women still face significant discrimination in Malawi and Pakistan in particular. We need to acknowledge that as we move forward, and we in the Conservatives were somewhat disappointed to find that the Scottish Government's motion fails to include a reference to doing more to protect human rights in those countries. Although "Global Citizenship" talks about tackling economic inequality, it fails to mention the challenges that are faced by marginalised and vulnerable individuals who often face criticism and harassment, and our amendment therefore calls on the Scottish Government to do more to promote the needs of such individuals in our partner countries.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): I recognise your point that the issue is not specifically covered in the Government's motion, but the minister outlined the position that the Government has taken on the issues that you just raised. It would be reasonable for you to at least recognise that.

Alexander Stewart: I was about to come on to that. I had written down the point, which was not in my original speech.

On that very point, I acknowledge that the Scottish Parliament has taken on board some of our concerns. It is important that you and we acknowledge the matter and that we work collaboratively on it, because I believe that a lot of work on that endeavour can be done across parties and organisations in Parliament and civic society. I acknowledge what you have done, and I thank you for taking that on.

I am also pleased to note the reference in "Global Citizenship" to the close working relationships between Scotland's Government, the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Such partnerships have already been invaluable to Scotland's relations with places such as Malawi, and they will become much more apparent as we develop things in Rwanda and Zambia.

As time is moving on, I conclude by pointing out that there is much consensus on the issue not just among the parties in the chamber but throughout Scotland. I am proud of the international development efforts of Scotland's two Governments, which are leading the way internationally and providing help to those who need it. To that end, we in the Scottish Conservatives broadly welcome the Scottish Government's international development strategy, and we hope that we can continue to build on our success in such areas in the years ahead. We urge the Scottish Government to carefully consider efforts to promote human rights in our partner countries, although I am delighted to find that that issue is being incorporated.

I move amendment S5M-03303.1, to leave out from "welcomes the Scottish Government's stated ways of working" to end and insert:

"calls on the Scottish Government to further promote the needs of minority, marginalised and vulnerable groups in these countries where such groups are often subject to criminalisation and harassment; welcomes the Scottish Government's stated ways of working to achieve its vision and implement its priorities, namely to invest its International Development Fund strategically and in line with good development practice, to utilise Scottish expertise, to collaborate with others to achieve these ambitions, including its partner countries, civil society and other governments and donors, and to promote the Beyond Aid agenda, and encourage the move from aid to investment supporting Scotland's partner countries in developing economic growth; encourages the close relationship with the UK Government in international development; recognises the holistic approach necessary to achieve sustainable development through a shared duty to consider in everyday decisions and behaviours in Scotland and the impact that these have on developing countries, and reaffirms the strong cross-party collaborative approach and support for international development in the Parliament, as acknowledged in the strategy."

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members not to use the term "you" in the chamber but to use either the member's name or to say "the member".

15:05

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): The Government's motion talks about a

"strong cross-party collaborative approach and support for international development in the Parliament".

There is broad consensus, which Scottish Labour has been proud to be part of building. We welcome the strategy paper and we now want the Government to go beyond those 24 pages of good intentions and set out in detail what it will do to deliver them and how it will do so. I know that the minister will welcome the invitation to attend the cross-party group on international development to address those questions in more detail than he will have time to do today. I am glad that the

Government has indicated that it will accept our amendment in the same spirit.

Discussion of Scotland's approach to international development is always likely to start with Malawi, and the discussion has done that again today. The key early decisions in shaping a distinctive strategy for Scotland's devolved Government included those on core funding of the Scotland Malawi Partnership and the establishment of the Malawi development programme in 2005, as the minister acknowledged. The vision of Jack McConnell as First Minister and the coalition Government was to build on the long-standing partnerships in church and civil society between Scotland and Malawi and was for Scotland's devolved Government to add value directly in financial support and indirectly by providing a focus for the efforts of others.

That approach remains just as important today. According to the Scotland Malawi Partnership, for every £1 in official Government assistance, there is a further £8 in support from civil society, and there are more than 1,000 individual partnerships or connections between individuals and organisations in the two countries. Many of those links are long standing, but others have been stimulated by Government-to-Government engagement over the past 12 years. For example, individual congregations of the Church of Scotland have long had links with their counterparts in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, which have grown and developed in the context of Government support. The presbytery of Aberdeen, for instance, was twinned with its counterpart in the city of Blantyre in November 2005. The Scotland Malawi Partnership was established at the same time. There are now 18 individual twinning links between congregations in those two cities alone.

The Government's latest strategy proposes perhaps a closer focus on Malawi and three other countries. We think that a strong focus on a small number of countries makes sense in principle. In that way, the relatively modest Scottish Government budget can make the biggest difference where it is needed most. We also recognise that development partnerships in civil society are independent of the Government and are all the more valuable as a result. Organic connections at the grass-roots level can survive changes in Government and in policy and can continue to deliver at a local level, whatever may be happening elsewhere.

It follows that the Government must not be prescriptive when it comes to development work that is undertaken by civil society. A focus by the Government on particular countries may encourage others to follow suit, but it should not

discourage or downplay independent initiatives by churches, faith groups, councils or other partners that choose to support development elsewhere in the world.

Alexander Stewart made some important points. For example, he said that the Scottish Government should continue to work closely with the UK Department for International Development. The UK is one of the biggest providers of development assistance in the world, along with the United States, Japan, Germany, France and, of course, the European Union. Working with DFID and the EU institutions will therefore be essential to get the best outcomes from Scottish aid spending. It is simply a fact that Scottish taxpayers contribute far more through the UK and the EU than through the Scottish Government's programmes.

We agree on the importance of supporting

"minority, marginalised and vulnerable groups"

in the delivery of aid. I was pleased to hear the minister's assurances on human rights. However, Mr Stewart's amendment causes concern in its reference to encouraging

"the move from aid to investment ... in developing economic growth".

Aid is, of course, a means to an end, and successful development assistance ultimately puts itself out of business. However, that is quite different from making a political choice to shift the whole focus from aid to investment, regardless of how far poverty has been eliminated or the obstacles to inclusive economic growth have been eliminated.

We have heard the Secretary of State for International Development suggest that her department's role should be more focused on trade and economic advantage for the UK, so we are bound to worry about the political choices that are being made by some of Mr Stewart's party colleagues elsewhere. Our choice should be to work for sustainable and inclusive growth and to use aid and investment towards that end.

Labour's amendment calls for more detail in the Government's strategy and highlights the country strategies and policy coherence across the Scottish Government. Non-governmental organisations that are keen to support in-country work need to understand the mechanics of how applications to the international development fund and the climate justice fund will work—when applications can be made, the number of stages that will be involved in an application and whether the grant receiver will be required to part fund projects.

There are also questions about how the Government will seek to build sustainable long-

term partnerships in country to make the best use of local resources and local expertise. Just as local authorities and voluntary organisations in Scotland want to be able to plan on the basis of three-year budgets rather than one-year funding commitments, NGOs would like to have certainty about longer-term support for projects that will take time to mature or, as Liam McArthur said, for core funding of the essential work that allows them to deliver individual projects. Part of that will depend on how the Government intends to assess and evaluate the projects that it supports and how it will use those evaluations to improve the effectiveness of future projects.

When the Government commits to going beyond aid, it is important to know how it intends to do so in relation to its own activities outwith the international development programmes that we are debating. For example, direct assistance from police, health and education services in Scotland for building up those same services in Malawi is important, but it is also useful and important to know how the Government intends to embed its commitments on development, human rights and global justice into its routine decision-making processes across the Government, just as with its consideration of impacts on business, the environment and equalities.

I hope that the minister will be able to respond to many of those points in closing the debate.

I move amendment S5M-03303.2, to insert at end:

“, and looks forward to the Scottish Government setting out its detailed plans on how it intends to achieve its stated aims in each of the four countries where work will be focused, and in ensuring policy coherence across all sectors in pursuit of sustainable development goals in all the countries in question.”

15:12

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): I welcome the Scottish Government's international development strategy and its £10 million funding commitment, alongside complementary funding streams such as the climate justice fund and the humanitarian aid fund. I note that all of those have been welcomed by a range of stakeholders in advance of today's debate, including SCIAF and Oxfam.

I begin my comments by taking the opportunity to promote the general principle of international aid, because lately it has been under attack from elements of the right-wing press and what are known as alt-right politicians, and it is important that we counter those attacks. Our cross-party record of support in Scotland puts us in a good position to do that.

It is now almost 12 years since 225,000 people, all dressed in white, marched through Edinburgh in support of the make poverty history campaign in 2005. I am proud to say that I was one of them. It was the 20th anniversary of the Live Aid concerts, which had first focused the world's attention on Africa. The point of make poverty history was that the spirit of Live Aid needed to be permanent. The problem of global poverty and inequality required not just charity, but global structural and political changes and hard cash.

The year 2005 was also the year in which the Scottish international development strategy that we have had until today had its roots. The G8 summit took place in our country and its focus was on alleviating absolute poverty from the developing world, in particular sub-Saharan Africa. I pay tribute to the Government of Jack McConnell, who felt that it was important that Scotland did its bit to make a difference. It was not without opposition, probably from the same right-wing papers that attack aid today. In that year, the then Scottish Government signed the agreement with Malawi that has been so successful. The incoming SNP Government unveiled an international development strategy in 2008, which is being replaced today after extensive consultation and assessment.

My involvement in 2005 was also professional, as I was the editor of the magazine for delegates to the G8 summit that year, and I sent Scottish journalists from *The Herald* newspaper to Eritrea and Tanzania to put a human face to the issues that were to be discussed by world leaders. The millennium development goals that they were committed to included access to clean water, reducing child mortality and access to education. One of our reporters who went to Eritrea, in East Africa, rose before dawn with a little girl to make the long 5 kilometre trek, with a pitcher, to collect muddy water for her family—that was before the girl even managed to get to school; sometimes she was too tired to go to school. That was the human face of make poverty history.

Diarrhoea caused by dirty water and bad sanitation is still the second-biggest child killer worldwide. There are 2.4 billion people in the world who still lack access to improved sanitation. Partly as a result of the G8 summit in Scotland and the commitments that were made, there have been advances. According to the UN, the world has met the target of halving the proportion of people who do not have access to improved sources of water, which is five years ahead of schedule. Between 1990 and 2015, 2.6 billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources.

That is just one issue. There have also been improvements in maternal health and access to

education and a reduction in the number of people living on what was, in 2005, less than a dollar a day. Those improvements are a direct result of international aid, because international aid works.

At the G8 summit, world leaders committed to spending \$48 billion a year by 2010, and \$1 billion a year was used to wipe out debt for the most highly indebted poor countries. All UK political parties committed to maintaining the aid target of 0.7 per cent of national income. Although I had many disagreements with David Cameron's Government, it was commendable that he stuck to that commitment. I hope that the present UK Government's Department for International Development, under Priti Patel, maintains the commitment that existed under Mr Cameron.

I am very pleased to note that there is absolutely no chance of us in Scotland renegeing on any of the commitments that we have made. We contribute to the UK's international development spending through our taxes, and our own fund is additional to that. There is a consensus in Scotland that it is the right thing to do and that it makes us better global citizens—to borrow from the title of the new strategy.

There appears to be a consensus in the submissions from charities that the priorities of the strategy should be to address those in the greatest poverty, and by focusing on just four countries—three of them in sub-Saharan Africa—we can do that more effectively.

The Scottish Government's approach to date has also been tightly focused. It has been to work with NGOs and experts in Scotland and in the countries themselves. It is fair to say that the system is more accountable than when large sums of aid are channelled through governments.

The Scottish system of delivering small grants and project funding allows us to see exactly where the money is spent. I had a glance at the Scottish Government's grants for 2016 and was impressed by how well they illustrated the aims of the new strategy. For example, the grants included £20,000 to enable Haemophilia Scotland to educate 300 health workers in Malawi about bleeding disorders, which is an excellent example of partnership. Another £48,000 was used to help communities suffering from leprosy in Zambia and Tanzania to generate their own income through work. Many other Scottish projects have helped to improve maternal health over the years through work by clinicians from Scotland who have travelled to Malawi.

However, I agree with SCIAF, in its briefing, that we should always, where possible, use expertise and workers from the country itself to build up capacity. A good example of that is the work that the Scotland Malawi business group has been

doing with Stirling university—backed by the Scottish Government—to promote aquaculture in Malawi, so that people can earn a living, nutrition can be improved and food security can be increased in local communities through small-scale fish farming. That is a good example of the beyond aid approach.

“Give a poor man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you give him an occupation that will feed him for a lifetime.”

That is a very old Chinese proverb, but it is apt for our 21st century international development strategy.

15:19

Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con):

I am sure that all members in the chamber today would agree that it is the responsibility of developed nations, such as our own, to contribute towards sustainable international development and to co-operate globally with our international partners towards achievement of the UN sustainable development goals. I therefore welcome the Scottish Government's £10 million commitment to continue to take action to help to tackle poverty among some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, in areas of Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda and Pakistan, which is on top of the UK Government's £12 billion international development budget. Both of those commitments demonstrate that Scotland and the UK are punching above their weight in promoting sustainable international development.

By working together, we can tackle the global challenges of our time, including poverty and disease, mass migration, insecurity and conflict, and build a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for everyone.

International development is not just about creating stability and tackling poverty abroad; it also contributes directly to our own security and prosperity at home. Andrew Mitchell MP has said that the security of our country is

“not only maintained by our brilliant armed forces, it's also secured by training the police in Afghanistan, or building government structures in the Middle East. Those things make Britain more secure and stable and are funded from international development.”

