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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Tuesday 1 April 2014

Session 4

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Scottish Parliament

Tuesday 1 April 2014

Time for Reflection

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

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is the Rev Neil Glover, the minister of Flemington Hallside parish church near Cambuslang.

The Rev Neil Glover (Flemington Hallside Parish Church, Cambuslang): Presiding Officer and members of the Scottish Parliament, I thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I wrote this talk to the musical backdrop of 500 high-pitched shouting children—I live next door to a large primary school and it was playtime when I was writing.

At 3 o'clock every weekday afternoon, the road outside our house is crowded with cars and with parents in ever more imaginative attempts to find parking spaces. Five years ago, that overcrowding was even worse. To address the issue, our council produced a plan to reduce the numbers at the school by moving the children from the poorest part of our community—children whose families were least likely to own a car—to a school 2 miles down the road.

There was uproar. There were petitions, meetings and arguments. One of the arguments was taken from Professor Richard Wilkinson, co-author of the renowned text, "The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better". Inspired by him, we said, "This proposal hurts not only our poorest children but our wealthiest children, for it will cause them to live in a community that has become less fair."

Two years ago, I heard Richard Wilkinson speak at a conference on public ethics, which was also addressed by the First Minister and a few MSPs. At that conference, people argued for empathy in public life, justice in public life, love in public life. That became too much for Wilkinson. In the middle of a panel discussion, he burst out: "All this talk of empathy and love and justice is all very well, but you also have to talk about structures—structures that reduce or foster equality."

I am grateful that in this building people change structures. You do that with an apparatus of motions, budgets, amendments and committees. You campaigned in stirring poetry; you now govern in structure-changing prose.

Five years ago, our arguments were heard. A new school was built, and it has a mixed catchment. It is loved by its children, its parents and its staff. It is there because of empathy, equality, love and justice, and also because, in a committee somewhere, someone moved a motion.

Above ground, a structure was built. Beneath, the deeper structures that hold us all together were strengthened. Thank you for your work in finding the structures that will enable a better, flourishing Scotland.

Business Motion

14:03

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-09563, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to the business programme for today.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for Tuesday 1 April 2014—

after

followed by Topical Questions

insert

followed by Ministerial Statement: Financial Implications from the UK Budget 2014—
[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

Motion agreed to.

Topical Question Time

14:04

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Report)

1. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change working group II report, what action it will take to meet the challenge of uncontrolled climate change. (S4T-00658)

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): The Scottish Government is committed to showing leadership on that global challenge through making a decisive move to reduce Scotland's production of greenhouse gas emissions by 42 per cent by 2020, articulating a progressive case for all nations to heed the evidence presented in the IPCC's fifth assessment report and to redouble international efforts to contain global surface temperature increases to 2°C.

Last June, our second climate change report on proposals and policies—RPP2—set out an approach to meeting Scotland's stretching annual statutory emissions reduction targets for the period to 2027. By 2011, Scotland was already more than halfway to meeting our 2020 greenhouse gas emission target. Indeed, only last week, the United Kingdom Committee on Climate Change published its third Scottish progress report, which highlighted the good progress that we are making, with almost a 10 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 2010 and 2011. It praised Scotland's efforts across a number of sectors, including energy. Only last week, it was revealed that, in 2013, 46 per cent of Scotland's electricity demand was met by renewables.

We are developing Scotland's first statutory climate change adaptation programme and firmly embedding climate change adaptation through the development of a robust evidence base, including research that has been commissioned from ClimateXChange; through the development of adaptive capacity through supporting Adaptation Scotland to build climate resilience among organisations and communities; and through policy-specific actions, including the announcement last Friday of £38.5 million of funding towards the cost of two major new flood protection schemes, in Brechin and Selkirk, and £0.5 million of additional support for Dumfries and Galloway Council. In the eight years from 2007-08 to 2014-15, we will have provided £326.4 million of capital funding for flood protection, which is more than seven times as much as was paid out under

the old prevention grant scheme in the eight years up to 2006-07.

Rob Gibson: I thank the minister for that detailed answer, which looked at some of the things that we have to do.

Should we play to our strengths in the fight against aggressive climate change? Surely the key is to persuade the UK Government to act with all speed to ensure that clean power from Scotland's coasts and islands gets appropriate levels of development support and access to the grid to help to decarbonise the Scottish and UK energy markets and thereby combat fuel poverty.

Paul Wheelhouse: Rob Gibson raises an important issue. Scottish islands renewables represent a massive opportunity for sustainable economic growth in Scotland, with the potential to meet up to 5 per cent of the electricity demand in Great Britain by 2030. They create many opportunities for a very large number of jobs across the Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney in particular.

The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, Mr Ewing, met Ed Davey last week to urge the UK Government to give prospective developers certainty on the level and availability of support, which is a key requirement for the development of vital network upgrades. The UK Government has agreed to our proposal for a delivery forum, which will try to ensure that the successful deployment of our island renewables is undertaken and will investigate what can be done to increase certainty for developers. It is vital that those issues are progressed very quickly.

Rob Gibson: As the minister says, the Scottish Government champions climate justice and recognises that, although we face increasingly severe weather at home, developing countries are at the greatest risk from current and future impacts of climate change. Which Scottish Government policies can ensure that those with the least means at home and abroad can be protected from the growing risks of climate change?

Paul Wheelhouse: In my initial answer, I mentioned the work that we are doing through Adaptation Scotland, which is vital to ensuring that we build resilience among organisations and communities at a local level. The climate challenge fund was adapted in November 2012 to broaden and deepen it.

We are specifically targeting a greater proportion of our effort at those in the Scottish index of multiple deprivation groupings that are the bottom 15 per cent of the population. We have had some success in providing development grants to enable people to build up a case. It is clear that, in many communities, there is not the capacity to put together a strong bid for funds, such as from the

climate challenge fund. Development grants will help those communities to develop good projects that are more likely to succeed and encourage them to take up such offers.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The IPCC report follows the Committee on Climate Change report of last week, which highlighted that, under current plans, it will be difficult to achieve our world-leading emission targets. Given that we have already missed our first two emissions targets, which makes the job ahead much more difficult, does the minister agree with the UK report that the only options that are open to the Scottish Government are to adjust the targets or to find

"additional opportunities to reduce emissions that go beyond current and proposed policies"?

Given that, is the minister confident that we will meet the 2012 emissions target?

Paul Wheelhouse: I am confident that we are on track to achieve our 2020 target. The Committee on Climate Change has stressed that the underlying performance of the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and Scottish society in achieving our 2020 target is to be praised. Indeed, it pointed out that we are doing a lot more than the UK Government is.

I will read out one quote from the committee's report, which is very important. On the 2011 target, the report says:

"It is important to note that the difference between estimated emissions and the target is less than the impact of the inventory revision. It can therefore be argued that the target was missed mainly because of the inventory revision."

As I am sure that Claire Baker is well aware, there are statistical changes in how the inventory is calculated and that has had an impact on 2011. To be fair, that would not have made a difference in 2010 and we would have missed the target anyway. However, we need to have a mature debate—I think that we can have such a mature discussion—about how we calculate the figures and get clarity on what we are doing, where policy is making a difference and, in the absence of policy, where trends would be moving in any case.

I agree with the Committee on Climate Change that we need to step up our efforts not only in the UK and Scotland but globally, because the targets are challenging and we must work together to achieve them.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): The minister acknowledges that we are yet to meet a single annual climate target, and yet the Scottish assessment report to which he referred demonstrates that international aviation and shipping is the one sector that is most conspicuously failing to make a contribution to reducing our emissions. In light of that, why has it

been 18 months since the First Minister agreed in the chamber to conduct a carbon assessment of the Government's flagship policy of cutting or scrapping air passenger duty? When will that happen? Why do we have to wait so long?

Paul Wheelhouse: I am aware that Mr Harvie does not agree with the APD proposals. I am prepared to send him the figure that I have seen, which is an internal assessment based on the UK's figures of the estimated impact of APD. I think that the impact of antisocial behaviour arising from air passenger duty in Scotland would be 0.05 megatonnes, but I will check that figure before confirming that in writing to Mr Harvie.

As we include international aviation and shipping in our targets, if either sector grows its emissions we as a society have to take it on the chin that we must bring down emissions elsewhere. We have to live within our 42 per cent target. We must also bear it in mind that we do not have sectoral targets in RPP2, as I am sure that Mr Harvie knows, so if one area goes up the rest of the economy must bear the burden. Therefore, we have to take a conscious decision as a society that, if air traffic grows, the rest of the economy must absorb that.

Nursing Vacancies (ISD Scotland Report)

2. Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the report by ISD Scotland into nursing vacancies. (S4T-00657)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): It is vital that we have the right number of staff in the right place at the right time to deliver the best possible patient care. Individual national health service boards are responsible for planning for NHS Scotland's workforce in accordance with that aim. ISD Scotland reports NHS workforce statistics quarterly. The most recent statistics, which are for the period ending 31 December 2013, were published on 25 February 2014 by ISD Scotland and show the nursing vacancy rate running at 2.5 per cent. That is a relatively low vacancy rate, which allows NHS boards positive and flexible opportunities to help develop new roles and skill sets for NHS Scotland's nursing workforce.

Ken Macintosh: I probably should not be surprised by the cabinet secretary's attempt to minimise the extent of the problem. I am sure that he will be aware of the Auditor General for Scotland's link between increasing vacancy rates and the Government's problems in meeting its waiting time targets.

I remind the cabinet secretary of a comment that the Royal College of Nursing made in 2010:

"we're determined that Government and health boards understand that they cannot continue to cut the numbers of nurses being trained, year on year."

In 2012, it said:

"the RCN will not be in a position of agreeing to a cut in student nurse numbers now, which in three to four years time will mean that there are not enough professionally qualified nurses to provide safe quality care for patients."

In 2007, the number of nurses in training was 3,362; last year, the number was 2,713. Does the cabinet secretary accept responsibility for the vacancy rate increase and does he accept that that is directly linked to the numbers in training?

Alex Neil: We are increasing the number of nurses in training. Since 2007, we have both reduced the vacancy rate and, at the same time, substantially reduced waiting times and lists. The vacancy rate that we inherited in 2007 was 3.5 per cent, which equates to more than 2,000 posts. Today, the vacancy rate is 2.5 per cent, which is equivalent to 1,500 posts. That is a reduction both in the rate and in the number of vacancies, against a background of an increase of 1,500 in the total number of nurses in the system. By any standard, we are doing far, far better than our predecessors—which would not be difficult.

Ken Macintosh: I remind the cabinet secretary of the figures that his department produced. In 2007, 3,362 nurses were in training; the number had fallen to 3,060 by 2010-11 and it fell to 2,430 in 2012-13. The fact that the cabinet secretary slightly increased the number—by 4 per cent—last year and slightly increased it this year does not make up for the fact that the number fell year on year. It takes three years to train a nurse. Does the cabinet secretary accept that the current problem is caused by his lack of recruitment?

Alex Neil: I think that the member has the wrong numbers. I have figures for student nurses and midwives, and the latest statistics from ISD show that 10,189 are in training. That is higher than the number in any year of the previous Administration and represents a 6.6 per cent increase in student intake in academic year 2013-14, which builds on a 4 per cent increase in the year before. The underlying figures on which the member is basing his proposition must be deeply flawed.

Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP): Will the cabinet secretary say what the Scottish Government is doing to ensure that NHS Scotland is an attractive place to work for nurses?

Alex Neil: We are doing a range of things. For example, we have given nurses the pay award that the independent NHS pay review body recommended. Therefore, from May this year the average nurse in Scotland will be £238 a year

better off than his or her counterpart south of the border.

Down south there is a two-year agreement, but in Scotland we have kept to the promise to review pay rates independently again next year. We have also provided for the guaranteed year after graduation, and we are increasing student numbers and the number of nurses. We are doing everything that we can do to make nursing a worthwhile profession in Scotland, to increase the numbers and to ensure that nurses in Scotland are properly treated and their awards properly negotiated.

When nursing awards have been independently reported on, we have implemented the recommendations. There has not been a word of criticism from the Labour benches about the Tory refusal, south of the border, to implement pay increases for nurses.

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife (Lab)): We are concerned here about Scotland, not England; our services in Scotland are radically different.

How can the cabinet secretary justify his grand-old-Duke-of-York approach to workforce planning? He cut the nursing student intake in two successive years and then increased it. Some 180 new midwifery students were being recruited; the cabinet secretary cut the number to 100 and it is now back up to 160. He cut 2,500 nursing posts, but the cut is now back down to 500 posts. He leads us up the hill and then leads us back down it.

Will the cabinet secretary do the same thing with health visitors? He will need 175 new health visitors for his family nurse partnership programme, which we entirely support, and the RCN estimates that he will need 450 for the named person programme. However, he is allowing a recruitment programme to continue at health board level that is not adequate even to replace those who are retiring, as we learned from our freedom of information request.

Alex Neil: I am amazed that a member of the better together campaign does not care about nurses south of the border. I certainly care about nurses south of the border and about the fact that they will be £238 a year worse off than they would have been had the recommendation of the independent pay review body been implemented.

The member referred to the grand old Duke of York, who marched 10,000 men up the hill. I have 10,000 student trainee nurses who are marching into the national health service—a record unsurpassed by any previous Administration.

As the member knows, we have the innovative nursing workforce planning tool to ensure that we

have the right number of nurses, with the right skill set, in the right place at the right time. That is why we have 1,500 more nurses in the national health service than there were when we came to power. The national health service is safe in our hands. It certainly would not be safe in Andy Burnham's hands.

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): Will the cabinet secretary give us figures for regional variation in Scotland? Is there a problem in Grampian? Does he have plans to deal with any deficiency?

Alex Neil: There are 304 vacancies in Grampian today, although the number of nurses there has substantially increased, as elsewhere. If the member would like a regional comparison, I am happy to send him the information.

Independence (Currency Union)

3. Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on reported comments by a United Kingdom Government minister that an independent Scotland could have a currency union with the rest of the UK. (S4T-00661)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): The fiscal commission working group set out the clear economic case for Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom to retain sterling in a formal currency union. The admission from a UK Government minister

“at the heart of the pro-union campaign”

that

“Of course there would be a currency union”

in the event of a yes vote demolishes one of the key arguments that the campaign against independence has made.

Jamie Hepburn: A recent YouGov poll showed that the Scottish people do not believe Osborne, Alexander and Balls on the currency. Does this recent admission not demonstrate that people are right not to believe them? It is now abundantly clear that a currency union is in the interests of not only an independent Scotland but the rest of the UK.

John Swinney: Mr Hepburn makes a fair point of analysis. Opinion polls have clearly indicated that people in Scotland do not believe the bluff that we have heard from United Kingdom Government ministers and their allies in the Labour Party. What further demolishes that argument is the revelation at the weekend that the private chit-chat in the UK Government is that

“Of course there would be a currency union”.

That helps to make it absolutely clear for people in Scotland that the UK ministers who tried to scaremonger on the question have been found seriously wanting in how they set out their arguments to the people of Scotland.

Jamie Hepburn: Does the cabinet secretary agree that the contrast between what is said in public and what UK ministers know to be the case in private shows a welcome acknowledgement of reality by the UK Government—[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Order. Let us hear Mr Hepburn.

Jamie Hepburn: Does the cabinet secretary agree that UK ministers should stop bluffing and instead be open to negotiation with the Scottish Government?

The Presiding Officer: I hope that Mr Swinney caught that; I did not.

John Swinney: Mr Hepburn makes a helpful suggestion—that the UK Government should embark on sensible negotiation rather than the foghorn diplomacy that we have heard from it in recent weeks and months on the subject.

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab): There is not a lot about an unnamed source offering to deal with the Scottish Government for a price that the Scottish Government has claimed it is unwilling to pay that gives us more certainty about currency arrangements in the event of Scotland leaving the UK. Will Mr Swinney remind us why the Scottish National Party believes passionately that interest rates and spending limits being set in London without any Scottish representation there represents a good deal for Scotland? Why does one unnamed source in London give Mr Swinney such confidence when many named sources in the yes campaign are arguing as strongly against a eurozone-style currency union as anyone in the UK Government is?

John Swinney: Nobody on the yes side of the argument who speaks on the Scottish Government's behalf is making a eurozone type of proposal. We put forward a currency union that is in the interests of Scotland as an independent country and the rest of the United Kingdom. If Mr Smith wants to be reminded of the arguments for that, they are that, if UK ministers refused a currency union, they would have to inflict on businesses south of the border £500 million of transaction costs and they would not have the benefit of the contribution to the balance of payments of Scottish oil and gas or the proceeds of Scotland's key industries, which contribute to sterling's strength.

The fiscal commission set out strong and robust arguments for establishing a currency union as part of the arrangements in the aftermath of a yes

vote. The admission at the weekend from influential sources in the UK Government indicates exactly why that position will prevail after a yes vote in the referendum.

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con): Does the cabinet secretary agree with everything that the unnamed minister said in the article in *The Guardian*?

John Swinney: I do not—for the simple reason that I came into politics with the objective of getting Trident and nuclear missiles out of Scottish waters. I have every intention of ensuring that that is exactly what happens with a yes vote in the referendum.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): One of the reasons why a currency union would be bad for both Scotland and the rest of the UK is the uncertainty about its duration, which international markets would exploit. The white paper says that the currency might change after a period. Indeed, the Scottish Government indicated in February that it had received advice on the duration of a currency union from the fiscal commission. What was that advice?

