

“Welcoming Global Citizenship, Scotland’s International Development Strategy”

Scottish Parliament Debate

11th January 2017

MOTION:

Motion S5M-03303: Alasdair Allan, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Scottish National Party, Date Lodged:

09/01/2017

Welcoming Global Citizenship, Scotland’s International Development Strategy

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.

Supported by: Fiona Hyslop

Current Status: Taken in the Chamber on 11/01/2017

Motion S5M-03303.1: Alexander Stewart, Mid Scotland and Fife, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Date Lodged: 10/01/2017

Welcoming Global Citizenship, Scotland’s International Development Strategy

As an amendment to motion S5M-03303 in the name of Alasdair Allan (Welcoming Global Citizenship, Scotland’s International Development Strategy), 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.”

Current Status: Taken in the Chamber on 11/01/2017

Motion S5M-03303.2: Lewis Macdonald, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 10/01/2017

Welcoming Global Citizenship, Scotland’s International Development Strategy

As an amendment to motion S5M-03303 in the name of Alasdair Allan (Welcoming Global Citizenship, Scotland’s International Development Strategy), 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.”

Current Status: Taken in the Chamber on 11/01/2017

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-03303&ResultsPerPage=10>

DEBATE:

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- 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.”

- 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 reneging 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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 on-going 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.