I applaud our Minister for International Development and Europe for his commitment, in the strategy paper, to aim even higher and to achieve our development goals in our partner countries and beyond. However, it is also important to recognise potential shortcomings in the strategy, not simply for the sake of doing so, but to enhance it.

First, the UN sustainable development goals are built on the principle of leaving no one behind and

endeavouring to reach the most vulnerable first. Indeed, the Scottish Government's paper notes that its

"commitment ... to the Global Goals must reflect and mirror our domestic aims and ambitions for Scotland."

With that in mind, the Scottish Government strategy should place a greater emphasis on the importance of deploying international aid to reach vulnerable and marginalised communities. Members will be aware of the concerns of Stonewall Scotland about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender inclusion in development. It says:

"There is a lack of recognition ... that barriers other than economic inequality, such as criminalisation, ostracism, and harassment, can hold individuals back and stop them accessing vital services, including through international development programmes."

Although I welcome the minister's assurances, I make the following points. In Pakistan, the Scottish Government's strategy places a strong emphasis on education, but what about the millions of LGBT people in Pakistan who live in fear of the death penalty for simply being who they are, and who are unable to enjoy the personal freedoms that we have here in Scotland? In Malawi and Zambia, the Scottish Government will form part of its sub-Saharan Africa project base to foster cross-border learning, but what about the fact that those countries continue to criminalise same-sex relationships and impose draconian penalties on individuals simply for being in love?

I urge the Scottish Government, wherever possible, to consult local human rights defenders in partner countries to guarantee that an inclusive approach is taken and that the projects that we support actively and effectively promote freedom and personal liberty and pursue real change.

We are all proud of the role that Scotland plays in the world. That said, it is important that we follow the public pound to ensure that the hard-earned money of the Scottish taxpayer does not end up in the wrong hands but goes to help the most vulnerable and oppressed people, who so desperately need it.

We also need to learn the lessons of the past. That is especially true in the wake of allegations that more than £2 million of UK aid to Gaza has been funnelled to Hamas by so-called charitable organisations, enabling a recognised terrorist organisation to build tunnels and purchase weapons in preparation for a third intifada against Israel.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): The member may have his own views on the issue, but I highlight the words of my colleague and friend, Anas Sarwar, who has said over many years that Gaza city is like Glasgow with a big wall around it and is a prison in which people have to live. If it

were not for United Nations Relief and Works Agency—UNRWA—aid and support from a whole range of countries, the situation there would be even worse.

Ross Thomson: I thank the member for her intervention but my point is not about the support that we give but about where it goes. It is right that we help the most vulnerable—I have made that clear in what I have said—but we have evidence of where aid has got into the wrong hands and has facilitated acts—

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): Will the member take an intervention?

Ross Thomson: I do not want to get dragged into a discussion about this; I am just making a brief point about the importance of following the public pound. I would like to move on.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is for the member to decide whether to take interventions, whether from back benchers or front benchers.

Ross Thomson: The Scottish Government's strategy must always ensure a process of real due diligence to guarantee that our money reaches projects that help with peace and not with hatred, discrimination or violence.

Our amendment encourages the Scottish Government to support investment and economic growth in our partner countries. Contrary to the view that the minister expressed in his opening speech, international development aid can encourage and promote not only democracy but the development of international trade—it is not one or the other; it is both.

Securing trade agreements with developing nations can help to reduce poverty by stimulating economic growth, encouraging investment and creating jobs. We can benefit in Scotland by enhancing innovation, improving skills and strengthening the ties between nations to secure peace and stability, particularly in the most troubled parts of the world.

Our amendment is considered and draws fair attention to issues of real importance that we feel have not been properly considered in the development of the Scottish Government's strategy or in its motion. I therefore urge the minister to reconsider his position, as I believe that there is common ground between us and that we could build a consensus today. If that is not possible, I urge all members to support the amendment in the name of Alexander Stewart.

15:26

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): This debate is founded on principle. Page 17 of the document to which we

are speaking today captures some of that principle when it says:

“Our approach to international development is one of working in ‘partnerships of equals’ with others, both within Scotland and with our partner countries.”

That relates to a very important point. This is not about what we do to people: it is about what we do along with them, because if the people with whom we work are not with us, we will achieve nothing that is of long-term benefit.

Ross Thomson referred to the United Nations. With regard to the underpinnings of the issue that we are discussing, Ban Ki-moon said:

“Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth—these are one and the same fight.”

Of course, at the moment, our eyes will be on what might happen in the United States, which is currently one of the biggest contributors in international development—although we might doubt its future commitment in that regard. In his inaugural address in 1961, John F Kennedy said:

“To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves”.

I wonder whether we will hear that message in the next few days from the United States. Perhaps Theodore Roosevelt, in a speech in Washington in 1906, got to the heart of where the United States is currently, when he said:

“The liar is no whit better than the thief ... An epidemic of indiscriminate assault upon character does not good, but very great harm.”

Let us hope that the events of the election in the United States can be put behind us and that the Republicans can return to the spirit of their founder, Abraham Lincoln, who, at Gettysburg, said that

“all men are created equal.”

Of course, he meant women, as well. Times have changed.

The faiths that underpin the moral codes of communities across the world also speak to the subject. Isaiah 58:6 says:

“to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke”.

That message is pervasive in the thinking of the human race.

As others have done, I will quote Jack McConnell. I have great regard for Jack McConnell on account of two things that he did during his time in office. First, his work on smoking, and, secondly, his statement that

“If we are not part of the solution in Africa ... We exacerbate the problem.”—[*Official Report*, 1 June 2005; c 17383.]

He was absolutely correct, in that regard.

It is worth saying that the past year has been a tough one for international relations. We have seen intolerance almost normalised in many parts of the world, and perhaps the hope that we might look to a better future for all the peoples of the world has all but vanished. In “The Once and Future King”, T H White ends his story of hope at the point of Arthur’s death. Before the king passes, he imparts a vision to a young boy; the final words are “the beginning”. Let us hope that after what has happened in the past year in particular, we are, in the face of defeat, actually looking at a new beginning.

In doing that, we can work with our partners and share a vision. In a world that is riven by intolerance and disregard, it is more important than ever that we build bridges with those with whom we can work, to improve their conditions and give our young people—it is often young people—the opportunity to learn from those who are less well off than they are that there are different ways of addressing the world’s problems. I quoted Ban Ki-moon; what he said is an excellent place to start, and we must tackle each part of his vision with our partners.

Tackling climate change is part of that vision. I have talked before about climate change and climate justice. Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland, now runs a foundation that addresses the issue. It works largely with women, including many women in Africa. We have heard about children who go out to collect muddy water for their families before going to school, and we know that as climate change aridifies areas where people live, women have to travel further and further to get wood for their fires. We, who benefit here from our industrial past, are part of the reason why such burdens are being placed on people in less-developed countries. That is why it is important that we stick to the knitting in terms of climate change, while working with the individuals who are most affected by it and whose problems in that respect we have largely created.

Work to end global poverty reinforces our commitment to defeating poverty in our own country and shows that our actions are not limited and selective. No human being, anywhere, should suffer the pain of poverty.

The diversity of peoples and approaches strengthens the outcomes that we are likely to get. Diversity is of intrinsic value. In the past I have quoted the first law of epigenetics, which is that the more highly optimised an organism is for one environment, the more adversely affected it is by a change in that environment. That gives us the scientific underpinning for why diversity means more resilient societies and ecosystems.

International development is an opportunity to create a certain unity of purpose across national boundaries. The greatest problems of our time will be defeated not by the actions of a single nation, but by the collaboration of all nations. Partnerships give us collective power. The Scottish Government's strategy document is an encouraging part of the development of a global response. We are but a small part of that, but let us hope that we are an exemplar that encourages others to greater efforts in the future.

15:33

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I welcome the Scottish Government's new international development strategy. Internationalism is a proud facet of socialism, and Scottish Labour supports the new strategy and believes that we in Scotland can play a role on the global stage in influencing progressive futures.

As Stewart Stevenson did, I pay tribute to Ban Ki-moon, whose term as secretary general of the United Nations recently ended. He has said that

"this generation is the first in humanity's history with the capacity to end endemic poverty, and the last with the chance to halt catastrophic climate change."

The UN global goals for sustainable development are a powerful and important guiding force for the path that we all hope our global community will take. They set targets to end extreme poverty and inequality by 2030 and to tackle climate change, and their might has been bolstered not only by the engagement of 193 world leaders but by social media, which have reached out to young people across the world. Raising awareness in such ways is vital in order to fuel a sense of shared duty and to encourage the behaviour changes that we must make.

It is absolutely right that the climate challenge fund is featured in the strategy. Climate change is perhaps the greatest challenge that we face, as is demonstrated by references to it in so many of the UN goals. The creation of partnerships in the four targeted countries means that we can share the valuable expertise that has been garnered at home, as was highlighted by Stewart Stevenson.

The Scottish Government motion

"recognises the holistic approach necessary to achieve sustainable development through a shared duty to consider in everyday decisions and behaviours in Scotland and the impact that these have on developing countries".

A fine example of that is the charity Tearfund Scotland. Through the climate justice fund, Tearfund has been able to assist with water-resource management in Malawi, in making clean and safe water more available, setting up district and community systems for governing resources, and empowering targeted communities with

strategies to adapt to climate change. The benefits of community empowerment initiatives such as those are far reaching: from the reduced risk of waterborne disease, to making bricks and mortar for new infrastructure, to saving valuable time for those who collect water—often women and children.

Tearfund states that

"more people have escaped poverty in the last 25 years around the world than at any other time in history, but at Tearfund Scotland we are concerned that climate change and rising inequality will reverse that unless we act now."

The charity also asks us to act here in Scotland on a number of issues. In the climate change plan, it is right that we have a robust link between what we do here and what we do globally.

Last year, at COP23—the 23rd conference of the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—the Marrakesh vision was launched. It is a pledge by 48 nations to cut emissions dramatically. As I highlighted in a parliamentary motion in December, the most inspiring part of the vision is the commitment from some of the poorest nations around the world—the nations that have contributed least to climate damage. Scotland is resplendent with opportunities for renewable energy creation. The Marrakesh vision should remind Parliament that we must not squander that privilege, and that we must strive for greater progress in decarbonisation.

I will also speak in support of the Scottish Government's targeted approach, as highlighted in our amendment, which was spoken to by Lewis Macdonald. That shows how important it is to look to detailed plans for the way forward.

The minister highlighted the "myriad of connections" with Malawi. As a member of the cross-party group on Malawi in the previous session, I was able to witness further the strength of the links between Scotland and Malawi. The Scotland Malawi Partnership makes a significant contribution to them.

Empowerment of and support for women are of great importance globally. I was able to contribute in a small way to a day of sharing knowledge and experience with women from Scotland and Malawi about the opportunities for women in civic and political life, the barriers that we face and the positive action that is necessary. I ask the minister to say, in summing up, what contribution the Scottish Government intends to make to supporting women in our four sister countries in the global quest for gender equality. Specifically, will there be any work to tackle the scourge of men's violence against women and children in those four countries?

The Scotland Malawi Partnership also works to develop relationships between schools here and in Malawi. In my region, South Scotland, a number of schools including Beeslack community high school, Newtongrange primary school, Penicuik high school, Carstairs primary school and Libberton primary school—the list continues—have been involved. I will quote the partnership. It says that

“all have active, dignified, two-way school-to-school links which are informing and inspiring generations of young Scots to be good global citizens.”

As a former eco-schools co-ordinator, I will acknowledge the global citizenship part of the green flag programme. The Climate Coalition is running the “Show the love” project in February, including a free resource pack, to highlight climate change. Oxfam—[*Interruption.*] Excuse me—I think I am not the only one suffering from a virus. Oxfam has produced “food for thought” resources for primary learners who are studying Malawi, and has used a version of snakes and ladders so that pupils can learn about the experiences of small-scale farmers.

I ask the Scottish Government how links with our four sister countries will be encouraged specifically through the eco-schools programme. As a member of the Co-operative group of MSPs, I ask the minister whether he agrees with me that the opportunities for people and communities to take financial, productive and negotiating power into their own hands through co-operative models—here in Scotland and around the world—are clear to see, and whether the strategy will highlight those ways forward.

Finally, I make a plea for the Scottish Government to seize every opportunity to contribute to conflict resolution through the new strategy—not least through involvement in whatever way possible in supporting the development of non-proliferation treaties in order to rid our world once and for all of nuclear weapons.

15:40

Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): For two years, I used to pass a tarpaulin-covered shack on my way to school each morning. It was not a heap of rubbish—although you might be forgiven for thinking that it was—but a semi-permanent home for a family with four or five children. Through every season, only a thin sheet protected the family from the scorching sun or the heavy rain. The father and mother, and the eldest children—who were probably my age—were probably manual labourers when they could find work, building roads and houses with loads of bricks and cement perched precariously on their heads, with their worn sandals barely protecting

their feet from the gravel. The toddlers would play in the dust by the road, stopping to smile as my siblings and I walked past in our smart uniforms, with our packed lunches and textbooks in our schoolbags. That, for me, is injustice.

I met and saw countless families like that, but I wanted to pick just one to personalise my contribution to the debate. That is just one family out of 836 million people who are living in extreme poverty worldwide. It is one household that faces more than just lack of income and resources, as its members have limited access to education and healthcare and face discrimination and exclusion from society.