John Swinney: The advice that we received is the advice that is contained in the fiscal commission's report. I do not think that there has been any secrecy about that. That is the comprehensive advice that we have received on the question of the proposed currency union.

I return to what I said to Drew Smith. The reason why there should be a currency union after independence is that it makes sense and is in the economic interests of both Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom that we enable it to prevail. I understand why Mr McArthur is not very happy about the situation. It must have been an awfully unpleasant weekend in Aberdeen while all this was brewing. Once the Liberals settle down after their difficult weekend, they will realise that a currency union is in the interests of both Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom and will support the Government's position.

United Kingdom Budget 2014

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is a statement by John Swinney on the financial implications of the United Kingdom budget 2014. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of his statement and there should, therefore, be no intervention or interruptions.

14:26

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): I welcome this opportunity to update Parliament on a package of measures that the Scottish Government intends to take to support Scotland's economy.

I intend to allocate the consequential funding arising from the UK budget for our 2014-15 budget, along with some identified underspend from this year that I will carry forward. That package will support jobs, skills development and children and families, adding to the decisive steps that the Government is taking to help Scotland's economic recovery and build for the future.

We do so against the backdrop of the UK Government's continuing cuts to public spending, which were confirmed again in last month's UK budget. Published alongside the budget were economic forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility. Its latest growth forecasts simply serve to remind us of how badly the UK Government mismanaged the recovery in the first place. The UK had one of the deepest and longest recessions among the G7 partners, and its average growth throughout the recovery has been weaker than the average growth of the United States, Canada and Germany. That has resulted in the UK economy being further away from its pre-crisis levels of output than the economy of any country in the G7, with the exception of Italy.

Despite the damaging approach that is being taken by the UK Government, Scotland's economy continues to overcome those obstacles and we should be optimistic that we have put in place the foundations of longer-term recovery. Scotland continues to outperform the UK across all headline labour market indicators, with a lower unemployment rate, a higher employment rate and a lower economic inactivity rate. Although the economic data is encouraging, we must reinforce our focus on delivering recovery.

The fact that the peak-to-trough recession in Scotland was shallower than in the UK is due in no small part to our consistent and sustained investment in growth and in capital infrastructure in particular. This week, confidence in the construction sector in Scotland reached its highest

level since the start of the recession. Our approach has, to date, mitigated the impact of the downturn on the Scottish economy.

Whenever there has been an opportunity to invest further in our economy, the Government has taken it. I am pleased to announce today a number of measures that will boost our economy, create jobs, support skills development and strengthen Scotland's infrastructure.

First, I announce to Parliament that the Scottish Government will develop plans to extend our current programme of non-profit-distributing investment, with additional investment taking us through to 2019-20. That programme will build on the successes of our current investments, delivering colleges, schools, roads, hospitals and community health facilities throughout Scotland. It will provide the construction sector with the long-term certainty of a future pipeline of work. It is also affordable within the headroom of the 5 per cent limit that we chose to put in place to ensure that we can deliver now for the economy without overconstraining future budget choices.

The current revenue-funded programme is now delivering strongly. Projects worth £650 million started construction in 2013-14, and we expect all the other major NPD projects to follow suit in the coming financial year. The procurement of the M8/M73/M74 improvements took only 23 months from *Official Journal of the European Union* stage to financial close, which is much quicker than the average time of 36 months. There has been significant investor interest in financing the programme, and we continue to secure good value for money.

Our schools programme to deliver 67 schools for the original price of 55 continues on track, and the first of our new community health facilities is now in operation in the city of Aberdeen.

We are keen to maintain that positive momentum and to extend the programme further. We know that every additional £100 million of construction activity is estimated to support more than 1,300 jobs. We also get the long-term benefits of using those assets. I have therefore asked the Scottish Futures Trust to explore with a range of public bodies the development of robust business cases for individual projects. I will come back to Parliament with the details of the programme of investments in the draft budget in the autumn, which will total additional NPD investment in the Scottish economy of a further £1 billion.

In addition, I announce a further allocation of £10.3 million in financial transactions funding to provide shared equity capital support to the help to buy scheme in 2014-15. That will bring our overall investment in the help to buy (Scotland) scheme to

£235 million over three years. In making that announcement, I recognise the benefits that the scheme has for the construction sector and the wider economy, and the important role that it plays in supporting aspiring home owners throughout Scotland. The announcement does not preclude further decisions about financial transactions. We will continue to listen to the industry and to explore opportunities to build on the already significant package of support that we have put in place.

I am pleased to confirm to Parliament that the Scottish Government will make an exceptional one-off contribution of £500,000 to Dumfries and Galloway Council to deal with the aftermath of recent flooding in the local area. I fully understand the extreme situation that the local authority has faced since the turn of the year, and the grant will allow it to carry out the required essential repairs to the affected infrastructure.

While the Chancellor of the Exchequer failed in the budget to reverse the capital budget cuts, he took the opportunity to reiterate the UK Government's approach, which will see further public spending reductions until 2018-19. Indeed, based on the UK Government's projections, we have so far seen less than half the chancellor's cuts—some 60 per cent of them are yet to come.

The brunt of the austerity agenda is borne by some of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Earlier this year, we provided much-needed support to some of those vulnerable groups through our welfare reform mitigation and early years commitments. Today, I plan to go further in providing support to those vulnerable groups.

Despite the progress that we are making in the labour market, the Government remains deeply concerned about the levels of youth unemployment. In the Budget (Scotland) Bill, I committed to bringing forward swift measures and appropriate resources to implement the recommendations of the Wood commission on developing Scotland's young workforce. I reaffirm that commitment and will ensure that the implications of the final report, which is due to be published in May, will be taken forward as part of the 2015-16 draft budget later this year.

In the meantime, I take the opportunity to announce the allocation of £12 million this year to begin the implementation of the Wood commission's recommendations and to further enhance our existing measures to support youth employment in programmes such as the modern apprenticeship scheme. Our young people deserve our best efforts, and we will do everything in our powers to improve their vocational pathways and to provide employment opportunities.

As the First Minister announced in January, we will further expand the provision of early learning

and childcare to make it available to more of our most vulnerable two-year-olds. As well as benefiting the children, that will open up employment opportunities for their families by removing lack of childcare as a barrier to work. To ensure that we have the physical capacity to meet our commitment to expand childcare, I have decided to allocate all the capital consequentials from the UK Government's budget to local government.

We will continue to work with our partners at the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to fully understand the capital cost implications of the expansion of childcare services, but the initial investment of £23.5 million in 2014-15 and £7.7 million in 2015-16 will emphasise our determination to properly resource our early learning and childcare services within the constraints of devolution.

The Government has made it clear that we will allocate a full-year cost of £42 million to local authorities to fund the expansion of free school meal eligibility. Recent discussions with COSLA have persuaded me to allocate a further £12 million of resources to local government on a full-year basis to replace the elements of subsidy that local authorities apply to the provision of school meals across Scotland. The allocations for 2014-15 will be adjusted to reflect the January 2015 start date of free school meal provision.

Access to a nutritious meal not only delivers better outcomes for our youngest learners, but provides very welcome financial support to hard-pressed families, many of whom have been badly affected by the austerity agenda. We also know that disabled people and those with health conditions are likely to be negatively affected by a number of the welfare reforms and changes that are being introduced, such as the personal independence payment, which is replacing disability living allowance for working-age people. On-going issues with the work capability assessment, which is used to determine entitlement to health-related benefits, also continue to cause concern, with many people wrongly deemed fit for work. I therefore want to ensure that more support and advice are available for those affected by the welfare reforms and benefit cuts, and I announce today a further £1 million in both this financial year and the next to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform.

We cannot undo all the damage of welfare reform, the austerity agenda or the consequences of Westminster's economic mismanagement, but the actions of this Government demonstrate our determination to take the initiative where we can. In its analysis, which accompanied the budget, the Treasury admitted that the average household will already be the equivalent of £757 worse off as a

consequence of the cuts that have been announced to date, but in the poorest households that rises to £814. We should genuinely worry about the damage that could be caused to our people and communities by the time we reach 2018-19. However, under the current constitutional arrangements championed by the other political parties, Scotland would have no option but to accept funding decisions taken by Westminster.

This Government will continue to argue that Scotland deserves better. We deserve real control over our finances, and our people deserve the right to take their own decisions about the economy, taxation, public spending and public services.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, cabinet secretary. I now call Iain Gray. Mr Gray, you have just over a minute.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I also thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of his statement.

The last time that the cabinet secretary allocated consequentials, which was in January, he used them, as he told us, to extend the provision of free school meals and free childcare. He was adamant then that he had fully funded those commitments. His allocation today of more than £30 million of capital spending and £12 million of resource spending to local government to provide the required funding is welcome, but it is surely a straightforward admission that in fact the commitments made in January were never fully funded.

As for the mitigation of welfare reform, to which the cabinet secretary has allocated £2 million today, this is the date—1 April—by which he promised to have a scheme in place to fully mitigate the bedroom tax, whether through discretionary housing payments or otherwise. At the weekend, UK ministers indicated that they would indeed allow such a scheme through discretionary housing payments. Can the cabinet secretary tell us whether the scheme, which we both agreed is so important, is fully in place today, as promised?

John Swinney: In relation to the approach to the implementation of expanded childcare provision, we always made it clear that there were capital costs that would be the subject of discussion with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and those discussions are under way. I set out in my statement today that £31.2 million of capital support will be available to local government to undertake the physical work that is required to provide for the expansion of childcare.

In relation to revenue support for free school meals, the Government has listened carefully to the points put forward by local government. I

simply say to Mr Gray that that is what happens when we work in partnership with our local authority colleagues: we listen to what they say and respond where we can and where the points put forward are justified.

Mr Gray knows that I appreciate and value the dialogue that I had with him and his colleague Jackie Baillie in the run-up to the budget process in relation to discretionary housing payments. Of course I welcomed the Labour Party's support for the Government's budget. At the time, I made it clear that our preferred route for dealing with the implications of the bedroom tax was for the cap on discretionary housing payments that the United Kingdom Government applied to be removed. To date, we have not been advised that its removal has been agreed. I saw the same media reports to which Mr Gray referred.

The Deputy First Minister raised the issue at the joint ministerial committee in London on Wednesday of last week. We continue to await the outcome of discussions within the UK Government. A variety of helpful advice and input has been given to try to resolve the issue, and I hope that we get to the conclusion that I would prefer—the lifting of the DHP cap—so that we can implement the Government's preferred approach.

However, I assure Mr Gray that we cannot go on waiting for ever. We will consider other proposals if we are unable to secure clarity from the UK Government. I remain optimistic that the UK Government will agree to the point that we have made on the issue.

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con): I, too, thank the cabinet secretary for the advance copy of his statement.

If the Scottish Government's NPD promises are to be credible, they have to deliver on the ground, today. The Scottish Government said that, for 2013-14, it would deliver £330 million-worth of projects on the ground, but that figure was revised downwards to £185 million-worth. Can the cabinet secretary guarantee that at least £185 million-worth was delivered on the ground in 2013-14?

The cabinet secretary stated that we still do not "understand the capital cost implications of the expansion of childcare services."

The policy was announced months ago, so when does the cabinet secretary envisage the Scottish Government will understand those capital cost implications?

Where are the underspends to which the cabinet secretary referred at the beginning of his statement?

John Swinney: Today, £635 million of NPD expenditure is currently in construction. A further

£1.4 billion of projects are in procurement or have entered development through the hubs. I hope that that is sufficient reassurance for Mr Brown that the Government's programme is taking its course.

Mr Brown knows—because we have been round the houses on the subject many times—that I have accepted that the Government was optimistic about the timescale for implementation of the NPD projects; it took longer than we expected. Surely now that the Scottish Government has rescued the capital programme of Scotland from the swingeing cuts of the United Kingdom Conservative Government, the Conservatives will accept that this Government has done a good job in progressing £635 million of construction work that would never have happened if the Conservatives had been responsible for the programme.

Mr Brown's second question was about the capital cost of childcare. I and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning have said previously that we have to work with our local authority partners to establish—it is a facility-by-facility exercise—where the extra capacity will be required. Some facilities have, because they have surplus accommodation, capacity to accommodate children who are entering nursery education, but others will have to develop additional accommodation. We are doing a case-by-base analysis—again, working in partnership with our local authority colleagues—to ensure that we do the job properly. The issue will be resolved timeously and we are putting in place the financial commitments to enable it to happen.

If I turn the logic of Mr Brown's argument around—I think that there was some logic in his question—he is essentially arguing that we should not embark on those commitments unless we have in place all the necessary capacity. We are taking steps to implement the expansion across the country.

Mr Brown's final point was on underspends. The Government has to secure a level of underspend from its budget this year to carry forward to support budget provisions in 2014-15. Some additional underspend will come, beyond that, through some energy programmes that are not spending as strongly as I had anticipated. I have rehearsed the arguments with the Finance Committee, so Mr Brown knows why that is the case—it is to do with uncertainty over electricity market reform. We will, of course, make a statement to Parliament towards the summer recess on the outturn position, once all the information is clear and to hand.

The Presiding Officer: Before I call Jamie Hepburn, I remind members that I expect one question, and that it should be short. I want to get

as many members in as possible, and I need to protect the time for the following debate.

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): Will the cabinet secretary provide detail on the impact of loan funding from the UK Government and, in particular, how it affects the Scottish Government's finances?

John Swinney: If I picked up Mr Hepburn's question correctly, it relates to financial transactions, which in essence are loans that are made available to the Scottish Government. They cannot be spent as core capital expenditure. I cannot, for example, allocate financial transactions to projects that would become part of the responsibility of Government; such projects must be taken forward by third parties. Of course, the transactions are repayable, and we are in negotiation with the United Kingdom Government about the terms of those repayments, which will take place over a number of years, once the resources have been allocated and deployed.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): Investment in the Wood commission proposals is welcome. The consequentials in the area have come from an increase of 100,000 in apprenticeship places in England. Can the cabinet secretary guarantee that the investment will provide additional apprenticeship places and can he estimate how many there will be?

John Swinney: We have in place much more significant commitments on apprenticeships than were in place when we came to office; we inherited about 16,000 apprenticeship places, but are now up at 25,000; I am confident that 25,000 will have been secured in 2013-14. The Government will consider carefully how we can use the resources for assisting young people into employment, and we will consider carefully how the modern apprenticeships programme can be expanded. We will consider implementation of the Wood commission recommendations, in concert with Sir Ian Wood, whose final report, which is due in May, we anticipate with enormous interest. I think that it will be a transformational report that will be of enormous value to Scotland.

Of course, many of the initiatives that were announced in the United Kingdom Government's budget—for example, support to employers to take on individuals—already exist in Scotland, so the United Kingdom Government is having to catch up with the measures that we have already introduced here.

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP): What has been the impact of the UK budget on Scottish airports, given that it failed to go far enough on air passenger duty?

John Swinney: Clearly, any optimism that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might acknowledge

the significance of the impact of air passenger duty on Scottish airports was dashed by the budget. The chancellor accepted that air passenger duty is a factor that undermines the competitiveness of some transport connections, which is why he acted to revise the duty in relation to certain international destinations. I only wish that he had had Scotland in mind when he took those decisions.

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD): We know that, under the cabinet secretary's plans, people on low and middle incomes will pay more income tax. Does the cabinet secretary understand that there is disappointment that he has not gone far enough on childcare, and could have matched the 40 per cent provision in England for two-year-olds? When will he do that?

John Swinney: I try my best to keep up in Parliament, but I am afraid that I just did not understand the first part of Mr Hume's question.

Mr Hume was a supporter of the Government's budget and voted for it. I am awfully sorry that his leader is not here, because his leader is always much nicer to me than Mr Hume is and he is much more appreciative of what I do to support the Government's childcare agenda. I am sure that, if Mr Rennie had been here, he would have been much more supportive of the Government than Mr Hume has been.

Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP): What support will be available for Dumfries and Galloway, which I represent and which has suffered disproportionately from inland flooding and tidal storm surges that caused coastal damage at Port William, Drummole and Kirkcudbright, among other places?

John Swinney: Dumfries and Galloway Council made representations to the Government about the severe impact of the tidal surges and flooding over the winter. We all saw that the area endured a significant and disproportionate impact. The local authority approached me and I had a constructive meeting with it on the subject. I agreed to match fund to the tune of £500,000 the support that the council looked to put in place to remedy the difficulties that it had experienced. That will enable £1 million-worth of investment to remedy some of the challenges that Dumfries and Galloway faces.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): Not all of the funding for schools, colleges or health facilities under the NPD programme comes directly from the Scottish Government, so it is not included in its 5 per cent cap. Will the cabinet secretary, as the Auditor General for Scotland has requested, tell Parliament exactly what is included in the 5 per cent cap and how he will report on it to Parliament?

John Swinney: I have given a pretty comprehensive explanation of the methodology behind the 5 per cent cap, and I have set out clearly to Parliament what is in it. I had thought that it would be viewed across the chamber as an element of valuable fiscal discipline—in contrast to the recklessness of the public finance initiative commitments that I inherited when I came to office in 2007. Those costs were galloping off, and nobody had given a minute's thought to what constraints should be applied.