The UN's number 1 global sustainable development goal is for that family, wherever they are now: it is to end poverty in all its forms, everywhere. The Scottish Government's new international development strategy is a message to the world that we will play our role with Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda and Pakistan to achieve mutual progress towards the UN global goals. If the benefits of ending poverty and meeting the UN global goals are mutual, the means by which we do that must be collaborative. That is at the heart of the Scottish Government's strategy.

We might be a fairly small nation, but we stand on the shoulders of giants whose belief in the ethos of the common weal—sharing wealth, whether that is financial wealth, faith or friendship, for the common good—was not restricted to their own front gardens, but stretched far beyond. It was born not of an inflated view of their self-importance, but of a view of common humanity. They included men such as David Livingstone, a medical missionary from a humble home in Blantyre, whose working life began in a cotton mill at the age of 10 and whose explorations of the African continent and crusades against slavery made him a national hero. They also included Mary Slessor, from the slums of Dundee, who started working at a mill aged 11, and travelled to west Africa as a missionary who fought for women's and children's rights.

I passionately believe in community, and none more so than the global community. There is an enormous challenge before us and a moral obligation to act, but not as the paternalistic benefactors of generations past, although I fear that there is still a strain of imperialism in a lot of public rhetoric from politicians, the press and others.

As Stewart Stevenson highlighted, the Scottish Government's approach to international development is to work in “a partnership of equals” with others. The purpose is to empower communities, within and beyond our borders, and only a partnership approach with a mutually beneficial goal will empower communities to effect

change and work towards sustainable development. That approach dignifies all partners.

My personal desire to empower communities drives my service to my constituents, so I am pleased that the Scottish Government's strategy puts empowerment rather than charity alone at the very core of our internationalism.

I mentioned Mr Livingstone, and many members have mentioned our long-standing relationship with Malawi, which is a great example of a mutually beneficial and valued enterprise. I thank the Scotland Malawi Partnership for all that it does. The very title of that organisation is evocative of a relationship of friends and equals rather than one of reliance and subsidy.

The strategy that we are debating also considers the importance of funding opportunities for Scottish organisations that support young people to volunteer so that they can realise their role and be a force for good in the wider world, via education and the example that they set. Earlier this year, as a mentor at the Commonwealth youth parliament, I saw the enormous potential of young people pursuing the common global good. The event involved young people from 66 regions, so there was great variety in culture, language and experience and yet there was much friendship and unity of purpose. If they are the future leaders, there is great hope that international friendships of the future will develop great global partnerships.

In September 2015, 193 world leaders agreed to 17 global goals for sustainable development to end extreme poverty, inequality and climate change. It can be easy to despair about the challenge and the magnitude of the problems of extreme poverty that we face—I do it myself at times. It can also be easy to indulge in self-centred parochialism or to sign a cheque, get a pat on the back and move on. However, the Government's strategy does not take the easy route; instead it contributes distinctively to international development by focusing our expertise, being innovative and employing our unique partnership approach for the global good.

I do not know where the family I mentioned at the start of my speech is today. I do not know whether their children managed to get out of the relentless cycle of poverty that passes from generation to generation. That family is just one of millions of families on the other side of the world, but I firmly believe that they are fellow members of our global community. They are global citizens, and so are we.

15:47

Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con): I am proud to stand here as a member of a party whose Government at Westminster leads the world in its

support for the people of poor nations. Our UK Conservative Government has ensured that our country is one of only six in the world that meet the UN target of donating 0.7 per cent of GDP to assist those who are less fortunate. It is good that, in Scotland, we add to that contribution by assisting countries with which we have a special bond, such as Malawi.

The UK has been setting that example to the rest of the world since 2013. It is the only member of the G7 to meet the UN target and, of course, it is by far the largest contributor of any European country. In cash terms, we contribute over £12.1 billion, which is second only in the world to the United States, although the UK's contribution of 0.71 per cent of GDP is far in excess of the 0.17 per cent from the Obama Administration.

According to a report from the House of Commons library, countries' proximity to achieving the UN target

"is regarded by the international community as being an indicator of the generosity of individual countries' aid policies."

That being the case, thanks to both the UK Government and our Scottish international aid, we in Scotland can certainly hold our heads high. However, we should not and cannot be complacent, as everything possible needs to be done to ensure that aid from the UK taxpayer reaches the designated projects and individuals who are in need.

Giving aid to developing countries has often had critics. The issues include a lack of targeting, corruption in receiving countries or aid being used to allow countries to divert expenditure towards other purposes that are often not in keeping with meeting the United Nations sustainable development goals. To maintain taxpayers' confidence that their money is well spent, aid must be focused and accountable and, except in emergency humanitarian situations, it must always go hand in hand with a recognition by the recipient countries of human rights and freedoms. Michela Wrong, the author of "It's Our Turn to Eat", which looks at corruption in Kenya, also points to other countries, including Rwanda, where the promotion of democracy and human rights has not had the same focus as building schools.

A large number of countries benefit from UK aid. Not surprisingly, Commonwealth nations feature high in the list of recipient countries. Pakistan is a large recipient, receiving more than £350 million of aid from British taxpayers. Other countries in the top 10 include India, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria. Each receives hundreds of millions of pounds in aid, which reflects recent tragic events.

International development aid makes a real difference towards achieving the UN global goals. They assist nine million children in the poorest countries on earth to attend primary school. UK aid has immunised 55 million children against preventable and life-threatening diseases. Furthermore, it is estimated that more than a quarter of a million newborn children are alive today thanks to our contribution, which includes developing sources of clean drinking water, improving agricultural yields and giving humanitarian aid to people displaced by war and famine by providing shelter, food and medicine. From the refugee camps of Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon, to the newly dug wells in South Sudan, the logo of UK Aid, highlighting our flag and the message “from British people”, is a welcome sight to countless thousands.

Aid is the right thing to do in not only human but political terms. Giving aid to the poorest is the right thing: we must do it. Poverty can be a recruiting sergeant for those who seek to radicalise, and failed states can become safe havens for enemies of our way of life. It is in our national interest to help alleviate poverty and suffering. As we leave the European Union and take up our historic role in the wider world, we can be proud of what Scotland and the wider UK does. If our actions make it easier for there to be a safer world, that is no bad thing.

Encouraging and giving aid to countries who genuinely aspire to the UN global objectives has many positives. I was struck by the words of Kirsty McNeill, executive director of policy and campaigns at Save the Children, who said that we should also play our part because, as one of the world’s wealthiest and most successful economies, we can. Kirsty put it like this:

“If I saw a man in the Thames on the way home tonight and I saved him, it may well do wonders for my reputation, but that’s not why I do it—I do it because if you can save a life, you should save a life”.

I applaud the amendment lodged by my colleague Alexander Stewart because, of course, it is good to save a life. However, in Kirsty McNeill’s analogy, what would have happened if she had not been passing by? Surely it is better to provide the tools, the know-how and, yes, the emergency aid when needed, but let us use aid to empower people in developing countries and to promote the rights of those targeted because of gender or sexuality. That is the difference between the two visions and why I support the Conservative amendment.

15:53

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): I confess that when the whip told me that I had to speak this afternoon, I had a slight sense of “Oh

my goodness—not another debate on Brexit.” I gratefully realised that the minister was not promoting yet another debate on Brexit and that instead we were to debate the international development strategy. However, I cannot resist mentioning the tweet that I saw this morning on the aforementioned subject, the name of which we will never hear again, which said:

“Fearing her position on Brexit was starting to emerge, Theresa May has decided to un-clarify it again.”

I thought that that was a fairly accurate summation of the running commentary that we have seen in the past few days. In fairness to my Tory friends, we will say no more on Brexit—and no more on tweets, either.

The tweet now appears to be the mechanism for foreign policy announcement by the President Elect of the United States, which will cause most of us some concern. I see that his nominee for Secretary of State is being scrutinised in the Senate today—I think that it is happening later today, our time. That will be worth watching, and I hope that he gets a few questions on Africa. I suspect that Mr Tillerson’s knowledge of Africa is probably concentrated on Angola and Nigeria, given that ExxonMobil has fairly significant oil interests in those countries. However the Trump Administration begins to act internationally, international aid—and how it responds to the issue—will be important.

This is a young Parliament. New institutions around the world have to consider the most effective way in which they can invest limited resources—particularly in tougher economic times—and contribute, help and offer assistance.

Alasdair Allan and others have been generous today about Governments in the past that began a journey that is certainly being continued. On concentrating resources, I suspect that the Government of today had exactly the same challenges that Lewis Macdonald and I shared in previous years. The first is how we win the argument for the budget to be spent in a certain way. I do not think that that should be ignored in the context of the political world that we are in—in fairness to some of my Conservative friends, they have made that observation as well. The second relates to the importance of concentrating the resources that Alasdair Allan, in this case, may now have.

Others have talked about international events more widely, but the other role that we can play is that of being an active part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Many countries that have been mentioned today are very much part of that Commonwealth family.

Some of the best things that I have been involved in as an MSP have also involved

parliamentary colleagues from different legislatures, and from legislatures in Africa in particular. When we meet Canadians, Australians and Kiwis, we all tend to talk the same talk, in terms of audit, parliamentary scrutiny and so on. We all do things differently, but there are similarities. However, to meet colleagues from Africa is to meet people who have profoundly different issues. Colleagues who have been on parliamentary delegations to Malawi, in particular, are all too well aware of that.

I believe that in building and helping to clerk Parliaments such as that in Malawi, the CPA branch here in Edinburgh can bring an aspect of practical democracy into play. As Kate Forbes said, that is not in essence like the colonial reach that this country and other European nations tried to impose in the past; rather, we are saying, “Look, here is a way to do it. By all means, go and talk to the Kiwis and to the Canadians about how they do it as well, but here are some thoughts that you might want to have”.

Others have mentioned the UN. I must confess that I struggle a bit with the UN in the modern world. This morning, I read on a website a terrifying account of the reality of Syria and Aleppo right now. The problem with being critical of the UN is this: what is the alternative? None of us can get past the fact that the United Nations Security Council has not covered itself in glory after six years of atrocity after atrocity after atrocity in Syria. I find it very difficult to contemplate that no grouping in the world has been able to find some way forward, but none has.

A general practitioner I know well works in Uganda for Médecins Sans Frontières. The other day, she sent me an email about the 2.2 million people who have fled from South Sudan and the civil war that is going on there into neighbouring countries—some have been mentioned this afternoon, and some are mentioned in the Scottish Government’s strategy. That GP said:

“your husband was killed in front of you and your teenage son was forced to stay and fight in South Sudan, you’ve brought your other 3 children plus a couple of orphans you picked up on the way into another country”—

a country that the woman she described as presenting an immediate challenge to her as a doctor has never been in before—

“you might have been raped on the way, and as it starts to get dark, you go into labour. This is daily reality.”

We lead sheltered lives compared with the life of a Scottish GP who happens to be working in an aid camp in Uganda—never mind that of the woman she was describing. If we can do a bit more on the medical front, perhaps we should. If we can occasionally be a bit more reflective about

our own health debates, we probably should do that, too.

The GP also described the life-saving interventions for 50,000 people that she is seeking to co-ordinate in a mobile clinic—incidentally, it is a tent—providing

“healthcare, ... vaccination, mental health, care for rape survivors, a network of community health workers, maternity and an inpatient ward”.

That ward is in yet another tent. There is much that we can do in that regard as well.

I want also briefly to mention two constituency examples. A brilliant woman who was a nurse in South Africa many years ago runs From Shetland with Love, a charity for children orphaned or abandoned because of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses and violence. She is quite a woman. She delivered two of Nelson Mandela’s grandchildren and met him on several occasions—there is a fine photograph showing that at her home in Shetland. From Shetland with Love provides help for a charity that is doing simple things such as restoring a school whose dining room roof blew off during a heavy storm. There are many such projects for which the money is all raised locally by people who want to do their little bit to help in different parts of the world.

The other example is a brilliant project that is run by a retired arts teacher, Peter Davis. That non-profit-making charitable trust is based in Shetland and provides money for Ghana in west Africa. It supports similar educational programmes and is similar to From Shetland with Love. It is all about putting money that comes from our rich part of the world into places where there is none or little. That is the role that we can play, and the strategy that the minister has outlined today is an important part of that.

16:00

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): The Government’s international development strategy document touches on a wide range of matters, but I will focus my brief comments on three main areas: first, the importance of trade and trading relations; secondly, the key part that civil society in Scotland plays in the promotion of international development; and, thirdly, the global impact that is made by NGOs that are based here in Scotland. In other words, I want to talk about the positive role that people who are living, learning and working right here in Scotland play internationally.

I draw members’ attention to my entry in the register of members’ interests, which states that I am a local councillor in Dumfries and Galloway. That includes a voluntary role as Dumfries and Galloway’s fair trade champion. I am also the convener of the Parliament’s cross-party group on

fair trade, which is an honour so soon after being elected to this chamber. The post gives me the privilege of being able to continue to promote fair trade, and I pay tribute to the many volunteers and campaigners who have actively promoted fair trade for many years, particularly in Dumfries and Galloway, where I have worked closely with them as the chair of the regional fair trade steering group.

The contribution that volunteers from Dumfries and Galloway have made was recognised most recently at the Scottish fair trade awards, at which the fair trade group in the village of Dunscore won the community award, the Dumfries fair trade group was the joint winner of the campaign of the year award and Dumfries's Paul Tofield won the volunteer of the year award. The region also boasts fair trade groups in Wigtown, Kirkcudbright and Castle Douglas. Thanks to the work of all those groups, we are well on our way to achieving fair trade zone status for the whole of Dumfries and Galloway.

Those are examples of fair trade activities that I am keenly aware of, but I know that outstanding activities and campaigns promoting fair trade are to be found in all members' constituencies and in regions right across Scotland. Much of the work is organised, co-ordinated or supported by the Scottish Fair Trade Forum, and I commend the valuable role that is played by the forum. It not only led the way in securing fair trade nation status for Scotland—which the minister mentioned in his opening comments—but continues to do much to ensure that we retain that status. Along with Wales, Scotland helped to develop the idea of the fair trade nation, and the model is now shaping interest in the development of fair trade nations and regions across the world.

Just recently in Glasgow, the Scottish Fair Trade Forum hosted fair trade representatives from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the UK's Fairtrade Foundation, Sweden, the Netherlands, Poland and Canada to discuss the development of the fair trade nations and regions model. In these times, when the nature of international connections can sometimes seem fragile, it is welcome to see that Scotland is taking a leadership role in the process of developing an international commitment to fair trade. The fair trade nation campaign has had the support of all successive Governments in Scotland—support that, I am pleased to see, the international development strategy commits to maintaining.

Much has been achieved in the promotion of fair trade in Scotland but a lot more still needs to be done. Trade that is fair and mutually beneficial is a means to promote development that is sustainable and empowering, yet much global trade is still inherently unfair and exploitative. Therefore, the

support of the Government and people in communities across Scotland for fair trade needs to continue and has never been more important.

It is not just in the area of fair trade that the support of the Government and civic society in Scotland is important. There are many examples of positive engagement with international development across civic society, and that engagement is perhaps more necessary than ever at a time when global uncertainty is on the increase. Therefore, the commitment in the strategy to prioritise the engagement of the people of Scotland is important, as is the commitment to raise awareness of Scotland's international development work through networking organisations.

I have commended the excellent work of the Scottish Fair Trade Forum, which I hope the Government will continue to support, but I also recognise the work that is being undertaken by other networking and advocacy organisations such as the Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland, the International Development Education Association of Scotland and the Scotland Malawi Partnership. Those networks build support in Scotland for the work that is undertaken overseas, and we see that support every day in our communities, not least in our schools.

Claudia Beamish mentioned a number of schools in the south of Scotland. Lockerbie academy is also in that region. For eight years, the school has had a partnership with Thawale primary school in the Mulanje district of Malawi. The link, established by Helen Wright, a teacher at the academy, through Link Community Development Scotland in 2009, has included significant fundraising, enabling—among many other things—the academy to sponsor the Mary's Meals kitchen in Thawale primary school. The kitchen has encouraged more pupils than ever before to attend the primary, and thanks to the continuing fundraising efforts of Lockerbie academy, a scholarship fund has been set up to allow students from the primary to go on to secondary school.

That global link is about more than just fundraising. It is about sharing experiences through regular exchange visits; and it is about pupils in all years at Lockerbie academy having the opportunity to be involved in the school's African link and encouraging them to be responsible citizens in their local community and to understand that they are also citizens of a world community.

As well as those learning in Scotland, there are also many examples of people in our local communities working to make a massive contribution to international development.

I suspect that few members will be aware that the world's largest humanitarian mine clearance organisation is based in Scotland, in rural Dumfriesshire. The HALO Trust works in 20 countries and territories across the world, clearing landmines, cluster munitions and improvised explosive devices. It has destroyed tens of millions of bullets and bombs, clearing an area the equivalent of about 40,000 football pitches. As important—indeed, lifesaving—as the HALO Trust's work on the physical clearance of the debris of war is, it is about more than that. In its work to make people and places safe, it very much embeds itself in local communities around the world, providing skills and a livelihood to the 6,500 people it employs, offering opportunities to rebuild lives and preparing the way for development and long-term stability.

Although the trust is not active in the four partner countries identified in the Government's strategy, it is pursuing funding to carry out work in Malawi, where badly stored ammunition in military stores is posing a threat to civilians' lives. I hope that the minister will give careful consideration to whether the Scottish Government could support that work and thereby show a commitment to harnessing Scottish expertise, as set out in the strategy. Indeed, I urge the minister to take the opportunity to visit the trust's headquarters in Carronbridge on the outskirts of Thornhill.

I visited the HQ recently. It was an eye-opening experience to walk in and be introduced to the Afghanistan desk officer who co-ordinates the work of 2,500 Afghans and international staff from a converted barn in Dumfriesshire. That is very much international development in action, taking place right here and right now from Scotland.

I have highlighted some of the examples of people living, learning and working in our communities who play such a positive role in promoting and delivering international development—examples of which we can be proud; I am sure that they are replicated in other members' constituencies.

As the Government's new strategy is implemented, there is obviously a need for the Government to provide more detail on how it will turn its good intentions into action. I look forward to seeing that detail, including—I hope—continued practical support for fair trade and for networking organisations, to build on public support for international development work and NGOs to ensure that we harness Scotland's expertise as a force for good across the world.

16:08

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I am pleased to take part in today's debate. In the

1980s, when I lived and worked for three years in Nepal, it was one of the six poorest countries in the world. That immediately raises a question about the strategy. What about all the other countries that Scotland has links with? Nepal has links through the Gurkhas and the British Army; Jamaica, where we were involved in the slave trade, has a yellow saltire in its flag. The list could go on and on.

However, on balance, it is right to focus on a few countries. We are a relatively small country and I accept that we are really only supplementing the main UK development budget. The risk is that we would otherwise spread ourselves too thinly and have less effect but, as others have said, I hope that we can at least keep some interest in other countries through, for example, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and exchanges with Parliaments more widely, which are valuable.

I welcome the focus on education and the links between education institutions. In that way, we can certainly make the money go further, as other organisations get involved in sharing the costs. An example of that is the work that is taking place in schools in my constituency. As other members have mentioned schools in their constituencies, I will mention Bannerman high school, in my constituency, which has raised funds to take youngsters from Scotland to Malawi and bring youngsters from Malawi to visit Scotland.

There are those who argue against Scotland having an international development programme at all. I meet people with that view in my constituency and in Twitter land, where I enjoy spending some of my time. Such people say that we have so many needs here that we should focus on them, but I have a couple of points in response to that.

First, it is not the poorest people in my constituency who say that kind of thing. I see pensioners and others who are not well off running coffee mornings or other fundraising events and sacrificing their own money to help people in other countries who they know are less well off than them. Secondly, we live in an interdependent world, so we cannot separate what is good for Scotland from what is good for Malawi, Pakistan, Zambia or Rwanda.

To put it in crude economic terms, if we want to sell Scottish goods such as whisky to countries around the world, it is to our advantage if they have stronger economies and if more of their residents can afford to buy our goods. That is why I am keen on supporting fair trade, on which we just heard Colin Smyth speak eloquently. It is not only morally right that people earn a decent wage for their work, but fair trade—if it works—benefits both other economies and ours.

Another argument that is sometimes used against Scotland engaging in international development is that there is already wealth in some of the countries that we help. For example, Pakistan has some very wealthy individuals and the country spends a lot of money on sophisticated military weapons. However, there is still extreme poverty in Pakistan, and we have a responsibility to help those who have the greatest need. That is why I particularly welcome the strategy of working in conjunction with Governments but not giving them cash.

On working with others, of course we want to help the four countries concerned as much as we can, but there are aspects of life in all those countries that are better than similar aspects in ours. We therefore can and should learn from them, too. I have visited three of the four countries, and one example of the strengths that I have seen there is in strong family bonds and care for the elderly. I mean not better material care but a sense of duty to the older generation, which we used to have generally in Scotland. We still have some of that, but we are in danger of losing it because we expect wider society to shoulder most of the responsibility for our elderly relatives.

We should also hope to share some of our values with the other countries. I hope that, as one or two members have said, we can do that from a position of mutual respect so that we do not talk down to those countries, as has often been done in the past by western countries, including ours.

Briefings for the debate encouraged us to remember the most marginalised in the societies of the four countries. I certainly agree that we should do so, but that is not entirely easy, as we have a limited budget and limited influence. We need to get the balance right between respecting different values and traditions and calling a spade a spade if we think that something is wrong. Mary Slessor is still respected in Nigeria, although she challenged the tradition that twins were bad. Obviously, she went about that in the right way and, in the long run, she has been respected for her challenge.

A concern that I hope that we can work on is the treatment of those who are of a minority religion or of no religion. People should be free to worship in the faith of their choice, to change their religion or faith or to abandon all faith. However, Christians in Pakistan can be treated very much as second-class citizens. They have little protection in the legal system and are often open to empty charges of blasphemy. Pakistani Muslim leaders who challenge that system can put themselves at great risk. I hope that, through sharing in education and in other ways, we can discuss such issues with our partners while still respecting their culture.

In relation to Pakistan, I was extremely disappointed when the UK Border Agency refused visas recently for Pakistani church leaders to visit Scotland under the auspices of the Glasgow presbytery of the Church of Scotland. I am glad that that position has been reversed, which was partly because of the intervention of the minister and his colleagues. I hope that, going forward, it can be agreed with the UK Government that Scotland has a relationship with the four countries concerned and that, at the very least, the UK Government will not put obstacles in the way of visitors from there coming here. It is important that the third sector in general and churches and religious organisations in particular take forward our relationships around the world.

Finally, we often come up against the question whether there should be sustainable development or short-term emergency aid. The strategy clearly says that there should be both, so we have the humanitarian aid fund as well as the international development fund. We should be aiming for each country to be as self-reliant as it can be but, if children cannot go to school because there is no food, we need to tackle that problem, too. I therefore welcome the likes of Mary's Meals, which does so much in that regard.

Much more could be said, but the key point is that it is great that Scotland has an international strategy. Although we might debate some of the details, there is broad agreement that we should be going in the proposed direction.

16:15

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): First, I, too, pay tribute to the team at Mary's Meals and the fantastic work that it does across the world, which the minister very kindly referred to. As a resident of Argyll and Bute, I am particularly proud of the work that it does from its base in Lochgilphead.

It is only right that, as one of the world's leading economic powers, one of the world's key long-term stable democratic states and one of the world's most compassionate nations, the UK and Scotland play a key role in helping other nations through aid projects and aid spending. In that respect, I commend Tavish Scott for his speech and the examples that he gave of the wonderful work that is being done abroad to deal with the harrowing situations in which people find themselves. I particularly commend the work that several British people are doing to sort such situations out; indeed, I have seen and experienced that in the parts of the world in which I have worked.

The UK as a whole should be congratulated on contributing the second largest amount of aid to

other countries on the planet. It is behind only the United States of America, providing more than £12 billion in aid, mainly to Africa and Asia. Moreover, the UK is currently the only G7 nation to meet the obligation set by the UN to spend 0.7 per cent of GDP on international aid, and that is thanks to a Conservative Government that has legislated to protect the UK's international aid budget.

We have done that because international aid spending helps not only those who receive it—which would, of course, be enough reason to spend it—but us here at home. It gives countries the opportunity to develop economically and create jobs and growth locally, which, it is hoped, will in turn mean more overseas customers for our products and services and more business for us in this area. It also means that countries are less likely to produce the conditions necessary for terror organisations—and, more important, the hateful radicalisation that they spout—to thrive and that we at home are safer on our streets.

Additionally, such spending gives other countries the breathing space that they need to develop political institutions, and it allows new democracies to be created and to flourish in places across the world where they have not existed. I was lucky enough to meet some members and officials from the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, who visited the Parliament last November. They were here to learn about the procedures and practices of our Parliament in the hope of implementing best practice in their Assembly back home, and the delegation's visit is a perfect example of what we can provide to others alongside financial help. I have other personal experience of offering aid and support; I served in Bosnia and provided support in Afghanistan, where we provided logistical support for vehicles to move aid around the country. We also trained up the Afghan national police to ensure effective security in the country as it made efforts to secure its borders.

As a result of my experience, I can give the chamber some of the so-called golden rules for stabilising developing countries. First, one must establish a secure and stable environment. Secondly, one must ensure that water and electricity supplies are working and get the lights switched on. When the lights go on, it has an amazing positive effect; I saw that in Sarajevo in Bosnia when they were switched on by a Glasgow engineer. Thirdly, one must ensure that transport systems are operational and effective. Fourthly, one must get the shops open to ensure that commerce and normal day-to-day life begin to operate. Finally, one must provide medical services and education. Providing those basic services and building the infrastructure is something that we in this country are second-to-

none and brilliant at, and I am pleased that such areas are covered by aid spending in one way or another.

Many of the people who help to deliver such things in those countries come from Scotland. A lot of them have very high positions in those projects; they have been at this work for many years, and their skills, particularly in engineering, are absolutely brilliant.

The point about providing education is of the utmost importance. I am pleased that the strategy focuses on that, certainly in part. In Pakistan, for example, a disaster is waiting to happen, as more than 7 million children are not in school. The lack of even basic education for so many people will create problems down the line in that country. That is why we must encourage people—young women in particular—into school and further and higher education.

As the World Bank's chief economist has noted, an investment in women's education could potentially provide the highest return available. Such investment is not just economically beneficial; it is socially beneficial in many parts of the world. The benefits would be felt most of all in the parts of Pakistan in which the education of women is not the norm, such as rural areas that are among the poorest parts of that country. That is why the Scottish Government's announcement of £300,000 to create a scholarship programme back in 2013 to enable women from disadvantaged backgrounds to study masters courses in education and the environment was a very welcome step. We can only imagine how much those parts of Pakistan will improve after having two or three generations of women educated and their education being considered the norm, not an exception.