The mechanisms and methodology have been explained well to Parliament and the Government is operating within the 5 per cent cap that it volunteered to set in order to provide fiscal discipline.

Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP): I welcome the additional £1 million for welfare reform mitigation. Will the cabinet secretary advise where he expects that money to be allocated?

Does he agree that it would be far better if we had in the Parliament the powers to shape and reform our welfare state, rather than having to mitigate decisions that are taken at Westminster?

John Swinney: The Government is looking carefully at emerging issues in welfare reform. The Deputy First Minister is considering priorities and we are in discussion about how they can be best addressed in the coming period. Further information will be set out to explain exactly how the support can be used to maximum effect to assist people who are suffering from the anxiety that is caused by the welfare reform programme.

Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab): In general, the third sector will welcome the £1 million for welfare funding, but it has been brought to my attention that a welfare reform capacity building fund of around £2.5 million has been set up, and the opinion has been expressed to me that the £1 million might have been better added to that fund to build capacity in support and advice. Why was the choice made to spend the money directly on advice services and not on topping up the welfare reform capacity building fund?

John Swinney: The way that I expressed it may have misled Mr McMahon, but I was certainly not announcing that £1 million would go directly to advice services. The possibility that he has raised will be considered among the proposals that the Deputy First Minister will consider. The matter was covered by my response to Mr McDonald that we will make further announcements in due course, but I hear clearly what Mr McMahon has said; the Deputy First Minister has, likewise, heard it.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Is not it the case that the Treasury figures that have been quoted by the cabinet secretary which show that

the poorest households are particularly unfairly hit by the austerity cuts underline the argument not only for the powers, but for the political will to develop a more progressive tax system in which high-income individuals—including all members in the chamber, as well as wealthy corporations, which have enjoyed corporate tax cuts for too many decades already—begin to pay their way in society?

John Swinney: The Government's interest is in advancing an agenda that makes Scotland a more prosperous country and which tackles the inequality that exists in our society. Those are the principles that underpin the Government's programme and its aspirations to be an independent Government that can exercise responsibility, and can make choices and live up to those principles in securing a more progressive, prosperous and fairer society. That is exactly what the Scottish Government will do.

Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): The UK budget showed that Westminster has once again failed to deliver for Scotland. Will the cabinet secretary confirm what changes we could make in terms of creating opportunities and securing investment if Scotland were independent?

The Presiding Officer: I ask you to restrict yourself to your statement, cabinet secretary.

John Swinney: Clearly, there would be a great deal more flexibility than I am able to exercise within the powers and responsibilities that are available to me under the devolved settlement. However, what I have tried to do in my statement today is to maximise the flexibility that is available to me and maximise the impact of the spending that I have at my disposal.

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): Has the SNP Government any plans to charge a £10-a-month health tax on the sick, as proposed by Labour?

John Swinney: No—

The Presiding Officer: Cabinet secretary, as that question does not refer to your statement in any shape or form, I would appreciate it if you did not even attempt to answer it.

Scotland: A Good Global Citizen

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-09547, on Scotland: a good global citizen.

I allowed the questions on the statement to run on because of the importance of that item of business, but that has implications for this debate. We will monitor the time that is available throughout the debate, but it is clear at the moment that members must keep to the time limits that they are given and that there is no time to pay members back for interventions that they take. Further, it is likely that at least one of the members who have requested to speak will not be able to do so.

I call Humza Yousaf to speak to and move the motion. Mr Yousaf, you have 14 minutes.

14:56

The Minister for External Affairs and International Development (Humza Yousaf): It is a great pleasure to lead this debate. I welcome the opportunity to highlight the work of the Scottish Government—and Scots more widely—in areas of global concern, and to consider areas of that agenda that Scotland and Scots might contribute towards in the future.

Yesterday, I had the great pleasure of addressing and taking questions from the first ever Scotland Malawi youth congress, organised by the Scotland Malawi Partnership. Speaking in this chamber can be daunting at the best of times, but having to address more than 100 teenagers from high schools across Scotland is certainly not for the faint-hearted. However, it was clear from their enthusiasm and their questions that our future, in terms of this important global agenda, is in very good hands indeed.

In Scotland, we are rightly proud of being an outward-looking nation, embracing the world beyond our borders, but also having our borders embraced by many who have travelled to make Scotland their home. Our Parliament is a great reflection of that. I have heard many stories from members of this Parliament of how their families came to be in Scotland. Among others, Jackie Baillie, Michael McMahon, Hanzala Malik, Christian Allard and, indeed, myself have all spoken of that.

During the past 12 months, we have been celebrating the life of Dr Livingstone, one of Scotland's greatest explorers, who embodied a thirst for education, enterprise and capacity for endurance, making a significant contribution to our understanding of the world. He is remembered for his importance to civilisation, which is one of the

three Cs that are often talked about in relation to Dr Livingstone—Christianity, commerce and civilisation. That last word concerns the common bond that unites humanity and enables us to face down the challenges that face us all, regardless of our religion or race or what country we come from.

That spirit of global humanity, or civilisation, that Dr Livingstone talked about continues today, with Scots playing a huge role in international humanitarian organisations across the world, often in dangerous circumstances. The Robert Burns humanitarian awards—whose award ceremonies have been attended by the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, myself and other Scottish Government ministers—have recognised the efforts of some of those brave Scots in recent years.

In particular, I think of individuals such as Linda Norgrove and Khalil Dale, who both made the ultimate sacrifice and were killed while helping others undertaking humanitarian work overseas. I pay tribute to those Scots and to the thousands of others who are working throughout the world in the fight against global poverty.

Turning to the Scottish Government's current work, members will know that we have an international development fund. Our work began in 2005 with a £3 million budget for Malawi, which reflected the historic connections and the modern civil society links between our countries. To give credit where it is due, I have spoken many times of my great admiration for Lord McConnell and his personal drive in progressing that work. It is important that Scotland's relationship with Malawi has been re-established, and I am pleased that the current Government has chosen to build on that work.

I recently met Lord McConnell at the launch of the McConnell International Foundation, at which we gave out certificates and announced scholarships for the next tranche of young volunteers who are going to Malawi, which will be a life-changing experience for them. I saw that Lord McConnell's passion, drive and motivation in his work for Malawi had clearly not left him, but I noted that he could now do it without a tie on, to which he replied, "And without any funny kilts!" Scotland's relationship with Malawi remains special, and its uniqueness lies in the bottom-up nature of the relationship and the reciprocal partnership approach.

In 2007, this Administration elected to broaden our international development focus to cover four countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including not just Malawi but Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia, and three areas of south Asia, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and the three poorest states in India.

The effect of our support on the lives of some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people is profound, as I saw at first hand during my first visit to Malawi and Zambia this January. It was an eye-opening experience for me to meet local farmers outside Lusaka, where we work in partnership with the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund to enable people to learn about sustainable agriculture.

The clear difference that those projects, and others such as providing energy to some of the poorest women in the villages outside Blantyre in Malawi, are making to people's livelihoods has had a huge impact on me personally, and it highlights the need to understand the importance of our international development work, which can often seem far removed from Scotland.

We can be at our best in that field when our efforts are targeted and focused. A key element of our approach to international development is that we want to share Scotland's technical expertise and knowledge globally where we can—for example, in areas such as water and sanitation, renewable energy and education. I will touch briefly on our climate change and climate justice work as an example of that.

Our ambitious action to tackle climate change has been recognised internationally by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. He has praised Scotland's leadership on climate change and our commitment to renewable energy, and he personally invited Scotland to take part in the UN sustainable energy for all programme. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, are also full of praise for Scotland's championing of climate justice.

In 2012 we launched our innovative climate justice fund to help people in Malawi and Zambia to adapt to the impacts of climate change. At the climate justice conference in October last year, the First Minister announced the doubling of the fund.

Climate justice work is important not just because it highlights our areas of expertise but because Scotland's role as a good global citizen is about justice, not just aid and charity. That is why we call the fund a climate justice fund. The First Minister has said previously that the fund is a drop in the ocean in the fight against climate change, but it is an important step because our excess use of energy and so on means that those in the global south and in the developing world are suffering the most. We need to rebalance and tackle the injustice that exists.

I mentioned earlier that Scots have been great travellers and explorers. However, we are perceived as a nation on the global stage—as any country is—just as much in the context of our domestic policy as through what we do

internationally. We therefore have an obligation to be a good global citizen by setting an example through our domestic policy.

We are committed to creating a modern, inclusive Scotland that protects, respects and realises human rights. We expect all states to comply with international and human rights law, and of course we condemn human rights abuses wherever they occur. We can encourage change through example. In that vein, the Commonwealth games, homecoming and the Ryder cup give us huge opportunities.

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): On that very good principle of encouraging change around the world, would the minister look forward to meeting the Dalai Lama at some stage?

Humza Yousaf: I have not had an invitation to meet the Dalai Lama, but of course if such an invitation comes it will be considered. The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs has raised the issue of human rights with the Chinese, and I also raised it when I went to China. Wherever we go, we look to do that. If Tavish Scott would like to forward an invitation, it would be considered—all invitations are considered on their merit.

The point is that, with the Commonwealth games, the Ryder cup and homecoming, we have a huge opportunity to make sure that international human rights are at the centre. At the forthcoming Commonwealth games, people will be left in no doubt—athletes, officials and those who are watching—about Scotland's values and commitment to human rights, which will be at the heart of the games.

I have highlighted some of the key areas in which Scotland is currently demonstrating a commitment to international co-operation and doing what she can in the fight against global poverty. My belief is that we could do so much more with the powers of independence, which would mean that, in the first time in over 300 years, Scotland's interest would be directly represented on the international stage. Independence presents a unique opportunity to put Scotland's interests first. That is important because the choices that we make internationally will have a significant impact on our economy, society and people but also on countless thousands if not millions worldwide.

On international development and the future, I say from the outset that I very much respect the commitment and hard work demonstrated by the Department for International Development. I have said many a time in this chamber that I welcome the United Kingdom Government reaching the UN target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for overseas aid. It is certainly better late than never,

and I continue to urge the Prime Minister to follow through on his Government's promise to enshrine that target in legislation and not heed the voices of opposition, be they from his own back benches or otherwise.

With independence, Scotland has the opportunity to create a fairer and more progressive international development policy. On page 230 of "Scotland's Future", we explain some of those priorities. We would have a "more and better aid" system. The 0.7 per cent target would be legislated for, so we would future proof it for Governments.

The Scottish Government will give careful consideration to the issue of debt relief. We will work to ensure that an independent Scotland's export agency does not create new, unjust debt. We will look to put gender equality at the heart of our international development policy, should we have control over that important function, because every study shows that with gender equality in international development we will get more bang for our development buck.

One of the most important issues that, on independence, we will look to develop in international development is the idea of doing no harm. That relates to the idea of policy coherence in development, which the Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland has been championing for quite a while now. A lot of its conferences have focused on the idea that we should not undermine the good work that we do with international development through, for example, our trade or foreign policies.

On foreign policy, we would like Scotland to be known as a nation that promotes peace and leaves a positive influence on the global stage. What an opportunity we have to do that. What a great signal it is to send to the world that, upon a yes vote, Scotland will safely and responsibly remove the abhorrence of nuclear Trident missiles from our soil. That will send a strong message to the international community about the progressive beacon that we aim to be in the world.

That will only be strengthened by our values being enshrined in a written constitution. On foreign policy, we will have that essential triple lock, which is talked about in the white paper, that military intervention will be internationally legal, sanctioned by the Scottish Government and of course sanctioned by this Parliament. Never again will our sons and daughters have to fight in an illegal war that was based on the premise of a lie.

The importance of the Parliament is seen in the international development work that we do. It is demonstrated by our parliamentarians and our cross-party groups, and it is rightly highlighted by

Patricia Ferguson in her amendment, which, I am pleased to say, we will support on that basis.

The First Minister set out last year his aspiration that an independent Scotland would be a “progressive beacon”. We envisage a Scotland that encompasses our core values, acts as a good global citizen and contributes to the international community. I look forward to hearing other members’ vision of how Scotland—regardless of what they believe the constitutional set-up should be—will play its role as a good global citizen on the world stage.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises that Scotland, as a good global citizen with a history of positive, outward-looking engagement with the world, is committed to international cooperation and progress in areas of global concern; notes that the Scottish Government has developed a distinctive and effective approach to international development; further notes that the Scottish Government’s championing of climate justice has raised the international profile of this important issue; recognises and welcomes the role that Scots play in international humanitarian organisations; agrees that Scotland should be a party to fair and reciprocal agreements that respect human rights, and welcomes future opportunities for Scotland to promote democratic values, equality and good governance and to contribute toward the fight against global poverty.

15:10

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): In this fast-changing world, one thing remains constant: the responsibility that wealthy, developed countries such as ours have to support our friends and colleagues in developing countries across the world.

I was interested that the minister chose to begin his speech by talking about David Livingstone, who was a great Scot, a great humanitarian, a great doctor and, of course, a missionary. Sadly, David Livingstone died from some of the tropical diseases that he was instrumental in identifying and naming. The sadness of that is that today, so many years after his death, many of those tropical diseases are still prevalent and still kill people around the world. We do not even have a cure for some of them. The legacy that David Livingstone left us must surely be that we redouble our efforts to combat the plague of those diseases.

Because Labour believes so much in international development, we support the motion in the name of the Scottish Government, while seeking to add some additional substance to it. We would also have supported the amendment in the name of Tavish Scott, which reminded us of the history of international development in Scotland and the part played by successive Scottish Administrations.

It is important that we recognise that climate change is a problem for every country in the world

and that, ironically and sadly, those countries that have contributed least to things such as global warming are the ones that suffer most from the changes that we see happening to the climate internationally. As we heard, in 2005 a Labour and Liberal Democrat Administration recognised that we had such a responsibility and decided that we would play our part in taking forward that vital agenda. We did that with the full support and encouragement of the UK Government, which saw it as a way to add value to what it was already doing.

We decided that we would concentrate our efforts on Malawi. I have to say to the minister that we did not target Malawi exclusively—we targeted sub-Saharan Africa—but Malawi was important and central to our plans, because we felt that we had a responsibility to cement our age-old ties of friendship and work with the Government of Malawi to ensure that we supported its priorities for its country.

One of the most important elements of our approach was a determination that it would be a partnership between two nations working together, not a relationship between donor and recipient. By taking forward that work, as my amendment says, we simply built on the efforts of the many schools, churches, colleges, local authorities, communities and non-governmental organisations that already had relationships with counterparts in Malawi and had already helped to bring about real change in the lives of so many Malawians.

Over the years, Parliament, too, has played its part by helping to develop the skills of Malawian parliamentary clerks and parliamentarians. A number of members of this Parliament have gone to Malawi to conduct workshops with our colleagues there, and a number of cross-party groups have been established to promote interest and activity in Malawi and other countries with which we have a relationship.

It is important to remember that the work that we do should complement the work that the UK does through DFID. It is vital that we maintain a good relationship with DFID and align our work with its work, so that we maximise the value of our activity and avoid duplicating effort. We should be very proud that DFID is based in East Kilbride and we should value both the work done there and the jobs that are located in Scotland as a result. One does have to wonder what would happen to those jobs if we were to separate from the UK.

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): I wonder whether Patricia Ferguson has spoken to any of the staff who work in that office, especially members of the Public and Commercial Services Union, who all voted recently to support the yes campaign.

Patricia Ferguson: People will vote as people think fit. I note that, as a union, PCS has chosen to remain neutral on the issue, which is probably a good thing from its point of view. Given the position of the staff in the event of a yes vote, the reality might make them regret any decision that they make in that direction.

We began this work at a time when there was real momentum in relation to development because of the G8 summit at Gleneagles. We discuss these issues today at a time when we are facing up to the fact that a number of the millennium development goals will not be met before they expire in 2015. However, we should not be despondent about that but must instead play an active part in developing a new framework. At a time when 22 per cent of the world's population lives on less than \$1.25 a day and one in eight people around the world go hungry, it is vital that we continue to work on these issues and look for every opportunity to make a difference.

As the second nation to be granted fair trade nation status, we can be proud of the work that has gone on around our country to increase the number of fairly traded products on sale and to raise awareness of fair trade. However, we need to go further because, too often, we hear horror stories about the pay and conditions of workers in garment and other factories, and the work that they do. Too often, we hear of tragedies that occur because of those conditions. The worst of it is that those workers are producing garments for us to buy cheaply here. Too often, our desire to find a bargain blinds us to the reality of the origins of our purchases. They may be cheap to us, but others pay a high price to produce them.

We on this side of the chamber support the idea of a procurement bill, but it will come as no surprise that we think that the current bill does not go far enough. We want sustainable procurement to become the norm. We want the legislation to be a vehicle that ensures that workers are paid a living wage, and we believe that companies benefiting from public sector contracts should pay tax at a fair rate so that money can be reinvested in our communities. We would back a Robin Hood tax on transactions, too.

Many of our agencies are promoting the idea of policy coherence, in which they encourage Government to consider carefully all its actions to ensure that policies are not contradictory and that our support for developing nations extends into every policy area by making all our policies compatible with that aim. Scottish Labour believes that that is an entirely reasonable suggestion and one that we would like to work with those agencies to develop.