That is alongside the other projects that Scotland is supporting in Pakistan. They include projects that will support the agricultural sector in the country, which will help to secure the food supply and ensure that the large number of smallholder farmers in Pakistan can benefit more from their work and begin to build up wealth among their group, rather than there being the hand-to-mouth and day-to-day existences that many currently have.

Scotland is doing great work in that country alongside great organisations such as Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Tearfund and Christian Aid. The opportunities for Pakistan, which has large energy and mineral reserves and is positioned near to some of the world's busiest shipping lanes, are massive. It certainly has the opportunity to turn itself into a first world democratic state, and I hope that, with our help, it will be able to do just that. That is why I support the Conservative amendment.

16:22

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): I was delighted to learn that the Scottish Government had decided to bring forward this debate so early in the new year, because 2016 was a miserable year for those of us who believe in progressive politics. It seemed that reactionary forces, intolerance and isolationism increased and were on the march across the globe. This debate gives us the chance to remind ourselves and the world that Scotland is the home of citizens by far the majority of whom are outward looking and want to give a helping hand to those who are less fortunate in the world. It gives us a chance to provide a positive and forward-looking perspective on what we in the Parliament can do to help others in the world by shining a bright light on what can be achieved in the field and to help to banish some of the blues of 2016.

There will always be people who have a negative view of the Scottish Government's contribution to international aid—John Mason alluded to that. I am talking about people such as a constituent who contacted me in the past few days. I contended with him that Scotland has a unique contribution to make to the world.

Let me give members an example from the Friends of the Earth Scotland briefing paper for the debate. It explains:

“The Climate Justice Fund was established in 2013 with a budget of around £1m per year to help tackle the effects of climate change in four sub-Saharan African countries: Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and Rwanda. This was increased to £3m in 2015.”

It says:

“Achievements of the fund so far include providing more than 70,000 people with access to clean, safe drinking water, and training 110,000 people in climate change and water rights.

In addition, Scotland is in a position to help mitigate and adapt to climate change by sharing knowledge and expertise, especially in the areas of water management and energy.”

I make the particular point about climate change, because that is a vital area of work if we are going to avoid the mass displacement of human beings and enable people to live in their homelands in safety, removed from absolute poverty.

I think that it was Joan McAlpine who said today that, when we are doing these tasks, we cannot simply exploit the skills of our own people; we must make sure that we are developing local skills in the activity. By working in that way, we can not only help troubled parts of the world but, I believe, hugely enrich ourselves. I know that when I go about my daily job as an MSP, if I help someone get a bit of justice from a Government agency or just help them in their general lives, I feel good

about myself. There is absolutely no reason why our nation should not feel the same when it is doing good things around the world.

When it comes to constituents such as those that John Mason mentioned—and I am sure that other MSPs have had the same experiences in their own parts of the world—we still have a big job to do in raising awareness in this country of the virtue of such works. As Maurice Corry said, it is about letting people in Scotland understand that, when we act positively in other parts of the world, it is as much for our own good as it is for the people there. We need to do something about that. Doing so will also help break down intolerance and isolationism.

The Scottish Government is committed to integrating the principles and priorities of its international development programme into its broader policy agenda. Clearly that does not mean just throwing money into a country and hoping for the best. Instead, the international development policy seeks to harness the existing links that Scotland has to use our people's expertise in areas such as climate change, education and health improvement, and to create a model of civil society-led partnerships. Scotland and the Scottish Government have found innovative ways to tap into the incredible expertise, goodwill and willingness to volunteer time across Scotland and in partner countries. That more holistic, beyond aid approach means having all groups—Government, local government, public bodies, the private sector, communities and individuals—adapt their behaviour in support of global goals.

Aid is only a small part of international development work. Some of the greater benefits to the world's poorest and most vulnerable can be brought about through policy changes by developed countries. The beyond aid policy recognises the variety of development challenges that underdeveloped countries face. By addressing the causes of seemingly intractable challenges, we can help reduce their impact on future generations. Aid alone, as I think we all know, will not end poverty.

I also believe that, as others have said, by focusing our efforts on a selected number of countries, we are able to maximise our impact. We have heard that the refreshed international development strategy targets support for communities in four countries. Most people have reflected on the impact that we have had in Malawi over the past 150 years. More than 94,000 Scots are actively involved in civic links with Malawi, which makes that probably the world's strongest set of north-to-south civic links. That is central to the Scottish Government's work.

In my constituency, a number of organisations are involved in that type of activity. Bannockburn

high school, Kincardine-in-Menteith primary school and St Ninian's primary school all have links with Malawi that are informing and inspiring generations of young Scots to be good global citizens. I know that there are also other links with Malawi that are helping to transform lives in both Malawi and Scotland.

In 2015, Bannockburn high school sent a group of students and teachers to Malawi for the first time, where they helped to build and refurbish classrooms. I can only imagine how much they learned about their own lives and the lives of others, especially through the relationships that they formed.

I want Scotland to be able to empower our partner countries, which in turn can go on to effect change and work towards sustainable development in their own countries and for their own communities.

As we have heard today across the chamber, international aid is about much more than just giving money. It is about establishing links, learning from each other and playing our part in tackling global challenges. I want Scotland to be proud of the role that we play across the world in doing just that.

16:29

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): I declare an interest as a member of the CPA Scotland branch executive committee. I thank the Scottish Parliament's international relations team for all the work that they do on the Parliament's behalf to advance inward and outward international relations visits and to support the CPA committee. I am also a co-vice-convenor of the cross-party group on Malawi and, as Deputy Presiding Officer in the previous parliamentary session, I led a delegation to Malawi in 2015 to recognise the 10th anniversary of the Scotland-Malawi relationship at parliamentary level. I recommend the report of that visit to members, if they have not already read it.

It would be difficult to disagree with the Government's motion and, in particular, with its recognition of the strong cross-party collaboration and support for international development. I am pleased that the Government has indicated that it will accept the Labour amendment.

It is important to recognise the legitimate role that the Parliament and the Scottish Government have in the field of international development. I say that, because there has been criticism from some quarters about the Government and Parliament spending money on international development—Joan McAlpine also made that point.

Scotland has a massive contribution to make to international development and to tackling poverty and inequality across the globe by using our expertise and innovation through partnership working. We have a long proud history of doing that.

Oxfam provided an interesting briefing for this debate, which stated:

"Good quality aid saves lives and can unlock people's ability to work their own way out of poverty".

Oxfam made the point that conditionality should be avoided, and I agree. Oxfam also pointed out that a human rights approach to our international development work is vital and that we must go beyond material resources when considering and addressing the capacity choices and the power needed for people who live in poverty to enjoy their human rights. I note that other members have mentioned that in today's debate.

Oxfam proposes that the Scottish Government's "do no harm approach" should go further, that it should have a more proactive "do good policy" as well as implementing policy coherence for development, and that it should produce a publicly accessible annual expenditure report to aid openness and accountability. I would be interested in the minister's response to that in his summation of the debate.

In the time that I have left, I will focus on Malawi, as other members have done. Malawi was recently a pointless answer when people were asked to name African countries on one of my favourite BBC programmes. I doubt whether that would have been the case if the question had been asked only in Scotland. The Scotland Malawi Partnership found that there is not only a high awareness amongst Scots—at 49 per cent—of the people-to-people links with Malawi, but a remarkably high level of active and diverse civic involvement. Forty-six per cent of Scots know someone who is involved in one of 40 different types of links with Malawi. There is also remarkably strong public support for those civic links with Malawi—74 per cent of people were in favour and only 3 per cent were against them.

Viewed alongside comparable international development surveys across the UK, it is clear that Scotland's people-to-people partnership with Malawi is quite exceptional in terms of public awareness, engagement and perception. A lot of that is down to the work that has been done via the Government and the Parliament, as well as the work that is done by civic society.

Our links have Christian roots that go back more than 150 years to David Livingstone from Lanarkshire and to other Scottish missionaries who are still remembered fondly in Malawi. Our more recent extremely close parliamentary

relationship goes back to 2005, when the then First Minister Jack McConnell established our unique co-operation agreement with Malawi, which was mentioned by various members, including Stewart Stevenson.

The Scotland Malawi Partnership is keen—or was keen, since we are reaching the end of the debate—that contributions should emphasise the vital role that civic society plays in driving Scotland's international development work. Members have indeed done that throughout the debate. Many churches and voluntary organisations have connections with Malawi—we have heard lots of examples during the debate—but I want to specifically mention the healthy lifestyle project called aiming higher in Malawi, which is supported by North Lanarkshire Council and run by Charles Fawcett. The project has been running for nearly two decades and, at one level, it involves local schools in Coatbridge and Airdrie having partnerships with schools in the Mulanje area. Young people in Scotland learn about Malawi through their education here, but they also fundraise and many have the opportunity to go to Malawi to do voluntary work.

When I was in Malawi, I was lucky to see some of the healthy lifestyle projects, in particular the girls go for health project in the Mendulo parish, which was empowering women to set up enterprise activities and supporting girls in school through confidence building, as well as practical support, for example by providing sanitary wear. I also visited children who were being assisted by the disabled children programme, which provides wheelchairs, crutches, other aids and transport. Those projects need Government assistance to support the fantastic work that they are doing on the ground.

The international development strategy can and should provide help to such projects where the funds are going directly into communities and the people are being given the skills and tools to help themselves in the longer term.

Being a good global citizen is vitally important in a world where so many people live in abject poverty, and, of course, the main purpose of aid is to tackle such poverty. That remains vital, but being a good global citizen also involves promoting and supporting human rights, fairness, equality, sustainable development, fair trade and climate justice. Scotland's international development strategy must do all that. Like others, I welcome the Government's newly refreshed strategy today.

16:35

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): We have had a fantastic debate today. It reflects the best of this

Parliament when we are unified around important goals—not just to deliver for people here in Scotland, but to look out for those who are less fortunate around the world.

Critics of international development often say that charity begins at home, I agree with them. Charity does begin at home—but as we have demonstrated today, it does not end there. We have a responsibility to the world in social and economic terms, but also through our human interest. We need to look out for all our citizens in the global village—a point that was well made by Stewart Stevenson, Kate Forbes and Alison Harris.

As Alasdair Allan and Elaine Smith said, Scotland has an historical link with international development. We have been a beacon in the world through our reaching out and looking out for those who are less fortunate. That is why I am so proud that it was a Labour Government that delivered the initial £3 million of international development spend and set up the Department for International Development. Lewis Macdonald also made it clear that Labour has played a huge role in achieving great consensus on development across the United Kingdom.

Stewart Stevenson: For completeness, it might be as well to acknowledge the contribution that the person in the chair today made to the debate in 2006 when she supported the aims. This is also an opportunity to sook up to the Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You are such a sook, Mr Stevenson. Mr Sarwar—you could do with being a sook a bit more often.

Anas Sarwar: Yesterday, I was sooking up to the Presiding Officer, so today I will sook up to the Deputy Presiding Officer and echo Stewart Stevenson's point; it was well made.

It is important to see how far we have come in the past 20 years. In politics 20 years ago, we were debating whether we should have a Department for International Development in the UK. We moved past that and the debate became about whether we should make a 0.7 per cent of GDP commitment to international aid. Again, we found consensus on that. Now, I welcome the fact that we are not debating whether we should spend money, but how we should spend it to help people around the world who are struggling.

Elaine Smith: Will Anas Sarwar take an intervention?

Anas Sarwar: I will, but I am running out of time.

Elaine Smith: As Anas Sarwar is acknowledging people's contributions, will he recognise the contribution of Tom Clarke to reporting on the 0.7 per cent contribution?

Anas Sarwar: Absolutely—I was just coming to that. It was a particularly proud moment for me to lead from the front bench in the UK Parliament when we delivered the bill on reporting on the 0.7 per cent commitment. Tom Clarke led and inspired that and—I say this to pay tribute to the Liberal Democrats—Mike Crockart and he worked to get that private member's bill passed.

As Joan McAlpine rightly said, we cannot be complacent: we have found consensus, but we cannot be complacent about the risks to that consensus. I say gently to Ross Thomson, who highlighted concerns about where aid spend goes and negative consequences, that his party's Government in the UK has developed an international development tracker that shows where the UK's aid spend goes so that we can make sure that it is not going to negative places. Perhaps he should go and look at that tracker to see where UK money is going.

Ross Thomson: I welcome that point, but I am sure that Anas Sarwar will appreciate that I was referring to the particular case of World Vision. When incidents like that occur, we should always learn lessons and be diligent in preventing abuse of international aid.

Anas Sarwar: We should always learn lessons, but I think that Ross Thomson was suggesting that aid that was being sent from this country to the Gaza strip was being used for illegitimate purposes. If he looks at the development tracker, he will be able to see that every penny of international aid from the UK to Gaza has been to feed and clothe people who would otherwise be starving and dying.

Another important point that must be made is that we are talking not only about aid, but about development. It is, of course, important that we clothe and feed people and support them in humanitarian crises, but we use the term "international development" for a reason: it is because we want to support developing countries so that they can become developed countries. We do that by helping to support institutions and by promoting good governance and universal health and education programs—a point that was made well by Tavish Scott.

Of course, we should also recognise our other commitments and obligations. Claudia Beamish rightly mentioned the impacts of climate change. In that regard, our actions in the UK have an impact on other countries in terms of land mass, water taking over land and mass migration of people, which can drive people into extreme poverty. We should not forget our responsibilities on climate change.

Alexander Stewart's amendment rightly mentions the role of the UK. The Department for

International Development is the second-largest aid agency in the world, and is based in East Kilbride. It employs thousands of people and has a budget of £12.1 billion. The Scottish Government's international development fund is £10 million, but Scotland also contributes more than £1 billion to the Department for International Development. Through that department, we demonstrate how we can pool and share resources to maximise income for and impacts on those who are suffering in the most vulnerable places. For example, Malawi receives £86 million, Zambia receives £57 million, Rwanda receives £101 million and Pakistan—the single largest recipient of UK aid—receives £374 million a year.

We have a responsibility in terms of development. However, let us not forget the importance of institutions. Failure to pay tax accounts for three times as much money as the complete global aid budget. Introducing tax systems in the countries that get aid is absolutely crucial. How we procure is also important—I note the points that Colin Smyth made about fair trade, in that regard. We should also take into account our diaspora communities, from whom we can learn lessons. We should try to shape some kind of participatory development with them so that we can use their expertise to target our aid to enable us to be confident that it delivers the desired results.

We in Scotland take health, education and the rights of women and girls seriously, but those privileges and rights should not just be for Scottish and British people. They should be for men, women and children around the world. Yes—we have poverty here, but there is extreme poverty around the world. I hope that through work in this Parliament and around the world we can eliminate poverty globally.

16:43

Rachael Hamilton (South Scotland) (Con): We are all proud of our involvement in international development. Many speakers have referred to Scotland's commitment to social, economic and environmental global goals. Stewart Stevenson and Claudia Beamish rightly paid tribute to Ban Ki-moon and his role in the UN.

Across the parties, we agree that the Scottish Parliament can set an example to our young people—an example that shares the values of humanity, tolerance, compassion and progressiveness. After all, as the motion states, we are all

"part of an interlinked, global community".

Demonstrating global citizenship cuts through the detail in our own lives and encourages us to look more closely at the lives of others. As

Alexander Stewart said, we are proud to be able to provide aid to people who are less well off than ourselves. Scottish universities often play an important role by linking courses to development work in specific countries. Of course, it is not only universities that can share their knowledge; as members have highlighted today, Scotland as a whole can share its knowledge and collaborate on projects when we face common challenges in areas such as health, education and renewable energy.

Alasdair Allan talked about the Blantyre-to-Blantyre clinical research project, which links health workers in Glasgow and Malawi, and about Mary's Meals, which feeds more than a million children in Malawi. Maurice Corry and John Mason also mentioned that charity. Joan McAlpine gave us a poignant Chinese proverb to demonstrate ways of enabling people in Malawi to feed themselves sustainably through an aquaculture project between Malawi and the University of Stirling.

Members talked about Scotland's distinct approach. Lewis Macdonald rightly talked about civic activity and said that for every £1 that is committed by the Scottish Government, about £8 comes from civic society. There are many ways to engage. Kate Forbes, who was recently a mentor at the Scottish Youth Parliament, said that she was heartened by the quality of leadership in that forum, which gives hope for great global partnerships in the future. Colin Smyth gave examples of important fair trade activities throughout Scotland.

Claudia Beamish talked passionately about violence against women and children globally. One harmful cultural practice is female genital mutilation. The UN reports that the practice is carried out in 29 countries and that the procedure has been performed on more than 125 million girls and women. With a targeted focus on the issue by the Scottish and UK Governments, I hope that the practice will be abolished.

I want to draw members' attention to Priti Patel's recent announcement of an extra £6 million to fight abuse of women and girls. It comes on top of the £12.1 billion funding that the UK Government has given to developing countries. The £6 million package that was announced in November will support innovative grass-roots programmes in 17 countries to deal with female genital mutilation, child marriage and domestic violence. The funding has been welcomed by many people in the aid sector because it will impact significantly on smaller projects that are thought to make such a difference to women's lives.

It is true that our country will not tolerate any form of violence against women and girls, so it is shocking to learn from the UN that 35 per cent of

women world wide have experienced physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives. As a reaction to that unacceptable statistic, extra funding has been dedicated to break the cycle of abuse; £2.75 million of that funding will go to the UN trust fund to end violence against women, to tackle gender-based violence, to improve access to legal assistance and healthcare, and to work towards strengthening laws that protect women.

I am pleased that the minister supports the Scottish Conservatives' call on the Scottish Government, in our amendment, to

"promote the needs of ... vulnerable groups",

but I am a little disappointed that the Scottish Government will not support an amendment that highlights the importance of economic growth. Sustainable growth will enable our partners to prosper. I hope that the minister will reflect on what his back benchers said. John Mason, for example, talked about the importance of trade and self-reliance.

Stewart Stevenson: In the 2006 debate on the subject, the member's Conservative colleague Murdo Fraser ended his speech by saying:

"We are making a difference to people's lives in Malawi and I encourage the Scottish Executive to carry on with its work."—[*Official Report*, 29 June 2006; c 27202.]

Consensus was thereby created across Parliament. Notwithstanding the difficulties with part of the Tory amendment today, will the Tories support the unamended motion, should that be the subject of the final vote tonight?

Rachael Hamilton: Yes.

Ross Thomson made it clear that we should promote human rights and the defence of minority groups and the most vulnerable people in our partner countries. The Scottish Conservatives support the Labour amendment and call on the Scottish Government

"to further promote the needs of minority, marginalised and vulnerable groups in these countries where such groups are often subject to criminalisation and harassment".

The Scottish and UK Governments have a strong record of helping countries that are less fortunate than our own. Aid is working to end female genital mutilation and child marriage, to prevent domestic abuse and to help survivors in some of the world's poorest countries. I hope that both Governments will continue to increase our global leadership and support in order to protect even more women and girls, to address the root causes of violence and to promote the needs of marginalised groups that need support.

Members of all parties have almost unanimously agreed that Scotland's continued engagement in international development has a huge impact across our partner countries. We must continue to

show and promote collaborative cross-party efforts.

16:49

Dr Allan: I begin by saying how pleased I was to see the Malawian high commissioner, Kena Mphonda, in the gallery earlier. That is further testimony to the warm relationship that exists between our countries, which many members have spoken about today.

I thank all members who have contributed to the debate, noting all the countries to which they referred. As has been mentioned, there is cross-party support in this area, as was represented by the comments of Mr Stewart, Mr Macdonald and many others. I am happy to take up the invitation to meet the cross-party group on Malawi, to which Mr Macdonald referred, and to provide further information over the coming months on an ongoing basis about the work that we are doing and the plans that we have on a country-by-country basis.

Joan McAlpine made the important point that helping the world's poorest is a good thing and that anyone who tells us otherwise deceives us and themselves. It is important to deal head on with the myths that are sometimes published on the subject of international development. It is important for us to say that, despite what people may have heard elsewhere, the Scottish Government does not give money to Governments on this matter.

Ross Thomson made an important point. We should not keep silent about human rights, which should be at the heart of all that we do in our international development work. On my recent visit to Malawi I raised the issue of LGBTI rights and met representatives of the community of people with albinism, who are subject to persecution in some parts of the country from some quarters. Mr Yousaf, my predecessor, met a delegation of Christian leaders in Pakistan in 2013 to hear their concerns.

To respond to some points that were made by many speakers, the question of human rights is at the forefront of all that we do. To respond specifically to one issue that Claudia Beamish raised, I can confirm that the Scottish Government actively works to tackle violence against women and children. We specifically want to highlight the issue of child marriage in Malawi. In Pakistan, more than £600,000 has been spent to date in the area of empowering women through education. Also, regarding a point that Claudia Beamish made about conflict resolution, I am happy to confirm that the Scottish Government has been supporting 50 women every year from conflict

zones around the world to allow them to play their full role in the peace processes in their countries.

Elaine Smith: Has the minister had any opportunity to examine the issue of juvenile justice in Malawi, particularly juvenile prisons?

Dr Allan: Yes. When I was in Malawi I visited Chance for Change, which is a project that is run specifically with the issues that the member raises in mind to divert young people from aspects of the justice system and to allow them to be rehabilitated in the community. Scotland has made a great contribution towards the good work that has been done in many individuals' lives in that respect.

Members raised many points about numerous countries. I will pick up on one or two of the questions that were raised about NGOs and their funding, and specifically the question of three-year funding. Current grants under development programmes are generally three-year grants. We have said in our strategy that we will consider how we might support longer-term partnerships for all three-year-funded streams. As Mr Sarwar points out, the question now is not just whether we spend money but how the money is spent and what projects are supported.

John Mason raised the question of what we do beyond the four partner countries where we operate. He and other members have acknowledged that our programme is limited. However, a huge contribution is made by the Scottish public and by Scottish civic society around the world. One way in which we can emphasise that contribution is through the help that we give to the fair trade movement. That is one of the ways in which we show that commitment in a much larger number of countries.

Colin Smyth rightly highlighted the good work of the HALO Trust in Dumfriesshire in his constituency. I am aware of the vital work that it does, and Ms Hyslop was delighted to meet a delegation from the trust on 25 October. Bruce Crawford focused on the manner in which Scotland goes about international development and the importance of addressing the causes of poverty as well as treating its symptoms.

I acknowledge the points that were made by Tavish Scott and other members about the role of parties in previous Administrations in establishing much of the work that we are continuing with and expanding. I will pick out one or two examples of our work that I did not have time to mention earlier, starting with the hydro nation area of activity. Although we in Scotland are fortunate to have an abundance—or a superabundance—of water, it is important to remember that that privilege is not enjoyed by all those around the world. Sustainable development goal number 6

focuses specifically on water and sanitation, and our climate justice and hydro nation initiatives have already delivered success in that area in many parts of the world.

As Claudia Beamish mentioned, Scotland's international approach to climate change is at the centre of what we do and what we should be doing. When I was in Malawi, a key point was made to me by some of the world's poorest people: climate change is not created by them, but it affects them disproportionately.

I want to mention one or two other areas of humanitarian aid. In the debate, members referred to various humanitarian disasters that have occurred. I take this opportunity to emphasise that the Government is strengthening its capacity to respond quickly and effectively to urgent humanitarian crises overseas, and we will establish a separate £1 million humanitarian aid fund to respond to such crises.

I highlight the important, and at times very moving, contribution from Kate Forbes, who reminded us that international development, if it is to be about anything, must be about individual, real people who have the same inalienable rights to dignity that we never question that we, as individuals, should have ourselves. I recently had the privilege of visiting Malawi; it was truly amazing to see the number and variety of projects that Scotland supports in that country, as it does in other countries. Nothing prepares visitors for the warmth and kindness of Malawian people, nor for the reality and immensity of many people's needs.

This month, we mark the first anniversary of the new UN global goals coming into force. There is no doubt that this timely debate allows us to demonstrate that Scotland continues to play its part as a good global citizen in meeting head on not only our own domestic challenges but international challenges. We will continue to lead by example through our commitment to the UN global goals by helping to tackle poverty-related issues. We will do so in our best traditions of humanitarianism and global solidarity, mobilising our skills and expertise in the fight against poverty and injustice here in Scotland and beyond.

Business Motion

16:58

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-03322, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 17 January 2017

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Protecting Scotland's Interests in Negotiating our Future Relationship with Europe

followed by Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body: Appointment of Members of the Standards Commission for Scotland

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 18 January 2017

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
Education and Skills

followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 19 January 2017

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.45 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate: The Future of Funding for Rural Development

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 24 January 2017

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Topical Questions (if selected)
followed by Scottish Government Business
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 25 January 2017

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
 Health and Sport
followed by Scottish Government Business
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Thursday 26 January 2017

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 11.40 am General Questions
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions
 12.45 pm Members' Business
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 2.30 pm Scottish Government Business
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

16:59

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of a Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S5M-03323, on the designation of a lead committee.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Finance and Constitution Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There are four questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S5M-03303.1, in the name of Alexander Stewart, which seeks to amend motion S5M-03303, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on welcoming global citizenship, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)

Evans, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine)

(SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 29, Against 94, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-03303.2, in the name of Lewis Macdonald, which seeks to amend motion S5M-03303, in the name of Alasdair Allan, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-03303, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on welcoming global citizenship, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament welcomes the Scottish Government's new international development strategy, *Global Citizenship: Scotland's International Development Strategy*, which was published on 21 December 2016; believes that the Scottish Government and the Parliament both have a key role in continuing to provide a voice for humanity, tolerance and compassion as part of an interlinked, global community, including through the expression of the concept of good global citizenship; recognises that the Scottish Government has pioneered a partnership approach to development that has helped Scotland and several developing countries to achieve mutual progress towards the UN Global Goals; welcomes the four priorities under the strategy to achieve its vision, namely to encourage new and historic relationships, empower Scotland's partner countries, engage the people of Scotland and enhance global citizenship; notes that, geographically, the Scottish Government's international development work will be focused on where it can make a real difference and most impact in relation to its budget, in four countries, Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda and Pakistan; welcomes the Scottish Government's stated ways of working to achieve its vision and implement its priorities, namely to invest its International Development Fund strategically and in line with good development practice, to utilise Scottish expertise, to collaborate with others to achieve these ambitions, including its partner countries, civil society and other governments and donors, and to promote the Beyond Aid agenda; recognises the holistic approach necessary to achieve sustainable development through a shared duty to consider in everyday decisions and behaviours in Scotland and the impact that these have on developing countries; reaffirms the strong cross-party collaborative approach and support for international development in the Parliament, as acknowledged in the strategy, and looks forward to the Scottish Government setting out its detailed plans on how it intends to achieve its stated aims in each of the four countries where work will be focused, and in ensuring policy coherence across all sectors in pursuit of sustainable development goals in all the countries in question.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-03323, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Finance and Constitution Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

STEP Physical Literacy Programme

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-02327, in the name of Liz Smith, on the STEP physical literacy programme. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament is impressed by the STEP physical literacy programme; understands that its results have demonstrated that the children who take part in it have been proven to learn more efficiently, socialise more easily and participate more positively both inside and outside the classroom; is encouraged that local authorities and schools throughout Scotland are showing an interest in the programme; considers that introducing it would be of benefit to all state primary schools in Mid Scotland and Fife and across the country, and notes the view that the Scottish Government, local authorities, teachers and parents should consider the merits of the programme for primary school children as a valuable contribution to pupils' education and self-esteem and to help close the attainment gap.