Taking forward that idea, we would like the Scottish Government to be more proactive in

challenging Governments with which it has a relationship on their human rights records. Whether it is the way that China treats dissidents or the dangers that gay people face in Uganda, we have to challenge the thinking that allows that to happen, and all of us have to be a critical friend if our own commitment to human rights is to mean anything. If it is to be worth doing, policy coherence must allow us to be that critical friend.

I do not think that policy coherence will necessarily be an easy thing to do. It will be extremely challenging, but it is something that we should look at very seriously and something that we would do well to consider and discuss with our colleagues in the international development world.

I also want to mention briefly the work that has been done by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in this Parliament. As a member of the branch executive, it would probably be remiss of me not to mention that. Over the years, we have worked with our colleagues in the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to try to ensure that the schemes that we put in place encourage young parliamentarians from Malawi and other countries and their parliamentary clerks to take forward the work that they do in a way that helps them to build the openness and transparency in their countries that they seek and that they work hard to establish. I think that that work has been very valuable.

A recent CPA international initiative is a mentoring project. MSPs or members from other Parliaments can work with an individual from the developing world to encourage and help them through their work as an elected politician. That goes very much to the heart of the partnership that we sought to establish with Malawi back in 2005. Our relationship with people and Governments in the developing world must be one in which we work with them so that we have a relationship of partners and equals. Only by doing that will we truly live up to the reputation that we want to have as a global citizen. Surely that is what we all want to be known for.

I move amendment S4M-09547.3, to leave out from first "notes that" to "development" and insert:

“; applauds the work of the many schools, churches, colleges, communities and aid organisations that have taken this work forward over many years; notes that the Scottish Government has developed a distinctive and effective approach to international development that has been complemented by the work of the Parliament and many of its cross-party groups”.

15:20

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con): Earlier today, I was told by a much-valued Scottish National Party colleague of an invariably sunny disposition that my amendment was the only one

that was not consensual. I was astonished because it seems to me to be wholly consensual to suggest that

“the people of Scotland benefit from the UK’s international networks and influence on the world stage”.

All of us in the chamber are, of course, immensely proud of the work that the people of Scotland do on international development, furthering the campaign to eliminate global poverty and championing climate justice, but it cannot be denied that we add to our domestic efforts and achieve much more by being a part of the larger UK family.

Our UK diplomatic network extends across 250 countries, protects our citizens abroad and promotes our interests. Our youK Trade and Investment agency works internationally in more than 100 countries to promote the economic interests of businesses that are based in Scotland as well as those that are based in England and elsewhere, and our Department for International Development, which has been mentioned repeatedly already, leads the UK’s work to end extreme poverty. It works to end the need for aid by creating jobs, unlocks the potential of girls and women, and helps to save lives when humanitarian emergencies hit.

The UK has played a leading role in strengthening the rule of law, supporting democracy and protecting human rights around the world, from the historical campaign to end the slave trade all those centuries ago to drafting the European convention on human rights in the 1950s, supporting the creation of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2006, and using the UK’s presidency of the G8 in 2013 to launch an initiative on preventing sexual violence. Scots have been at the heart of most, if not all, of that.

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): It may have been a slip of the tongue, but I heard the member say that the UK has embassies in 250 countries. Will he give us the names of three of those beyond the 193 members of the United Nations?

Jackson Carlaw: I would love to be on “Mastermind” with Mr Stevenson, because it would be almost impossible to compete against such a wealth of knowledge on all subjects. I once again pay tribute to the vast reach of his interests and erudition—I say that with mock sincerity.

The Prime Minister put tackling tax avoidance at the top of the G8 agenda. Large companies that avoid paying taxes are depriving developing countries of the funds that are necessary to implement food security measures.

Last year, it was announced that some of the international aid budget will be diverted to provide

stabilisation forces in fragile states. That is not only the right thing to do; it is in our UK or even Scottish national interest. There is no development without security, and we know that instability overseas very often means that we eventually foot a larger bill in the UK through mitigation.

Humza Yousaf: Is the member suggesting that aid money should be spent on military intervention, as it has been, for the securing of aid?

Jackson Carlaw: No. In fact, in just a moment I will come to an example of how Scotland prevented military intervention.

Our UK takes a leading role in the fight against poverty. It is the world’s second largest aid donor, and, as the minister graciously acknowledged, in 2013 it became the first G8 country to spend 0.7 per cent of gross national income on aid.

Our UK is helping children to go to school. It is immunising millions of children against preventable diseases and saving the lives of tens of thousands of women in pregnancy and childbirth and hundreds of thousands of new-born babies.

I endorse and applaud all that Mr Yousaf said, and what Patricia Ferguson said subsequently, about Scotland’s role in Malawi and elsewhere, and support and appreciate Mr Yousaf’s sincere efforts on behalf of Scotland in that work.

The UK provided assistance in Sri Lanka, in the aftermath of the tsunami, and in Lebanon, from where it evacuated more than 4,000 UK-entitled people in just six days.

I return to Syria, a subject that I have already touched on. In last year’s crisis over Syria, Scotland was deeply influential. In the House of Commons vote on military action, the decision not to proceed militarily was taken by a majority of just 13. That majority of 13 included the votes of 45 Scottish MPs who voted no. It was Scotland, voting through the United Kingdom, that stopped military action in Syria; and it was Scotland, through the United Kingdom, that caused the United States to pause in its consideration of military action and, as a result, to approach the crisis differently. There could be no better example of how Scotland, through the United Kingdom, exercised influence over a major international incident, which led to a change in how the international community responded. That simply would not have been the case had Scotland stood alone and not been part of the United Kingdom. That is a practical and demonstrable point.

There are 9.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria, including 6.5 million internally displaced people and 2.4 million refugees in neighbouring countries. The UK has

pledged £600 million to provide support, including food, medical care and relief items for more than 1 million people in Syria and the region, making it the UK's largest ever response to a humanitarian crisis.

Humanitarian values are not something over which Scotland alone has a passion; they are shared by the people in the rest of the UK. We can, we will and we must do more by remaining together.

Given that I was told that my amendment was not consensual, I conclude by saying that we will support the Labour amendment, we would have supported the Liberal Democrat amendment had it been selected, and we will support the Government motion, amended or otherwise.

I move amendment S4M-09547.1, to leave out from first "notes that" to end and insert:

"welcomes the role that Scotland plays in furthering climate justice and overseas aid distribution; supports the outstanding work that the UK does in this area as a whole; commends the UK on being the first G8 member to meet the commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on international development; agrees that the people of Scotland benefit from the UK's international networks and influence on the world stage, and acknowledges the collective good that is achieved, and can be achieved in future, by a strong, proactive and dynamic Scotland acting with and remaining part of the UK."

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): We move to the open debate. We are extremely tight for time. If speeches are of six minutes or less, I might be able to call everyone.

15:27

Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP): Scotland is a good global citizen. It is distinct from the country that I come from, and it is distinct from Westminster. I thank the Labour Party for acknowledging in its amendment that we are very much a distinct country.

As someone who was not born in Scotland, I testify that Scotland and its people have a great tradition of being good global citizens—citizens who understand the world in which we live and, more important, who know how to engage on an equal footing with people across the globe.

We recognise the importance of human rights, we respect international law, and we have a positive attitude towards refugees and how to fulfil our human rights obligations. Such positive language is not often heard in Westminster. Immigration, climate change and the international rule of law are used as arguments to disengage the UK from its international obligations. Some blame the media. I do not—I blame the Westminster culture, which is very distinct from the culture in this Parliament and in which politicians

have their own axes to grind—they really ought to know better.

Members will have to decide which direction they want Scotland to take: the direction that this Parliament has taken since it was reconvened in 1999; or the direction that successive Westminster Governments are taking the UK in.

With our limited powers, we have punched well above our weight since 1999 and—beyond that—since 2005, and the people of Scotland have supported our highly successful programme of international development work, which is delivering real and tangible outcomes on the ground.

What I like about our involvement is that it is not driven by our national commercial interests or by some political and military alliance with other national Governments—nor should it be. Our involvement is driven by our desire to alleviate poverty in the world where help is most needed, using existing partners and non-governmental organisations such as Oxfam Scotland.

As one of the world's wealthiest nations, we recognise our responsibility for international development. We can do much more to ensure that Scotland's aid is of the highest quality. One of the best examples of that new approach is our innovative climate justice fund, which is recognised and supported across the world. As the minister mentioned, at the fund's launch, Mary Robinson, president of the Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, said:

"Scotland's Climate Justice Fund acknowledges that those who contributed least to the causes of climate change are bearing the brunt of its impacts."

Others said that championing climate justice is crucial in promoting human rights across the world and adds to vital work to improve access to education and health.

The need to build trust between developed and developing countries must transcend the concerns that some nations might have about immigration and the rights of refugees. I have met refugees from many countries, and they all recognise our distinct approach to human rights in Scotland. Our approach can only be boosted by this nation becoming independent, and I am looking forward to showing how Scotland can become a better global citizen after September.

Asylum seekers flee persecution or serious harm in their countries, and often arrive in the country in which they claim asylum by chance and with very little forethought or preparation. Scotland will play a responsible role as a good global citizen, supporting vulnerable people who flee persecution.

Migrants apply for visas to come to Scotland to work, study or join family members. Like me, they made a decision to move to Scotland. I was a European Union citizen, so I did not need a visa to come here and make my life here. Our policy is clear: an independent Scotland will continue as a member of the EU. That has been recognised by people who have no axes to grind, some of whom have come here from the EU in the past few months. Politicians from the French Senate and Assemblée Nationale came here and backed up our position, because it is common sense.

I conclude by quoting recent articles in the media on the two futures that are in front of us. Last Sunday, the front page of a paper invited us to know more about “Generation Yes”—members might have bought that paper. Inside the paper, I read a couple of columns from another voice, Alison Doig, who told us about the great work that the Scottish Government is doing in Malawi and about how investments from London are working in the opposite direction.

On the same page, Euan McColm gave us his perspective on the prospect of a written constitution after a yes vote. He said:

“the stuff of the European Convention on Human Rights” does not need to be

“written down, again. A written constitution that guaranteed certain matters of policy would be a terrible, undemocratic development.”

I have a message for Euan McColm: I do not believe that being Scottish makes us different from other people, but I know the difference between our Parliament and a Parliament in London that uses a negative tone to disengage from its international obligations. I do not believe in Scottish exceptionalism but I believe that Scotland can play a full role, working with and alongside the international community, on migration, climate change and the international rule of law. We will communicate with rather than dictate to the international community.

The UK is the only country in the European Union or the Commonwealth that does not have a written constitution or a constitution act.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must conclude, please.

Christian Allard: That is a democratic deficit that an independent Scotland will not replicate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you close, please?

Christian Allard: As a member of parliamentarians for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, I call for a nuclear weapons-free Scotland in the constitution of an independent Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I must reiterate that in this debate we have no time to allow members to go beyond their time limit. If they do so, we will have to drop a member from the debate.

15:33

Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Lab): I am pleased to be able to take part in this afternoon’s debate, particularly as it is taking place during the Christian season of Lent. As most if not all members know, Lent is the period when Christians remember and reflect on the time when Jesus spent 40 days and nights fasting in the desert, while being tempted by the devil.

Most of us observe the season by giving up something that we enjoy, and given that we are nearly four weeks into Lent the majority of observers will be struggling to keep their promises—I know that I am. However, we have only a couple of weeks to go and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Many other people in less fortunate parts of the world have to go without the most basic things every day. For them, there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

That is why I welcome the chance to participate in the debate. It is right that we recognise Scotland’s proud record on international development, reflecting on things that we have been good at doing and highlighting things that we can get better at doing. I will support the Labour amendment, which rightly recognises the invaluable contribution that individuals and aid organisations throughout Scotland make to international development. Without those people, we would not have made as much difference.

Last week, Sarah Boyack and I hosted a Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund event, entitled, “Taking care of business”. It was a chance for MSPs and guests to meet SCIAF and its partners from Colombia and hear about the impact of big business on the country’s Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. It included presentations from representatives of the indigenous Embera community and Caritas Colombiana. We heard from Monsignor Héctor Fabio, who co-ordinates a network of offices throughout Colombia that work on peace building, human rights and assisting victims of the Colombian conflict. In December 2003, he led the negotiations that resulted in the release of foreign tourists who were held hostage by ELN guerrillas. In 2012, he received the liberty medal from the Mexican embassy in Colombia in recognition of his work to strengthen democracy and human rights in Colombia.

At the Parliament event, Monsignor Héctor Fabio was joined by Father Sterlin and Criseria

Chamy, who belongs to the Embera community. Her community has experienced the negative impact of various external actors encroaching on its territory, including illegal armed actors and rich landowners who are keen to expand their cattle ranches. Criseria and her family are featured on SCIAF's wee box this year. This is the first time that someone who is featured on the wee box has visited Scotland during Lent.

Those of us who attended the event could not fail to be moved by the personal testimonies of the three speakers, who told us about the impacts of big business on their community. I make it clear that the businesses that they spoke about were registered in the UK and Scotland and were not specifically registered in Colombia.

That is why I agree with SCIAF's call for a coherent approach to tackling global poverty—the type of poverty that Criseria Chamy and her community have experienced. To tackle such examples, we cannot rely simply on the aid agreements that we have in place. As SCIAF stated in its briefing for the debate,

“a ‘policy coherence’ approach must be at the heart of Scotland's role as a global citizen; with policy decisions across the whole of Government being made coherently through a development lens”.

I could not agree more. The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill that is making its way through Parliament gives us an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to that proposal. I hope that the Scottish Government can support that.

It will come as no surprise to the minister that I will speak about Malawi. I have spoken about many aspects of my visit there on a number of occasions in the chamber, but I have never addressed the human rights issues that are apparent in the country. I am extremely concerned about those and I believe that Scotland and the Scottish Government could do more on that.

During my time in Malawi, I visited Chichiri and Zomba prisons. Although the conditions for all prisoners are horrendous, for female prisoners they are inhumane. Despite the efforts of charities and individuals—none more so than Sister Anna Tommasi—conditions are only getting worse for women. I witnessed 40 women and children sharing one cell. They had to sleep on the floor with no bedding and had to take a shower three at a time.

I spoke to a woman who was 74 and had been in prison for more than 20 years without trial. She was not a one-off; that is the norm. As members can imagine, living in such conditions has had a considerable effect on her health, but the females of the prison have no access to the prison hospital, which is reserved for the males.

An Amnesty International review of Malawi in 2011 showed that prisons there were overcrowded—the prison system has a capacity of 6,000 but was holding about 13,000 prisoners. Prison congestion was exacerbated by prolonged pre-trial detention. Overcrowding, poor nutrition, poor sanitation and inadequate health facilities contributed to the spread of infections, including tuberculosis and measles. Many prisoners relied on families and charities for supplementary food.

In June 2010, prisoners in Chichiri prison were locked in overcrowded communal cells with poor ventilation and had to sleep sitting up. Up to 200 prisoners shared one toilet. One inmate had been held for nine years without trial; he was later released on bail. The female section of Chichiri prison was similarly congested. Eight of the 55 female prisoners were mothers with babies. Further to that, a report on monitoring of the prisons in Malawi by the Malawi Human Rights Commission in the period between December 2011 and March 2012 revealed that 79 prisoners had died.

It is clear that human rights are continuously being breached in Malawi. I know that many organisations, including churches and schools throughout Scotland, continue to carry out important work in the country and I would never wish that to stop. We should not underestimate how invaluable the aid that the Scottish Government has sent to the country is and it must continue, but I wonder whether our agreement with the country could be stronger. We cannot allow the conditions that I have just outlined to persist. We must do more—not to the detriment of others, but to the benefit of all citizens of Malawi. That is our duty as an international partner and would truly support the laudable aim of Scotland being a good global citizen.

15:39

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): Global citizenship is a big idea and concept, so it is sometimes difficult to pin down. We can perhaps define it more clearly by its antonyms—alienation and isolation, which are ideas and ways of living that cut out the rest of the world. That isolation can be deliberate. The splendid isolation of 19th century UK Tory Prime Ministers' foreign policy in Europe is coming full circle 120 years on and is regaining its popularity at Westminster. Or it may be the isolation that is forced on countries that are in conflict, which Syria and Sudan are experiencing. It could also be the isolation and alienation that leave our young people feeling lost and powerless, deprived of a future and feeling that society has let them down and offers them nothing positive.

Global citizenship is not some kind of benevolence that is bestowed on the poor by wealthy do-gooders who seek to salve their consciences; it is about interdependence, participation and taking responsibility.

“Scotland’s Future” states:

“no economy is isolated from global economic conditions and every nation is increasingly dependent, to a greater or lesser degree, on the flow of international trade and investment and its relationships with others.”

Yet, as things stand, we can do little. The Scotland Act 1998 tells us that we are responsible for

“observing and implementing international obligations, obligations under the Human Rights Convention and obligations under EU law”

and that we can assist UK ministers in relation to issues of foreign affairs. However, when one of our colleagues recently tried to assist by filling in for a missing UK environment minister in Doha, he was refused and the chair was left empty. That is how we are able to assist UK ministers.

We have no formal voice on the international stage—we saw that clearly in the Iraq war and we are seeing it now in relations with the rest of the EU. In an independent Scotland, we will be able to put forward our views and have a voice at the leading world fora—political, civil or the international opinion-forming organisations of human rights, academia, international aid and disaster relief, for example.

Independence will give us the power to do things differently. Instead of projecting the isolationist agenda that has taken over at Westminster, we will direct our international efforts

“into deepening and consolidating relationships with friends and partners, new and old, across the world and, through this, expanding opportunities for people and businesses in Scotland. ... Our bywords will be co-operation, development and trade. Our clear priorities will be commerce and partnership, not conflict. Scotland will be a champion for international justice and peace.”

We need only look at the Scottish Government’s country plans to see the aspirations that we share with our friends across the world. Although we are restrained by Westminster command and may only assist ministers of the Crown, we in Scotland have been very much engaged with international development policy. We are very proud of the work that we do in Malawi and I am proud to come from a part of Lanarkshire that remembers David Livingstone, although when I met the kids at Bandawe primary school, in Malawi, they seemed to know much more about him than I did. I congratulate Siobhan McMahon on a powerful speech. We should be proud of the work that we do in Malawi, but we should never forget those who suffer injustice and we must always stand up for them.

Since the international development policy was set out in 2008, we have been working to enhance Scotland’s contribution to the global fight against poverty and have created an international development fund that has now grown to £9 million a year. The fund focuses on seven countries: Bangladesh, India, Malawi, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia. Notably, Malawi has received around half of the funding. We have also made the promise that an independent Scotland will enshrine in law spending of at least 0.7 per cent of our gross national income on development aid.

Our national values will drive meaningful, effective aid. As a small, wealthy country, we will be able to monitor and check just how our support is being used to improve the lives of others beyond our shores. When I was in Malawi, I found very compelling the work that is being done with money that is being channelled not through Governments but directly to the people who need it. To those who seek sanctuary in Scotland, an ethical foreign policy and our status as a nuclear-free, peaceful nation will be our cornerstones internationally.

As Mandela said, the elimination of poverty is an act not of charity but of justice. That concept of fairness for all will be a keystone of our society. Playing a meaningful part in tackling world problems such as human trafficking, climate change, hunger, lack of clean water, poor sanitation, unjust debt, poor healthcare, poor education and gender inequality is a major responsibility and one that our children—including my young son, in the work that he is doing on global citizenship—are developing through the curriculum for excellence.

Global citizenship means accepting the need for change and having the capacity to help to deliver that change, so let us go forward in an independent Scotland and make a contribution that does no less than change for the better the lives of people for whom we care. All of us—wherever we are in the world—have the right to justice, but we all have an obligation to be good global citizens.

15:45

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): I want to speak to the first part of the minister’s motion on international co-operation in areas of global concern. In an effort to understand the SNP’s policy positions, I reread the independence white paper, which the minister mentioned in his opening remarks.

In passing, I express the hope that the minister will support Mr Carlaw’s amendment, given the evidence that he gave to the Westminster

International Development Committee on 31 October. To his credit, the minister was fulsome in his praise of the UK's international aid work. I commend his evidence to his back benchers. I particularly noted his remarks about the Department for International Development staff in East Kilbride, whom Patricia Ferguson mentioned.

The biggest worldwide challenge that we face is not the madness of North Korea nor even the utterly depressing civil war in Syria—I share Mr Carlaw's political assessment of what happened in London some months back on that—but the situation that is unfolding here in Europe. The crisis that is eastern Europe is the foreign policy challenge of today. That challenge is about how we confront an assertive Russian president—a man who says what he wants to do and then does it. It is about NATO's role, which is important because of the SNP's position of wanting to join the nuclear defence alliance if Scotland becomes independent.

The situation in the eastern Europe of today is also about human rights, which the motion mentions. Putin released Pussy Riot just before the Sochi winter Olympic games but then had its members attacked in front of the television cameras because they did not do what he wanted them to do.

Ironically, the only supporter of Putin in the UK is the UK Independence Party's leader, Nigel Farage. Farage cites Putin as the politician he most admires. Apparently, he appears more on "Russia Today", Putin's in-house TV channel, than any other European politician. Most will find Farage's views odd, if not downright dangerous, but that is why they should receive the widest possible airing. That is why the SNP was completely wrong to attack Farage when he was in Edinburgh last year. People holding signs saying "Go back to England" makes me uncomfortable about my country. Farage should have his say and be defeated on the arguments rather than chased away by a rent-a-crowd.

Humza Yousaf: Could Mr Scott tell us the name of a single SNP member who attacked Mr Farage on that occasion?

Mr Scott has spent two minutes defending Nigel Farage's rights in Scotland, which seems a bizarre tack to take.

Tavish Scott: We live in a democracy, and any politician should be allowed to say what he wishes and have his arguments defeated. I rather enjoyed listening to George Galloway and Brian Wilson make arguments against independence in Bathgate the other night. The implication of the minister's remarks is that they should not be allowed to have that say. [*Interruption.*] This is a point on which SNP members are extremely

sensitive. You always know that you have got the SNP on something if its members attack you repeatedly.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Members are probably wondering whether you will return to the subject of a good global citizen. Remember that you have a maximum of only six minutes, Mr Scott.

Tavish Scott: I was here for the minister's opening speech, in which he made a lot of remarks about independence, which is what I am addressing.

The annexation of Crimea, the massing of Russian troops on Ukraine's border and Russia's readiness to use military intervention mean that NATO's role in Europe is changing. Putin wants to force Ukraine apart using propaganda, agents of influence and provocateurs. His announcement on 18 March that Crimea was Russian was steely in its vision. Russia will use military force in support of coercive diplomacy when it feels that Russian interests are jeopardised.

What of the response? I do not know whether the minister shares my view that the western response to the annexation of Crimea has not been good enough. There is a lot of talk about economic sanctions, but tough, real measures would mean saying to BP, Chevron, Boeing and Siemens that they cannot do business in Russia. It is no wonder that, so far, action has been limited to naming and shaming a small number of Russian diplomats.

This is where high-minded diplomacy competes with economic power. An independent Scotland would face exactly the same dilemma. An economy beholden to oil majors that was led by a First Minister with an appreciation of big international businessmen would make choices. When it came to human rights, Alex Salmond chose China and not the Dalai Lama. By your deeds your Government will certainly be judged.

The NATO secretary general said this morning that Russia had broken its international commitments and that there will be a reassessment of NATO's defence plans. At this rate, Saxa Vord in Unst will again be a NATO listening station looking to the east. Therefore, it is right to ask this Government, which wants to be a member of NATO, what its response would be to a Russian president driving forward his doctrine of the Russian world, in which Russian-speaking parts of eastern Europe can be invaded. NATO will meet in full session in Cardiff in September. Its 28 members must define and address Russia's recent record in Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and, now, Crimea.

The NATO secretary general was right in what he said this morning in Brussels, because Russia

has not once but many times rewritten international rules about the boundaries of sovereign countries. The Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are the most exposed and are NATO members. Were Russia to threaten annexation of them, NATO would be duty bound to invoke article 5: that an attack on one is an attack on all. So, what is the minister's and his Government's position? Surely he cannot on the one hand say that it is a matter for Westminster, while on the other hand stand behind his white paper. Being a member of NATO is about a lot more than just an annual lunch and a photo opportunity; it is about potentially committing men and women to armed conflict, which is the hardest decision that any leader must take.

There is a crisis now. Given his talk of independence, I would be grateful if the minister would share with us his view on what his Government would actually do.

15:51

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): I will spend most of my time talking about the impact that smaller countries can have on international affairs.

Other members have referred to Mary Robinson, and I very much commend the work of the Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice. The foundation's work is in four parts: sustainable energy, climate justice, food and nutrition, and gender impacts. In respect of sustainable energy, it is clear that Scotland has a set of engineering skills that would enable us to work on that agenda. On climate justice, Mary Robinson came to launch our climate justice fund with the First Minister, and I had the great privilege of chairing that launch. We also have considerable expertise in food and nutrition.

I have spoken previously in the chamber about the gender impact of climate change. For example, 70 per cent of small farmers in Africa are women, and it is those small farmers who are most disproportionately affected by climate change. They are having to go further to forage for fuel for cooking and are having to carry water further to water their crops. They are the people who are paying the price for the international injustice that the western developed world imposes on people. We in Scotland are privileged to be part of the climate justice campaign, and can make practical efforts to help such people.

Tavish Scott has just spent a great deal of his time talking about two international bodies: NATO and the United Nations. The next secretary general of NATO is, of course, the former Prime Minister of Norway, which is comparable in size to Scotland, although it is a little smaller, and he is a

man who will be taking the hardest decisions that can be taken. Small countries can do that.

Furthermore, who is the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations at the moment? It is Mr Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda—a country that most people here have probably not heard of and whose population in 2011 was 81,799. Small countries can punch well above their weight. Mr Ashe has chaired sessions at the United Nations on international trade and development, and on information and communications technologies. In the 71st plenary session, when he has been in the chair, the UN has discussed the international financial system and received keynote reports from a New Zealand-led committee. Small countries can do big things on the international stage.

It is worth commenting on Tavish Scott's references to South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, which is a country that is certainly under threat. The Russians went into Abkhazia in the late 90s and into South Ossetia more recently. When I visited Georgia twice in 2006 as an Opposition MSP, I met the Government there and actually got it to change the law in relation to language, which I was very pleased about, indeed.

I turn to some of the things that the Tories said. Jackson Carlaw, the Tory spokesman, suggested that other members think that he is not consensual, but when his amendment would delete a reference to human rights, that is to step away from consensuality. When his amendment would delete a reference to humanitarian operations, that is to step away from consensuality. When the amendment would delete a reference to democracy itself, we see a step away from consensuality. Finally, the amendment would delete a reference to global poverty.

Most astonishing of all, we heard Jackson Carlaw commend the work of Labour members at Westminster who saved that non-democratic institution with 820 unelected and undismissible members—the House of Lords—and the 650 elected members in the House of Commons for making the wrong decision on Syria.

Jackson Carlaw: On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

Stewart Stevenson: I will not give way; I have no time. I am sorry.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Stevenson, it is a point of order. Could you take your seat please?

Stewart Stevenson: I beg your pardon, Presiding Officer.

Jackson Carlaw: I apologise, Presiding Officer. It was a slip of the tongue; it was not a point of order but an intervention.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I apologise, Mr Stevenson. It was cited as a point of order. Please continue.

Stewart Stevenson: That is fine. Thank you Presiding Officer.

Jackson Carlaw is in favour of Scotland having international influence, but he seeks institutional arrangements that would prevent that.

As a minister, and as a member of the UK ministerial delegation, I attended 25 events in Europe and around the world, and only once did I get to speak on behalf of the UK. It was at an economic conference in Poland, and was for the simple reason that the UK had sent only one minister—me. At other times, even when the UK minister is absent—as Paul Wheelhouse has found—we do not get to speak.

We have to move to a world in which Scotland can go to the important occasions, give what we have to give—which is substantial—and get the decisions that matter to us. Go, give, get. Until that happens, we will not truly make the contribution that we should and must make.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you. I apologise for the interruption.

15:57

Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab): The world that we live in is constantly changing and evolving. Economic change, technological change and political change have shaped a world that is very different from the one that I grew up in. We have seen the end of the iron curtain and the introduction of the European single currency. We have seen the internet and mobile devices, terrorism and war, and we have seen peace and reconciliation. None of us knows what the future holds and many of us would have struggled to predict the defining historic moments of our past.

The world is in flux, as it always has been, but that does not mean that people are just bystanders in a world of permanent change. Societies, governments and movements can make a difference.

Just last year the UN General Assembly agreed the arms trade treaty to regulate the international trade in conventional arms. There would be no treaty without the campaigning efforts of non-governmental organisations and people like David Grimason, or without Governments around the globe showing the political will to make the world safer. After the collapse of the Rana plaza building in Bangladesh, campaigners secured a major victory when 150 companies signed up to accords that are protecting trade unions and making Bangladeshi factories safer.

I do not have to look very far from my home to see people influencing, changing and shaping the world. I am proud of my hometown of East Kilbride, which is Scotland's most successful new town, a Fairtrade town, and home to the Department for International Development, where 600 civil servants help to deliver the world's second-largest aid budget. As we debate our constitutional future and consider Scotland's global role, I want to ensure that we all recognise the amazing contribution that DFID staff make every day to people in the developing world. I also want to be clear about why I believe that a yes vote could disrupt the work of the DFID and the civil servants who are based at Abercrombie house in East Kilbride.

Since its establishment in 1997, the Department for International Development has become internationally recognised as a world-leading development agency. There can be no surer sign of the success of the DFID than the consensus that exists on so much of what it has achieved. At last, 0.7 per cent of national income is being spent on aid. Skilled and experienced DFID staff work in Whitehall and East Kilbride and in 28 countries in Africa, Asia and the middle east. There is cross-party agreement on aid, which means that the current Government and future ones will go on supporting schools, medicines and disaster relief around the world. As a Government department, the DFID has its own secretary of state with a seat at the Cabinet table.

I believe that, thanks to the hard work of civil servants at home and abroad, the DFID has been an international success story, even if I have not always shared the politics of the ministers who have happened to be in charge at particular points in time. However, I understand the importance of challenging and scrutinising the DFID's record on aid, just as we have to challenge and scrutinise the claims that are made in the white paper about what independence means for development.

Now that the UK finally spends 0.7 per cent of its GNI on overseas development assistance, I would not want our contribution to the developing world to diminish. However, if Scotland were to become independent and the UK's GNI were to become smaller, we could expect continuing UK aid spending to fall by about £1 billion. Meanwhile, the more an independent Scotland spends on establishing a new overseas development agency and on its administration costs, the less it will have to spend on aid.

What about East Kilbride? The UK International Development Committee believes that the DFID would pull out within five years, which would undo one of the most successful Government relocations of the past 30 years and bring development jobs back to London. A new Scottish

agency might save some staff from redundancy, but given that many of the jobs at DFID are highly specialised, I am afraid that the key operational centre in East Kilbride would be broken up, jobs would be repatriated to the rest of the UK and East Kilbride would lose out. Do not take my word for it; listen to David Fish, who headed up the DFID's Africa programme, and who has described the Scottish Government's claims as "simply not credible."

We all agree that Scotland should aspire to be a good global citizen. That means not just our Governments, but the NGOs and movements that are alluded to in the Labour amendment. However, in debating our role in the world, let us not lose sight of the fantastic work that is being done right now in East Kilbride, which as part of the UK is the proud home of the DFID, which is dispensing the world's second-biggest aid budget to make the world a better and fairer place.

16:02

Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP):

Given its size and population, Scotland will never be, or aspire to be, a global superpower, but as the minister set out in his speech and as the Government has laid out in the white paper, we can be an active and good global citizen. The scale of the global challenges is immense. They include tackling climate change, responding to global pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and taking measures to deal with cybersecurity. That reminds us that—as Christina McKelvie pointed out—all countries, whatever their size, are interdependent.

Those challenges cut across national boundaries and legal jurisdictions, so finding solutions to them requires effective intergovernmental institutions and international co-operation on a scale that global institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank, which were established after the second world war, have so far failed to provide. Professor Ian Goldin, who is director of the Oxford Martin school, encapsulated that succinctly when he stated:

"The stakes could not be higher. Unless we are able to more effectively manage the risks associated with globalization, they will overwhelm us. This is the core challenge of our times."

Although we will debate with passion and conviction whether Scotland's aspirations to be a good global citizen can best be met as a small independent country, working with others and setting our own aims, partnerships and priorities, or as part of a medium-sized state that is still coming to terms with the loss of empire—as Jackson Carlaw would prefer—we can at least agree that Scotland has the opportunity to play a key leadership role in a number of important areas.

In promoting climate justice, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009—an achievement of the Scottish Parliament—set in law some of the firmest and most ambitious climate change targets. Scotland is a world leader in advancing climate justice and is actively addressing the needs of vulnerable people around the world by providing £3 million for the second round of the climate justice fund. Scotland can also play a vital leadership role in removing nuclear weapons from these islands and in making its own contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

Scotland continues to develop innovative responses to the challenges that face the international community and the developing world. New ways are constantly being sought to fulfil the potential that Scotland has to offer and to channel the energies and efforts of the many non-governmental organisations, agencies and volunteers who are active in improving the lives of, and opportunities for, thousands of people throughout the world, often in the most difficult and demanding circumstances imaginable, as Siobhan McMahon outlined.

I welcome the public campaign by the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund and Christian Aid to put fair trade and ethical practice at the heart of the Scottish Government's procurement process. I lodged an amendment at stage 2 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill with the support of the Scottish Fair Trade Forum and was pleased that the strength of the arguments that I and the forum deployed persuaded the Government to lodge its own amendment to ensure that contracting authorities' procurement strategies will set out clear statements of general policy on fairly and ethically traded goods and services.

I take the opportunity to pay tribute to Mercy Corps, which is an organisation whose European headquarters is based in my constituency and which continues to succeed in advancing humanitarian causes on a truly global scale. Mercy Corps has benefited from more than £1 million of Scottish Government funding to implement aid projects in six countries. They range from projects assisting in providing the most basic needs, such as access to water, sanitation and hygiene, to a youth entrepreneurship project in Kashmir in India.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): I completely agree with the comments that Jim Eadie makes about Mercy Corps, but does he not also acknowledge the huge amount of money that the organisation has been allocated by the UK Government for, for example, good governance work in Pakistan?

Jim Eadie: Sarah Boyack will know from my speeches in previous debates that I have put on record my appreciation of the contribution that the

UK Government and the Department for International Development make, particularly in relation to Syria. We are not in disagreement on that.

The Scottish Government is also providing almost £400,000 of funding for a Mercy Corps programme that seeks to support community midwives in Pakistan, which has the third-highest rate of maternal death in the world. Working with the Scottish Government and partners across the world, Mercy Corps is helping to train and support 90 midwives to set up as self-employed practitioners and offer life-saving services sustainably.

Although those projects are diverse in their scale and objectives, they are united by their success in capturing the added value that Scottish expertise can bring to international aid efforts, and in tapping into the almost limitless resource of innovation and inventiveness for which Scotland is famous. One example of such innovation can be found in the representations that have been made to me by my constituent, Mr Alan McKinney. For more than 20 years, he has harboured an ambition for Scotland to play a leading role in advancing humanitarian relief efforts throughout the world. He has made a bold proposal that would involve Prestwick airport becoming a centre for international relief efforts and forming a permanent base to allow co-ordinated European responses to disasters and emergencies. No such permanent centre exists in Europe. Why not, and why should it not be in Scotland? I accept that it would not be possible within the constraints of the budget that is available to the Scottish Government, but the idea could be developed and explored with independence.

Smaller countries are more agile in developing clear strategies and exploiting their comparative advantage in international development. We have much to learn from the Scandinavian countries. Another world is possible, and we in Scotland can help to shape it.

16:08

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): I am pleased to take part in the debate not only because of my role as convener of the cross-party group on Malawi, but to highlight the sterling work that is being done in projects in my constituency and in other projects about which I have recently learned.

Scotland has never been good at blowing its own trumpet. That is as true in climate justice as it is in other fields. As other members have said, Scotland became the first country whose Government established a climate justice fund based on the concept that nations that have

benefited from industrialisation are obliged to help less-developed countries to adapt to the consequences of climate change.

It is an accolade that has been recognised by Mary Robinson, who is a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Al Gore and many others. Indeed, this has become a timely debate in the light of the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as Rob Gibson highlighted in topical question time earlier.

I will mention projects that are based in my constituency. Researchers from the James Hutton Institute, together with international organisations and institutions on the ground in Malawi, are working on two initiatives. The first is the waters project, which is focused on supporting local government and communities to plan for future natural resource management in the face of climate change. It works in four districts of Malawi that are particularly vulnerable to droughts and floods. It helps communities to take ownership of environmental planning and co-ordinates work across administrative levels with a view to increasing resilience and adaptation to climate change. The project is led by Voluntary Service Overseas, and is supported by the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy, by Lead Southern and Eastern Africa, by the Malawi Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development, and by the James Hutton Institute, and it is funded by a £490,000 grant from the Scottish Government's climate justice fund over three years.

Another project that the James Hutton Institute is involved in is the climate-smart agriculture programme. That project is funded with a grant of £397,341 from the Scottish Government's international development programme, and examines the underlying issue of soil health in Malawi, with the aim of ensuring that farmers can get maximum yields with as little reliance as possible on fertilisers and pesticides, which are probably economically and environmentally unsustainable in the long term.

I was delighted to learn last week that, through the Scottish Government's international development small grants programme, the Orskov Foundation was awarded £50,874 for its food forest project, which works to provide training in permaculture and income-generation activities for households and small farmers in the Mangochi district. It will help farmers to become more resilient to climate change and to diversify their food production. It is a charitable project that is run by the Orskov Foundation, which was set up by Bob Orskov, who worked for many years at the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, as it was known then, and whom I met several times, as his

wife was a councillor in the then Grampian Regional Council. It is fitting that this charitable foundation project dovetails with the climate-smart project in which the James Hutton Institute is involved.

I would also like to mention CIFAL Scotland, and the work of May East, who travels to conferences around the world highlighting the work of the Scottish Government through the climate justice fund, the climate challenge fund, and the “Scotland the Hydro Nation” prospectus, through which our expertise in this area is used abroad. Because Scotland is only a sub-state, we are often not invited on to the international stages where such issues are discussed. However, because the work here is extremely important and is beginning to be recognised worldwide, Scotland is invited to show what can be done.

Scotland is in an excellent position to assist citizens worldwide and to become much better as a global citizen. For example, in the 1990s, Norway almost managed to get agreement among countries in the middle east—an effort that was scuppered only when the big boys came in. In 2003, Scotland hosted the first dialogue outside the Soviet Union among parliamentarians from the south Caucasus, with delegations from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan discussing the frozen conflicts in their regions.

To paraphrase, Scotland cannot use the example of our power, but we can use the power of our example. We could do that much better with a seat by right on—rather than the occasional invitation to—the international stage.

16:15

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): Presiding Officer, I ask you to forgive me if I do not choose to use my insecurities as a cloak during the debate. I want to talk about Scotland as a good global citizen, which we have been. Throughout the past 300 years we have demonstrated our ability to punch well above our weight and shown that—within the United Kingdom, significantly—Scotland has a great deal to offer.

We have heard quite a bit about David Livingstone and we should actively celebrate the 200th anniversary of his birth. His historical contribution has led the Parliament to align itself with Malawi, a connection of which I and every other member in the chamber remain proud. The Parliament’s work with Malawi is a true living memorial to the missionary work that David Livingstone undertook, of which we should also be proud.

If we look a little further back in Scotland’s history, we see that during the Scottish

enlightenment Scotland did much to indicate its success on the global stage. The work of David Hume commands a great deal of respect internationally, but I am more of an Adam Smith man and I take “The Wealth of Nations” as Scotland’s great contribution in that period. It was Adam Smith who told us that it is possible for nations and for individuals to generate wealth and that we should work on ensuring that the wealth is spread. That has happened within countries, and it can happen internationally.

Whatever we say today about our international aid programme, of which we should be proud, and the charitable work that goes on, we must—as a number of members have said—never forget that trade plays a vital role in ensuring that we can work with other countries.

Trade can deliver a great deal, so it worries me slightly that a couple of Labour members have taken the opportunity today to discuss the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill. The Labour Party has tried very hard to amend the bill to guarantee that trade will be conducted in a particular way and I worry that some of those amendments would, if they were agreed, give future Governments the opportunity—or perhaps the excuse—to exclude foreign companies and foreign farmers from trading in our economy. I do not want the bill to include excuses for protectionism in the future and we must take care to ensure that it does not do so.

Members have mentioned that an independent Scotland would legislate to dedicate 0.7 per cent of its gross national income to international aid. That is a strange claim to make, given that we are already part of the United Kingdom, which is the first developed nation to achieve that target. A little more thanks for those of us who have spoken on the subject in recognition of that achievement would be worth while.

A couple of key issues have been raised in the debate. The first is Scotland’s potential to contribute to sustainable agriculture at a global level. It is sad to reflect on the fact that Scotland once led the development of genetic technology and food crop production. It saddens me more that the great work that was done by the then Scottish crop research institute at Invergowrie was ultimately wasted because the technology was—almost exclusively—allowed to fall into the hands of a few companies that are using it for what are perhaps the wrong reasons.

If Scotland had maintained its interest and investment in genetic modification technology, we would now have the opportunity to provide farmers in the developing world with crops that were resistant to disease, parasites, drought and the presence of salt in the environment. The fact that we in Scotland have turned our back on such

technology disadvantages the world—doubly so, given that the technology is now controlled by others and not by us.

I return to an issue that was raised initially by Jackson Carlaw. He pointed out that Scotland, as part of the United Kingdom, was absolutely influential, through the intervention of its members of Parliament, in determining international policy in Syria by first influencing the direction of the UK Government, which then went on to influence the direction of the United States Government. There is an example of what Scotland can achieve within the union.

There is one other point relating to our military involvement that I cannot allow to pass without remarking on it. The minister in his opening speech said that never again would our sons and daughters be sent abroad to participate in illegal wars—I hope that I have that right. Sadly, that is a narrow and misguided interpretation. If we achieve the independence that he aspires to, what would happen is that Scotland's sons and daughters would choose to go on serving within the military organisations that they are members of, but they would have no representation within the Parliament that makes decisions on their behalf. That, in my view, is a sin that we should not commit.

16:21

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): As the MSP for Angus South, I do not have to look far to see a tangible illustration of Scotland's historical standing as a good global citizen. My constituency office is located just yards from Arbroath abbey—home of the declaration of Arbroath, on which the Senate of the United States of America acknowledged in 1998 that its own declaration of independence had been styled.

In this week, which marks the 694th anniversary of the signing of the declaration of Arbroath, it would be remiss of us not to highlight that particular example of Scotland reaching out positively to the wider world. It is accepted that the US version was—as a result of the influence on its principal author, Thomas Jefferson, of one William Small—heavily based on the document that set Scotland on the road to freedom in 1320.

Small, who was originally from Carmyllie just outside Arbroath, was appointed professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1758. Among his pupils was Jefferson, who went on to chair the committee that was commissioned to draft a declaration of independence. Jefferson, who became the third president of the USA and who, it is claimed, was actually a descendant of Thomas Randolph, one of the signatories to the

declaration of Arbroath, never hid his admiration for Small and admitted that meeting the Angus-born academic had

“probably fixed the destinies of my life.”

It is little wonder then that, as the 20th century drew to a close, the US Senate moved to mark the links between the declaration of Arbroath and its own declaration of independence by backing unanimously a resolution from Senator Trent Lott to fix 6 April as a day upon which America would acknowledge the contribution of Scots to the development of its nation.

In the preamble to the resolution, Lott stated:

“April 6 has a special significance for all Americans and especially Americans of Scottish descent, because the Declaration of Arbroath, the Scottish Declaration of Independence, was signed on April 6 1320 and the American Declaration of Independence was modelled on that inspirational document.”

What more striking historical example of this nation's positive impact on the world could we have than our most famous document, accepted as the first expression of the idea of a contractual monarchy and an eloquent plea for the liberty of man, being recognised by one of the major democracies in the world in that way?

I point to the gathering of consul generals that will take place in Arbroath on Friday, which involves, among others, Japan, Norway, Ukraine and Ireland and which will celebrate the declaration and start the countdown to its 700th anniversary, as further evidence of the document's global standing.

Ahead of this weekend's tartan day celebrations, I popped into the abbey yesterday to see a newly deployed display that explains the links between the two declarations. I am sure that those visiting the abbey for a weekend of events to celebrate the signing of the declaration will find it interesting and informative and will reflect upon the connection as a fine example of this great nation's credentials as a good global citizen.

Good global citizenship can be found in a variety of guises but, whatever form it takes, it is invariably informed by the qualities of fairness and justice and, in a modern-day context, by sustainability and environmental responsibility. Just as it reached out to the world seeking to do good over many centuries past, the Scotland of today seeks to do the right thing: not just to talk about fairness, equality and environmental responsibility but to deliver them.

We are a Fairtrade nation with Fairtrade communities the length and breadth of the country, not because it ticks a box but because we believe that that is how a good global citizen behaves. This Parliament introduced world-leading climate change legislation not because it would

bring us kudos but because it was the right thing to do for our benefit and that of the planet, its inhabitants and its future. The creation of the climate justice fund and the impact that it is having is further proof, were it needed, of our commitment to setting an example for the rest of the world and, as the minister said, trying to rebalance injustice.

We have to deliver on driving down climate change emissions, so it was encouraging to attend last week's briefing by Professor Jim Skea from the UK Committee on Climate Change, which was hosted by my colleague Rob Gibson here in the Parliament. Yes, owing to the revision of the greenhouse gas inventory we narrowly missed the 2011 targets, but the 2014 progress report was clear on the direction of travel. It stated:

"Scotland has made good progress".

The report came amid further positive announcements. Last year Scotland generated 46 per cent of its energy needs from renewable sources and, between 2008 and 2012, greenhouse gas emissions from our power stations fell by 6.5 million tonnes carbon equivalent. However, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report states that global warming is likely to have a "severe, pervasive and irreversible" impact on humans' health, homes, food and safety and lays bare that we must build on those efforts. I believe that, as a good global citizen, Scotland will do that.

16:25

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): We meet on the day after the publication of the IPCC's report on climate change, which says that we all need to act. The statement that the latest report should "jolt people into action" is something that we must think about very seriously. Widespread food shortages, water scarcity and climate refugees are realities that must be discussed and acted on in the next few years. If Scotland is to be a good global citizen, that should be not just a soundbite, but inform everything that this Government does and involve everything that we all do together. It should be a call to action for all of us and the communities that we represent.

Our actions should be driven by values. The values that we should aspire to in the work that we do in Scotland, such as fairness, equality, promoting social justice and solidarity, should apply to the work that we do abroad. When we commit to abolishing child poverty in Scotland, the commitment should not be limited to Scotland; it must inform our contribution to international development, too. The fact that 22 per cent of people in the world live in extreme poverty—the vast majority of them women—should concern us. We should use today's debate to think about what

the next framework for the millennium development goals should look like—Patricia Ferguson was right to raise that in her opening remarks.

I do not agree with the minister when he says that if Scotland left the UK we could do so much more. Actually, we could do so much more now, together. We need to focus on not just whether we are in or out, but what powers we have here. The powers that we have here are not just financial. They are the powers of leadership. We have the power to inspire people, co-ordinate people and make a real difference.

There is more that we can do. Although there is much to be proud of, NIDOS suggests that we should make our values explicit, so that we can be held accountable. That is a good principle and it should apply to every level of Government. There is much that we can be proud of, but there is more that we could do.

We must think of the good things that are being done—on health, education, climate change, and on transferring engineering and renewables skills—as a two-way street. We are not just imparting knowledge; we are reflecting on and learning from the experience of people we work with in different communities. Although there is much to be proud of, there is an awful lot more to be done, so let us not make the independence debate a diversionary discussion; let us keep a focus on what more we can do, regardless of where the border lies between Scotland and England and regardless of whether we are in or out of the UK. There is a huge amount more that this Government can do.

As the Scotland Malawi Partnership notes, people have been mobilised and people are committed to using their skills, whether those are the skills of ordinary communities or specialised skills. We should all be proud that every university is part of the Scotland Malawi Partnership.

There is a challenge to us all to think about how we exert leadership and how the Scottish Government in particular exerts leadership and could build capacity to help our civic organisations, charities and NGOs, which make an invaluable contribution. Jim Eadie and Maureen Watt made appropriate comments. I also agree with the comments about the work done in East Kilbride and Siobhan McMahon's comments.

We have been discussing the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill. Alex Johnstone said that we should not go there but, for me, procurement is fundamental. Our relationships should be about commerce as much as about good principles and doing the nice things that we would all agree with. We have to ask some tougher questions. We decided that we wanted to be a Fairtrade nation

because people, as consumers, wanted to act immediately and ensure that the money that they spent would be used properly and would drive fairer incomes for farmers throughout the globe, allowing them to invest in their families and in their local health and education facilities.

No one has mentioned the incredible impact of our diaspora communities. People in those communities make a fantastic contribution, not just to Scotland, the community that they have chosen to come to, but to the communities that they have left: more money goes back to Bangladesh in remittances than in international aid.

We should think about not just the power of Government, but the power of communities to work together. The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill is weaker than it should be. This is absolutely not about excluding farmers in other countries; it is about giving them the chance to trade with us and ensuring that they are not excluded.

When we think about those issues, we need to think about the power that our citizens can have. I was reflecting on the make poverty history demonstration nine years ago, which led to 0.7 per cent of our money being spent on international development. It was citizens that made all the parties sign up to that and ensured the cancellation of debt for the poorest countries, and it was the work of citizens that let the UK lead the way and work with other countries, but there is much more that we could do. We can create a better world through working in partnership, through networks and, I believe, as part of the UK—that should not have been the focus of the debate, but it has been made the focus of the debate—

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Can you start bringing your remarks to a close?

Sarah Boyack: Scotland gets the best of both worlds. We need to make the most of those worlds. Last month, the Britain and Africa after 50 event in the Scottish Parliament focused on what we needed to do more of in trade—

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry, Ms Boyack, but you are cutting into the time for the last speakers.

16:31

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP): It has already been said that Scotland has a distinctive contribution to make in its work with developing countries, in recognition of our global responsibility. That is demonstrated by Scotland's establishment of a climate justice fund. The concept of climate justice is that nations that have benefited from industrialisation have the obligation

to help less developed countries to adapt to the consequences of climate change. As others have said, projects in the fund are helping communities affected by climate change in Malawi and Zambia. The fund will make a real difference to people's lives in those countries.

Scotland has a commitment to play its role in addressing the challenges faced by the developing world, recognising our identity as a responsible nation. With 18 September and the independence vote coming ever closer, Scotland has shown the world that it is ready to be an independent nation. We will do that by joining well-known and well-respected organisations, such as the European Union, the United Nations and NATO. With independence, Scotland's voice in the world will be stronger than ever and we will use that voice to promote democracy, international law, climate justice and human rights.

With independence, we will also be able to support and promote nuclear disarmament and look forward to the opportunity to add our name to the list of states that have ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. With independence, Scotland will have many new powers—powers that we have long sought and that I have long fought for in my years as a member of the SNP.

As my good friend Jim Eadie said, we will not try to be a global superpower, but all countries are interdependent and we can be a good global citizen through partnership with other nations. In "Scotland's Future", three overlapping ideas were set out for international relations: first, our partnership with the other nations of these islands; secondly, our regional role as an active member of the EU, with strong links to the Nordic countries and the Arctic; and thirdly, our independent role in international organisations.

Scotland will continue to be a good global citizen through our commitment to international law and our respect for human rights and good governance. I support the motion and the situation that has been set out by the minister. I compliment the minister on the good work that he is doing to promote Scotland as we go forward as a nation in the world. After 18 September, I hope that Scotland will join the international community as an independent country.

16:35

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I am pleased to close this debate for the Scottish Conservatives, and I thank the organisations that provided briefings for the debate, including NIDOS and SCIAF.

There have been some good and constructive speeches, including from my colleagues Alex

Johnstone and Jackson Carlaw, who set out some of the key benefits that Scots enjoy internationally from the UK's presence and global connections, not least through our first-class international diplomatic network, which provides assistance to our citizens in many countries. Each and every day, Scotland has significant international clout by being part of the UK, with its permanent membership of key global organisations such as NATO, the UN Security Council and the G8. Those are important, tangible things that mean that Scots consistently have representation at the top table internationally and can help to shape international decisions. We should not take them for granted.

I should also mention the British Council offices. There are more than 200 British Council offices worldwide, and they are used by Scots. In 2012, the British Council facilitated 1,000 international school partnership projects in Scotland. The UK's international scholarship programmes, such as the Chevening programme, bring many scholars to Scottish universities and generate significant income for them. Other countries that do not have our international influence often look on in envy.

I want to pick out some of the themes that have emerged strongly in the debate before I look at parts of the Government's motion and our amendment. A number of members have rightly highlighted what Scotland has given to the world and the impact that our nation has had globally in the past 300 years and in its contribution now. Like other members, I am very proud of what Scotland has achieved and of what we do internationally as part of our United Kingdom. The minister describes that as

"positive, outward-looking engagement with the world".

I agree with him.

The Scottish enlightenment, which occurred only a few years after the act of union, was one of our greatest periods of global impact and influence. Indeed, at that time, Scotland, which was at last secure domestically, transformed and confident, led the developed world through its intellectual enlightenment, and Scottish thinkers such as Adam Smith and David Hume, who were mentioned by Alex Johnstone, established systems of ideas that still underpin the economics and philosophy of modern liberal democracies. Later, Scottish inventors such as Alexander Graham Bell and John Logie Baird developed technology that led to the interconnected, modern, dynamic and fast-moving world of communications that most of us enjoy now.

Individual Scots play leading roles in international humanitarian efforts across the globe. Dalmally, which is my local village in Argyll, is the headquarters of Mary's Meals. The charity, which

was founded and run by my inspirational constituent and neighbour Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, provides a nutritious daily meal to more than 800,000 of the world's poorest children, notably in Malawi, which Patricia Ferguson, Siobhan McMahon, Christina McKelvie, Alex Johnstone and other members mentioned. We should be very proud that a charity that is based in the Highlands and Islands is making such a big difference to the lives of so many children throughout the developing world. Other charities from Scotland are always at the forefront of tackling the consequences of international humanitarian crises.

The Government's motion refers to the Scottish Government's international development policy. We acknowledge the work that is being done on that, but we should not consider it in isolation. We should also look at the UK picture. Scots, as UK taxpayers, also support the UK's significant international aid contribution. Although the Scottish Government's international aid budget of around £9 million a year is welcome, the UK will spend more than £12 billion a year on overseas aid by 2015. The UK is the first of the G8 countries to meet the 0.7 per cent of GNI target. That aid is helping to both save and transform the lives of millions of some of the poorest people in the less-developed world.

The Government's motion also refers to climate justice. We agree that that is an important policy area, but Scots are also contributing a great deal to that through the UK. We must assess things in context. Scotland's £6 million climate justice fund, while very welcome, compares with the almost £4 billion that the UK is providing through the international climate fund. Those contributions are as much Scotland's and Scots' as those that come from the Scottish Government, and the Scottish Government should recognise that and work together with the UK Department for International Development. Scotland is doing a huge amount for international development and climate justice, fulfilling its role as a global citizen, as part of the UK.

I pay tribute to all those Scots and Scottish organisations that help to fulfil the roles of Scotland and the UK as good global citizens and which undertake some of the very best international aid projects that exist. We can be proud of Scotland and the UK's position. I am confident that Scotland can and will achieve even more for the planet's poorest people as we go forward as one United Kingdom playing a big part on the world stage. I support the amendment in the name of Jackson Carlaw.

16:41

Patricia Ferguson: This has been an interesting debate. It has given us the opportunity to explore, perhaps more widely than I thought would be possible, the issues that are reflected in the motion and the amendments.

I very much welcome the fact that the UK has become the first global player to reach the 0.7 per cent of GNI aid contribution. All of us in the chamber should be proud of that and talk about it more often. Having said that, I am afraid that I cannot support the Conservative amendment—not because I object to any of the wording, but rather because, given how the amendment is structured, some of the good parts of the motion and our amendment would be knocked out. For no reason other than that, we will abstain in the vote on the Conservative amendment.

The debate has been largely consensual, although I must say that the propensity of the SNP to bring everything back to independence really depresses me sometimes. People in Malawi do not care whether the help that they get comes from an independent Scotland or a strong Scotland in a strong UK. We should be concentrating our efforts on that.

A number of issues have been mentioned to which I will return. I think that we would all agree, no matter what our positions are on other issues, that the position of women in the developing world merits special mention. In many countries, girls are less likely to receive formal education beyond primary school level than their male peers. That is particularly the case in countries where education is not free. However, young women face other challenges, including a lack of sanitation, which often makes it much more difficult for them to remain in education.

That is a waste not only of the talents of individual girls and women. It can hold back entire families as, in the developing world, it is often the women who are responsible for the household and who are instrumental in taking forward the next generation to achieve their potential. I sincerely hope that the increasing numbers of women in the developing world who are holding political office—some of whom are in high political office—might help to resolve that particular issue. I have spoken to a number of female politicians, from around the Commonwealth, in particular for whom that is nothing less than a mission. They understand the imperative to get the young women of their country into education, but they need our help and our support and they need that now.

I will say a few words about the plight of those who are caught up in the tragedy that is engulfing Syria. We rarely hear of Syria on our television news these days because we have moved on to

other tragedies in other parts of the world, but people are still losing their lives and being forced to flee their homes daily. In fact, so severe is the refugee crisis that the population of Lebanon has increased by a quarter. Imagine if our population increased by a quarter in the space of a couple of months or a few years. We would not be able to cope; likewise, the countries neighbouring Syria cannot cope.

Therefore, I was delighted when I heard that the UK Government has succumbed to pressure and will accept Syrian refugees in our country. My delight changed to disappointment when I realised that the Government was talking about a relatively small number of refugees, but the move is nonetheless welcome. The Scottish Government's pledge to play its part in accepting refugees is also welcome. I am pleased to be able to praise the UK Government for the other assistance that it has provided to help to mitigate the problems that Syrians are experiencing, in Syria and beyond the country's boundaries.

In a members' business debate on the plight of Syrian refugees, which I led, I mentioned a call from Gordon Brown MP, which bears repeating. Gordon Brown, having carefully considered the refugee situation, pointed out that there is a real danger that an entire generation of young Syrians will have no education, because of the turmoil in their country. He suggested that just as the idea that medical treatment would continue in times of war became the norm in the previous century and led to the establishment of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, the idea that young people in Syria and those who are caught up in other crises should still be able to have an education is one that we should work towards.

That is a principle to which we can all aspire. Perhaps Scotland can lead on the issue, given our proud record on education. I know that the minister listened carefully to the suggestion and has by no means discounted the idea; perhaps we could work on it across parties, as we have done on other issues to do with our role in international development. Sarah Boyack was right to say that we must do more. We have to inspire and we have to lead. Perhaps this is an issue on which we can step up to the mark and make a difference.

Siobhan McMahon reminded us of what the debate should be about. As members probably know, I am proud that churches and schools in my constituency contributed more than £1,400 to the SCIAF wee box, big change appeal last year. We should support and encourage the work that organisations such as SCIAF do. I agree entirely with what Jamie McGrigor said about the work of Mary's Meals. Part of the charity—the storage element—operates from my constituency and I am

proud that we play a small part, because the organisation does great work, particularly in Africa.

I say gently to Stewart Stevenson that I am sorry that he was so disappointed not to be able to speak on behalf of the UK and to take the UK's chair in Europe, but that might be about how he approached the matter. Certainly when I was a minister, I took the UK's chair and spoke on behalf of the UK. I was proud to do so, not just as a proud Scot but as someone who was representing my colleagues in Wales, Ireland and England. That is a possibility for us.

Christina McKelvie and Alex Johnstone mentioned commerce and trade, albeit perhaps in slightly different ways. I say to Alex Johnstone that commerce has to be shaped to ensure that it supports our values and aims. Pope Benedict, when he was in office, said that the core purpose of economic life is not for the good of itself but for the good of human beings. In other words, the economy is there to serve the needs of people and not the other way round. I concur with that.

Alex Johnstone: Will the member give way?

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry. The member is in her final 10 seconds.

Patricia Ferguson: I am sorry. Mr Johnstone and I can debate the issue elsewhere.

I pay tribute to all Scottish aid organisations that work in international development, whether they are based in Scotland or are Scottish in and of themselves, and to all Scots who are involved in international development, whether that is because they put money in a wee box or because they are working in conflict zones and in situations that test their bravery. All deserve our respect and praise in this debate.

16:49

Humza Yousaf: I welcome all the speeches that have been made. We might disagree on some issues, but the debate has by and large been excellent. Some fantastic points have been made, which I will try to reflect on and respond to.

I pay special tribute to the organisations across Scotland that do a fantastic job to co-ordinate our international development activity, such as the Scotland Malawi Partnership, which has more than 600 members. Others involved include schools, churches and faith groups—they run the whole gamut. I also include NIDOS, an umbrella body that has more than 100 members. All those organisations do a fantastic job of co-ordinating efforts the length and breadth of the country.

I thank the many groups that have been involved in helping Scotland to gain fair trade nation status. We are only the second such nation,

after Wales, which is the world's other fair trade nation. I am proud that one of my first jobs as a minister was to announce that Scotland had that status. That is important because work in relation to that is being taken forward by our children. The recognition of fair trade among children in secondary schools, primary schools and even nurseries is a great standard-bearer for the future. If the debate is about anything, it is about Scotland being a good global citizen in the future.

A number of members across the chamber were right to say that Scotland has shown leadership on climate change and climate justice. I emphasise again that the issue is one not of aid and charity but of justice. I was delighted that the First Minister announced in October the doubling of the climate justice fund. The second £3 million round of funding will open this year and will deliver on a human rights-based approach, which Siobhan McMahon mentioned in her excellent and powerful speech.

The second round will focus on the Scottish Government's four priority African countries. The fund's first priority will be to deliver the human rights-based approach that I talked about and to empower those who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change to realise their rights to natural resources. The emphasis will also be on climate adaptation, which our hydro nation fund will support. That will encapsulate water-related projects, but we will also consider projects on energy and food security.

I am keen to see applications that are made in conjunction with the private sector. In the past, that sector has been much maligned in relation to international development, but it has a role to play in creating the conditions that take people out of poverty.

I will address some points that were made in the debate. Jackson Carlaw made an excellent speech, but he will perhaps be unsurprised to hear that I disagree with his point about the vote on Syria. He suggested that that vote showed that it is better for London to make decisions for us.

First, I am pleased that Jackson Carlaw recognises that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were probably wrong to push for that decision. Secondly, Jackson Carlaw's case for Scots to remain in the UK is that Scottish MPs prevent the UK Government from making silly decisions. I am not sure that that is a good enough reason for the 85,000 people who have been hit by the bedroom tax. Some 90 per cent of Scottish MPs voted against the bedroom tax, but it has been landed on our doorstep. I am not sure that the reason is good enough for the thousands up and down the country who have to go to food banks. I am not sure that it is good enough for the 100,000 additional children who will suffer in

poverty because of the austerity measures, as the Child Poverty Action Group has described. If Jackson Carlaw's argument is that Scottish MPs prevent the UK Government from making silly decisions, that does not provide a good enough reason to remain in the UK.

A number of members across the chamber mentioned DFID jobs. Michael McCann, the MP for East Kilbride, said that the UK

"Government isn't doing all it can to protect ... jobs"

in DFID. All that we have to do is look at DFID's annual accounts to see that the numbers of DFID staff who are based in London and East Kilbride were to increase from March 2011 until 2013 but decline thereafter. The only guarantee for DFID is legislating for the 0.7 per cent target, but it has not been legislated for. However, the Scottish Government has said that it will legislate for that commitment with independence.

I have been one of the first to congratulate the UK Government on meeting the 0.7 per cent target. It is long overdue, but I give credit where it is due. Indeed, the Prime Minister himself showed personal endeavour in reaching that commitment. However, we should not use it to boast that the UK is the first G8 country to achieve the target. The G8 is a collective of the most industrialised eight countries in the world. For one of those countries to have missed that target for 40 years—that is £87.5 billion in missed aid—is hardly something that we should be cheering to the rafters. Although I am happy about it, I hope that the target can be committed to in legislation.

Asylum was mentioned by a number of members across the chamber. Asylum is an important issue because being a good global citizen is about how we help those who are fleeing persecution. I am pleased that the Scottish Government has a fantastic record on helping those who are fleeing persecution and seeking asylum in our country. Some members have said that we have the best of both worlds and are better together, but I do not think that they could look into the eyes of an asylum seeker who has had their door broken down at 4 in the morning by six UK Border Agency or Home Office officers and tell them that we have the best of both worlds. I do not think that they can say that we are good global citizens when we detain women and children in the UK. I do not think that we are good global citizens when asylum seekers who are fleeing persecution are made destitute because they are cut off from any support while they are here.

Christian Allard: On how to welcome asylum seekers, does the minister think that using phrases such as "proud Scots" too often may not be the language of an inclusive society?

Humza Yousaf: Yes, I agree with the member. Language is incredibly important.

I must comment on Tavish Scott's speech, but I honestly do not know where to begin. His complaint was that the UK's response to the situation in Crimea was not good enough, yet his party is part of the Government at Westminster. He also suggested that small, independent nations could not make difficult decisions. However, as my colleague Stewart Stevenson mentioned, the new NATO secretary general is the Prime Minister of Norway, and the president of the United Nations General Assembly, John Ashe, is from Antigua and Barbuda. In addition, Ireland held the EU presidency and helped to see through the EU's multi-annual financial framework budget.

I thought that Tavish Scott's last point was particularly off tone. He said that, somehow, there was some duplicity in how we conduct our international affairs. When it comes to human rights in China, I remind him of the words of Richard Hamer, the Scottish programme director for Amnesty International:

"The First Minister has made an important first step by discussing human rights in his speech. Scotland has an important role to play in promoting human rights internationally and it's great to hear the First Minister acknowledge that profit and principle are not mutually exclusive."

What a brass neck Tavish Scott has to talk about duplicity when the UK Government that he supports—and supports our remaining a part of—sold defence equipment to Saddam Hussein and then illegally invaded Iraq, killing hundreds of thousands of people. The UK Government condemned Colonel Gaddafi, but we then had Tony Blair kissing and canoodling him in his Bedouin tent. On the one hand, the UK Government condemns Mugabe; on the other hand, it has sold him defence equipment. Tavish Scott has such a brass neck that I am surprised that he can lift his head off the pillow.

To end, Presiding Officer—

The Presiding Officer: You have until 5 o'clock.

Humza Yousaf: I agree that, in the current constitutional set-up, Scotland can play a role, but as an independent country with the full international and foreign totallylyclic levers we could play a great role as a good global citizen.

We have a great history. Dr David Livingstone was described as "Africa's first freedom fighter" by Kenneth Kaunda, the President of the Zambian Republic. We also have a great history of literature and culture. These famous lines are known to every member of the Scottish Parliament:

"That Man to Man, the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that."

Regardless of race, religion and nationality, be it domestically or internationally, an independent Scotland will stand with the poorest in the world and will be a good global citizen.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of a Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S4M-09379, on substitution on committees.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that Cameron Buchanan be appointed to replace Alex Johnstone as the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party substitute on the Public Petitions Committee.—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

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

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are four questions to be put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-09547.3, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-09547, in the name of Humza Yousaf, on Scotland: a good global citizen, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-09547.1, in the name of Jackson Carlaw, which seeks to amend motion S4M-09547, in the name of Humza Yousaf, on Scotland: a good global citizen, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Abstentions

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahan, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 14, Against 62, Abstentions 33.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-09547, in the name of Humza Yousaf, on Scotland: a good global citizen, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament recognises that Scotland, as a good global citizen with a history of positive, outward-looking engagement with the world, is committed to international cooperation and progress in areas of global concern; applauds the work of the many schools, churches, colleges, communities and aid organisations that have taken this work forward over many years; notes that the Scottish Government has developed a distinctive and effective approach to international development that has been complemented by the work of the Parliament and many of its cross-party groups; further notes that the Scottish Government's championing of climate justice has raised the international profile of this important issue; recognises and welcomes the role that Scots play in international humanitarian organisations; agrees that Scotland should be a party to fair and reciprocal agreements that respect human rights, and welcomes future opportunities for Scotland to promote democratic values, equality and good governance and to contribute toward the fight against global poverty.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-09379, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on substitution on committees, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that Cameron Buchanan be appointed to replace Alex Johnstone as the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party substitute on the Public Petitions Committee.

Anticoagulation Therapy (Self-management)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-09430, in the name of Nanette Milne, on self-management of anticoagulation therapy. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament considers that there is a lack of progress in patient self-testing and self-monitoring in Scotland compared with England and the rest of Europe; understands that, while Yorkhill Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow provides an excellent service for children and young people on anticoagulants in terms of providing them with the equipment and the training to self-test and self-manage their conditions, when transitioning to adult care these patients are unable to continue to self-manage, leading to only 40 of 16,000 adult patients in the Greater Glasgow area, or ¼ of a percent of the total, being able to self-manage; understands that this is a common occurrence across Scotland; considers that, despite evidence that self-management of anticoagulation therapy provides patients with better health outcomes while remaining cost effective, there is still a general reticence across Scotland to help patients who want to self-manage to take control of their own care; notes what it considers the lack of implementation of the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) 129 guidance promoting self-management and that this inactivity runs contrary to the NHS 2020 vision of "A focus on prevention, anticipation and supported self-management ... with the person at the centre of all decisions", and notes calls for the Scottish Government to implement a national service delivery model to ensure that NHS boards support those patients across Scotland, including the north east, who want to self-manage their condition with the training and skills to do so.

17:03

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I am sure that we all know that, to ensure the efficacy and safety of anticoagulant therapy, which is usually given orally as warfarin, regular monitoring is essential to ensure that its effect stays within the therapeutic range. The dosage is adjusted according to the time that it takes for a blood sample to clot. Because serious complications can occur if warfarin is poorly controlled, it is vital for patient welfare that the clotting time is checked frequently. Traditionally, of course, that has been done through hospital-based anticoagulant clinics.

I first brought the issue of self-monitoring and self-management of anticoagulation therapy to the Parliament in 2010, because it appeared to me to be a cost-effective and beneficial way of enabling appropriate patients to be partners in their care, in line with the Government policy of encouraging self-monitoring and self-management of long-term conditions, when that can be done appropriately and safely.

At that time, Scotland lagged behind England and the rest of Europe, and that remains the situation today. Only 1 per cent of patients on warfarin in Scotland self-manage their treatment, whereas across the UK as a whole the figure is 2 per cent. Approximately 740 people in Scotland self-monitor out of 25,000 in the UK, but 70,000 people in Germany do so.

NHS boards in Scotland generally do not provide support for self-monitoring or self-management of anticoagulation therapy; for example, in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde only 40 adults self-manage, which is a quarter of 1 per cent of the 16,000 patients on the treatment, whereas there is very good provision in Yorkhill hospital for paediatric patients to self-manage. Unfortunately, as children in that area who can self-manage reach the age of transition to adult services, they have to return their monitors and go back to attending clinics for treatment. In fact, only three health boards in Scotland have protocols for self-management of transitional patients.

In my own region, NHS Tayside actively discourages patient self-monitoring, or PSM, and I am told that it has even refused support when PSM was recommended to a patient by a consultant cardiologist. NHS Grampian as yet gives no formal support, with the development of a protocol for self-monitoring being delayed due to a lack of enthusiasm for it from the various parties that need to be involved.

However, there is growing support for change and there are pockets of best practice in Scotland. A good example is Largs medical group, which is actively supporting 13 people to self-test through its active self-management service. Increasingly, there are drivers for change. For example, Scottish intercollegiate guidelines network guideline 129, on antithrombotics, states:

“Self monitoring and self dosing is safe and effective and can be considered for some patients.”

The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh also encourages the use of self-management, stating:

“Anticoagulant control may be improved by near patient testing and engaging patients in their own care; patient education should be supported at every stage.”

NHS Scotland's 2020 vision for the NHS emphasises a focus on prevention, anticipation and supporting self-management, with the person at the centre of all decisions. Finally, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's draft guidance recommends self-monitoring for people on long-term anticoagulation therapy. The final report by NICE on self-testing systems is due to be published in July, with the expectation that self-testing will be increasingly supported in England and Wales, which could let Scotland slip even further behind.

Unfortunately, the greatest resistance to self-testing for those who wish it seems to come from general practitioners and clinicians, according to the Anticoagulation Self-Monitoring Alliance. That point was brought out in a round-table discussion last year on the potential for the self-monitoring of anticoagulation that was attended by senior clinicians and patient groups and which resulted in four recommendations: first, that SIGN guideline 129 should be supported; secondly, that a review of the uptake of appropriate technology in Scotland compared with that in England and the rest of Europe should be undertaken; thirdly, that a learning-needs assessment for clinicians, GPs and other healthcare professionals should be carried out; and, fourthly, that consideration should be given to setting up a national service delivery model for anticoagulation to encourage health boards to promote self-management to appropriate patients.

On cost-effectiveness, studies carried out by the NHS in mid-Yorkshire and by health economists in the University of York showed that the NHS in Scotland could be saved around £600,000 a year from the prevention of strokes through the improved control of anticoagulation achieved by self-monitoring patients. Furthermore, all the patients who took part in the mid-Yorkshire study agreed that self-testing had been beneficial and would recommend it to others.

In her response to my earlier members' business debate on the issue, the then health secretary, Nicola Sturgeon, was somewhat lukewarm about the self-management of anticoagulation, given earlier clinical advice and the fact that newer anticoagulant agents might replace warfarin. However, warfarin is still the treatment of choice for many patients, and expert advice is changing. Indeed, replies from the current health secretary to some recent parliamentary questions from my colleague Richard Lyle show that the Scottish Government is now taking account of SIGN guideline 129. However, with a rate of self-monitoring in Scotland that is still less than 1 per cent, something does not add up.

The response from the Government to another question from Richard Lyle about what support is available to patients in transition from paediatric to adult services was that local protocols for the delivery of anticoagulation management vary across Scotland but are in line with SIGN guideline 129 and that, at the time of transition, on-going warfarin management, including self-testing, would be agreed as part of an overall plan of healthcare—clearly, that is not generally the case.

Understandably it has been put to me that there is a significant difference between the answers that were given to Richard Lyle and the reality on

the ground, where little or nothing appears to be happening by way of implementation. I would welcome the minister's comments on that when he sums up because the Government needs to do more to ensure that patients are given the option to self-manage than just saying that that is the case.

I will conclude my speech as I did my 2010 speech, because it is still relevant to do so, by urging the Government to look closely at how anticoagulant therapy is managed and to consider investigating the potential for increasing self-testing and self-management with a view to rolling it out across health boards to suitable patients, thus saving the NHS money and improving the quality of care for the large and increasing number of people in Scotland who need long-term anticoagulation therapy.

17:10

Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in the debate. I begin by thanking Nanette Milne for securing debating time this evening.

Warfarin therapy is vital to lowering the risk of strokes, heart attacks and other serious problems that are associated with clots forming in the bloodstream and, possibly, thereafter travelling through it to cause serious damage to major organs. We also need to be aware that, although warfarin is a vital drug in the right amounts, it is important to get the balance right. As my colleague Nanette Milne has observed, creating the circumstances in which more people are able to manage their conditions is in line with the Scottish Government's 2020 vision for NHS services.

In reading the background material for tonight's debate, I asked myself why what is being advocated is not being more widely done now. The key test that must be applied to every possible new development is the extent to which it is safe and effective. Self-testing and self-management are standard practice for other long-term conditions, and I have often used the example of the telemedicine diabetes clinic at the Galloway community hospital in Stranraer, which uses Diasend technology, specialist nurses and secure videoconferencing to relieve patients of a very long round trip to see their consultant and give them back some flexibility in their day-to-day lives. I can certainly see at face value the benefits of similar approaches to blood testing for warfarin prescribing. In addition, there is evidence that supports the clinical effectiveness of near-patient testing and self-testing and, as is so often the case, it might well be that a mixture of approaches is the most effective.

I note from the information that has been circulated to members that although NHS Dumfries and Galloway does not have a patient self-monitoring protocol, it now advises that it will seek to support patient self-monitoring. I welcome that, especially given the distances that some patients in the region have to travel to access healthcare.

In that regard, I also want to mention the work that the digital health institute is doing on detection of atrial fibrillation using a device that can be used by a patient in their own home and can be purchased right now on Amazon. Atrial fibrillation is an important factor in identifying patients who are likely to benefit from use of anticoagulant drugs, so its detection and the subsequent use of anticoagulants are related. Indeed, in my view, this debate highlights questions that are crucial to the way in which we will need to deliver healthcare in the future, when technology is likely to enable patients to take a far more active role in managing long-term conditions with the advice and supervision of health professionals.

Central to all such developments must be the certainty that a testing, monitoring or treatment method is safe and appropriate, and that appropriate education and training are also provided. There must also be recognition that what works well for one patient might not be appropriate for someone else.

We have heard tonight of examples of patients for whom self-testing is clearly the right approach, and for whom it is working well. My colleague Nanette Milne cited the Largs medical group as an example of best practice, in which it has been found that by far the biggest benefit for patients is the flexibility of being able to test when they want to test. Patients should be supported in that, and the current guidance from Health Improvement Scotland recognises that there will be patients in just such situations.

I look forward to hearing the minister's views, and I await with interest NICE's final report on the effectiveness of self-testing, which is due to be published in July. Again I thank my colleague Nanette Milne for securing tonight's debate, which is on the key issue of enabling people to be in charge of their own blood testing and monitoring.

17:14

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I also start by congratulating Nanette Milne on securing the debate and on her thoughtful contribution. I simply observe to the minister that Nanette Milne is clearly persistent in her drive for change in the area, having had a previous debate on the issue. I have no doubt that we will return to it unless improvements are made.

In the UK, 1.25 million patients receive anticoagulation therapy, and the number is set to increase by as much as 10 to 20 per cent. It is estimated that there are 74,000 patients in Scotland, but that only 740 self-manage, so it is a tiny fraction, at 1 per cent of the total. In England, the figure is 2 per cent—approximately 25,000 people there are self-managing—and in Germany the number rises to 70,000. Self-testing is increasingly supported in England and Wales; the danger is that Scotland will fall even further behind. Aileen McLeod rightly said that we must ensure that treatment is safe and effective, but the numbers are increasing in England and Wales, so it has clearly been judged to be safe and effective for those patients.

NHS boards in Scotland generally do not provide support for self-monitoring, despite the fact that increasing numbers of patients might benefit from it. Nanette Milne rightly pointed out that only three health boards in Scotland have protocols for self-management. We should congratulate them on doing some work in the area, but there is clearly a need to do more, if we are to provide that opportunity for the population across Scotland.

There has been quite a lot of success in training young people to self-monitor and self-manage their anticoagulation therapy although, disappointingly, there is no support for them when they move to adult clinics. That transition from paediatric to adult services has been highlighted in a number of briefings. It seems to be genuinely counterproductive that support for self-management comes to an end when people move to adult services, with many people being forced to attend anticoagulation clinics for testing. Having been in control and able to manage their condition, they lose that empowerment and must cede control to others. I hope that we will consider the issue seriously.

The results of the Cochrane review suggested that self-monitoring or self-management can improve the quality of anticoagulation therapy, although I recognise that it is not for every patient. For some patients, it is not feasible, so we need to identify and educate suitable patients. However, there is an opportunity to do more and to do it safely and effectively.

The results are good. Nanette Milne touched on them, and I will rehearse some of them. After starting self-management, 80 per cent of “poorly controlled” patients move into the “well controlled” category. That alone convinces me that we need to do more, but the figures are equally convincing when we consider the improvements for patients in monetary terms. Across the UK, a 5 per cent improvement would prevent 500 strokes and save

the NHS a minimum of £6 million, of which approximately £600,000 would be in Scotland.

Other results suggest that, with 6,354 patients self-managing in NHS Scotland rather than being on standard care, over five years, 360 would avoid strokes and embolisms, 186 would avoid death and the total savings would be extraordinary, at almost £3 million out of the current cost of £11 million. I therefore recommend the approach to the minister, particularly when we consider that the cost for clinics could reduce from almost £7 million to £500,000 and that test strips for prevention are a mere £67 per patient for one year.

Self-management makes sense. It is good for budgets, which should interest us all, and it is good for patients, because we give them power and control. The Scottish Government’s policy direction is towards self-management, so why not for anticoagulation therapy?

17:19

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): As other members have done, I congratulate Nanette Milne on securing time for what has been a relatively short debate.

As members will be aware, we set out in our quality strategy in 2010 our clear commitment to ensure that patients receive safe, effective and person-centred care, which goes for every person, every time that they make use of our NHS.

As part of that commitment, we have supported people with long-term conditions to be active in their care. Our 2020 strategy and our quality strategy are complemented by “Gaun Yerse! The Self Management Strategy for Long Term Conditions in Scotland”, which was written by people with long-term conditions. Since its adoption, we have provided £11.75 million through the self-management fund to support people to manage their long-term conditions in the community.

In responding to the debate, I must address some of the assumptions that are set out in the motion, which may be slightly confused. First, it is important to recognise that there is a difference between self-testing and self-management. They are not the same thing. Secondly, self-testing is not the best option for the majority of warfarin patients, who are elderly and may have cognitive impairments.

In Scotland, around 80,000 people are currently prescribed warfarin for the treatment of conditions such as irregular heartbeat and deep vein thrombosis and for the management of mechanical heart devices. Making the blood clot less easily prevents blood clots from forming and

leading to strokes, heart attacks and pulmonary embolisms. However, taking too much warfarin can cause death and disability due to internal bleeding, especially in the brain. Therefore, it is vital to get the right balance for each of those patients, but it is also a challenge.

I will address some of the points that Nanette Milne raised and to which Jackie Baillie also referred, as they are set out in the motion.

The motion suggests that there has been a lack of progress on self-testing and self-monitoring compared with England and other parts of Europe. I am not entirely sure on what basis that conclusion has been drawn. The only source of data regarding England that we have been able to identify is from the company that produces one of the branded testing kits and machines. Moreover, we must be careful with European comparisons because the provision of primary care is fundamentally different across different countries in Europe.

The motion also suggests that paediatric patients, or their parents, supported by the national cardiac service at Yorkhill self-manage. That is not the case. They self-test and forward their results to a qualified haematology nurse who prescribes the medicine dosage, which is sent to the patient by secure text. Then, when they move on to the adult service, they have one meeting with the adult team, after which the same arrangement continues.

The motion also suggests that there is clear evidence that self-management of anticoagulation therapy provides patients with better health outcomes. In fact, it is worth considering the NICE guidance on the matter—the draft standards that it published in February this year regarding self-testing. They suggest that self-testing is more clinically effective than the usual approach of taking blood, sending it off to a laboratory and advising patients by phone of the dose that they should take. That is self-testing rather than self-management.

Nanette Milne: I absolutely accept that there is a difference between the two, and I made that very clear in the debate that I had a few years back. I also accept what the minister says about the children from Yorkhill self-testing rather than self-managing but, when those children transit from paediatric to adult services, why should they hand back their monitors so that they no longer self-test?

Michael Matheson: I mentioned that they have an interview after they move into the adult service and then continue with the arrangement that was in place, so I think that there may have been an issue with some of the information on how

services are delivered that members have been provided with.

Some members may also be aware of the paper that one of the suppliers of self-testing technology sponsored—the York study. Like the NICE study, the York paper is based on assumptions, including on the average age of those on warfarin. The model assumes that the average age is 65 years. However, in Scotland, 77 per cent of those on warfarin are older than that and 28 per cent are older than 75. Those are important factors that need to be taken into consideration in any self-testing or self-management process that is introduced.

Nanette Milne suggested that we should have a national service across the country. Again, I am not persuaded that that is the approach to take. I am sure that she will recognise that boards have a responsibility to have in place local protocols for the delivery of service, making use of the SIGN guidelines but adapting the approach to the boards' local circumstances. That seems to me to be a much more appropriate way in which to take forward this type of issue.

Members will also be aware that we have made significant investment in our patient safety programme, which has been extended to primary care. It pays particular attention to adopting best practice in how we can systematically make the prescription of warfarin safer. It has already been adopted in eight of our boards: NHS Ayrshire and Arran; NHS Borders; NHS Dumfries and Galloway; NHS Fife; NHS Forth Valley; NHS Highland; NHS Lothian; and NHS Grampian.

Nanette Milne also referred to the experience with the GP practice in Largs. It is worth keeping in mind that the GP practice that was highlighted in that pilot had a significant amount of resource provided to it for the purpose of the pilot. In fact, it had one GP, three practice nurses, two healthcare assistants and an administrator in its anticoagulant team. That is a model that would simply not be sustainable if it were rolled out across the country.

I hope that members recognise that we understand that changes are taking place in this area. We are keen to ensure that patients who are receiving anticoagulant medication in Scotland receive the best possible care. However, the method and approach that we take should be one that is safe and effective and is appropriate to the circumstances of each individual patient.

Meeting closed at 17:27.

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