17:03

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I am delighted to bring the motion to the chamber. I thank all the members who have given me the requisite cross-party support to host the debate. I welcome Kenny Logan and his STEP team to the public gallery. Kenny Logan has become an excellent ambassador for our young people, as a great star of Scottish rugby. He has also—very bravely in my opinion—shared the story of his struggle with dyslexia throughout his school years. Many members will have heard his moving interview on Radio Scotland some weeks ago, when he told us about his experience of the stigma of living with an undiagnosed learning disability and, more important, how that experience led him, in his words, to be labelled “stupid” by a teacher and then to go on to leave school at 15 without reaching his full potential. He has spoken passionately about how he would have benefited from a programme such as STEP, which has fuelled his determination to ensure that every child has the opportunity to improve their physical literacy.

The STEP programme is a bespoke, school-based literacy programme that is aimed at pupils in primary 4 and 5. It helps children to develop the fundamental skills that are needed to learn successfully. Physical literacy assesses a child's core physical capabilities and is thus different from general physical education or sport.

We know only too well that, for many children, basic learning skills such as sitting still, maintaining concentration and physically following

letters when reading are not automatic tasks, and an inability to do those things usually means that those children are at an immediate disadvantage in the classroom. The STEP programme focuses on tackling that by improving three main skills: balance, eye tracking and co-ordination. Each pupil completes two short exercises focusing on one or more of those skills. The programme has been shown to have benefits for almost any pupil, but the greatest impact is shown to be on those in the lowest quartile of classroom performance.

The exercises are completed twice per day during the school week and are overseen by a trained member of staff such as a learning assistant or a teacher with additional needs specialism. The huge advantage is the fact that the STEP programme is highly personalised, so that each child enrolled can focus on particular strengths and weaknesses, and that is what makes it unique among physical literacy programmes. The accompanying software platform can be delivered online and the software that is used generates exercises for a pupil based on their previous day's performance. Because the programme is personalised, pupils do not have to compete against one another but are made aware of the daily improvements that they are making.

As members know, the programme has been used successfully in both England and the United States, and it has been empirically evidenced to reduce the attainment gap in primary school pupils. Pupils who have completed STEP have shown significant improvements academically, behaviourally, physically and socially. A United Kingdom pilot last year compared more than 100 below-attainment primary school pupils who were on the STEP programme to a group of pupils at the same attainment level who were not. The improved learning outcomes that the study showed are extremely impressive: 86 per cent of pupils on the programme moved to on or above target in reading, compared with 56 per cent of the non-STEP group; 70 per cent of STEP pupils met their target for maths, compared with 30 per cent of the non-STEP group; and 75 per cent and 62 per cent of STEP pupils were on or above target for English comprehension and spelling respectively, compared with 43 per cent and 30 per cent of the non-STEP group.

In Mississippi, in the USA, more than 1,000 pupils have completed the programme over the past three years, and it is no coincidence that that state has seen significant improvement in fourth grade—which is the equivalent of P6—reading and maths, which has resulted in the state being awarded a commendation for educational innovation. John Moore, of the Mississippi House of Representatives, said that STEP

“was one of the missing components we’ve been searching for in the dynamic to assist struggling students to get the training they need ... STEP had made an amazing difference”.

In addition to improving their academic results, pupils on the programme have shown significant and marked improvement in emotional control, behaviour, balance, concentration, co-ordination, attention and wellbeing. Ninety-four per cent of pupils said that they found their school work easier and believed that they now had the ability to achieve at school. Furthermore, although STEP is certainly not intended to replace physical education lessons, pupils on the programme also benefit from an extra 100 minutes of physical activity per week, which complements other physical initiatives such as the daily mile.

As we know, the First Minister has stated that education and, specifically, reducing the attainment gap are her top priority, and that we should judge her on her record on that. Although some of us in the chamber may disagree about the details of the disbursement of the attainment fund, narrowing the attainment gap and boosting pupil performance is something that we all agree about and which we want to put above party politics. The First Minister has stated in the chamber on numerous occasions that she is “open to suggestions” on ways to reduce the attainment gap, so I very much hope that this is one that she and John Swinney will consider.

Indeed, we are delighted to hear that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills has agreed to meet STEP directors to discuss the programme later in the month. As the cabinet secretary has remarked, the recently released programme for international student assessment figures “made for uncomfortable reading”. The programme could help us make great strides towards boosting numeracy and literacy results among the weakest 20 per cent of pupils.

We already know that some Scottish councils are taking a very strong interest in STEP, and we have no hesitation in recommending that others do so too. How good it would be to see the cabinet secretary commit to a significant pilot study of Scottish pupils in primary 4 and 5, beginning in the autumn of 2017.

I know from my teacher training days what the devastating impact for life can be if children are written off simply because of a misdiagnosis of their problems. I can empathise wholly with the experiences of Kenny Logan, so we wish him and his team every success in their endeavours and thank them for the work that they are doing to improve opportunities for all children and to make a real STEP change in Scottish education.

17:10

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): I thank Liz Smith for bringing the debate to the chamber. I also welcome Kenny Logan and his team to the gallery.

It is fitting in some ways for me to speak in this debate, as the members’ business debate that I brought to the chamber at the end of last year highlighted the year of walking and the benefits that physical exercise can have for a number of health outcomes. Brian Whittle also spoke in that debate.

The Scottish Government is committed to increasing the physical activity of our young people. Some 200,000 primary school-aged children across Scotland now take part in the daily mile initiative, which Liz Smith mentioned. That is in line with the curriculum for excellence agenda, which places emphasis on sport and physical education as key elements of learning.

I always think that this type of debate offers a good opportunity to talk about the great work that goes on in our constituencies. When I decided to speak in tonight’s debate, my office contacted four of my local primary schools to find out whether they were doing anything like STEP or the daily mile and, if so, how they found it. I am pleased to say that all four schools that we contacted are doing the daily mile and find it an extremely beneficial part of the curriculum.

For example, Greenhill primary school is involved in the national walk to school week, in addition to having a play leader scheme to promote physical activity in the playground. It also works in partnership with Albion Rovers Football Club and Parent Action for Safe Play, which is carrying out an eight-week programme with primary 2 pupils in the near future.

At St Patrick’s primary school nearby, which I visited recently and I am pleased to say was the first school whose assembly I attended as an MSP, as part of the daily mile each week the children walk or run around Dunbeth park, which is the park that I mentioned in my members’ business debate; it now has a designated 1-mile walk route, through the work and initiative of the New College Lanarkshire students association. It also has a health week every June, when local sport groups come into the school and discuss healthy eating, fitness and exercise. Those include the Bannan fitness club and dance groups.

It would be fair to say that most schools have a similar ethos and promote exercise and health through a number of means, including their after-school clubs and the like. The other two schools that I contacted specifically for today’s purposes—Chryston primary and Cambroe primary—both do the daily mile and have other activities, such as, in

Chryston, running the active schools course through the local authority.

As it happens, Cambroë primary is where two of my young nephews attend. I always think that there is nothing better than asking pupils directly what they think, so, about an hour and a half ago, when they got in from school, I phoned them both and asked them what they thought. I asked a simple question: whether they did the daily mile—not the Royal Mile; that is outside here—at school and what they thought of it. My older nephew, Brayden, said:

“It’s good because it keeps us out of school. I run around the school eight times and it makes me feel good.”

My younger nephew, Flynn, said:

“Eh, it’s good. I get to run around the school with my class and it keeps me fit.”

Those are two good endorsements for the daily mile.

The daily mile is free and therefore it is inclusive, which can be important, especially in areas of deprivation such as some of those served by the schools mentioned. That said, Liz Smith has talked at length about the STEP programme, which sounds very impressive, as are other initiatives. Those initiatives should not be in competition with each other, and I do not believe that they are. Every school should be able to decide which initiative best meets its needs for its young people and the area that it serves. I fully believe that headteachers make those decisions every day.

At the end of the day, the most important thing for me is that the children in our schools are offered an opportunity to be involved in regular exercise, as we know that it improves a whole range of outcomes for them.

17:15

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I congratulate my colleague Liz Smith on bringing the motion to Parliament. She well knows that the STEP programme is an issue that I am passionate about. It is also nice to see Kenny Logan and his team in the gallery.

When I was in primary 4, in my school days, we played football at every opportunity—with a tennis ball, because that was all that we were allowed to play with. It was one primary 4 class against the other—30-a-side for a week before we reset the score. The game started at 8.30 am every day. Truanting? Kids were dragging their parents out to get them to school to get to the game. The P5s, P6s and P7s were doing the same, criss-crossing the playground at full pelt. It was like playing football on Sauchiehall Street on a Saturday. I sense all the health and safety officers passing

out, but nobody got mashed or killed. I played in goal for the school in the interschool tournaments, but it was a football career that was cut tragically short through severe lack of talent.

Do members remember British bulldogs? The school sports day was also a big deal in those days. All the school turned out—as well as parents in their droves. For weeks before, we practised in the playground. We would get home and practise some more, put the jumpers down for goalposts or race each other on our bikes. That is when I discovered that I could put one foot in front of the other faster than most and joined a running club.

We were very excited about going to secondary school because we would get to play rugby. The thing is, by the time we got there we already had hand-eye co-ordination, movement skills, agility, speed and basic fitness. In other words, we had a good grounding in physical literacy.

Much as I may lament the fact that it is not my day any more, and that times have moved on, physical literacy and activity remain as important to development of our children as they have ever been. The kind of activities that I described have all but disappeared. We even have reports of schools where running in the playground is banned in case pupils bump into each other. Competitive sport has somehow been eliminated from some quarters—which might be the most ridiculous idea that I have ever heard.

In other words, in the interests of progress, inactivity has now become the norm. Our kids are more likely to be inactive, more likely to have weight issues, more likely to have mental health problems and less likely to take part in sport—especially those who live in less-affluent areas. Lack of leadership and lack of opportunity are setting them up for an inactive and potentially unhealthy lifestyle.

I used to chair Athletics Coaches Scotland and am a member of the European Athletics Coaches Association. I often hear coaches say that kids today are not like they used to be. That is undoubtedly true. Although I accept that we cannot set the clock back, we must endeavour to ensure that physical literacy pathways are as integral a part of a child’s education as reading and writing because, as is widely recognised, there is an intrinsic correlation between physical literacy and academic achievement—not to mention the positive effect that it has on behaviour patterns in the classroom. We cannot go back, but to go forward we must find a delivery framework for the physical literacy education of our children that is universally accessible but also specific to the individual.

The STEP programme is tried and tested, with measured physical, emotional and academic

outcomes, especially in the lower percentiles. It speaks directly to balance, co-ordination, eye tracking and proprioception. Just as important, it is simple to deliver and time efficient. That is not to mention the fact that it delivers inclusivity, increased opportunity, self-awareness and achievement, confidence, aspiration and self-belief—all of which are eminently transferable skills.

“The attainment gap”, “health inequality” and “inequality of opportunity” are buzzwords that are often heard in this chamber. The reality is that we are as far from tackling those issues as we ever were. In fact, despite the genuine will that exists across the chamber and despite investment from all parties over the years, the gap continues to grow. Let us be brave and do something different. If we are prepared to accept declining physical literacy and activity among our children, with the impact that that has on their potential achievement and long-term health, those issues cannot be resolved.

There is no need for us to reinvent the wheel. The STEP programme is successful, available and ready to be rolled out in our schools. Let us at least trial it and give our children—irrespective of background and personal circumstance—the opportunity to have an active and healthy lifestyle.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you very much, Mr Whittle. I got exhausted just listening to your energetic speech.

17:19

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): I, too, welcome Liz Smith’s role in bringing this important debate to the chamber. She put the issue very well: if we are serious about tackling the attainment gap and improving education for all, it is vital that we broaden and deepen our understanding of what education is, what it contains and what it is for.

When I was preparing for the debate, I was a little bit put off by the definition of physical literacy, which is:

“the mastering of the core physical skills of balance, co-ordination, and eye tracking through personalised exercise.”

I say that because, as anyone who has watched me play tennis will know, I know little about those things.

In all seriousness, the Kenny Logan story has echoes for me. At the age of 35, I was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. In looking at the STEP programme’s contents, I recognise the benefits that such a programme could have had for somebody like me, which would be better than experiencing the frustrations

that I had with much of my education. It is vital that we introduce—in a renewed way—the idea of physicality into our education system. It is vital that we understand that there is a direct link between physical understanding, learning, knowledge and ability and educational ability. Overall—and specifically—there would be key benefits for people who have conditions such as ADHD and dyslexia.

The STEP programme is interesting. As Liz Smith outlined, it is a tailored programme that looks at key elements of physical understanding and capability. More important than that were the report’s findings—this is what impressed me—about the sense of achievement and the changes in attitude that the programme has brought about. We all know and have discussed many times how important those things are for attainment in school. They are being delivered through a programme of twice-daily exercises of 10 minutes.

As I said, we need to improve our understanding of the physical being part of our education. As Brian Whittle has just outlined, we live in the physical world. Our ability to engage in our daily lives is dependent on that physical understanding and capability, but we have increasingly sedentary lifestyles and occupations that put us behind desks. I can see how programmes such as STEP can change habits and form behaviours and norms for the rest of people’s lives.

If people are to have truly fulfilled lives and if we are serious about wellbeing being a key objective for education, the importance of physical literacy is all too clear. Other examples include forest school training in our schools. There was also an interesting recent report about the improvements on mental health that simply being involved in the Scouts can have. We need to look at all those things in the round as we consider what our education system should and should not do.

Perhaps most impressive is the STEP programme’s achievements on academic improvement—it has led to improved English for 76 per cent of participants, and to improved maths, reading and spelling for 70 per cent of participants. The benefits that physical literacy can bring to academic attainment are clear.

However, there are also bottom-line health improvements that must be made. We all know the importance of tackling childhood obesity. That was—again—an issue that Brian Whittle outlined well.

I will briefly mention ADHD and dyslexia. We are at the beginning of a revolution in our understanding of how the brain works and how neural pathways are altered and formed. The notion that the brain is static once a person

reaches adulthood is not true. Exercise is proven to improve and to promote neuron growth.

There is a growing body of evidence about the link between spatial awareness and physical ability and dyslexia. Likewise, the improvements on focus and concentration that exercises such as those that are outlined in the STEP programme can have for people with ADHD are clear. Improvements in those areas are linked not only to training the mind to concentrate, but to the impacts on brain chemistry.

I commend Liz Smith for securing the debate, and I am grateful for the opportunity to talk about the issues.

17:24

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): I, too, commend Liz Smith for securing the time for this important debate. It is an issue that she is—rightly—passionate about.

As someone who has struggled with both dyspraxia and dyslexia, I know all too well the challenges that some young people and their families face and how often those with additional learning needs find themselves victims of the attainment gap. I empathise with many of the remarks that Kenny Logan has made in relation to his own experiences, and I thank him for the time, energy and commitment he has given to this cause. It does make a difference for young people to have successful role models and to see those from outside politics bringing forward ideas such as the STEP programme.

From speaking with my constituents, particularly at a time when learning support resources are under strain, it is clear to me that many highly capable children are being denied the support that they need to fulfil their potential. That is not good enough, and I hope that we can all recognise that something needs to change. If we do not take advantage of the STEP programme, I believe that we will be missing a major opportunity to support not just those with specific learning difficulties but all those who are struggling with numeracy and literacy.

I was very lucky in the support that I received from a great many people, particularly during my time at Moffat academy. The list of those who helped me is too long to name everyone, but I have no doubt whatsoever that I would not be making this speech, never mind have made it to university, if it had not been for Douglas Lipton, Lillias Nichol, Donald Hastings and my first classroom assistant, Mrs Rowley. They were all dedicated individuals who went above and beyond, and were always looking for new ideas to help me to learn.

I was also very lucky to have determined parents who were not willing to take no for an answer or to accept, at my first parents' evening, that the reason none of my school work was on display with that of the rest of my class was that I was too slow or lazy. However, the problem is that not everyone is as fortunate as I was. Not all teachers, support staff and schools are as well equipped as mine was. As results and peoples' experiences show, far too many children are being left behind.

It is through my experiences, too, that I came across physical literacy and saw its benefits at first hand. I remember sitting at the STEP programme launch last year and recognising many of the exercises that feature in the video explaining the programme's work. The beauty of STEP and what makes it so important is not just that it brings together a range of exercises and activities and combines them into a coherent and measurable programme, but that rather than having to go out and search for them, the exercises are immediately available from a single source and are tailored to the needs and ability level of the child. What is more, the STEP programme has been shown to work and is popular with both the teachers and the pupils who have benefited from it in England and the USA.

My colleagues have highlighted much of the evidence of the programme's success, so I will refrain from repeating it. However, I stress that at a time when new ideas are badly needed and we want improved use of technology in school education, the STEP programme provides a clear opportunity for action. I therefore hope that the minister will reflect carefully on this debate and will do what she can to enable and encourage schools to take part in the STEP programme and to promote the benefits of physical literacy more generally.

17:28

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): I congratulate Liz Smith on securing the debate. I apologise for not being able to attend the launch of the STEP programme last year. I had intended to attend it, but was unfortunately unable to do so.

It is fitting that at the start of the new year we are discussing education, as it is a good resolution to have bolder ambitions for children in Scotland. Members' business debates traditionally tend to be less confrontational, and it is also prudent in these debates not to challenge the minister too much if we hope to achieve a favourable outcome. However, that does not mean completely letting the Government off the hook. I therefore think that before I talk further about the STEP programme, we should consider the background of education in Scotland at the moment.

In this month of January, it is pertinent to quote our national bard, Robert Burns, who pointed out that

“facts are chieils that winna ding”.

One extremely concerning fact is that our education system is currently failing some of our children. Scotland has slipped from sixth in the world for reading to 23rd since 2000, from ninth in mathematics to 24th since 2003 and from 10th in science to 19th since 2006. We agree across the chamber that that is not good enough and that urgent attention and investment are needed to restore our once world-class education system to its former success.

The attainment gap is a problem for all children, but it is particularly concerning for those with additional support needs.

We also need to consider the importance of the whole-school environment in learning. For example, we know that being hungry and thirsty impacts massively on children’s ability to learn, which is one reason why I have been a long-time campaigner for free school meals, fruit and water provision in our schools. We also know that physical literacy can specifically help children with additional needs by improving their concentration and awareness; alongside that, it helps to improve general health by highlighting the importance of physical activity in our children’s learning process. We must not underestimate the importance of that, particularly in light of the active healthy kids Scotland report card, a study of 38 countries across the world, which recently placed Scotland last in physical activity among children.

With regard to STEP, we have already heard that it is a programme of exercises performed twice a day for 10 minutes and focuses in particular on balance, eye tracking and co-ordination with the aim of making physical activity part of children’s everyday learning. Improving physical literacy is particularly advantageous for children and young people who can find it difficult to concentrate, such as those with dyslexia and autism.

As deputy convener of the cross-party group on dyslexia and the mother of a rugby-playing dyslexic son, I was particularly pleased to see the STEP programme being championed by Kenny Logan, the former Scotland international rugby player, who is also dyslexic. Like others, I welcome Kenny to the gallery this evening.

STEP also has the backing of the British Dyslexia Association, which supported the findings of the pilot study. It is worth repeating that 86 per cent of kids who took part in the UK pilot study had improved reading after 12 months; 76 per cent had improved English; and 70 per cent had improved maths. Anything that helps children learn more

efficiently, socialise more easily and participate more positively both inside and outside the classroom should be worthy of our attention. The programme would certainly have helped my son, who I am happy to say got a reasonably early diagnosis and is now at university, studying engineering. I should say that getting that early diagnosis and support very much helps.

In conclusion, I must once again return to the Government’s responsibility and address the key barrier to any such programme—funding. The Government must be prepared not only to invest more in our education system but to consider centrally funding programmes such as STEP to allow schools to take advantage of innovative ways of helping all children to learn and grow. I do not think that, given the good outcomes, expenditure of about £1 a day per child is particularly over the top.

Once again, I congratulate Liz Smith, and I hope that the programme can be considered across Scotland so that physical literacy becomes a core part of the school day.

17:32

The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Shirley-Anne Somerville): I, too, thank Liz Smith for bringing this motion to the chamber and welcome the contributions that have been made. It is always a pleasure to listen to Brian Whittle talk in the chamber, particularly on such a subject, given, as the Presiding Officer pointed out, the clear energy and passion that he brings. I also found the remarks made by Daniel Johnson and Oliver Mundell about their personal experiences very pertinent, and in talking about how they had dealt with those experiences and, in Mr Mundell’s case, highlighting the individuals at school who had helped him, they added a great deal to the debate.

As others have said, it is great to see Kenny Logan and others in the chamber, and I am very pleased to close this debate on the STEP programme for the Government. It is important that when we hear about such initiatives we acknowledge that they make a contribution to the ability of children and young people to realise their full potential.

As has been mentioned by others, health and wellbeing is one of the eight curricular areas in the curriculum for excellence, and one of its key components is physical education, physical activity and sport. The substantial importance of health and wellbeing is reflected in its position at the centre of the curriculum and at the heart of children’s learning. It is a central focus of the Scottish attainment challenge and the national improvement framework for education and it is,

along with literacy and numeracy, one of the three core areas that are the responsibility of all school staff.

The Government is very clear that creating a culture in which healthy behaviours are the norm must start in the very early years so that children and young people can develop a genuine lifelong habit of activity. Such activity has many health, social and economic benefits, which members have already spoken about. Research shows that it is vital that children are active before they reach school age. That can be through active play, which improves not only co-ordination, but social skills with peers, siblings, parents, grandparents and nursery workers.

I am delighted to say that 98 per cent of schools provide their pupils with two hours or two periods of physical education a week. That compares with fewer than 10 per cent of schools in 2004-05.

I know that Brian Whittle had a rather despairing picture of the young people of today but, in 2015, 73 per cent of children did an average of 60 minutes or more of physical activity, including school-based activity, a day. Therefore, there is hope yet for our children and young people.

We are not complacent. As Brian Whittle and others have said, there is much more that needs to be done. That is why we will continue to support PE provision to maintain and improve the quality of PE and physical activity, ensure that it is inclusive, and position that in the Government's overarching aim of raising attainment.

Members have mentioned the daily mile. The Government's manifesto included an ambition that Scotland would become the first daily mile nation, of course. More than 800 primary schools across the country have now started their own daily mile programme and adapted the basic idea to meet their own circumstances and needs. It was great to hear about some of the work that is going on in constituencies, including Fulton MacGregor's constituency, and the direct feedback from young people. I think that my daughters view it as a good opportunity for gossip in the playground. That certainly encourages them on their daily mile. Whatever a person's reasons are for enjoying the daily mile, it seems to be going down well in primary schools, and the young people in primary schools seem to enjoy it.

The daily mile can and does work for many schools, but there are, of course, other examples that can be explored of how physical activity can be embedded into the daily life of a school. One example is the better movers and thinkers—or BMT—programme, which is an innovative and exciting movement and learning programme that is delivered free by Education Scotland. BMT has

raised performance standards and created a step change in the learning and teaching of PE.

The BMT approach is completely inclusive, as it supports children and young people to identify and achieve their individual physical and cognitive potential. It has been developed from a range of evidence-based fields, including child development, cognitive neuroscience and pedagogy, and the approach has a positive effect on all children by encouraging and supporting their engagement in the learning process, regardless of their starting ability or any additional support needs that they might have. Children like BMT as an approach to physical education, and using the approach in the gym and the classroom has prompted teachers to report improvements in concentration and better peer engagement in all aspects of the curriculum.

Liz Smith: The minister is quite right to make those points. On that specific issue, we were delighted to learn that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills will meet the STEP group at the end of the month. Will the Government make a commitment today? The minister has just named improvements for another impressive programme. Can the same thing be done with the STEP programme? As I have said, the feedback from teachers is very good, and it is clear that some very positive comments are coming from local authorities. Can we have a commitment from the Government to at least examine that programme in full?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: As Liz Smith mentioned in her opening speech, the cabinet secretary is due to meet Kenny Logan and others on 25 January, I think, to discuss the matter. I do not want to pre-empt that discussion and make an announcement today.

The final decision on what approaches are to be used in schools, whether on the daily mile or other initiatives, rests with teachers and local authorities. As members have said, they are very well placed to decide how the curriculum is delivered in the area. I am sure that the cabinet secretary will discuss that matter in much greater detail with Kenny Logan when he meets him at the end of this month.

We are aware that the STEP programme has been promoted for children who have dyslexia. I want to be clear that, as well as ensuring that our children and young people have an active start in life, the Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people get the support that they need to realise their full potential. To ensure that that happens, the Scottish Government has taken forward a range of actions, including the Doran review, the recommendations from the Education and Culture Committee's report on the

attainment of pupils with sensory impairment and the mainstream review.

With regard to children and young people with dyslexia, education authorities have a duty to identify, meet and review the additional support needs of all their pupils. Education Scotland considers that duty as part of its inspection programme.

To help all teachers address the needs of their pupils with dyslexia, the Government supported the development of the addressing dyslexia toolkit, which includes material on effectively identifying and supporting pupils and increasing accessibility for teachers, as well as information for education authorities on implementation of the toolkit. The dyslexia making sense working group supports delivery of the five workstreams, including the toolkit, that were recommended by the "Making Sense" review report that was published by Education Scotland in 2014.

The Government provides grant funding of £100,000 per year to Dyslexia Scotland to assist with its critical work towards carrying out the recommendations of the review report, in addition to its wide range of valued support services across Scotland and its network of volunteer-led branches. Provision of such support networks and services will allow every pupil in Scotland to experience the broad general education that they are entitled to under the curriculum for excellence.

The Government does not doubt the benefits of a programme such as STEP, and it believes that it and initiatives like it have a positive impact on the learning needs of our children and young people. The Deputy First Minister will meet Kenny Logan to discuss the STEP programme on 25 January, and I am sure that we all look forward to finding out about their discussion and what will follow from it.

I thank Liz Smith again for bringing this issue to the chamber. I look forward to continuing the debate along with the cabinet secretary at the end of this month.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate. I thank members for their very interesting contributions.

Meeting closed at 17:41.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

All documents are available on the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers is available here:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba