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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
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# HOUSE OF LORDS

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DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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# House of Lords

Thursday, 17 September 2015.

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Sheffield.

## BBC: Charter 2017 Question

11.06 am

Asked by **Baroness Grender**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made towards renewal of the BBC's Charter in 2017.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Baroness Neville-Rolfe) (Con):** My Lords, the Government's charter review public consultation runs from 16 July to 8 October, but the process does not end there. Over the autumn, the Government will develop proposals, taking into account responses to the consultation. We are also commissioning reviews and research. This includes an independent review of governance and regulation, led by David Clementi and announced yesterday. The Government intend to publish proposals for the future of the BBC in spring 2016.

**Baroness Grender (LD):** When Chancellor George Osborne defines the BBC as "imperial in its ambitions", with an intention to crowd out national newspapers, and the Green Paper suggests that BBC online might impede the profitable business model, can the Minister explain how, with such constraint in the marketplace, the local, national and global—one might even say "imperial"—dominance of the paywall-free *Daily Mail* online is possible?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** My Lords, there are a number of questions there. I make the general point that the BBC is funded with public money, paid through the licence fee, and that we should expect it to observe the same efficiencies as others in the public sector. Local news is very important. We welcome the proposals that the BBC has put forward, but we are looking at the potential effect on competitors; I think that that is what the noble Baroness is referring to. We need to find the right balance in this area so that strong, creative content and excellent news continue to be produced.

**Lord Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab):** During the debate last week led by my noble friend Lady Bakewell, the Minister was at pains to stress that the BBC charter review was focused on the people. Indeed, the hashtag "yourBBC" has been applied to the charter documents for those who are trendily following it. As the Minister said, the Government announced yesterday that David Clementi would be leading the independent

review. How, precisely, does that square with the idea that the people should lead, given that the consultation does not finish until 8 October? Can she tell the House whether the independent review and its evidence will be published, and confirm that it will be debated in the House?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** As I see it, all these various pieces of work fit in and feed in to the charter review. The consultation is important and, as noble Lords know, we are making good progress with it. But we saw a need to have some new, independent advice on governance and regulation, which is why Sir David has been appointed, and his review will indeed be published.

**Lord Clement-Jones (LD):** The Minister has not yet mentioned the advisory panel but, in answers to Written Questions, she has said that it will meet frequently and contribute significantly to the Government's charter review—yet it has no terms of reference, it will not take its evidence in public, and its advisers are not subject to appointment by reference to the Nolan principles. Is it not totally unacceptable in the light of the influence that those advisers will have to have those circumstances prevailing, since they will have a great influence on the charter review? It is no surprise that even one of her noble friends described them as "assistant gravediggers"—and they clank with special interests.

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** My Lords, as I have said before, the group is not a decision-making body; it is just one part of the process. It has no legal status. As the noble Lord said, it is not set up under Cabinet Office guidelines for public appointments. It operates on a voluntary basis. We feel that it would be impossible to find a group of this kind without a significant overlap with the industry. I think that noble Lords can see that the way things are going we have several bits of work coming together. This advisory group is an important part of that work.

**Lord Low of Dalston (CB):** My Lords, the Secretary of State was reported yesterday as saying that it was important to investigate the impact of the BBC on the commercial sector. Does the Minister agree that it is equally important to investigate the impact of the commercial sector on the BBC?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** I thank the noble Lord for his comment. I hope that he has now got the reader that he was missing, for which I apologise. We are also looking at the impact of the BBC on its rivals. An analysis of that sector will inevitably look at the flows both ways. It is very important as part of the charter review that we understand the market and where the competitors are going because we have a shared interest in having a strong creative, independent sector in this country, and the key thing is to make sure that BBC arrangements help and encourage that.

**The Lord Bishop of Sheffield:** My Lords, will the Minister confirm whether there are any plans to separate the setting of the licence fee from the renewal of the BBC charter?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** The licence fee is one of the issues that we will be looking at as part of the charter review, so I think that the answer is no.

**Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Lab):** My Lords, following on from the question of the noble Lord, Lord Low, will the Minister explain why, by implication, it is all right for competitors to compete but not all right for the BBC to compete? I come from a sector—the theatre—where public funding substantially adds to its diversity and creativity and the commercial competitors, as it were, of funded theatres are very well aware of how much they owe to their colleagues in the funded sector. Is that not also true of the BBC and the independent sector?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** I agree with a lot of what the noble Baroness says. Both public service broadcasters and commercial operators contribute to the creativity and greatness of the UK industry. The BBC has an arm worldwide which sends programmes such as “Sherlock” to China, which is incredibly important. It is a misapprehension to think that we are not looking at the BBC’s commercial arm as a positive, but we need to make sure that there is no unfairness or bad competition.

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean (Lab):** My Lords, following on from the question from the noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones, what possible justification is there for the advisory panel not taking its evidence in public?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** I can only repeat that it is not a decision-making body. It is meeting six times. In these matters, you can either take evidence in public or not. It gives it a whole new status—

**Noble Lords:** Oh!

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** I am glad noble Lords are amused. It gives it a whole new status if you start to have lengthy hearings, and that is not the way we are going about it. But I hope I have reassured the House that we are having a lot of different inputs.

## Retail Sector: High Street Question

11.14 am

Asked by **Lord Naseby**

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what new proposals they have to support independent high street retailers, particularly in the light of the increasing cost of business rates.

**Lord Naseby (Con):** My Lords, in asking my Question, I declare an interest in that a member of my family works in the retail trade.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con):** My Lords, our high streets are changing and the Government are committed to helping them adapt—for example, by tackling planning and parking restrictions. We have

also introduced a £1.4 billion package of support for 2015-16 business rate bills. Approximately half of that will go to the retail sector.

**Lord Naseby:** My Lords, my noble friend’s Answer is indeed helpful but does not really reflect the crisis facing our town centres, with 10% of properties empty, declining footfall and business leaching away to online and retail parks. Against that background, in addition to what Her Majesty’s Government are doing, I wish to put two thoughts in my noble friend’s mind. First, encourage all local authorities to make parking easier and cheaper—for instance, my former constituency of Northampton has free parking all weekend and two hours free every single day. Secondly, look closely at what Northampton’s business support programme is doing, and consider extending it on a shared basis between Her Majesty’s Government and local government so that we may see a significant reduction in business rates for independent retailers throughout the United Kingdom.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, it is good to hear what Northampton is doing. I certainly encourage local areas to share similar schemes with other authorities. Where local authorities are given the power to provide business rate discounts, they do as they see fit and the Government will meet half the cost. The noble Lord asked me about vacancy rates. They have fallen to 9.8% and are at their lowest since records started in 2011. I appreciate the point about online sales, which for many people are becoming more convenient, but retail sales have increased for the 28th consecutive month, the longest sustained period since 2008.

**Lord Beecham (Lab):** How much progress has been made in dealing with long-standing revaluation appeals? What has the impact of those been on local authority finances? Will the Government, having received their share of those rates when they were paid, now meet their share of the cost of any refunds?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, the Government are providing real incentives for councils to support enterprise and economic growth. We have introduced the local retention of business rates, allowing councils to keep half the revenue from business rates. In this year alone, 362 authorities will retain an extra £544 million in business rates, and local authorities are protected against significant declines in business rate income through a safety net that guarantees income at 92.5% of baseline funding.

**Lord Shipley (LD):** My Lords, business rates have risen by some 20% since 2010, at a time when the Government have held down other forms of taxation. Does the Minister agree that that is a very high increase? Given that the Government initiated in March a consultation on the reform of business rates and that consultation closed in June, will she confirm that they are still committed to the reform of business rates within the timescale for announcement in Budget 2016 that they set out a number of weeks ago?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, I can confirm that. The business rates review will report at the end of the year.

**Lord Skelmersdale (Con):** My Lords, the Minister prides herself on the fact that unoccupancy rates have fallen. Is it not a fact that most of the incoming renters of these shops are food outlets? How does that help people who want to buy other equipment and goods from high street shops?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, I think it is true that incoming occupants of high streets are a mixture. I do not have a disaggregated number for what proportion is food retail, but certainly putting more housing—which this country desperately needs—into a town centre increases the footfall in that town centre.

**The Lord Bishop of St Albans:** My Lords, while I am grateful for the support Her Majesty's Government are giving to independent retailers, it seems extraordinary that they are doing so at a time when they are talking about deregulating further Sunday trading hours, which many insiders in the industry believe will give huge commercial advantage both to the large supermarkets and to out-of-town shopping centres. There is deep concern that local councils will not be able to resist the legal appeals by some very powerful commercial organisations if they try to differentiate in different areas. Recently the CEO of the British Independent Retailers Association said that any extra trade from deregulated Sunday trading,

“will go to the more suitable out of town centres with further lost market share for independents”.

Can the noble Baroness inform the House what Her Majesty's Government are doing to support independent retailers in the light of this information?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, the right reverend Prelate is absolutely right to point out that that will be up to local areas. However, we have done a lot to support independent retailers by supporting projects such as the Portas projects, which have done very well in Braintree, Tiverton and Ashford, and we have put 360 town teams in place. Ultimately, however, these decisions will be for local authorities to make.

**Baroness Crawley (Lab):** My Lords, will the Minister accept that the loss of nearly 50% of local government trading standards officers has had a negative effect on local high street retailers, who have often benefited from their help and advice in the past, but has had a positive effect on rogue traders, who are very glad to see the back of those trading standards officers and their enforcement capabilities?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, trading standards officers are certainly very helpful, and some of the town centre managers who are now in place in town centres have, to a certain extent, helped monitor what is going on in town centres, as have town teams.

## Health: Detection Dogs

### Question

11.22 am

Asked by **Lord Astor of Hever**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of using dogs to detect medical conditions.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Lord Prior of Brampton) (Con):**

There is not, as yet, an established level of evidence to support the systematic application of the use of dogs within the NHS at this time. However, both the Department of Health and NHS England will be interested to see the outcome of the prostate cancer detection trials that recently started at Milton Keynes University Hospital with the charity Medical Detection Dogs.

**Lord Astor of Hever (Con):** My Lords, each day that we sit in this House we trust dogs' acute sense of smell of explosives to ensure our safety. Research shows that dogs detect human disease earlier than existing tests, which could increase survival rates and save the NHS millions of pounds. Will my noble friend's department increase research capacity in this field and ensure that Britain remains a world leader?

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** My Lords, interestingly, the human nose contains some 5 million scent glands but a dog's nose contains many more. In fact, the sniffing ability of a dog can be up to 10 million times that of the ability of a human being. Therefore we should not underestimate the contribution that dogs can make in this field. The trial being conducted at Milton Keynes University Hospital, which involves 3,000 patients giving urine samples, with nine dogs in a controlled environment over the three years, could indeed make a huge contribution to the early detection of certain cancers. Therefore we will follow that trial with keen interest.

**Baroness Ludford (LD):** My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Astor of Hever, for asking this Question, and also Claire, a young diabetes nurse with type 1 diabetes, who told me about her dog, Magic, which helps her avoid hypos—hypoglycaemic incidents. I declare an interest in that I have been married to someone who has had type 1 diabetes for nearly 45 years. Is the Minister aware that if the NHS did a serious cost-benefit exercise on type 1 diabetes, its investment in measures to assist strict blood glucose control and prevent hypos would be transformed? However, it seems to have a blind spot. Type 1 diabetes accounts for a large chunk of the 10% of NHS spending on diabetes but is not even mentioned in the *NHS Five Year Forward View*. Will the Government seriously look at extending access to technologies and, for people whom they would assist, access to detection dogs?

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** It is interesting that the cost of training a dog is some £11,200—considerably less than the cost of training a doctor, I might add. Unquestionably there is considerable evidence to suggest that dogs can make a real contribution as regards

[LORD PRIOR OF BRAMPTON]

people suffering from diabetes and low-sugar problems, whom the noble Baroness mentioned. Decisions in this area are for local CCGs to make, but it is something that we will certainly encourage.

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab):** My Lords, that is a clear hint of the Government's new approach to the workforce shortage in doctors. We will see the outcome of the Milton Keynes trial, but does he agree that the organisation Pets as Therapy needs to be praised? I do not know about dogs detecting illnesses but they have certainly been shown to provide great companionship to patients, particularly long-stay patients in hospitals and care homes. This organisation does a fantastic job.

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** I agree with the noble Lord. Dogs—indeed, all pets—can provide companionship to many people who are lonely, particularly elderly people who have lost many of their relations. I congratulate Pets as Therapy.

**Lord Ribeiro (Con):** My Lords, the Minister is absolutely right in referring to the research in Milton Keynes. As far as prostate cancer is concerned, a man's best friend probably is his dog. However, there is no doubt that the molecular markers can be detected in urine, and this may be the way to go in future research. It needs to be directed in that way because just a simple dipstick might well be able to detect the markers. If it is possible to detect prostate cancers using dogs, will the Government be prepared to fund such research and carry out a proper controlled clinical trial?

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** Clearly, molecular diagnostics is a growing field and will have a hugely important role to play in diagnosing many cancers. This was certainly a recommendation of the cancer task force led by Harpal Kumar. We are not by any means saying that we should pursue dogs at the expense of molecular diagnostics, just that we should try every opportunity. There seems to be some evidence regarding the number of false positives—for example, the use of dogs to sniff urine is considerably more accurate than more conventional forms of detecting cancer. We would not therefore want to rule out the use of dogs by pursuing solely molecular diagnostics.

**Baroness Walmsley (LD):** My Lords, is the Minister aware that many diabetes patients who would like a dog and feel that they would be helped by one but cannot get one through the NHS are paying for dogs from unlicensed trainers? However, they are of variable quality and may not be as good as properly trained dogs. Will the Minister look into this to see what can be done about it?

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** The decision on whether to supply dogs locally must be left with clinical commissioning groups.

**Lord McColl of Dulwich (Con):** Is the Minister aware that diagnosis may be helped not only by dogs, but by ants in India? One way in which to detect diabetes is to get the patient to urinate up a wall, and if the ants crawl up the column of urine it means that there is diabetes because sugar is there, and ants like sugar. It is a very cheap way to diagnose diabetes.

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** I seem to remember a noble Baroness asking a question about ferrets climbing up someone's trousers. Now we have ants climbing up people's trouser legs. We are open to all sensible suggestions.

## Syria Question

11.29 am

Asked by **Lord West of Spithead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the remarks by General John Allen, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, on 13 September that the conflict in Syria must be solved at a political level in order to ease the humanitarian crisis, whether the Chiefs of Staff have formally discussed comprehensive strategy options for the defeat of ISIL, and peace and reconstruction in Syria.

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Earl Howe) (Con):** My Lords, in Syria, we are tackling immediate threats to UK national security, while also seeking a political settlement to the conflict. The ultimate solution, both to the migration crisis and to threats emanating from Syria, must be political transition. The National Security Council is the forum for comprehensive cross-government discussion of strategy and has recently discussed Syria. The Chiefs of Staff also address Syria regularly at their monthly Chiefs of Staff Committee.

**Lord West of Spithead (Lab):** I thank the noble Earl for his Answer. However, I am disappointed, because I know that the Chiefs of Staff have not discussed this formally. Does the Minister agree that there is now great urgency to agree a comprehensive strategic plan to destroy ISIL and restore peace? It clearly needs to involve Assad, Russia and Iran, all levers of diplomacy, pressure on money flow, propaganda and military force, and being part of a huge coalition makes it much more complex. Will the Minister assure us that strategic options have been looked at for us to present to the coalition, because we are experts in this, as are the Americans? They have not been so far, but will the Chiefs of Staff be fully involved in this in a formal way?

**Earl Howe:** I agree with the analysis that the noble Lord has put forward. We have in place a cross-government, counter-ISIL task force. We are also supporting our friends and allies in the Middle East to broker a solution in Syria. We welcome the international

effort, particularly that being conducted by the United States, Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia, which are clearly key players in the area. We encourage Russia and Iran, in particular, to use their influence with the regime to achieve a lasting political transition. There is a blend of tough military action and self-defence at home, but we are also using our good offices, diplomatically, to broker that political solution.

**Lord Wright of Richmond (CB):** Does the Minister agree that the only credible strategy option for the defeat of ISIL is what the Russians appear to be doing at present—namely, to work with their long-time ally, the Syrian Government, to help them push back ISIL from the occupation of their sovereign territory? That is the only strategy that might enable those Syrians massing at the Hungarian border, many of whom have fled the brutality of ISIL, to return to their homes. Are we in diplomatic or military contact with either the Russians or the Syrians about this?

**Earl Howe:** We are certainly in diplomatic contact with the Russians. However, we are also strongly supporting the United Nations efforts. Following on from wide-ranging consultations, the UN envoy, de Mistura, has outlined plans to form four thematic working groups. These focus on political and legal issues, military and security issues, continuity of public services, and then, in the future, reconstruction and development in Syria. Last month, the United Nations Security Council endorsed his plan, in a welcome show of unity, and we would give maximum encouragement to that process.

**Baroness Falkner of Margravine (LD):** The Minister will be aware of reports that the Russians are building new runways in Syria, in addition to the naval base in Tartus, and deploying significant numbers of military advisers, even “green men”, we are told. This has striking parallels with Vietnam; although of course this time it is the Russians, rather than the US, in the role of being sucked in. Is the Minister able to tell the House whether Chiefs of Staff and military-to-military contacts have been made with the Russians to avoid conflicts and conflagration within the Syrian-Iraqi space?

**Earl Howe:** My Lords, we are aware of reports that Russia may have deployed military personnel and equipment to Syria. We are monitoring those reports very closely. Any unilateral military support to the Assad regime, for any purpose, is, in our view, destabilising and counterproductive. This is, after all, the same regime that is causing a humanitarian crisis through aerial bombardment of its own people, forcing thousands of people to flee. They cannot be a partner against ISIL. Therefore, any attempt by the Russians to achieve that is, in our view, misguided. We are, however, in diplomatic contact with the Russians, and we make our views clear.

**Lord Reid of Cardowan (Lab):** My Lords, before the Government come back to Parliament in a few weeks’ time with, as we understand, a proposal for military

action, can the Minister make sure that they outline their grand strategy, by which I mean not only the purpose of military action but the diplomatic, financial, humanitarian, political and military aspects of the overriding grand strategy? One reason why the Government failed last time to get agreement on military action in Syria was that there was a belief in this House and elsewhere that it was not part of an overall grand strategy, or at least that it had not been explained to Members of Parliament.

**Earl Howe:** My Lords, I take fully on board the comments of the noble Lord, with his immense experience in this area. The Prime Minister has made it clear that in order to facilitate further action in Syria he will return to Parliament; but, as he has said, it would be better if there were consensus in the House supporting such action. His views have not changed on that. What has changed is the growing evidence that ISIL poses a threat to us here in Britain. It is right for parliamentarians to be thinking about these issues and what more we can do, but I recognise that it will be vital for the Government to present a coherent case for action in Syria if that is what we decide is best.

## Energy Bill [HL]

### *Motion to Recommit*

11.36 am

*Moved by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

That the Energy Bill [HL] be recommitted to a Grand Committee in respect of Part 5 of the Bill (Clauses 65 and 66).

*Motion agreed.*

## Sustainable Development Goals

### *Motion to Take Note*

11.37 am

*Moved by Lord Chidgey*

That this House takes note of the forthcoming summit on sustainable development goals in September and Her Majesty’s Government’s objectives at that summit.

**Lord Chidgey (LD):** My Lords, on 2 August, the 193 member states of the United Nations agreed the outcome documents that will constitute the new sustainable development agenda. This ambitious agenda, with 17 new sustainable development goals, aims to end poverty, promote prosperity and people’s well-being, while protecting the environment, by 2030.

To put into perspective the aims and objectives of the new SDGs, we should reflect on the achievements of the MDGs, the millennium development goals—the targets set in 2000 to be reached by 2015. The global mobilisation behind the MDGs has produced the most successful anti-poverty movement to date.

[LORD CHIDGEY]

The MDGs framework has helped to lift more than 1 billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger and to enable more girls to attend school than ever before. The MDGs galvanised public opinion and showed the value of setting ambitious targets. Yet inequalities persist and progress has been uneven, with, in 2011, 60% of 1 billion extremely poor people living in just five countries.

Unlike their predecessors, the SDGs are universal in nature, meaning that all countries and not just developing nations are committed to their implementation. The success of the agenda depends on swift, effective and comprehensive implementation, undertaken by all countries and with no one left behind.

This is not a pick-and-choose agenda and it would be disappointing if the Government treated it as such. Will the Minister give a clear commitment to reflect on all 17 goals and 169 targets within the UK's domestic sustainable development plans?

Indicators for the goals and targets are yet to be agreed. Comparability between countries is an important aspect of monitoring progress against the goals, and many of the goals can be measured with indicators that are already widely measured under existing agreements. Will the Government therefore resist arbitrary restriction of the total number for the spurious reason of technical capacity?

A mark of the progress made under the MDGs is that the global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half. Some 84% of children worldwide received a dose of measles vaccine in 2013 and between 2000 and 2013, there were nearly 16 million fewer deaths. However, UNICEF reports that every five minutes a child still dies as a result of violence, making a strong case for the Government to make ending violence against children a priority within the SDG framework.

More than 6 million malaria deaths have been averted, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa. TB prevention and treatment interventions saved some 37 million lives and the TB mortality rate fell by nearly half. Since 1990, 1.9 billion more people have gained access to piped drinking water and 2.1 billion more people gained access to improved sanitation, while the proportion practising open defecation has nearly halved. WaterAid points out, however, that the MDG target on sanitation was missed by over 700 million people while the MDG target on safe water was missed in the 48 least-developed countries, so will the Government take a lead in securing safe water and good hygiene as basic human rights in these poorest communities?

Much has been achieved in aspiring to meet the MDGs, with tangible progress evident in every developing country, but much remains to be done if the ambition to eradicate poverty is to be achieved. Despite many successes, the poorest and the most vulnerable are still being left behind. Progress towards the MDGs has been uneven across the regions and countries. Millions of people are being left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or location. Targeted efforts in the SDGs are needed to reach these most vulnerable people.

Major gaps still exist between the poorest and the richest households and between rural and urban areas, with the result that in the developing regions, children from the poorest 20% of households are more than twice as likely to be stunted as those from the richest 20%. They are four times more likely to be out of school, and infant mortality rates among the under-fives are about twice as high in the poorest households. Climate change and environmental degradation undermine progress, and poor people suffer the most while conflict remains the biggest threat to human development.

Despite enormous progress, even today, some 800 million people still live in extreme poverty and suffer from hunger. Over 160 million children under the age of five are stunted through malnutrition. Some 16,000 children die each day before celebrating their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable diseases. With global action, these statistics can be transformed and the successes of the MDG agenda have already proved that global action works. It is the way forward to ensure that the new sustainable development agenda really does leave no one behind.

Improved agriculture is the best route to fulfilling many of the 17 SDGs, including poverty eradication, food security and nutrition. Some 1.3 billion people are engaged in agriculture in developing countries and 70% of all Africans depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. All too often, smallholder farming is seen as a source of poverty rather than a solution, yet investing in agriculture can play a transformational role in improving incomes and economic well-being. Improving agricultural performance and linking farmers to markets is the most powerful tool to end global poverty and hunger.

At the Addis Ababa development finance summit in July, a visionary yet costly SDG agenda was set out. The sweeping ambition of the post-2015 agenda called for a goal to end poverty and hunger and achieve sustainable development through providing inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment and promoting social inclusion. Financing must reflect those ambitions and it is worth reflecting on how much money is currently spent on development. Official development assistance, ODA, represents only 0.4% of total investment. In 2012, domestic investment accounted for a third of all funding currently available for developing countries. These domestic resources will be the largest single resource for funding development in most countries. They must not continue to be undermined by international tax evasion and avoidance, costing developing countries hundreds of billions of dollars every year. The UN estimates that the amount of money laundered each year globally is between \$800 billion and \$2 trillion.

Concerted efforts will be required to reduce illicit financial flows, known as IFFs. Corruption, tax evasion and money laundering fund the engine of illicit flows. They drive resources from where they are needed into the hands of the corrupt. Addis Ababa set a clear objective to redouble efforts to substantially reduce IFFs by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them. To achieve this, much more co-operation is needed at the international level to, first and most critically, address the source of IFFs, thus reducing

financial activity, corruption and tax evasion. Secondly, IFFs need to be halted to prevent illegal money from leaving the country. Finally, third parties, especially financial intermediaries, need to be stopped from accepting these assets.

I am grateful to the Bond organisation for helping to bring together the views of many leading NGOs engaged in aid and development. I am also indebted to UNICEF, for which I am a parliamentary ambassador, and to Save the Children, WaterAid, RESULTS, Malaria No More and many other NGOs for their views on the UN agenda for sustainable development. Save the Children strongly welcomes the agreement reached on the SDGs. If adopted and implemented, the goals and targets will represent a seismic shift in how the world tackles poverty. The agenda charts a new course to follow on from the MDGs with three major shifts of approach. First, the SDGs represent a real advance in how we will view success in getting to zero on extreme poverty and preventable child deaths. Secondly, the SDGs offer wins at some of the most progressive limits of development, in areas of governance, gender, sexual and reproductive health, ending violence against children, equity and climate change. Thirdly, the SDGs have been negotiated in a transparent and inclusive process over three years in the most participatory process in UN history.

Recognising these priorities, will the Government now set out clearly how, at the forthcoming UN General Assembly summit, they plan to deliver on the agreements made? In particular, as one of the leading and most powerful forces in the international development community, will HMG commit to, first, finishing the job of the MDGs, especially poverty reduction, children's rights and development, and getting to zero on key human development outcomes? Secondly, will they commit to leaving no one behind by prioritising a reduction in all forms of poverty, including by disaggregating targets by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, location and income, and ensuring that no target is considered to be met until it is met for all social and income groups—that is, that the goals and targets must be met for all nations and for all peoples and for all segments of society? Thirdly, will the Government commit to addressing the substantive gaps in the MDGs at the goal and target levels, including the protection of children from violence, conflict and sexual abuse, open, transparent and accountable governance, more and better data, disaster risk reduction and inclusive and sustainable economic growth?

The SDG agenda is not legally binding, but it does apply to all UN member states and will be implemented globally from January next year. Implementing the post-2015 sustainable development strategies will require effective co-ordination between the many government departments, devolved Administrations and stakeholders which have roles to play across the new framework. Will the Government therefore confirm that they are establishing mechanisms to help co-ordinate between sectors and stakeholders to ensure ongoing monitoring and that adaptable plans are designed to achieve the established goals and targets? Will they embody an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development?

It is really important to note that while the MDGs were judged on what they have achieved for some, the new SDGs will be judged on what they achieve for all, which begs the question: how will the SDGs be judged and who will do the judging? It is clear that the only body which carries the mandate from a nation's electorate over development and state expenditure is its democratically elected parliament. It is the only body that should carry the authority to monitor, approve and ratify state development programmes. Only parliaments can insist on transparency, accountability and probity from the executive branch of government on behalf of the people.

In this regard, the UNDP's brief on parliaments' role in defining and promoting the post-2015 development agenda is particularly encouraging. The UNDP recognises that in the MDGs agenda, the need for country ownership and government accountability were not sufficiently taken into account. In the SDGs, these were highlighted as requirements. Parliaments must be at the forefront of these imperatives because they play a crucial role in meeting those requirements through their law-making, budgeting and oversight functions. Parliaments have a clear role in monitoring and holding Governments to account for the international, national and regional commitments they have made.

Parliaments must become leaders in domestic accountability, with parliamentary reviews helping to ensure that adequate funding is allocated. Not just Parliaments but development partners, too, must recognise the crucial role of Parliaments and provide them with direct support. To that extent, how and when will the Government engage with parliamentarians of all parties in this new agenda?

The Government have been commended for the leadership they have shown in the MDG programme. The ambition of the 2030 programme for sustainable development needs to be matched by ambition and commitment to deliver. Will the Government therefore provide examples of the ways in which they will implement the agenda domestically and as a world leader in developments in the immediate and medium term? I beg to move.

*11.51 am*

**Baroness Mobarik (Con):** My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, for introducing this debate. The millennium development goals have been largely a success: with levels of extreme poverty being reduced by 50%; with 42 million more children at school; and with the maternal mortality rate declining by 45%. However, we have to remember that about 1 billion people still live on less than \$1.25 a day—the World Bank measure on poverty; more than 800 million people still survive on very little food; there are still 58 million children with little or no access to education; millions of women still die in childbirth; and child mortality, although almost halved, still stands at around 6 million.

After 15 years there is still much to do, and the sustainable development goals have a much broader agenda. Point 17 of the draft resolution submitted by the president of the General Assembly of the United Nations states that the framework being announced,

[BARONESS MOBARIK]

“goes far beyond the MDGs. Alongside continuing development priorities such as poverty eradication, health, education and food security ... it sets out a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives. It also promises more peaceful and inclusive societies”.

More importantly, means of implementation are defined that focus on,

“interconnections and many cross-cutting elements across the new Goals and targets”.

There is no doubt that economic development is key to securing long-term peace and security as well as eradicating poverty; it is no longer about wealthy countries helping the poor but about partnerships across the globe.

After months of intergovernmental negotiations and the SDG outcome document, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, there was an agreement by all 193 negotiating countries. The 17 goals—as opposed to the eight MDGs—and the 169 targets will most likely be formally adopted by world leaders at the special UN summit later this month. Some would say that there are too many goals, but Amina Mohammed, the UN Secretary-General’s special adviser on post-2015 development planning, said that it had been,

“a hard fight to get the number of goals down to 17, so there would be strong resistance to reduce them further”.

This broad agenda, while to be commended for including key issues of women’s empowerment, good governance, peace and security, also has to be strategic to be effective. We have goals underneath that are targets and underneath the goals there has to be a measurable indicator. Otherwise, we cannot monitor the progress that we make.

I draw attention in particular to point 53 of the draft resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which states:

“The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today’s younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations. We have mapped the road to sustainable development; it will be for all of us to ensure that the journey is successful and its gains irreversible”.

As a member of the advisory board of UNICEF in Scotland, I believe that that focus on children is key. Goal 16 is about society and governance, and target 16.2 is to,

“End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children”.

This has been welcomed as a step forward in addressing the protection of children across the globe. The indicators are still being discussed by an expert group. Each indicator is being assessed for its suitability and relevance, as well as for how feasible it will be. These indicators are due to be finalised in March 2016. I would stress that the indicators must also include the number of children who experience violence from a care giver. I speak of children in the developed world—and of children here in the UK—as well as of the countless who face untold horror and violence in conflict zones around the world, or those who are trafficked and cruelly subjected to slave labour in the developing world.

The universality of the goals is possibly one of the most striking aspects of the new framework. On Tuesday, at the IDC session, the Secretary of State for International

Development also mentioned the universality of the goals, stating that she will work with the Cabinet Office to ensure that the UK also plays its role. UNICEF has declared that the lack of global attention and commitment to tackle violence has made it impossible to deliver the millennium development goals in full, despite huge improvements in child well-being since the goals were agreed. Tackling the risk of violence must be a key priority if the other development areas, such as child mortality and education, are to thrive. For example, how can we expect children to learn if they are being abused at home?

The sustainable development goals will officially be adopted at a UN summit in New York this September and will become applicable from January 2016. The deadline for the SDGs is 2030. This means that we need plans and commitments at national levels from those that have signed up and a global partnership if we are to see the measurable results that we would wish to see 15 years hence. The sustainable development goals, like the millennium development goals, are to be celebrated as a noble effort to make this a better and fairer world, but they need the full support and commitment of the 193 Governments that have signed up, both in implementation and in financial terms. The SDGs are, after all, an aspiration—a beacon of light and hope for something better in what is otherwise, for millions on our planet, a very dark world.

11.59 am

**Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Lab):** My Lords, 2015 is in danger of being remembered in 21st-century history as a year when the poorest and most desperate people in the world—whether from northern Burma, Syria, Libya or Eritrea, or even recently from Burundi—either climbed on to boats with their children and took the terrifying journey to try to find peace and security elsewhere, or moved back into refugee camps in central Africa that we thought had been long closed.

But 2015 surely can also be a year when there is hope for our world, not just this great humanitarian crisis. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, for securing this debate today, one week before the United Nations, we all hope, approves and moves forward with what I believe are to be called the global goals for sustainable development. I also thank and congratulate the United Kingdom Government on their role, not just the very public role of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, but also, in relation to statistics and data, the key role that United Kingdom officials have played behind the scenes in working out the detail of these goals and their implementation.

I specifically congratulate Amina Mohammed, the Secretary-General’s special adviser on the sustainable development goals. Given that four years ago it may have seemed an almost impossible task to pull together a global agreement on these goals, she and her team have done a phenomenal piece of work to get us to this stage and provide that perhaps one glimmer of hope in 2015 amidst all the darkness.

I look forward to going to New York next week. I refer noble Lords to my interests in the register—I support a number of charities and NGOs and hope to promote their case next week.

I also thank all those other NGOs and groups around the world that have been part of this historic process. These are not the millennium development goals and this is not the setting up of the United Nations, with a group of people meeting in a dark room somewhere agreeing what is best for the rest of the world; this has been a truly participative process, where Governments north and south and people from countries rich and poor have come together to try to forge a way ahead, set targets, however stretching they may be, and, I hope, now agree to work towards them.

None of this is perfect. The agreement reached at the summit on finance in Addis Ababa back in July took major steps forward, but it is not perfect. The global goals to be discussed next week will not meet with absolute approval from everybody. I am sure that the Paris summit in December will disappoint some but, I hope, enthuse others. However, what we do have is a global agreement for comprehensive goals that are universal in character and will, we hope, leave no one behind. We also have an ambitious target for 2030. We should make no apology for setting that ambitious target to try to end extreme poverty and help ensure that no child dies for reasons that could be avoided.

I want to focus my remarks on two issues in particular. First, on implementation, there are many examples, particularly over the last 15 years or so, of the UK Government and DfID in particular assisting Governments around the world in capacity building in their institutions, whether in relation to tax revenue, statistics, land registration, civil service and public service delivery or in many other ways. I believe there is a role here for the United Kingdom in leading the way in saying that every pound that we spend over these next 15 years in building capacity, in particular in the early years following the agreement in 2015, will reap dividends as we work towards achieving the goals by 2030. ODA, private donations and the expenditure generated domestically by the Governments of the south can be invested in building the capacity of public institutions to deliver public services, building a business environment that welcomes inward investment and ensures that jobs can be created, establishing public institutions which deliver justice for all and promoting the collection of data and statistics to ensure that we have the records that allow us to monitor the implementation of these goals. That investment would be tremendously helpful.

In particular, there should be an investment in the empowerment of women and girls. That is identified in these global goals, clearly and explicitly, as a key factor in delivering them as a whole. The empowerment of women and girls—their organisations, their education and their rights around the world—will be absolutely key to ensuring that the phrase “leave no one behind” is meaningful for everybody.

I particularly want to highlight global goal 16. I believe there has been a hard-fought effort to secure that goal and to make sure that it was there, right to the very end. I shall read it into the record here in your Lordships’ House. Global goal 16 is to,

“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable institutions at all levels”.

The millennium development goals were of their time. They were right to target education, health and clean water, maternal rights and all those other important issues, and to try to make specific progress on them. But it cannot be denied that, today, the people in the world in the most vulnerable conditions—those who have the least access to schools, hospitals, jobs, clean water and all the other things that we in the developed world largely take for granted; those who live in fear of their lives and have the least human rights—are those who live in countries which are affected by conflict and violence. The children affected by violence, both in countries affected by conflict and in others where children are terrified or trafficked on an almost daily basis, should be the number one priority of any effort to try to secure a better world.

Including that global goal 16 in the global goals is absolutely critical for ensuring that the global community’s effort does not just focus on the easiest places to build up the biggest numbers of people who are going to school, accessing clean water and hospitals or getting jobs but targets those who are most difficult to help. It should target those where the effort has to be most consistent and where we may fail but absolutely have to try. I want to ask the Government specifically about this issue and global goal 16. Will that goal lead to a review of the *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* by the UK Government? Will the UK Government retain their admirable commitment for these last five years to spend one-third of our ODA in conflict-affected and fragile states? Will they continue to be an enthusiastic supporter of not just UN peacekeeping but UN peacebuilding? I see on the news this morning that the Prime Minister may have something to say about peacekeeping in New York next week. Let us hope that he also has something to say about peacebuilding, because £1 spent on peacebuilding is worth £10, £20 or £30 spent on peacekeeping. Will the new Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund not only continue to exist but help drive this agenda and the implementation of these goals in the years ahead?

I believe passionately that education is the greatest liberation opportunity for children and that we have a climate crisis which we need to attack with the same ferocity as we would attack any other threat to the people of our planet. I also believe absolutely that global goal 16, with its creation of “peaceful and inclusive societies” and the tackling of opportunity for those who live in conflict zones, is central to leaving no one behind. This goal potentially creates safe havens in those conflict zones where children can go for education and health services—not to be taken to other places across the sea but to be safe and secure there, still accessing opportunities without losing a whole generation. I hope that the Government will agree.

12.08 pm

**Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD):** My Lords, it is always a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, who has demonstrated to the House the depth and breadth of his knowledge and experience in this area. I agree with many aspects of his contribution; indeed, he said many of the things that I am now having to think about saying differently in my contribution.

[LORD PURVIS OF TWEED]

Before I start, I wish to refer noble Lords to the register of interests. I also pay tribute to my noble friend Lord Chidgey, who introduced this debate with skill and detail showing that, as we all know on these Benches, his record speaks for itself. That the House has an opportunity to debate these issues, in advance of the discussion of the draft resolution, is a tribute to him for bringing it to us.

It is frequently frowned on, if not sneered at, when we hold to bold ambition. An air of cynicism often pervades much commentary when we talk about tackling the major global issues and a desire to resolve them. The seemingly intractable situation in Syria allows some to think that humanity cannot address its own deficiencies and that people need to come to terms with settling for their lot in the world. Even worse, some think that some in the world have a predilection to live in conflict, in poverty or without justice—that they are somehow not capable, as we are, of having a prosperous economy or a way of life based on western culture. Others take the view that if they simply learned to be like us and operate an economy like we do—overlooking our deficiencies in recent years—the issues would effectively solve themselves.

As we have witnessed the crises in recent weeks, we have seen the difficulties of many conflict areas but also the resilience of people seeking better lives for themselves and their families—the struggles that they go through and the lengths that they go to for a better life—which in many respects humbles those of us here. I hold to the view that bold ambitions are not just admirable things in their own right but are necessary in order to shape our thinking so that we can achieve great things. We must develop our hard policies to match them.

When I had the privilege of leading the then International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Bill through your Lordships' House on behalf of Michael Moore in the other place, I cited the bold ambition, announced in 1970, that developing countries should by the end of that decade provide 0.7% of their GNP to support the development of other nations. It took much longer than it should have, and some of the richest countries in the world are shamefully far off meeting this ambition, but in this decade we in the United Kingdom have done so. Parliament has decided that we should do so year on year until we have made a meaningful impact on these global issues, so it is the law of our land that government should meet this condition to address the world's problems.

A number of years ago, many would have said that this would have been unachievable; yet people came together and decided we would achieve it. The fact that we have done so gives us an unparalleled opportunity within the OECD and the wider donor community to shape thinking in the future and, indeed, to mould these priorities. We are assisted in this in having in the UK the development body most highly regarded in the world.

At the start of the millennium development goal period, many would have thought that eradicating malaria, for example, was similarly a worthy ambition

but one hardly capable of being achieved—yet my noble friend indicated the progress being made. In a report published today and launched in another place by the Secretary of State for International Development as we debate this Motion, the results of such hard policy to meet bold ambition can be seen. Between 2000 and 2015, the rate of new malaria infections has reduced by 37% and the global malaria death rate by 60%. This is a profoundly strong record and one that simply could not have been possible without ODA, including, critically, that from the UK, working in partnership with our global neighbours afflicted by high levels of the disease. The ambition for a further 90% reduction in malaria incidence and mortality by 2020 is achievable, but only with additional resource. Critically—this is where I agree with the noble Lord, Lord McConnell—resource is needed now to create the impact for the future, rather than delay to the level of support.

I use the example of malaria as it highlights to me what can be achieved across all 17 goals. Increased ODA, with a bold ambition and clear and accountable work streams to deliver it, can see real impact. That is why I have been extremely disappointed with the position the EU as a whole has taken—on behalf of the richest region on the planet—that EU countries would only catch up with the UK by the end of the SDG period in 2030. This is shameful. Although I welcome the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the A4, the dispiriting part of it was the lack of ambition on finance from the most developed nations—critically, from the EU.

I know that the A4 is for the whole term of the SDG period, but I do not want this to be the final word from the EU perspective. The UK assumes the presidency of the EU in July 2017. I do not want it to be wholly subsumed by angst about our relationship with the EU. I want the first item for the UK presidency to be to convene an EU ODA finance summit where we have a new EU position to accelerate the delivery of the 0.7% target. I want it to be brought forward for each EU member by a decade. That means signalling to our neighbours now that they must commence political and parliamentary work to accelerate support between 2015 and 2020.

We know from our experience in the UK that this can be done. It is not easy; it is sometimes controversial. I saw that for myself having to respond to amendments during the Bill's passage, but we in the UK must take the lead, and it must be ratified under our presidency.

The successful delivery of the goals will make a meaningful difference to humanity. Of course, it has not proved easy to agree on the 17, as indicated by the noble Lords, Lord McConnell and Lord Chidgey. Some have argued that 17 is too many. I want to focus on goal 16, outlined by the noble Lord, Lord McConnell. In many respects, all the other goals cannot be delivered and we cannot create the long-term basis on which development will be successful unless meaningful improvements are made within that goal.

Paragraph 16.7 of the draft resolution states that we must,

“ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”.

That is very welcome, but as the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, said, “parliament” is not mentioned. Interestingly, it is in the Addis action plan, as a footnote, but not in the goals themselves. The resolution does not draw sufficient attention to the necessity of each developing nation to have a functioning and supportive parliament. Without a parliament properly resourced, free to hold government to account and scrutinise priorities, and to debate and agree rule-of-law solutions to development issues, we will struggle to achieve meaningful impact of the SDG ambitions across all the different areas. Many of the barriers to the effective delivery of the SDGs—corruption, maladministration, poor decision-making, donor countries dominating the policy agenda over recipient countries—are often symptoms of the lack of a properly functioning parliament.

I understand why “parliament” was missing from the draft resolution, but I believe very strongly that building capacity and parliamentary strengthening is of major importance. It pained me to read the IDC report from the Commons in the previous Session, which highlighted the incongruity of the UK paying the US National Endowment for Democracy to deliver parliamentary strengthening work on behalf of the United Kingdom. That is not an appropriate answer.

Yesterday, I was at a very good parliamentary strengthening event where the CPA, the WFD, the British group of the IPU and others—parliamentary clerking staff and the National Audit Office—were together. We have the best foundations in the UK Parliament to develop much stronger support for parliamentary strengthening. It is a challenge to us in Parliament how we use the fantastic skills available to us.

I end on the second part of the goal, which, as the noble Baroness, Lady Mobarik, mentioned, concerns abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. It is of course welcome, but there needs to be strong consideration of the detailed outcomes and how it will be developed. Too often, children are systematically used in areas of conflict or dispute by protagonists. It is one of the most insidious examples of war crimes. In some examples, we see children used politically, knowing that they are the next generation which can be targeted for future conflict.

Ten days ago, I was in the Occupied Territories in the West Bank, where the incidence of child detention by the IDF remains high. Children are arrested under security law, not civil law, often in the middle of the night. They infrequently have their rights read to them in Arabic, if at all. More than 90% have testified to being hand tied, and 80% hooded, in contravention of international standards and calls from our FCO that that practice end. As I left Hebron that evening, I saw a child of no more than 10 years old escorted away by three soldiers—something which would have an impact on any of us used to our approach in the United Kingdom.

Of course, there is the wider humanitarian aspect: 100,000 children born as refugees in the Syrian crisis; 5 million going without education; 10 million at risk in Yemen. None of these goals will be successfully achieved if we do not focus our resource on children and also

on increasing the level of ODA support. We are less than 1% of the world’s population but we have a considerable role to play. I give the Government my full support in making sure that we work with our colleagues around the world to deliver on these goals.

12.20 pm

**The Lord Bishop of Sheffield:** My Lords, from these Benches I warmly welcome this debate and thank the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, for bringing it forward. I welcome the sustainable development goals and the Government’s commitment to them.

Like others, I was initially somewhat sceptical about a document that contains 17 goals and 169 targets. These are not even memorable or round numbers. However, I am inspired by the single vision for our world that drives and shapes these goals. That vision is set out in the ambitious declaration that forms a preface to the draft document to be considered and, we hope, agreed at the September summit. The language of the declaration is lofty—rightly so. It says:

“Never before have world leaders pledged common action and endeavour across such a broad and universal policy agenda”.

There is then the best sentence in the document, which says:

“We can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet”.

The vision in this document is of sustainable development, a safer world with more resilient institutions where no one is left behind. It is one consistent with the Christian tradition and those of the major world faiths. I applaud it, believe in it and support it. However, that vision needs to be communicated well and carefully, and implemented with rigour. It is here that I will focus my remarks.

The single vision in the report is broken down into just five areas of critical importance. These five areas are easy to name, remember and communicate: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Preachers love alliteration. I would encourage the Government to place real weight on these shorter, more memorable and accessible headings, for the following reason. These visionary goals for our world will be realised only as they are widely understood and communicated. This compelling vision will never be realised if it is the vision only of politicians and NGOs. It must become that of the majority of people on the planet, a shared vision of prosperity, peace and partnership. These goals need to be spoken of in schools, universities and in the media. I wonder how many people even know that there is a summit in a few days’ time to agree this document. There needs to be international and local debate. Resources need to be invested here and elsewhere in education and building awareness of the values that underpin this vision which are no longer self-evident to many in our society or across the world.

I was a member a few years ago of the city-wide fairness commission in Sheffield—on a much smaller scale than this—attempting to articulate a vision. I assumed at the beginning of that process that fairness would be a shared concept among the population, that we were articulating something that people would understand. On the day of the report’s publication, I appeared on local radio. The bracing phone-in responses

[THE LORD BISHOP OF SHEFFIELD] revealed that my assumption was wide of the mark. A big vision and detailed targets are both excellent but, in between, comes the harder task of transforming human attitudes and building deeper generosity of spirit, explaining the reasons why we seek a better world for all. The churches and faith communities have a key role here. We understand that we are global citizens, and we share the deeper values which lie beneath these goals.

To quote from the report again,

“we are setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision. We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive ... A world in which every woman and child enjoys full gender equality ... A just, equitable, tolerant and socially inclusive world”,

in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met, and a,

“world in which ... consumption and production patterns ... are sustainable”.

That vision is worthy of agreement, and it is worth sharing and communicating throughout our nation and beyond it. I hope that the Government will take this responsibility seriously. As other noble Lords have said, it is also a vision which calls for clear plans for implementation. Here, along with others, I encourage the Government to pay careful attention immediately to plans for enacting this ambitious programme and for scrutiny and review.

I have two specific questions for the Minister. Will the Government commit to promoting the vision of the SDGs and to implement the agenda in this country in full? If so, how do they plan to do this? Secondly, how will the Government use the high-level summit to build support for an ambitious global climate change agreement in Paris in November and December? What link does the Minister see between the two summits?

We all listen more to those who practise what they preach. The Government's rhetoric on climate change in the manifesto for the election was strong, but their record on climate change since the election is becoming a cause of concern to many, myself included. The independent Committee on Climate Change has already raised the issue of a gap between the policies already in place and the policies needed to meet the climate change that the Government support. Many were therefore expecting after the election a series of positive policy announcements to close this gap and prepare the way for next week's summit and for Paris. Instead, the gap seems to be widening; the Government have cut subsidies for solar and wind power and have privatised the Green Investment Bank, are getting rid of the Green Deal, have lifted the ban on certain harmful chemicals and have introduced a tax on electric cars. Can the Minister confirm that the Government will continue to hold to their commitments and support the positive and transformative vision of the sustainable development goals with consistent, prompt and long-term action, especially on climate change?

12.28 pm

**Lord Loomba (LD):** My Lords, I welcome this debate and thank my noble friend Lord Chidgey for securing such an important opportunity to discuss the

forthcoming summit on the SDGs and the Government's position. The UN is to be congratulated on the progress that it has made in creating the 17 successor goals, with 169 targets, covering five main areas to act as a springboard from the MDGs. David Cameron, our Prime Minister, has ensured that the UK has played a significant role in the groundwork around the formation of the SDGs by serving on the High-Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda, and is to be congratulated on this.

As we have heard from previous speakers, the UN is recommending 17 goals and 169 targets which relate to the five themes and cover many aspects: poverty, humanitarian, social, economic, climate and conflict. If all these goals and targets are implemented properly in the anticipated period of 15 years from 2015 to 2030 by all world leaders, I have no doubt that the world will be free of inequality, conflict, diseases and threats of climate problems.

Out of the 17 goals, I will focus on five which relate to women and girls. These are goals 1, 4, 5, 8 and 16. These goals are about achieving a better life and security for women and girls in the developing world. Many are often not able to access the means to enable them to improve their lives at all.

I will start with goal 16, which is to:

“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

It needs to be attained in several regions before many of the other goals can be implemented, for without peaceful, inclusive societies there is little that can be done to improve the lives of those who need it most. This goal should be at the forefront of every goal.

For many women and children, goal 4 to:

“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all”,

is but a far-off dream due to the conflicts and instabilities in many regions. The ongoing migrant crisis, resulting largely from conflicts, means that for many there is little hope of a life that is stable enough to allow them the opportunity to access any education, even if it is available for them. This is also true of goal 5 to:

“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, and goal 8:

“Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

Goal 1 refers to ending,

“poverty in all its forms everywhere”,

and continues on from the first goal of the MDGs, which was to eradicate extreme poverty. The UN *Millennium Development Goals Report 2015* states that there is,

“greater risk of poverty among separated women, widows and single mothers”.

This report emphasises the importance of understanding what is happening in the world through data collection and analysis.

I am sure that your Lordships' House is aware that I am committed to the welfare of widows and their children around the world. Here I declare my interest as founder and chairman trustee of the Loomba Foundation. The foundation commissioned a research

study, the *Global Widows Report 2015*, which has revealed the growing numbers of widows and the struggles they face, especially in the developing world. There are now 259 million widows, up 9% since 2010, and 584 million dependants worldwide.

As noble Lords know only too well, since I and many others have said this in the House before, in the developing world widows suffer the double injustices of gender discrimination and widow discrimination. Widowhood is precisely the type of situation that the SDGs aim to improve. The humanitarian situation faced by widows and their children has worsened in the past few years, due to factors including armed conflict, instability in the Middle East and north Africa, the Ebola epidemic and increasing HIV infections. Conflicts have contributed to a growing number of widows, while UNICEF estimates that the Ebola virus has led to over 16,000 children losing one or both parents or their primary caregiver. Other estimates show that 17.7 million children under 18 have lost one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS.

These global challenges have resulted in the worst humanitarian crisis for widows and their children since World War Two. Making a specific focus of widows and their children part of the wider remit of the sustainable development goals, and the intention to probe more deeply into the problems that help create and sustain poverty, will serve women and girls much better. I understand that a global indicator framework to support the SDGs will be developed. Widows and their children in these indicators will ultimately have a far better life and status through the implementation of the five goals that I have referred to.

“Leave no one behind” is an encouraging goal. If properly implemented, it would help not only 259 million widows and 584 million children but more than 1 billion people on the planet when you add the number of dependants of these unfortunate widows. Will the Government encourage the UN to include widows and their children in the indicators that will follow after the adoption of the sustainable development goals at the forthcoming summit?

12.37 pm

**Baroness Tonge (Ind LD):** My Lords, in congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, on securing this debate on such an important topic for all our futures, I declare an interest as chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health.

It is widely accepted by the World Bank, other institutions and academics that there is a correlation between development and economic growth and the empowerment of women, a phrase that we hear much about. That is done by the reduction in family size and, subsequently, women’s access to education and training. Women can be empowered, though, only if they have power over their own bodies, and in many countries, developed and developing, women do not have that power. At this point I commend my noble friend Lord Loomba for the speech that he gave and for the work that he does in this field. It is much admired and appreciated.

I am sure that noble Lords all know the 17 sustainable development goals and the 169 targets attached to them. Personally, I have only just learned to recite the millennium development goals; now my failing memory has to cope with 17 SDGs and 169 targets, and I am not going to remember them. Can noble Lords recite them? Do your Lordships remember doing the catechism at school? Perhaps the right reverend Prelate remembers it; I never learnt that either, I have to say. Most important of all, for me, are SDGs 3.7, on good health and well-being, and 5.6, entitled “Gender equality” but dealing with women’s health and sexual and reproductive health and rights in particular. They do not deal with just maternal health, family planning and safe abortion but FGM, child marriage and violence against women generally, all of which are rife in this world and which must be eliminated. Here I must congratulate and thank the Government and the coalition Government before them on the continuing support on these issues and the high profile they have given them. Long may it continue.

My all-party parliamentary group recently produced a paper—here is a visual aid for noble Lords—following hearings on population dynamics and sustainable development. That is a rather clumsy title, but it is a good paper. It was chaired by the former MP Sir Richard Ottaway, who was one of my vice-chairs at the time. This paper deals with the advantages of reduced fertility rates—that is, family size—and links them to climate change, desertification and water shortages, which with large and often young populations lead to conflict and certainly to mass migration, which the world is experiencing now, not just in the Middle East but in Africa and Asia.

A friend on Facebook recently sent me an article. That is at least two times this week that Facebook has been mentioned in this House, I think, which may mean that we are modernising. This article was a very interesting one that I had never seen before, and gave a brilliant example of all these factors of population dynamics and climate change, and so on, coming together in the story of Syria. It was written a couple of years ago by William Polk, one-time professor of history at Harvard and I believe an adviser to the American Government, and was published in the *Atlantic* magazine. He describes Syria as densely populated in 2010, with a population of 24 million; one quarter of the land is arable, and the population is clustered in a very small area. He writes:

“Four years of devastating drought beginning in 2006 caused at least 800,000 farmers to lose their entire livelihood and about 200,000 simply abandoned their lands”.

In some areas there were 75% crop failures, and 85% of livestock died of thirst. Hundreds of thousands of Syrian farmers gave up and fled to the towns. Some noble Lords know this, I am sure. There they had to compete with refugees from Palestine and Iraq from previous troubles for water and food. Hostile groups formed. Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Syria—I did not know this—turned to USAID and described the situation as “a perfect storm”. No aid was given; nobody took any notice. They left Syria to it. When a relatively small group gathered in Deraa to protest against the Government and their failure to help them,

[BARONESS TONGE]

the brutal crackdown by President Assad's Government started and, as we say, the rest is history. I tell that rather lengthy story to remind noble Lords because it is very important as an illustration of what sustainable development goals should all be about.

From countryside to cities and between countries, human beings are on the move. This is why we in the group concentrated on the term "population dynamics", which encompasses the demographics structure of a society, ageing populations who have a shortage of working-age citizens, and populations which are predominantly young. We must take all these things into account. All these factors have been recognised by the latest document to emanate from the United Nations, which we have already heard about in this debate, entitled *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Paragraph 34, in a section on urban development, states joyfully:

"We will also take account of population trends and projections in our national, rural, and urban development, strategies and policies".

The UN gets it—I must send it a copy of our paper.

Let me stress that we are not talking about population control, but giving women the choice and necessary commodities to decide how many children they have means that mankind benefits in many ways. Countries such as Indonesia and Bangladesh are already benefiting. So are Rwanda, Tunisia, Vietnam and Ethiopia. Even Iran has reduced its fertility rate and the country has benefited as a result.

Finally, I thank the Government once again for their promotion of these issues and plead that when the Prime Minister addresses the assembly on the sustainable development goals in the autumn, he specifically mentions the benefits of the often marginalised subject of sexual and reproductive health and rights in his speech.

12.46 pm

**Baroness Brinton (LD):** My Lords, I declare my interests as a trustee of UNICEF UK and a patron of Christian Blind Mission, which is the largest disability NGO worldwide. I congratulate my noble friend Lord Chidgey on securing this important debate. He spoke at the start of his contribution of the dangers of spurious targets. It is worth noting from the SDG outcomes document that:

"Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each government will also decide how these aspirational global targets should be incorporated in international planning processes, policies and strategies".

I ask the Minister for the Government to ensure that we can see that clear link throughout everything this country does to fulfil the SDGs in the future.

One strength that we have developed globally over the 15 years of the millennium development goals is much more collaboration within the Government as well as with other Governments and others. It is clear from the SDGs that we will have to improve even that good level of working. At the international level, UK implementation of the target will involve DfID, the

Ministry of Defence and the FCO; whereas some of the domestic implementation, particularly of goal 16.2 on violence against children, is likely to involve the Home Office, the Department for Education, the Department of Health and the Ministry of Justice. I therefore ask the Minister whether the Government are considering cross-departmental models for co-operation and development to ensure that, both domestically and internationally, our contributions are working at the most effective level possible.

In addition to interdepartmental and intra-departmental collaboration, we have moved into a world of multistakeholder global partnerships. Gone are the days when international development money was passed on to a Government to be targeted and delivered by them. The Government already use the private sector, civil society, faith-based organisations, philanthropists and other actors, who can connect and co-ordinate their efforts in pursuit of a common goal. A number of existing initiatives, such as Scaling Up Nutrition, Every Woman Every Child and A Promise Renewed have already demonstrated the importance and growing roles of partnerships in the delivery of international goals related to children. I ask the Minister whether the Government will continue to emphasise that these partnerships in delivering outcomes are vital and will play a central role in mobilising and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to make the SDGs a reality and go beyond just the traditional remit of government responsibilities.

We must celebrate the most successful parts of the millennium development goals. I also want to highlight some of the other headlines that we have heard in this debate. Between 2000 and 2012, the total number of out-of-school children worldwide declined from 100 million to 58 million, and child mortality has been almost halved. In 1990, 12 million children died before their fifth birthday. In 2012, that was down to 6.6 million, and it continues to reduce. That is a real statement of the success of the millennium development goals: 6.6 million children is still too high, but at least the numbers are now going in the right direction.

DfID needs to continue to promote child-related policies and programmes to further reduce child mortality and conclude this unfinished business. Can the Minister tell me whether there will be a real focus on ending violence against children, which has not been a major target in the past? It is vital that we reduce that inequality.

It is not just about violence against children elsewhere in the world. Violence against children here in the UK remains shocking. Statistics from the National Crime Agency show that, in 2013 alone, an estimated 602 children were trafficked into the UK. That is more than 10 children a week facing violence, exploitation and abuse. For far too long, the world has tolerated this epidemic of physical, sexual and emotional violence that leaves millions of children unsafe in their homes, schools and communities, including here in the UK. The inclusion of target 16.2, to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children, has to be welcome. It is a major step forward in addressing the protection of children worldwide.

I want to focus briefly on the coalition Government's previous work to end female genital mutilation, sexual violence in conflict and online sexual child exploitation. Will the UK Government continue to make ending violence against children, particularly FGM and violence in conflict, one of their priorities when looking to implement the new SDG framework, both at home and abroad?

I congratulate the Prime Minister and the current Government on continuing the work of the coalition Government of aid in refugee camps in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. However, I have some concerns about the clear linking of the foreign policy of the Government with work in international development.

Dr Talaat Abdel-Malek, the former chair of the OECD DAC working party on aid effectiveness in the global development goals of 2014, wrote a very good article highlighting the factors undermining aid effectiveness, which include,

"the use of aid as a foreign policy tool; reluctance to untie aid; lack of transparency in aid allocation and management; lack of medium-term predictability of aid commitments ... interventions in recipients' use of aid funds".

I have concerns relating to that last point. This Government have proposed very recently to support the 20,000 Syrian refugees who will be coming to this country over the next few years, which is absolutely vital. However, that money might come from the current DfID aid support in those refugee camps. That seems a somewhat short-sighted approach. I urge the Government to make sure that funding continues at the right level in the Syrian refugee camps.

Peter Salama, the UNICEF regional director for the Middle East and north Africa, has said:

"Every Syrian I spoke to has told me that they would have stayed in their own country if they were able to feel safe, live in peace, and be treated with dignity".

Although 20,000 refugees coming into this country is a good start, it must be set in the context of more than 4 million Syrians, half of them children, having fled their country since the conflict started nearly five years ago. Turkey alone is now home to 2 million Syrians under temporary protection, more than three times the number at the beginning of 2014 and the highest number of Syrian refugees in any single country. In Lebanon, a country of fewer than 5 million people, 1.1 million Syrians are being accommodated, and Jordan is hosting well over 500,000 registered refugees.

Despite the enormous challenges facing those affected by the conflict, funding humanitarian assistance in those countries is not keeping pace with the needs. The one thing that this Government must not do is diminish the resources for those camps, when we could perfectly well provide that support from a UK budget.

12.55 pm

**Lord Rees of Ludlow (CB):** My Lords, the SDGs are indeed ambitious and wide-ranging, perhaps too much so. Our Government are surely right to argue for a focus on a subset of them, especially on those with well-defined, implementable outcomes and targets.

I will focus my remarks on goal 7, which is to:

"Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all".

This is of course a key cross-cutting goal, because electricity is vital for economic development and quality of life. The phrase "sustainable development" was introduced by the Brundtland commission in 1987 and was defined as,

"development that meets the needs of the present"—

especially those of the poor—

"without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The focus on future generations means that climate change must be held in check—and that is goal 13. Climate change will hit hardest those who have contributed the least to its cause. Heat stress will most hurt those without air conditioning; crop failure will most affect those who already struggle to afford food; and extreme weather events will most endanger those whose homes are fragile.

The eventual elimination of fossil fuels must be a worldwide imperative if climate change is to be controlled, but there is a special urgency to supply clean energy to the poorest in developing countries. Millions of such people have their health severely damaged by exposure to toxic fumes from stoves burning wood or dung. They lack even small-scale electrical power for lighting their homes and charging basic appliances. This can be supplied by solar panels and batteries, but a higher generating capacity will be needed to power transport and economic development. Unless the costs of renewables fall, developing nations will be under pressure to build polluting coal-fired power stations to supply this need.

The impediment to "decarbonising" our economy is that renewable energy is still expensive to generate. Moreover, power from the sun and wind is intermittent, so we need cheap ways to store it on a large scale. Fortunately, technology in solar energy and batteries is proceeding apace.

A group led by Sir David King and the noble Lord, Lord Layard, together with five other Members of this House, including me, is promoting a campaign to encourage as many countries as possible, especially those in the G20, to expand and co-ordinate publicly funded R&D into "clean energy", especially into solar power, storage techniques and the design of "smart grids". The faster this research proceeds, the sooner will the cost of power from "renewables" come down and become as cheap as coal-fired power stations. We call this the Global Apollo Program, to highlight an analogy with the American "Moonshot" programme, which exemplified how a spectacular goal could be achieved if the motivation were there. But whereas the original Apollo programme was fuelled by superpower rivalry in the Cold War, this programme will be international and co-operative. The target will be that new-build baseload energy from renewable sources becomes as cheap as new-build coal within 10 years.

Although wind, hydro and geothermal energy is the best choice in some locations, our focus is on solar. That is because the sun provides 5,000 times more energy to the earth's surface than our total human demand for energy. It is particularly abundant in the developing nations of Asia and Africa, where most of the future increase in world energy demand will occur. There are two techniques: photovoltaics, which can be used on a small scale and does not need direct sunlight;

[LORD REES OF LUDLOW]

and concentrated solar power, which is larger scale and requires direct sunlight. Unlike fossil fuel, solar energy produces no pollution and no miners get killed. Unlike nuclear fission, it leaves no radioactive waste.

If renewable energy is to become the primary source of energy, it must be capable of being stored and supplied when and where it is needed. There is already a big investment in improving batteries, but there are other possibilities, including thermal storage, capacitors, compressed air, fuel pumps, fly-wheels, molten salt, pumped hydro and hydrogen. The need is, therefore, to accelerate the development of cheaper solar generators, all storage methods and, thirdly, DC grids to transmit energy efficiently over large distances. This is an arena where public, private and philanthropic efforts need to mesh together, but the hope of those of us promoting the Global Apollo Program is that Governments joining it will pledge to spend an annual average of 0.02% of GDP as public expenditure on the programme from 2016 to 2025. The money will be spent according to each country's own discretion. We hope that all major countries will join. This is an enhanced, expanded and internationally co-ordinated version of many national programmes.

Incidentally, there is a precedent in the semiconductor field, where since the 1990s the International Technology Roadmap for Semiconductors has identified the scientific bottlenecks to further cost reductions and has spelt out the advances needed at the precompetitive R&D stage. The Global Apollo Program will follow this model. It will be collocated with the International Energy Agency in Paris but may include countries not belonging to the IEA. All results discovered through the programme will be made publicly available, though patents for all intellectual property will be protected and will remain with those who made the discovery.

In terms of value for money, this Global Apollo Program is an essential component of any serious attempt to manage the risks of climate change, and is better value, incidentally, than subsidising existing forms of clean energy. At relatively small cost, it will contribute powerfully to a safer and better world. The proposed programme has one aim only: to develop renewable energy supplies that can be deployed as cheaply as fossil fuels throughout the developing world.

Solar energy is already competitive for thousands of villages in India and Africa that are off-grid, but in most parts of the world it is still more expensive than energy from fossil fuels, and it becomes economic only due to subsidies or feed-in tariffs. Eventually, these subsidies have to stop, so we are looking for the technologies with the greatest potential for falls in cost year after year. In addition, the materials used should not be constrained in supply nor toxic, the risks of price volatility should be low and the installation payback should be short.

We hope that this rapid development would allow developing countries to leap-frog directly to cleaner energy, just as they have leap-frogged to mobile phones and the internet, bypassing landlines. Speeding up the transition by public pump-priming to accelerate the rate at which these technologies develop is perhaps the only way that the world can reduce the risk of really

damaging climate change by the end of the century. But it is hard to focus on benefits or threats so far ahead. For politicians, the immediate trumps the long term; the national trumps the global. Activists and experts by themselves cannot generate or sustain political will. Only if their voice is amplified by a wide public and by the media will long-term causes such as the SDGs rise high enough on the political agenda.

Here we can find powerful allies in the world's religious faiths. The Catholic Church powerfully transcends normal political constraints. There is no gainsaying its global reach nor its durability and long-term vision, nor its focus on the world's poor. It is hugely welcome that three months ago the Pope issued an encyclical on climate and environmental issues and that he is attending the UN summit this month. His influence on the meeting and on what happens in Paris in December could be immense, influencing both public and politicians in Latin America, Africa, east Asia and even perhaps in the American Republican Party.

To design wise policies, we need all the efforts of scientists, economists and technologists, but to implement them successfully we need the sustained commitment of our leaders and the full support of the voting public. Our responsibility to our children, to the poorest and to our stewardship of the diverse life on earth surely demands that we do not leave a depleted and hazardous world. That is why we should surely urge our Government to adopt a forceful stance at the UN summit in the hope of ensuring a sustained commitment to the SDGs and, in particular, to accelerating the development of clean energy, which should be high among the goals of that meeting.

*1.05 pm*

**Baroness Northover (LD):** I thank my noble friend Lord Chidgey for securing this debate and for opening it so effectively. I also thank the many NGOs, including Save the Children, RESULTS, WWF, Safer World and others for their engagement. I am proud of the fact that, under the coalition Government, we reached 0.7% of GNI on aid. As my noble friend Lord Purvis reminded us, it was he and my other Lib Dem colleague, Michael Moore, who took through the Bill that placed that in law. Now we must make sure that this aid is used effectively. Our debate yesterday on the refugee crisis, as people flee from war-torn and unstable regimes, underlined the importance of the global commitment to development. As my noble friend Lord Chidgey pointed out, conflict is the more significant cause of poverty. Therefore, development is something in which we all have an interest—not only moral but for global prosperity and stability. The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Sheffield is right to remind us that we have to get across, not least in the United Kingdom, this sense of the global community and responsibility.

When the MDGs were first drawn up for the year 2000, it was largely the hand of one man, the noble Lord, Lord Malloch-Brown. He did a pretty good job. There was clarity and purpose about the MDGs. That is why they have been so influential. Huge progress has been achieved in a number of areas as my noble friend Lord Chidgey and others have pointed out. Extreme poverty has been cut by more than a half; the number

of people who experience extreme hunger has also been cut by almost a half. Primary school enrolment for children is now well over 90%. Hugely importantly, MDG3, the gender goal, has been successful in galvanising resources and political will for girls' and women's empowerment and gender equality. Progress has been made. Globally, more girls go to school, women are living longer, they are having fewer children, and participating in the economy more.

The UK, both under the Labour Government and the coalition Government, has been at the forefront of taking action to ensure that these goals are implemented. The UK has used its expertise across health, education, nutrition, women's rights and many other areas for the benefit of the poorest and most vulnerable, as the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, indicated. We should be proud of that record. I certainly am. But the very success of the MDGs has brought international engagement in their replacements. I understand why the noble Lord, Lord Malloch-Brown, wondered whether the best thing would be to continue and simply tweak the MDGs. People had learnt that money and effort followed the MDGs, so this time it has not been the hand of one person. Everyone has wanted to make sure that their area, their perspective, their country, their region, their NGO might come within the new aims. It will be the new sustainable development goals that will help to determine where the money goes. So the danger was producing a Christmas tree.

The high-level panel to which my noble friend Lord Loomba referred was ably supported by Michael Anderson from DfID as it sought to come up with something effective and streamlined. Out of this came the proposal, still retained, to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 and to leave no one behind. That is a brilliant encapsulation. After the report was given to the UN, it went out to regional groups with the danger that various aspects, especially the need to prioritise women or political accountability, would be knocked out as being culturally unacceptable, while pressures to add things in would also serve to dilute. Clearly, there are lessons that we needed to try to address, such as focusing on outcomes as well as access. It is one thing to get children into schools, for example, but ensuring that they receive a good quality education is a different matter.

It is also clear, as the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, and my noble friend Lord Purvis said, that the SDGs needed to address issues such as the rule of law and the vital importance of peace and stability. I note what my noble friend Lord Chidgey has said about money laundering and corruption. He is surely right. Can the Minister reassure us that in the United Kingdom the Serious Fraud Office, now investigating, for example, the role of Soma Oil in Somalia, will not be weakened? Will she dispel rumours that the Bribery Act 2012 will be weakened and confirm that the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will likewise not be weakened? DfID should be commended for its work with the Metropolitan Police in combating corruption. This good work could be countered by these other moves.

We also know that treating the environment and development as separate issues does not work; they are interrelated. The noble Lord, Lord Rees, is right

about that, and we must surely harness new technology for sustainable economic growth, especially as we know that the poorest will be the first and the worst to be affected by climate change. Again I note that the right reverend Prelate said that we cannot advocate one thing internationally while doing something else at home, and the move away from leading on tackling climate change in the UK is of deep concern. I look forward to the Minister's replies to these points.

The millennium development goals have been criticised for their focus on averages, and noble Lords have made reference to that. Countries have reported successes on many targets according to average figures while many of those who are hardest to reach have been left behind. These people are often the most vulnerable and marginalised: women, children, ethnic or religious minorities, the elderly and the disabled. It is right that we put a new focus on being inclusive.

Where are we now? We have 17 goals and, I think, 169 targets. The noble Baroness, Lady Mobarik, rightly identified how difficult it has been to keep the goals even to this long list, and that it is indeed unwieldy. Like the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, I also pay tribute to Amina Mohammed for her efforts to ensure that the goals and targets are as focused as possible. For me, the critical elements of the new SDGs remain these: to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030 and to leave no one behind. This is about as comprehensive as it could get. However, I have heard it said that the SDGs themselves leave no targets behind, they are so long. I share the concern of my noble friend Lady Tonge that I will never remember them. I had a list of the MDGs stuck up on my fridge, and I had difficulty remembering those ones. All these goals and targets mean that the focus over the next few months must be on the technical details of how things will be measured and delivered. This is the key stage, and I look forward to hearing from the Minister about the details of what is being done here.

Most importantly, can the noble Baroness fill us in on gender? This issue has come up several times in the debate. I have mentioned the progress we have made on gender, but significant challenges remain. Some two-thirds of people who are currently living in extreme poverty are girls and women. Across 63 developing countries, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys among both the primary and lower secondary age groups. My noble friend Lady Brinton also made reference to this. Globally, at least one in three women is beaten or sexually abused by an intimate partner in her lifetime, although actually, evidence from the South African Medical Research Council shows that the percentage is much higher. Moreover, like my noble friend Lady Brinton, I urge a continued concentration on combating FGM. Gender equality is vital if we are to end poverty.

Evidence shows that where girls and women are "locked out", economies and societies underachieve. We know that gender equality is essential to help economies grow. As my noble friend Lord Loomba so rightly emphasised, widows can suffer the double discrimination of being widows as well as women, and they must have the focus on them.

[BARONESS NORTHOVER]

I turn to family planning and pay tribute to Andrew Mitchell MP for his brave and sterling work in this vital field, a point rightly made by my noble friend Lady Tonge. Women should be able to choose how many children they have. When a girl in the developing world receives seven or more years of education, she marries four years later and has fewer children, and her children are more educated and healthier. She, her family, her community and her country all benefit.

What we aim to do now is in many ways even more difficult than it was before. Addressing political structures, as the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, and my noble friend Lord Chidgey have outlined, is very challenging. Reaching out to the most marginal can be socially challenging. Later we will come on to a debate tabled by my noble friend Lord Scriven on the rights of LGBTI people worldwide. Further, as my noble friend Lady Brinton has flagged, disability can render people invisible. When she was at DfID, Lynne Featherstone—shortly to be my noble friend—rightly sought to shift the focus to ensure that those who were previously excluded and under the radar would receive the support that inclusive development demands should be the case. Perhaps the noble Baroness can update us on what is happening in regard to the emphasis on inclusive societies.

I should point out that the SDGs are applicable here, which is different from the MDGs, so how are we ensuring that the Treasury recognises its responsibility? When I was the Government equalities spokesperson and the spokesperson for DfID, I realised the read-across—I tried to get the Treasury to disaggregate data on policies affecting women, but it said that that would be too difficult. If we hold that view here, how can we expect developing countries to do so? Can the Minister tell me what progress we in the United Kingdom have made?

This has been an excellent debate and I thank my noble friend Lord Chidgey once again for tabling it. We should all be proud of the United Kingdom's record. DfID is an outstanding department, making a huge difference globally. I know that the department will be working constantly to make sure that the new SDGs transform the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable around the world. I look forward to the noble Baroness's update on how this will be taken forward.

1.17 pm

**Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab):** My Lords, I, too, want to thank the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, for initiating this debate and to pay tribute to his work generally on international development.

The year 2015 has been remarkable for international development, with the agreement on global plans for the next 15 years ready for approval by UN heads of states next week. Like my noble friend Lord McConnell, I strongly welcome the agreement and the Government's part in helping to achieve it. I am proud, too, of our past achievements: the MDGs focused attention on poverty worldwide, galvanised political action and showed that immense progress is possible. As we have heard in the debate today, the agreement on 17 stand-alone

goals and 169 targets differs because the framework will apply both to developed and developing nations alike. As my noble friend Lord McConnell said, by leaving no one behind we will be delivering change for all.

Labour's priorities in delivering the sustainable development goals have been: rights—for women and children, workers, indigenous populations, LGBT groups and disabled people; universal health coverage; and climate change. What does the Minister see as the UK's priorities within the expansive agenda that we now have? How does she intend to galvanise political will on her chosen concerns?

Making available an annual progress report would ensure that all Governments are fully accountable. They should fully engage with international review processes and set up national accountability systems. As noble Lords have stressed today, parliamentarians play a key role in this process, both at home and abroad. Will the Minister tell us to what extent—how and when—the Government will engage with MPs and Peers of all parties on this new agenda?

I welcome the Government's push that has delivered an SDG framework with a strong and explicit commitment to gender equality. Sadly, however, as a *Guardian* headline put it this week:

“20 years on from the UN summit in Beijing, equality remains a ... dream”

Critical issues such as maternal health, reproductive rights, sanitation and FGM fall between the remit of a range of UN agencies or between the cracks. MDGs helped focus attention on issues such as pregnancy care and childbirth, such that in the past 25 years maternal mortality has fallen globally by 45%, but developing countries still account for 99% of the deaths, with more than half in sub-Saharan Africa.

As highlighted by the noble Baroness, Lady Brinton, development goals will require effective co-ordination across government departments, devolved Administrations and stakeholders that have a role to play across the different goal areas of the new framework. Success in any one goal area will be dependent on progress in others. Strong co-ordination is particularly relevant for transnational issues such as violence against children, including trafficking, FGM and online sexual exploitation.

For example, as we heard in the debate, implementation of target 16.2 on ending all forms of violence against children will involve a wide range of UK government departments. To successfully implement this target, cross-departmental co-operation will need to be developed—as highlighted by the noble Baroness, Lady Brinton—bringing together both the UK's domestic and international contributions. Such a model can serve as a blueprint for other areas of SDG implementation. What mechanisms does the Minister envisage to help co-ordination between sectors and stakeholders to ensure ongoing monitoring, and to adapt to changed circumstances?

It is vital that the Government and DfID should continue to play a global leadership role on gender equality, as the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, said. However, to deliver and sustain the necessary change, we need to fully back women on the ground. That is why I support the development by DfID—in partnership

with, and implemented by, women's funds—of a new strategic fund under SDG5 to provide core, flexible and long-term funding to women's rights organisations. Will the Minister explain how DfID will ensure that all SDG5 target areas are equally and comprehensively addressed in DfID's work to support women's rights and gender equality under the strategic vision for girls and women?

Women who are the most affected by poverty have the least access to, and influence over, the decisions being made to tackle it. The Rana Plaza disaster which killed 1,129 people was a stark reminder of the human cost behind cheap fashion in our high streets. Some 3.6 million women work in Bangladesh's garment industry, most of them in factories similar to the Rana Plaza. Progress has been made, with retailers signing up to legally binding building safety agreements, but Governments need to act, too. Will the Minister take the lead in advocating the change needed to protect the lives of workers around the world, including support for ILO conventions?

Although significant progress was made at Addis Ababa, as we heard, on financing for development—highlighted particularly by the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey—we still need global agreement on tax transparency to ensure that companies pay their tax in-country. We need to support Governments to collect their own taxes to reduce aid dependency and foster good government.

The UK already has a competitive advantage in global health, and the Government must continue this by prioritising SDG 3, on health. The three sub-goals that require particular focus are: target 3.2, to end preventable newborn and under-five deaths; and target 3.3, to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases. I urge the Minister to sustain and, where possible, increase the UK's £536 million invested annually in malaria to achieve malaria elimination. Most importantly, on this side of the House we believe that the focus should be on universal health coverage, which will make countries resilient to health concerns such as Ebola before they become widespread emergencies.

Climate change hits the world's poorest people the hardest, as they lack the resilience to cope with drought, flood and food insecurity. Goal 13 acknowledges this and makes clear that failure to properly address the issue will undermine the potential of the entire agenda. As the right reverend Prelate said, the means to deliver will be determined at the UN conference in Paris, but it would be good to hear from the Minister how the Government are co-ordinating their engagement there with the New York agreement, as the outcomes are so clearly dependent on one another.

This side of the House has been clear on our priorities: tackling inequality and the attainment of human rights; universal health coverage; and combatting climate change. I hope that the Minister is able to match our ambition in her response to this debate.

1.27 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development (Baroness Verma) (Con):** My Lords, I join all noble Lords in thanking the noble

Lord, Lord Chidgey, and congratulate him on securing this debate. I commend him for his long-standing commitment to international development.

This debate is extremely timely, as other noble Lords have said, with the UN summit in New York beginning a week tomorrow. I am also glad that we have another opportunity to discuss the sustainable development goals and I thank all noble Lords for their contributions and for their many questions. As always, I will endeavour to respond to them, but if I fail to do so I will write to noble Lords.

I join the noble Lord, Lord McConnell, in his observation that against the backdrop of many of the challenges that we face, there is some cause to celebrate—the coming together of countries globally to agree to this universal document of global goals. The noble Baroness, Lady Northover, reminded us that we have cause to celebrate the 0.7% commitment and being the first of the G7 to put it into legislation. That demonstrates the UK's own commitment not just to working in the UK but our commitment to our partners across the globe.

The House is aware that United Nations member states agreed on 2 August to the post-2015 outcome document, now entitled *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. It covers the new sustainable development goals. That document will be formally adopted at the summit at the end of next week and will offer the international community a moment of both celebration and reflection.

I also agree with the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, that we should celebrate the successes of the millennium development goals and the significant results that the international community has achieved over the past 15 years. As he and many noble Lords rightly pointed out, extreme poverty has been cut by more than half, more than 90% of children worldwide now have a primary education and child mortality is less than half what it was in 1990. The UK has played a crucial role in those successes and the lives of millions of people around the world have been improved because of the money that we have spent and the actions that we have taken.

However, we all know that our job is not done. Some 836 million people remain in extreme poverty and the challenges of development are more complex than they were in the past. We must consider how we will do development differently over the next 15 years to make extreme poverty a thing of the past and to build a safer, more sustainable future. We must also consider what the post-2015 agenda means for that.

The outcome document is the result of three years of painstaking consultations, discussions and negotiations that have brought together the widest possible group of nations, civil society organisations, businesses and citizens from every part of the world. The UK showed clear leadership from the beginning of this process, starting with the Prime Minister's co-chairmanship of the UN high-level panel, which set the agenda for the debates and discussions that would follow. In particular it established many of the key principles that have endured to the final outcome document, such as the importance of including the issues of peace and good governance, and the need to leave no one behind.

[BARONESS VERMA]

The final result in the outcome document is an agenda that is unprecedented in its ambition. The sustainable development goals—or “global goals” as they are increasingly being known—are a huge step change beyond the millennium development goals. Our assessment is that they are a major step forward in four fundamental ways. First, they are universal. As noble Lords have said, the new goals were not dreamed up in a back room of the United Nations by unaccountable officials. They represent a universal and inclusive agenda, negotiated by all countries, for all countries. Developed and developing countries alike will deliver them, including the UK, and success will require the action of citizens, Governments and businesses.

Secondly, the global goals are comprehensive. They represent a broad set of priorities that match the development challenges the world faces. They bring together the challenge of finishing the job on the MDGs and ending extreme poverty with the ever-growing risks faced from climate change and environmental degradation, while addressing the underlying causes of poverty, such as conflict and corruption. The inspiring preamble to the outcome document defines the agenda around the five “Ps”: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. It is an agenda that people can truly get behind.

Thirdly, the goals are a step forward in the sense that the new agenda rests on the excellent agreement we reached in Addis Ababa in July to modernise the Financing for Development regime. UK aid will continue to be crucial, as will aid from all donors, but we will not be able to finance these goals with ODA alone. The Addis Ababa action agenda brings in the full range of financial and non-financial issues—including domestic taxation, foreign direct investment and, as noble Lords have said, tackling illicit flows and corruption—to marshal more resources to deliver the goals. This is a huge and crucial step forward.

Fourthly, and in many respects most importantly, a key principle permeates the fabric of the new agenda: that we must leave no one behind. This means that no target should be considered met unless it has been achieved by all segments of society. Progress against the goals must be measured by data disaggregated by age, sex, disability and other status.

Those four points will underpin the UK’s approach to the implementation of the global goals and our objectives at the summit. DfID will be the lead department in co-ordinating the UK’s international implementation of the goals. It is early days yet and the global indicators against which the agenda will be measured will not be ready until next year, but we are thinking now about how we will implement the agenda. The global goals will be the starting point for all DfID’s work. They will be built into our strategic objectives and inform the reviews of our work that are going on now, including the multilateral and bilateral aid reviews.

Over the coming months, DfID will make strategic decisions about how we will work with our partners. We will help to implement the goals where we have a clear comparative advantage and will encourage all our partners to plan and report against them. Increasingly,

implementation of the goals will require a whole-government approach. This means working in partnership with other departments across all sectors in service of the goals—working in partnership with others to deliver the best of British expertise.

As a universal agenda, the UK will take the goals on board domestically. We are already compliant with many of them. We are still considering how this will be done, and are working closely with the Cabinet Office and the Office for National Statistics to determine how this can be co-ordinated and measured more effectively.

Our approach to delivery will feature strongly at the summit. The Government will use their influence at the highest levels to lead the world in implementing the global goals. We will encourage countries to take an ambitious approach to the delivery of the agenda and avoid cherry picking the goals and targets that are the easiest to achieve. We will celebrate and highlight some of the important aspects of the new agenda where the UK has shown and continues to show real leadership, not least on empowering women and girls and promoting gender equality, and on the role of peace, good governance and access to justice. These were major successes for the UK in the United Nations negotiations, and we should rightly prioritise them as we seek to inspire the world at the summit.

The summit is expected to be the largest gathering of world leaders in history. We will use the opportunity to communicate the global goals to the widest possible audience. Before the goals can be implemented they must be known by the world. The real prize is for citizens everywhere to embrace this agenda and use it to hold their Governments to account. The summit will be the starting point, kicking off a global effort that will last 15 years and beyond.

The UK, along with our partners, including Richard Curtis’s Project Everyone, will work to communicate the global goals to the whole world. Together we will emphasise the importance of implementation and the need for all actors to hold themselves and each other to account for delivering the goals. We will engage Governments, civil society, young people and the private sector throughout, generating the energy and momentum needed for the world to hit the ground running next year. As Save the Children said to the International Development Committee in the other place last week, this agenda is an incredibly inspiring declaration of intent, comparable with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its progressive vision for the future of humanity.

I turn to some of the points and questions raised by noble Lords. I hope that through my comments I have laid out a clear vision of the UK’s priorities. As I said, the Prime Minister’s role as co-chair of the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda was very much the beginning of that. We believe that the new agenda reflects strongly the priorities consistently identified by the UK, and that there are clear goals and targets on poverty, health, education, outcomes, gender, livelihoods and economic growth as well as governance, peace, security and justice for all.

Our main priority was for the new agenda to be clearly understood. As noble Lords said, it needs to be easily understood because if we cannot remember the 17 goals and the many targets, it will be very difficult for others to embrace, so we need to find a narrative around that.

The principle of leaving no one behind is one of the most important and potentially transformative principles of the post-2015 agenda by calling for all targets to be met by all segments. As the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, said, it is important that we do not lose sight of the very important phraseology of leaving no one behind.

Noble Lords including the noble Lords, Lord McConnell and Lord Loomba, the noble Baroness, Lady Tonge, and many others focused on the agenda around girls and women. As noble Lords are aware, we at DfID have ensured that women and girls remain at the heart of all our programmes. Throughout the post-2015 process, our objective will be to ensure that there is strong and explicit commitment to achieve gender equality and the empowerment and realisation of the human rights of girls and women.

The outcome document includes excellent and hard-won targets on ensuring access to sexual health and reproductive rights and on tackling harmful practices such as FGM and child and early forced marriage. We are already making changes to the lives of girls and women, which has been a core priority. We launched the *Strategic Vision for Girls and Women* back in 2011. Since then, our country has helped to change the lives of millions for the better. We want to be much more ambitious. This is about increasing access to services and getting under the skin of the problem. We will make sure that the SDGs deliver for girls and women by tackling the discrimination they face throughout their life cycle from infancy to old age. The International Development (Gender Equality) Act imposes a legal obligation to consider how the UK's ODA spend will contribute to gender equality. The multilateral and bilateral reviews will examine the extent to which we are reaching girls and women throughout their life cycle.

Issues around finance were mentioned. We can all be pleased at the outcomes of the conference at Addis Ababa and the action agenda that came forth from that. I hope that I referred in my opening comments to many of the points that were raised by noble Lords. The Addis tax initiative commits us to doubling our support for tax reform in the developing world by 2020 and ensures that developing countries can benefit from an international tax agenda.

I was asked how these provisions would be implemented domestically. I think I have made it clear that, along with other countries, we will implement and comply with the SDGs domestically. Her Majesty's Government will have a co-ordinated approach, including through assigning lead departments to implement each target. In addition, we will identify interested departments. In July, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster wrote to all relevant departments asking how they would approach the implementation of the goals. We are currently considering those responses. The noble Baroness, Lady Brinton, is absolutely right: we have generated some extremely good partnerships across government and

we need to build on those. However, we also need to develop greater partnerships with civil society organisations, other Governments and the private sector.

Noble Lords asked how we would monitor and review the outcomes of these goals. The outcome document states that there will be robust, voluntary, participatory and transparent follow-up and review frameworks focused around the UN High-Level Political Forum. The UK has pressed for robust accountability mechanisms that will drive implementation and will be rooted in data participation and the principle of leaving no one behind. This will give us the picture of progress that is essential if we are to identify whether countries are remaining on track to achieve these goals.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Sheffield spoke of involving faith groups in this field and the significant and distinctive part that they play with the SDGs and civil society. The UK intends to strengthen its relationship with faith groups. We have launched the *Faith Partnership Principles* paper. As a result, there is now a greater understanding of the need for us to understand the role of religion in development. We will be working closely with faith groups to put these principles into practice through building a better understanding of faith in development.

The right reverend Prelate and other noble Lords raised the issue of climate change. We are fully committed to tackling climate change. We welcome the integration of objectives on climate change and sustainable development into the global goals. My department has already begun integrating work on climate change into our development programmes as part of the international climate facility. Over the next spending review we will set up this work to ensure that our programmes across a range of sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, energy and social protection are climate-smart and take into account a changing climate.

The Government are committed to reducing the UK's carbon emissions in the most cost-effective way for hard-working families and businesses. Our support has driven down the cost of renewable energy significantly and it has become easier for the renewables industry to stand on its own two feet without subsidies. Improvements in technology as well as a far faster growth in renewable-energy projects than anticipated has meant that renewables are generating more electricity requiring greater subsidies, so the Government are taking control to avoid overspending, which helps keep people's bills down for both homes and businesses.

I have run out of time, although I still have a number of responses I would like to have delivered. I once again thank the noble Lord, Lord Chidgey, for introducing this debate. I agree with him and other noble Lords that these goals must mean something to everyone, which is why we must all push for a comprehensive and easy way to understand and deliver them.

1.48 pm

**Lord Chidgey:** My Lords, I thank noble Lords for contributing to the debate. I particularly thank my noble friends Lady Northover, Lady Brinton, Lord

[LORD CHIDGEY]

Loomba and Lord Purvis of Tweed for their contributions. I thank the noble Lords, Lord Collins and Lord McConnell, and the noble Baroness, Lady Mobarik, for their contributions, together with those of other noble Lords. I also thank and congratulate the Minister the noble Baroness, Lady Verma, on her response to this complex and wide-ranging debate. I feel sure that this will merely be the opening discourse in a continuing debate. I would like to think that today's debate will become a check-list for progress in the future as time goes by.

In responding to the debate, perhaps I may make two or three points. First, there are those in our society who dismiss the aid and development agenda, saying that there is no point in the SDGs, that nothing has changed and that throwing money at the problem improves nothing. Let me be clear: since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty has more than halved. It would be difficult to convince the more than 1 billion people who have escaped extreme poverty that nothing has changed, and even more difficult to convince the 1.2 billion people who still live on less than £1 a day that no more needs to be done.

With regard to value for money on DfID spending, I am convinced that no other government department requires such intense collaboration with international partners to get the best value for money for the British taxpayer. International development demands international co-operation. DfID goes to great lengths to hold the recipients of UK aid to account and often offers assistance where corruption is known to be an issue, specifically so that it can be avoided. Corruption kills people; it is as simple as that. Perpetrators of these crimes should be brought to justice under international laws applying throughout the EU and the USA. Nevertheless, it is shameful that the City of London is still considered to be the international destination of choice for laundering billions of pounds of untaxed illicit funds from developing countries—funds that should be invested in relieving poverty and saving lives among penniless citizens.

Finally, next week, as many Peers have commented, Presidents and Prime Ministers from 193 countries will meet in New York to agree global goals to end poverty by 2030. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for parliamentarians to take a stand for the future of people and the planet. It is an opportunity to let our leaders know that we are watching them and will hold them to account. I hope that your Lordships will agree.

*Motion agreed.*

## Dairy Industry

### *Question for Short Debate*

1.52 pm

*Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the dairy industry in the United Kingdom, in the light of the European Union aid package announced on 7 September.

**The Earl of Shrewsbury (Con):** My Lords, I am grateful to your Lordships for affording me this opportunity to ask the Question for Short Debate today. In doing so, I declare my interest as a member of the National Farmers' Union. I am delighted that my noble friend Lord Gardiner of Kimble is to reply. He possesses a deep knowledge of the countryside in general and rural issues in particular. I know that he is well aware of the significant problems which face the UK dairy industry, especially as his family has long been associated with that industry. From small beginnings last week, I am delighted to see so many noble Lords taking part today, which shows the importance of this subject. I am most grateful for their participation and look forward to listening to their comments. I am genuinely sorry that the noble Lord, Lord Grantchester, is unable to join us on the Benches opposite on this occasion. I know that he has another appointment but he is an acknowledged expert on the dairy industry and we shall miss his expertise today.

Farmers are having a pretty rough time, with the dairy sector experiencing probably the worst of it. The situation is degenerating and dire. Farm-gate milk price returns to UK farmers have fallen by 25% to 30% since the summer of 2014. This equates to falls from around 35p per litre to an average price in May this year of 24p per litre. The variance in UK farm-gate milk prices is the widest ever seen, with farmers on retailer-aligned liquid milk contracts receiving prices above 30p per litre but others supplying into powder and milk brokering receiving prices down to 15p per litre. In fact my next-door neighbour at home, who only milks 60-odd cows, is on 14p per litre with First Milk.

This price structure has occurred as a direct result of falling global commodity prices, which were down by nearly 50% in the same period, and other external factors including the ban on imports by Russia. That ban has recently been extended by a further 12 months. Further factors are reducing purchasing by China and the Middle East. Currently, there are 9,777 dairy farmers in England and Wales; that is 488 fewer than in July 2014, and the figure is falling weekly. Many are leaving the industry because they simply cannot continue to fail to make ends meet and young, aspiring dairy farmers cannot get a foot on the ladder. It is really sad.

Just over half of the milk produced in the UK annually is sold as fresh liquid milk through retailers, and is subject to a competitive tendering process where processors bid for long-term contracts. Most retail milk is sold as skimmed or semi-skimmed, so liquid processors end up with a surplus of cream to be sold as retail or wholesale, or to be made into another product such as butter. The huge fall in global commodity prices has reduced the value of these milk constituents dramatically. Around a quarter of UK milk is processed into cheese, in the main into Cheddar. Cheddar is traded internationally and subject to high levels of competition from other countries, notably Ireland. The remaining volume of milk is processed into a variety of products, including yoghurt and milk powder as well as constituent products such as whey—and then we have the supermarkets.

Milk has been at the forefront of a UK retail price war as the major supermarkets compete for custom from hard discounters. Fresh liquid milk has been heavily reduced in price to the extent that the average price for four pints is just 98p. The full effect of these discounts cannot be easily understood, due to the commercial sensitivity of processor-retailer negotiations. But in the long term, this discounting devalues the product and could cause serious damage to the industry if there is not enough value to be passed down the supply chain. I believe that if retailers choose to operate in this way, they must absorb the cost themselves and not seek to recoup it further down that chain. Furthermore, I believe that the end customer would not object to a small rise in the cost of this highly nutritious and top-quality product, which currently is cheaper than bottled water. However, any such rise in price must be passed in its entirety to the farmer.

It is true that a few supermarkets have developed direct relationships with their liquid milk suppliers, paying a so-called cost of production-plus price to farmers, but only around 10% of UK milk is currently under such an arrangement. Cheese wholesale prices have also been falling dramatically, especially with the demise of exports to Russia, as I mentioned earlier, but there is little evidence of any of these cost savings being passed on to consumers—a move which would surely have the effect of bolstering consumption. Can my noble friend the Minister comment on the recent emergency agricultural council meeting, which I know he attended? Following that meeting, what strategic decisions for the long term have Her Majesty's Government planned to further support the UK dairy industry?

What can Her Majesty's Government do? The UK dairy industry is adjusting, albeit painfully, to an increasingly volatile global market. While the long-term prospects for dairying are positive and UK dairy farmers remain the most efficient in the EU, there are urgent short-term issues to be overcome. For instance, Her Majesty's Government need to ensure a timely payment of the BPS in December to ease cash flow in the short term. There also needs to be a review of UK dairy processing capacity. In addition, fairness must be ensured in the supply chain by supporting and strengthening the work of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, while encouraging milk processors to comply with the voluntary code on milk contracts. Finally, in this shopping list of numerous items, there must be a reduction in the regulatory burden borne by dairy farmers.

In conclusion, in many ways the dairy industry in the UK is a victim of its own phenomenal success. We must build on that success, further improving our skills in efficiency, productivity and first-class animal husbandry. We in this country are proud to be world leaders in dairy farming and we must do everything possible to encourage and support our farmers to remain at the top of their game and to be viable, so that they can have the confidence to invest in the future.

1.59 pm

**Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville (LD):**

My Lords, I thank the noble Earl, Lord Shrewsbury, for securing this debate. I am not an expert but put my name down to speak due to the notice on the A30 that said "Save our Dairy Farmers" and after watching local TV coverage of the drastic steps dairy farmers were forced to take to bring their plight to a wider audience.

I am fortunate to live in a village which has four active dairy farms, and others within a short distance. They are all, without exception, hard-working and diligent farmers, but not all are prospering. The averaging-out of costs of producing milk is a long-established practice but, like all averages, it does not suit all. There are many quirks in the system which seriously affect some farmers' livelihoods and do not lead to fairness or transparency.

Speaking to local farmers, I hear some fairly distressing stories. Farmer A, on a contract to Müller Wiseman, received 33.6p per litre in May 2014. He is currently paid 23.15p; from October this will drop to 22.35p, down a total of 11.25p per litre. The cost of his feed has dropped over the same period, but the decrease is well behind the rate of the drop in price, and he is down over £14,000 per month. When he left school in 1977, there were 93,000 dairy farmers in the country. Now, there are now 9,500, and they are leaving the sector daily rather than weekly.

Farmer B, on a contract with 300 other dairy farmers to Dairy Crest for Sainsbury's, gets 30.92p per litre. In October, he will have a small drop to 30.81p. His costs are assessed at 33.48p, so he will make a loss of 2.5p per litre. The milk tanker picks up the milk from both farmers on the same trip, and it is processed together, yet they receive widely different prices for their milk. This anomaly cannot be right and needs addressing.

Four miles further down the road is a very different farmer. This farmer won the Gold Cup at the Livestock Event 2015. He has a herd of 1,800 and milks three times a day. His farm and milking parlours are immaculate and he puts animal welfare at the heart of his operation. I commend him for his efforts and enterprise. But 1,800 cows take some feeding. I have been present at parish council meetings of villages which straddle the A30 and listened to concerns and complaints from the public about the size, speed and frequency of tractor movements through their village. Although I understand that the Government's general agenda is that bigger is better, this is not always the case. As smaller dairy farmers give up in desperation, the larger conglomerates will take over. This will have an impact on the countryside as we know it, and will not always be good.

There is a disconnect between the cost and effort involved in farming and the public's perception of where the food they eat comes from. Not everyone watches "Countryfile", and many in our urban areas have never been in the presence of a cow. Their connection with the countryside, if any, is limited to travelling through to their holiday at the seaside. More publicity is needed to assist understanding of the process of getting milk on to supermarket shelves and thence poured on breakfast cereals in the home.

[BARONESS BAKEWELL OF HARDINGTON MANDEVILLE]

I welcome the EU's €500 million package to support farmers but want to know what the UK's share of this is, how it is to be distributed and how quickly. There is an indication that it will be from 16 October. Is the Minister able to give us more detail?

2.04 pm

**Lord Plumb (Con):** My Lords, I thank my noble friend for leading us in this debate on the state of the dairy industry, which, I submit, is overdue. I declare an interest as a farmer, although sadly not a dairy farmer any longer. My son persuaded me quite a long time ago now that there were more pleasant ways of losing money than milking cows, so we decided to diversify, which we still do.

We joined a sector of farming that had 25,000 farmers milking cows in 2000. Now, as has already been said, the number is well below 10,000 and falling. At the same time, during that period, we have lost 314,000 cattle slaughtered with bovine TB, costing the taxpayer over £500 million, a figure that is still rising. The important figure to remember here is that the deficit in the balance of trade in dairy products increased in 2013 by £91 million to a total of £1.36 billion—that is a trade deficit in products that we can produce ourselves.

The European Union presented a €500 million package the other day for the whole of the European dairy industry, of which we will of course get a small share. However, what is needed is not palliative measures or short-term handouts but a fair market price and a more stable market in long-term business. The frustration of farmers—dairy farmers in particular—is therefore understandable. In theory, we have a comparative advantage in dairy production over the rest of Europe and even of the world, given the ability to grow grass and to ride the impact of climate change, with the potential to supply an increasing population.

There are many problems. The first is the international market, compounded by the Russian trade ban, the effect of which is estimated by some as equivalent to about 2p a litre on milk. Then there is the increased production still taking place in New Zealand, where they have very large dairy herds; the downturn in Asian demand; and oversupply in the rest of the European Union. We have to strengthen and bolster our domestic sector so that it is more resilient against such external issues. We have experienced supermarket price wars, which I need not dwell on, and food price deflation, especially over the last 18 months.

I am mostly encouraged by many aspects of the Government's decisions in recent times and by their ethos of supporting business and hard work rather than market intervention and the imposition of nanny state rules. We need to get rid of many of those rules that are already there and see that no more are produced. I am pleased that the Government have a commitment to a 25-year food strategy, and the dairy sector has to be a major part of that. I welcome the support for the Groceries Code Adjudicator, who has the ability now to fine in cases where it is obvious that there is unfair trade. It is important to consider further powers in that direction. I welcome tax averaging for farms.

Farming is a long-term business and tax averaging over a period of years is essential. I welcome the recognition of food production and processing as the largest manufacturing sector in the United Kingdom, with a commitment to follow science and ring-fence research and development funding.

We also lost the marketing organisation years ago, which we should not have done. In these circumstances, can the Minister bring together people in the dairy industry to try to agree solutions acceptable to all and renew the confidence in all parts of it? We have been—we are still—living through times of austerity. Therefore, surely, it is crazy economics to see a balance of trade deficit in the dairy sector of £1.3 billion. That is a national disaster, not just a farming crisis.

2.09 pm

**Lord Trees (CB):** My Lords, I too thank the noble Earl, Lord Shrewsbury, for securing this timely debate. The current crisis in the dairy industry is indeed severe, as he so clearly articulated. Moreover, it is causing great stress and hardship to our dairy farmers, who rightly attract much public support. They work incredibly hard for very modest reward; they cope with the disasters of epidemic diseases such as foot and mouth every few decades; and they cope constantly with the persisting endemic disease problems, such as bovine tuberculosis. Sadly, but perhaps not surprisingly, they suffer the highest suicide rate of any working group.

The current situation is complex. It involves an ephemeral conjunction of events, as has been described: the Russian ban, a global glut in production, a fall-back in Chinese demand and other factors. All that is overlaid on a long-term agricultural revolution, as the industry seeks to achieve financial sustainability in a competitive global marketplace. That latter challenge is one that many of our industries have had to face in the past 40 to 50 years, but I would argue that there is a strong case for some special support for our dairy farmers—particularly in the short term.

Special pleading is never easy, but I suggest that it is justified for a number of reasons. Our dairy farmers produce a nutritious, essential staple food, which contributes substantially to our food security. We cannot afford to lose the industry. Moreover, our dairy farmers are major stewards of the countryside. They have a key role in the rural economy. Finally, the UK has the geography and, dare I say it, a very good climate for growing grass, which dairy cows very efficiently convert from something that we cannot eat to a nutritious edible product.

What is being and what can be done? The recently announced EU support package has been referred to by several noble Lords, and the €500 million is certainly extremely helpful, but in reality it is fairly modest set against the value of the dairy industry in the EU of about €40 billion per year or the loss of the Russian market, which in Europe stands at about €5.5 billion a year. In the UK, I understand that the slice of the emergency package that we are likely to get is about €36 million. Again, that should be set against the loss of the Russian export market, which our farmers have hitherto enjoyed, valued at about €2.3 billion.

Consumers can help. We can buy British, as the noble Lord, Lord Plumb, said. Incredibly, in this time of crisis for processed dairy products, there is a trade deficit of about £1.2 billion. We could be producing those products and consuming them ourselves.

Milk schemes for children should be maintained. They not only support our farmers but provide valuable nutrition for our young children and promote a healthy diet. That leads me to my first question. Can the Minister assure the House that the EU school milk scheme and the UK's nursery milk scheme will be continued?

We can do more to ensure fair contracts for dairy farmers. The groceries code was introduced after a Competition Commission report into the supermarket sector which found that the main problems were between the 10 biggest supermarkets and their suppliers. Now, most of the milk produced by farmers in the UK is bought by just two processors. Will the Government bring forward the review of the groceries code during April 2016 and legislate to extend protection to primary producers of milk?

2.14 pm

**The Lord Bishop of St Albans:** My Lords, I, too, am grateful to the noble Earl, Lord Shrewsbury, for raising these important issues today. I declare an interest as a beneficiary of the Church Commissioners, who own 11,500 acres of land which is used by dairy farming tenants across the country, and as part of a church which serves more than 8,000 rural parishes across England and Wales, many of which are intimately connected to the farming community.

Both my parents worked in the dairy industry, and I know from my work on rural affairs that the UK dairy industry is a great British asset which forms an important cornerstone of our wider social and economic infrastructure. British dairy is at the forefront of farming research innovation.

The farming industry is different from other industries. The primary duty of government is to make sure that the population is fed. Just as global markets have meant that prices have collapsed, there will come a time when they will suddenly rise dramatically. That is how markets work. The point about milk and dairy is that you cannot simply turn it on again. You cannot keep cows tucked away somewhere just in case. It is vital that we make sure that we continue to have a basic ability to produce food.

With that in mind, I start by welcoming the Government's show of commitment to supporting the British dairy industry in the long term. I am particularly encouraged by Her Majesty's Government's commitment to source local food for public services and central government. Indeed, I would welcome an update from the Minister on what progress has been made on that front.

However, many of the Government's initiatives are inevitably long-term endeavours, but farmers are facing an immediate crisis that currently threatens the industry and is causing great concern, heartache and anxiety. To this end, the emergency European aid package for farmers agreed last week is most welcome, as it has

given the UK Government much greater flexibility over how they respond to the immediate needs of dairy farmers. Perhaps most significantly, the EU Commission has acceded to UK requests for extra flexibility on the rules surrounding direct payment under the basic payments scheme, ruling that on-the-spot checks will not need to be completed before payments are made. There are still question marks over whether that flexibility will be enough to ensure that direct payments can be made on time, or whether the Rural Payments Agency will be able to take advantage of early payments from mid-October. Making sure that farmers are given a clear and accurate timeline of when they can expect payment is essential to their planning.

The EU Commission has already confirmed that Britain will be receiving €36 million in targeted aid, and that member states have been granted scope to provide additional aid to support farmers facing cash-flow problems. I look forward to hearing how Her Majesty's Government plan to use that targeted aid and whether they will provide further state aid for struggling farmers. The case for state aid is a good one, particularly if early October direct payments will not be possible.

Something that the EU Commission did not do, despite requests from many farming unions and European Governments, is to announce a review of the current intervention prices. I know the complications and arguments about that; they have been well rehearsed. I understand that the EU Commission has its reasons for resisting such a review and that the UK Government supported the Commission's position. However, at 16p a litre, the current intervention price is patently too low to offer any real protection to farmers. Such protection is important: as I said, the nature of milk production is such that it cannot simply be turned on as soon as demand increases. Can Her Majesty's Government indicate whether they are willing to consider their position on the intervention price should the current position extend, say, into the new year?

2.18 pm

**Lord Marlesford (Con):** My Lords, I declare an ex-interest as a Suffolk farmer: 8 October 2004 was the last day we milked cows at home. We gave up because of the price. At the time, the price was 18p a litre and it was costing us 21p to produce. We were producing about 1 million litres. The arithmetic is simple: 3p a litre on 1 million litres is about £30,000, and that was a negative on the bottom line. There was nothing we could do about that. It was a sad wrench. I had milked my father's cows as a schoolboy. During the school holidays, the cowmen would throw pebbles at my window at 5 am to wake me up. Full of sleep, I would stagger off to help milk by hand my father's small herd of Guernsey cows. I could still do the hand milking in my sleep.

The problem has changed relatively little. As we heard, only half of the milk produced is drunk as liquid milk, the rest being converted. So the supermarkets know they can cut prices, even if it forces milk producers out of business, without risking their supply of liquid milk. That is the key factor. The figures speak for themselves. In 1995, there were 36,000 dairy farmers

[LORD MARLESFORD]

in the UK. Now there are 13,000. In the five years between 1995 and 2000, 20% of dairy farmers went out of business. In the next five years, a further 29% did. In the most recent five years, it was another 13%. Yet the crucial figure is that the national output of milk has stayed static during the past 20 years. In 1994-95, we produced 14 billion litres of milk. In 2014-15, we also produced 14 billion litres.

The average herd size has increased but nothing like as much as one would expect. In 20 years, it has gone up from 75 cows per farm to 133. That is in spite of the huge herds of which we heard from the noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell, a few moments ago. Many small producers, for example in the West Country, have no alternative but still struggle to survive and do so at a survival level. Honestly, with the income per person for some of those farmers, there is real poverty. Now, driving from London to Cornwall, cows by the roadside are merely something for the kids to play the “spot a cow” game with. I do not really see a solution to this, only ways to ameliorate the position.

I rather wish my noble friend Lord Deben, who is in his place, was speaking today because he could then explain whether he still feels that the abolition of the Milk Marketing Board—which gave farmers a stable price—was a good thing. That abolition liberated the supermarkets to do their worst. The situation is extremely gloomy. It is essential for Britain’s countryside, the farming community and our food supply that we continue to have a dairy industry.

2.22 pm

**The Duke of Somerset (CB):** My Lords, I, too, thank the noble Earl, Lord Shrewsbury, for initiating this timely Question for Short Debate. I declare an interest as an owner of agricultural land.

The background to this EU-wide farming crisis is well known and has been well rehearsed. However, maybe some repetition at this point would serve for a bit of emphasis. A price fall of from 25% to—some say—50% since last summer was caused by a fall of global commodity prices, the Russian import ban, less demand from China and the Middle East as their economies falter, and, above all, overproduction in the EU. According to the National Farmers’ Union, nearly 500 dairy farmers in England and Wales have quit production in the past 12 months or so.

The UK industry works in a global market and of its own free will. There is no right to a fair price. Over-production always means lower prices. However, that should not mean producers having to subsidise retailers at prices below the cost of production. Once a dairy farmer ceases, they hardly ever return to the industry. We should remember that most commodities are under extreme pressure and there is no easy answer. We heard that about half the milk produced is sold fresh through retailers. The rest is split roughly between cheese and yoghurt and powders. All this is affected by movements in international dairy markets, with farmers at the bottom of the supply chain.

Supermarkets are often demonised, and they should share risk and reward equitably. If they wish to sell four pints of milk for less than a pound, they should

absorb that cost themselves and not get it from their suppliers. It follows, as we heard, that the work of the Groceries Code Adjudicator must be strengthened to stamp out unfair trading practices. Other helpful suggestions from our farming leaders include longer-term thinking to embrace points such as fixed-margin contracts, much better country-of-origin labelling, the development of an effective dairy futures market to manage volatility and timely payments to farmers for the work they have already undertaken. They should preferably be paid in the autumn, as before.

The majority of the €500 million package is for targeted aid taken from the super levy on over-quota producers. That would not come out of the wider EU budget and therefore seems a very sensible purse. However, it is essential that this payment is invested in a planned manner and not frittered away aimlessly. Alongside that is the proposal to bring forward some of the direct payments to 16 October. This will most likely be mired in cross-checking and fear of penalties from the authorities.

Nevertheless, some farmers remain amazingly optimistic. I hope that the implementation of some of these suggestions might justify this hope. Do the Government share this sentiment?

2.26 pm

**Baroness Parminter (LD):** My Lords, I add my voice to those thanking the noble Earl, Lord Shrewsbury, for bringing forward this debate on an issue that is vital not only for hard-pressed dairy farmers but for the wider rural economy and tourism in dairy areas, where in the last 10 years the number of dairy farms has halved.

The business of producing milk has been one of the great influences on the shape of our British countryside and British rural life. It helped create the patchwork quilt of small fields and hedgerows threaded together by lanes and punctuated by rural hamlets. It sustained small family farms for generations and inspired artists and writers to give expression to a sense both of place and of who we are as a country. If we want vibrant rural communities in future, then the Government must retain a very sharp focus on supporting our dairy industry and its farmers.

We know that milk prices are no longer protected. The reality is that they are and will remain at the mercy of the global market. Other noble Lords expressed many of the pressures that that puts on the industry. However, I welcome what our Government and our partners in Europe are doing. There is no single solution to this crisis, and it is better that we work with our European partners to support them in making the situation much better.

In the time I have available, I will touch on two issues: the importance of strong supply-chain relationships, and how the Government champion and respond to rural issues. Strong supply-chain relationships exist between some dairy suppliers and supermarkets, including Waitrose, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury’s and the Co-op, which have schemes in place to ensure farmers are paid a price above the average cost of production for fresh milk for at least a portion of their liquid milk supply. However, as the noble Earl said in his opening

remarks, that accounts for only 10% of the market. Much more could be done. Like the noble Lords, Lord Plumb and Lord Trees, and the noble Duke, the Duke of Somerset, I hope that the review next year of the operation of the Groceries Code Adjudicator—a welcome introduction under the coalition Government—will, as the House of Commons EFRA Committee recommended earlier this year, look at how the GCA remit can be extended to incorporate suppliers throughout the supply chain.

Further, it is very clear that producer organisations build greater resilience into the industry and individual businesses, giving more collective power. We see that the strong co-operative structure within the organic sector has helped to keep supply and demand in balance as it has discouraged overproduction and developed added-value products, opened export markets and been able to negotiate with processors on behalf of its members. As such, organic dairy farmers are weathering the crisis better than their non-organic neighbours, as prices have not been decimated in the same way. What specifically are the Government doing to encourage more farmers to unite in producer organisations?

The issues affecting dairy farmers cannot be seen in isolation. There is an interconnected and often symbiotic relationship between those issues and the solutions that need to be looked at and the needs of wider rural communities—and, indeed, the need to protect our nature. It is vital that there is one department that has responsibility for them all—rural businesses and communities and the environment—as Defra does at present. We have a Secretary of State able in Cabinet and in Europe to argue the case for our farmers while mindful of the needs of rural communities and nature, which sustains them both. Rural businesses and communities and nature need one champion in government, and it would be a significant blow should it be dismantled. In the light of the forthcoming tight spending review, can the Minister confirm that the Government have ruled out disbanding Defra?

2.30 pm

**Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town (Lab):** My Lords, in thanking the noble Earl, Lord Shrewsbury, for his kind words about my noble friend Lord Grantchester, who is himself a farmer, I am delighted on this occasion to stand in his shoes as the shadow Consumer Minister, because, of course, this affects consumers where, in this case, our interests align with those of farmers. The Opposition firmly believe that farmers should get a fair deal for their milk. We have heard of the crisis facing the industry—the source of a very healthy and to me highly enjoyable product. Higher milk production and the action of wholesale purchases has led to farm gate prices falling below average production costs. That is untenable.

We support the dairy industry's voluntary code of practice, but want to see it adopted by the entire industry. Milk producers need improved bargaining power. At the moment, they are outmanoeuvred by the supermarkets engaging in price wars, with milk simply used as a weapon. That is bad for farmers, but also bad for consumers, who see a message that milk is a mere marketing tool. We need to see British milk on

supermarket shelves—yes, at prices which encourage consumers to buy it in preference to unhealthy fizzy drinks, but not purchased from farmers at prices which force them out of business.

So we would also like to see a tough new supermarket watchdog that can look across the supply chain by expanding the powers of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and protect food producers from unfair practices by the major supermarkets. The GCA covers only a narrow part of the supply chain between supermarkets and suppliers at the moment. Indeed, its head told the House of Lords that it could not get suppliers to produce evidence of breaches of the code, perhaps fearing retribution from big supermarkets. Will the Government support the calls made here today and earlier to extend the remit and powers of the GCA?

The UK nursery milk scheme gives children under five at an educational setting one-third of a pint of milk free a day, which I remember from my own youth, providing farmers with a ready market and helping to form life-long healthy diets. Under the EU school milk scheme, which we have heard about, children over five get subsidised milk. The EU is discussing reforms to the scheme, and the School & Nursery Milk Alliance has called on the Government to seize this opportunity to deliver the maximum benefits for schoolchildren and the dairy industry. Will the Minister clarify whether his department will continue claiming the subsidies from the European school milk scheme after the proposed changes? What discussions has he or his department had with the dairy industry about how it can benefit from the European school milk scheme? Perhaps he could also update us on plans for labelling of milk and milk products.

As the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of St Albans said, we cannot keep those cows tucked away in case we need them. This needs good action by the Government, and we will support them to help not just farmers but consumers so that we continue to get the milk, which is good for all of us, at a price good for consumers but also for the dairy industry.

2.34 pm

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Con):** My Lords, I declare my farming interests as set out in the register. I am a member of the National Farmers' Union. I, too, am most grateful to my noble friend Lord Shrewsbury for raising this important issue for debate. Coming as I do from a family much involved in the dairy industry over many generations, I know that it is a vital part of our £100 billion food and farming industry. Indeed, my first summer job was with the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers, and I am proud to wear its tie today.

I know of the pressures that farmers are under because of global volatility and a current surplus of milk on the world market. The Government have highlighted the need for EU-wide action to help farmers overcome the severe cash-flow pressures that they are undoubtedly under, and I was able to do so directly at the emergency Agriculture Council in Brussels last week. The Commission has listened to our calls and announced a support package for dairy farmers. The package will focus on three key areas: addressing the

[LORD GARDINER OF KIMBLE]

cash-flow difficulties; developing a dairy futures market, to which the noble Duke, the Duke of Somerset, referred, similar to those that already exist for grain and sugar, which would help the industry through periods of unpredictable price shifts and give farmers more certainty over prices; and increasing openness and fairness in the dairy supply chain. Commissioner Hogan announced further details of this package at the informal Agriculture Council on Tuesday of this week. Indeed, the noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville, asked about this, and the precise figure is that the UK has been allocated €36.07 million in direct aid for dairy farmers, the third-largest of all the member states, in recognition of our calls for the Commission to provide support for UK farmers suffering from cash-flow problems. Rightly, the question has been asked on this, and as a matter of urgency we are working on the right way to allocate these funds, speaking to the devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland about distribution across the United Kingdom

Other elements of this package are aimed to safeguard farming for the future, and the sustainability of the dairy supply chain. To this end, we welcome the announcement of a high-level group to look at the futures market and other ways in which to spread risk more evenly. I have to say to the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of St Albans that the Government believe that that, rather than going down the route of intervention on prices, is the best and most contemporary way forward; I think he understands that because I have said it before. In addition to distributing immediate direct aid, the Government recognise the importance of timely payment of the basic payment, as my noble friend Lord Shrewsbury and the right reverend Prelate have said. That is important to ease the cash-flow problems that farmers are facing. Ministerial colleagues and the RPA are working together to ensure that these are paid as soon as practically possible when the statutory payment window opens on 1 December.

As my noble friend Lord Shrewsbury said, it is vital to ensure that dairy farmers are not subject to undue regulatory burdens. In addition to our aim of seeking simplification of the CAP, our processes will be streamlined to make better use of the technology and data to reduce radically the number of inspections. By summer 2016, farmers will have to deal with only one single farm inspection task force, which will combine farm visits with mandatory checks. As well as taking action to support UK farmers now, I assure my noble friends Lord Marlesford and Lord Plumb that the Government want and intend to support the industry to become more resilient and ready to take advantage of the growing demand for British dairy products both at home and overseas.

The noble Baroness, Lady Parminter, referred to Defra and its work and what the Secretary of State and ministerial colleagues are doing. Last week, the Secretary of State set out a series of initiatives. There are quite a number, which I will go through in slightly staccato form because it is important for noble Lords to know about each one. They include an urgent

industry-led review of best practice in the dairy supply chain facilitated by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board. We also need more investment in processing capacity, which needs to be looked at. We have made a new commitment to publish details of central government catering contracts, including their renewal dates, to bring transparency to the market and allow dairy farmers the opportunity to prepare and compete for contracts. The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of St Albans referred to this. There will be a review of procurement across the wider public sector, including hospitals, schools and prisons. Our aim is that all fresh milk and more than 90% of butter and cheese bought by central government is British. We also want to improve the promotion of British dairy produce within the public sector by working with major catering providers. We also intend to use the Food is GREAT brand to showcase high-quality produce at home and overseas. We intend to work with the food industry, including supermarkets, retailers, manufacturers and caterers, on more consistent labelling and branding of British dairy products. I hope that the noble Baroness, Lady Hayter, will derive some satisfaction from this being something that we are very strong on. We will press the Commission on this because we want it to make it easier for consumers and food businesses to know when they are buying British dairy products.

It is clearly in everyone's interest—perhaps this is a message to the supermarkets—that supermarkets, caterers and the food industry have security of supply of milk and dairy products. Some supermarkets share with farmers the risk of price fluctuations. I hope and believe that supermarkets should be sensitive to what many noble Lords have said about farmers and consumers.

The Secretary of State will lead a trade delegation to China in November, which will include eight British dairy businesses, to promote quality British products to that growing market. This is part of our commitment to continue to expand export market opportunities, which grew to a record £1.4 billion for the dairy sector last year.

A number of noble Lords asked about the Groceries Code Adjudicator. We have recently given that adjudicator more teeth, providing the ability to fine 1% of turnover. I will take back all the points that have been made by the noble Baronesses, Lady Hayter and Lady Parminter, my noble friends Lord Plumb and Lord Shrewsbury, and the noble Duke, the Duke of Somerset. This is clearly somewhere where we need to think through how best we can assist.

The noble Baroness, Lady Hayter, and the noble Lord, Lord Trees, referred to milk for children. The Government continue to provide free milk for all children of nursery school age at a cost of £63 million. This clearly recognises that milk has many benefits to children's health and is important for their development. Around 1.5 million UK children under five in 55,000 childcare locations currently receive a free drink of milk—a third of a pint—each day they attend. I am short of time, but there are interesting details on the EU and domestic school projects that I would like to share with noble Lords who have spoken in the debate.

We should not lose sight of the fact that there is great potential for significant long-term growth in the sector, with milk production at a 10-year high and exports at record levels. The latest analysis from Rabobank is that commodity prices,

“are expected to enter a recovery phase”,

late this year or early in 2016, once Chinese buyers start to re-enter the market.

Food and drink is the largest manufacturing sector in the UK, and last year exports of food and drink reached an impressive £18.8 billion. Dairy is our fastest-growing export sector, and we should all be incredibly proud of the British produce that is world-renowned. More than 700 named British cheeses are produced in the UK. With these celebrated products, as well as the Government’s push to open new export markets for the dairy sector, it is perhaps unsurprising that dairy exports to non-EU countries increased by 25.5% between 2013 and 2014. There are real opportunities for development in the industry. The global market is expected to grow at a rate of more than 2%—around 13 million tonnes—a year for the next 10 years.

While the UK is self-sufficient in liquid milk, we are importing significant quantities of other dairy products—ice cream, yoghurt and cheese—which could be produced in this country. Let us all buy more British produce.

To me, dairy farming is at the very heart of the best of British agriculture. It is animal husbandry and the breeding of a top-quality herd of cattle, which is a lifetime’s work by men and women devoted to their animals. The noble Baroness, Lady Parminter, spoke about the landscape that dairy farming provides for us. This is all part of a rural way of life with which many of your Lordships will identify.

The Government believe that through a combination of short-term and longer-term measures we can, should and must safeguard the viability of the UK’s dairy industry through a time of global volatility. This industry is important to us all in the United Kingdom.

## LGBTI Citizens Worldwide

### *Motion to Take Note*

2.46 pm

*Moved by Lord Scriven*

That this House takes note of the treatment of LGBTI citizens worldwide.

**Lord Scriven (LD):** My Lords, noble Lords may ask why I have chosen this as the first debate I initiate in your Lordships’ House. I am proud and honoured to be able to do so because when I came into your Lordships’ House, I gave a commitment that I would use this platform in this House and this Parliament to give a voice to people who do not have a voice, and particularly to people whose are LGBTI citizens of countries where their voice may not be heard at home. That is why I chose this as my first debate.

“All human beings are born free and equal”.

So says the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, yet not everyone is listening or acting on that. As a gay man, I am, by pure accident of my place of birth, protected by the law. My human rights

are enshrined in law, and I can live a free life. That is not the case in many places across the world. LGBTI rights are fundamental human rights, and that is what we are talking about today.

Before I go on to the role that the Government and this country can play, even though we have a good record over a number of years, we still need to hold up a mirror to ourselves. If we are to have moral authority in promoting and supporting LGBTI rights across the globe, we need to be aware of our own performance. This country has made great progress under a number of Governments of different persuasions. We should be very proud of that. Sitting on these Benches, I am particularly proud of the work of my noble friend Lady Northover and my colleague who will soon join us here, Lynne Featherstone, in DfID. I have a question for the Minister regarding progress on the inclusive society fund, particularly around LGBTI issues. Which Minister has been allocated to deal with what and what progress has there been since the election on the fund and the programmes associated with it?

If we are to have moral authority, we need to be doing the right things here as well. On Tuesday I was privileged to be a guest of the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group, where 23 wonderful people who were seeking asylum or had been granted asylum in this country due to their sexuality were feeding back to me what had happened to them not only in their home country but, just as importantly, in the asylum process here in the UK. I have to say that I was mortified when one female from Algeria talked about being detained for six months on the grounds that she was trying to claim asylum due to her sexuality. It is not illegal to be gay or lesbian yet this woman, fleeing her country, came here and was detained for six months.

I say to Ministers that on immigration issues around sexuality the Vine report still needs to be enacted. It is a clear action plan for how we can provide security and safety yet also a clear asylum process for LGBT asylum seekers. Since I have taken an interest in this, it has become clear to me that there needs to be greater co-ordination between the Foreign Office, DfID and the Home Office. What work is being done to further improve that co-ordination, particularly around asylum and LGBT rights internationally?

I turn to what happens worldwide. I could give many statistics and I am sure that many noble Lords will do so, but in 75 UN states in the world consensual same-sex conduct is criminalised. Out of the 53 countries of the Commonwealth, where we should have much more influence on this issue than we do, 42 criminalise same-sex relationships. Two in particular—Brunei and a state in northern Nigeria—have the death penalty for same-sex relationships. What pressure are we putting on Nigeria and Brunei, and other countries outside the Commonwealth, that have the death penalty? That death penalty is for one thing—loving the person whom you naturally love. What action will be taken against those countries?

Since 2008-14, the Trans Murder Monitoring Project listed 1,612 murders of transgender people across the world. That is the equivalent of two per day. What co-ordinated work is being done to highlight the work that needs to be done and then to co-ordinate that

[LORD SCRIVEN]

particularly around transgender issues? Clearly there are issues around hate-motivated and honour killings, sexual violence, torture and the ill treatment of people, but I want to move away from statistics and talk about real people I have spoken to across the world and what I have heard.

I was in Istanbul a couple of months ago, speaking to the organisers of Istanbul Pride after they were water-cannoned and tear-gassed just for celebrating. They were telling me that international pressure, particularly from the British Government, is really important and they seek much more support from the British Government. They were saying that the official figures for the number of people who were going to hospital were understated because many lesbian and gay people in Istanbul would not have gone to hospital. One LGBT participant actually had a tear gas canister smash their face, but that person did not go to hospital for fear of persecution by the police. What is our ministry doing in Istanbul? This is a request from the people in Istanbul: will our embassy fly the rainbow flag on the date of the next Istanbul Pride to show solidarity with people who wish to march next June and take pride in their sexuality?

Russia says that it is not illegal to be gay there, but its anti-gay propaganda laws promote a culture where people can actually persecute and violently abuse in the street lesbian and gay people who are standing up and being who they actually are. I understand that Elton John wishes to have a meeting with President Putin. I have to say to Sir Elton that he needs to be very careful or else he will be subject to Russia's laws. If he sings some of his titles, for example, one of which is, "All the Girls Love Alice", he will be in conflict with its rules. If he says to President Putin, "Are You Ready for Love?", again he could find himself in serious trouble. It is quite clear, though, to use another title of Elton John's, that for President Putin, "Sorry Seems to Be the Hardest Word". He should be sorry about the culture that he has allowed, and we should be doing more to ensure that Russia lifts those issues.

I heard two stories from the group that I was with on Tuesday, one good, one bad. The good one—there are things we get right on immigration—was that a lesbian woman fleeing persecution from Uganda was granted asylum only three days into our asylum system. That is excellent. However, another woman, who had to flee her family and go underground because she was not able to tell anyone about her sexuality, eventually came here; her case has been ongoing for over 18 months and she has still not been granted asylum. My understanding of the Ugandan case is that one of the reasons why the change came about was not just government pressure but the pressure that multinational companies put on the Ugandan Government. What role will our Government play in seeking to co-ordinate our multinational companies in the UK which go into countries that have anti-LGBT laws, and what can we do to ensure that, first, they protect and promote equal policies within their own operations there and, secondly, they can put pressure on Governments to try to change things?

Against that background, we as a nation are doing things but we could do more. We have to be resolute, as a Government and a country. We have to make it clear that we will not tolerate any dilution of human rights for LGBT citizens across the world. Action from the Government could include more diplomacy, soft diplomacy and pressure, helping to co-ordinate multinational and economic muscle.

Ahead of this debate, I did something that the leader of the Opposition also did but he got there before me: we crowd-sourced this. We agreed that All Out, an online organisation that works with ordinary citizens to promote LGBT rights across the world and to put pressure on Governments and multinationals that are falling below standard, would email all its citizens in the UK—some were LGBT, some were straight, and so on; that aspect was irrelevant—to ask them what questions they wanted to put to the Minister on this issue. So noble Lords can see that I was there first; it is just that the leader of the Opposition was able to ask his questions yesterday before me. Nearly 6,000 replies came in. These are the sorts of things that ordinary citizens in the UK seek answers on regarding this issue. Of the 5,624 people who responded, 97% said that they thought the Government were not currently doing enough. We need to be clear that we need to do more. There are things that happen where we are not fast enough. I give the example of the Pride demonstration in Istanbul; we could have been faster in calling in the ambassador. However, the things they wanted to ask were very simple.

One of the big issues that came up was the push for global sporting events such as the World Cup and the Olympics not to go to countries with anti-gay laws. The winter Games in Russia show why that kind of action might be useful. I hear some people say that sports and politics do not mix. Actually, I was not aware that sports was separate from promoting anybody's human rights. That is an example of one thing which people, through this All Out survey, asked to be done. Interestingly, they suggested accepting more lesbian, gay and trans refugees fleeing persecution specifically by ISIS. Therefore, in the new wave of people whom we will take in and look after, and, I hope, grant asylum to, we should be aware of the sexuality of those fleeing being flung off roofs and stoned to death. That is the way of the world is for people in those countries.

This was another idea:

"Remove accreditation from anti-gay foreign diplomats".

I do not know whether that is possible, but it is one of the questions that has been asked. Another suggestion was:

"Stop selling weapons to countries with anti-gay laws".

Can the Minister say whether that is a policy initiative that is in place, and if not, could it be looked at?

The following idea not be the Minister's responsibility, but it is quite interesting: to require British holiday companies to make holiday-makers aware of the LGBT track record of the countries that they wish to visit. Could that be looked at by the Government? It would be an interesting way of taking a significant step forward. This is also quite an interesting idea:

“An LGBT tour by the UK government to anti-gay countries, speaking in venues or on streets, delivering workshops”.

That might be hard to co-ordinate, but it could be looked at. I ask the Minister to enact the following suggestion:

“Fly the rainbow flag at all UK Embassies for Pride”.

Another issue raised was to pointedly and proactively send LGBT government reps abroad to represent the UK at high-level meetings in anti-LGBT countries.

We must make the protection of LGBT and gender identity rights central to the work of the Foreign Office and DfID. It has to be systematic and co-ordinated across government. It is no good us pressuring a Government abroad to protect and give people equality in their human rights if we have not sorted out our own asylum system here, so we need to do that. We must make this an issue that we champion, not just of LGBT rights but of human rights. With that in mind, and those questions—and I am sure that many contributions will be made—I beg to move.

3.03 pm

**Lord Fowler (Con):** My Lords, first, I congratulate the noble Lord on his speech, and in particular on his choice of subject. It is very rarely debated in this House, certainly in the time that he has given to us. I agree with a great deal of what he said.

I have followed the issue, obviously, for some time, but I confess that until two or three years ago I did not fully understand the extent of the utterly unfair treatment meted out to so many LGBT people around the world. It was when I started to research a book on AIDS around the world that it became clear that below the surface of what should have been a medical problem and a question of public health there lurked a vast iceberg of prejudice, persecution and disdain.

Fighting this prejudice is one of the most crucial human rights issues of our time. Around the world hundreds of thousands of people live in the shade. They are shunned and ostracised by their communities, abused and attacked, prosecuted as criminals and imprisoned or worse—and all for no reason other than their sexual orientation. The comparison is made, fairly, with the treatment of the Jews in so many countries before the war. I will give just three examples from my travels.

First, I went to Uganda. One noble Lord mentioned that. I was told by one practising Christian, expressing a view widely held there, that homosexuality was an illness, and that if gay people were locked up, it would prevent it spreading. Just before I came there had been a paper called *Rolling Stone*, which specialised in publishing photographs of homosexuals plus their addresses. Eventually the paper was closed down, only to be replaced by another paper which carried the front-page headline, “Exposed: Uganda’s 200 Top Homos”. In Uganda, gay men are persecuted, imprisoned and, in the case of David Kato, murdered.

Nor should it be thought—this is an important point—that such outrages are condemned by the public generally. In 2012 the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament went to Ottawa for a conference, where she was roundly attacked for her country’s politics. She robustly defended

the discrimination, and when she returned home she was met by crowds on the streets who gave her a hero’s welcome. The public overwhelmingly support the repression, and the politicians compete to see who can be more extreme.

This morning the interviewer on the “Today” programme was corrected by one of the people being interviewed for saying that gay men could face the death penalty. The truth is that at one stage a proposed Bill did in fact threaten the death penalty for what was termed “aggravated homosexuality”, but then the author of the Bill relented, and very generously reduced the penalty to life imprisonment.

One law that did pass last year among other things put a duty on the citizen to report anyone they suspected of being homosexual. Failure to do so: a term of imprisonment of up to three years. In the event, that law was overturned by the Constitutional Court. However, no one can seriously doubt that a gay man in Uganda lives a precarious life, undefended by the vast majority of the public and the vast majority of politicians.

What of the churches? Tragically, there is all too little support from them as well. Here I do not just mean the American evangelicals, who have played a dismal part, but also the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. I am very glad to know that the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury is calling a conference next year—but to date, with the exception of a few brave individuals, the churches have done very little to challenge the repression. In some instances, disgracefully, they have supported it.

My second trip was to Russia. My first interview in Moscow, with a gay rights campaigner, summarised so much of that country’s intolerance. The interpreter wanted to start with an apology. He was standing in at the last moment because the planned interpreter had been taken into hospital. She had been taking part in a small, 20-strong demonstration the day before outside the state Duma against the new laws making it a criminal offence to “promote homosexuality”. They had been set upon by a crowd of several hundred supporters of the new laws: Orthodox Christians and pro-Kremlin youth groups. Riot police had moved in and made arrests, mostly of the gay rights protesters.

Again, the official attitude is clear to see. The cover story is that repression is to protect children, which is both utterly unfair and utterly untrue. At the heart of Russia’s legislation is prejudice. It is illegal to suggest that gay relationships are equal to heterosexual ones or to distribute information on gay rights.

Again, the new laws of Mr Putin are not a series of measures forced down the throats of an unwilling public. The new laws were passed by a majority of 436 to nil. Opinion surveys showed that three-quarters of the Russian public believed that homosexuality should not be accepted. The measures and intolerance more generally were supported by the churches—in particular, the Russian Orthodox Church. Two weeks after I left St Petersburg there was a gay pride march, which was attacked by opponents. Seven marchers were taken to hospital with injuries and another 60 were arrested.

My third port of call was India, the biggest democracy in the world but one where the criminal law against homosexuality remains in force. Defenders say that it

[LORD FOWLER]

is not much enforced; but the point is that whether it is enforced or not, it sets the standard. It gives a cover of respectability to people who discriminate. The law has a persuasive effect but, in this case, in entirely the wrong way.

I should mention another minority who also face discrimination and persecution but are rarely mentioned—transgender people, who are one of the most marginalised groups in India. They are effectively barred from most jobs, not because they fail the interview but because they are turned away at the gates. Often they are rejected by their own families and are subject to violence. Yet, when one talks to them, one cannot fail to be moved by their accounts of realising that they have been born in the wrong body, of their long struggles to come to terms with it, and of little acceptance by the public generally. It is often a story of loneliness and rejection, which takes them on to doing the only job available to them: sex work. They remain an often tragic minority from whom, all too often, the public and officials cross to the other side of the road.

I have mentioned just three countries, which gives some idea of the size of the issue we face. They are not remotely the only countries. As the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, said, 75 countries around the world have criminal laws against homosexuality. Forty out of the 53 members of the Commonwealth criminalise same-sex relationships; 90% of Commonwealth citizens live under such a law. Nor do I wish to assert that our country is in some way free of prejudice. We know that that is not the case, as the noble Lord stated. We also know that it was only in 1967 that the law was reformed here—which was not before it claimed some notable victims such as Alan Turing and our old colleague who has just died, Edward Montagu, who was so unjustly imprisoned in the 1950s.

However, what we can say is that the position here has been improved, not least by the equal marriage legislation. It gives us an opportunity to try to change the climate of opinion, here and overseas. It gives us that opportunity because we are often blamed for introducing the anti-gay laws in the first place, apparently without anyone understanding that the position here has radically changed. As the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, mentioned, I note that Elton John has suggested a meeting with Mr Putin. I pay tribute to the work of both Elton John and David Furnish but am not sure how far a meeting of that kind is going to take us in follow-up action. I would much prefer and advocate a meeting with David Cameron, not because the Prime Minister shares Mr Putin's views but because he simply does not share those views, and it could start a process whereby the discrimination can be fought and defeated. Perhaps there could be a London conference, with the serious aim of beginning that process. The agenda for such a conference is set out extremely well by the Amnesty report that noble Lords will have received.

The basic point is this. We can all condemn the outrages; that is the easy part. The difficult part is doing something practical about it. Necessarily, much depends on the bravery and commitment of people living in those countries where discrimination reigns. However, we should not just ask what they can do; we

should also ask what we can do to help and fight what, I repeat, is one of the greatest human rights issues of our time.

3.15 pm

**Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab):** I thank the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, for initiating this important and timely debate. I also welcome my noble friend Lord Cashman to the Front Bench. I remember that day in 1987 when he kissed a fellow actor on “EastEnders”; despite its tenderness, it prompted a storm of protests in our so-called popular press. It even resulted in Questions in Parliament about whether it was appropriate to have gay men in a family show when AIDS was sweeping the country. Things have changed. Since that time, the situation for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Britain has changed significantly and I am proud that much of that progress was made under a Labour Government. However, I am extremely proud and pleased that today we have a level of cross-party support that would have been unthinkable in the 1980s.

Domestic progress is not enough. If we are serious in our belief in equality, we should speak up for those beyond our borders. This country has led, and should continue to lead, the EU and the wider international community in ensuring that the rights of LGBTI people are recognised and protected. The noble Lord, Lord Fowler, referred to the discussion this morning on Radio 4's “Today” programme. I admit that what shocked me most about that discussion was that a man of religion refused to condemn the criminalisation of LGBT people in Uganda, despite repeated requests from a bishop.

Attitudes like that prompted many of us in Parliament to launch the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global LGBT Rights with MPs and Peers across the political parties. I am pleased that two of our vice-chairs, the noble Baroness, Lady Barker, and my noble friend Lord Cashman are participating in this debate. Our first inquiry will be to examine the UK's stance on international breaches of LGBT rights and will consider the most effective policies to champion and protect LGBT rights worldwide. I am sure that today's debate will prompt ideas and questions for that inquiry.

In too many countries, LGBT people are threatened, jailed and prosecuted because of who they are and who they love. Too many Governments have proposed or enacted laws that aim to curb freedom of expression, association, religion and peaceful protest. As we have heard, same-sex sexual conduct between consenting adults continues to be criminalised in 78 jurisdictions in the world, and 40 of the 53 countries of the Commonwealth of Nations criminalise same-sex relations for men, women or both. As the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, said, we have heard that these laws are a hangover from British colonial rule. While they remain on the statute book, they have a continuing impact of fear, stigma, rejection, violence and, far too often, murder. As the noble Lord highlighted in his excellent book—I am prepared to give it a plug, even if he was not—the persecution and criminalisation of identity can also decimate efforts to halt the spread of HIV. It often results in gay people not being able to access the healthcare, education and employment that they need, thereby preventing access to HIV testing and treatment.

I want to focus on the Commonwealth. Certainly the adoption of the new charter is welcome, with its commitment to human rights, gender equality and democracy. Today's debate gives a real opportunity for the United Kingdom Government to underpin the steady support that they have given to the reform and modernisation of the Commonwealth and to ensure that the Commonwealth Secretariat takes a proactive approach and supportive role in promoting the reform of bad laws across the Commonwealth, starting with those that still criminalise gay men.

In 2011, President Obama and the then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, identified championing the rights of LGBT people abroad as a foreign policy priority. I ask the Minister to do likewise today and make this an FCO priority. Challenging homophobia, promoting equality and pressing other Governments to introduce measures to ensure equality for LGBT people should be a priority for her department.

Earlier this year, US Secretary of State Kerry appointed Randy Berry as the US Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons, to approach this policy priority in a consistent and meaningful manner. My noble friend Lord Cashman and I had the privilege of meeting Randy during his recent visit to the UK, and he also had discussions with the Minister. Randy explained to us that, in his role as special envoy, he will adopt a new public-private type of approach. He will play a co-ordination role, not only in the State Department but across federal agencies, to ensure, as much as possible, that the US approach to the global protection of the rights of LGBTI people is uniform, consistent and focused on tangible results. In addition to the usual diplomacy with Governments, he believes that an essential part of his job will be to engage robustly, as we have heard today, with civil society organisations, foundations and businesses, both in the US and overseas, on promoting greater respect for the essential human rights of LGBTI people. He recognises that, in doing so, the US must be attentive to the needs and opinions of local civil society organisations, since they are doing the most difficult work, under some of the most difficult circumstances.

As Secretary of State Kerry has said:

"The human rights of LGBTI persons are fundamental and enshrined in the universal declaration".

It is important to note that Randy's new role is not special envoy for LGBTI rights, but Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons. That is a meaningful distinction, since the concept underscores the United States' very approach to these issues as a core human rights issue.

As we have heard, real progress on gay equality will ultimately come from grass-roots movements, but we need to help create the conditions where those local gay rights movements can emerge and be sustained. I ask the Minister to set out what direct assistance the Government will provide to support the development of lesbian, gay and bisexual movements worldwide, in particular in the Commonwealth countries, and whether she will support and promote active collaboration with the US special envoy, Randy Berry. I of course acknowledge the positive way that the Government are working closely with organisations such as the

Human Dignity Trust, Stonewall and the Kaleidoscope Trust on how we oppose human rights abuses of gay people worldwide. However, I am very keen to hear today of specific detail and action.

Finally, we cannot pretend that this does not affect us here. As the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, said, giving people asylum is really important—giving them refuge from the terrible discrimination that they face. I recently visited the Asylum Aid offices in Highbury. It specialises in giving assistance to those fleeing persecution because of their sexual identity. There, I heard the story of Thomas. Growing up in Uganda, Thomas's friends gossiped about him for years. In the school he went to, students were encouraged to inform on anyone they thought was gay. At university, Thomas started a relationship in secret but, when spotted with his lover one night, a large crowd gathered and started to threaten him. They chanted death threats, chased him down the street and attacked him with rocks. He tried to find shelter with his brother but was turned away. His father refused to have anything to do with him. His landlord locked him out of his home. Thomas came to the UK to study, but the clamour in Uganda to punish him grew; as we have heard, the law was getting even tougher. In 2012, the Ugandan Parliament passed a new anti-gay law. The most important thing about that law was not that it was finally not endorsed or passed by the President, but that it unleashed a new wave of extreme and violent homophobia, including physical attacks, arbitrary arrests, blackmail and evictions. Thomas was terrified and asked for asylum in the UK. Fortunately, Asylum Aid looked after him and took his case to the Home Office, providing expert advice and support. He was granted status as a refugee and started to rebuild his life in the UK.

I repeat the point made by the noble Lord, Lord Scriven: will the Minister ensure that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office works across Whitehall departments, and through the United Kingdom Border Agency, to ensure that lesbian and gay people are provided with a real safe haven when they flee from such terrible persecution? Is it not also time for us to acknowledge that the existence of these laws should be sufficient to establish persecution?

3.27 pm

**Baroness Barker (LD):** My Lords, I too thank my noble friend Lord Scriven for allowing us to talk about this important matter today. I declare my interest as one of the founding vice-presidents of the all-party group—and the only girl, I am sad to say; it is always the way with these things that we girls are in the minority. However, we are among a lot of very supportive men, I have to say.

I have been thinking about this debate all summer. In preparing for it, I arrived at the same point as the noble Lord, Lord Fowler: what do we do? That is why our all-party group was set up. As my noble friend Lord Scriven said, many of us have had the great good fortune to be born in the time and place that we were and live in relative safety. We look around the world and we wonder what to do.

One of the first things that we have to do is congratulate ourselves on what has been achieved over the last 25 years, but not to become cocky and think that life is

[BARONESS BARKER]

perfect. It is not; there is much yet to be done. We still have a National Health Service, great though it is, which, by and large, ignores the needs of lesbian and trans women. We have trans children in our schools who are being treated in the most appalling manner by teachers who refuse to look at the good practice of organisations such as Cornwall County Council, the police or other schools, and subject children to unnecessary distress and violence. We have a long way to go.

Perhaps our biggest failure in this country is that we permit our religious organisations to treat LGBT people in ways that would be deemed completely unacceptable if they were to behave that way to anybody else. When countries around the world look at the ways in which our religious organisations can behave towards us, that somewhat undermines our position.

In my preparation over the summer, I went back and read Section 28. When you look at it, you see that all the elements of the repressive legislation that pop up around the world are there: demonise gay people; make out that they are a threat to children; ensure that no public money goes towards them; and couch it all in terms that the general population can see as being protective. It is absolutely right and great that we have the political consensus that we have now achieved, but I want to say to the Government that we got rid of Section 28 because it was a blight on our political and economic life in this country. I think that the present Government, building on the work that was done under the coalition Government, who were pioneering and wonderful, are in a unique position to talk to conservative Governments around the world about why discrimination is wrong politically, economically as well as morally. I hope that this Conservative Government will take on that challenge and I think they should be judged on that basis.

The LGBT community in this country is acutely aware of the extent to which it was important for us to come under the European Convention on Human Rights and to have the Human Rights Act, which was a powerful measure for making sure that our aspirations for equality became a reality.

Let us consider countries across the European Union, and accession countries trying to become members of the European Union and live up to those commonly agreed standards of human rights, and contrast them with Turkey, for example, where there are abuses of LGBT people and cases of honour killings which have never been examined. Look at some of what is going on in places such as Ukraine and Russia. Over the summer, I watched one of the many excellent BBC3 documentaries—I will regret BBC3 going off the air; I think that it is a wonderful channel even though I am not in its demographic. I want to pay tribute to Reggie Yates and his production crew, who made a wonderful series of programmes where they went to Russia. If anybody believes for one moment the utter nonsense spouted by President Putin, I urge them to watch those programmes. It was absolutely chilling to see the extent to which people were harassed.

I say to the Minister that when talking to other people across the world, our willingness to subscribe to common standards in the field of human rights is

important. I ask her for an assurance that if the Government go ahead with the establishment of a British charter of human rights, it will be set at a level which is additional to the protections we have enjoyed so far and is not of a lesser standard.

Many people have talked about the way that DfID's aid programmes are changing—for reasons which we all understand—but one thing I have noticed in my very limited travels around the world is the extent to which organisations, particularly in middle-income countries, are concerned about the work they do with marginalised groups who their own Governments do not wish to support. They are really worried about the disappearance of aid from our Government. I commend to the Minister the work of one organisation, Micro Rainbow International, which works on issues of LGBT and poverty. It has recognised that if you do not have your own economic independence—particularly if you are a lesbian—it is extremely difficult, sometimes dangerous, to try to extract yourself from family or community situations which are oppressive. It has noticed that if gay people, and in particular lesbians, are encouraged to start successful businesses and become employers in their communities, not only are they safe but their standing and status go up. I encourage the Minister, if she has not done so already, to look at some of that organisation's work and to see whether it would be possible to scale up its work across the world so that we can ensure that people have economic security, which then enables them to have personal and physical security.

Others in this debate have spoken about the work of government and how the Government should go about achieving the objectives which were set out under the previous Government with DfID. I remain open to, but not yet fully convinced about, the need for us to have a special envoy. What I am much more interested in is seeing different departments of government taking LGBT issues into the heart of what they do. I would like to think that when the Government next go on a big trade delegation to some countries we might include some gay businessmen but also some of those international companies which are based here in London and have diversity and inclusion at the very heart of their successful business strategies. That might speak to some of the critics in other countries.

I want to advocate two things. The first is that we listen to very brave people such as Frank Mugisha in Uganda, who lives in daily fear for his life, and that we listen to LGBT people when they tell us that aid conditionality does not work and is dangerous for them. Secondly, we should equip all our embassies and consulates to work to the best standards that we have in some of our embassies and consulates, not only to offer protection to people who face oppression but to give security to the small groups which often work under the most oppressive regimes. The noble Lord, Lord Fowler, and I met an extraordinary young man from Ethiopia who explained that, because of the way in which all internet traffic is monitored in Ethiopia, it is difficult even for people to meet online for the simple purposes of giving health information to one another.

We will have a Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malta. I ask the Minister what specific messages this Government will be giving at that meeting.

As good as it is to be who we are and to live in our country, let us not kid ourselves that there are not still people who really do not like gay people and who give us our rights under sufferance. However, they have to admit that a country which is big enough and strong enough to do what we have done will be much more prosperous and successful in the long run. I doubt that we will ever overcome the great forces in countries such as Uganda which are ranged against us, but we might begin through smart economics to change hearts and minds.

3.38 pm

**Lord Smith of Finsbury (Non-Afl):** My Lords, I join other noble Lords in congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, and thanking him for not only raising the subject but raising it for sustained debate. The quality of the speeches that we have already heard is a real tribute to his wisdom in putting this subject in front of us.

It is now 31 years since, as a Member of the House of Commons, I came out publicly as gay. At the time, it was a somewhat lonely and difficult thing to have done. How things have changed here in the UK since then: a huge amount of legislative, attitudinal, social and governmental change. I am very proud to have been part of a Government who brought forward a very substantial amount of that change. I congratulate the current Prime Minister on his courage within his party in bringing forward the equal marriage provisions, which I was delighted to see went through this House with a bigger majority than in the other place. I also pay particular tribute to the Leader of this House for the skill with which she steered that legislation through.

Our work here in the UK is still of course not complete. There is still bullying and violence. There are attitudes that need to be challenged and places that are not safe for people who happen to be LGBT, particularly the “T” part—people who are transgender. We have still not got to where we should be even in legislative terms for those people. We also still need to make progress in Northern Ireland.

However, the picture here has transformed beyond recognition. Around the world, as we have already heard in this debate, it is very different, particularly in Africa and Asia. There are 78 jurisdictions where homosexuality is still criminalised. Some have the death penalty. It is not only the laws, the imprisonment and the death penalty that cause the problem. It is the violence, antagonism, prejudice and harassment that those laws give license to, among the thugs and the crowds who will then take their lead from the laws, the politicians and the Governments, and perpetrate savagery against people who have committed only a crime of loving someone of the same sex.

As many noble Lords indicated, there is a particular problem with the Commonwealth. As both the noble Lords, Lord Scriven and Lord Fowler, mentioned, 40 of its 53 countries discriminate in legislation against homosexuality. As the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, alluded to, in a peculiar kind of way we are responsible for

that. These are frequently relics of colonial laws that were imposed by Britain. There is an ultimate perversity in all this because many Commonwealth countries claim that homosexuality and liberal attitudes to it are a colonial imposition on them, whereas in fact it is the laws discriminating against homosexuality that are the colonial imposition. We have something of a special responsibility to make our voice heard around the world on this issue. As the noble Baroness, Lady Barker, said, in November we have the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta. There will be an ideal opportunity to start to discuss, raise and persuade on this issue.

In some places, things are getting worse rather than better. There are two examples. In the Gambia, on 9 October last year—less than a year ago—President Yahya Jammeh signed his assent to the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2014, which introduces the new offence described as “aggravated homosexuality”. That attracts a life sentence, raised from a previous sentence of 14 years. “Aggravated homosexuality” applies among other things to what are described as “serial offenders”—if you have sex more than once—and an offender who is a person living with HIV or AIDS. I am afraid that President Jammeh went even further in a speech marking the 49th anniversary of Gambia’s independence. He said:

“We will fight these vermins called homosexuals or gays the same way we are fighting malaria-causing mosquitoes, if not more aggressively”.

The other place where things are getting worse is Nigeria. In 2013, it introduced the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act. It actually goes much further than the title suggests. The Act not only prohibits marriage, it outlaws the registration of gay clubs, societies and organisations and their sustenance, processions and meetings. It outlaws the public showing of same-sex amorous relationships, directly or indirectly, and it prohibits same-sex couples from living together. These are frightening pieces of legislation.

Although in some places such as Gambia and Nigeria things are getting worse, there are small signs that in one or two places things may be making some progress. The high courts of Botswana and Kenya, for example, have recently made decisions to allow LGBT organisations to exist, to recruit and to campaign. This is perhaps a sign that somehow pressure, advocacy and persuasion from the rest of the world can help to begin to change things in some of these oppressive jurisdictions, and that is something that we here in this country must absolutely try to help with.

The Foreign Office and DfID ought to have LGBT rights around the world at the heart of their human rights programmes, and I would certainly echo the call made by the noble Lord, Lord Collins, that this should be made a Foreign Office priority. However—and this is a very important however—it must not be done in a preachy, finger-wagging way, and still less should it be done in a threatening way. As the noble Baroness, Lady Barker, mentioned, LGBT activists in countries affected by this have pleaded with us not to use aid as a bargaining tool to try to force change, because it would produce completely the contrary effect from what we might be trying to achieve. It has to be a

[LORD SMITH OF FINSBURY]

process of painstaking discussion and persuasion. It is not going to be easy or quick, but in my view it has to be done.

We can take heart, I think, from the example of President Obama in his rather courageous speech in Kenya where he did not preach at the audience; rather, he drew analogies between the position of LGBT citizens in Kenya and the position of black people in the United States, their need for emancipation and the importance of ensuring that that emancipation happened. Above all, apart from just talk, discussion and the use of diplomacy, we can support the incredible courage of LGBT activists and campaigners in countries where criminalisation exists. That is because being open, making the arguments and facing down threats, and in some cases being beaten up, will eventually help to change minds in those countries. The work of organisations such as Kaleidoscope and the Human Dignity Trust to try and help those activists make their case has to be applauded and supported.

As President Obama recognised, this is ultimately about emancipation. It is about the fundamentals of freedom and democracy. I remember that when Section 28 was going through the House of Commons, the argument made by its supporters was that it reflected the needs and wishes of the majority, and therefore in a democracy that was what had to happen. Long ago I was taught that democracy is actually much more about protecting the rights of minorities than about reflecting the will of the majority. It is also about recognising, protecting and celebrating difference, because it is difference that makes a society richer, fuller and freer. We in this country must do everything we can to support and protect it around the world.

3.51 pm

**Lord Black of Brentwood (Con):** My Lords, I join others in congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, on securing this debate. As my noble friend Lord Fowler said, it is really important that we regularly return to this issue so that we can chart progress where it has been made and keep up the moral pressure on those states which deny LGBTI people their fundamental human rights. As we have heard, some real progress has been made in recent years which it is right to acknowledge.

In our own country, now almost 60 years on from Wolfenden, we are one of 18 countries worldwide which have introduced same-sex marriage and, under all three political parties, have established a raft of other rights and initiatives which mean that all men and women are treated equally. These cover a whole range of issues vital to the welfare of LGBTI individuals, including discrimination and immigration, adoption and parenting, bullying and hate crime. That is a huge achievement, but as the noble Lord, Lord Smith, said, of course there is always more to be done. In gay equality, there will be no final victories.

There is one point I would like to mention right at the start of my remarks. In its ground-breaking report this summer, the UN Human Rights Council made 20 recommendations to national governments as part of a “systematic and comprehensive approach” to the

human rights of LGBTI people. One of the recommendations was to end the abusive therapies and treatments to which gay men and women can be subjected, including the so-called “conversion therapy”. The use of such therapy is absolutely deplorable, and I am delighted that earlier this year the Prime Minister made clear his strong opposition to its use in the United Kingdom. But when you are dealing with bigots, I fear that words are not enough. I hope that in due course that there will be a suitable vehicle in a Bill passing through this House which will allow us to introduce measures to ban by law these grotesque and abhorrent therapies.

Outside of our own country and continent, while the picture is much bleaker, as we have heard in the debate, there has been a glimmer of progress that we should acknowledge. In some 118 countries, same-sex sexual acts between adults in private are now legal, with Mozambique being one of the most recent countries to decriminalise. A critically important legal case is pending in Belize which would have ramifications across the whole of the Caribbean. I know from Answers to Written Questions which my noble friend the Minister has kindly given me that the Foreign Office is fully aware of this issue, and I urge her to keep a very close eye on it.

The number of countries establishing hate crimes relating to sexual orientation is growing. Eight countries, including Mexico, now have a constitutional prohibition against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and many more, particularly in Latin America, are making significant progress on the issue of legal recognition of gender identity, which is one of the big issues that we still face. For this, and so much other progress, I join others in paying tribute to the work of organisations such as the Human Dignity Trust, Kaleidoscope and Stonewall. Their dogged campaigning and advocacy continue to pay real dividends.

Welcome though those developments are, they cannot obscure the fact that in far too much of the world, LGBT people are deprived of the most basic human rights. They are detained, persecuted, tortured, imprisoned and, in some places, killed just for being who they are. As we have heard, 78 jurisdictions still criminalise homosexuality. Those 78 jurisdictions cover 2.9 billion souls. Legal developments, as the noble Lord, Lord Smith, said, in some parts of Africa are in fact deteriorating, with a number of countries such as Malawi revising their laws to criminalise consensual sex between women, and others increasing the penalties imposed on gay people. The noble Lord made very important points about Nigeria and Gambia. Of course, we have talked today about Russia, where initiatives have been taken to criminalise the “propaganda of homosexuality”. That has been copied in Moldova, Lithuania and other places.

This continues to have lethal consequences in terms of public health because of the link between criminalisation and increased HIV prevalence, as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS discovered when looking at the Caribbean. The figures are shocking. On islands where homosexuality is criminalised, and there are therefore no prevention campaigns, almost one in four men who have sex with

men are infected with HIV. I am told that one appalling study recently found that, when random tests were conducted on homeless gay teenagers in Kingston, all of them were found to be HIV positive. However, in Caribbean countries that do not criminalise, the rate is not one in four, but one in 15. Criminalisation kills people.

As the work by the Human Dignity Trust has shown, criminalisation also tends to march hand in hand with bad or authoritarian government. Only one criminalising state is a full democracy. Of much interest to me, there is also a direct link between criminalisation and poor indices of press freedom—and here I declare my interest as chairman of the Commonwealth Press Union Media Trust. In countries where the rights of a minority are so casually trampled on, it needs a free and vibrant press to foster debate and sow the seeds of change. That is what has been happening in Botswana, and which I hope will happen similarly in Kenya, Belize and Jamaica where the press has been able for the first time openly to discuss LGBT issues and question politicians, providing an important back-drop to vital court cases. For reasons of basic human rights, public health, good government and freedom of expression, decriminalisation must remain at the top of the Government's agenda. I know that the Minister has been working hard in this area and she deserves our full support.

Decriminalisation can come about in a number of ways. Often it is a result of legal challenge. Sometimes it springs from the membership requirements of regional groups of countries, such as the OAS and the OSCE. The OSCE, for instance, should be a criminalisation-free zone but two of its members criminalise homosexuality. However, it can also come about because of pressure from civil society and, in particular, as the noble Baroness, Lady Barker, and others have said, from international business. Businesses today carry as much influence as sovereign states, particularly in the developing world, and I believe they must leverage that power in furthering the human rights agenda. Businesses operating in countries where homosexuality is criminalised need vocally to express their concern about it, and if necessary make clear that investment decisions will take this issue into account. I think the UK Government can encourage those developments, and I ask my noble friend what action the Government are taking to ensure businesses play their full part.

There is one other substantive point I would like to make. It may seem obvious, but I am not sure that enough thought is given to it. It is on the subject of cultural change. Decriminalisation is the foundation stone, of course, but it is the first step on a very long road. Bear in mind, as I mentioned earlier, that in our country it took 60 years from Wolfenden, and 50 years from decriminalisation to full legal equality for gay men and women, and a huge shift in cultural values at the same time—including that first kiss on “EastEnders”. In some countries, the path will be a great deal more difficult than it was for us, and it seems to me that we need to be ready to help the process along by supporting and encouraging civil society and grass-roots groups who will foster change long after the lawyers have left town. In many places, gay men and women will have become used to a “Don't ask, don't tell” attitude

towards their sexuality. In the wake of decriminalisation they will find their lives very different and, frankly, not always easier in the short term.

This is particularly important because of the baleful influence of evangelical movements, many of them from the US, in so many of the countries affected, as my noble friend Lord Fowler mentioned. Where there is the prospect of legal change or where decriminalisation has happened, these groups, which are well organised and well funded, move in to take over the territory that the law is vacating. A friend of mine in Belize, where that vital legal decision is pending, told me that the evangelicals are already thick on the ground there. They play a key role in building schools and therefore influence the education of the young—clearly not in a positive way. They are often supported by influential and popular television programmes. Every morning in Belize there is a TV programme called “PlusTV”, the presenters of which invite viewers to join with them in praying to rid Belize of homosexuals.

That produces a massive cultural problem, which of course also often leads to violence, in particular in conflict zones. Stonewall recently undertook a consultation with 66 LGBT rights organisations worldwide, which confirmed that violence is the global movement's top priority—even more so than decriminalisation. We heard the statistics earlier about the murder of trans people. In the Americas alone, a trans woman is killed in a hate crime every 32 hours.

The mere fact of decriminalisation will not alter the toxic culture that envelops so many LGBT communities. If we are to make a real difference, we will need to be ready to help tackle it by supporting grass-roots organisations. I wholly agree with my noble friend Lord Fowler and others that we need to look at practicalities. Here are some relating to this. In some cases, we may have to do that by providing funding mechanisms that explicitly support LGBT groups formed to create change. On a practical level, it will mean: helping NGOs to run education campaigns, especially in schools; providing training for diplomats and desk officers that equips them with the skills they need to engage with LGBT groups, along with workshops for public officials; ensuring that police and law enforcement officials treat LGBT people fairly and appropriately; and, crucially, providing advice and support on running HIV prevention campaigns aimed in particular at men who have sex with men.

As this extraordinarily good debate has shown, the agenda is huge. Global and regional organisations can play their part, but it seems to me that the British Government are in a unique position to play a leadership role in this area, particularly as—certainly according to the *Economist*—we possess more soft power than any other nation on the planet. Let us use it. In this 800th anniversary year of Magna Carta we have been constantly reminded that one of our greatest exports is the rule of law, which is undermined by criminalisation. Let us also use that heritage, which saw us play the leading role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the ECHR. Let us use, too, our position in the Commonwealth, in particular at the CHOGM in Malta, to ensure that its institutions

[LORD BLACK OF BRENTWOOD]

bring maximum pressure to bear on countries that still deny LGBTI people the basic human rights that we take for granted.

Above all—I hope this will be one of the messages of today’s debate—we must remember that decriminalisation alone is in so many ways just the beginning of the story, not the final destination. How we build on those legal successes in supporting change at the most local level—change that is fundamental to the quality of life of LGBT citizens worldwide—will be just as crucial in securing the identity and dignity of so many of our fellow men and women.

4.03 pm

**Lord Paddick (LD):** My Lords, I, too, thank my noble friend Lord Scriven for securing this very important debate. In considering the treatment of LGBTI citizens worldwide, it is important that we remember our own history. We have been where other countries are now. Therefore, it is possible for other countries to make the same progress that we have. As my noble friend Lady Barker said, it was not long ago that we had legislation similar to that which we are complaining about in other countries, such as Section 28.

I pay tribute to the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, not just for his lifelong work on HIV and AIDS, but for his work against prejudice and discrimination of all kinds.

I also thank the noble Lord, Lord Black of Brentwood, for introducing the very important issue of the link between the prevalence of HIV and criminalisation. I hope noble Lords will not mind if I appear somewhat self-indulgent in talking about some of my own experiences, but I think it is important for people to read about others’ experiences to help with the normalisation process.

Nineteen fifty-eight was a notable year. It was the year the Life Peerages Act was passed, and most of us would not be here if it was not for that. It was also the year that my twin brother was born. I am just testing to make sure that noble Lords are awake. It was also the year that the Homosexual Law Reform Society was formed to campaign for the implementation of the Wolfenden report.

While we have to go back to 1835 to find the last people in the UK to be executed for sodomy, when I was born same-sex activity between men was still a criminal offence. In England and Wales, homosexual activity between two men over the age of 21, provided no one else was present, was decriminalised in 1967, so by the time I had my first sexual encounter with another human being in 1979—another male police officer—I was not committing a criminal offence. However, that is only half the story. As the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, said, the problem in Russia is not just that anti-gay legislation was passed by unanimous vote of the Federal Assembly, but that 75% of Russian public opinion is also anti-gay.

My police officer colleague and I were petrified of being found out. He would talk to me only when I was in my room late at night, when there was nobody else around. He would not even look at me if we encountered each other when other police officers were present.

Fearing the adverse reaction of my colleagues and the end of any further career progression if I was found out, it took me a while to officially acknowledge to the police service that I was gay—20 years. Because of social pressure, not least from my family, and the honestly-held belief that a relationship with a man was impossible because of the social conditions that prevailed at the time, and wanting a relationship more than anything else, I dated women. I was engaged three times and married Mary in 1983. It was only when work problems became so great that I could not deal with them and with “living a lie”, as some would have it, that I cracked under the pressure and told my wife. Mary said, “If you had told me you were leaving me for another woman I would never have forgiven you, but I realise that you need something I cannot give you”, and she has been amazingly supportive ever since.

The pressure of having to use gender-neutral terms at work to disguise your sexuality when talking about what you and your partner did at the weekend, and being in constant fear of being seen in the wrong part of town or in the wrong bar or club, is draining and inhibiting. In many countries that is what LGBTI people have to put up with today. It is a constant fear of being yourself. Even when I eventually decided to be publicly open about my sexuality, it was not easy. Having debated with a *Mail on Sunday* columnist at the Oxford Union, and having got on very well with him—at least, so I thought—he subsequently called me in my office at Brixton Police Station, where I was the police commander. “As you know”, he explained, “we keep files on people and I just wanted to check a few things. The first question I have for you is: is it true that you are homosexual?”. A few months later, Mary called. A journalist had tried to doorstep her to ask questions about me. It was only a matter of time before they tracked down one of my disgruntled male ex-partners. A front page and eight inside pages of the *Mail on Sunday* were filled with a mixture of lies and intimate details of the five years we had lived together—everything from where I bought my suits, what moisturiser I used and what my HIV status was. Eighteen months later, my claim that the newspaper had breached my privacy was settled out of court, although the newspaper claimed it settled because it had libelled me.

The points I make with these anecdotes are that, despite those difficulties, I have had a very easy ride compared with LGBTI citizens in many other countries, and that changing the law, although important, is only half the battle—arguably, the easier half. The other reason is that it is important for people living overseas to know what is happening here and the progress that we have made.

In January 2009, I did something that I never believed I would be able to do. The real significance of what was happening did not really strike me until the judge in the courthouse in Oslo, Norway, said, “We are gathered here to witness the marriage of Brian and Petter”. They conducted the ceremony in English; the Norwegians are very obliging. I married a man but when we got on the plane to fly back to London the next day and landed in England, we were not, in the eyes of the law, married here. Our marriage was recognised as only a civil partnership until last year. We did not

feel that our relationship was equal until last year. As the noble Lord, Lord Smith of Finsbury, mentioned, my husband and I are still not legally married in Northern Ireland and same-sex couples cannot marry there, which is unacceptable.

Using the very helpful House of Lords Library Note for this debate, it is easy for my husband and me to avoid going on holiday to the 75 UN member states where same-sex acts are not legal, not least the six that still implement the death penalty for those acts, but LGBTI people who live in those countries invariably cannot avoid being there. Not only can they not give expression to their true feelings but, as the noble Lord, Lord Collins of Highbury, said, the law encourages those who wish to violently attack those who differ from them. People are not being allowed to be themselves and their rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 2, 5, 7, 9, 12 and 18, are being breached.

Life for me has been difficult because I am gay and, even now in the centre of London, one of the most diverse and liberal cities in the world, I am still being subjected to homophobic abuse. I cannot go into further details because the case is sub judice. This is nothing compared to what LGBTI people in many other countries have to contend with, as my noble friend Lord Scriven so graphically described in recalling what happened at Istanbul Pride. Parts of this country are at least leading by example on equality for LGBTI people. However, what are the Government doing to raise these breaches of human rights against LGBTI people in other parts of the world?

I respectfully suggest that, rather than seeking to restrain the human rights of those in the UK through a UK Bill of Rights and repeatedly refusing to implement judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, this Government should divert their resources into championing the human rights of LGBTI people across the world.

4.13 pm

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth (CB):** My Lords, I am very glad to have the opportunity to contribute to this debate and I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, for initiating it and for his excellent speech, as well as for the excellent speeches of so many of your Lordships.

As has been made abundantly clear by all those who have spoken, LGBTI people worldwide face an appalling, inhumane situation. Same-sex intimacy between consenting adults in private, which is now regarded as a fundamental right in Europe, remains a crime in 78 jurisdictions. LGBTI people are liable to be arrested, imprisoned, harassed, blackmailed and, in eight jurisdictions, still put to death. To avoid criminal prosecution they have to live lives that are isolated, fearful and above all subject to humiliation.

Again, as has also been made clear, we are dealing not just with a few people but with millions. On a conservative to moderate estimate that 2% to 6% of adults in the general population identify as LGBTI, we are talking about 58 million to 174 million people. In India alone, there are 41 million to 63 million people who are potential criminals as a result of the law.

The Human Dignity Trust, which does such excellent work on this issue, helpfully sets out 10 recommendations to the Government on how this issue can be made a fundamental feature of policy, and eight spheres in which action can and should be taken. Others among your Lordships have mentioned many of these actions, all of which I very strongly support. However, I want to focus on one area that the trust did not address: namely, religion. There is no avoiding the fact that hostility to same-sex relationships is shaped and fuelled by the teaching of most religions, as the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, so eloquently indicated. We cannot sensibly address this challenge without facing the uncomfortable truth head-on. In the Middle East, the dominant religion is obviously Islam. In the target areas that the Human Dignity Trust suggests—the Caribbean, west Africa, southern Africa and parts of the Pacific—it is Christianity.

On the whole, religious institutions, like all institutions, are slow to change. There is an understandable rationale to this, in that their role is to garner the insights of the past and convey them through time and space to future generations. But, as Cardinal Newman said:

“To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often”.

Religious institutions, while remaining true to their foundational principles, have to unfold and develop in response to the new insights of each generation. Inevitably, in every age there will be turbulence caused by disputes about what is an authentic development and what leads people astray. This process of discernment is not any easy one. Change can take a long time but it can take place: we know it has happened in at least some churches.

That change can take two forms. One is a change in the teaching itself, so that churches might come to see committed lifelong partnerships between people of the same sex in the same way that they understand marriage—in the lovely words of the Book of Common Prayer,

“signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church”.

The other change, which is the one I want to focus on, does not involve any change in the teaching on the issue itself, at least in the short term, but involves an acceptance of the civil sphere as valid in its own right. Some Christians, while not able to accept same-sex marriage as a Christian option, have, however reluctantly—some have been very reluctant indeed—come to accept civil partnerships as a valid option for society as a whole. It is that second kind of change that I believe we have to work to achieve first in relation to conservative religious institutions.

In short, church leaders and institutions in those countries where LGBTI people are criminalised have to be urged to make a distinction between teaching which may be applicable for their own members in their private lives and the basic rights and dignity that need to be accorded to everyone in their society, whatever their religion or belief. Of course, working through secular channels to challenge the laws in those countries is fundamental. But behind those laws is a culture, as the noble Lords, Lord Black and Lord

[LORD HARRIES OF PENTREGARTH]

Paddick, mentioned and stressed—very often, as the noble Lord, Lord Black, said, a “toxic” culture. That toxic culture is, sadly, intertwined with religion.

It is no secret that the Anglican Communion has become very frayed at the edges on this issue. That is what I wrote in the first draft of this speech, but from what we read on the front page of some papers today, “frayed” is much too weak a word. The churches in countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda are taking a very conservative and hard line and see themselves as quite apart from churches in North America. Nor is that the sum of it: the frontier of the culture wars in the USA has moved to Africa, with conservative forces in America lining up with and reinforcing the conservative forces in some African countries, as the noble Lord, Lord Black, quite rightly mentioned. Indeed there is evidence, which the Human Dignity Trust has on film, of some American churches actively proselytising in Uganda with a view to strengthening hard-line attitudes to gay and lesbian people.

In those countries, the Christian churches have been and continue to be very strong. In contrast to Europe, they are a major influence in shaping the lives of people. If it is unrealistic to think of changing the minds of those churches on the issue itself in the short term, what can and should be done is to work on getting them to accept the legitimacy of the civil sphere, and, in particular, laws which protect the rights of minorities, not least LGBTI people.

The way that such people are treated in those countries is an affront to any concept of human decency, and the church must be challenged to see that its support for their criminalisation is a direct cause of this. It is an offence against the human person: the unique value and dignity of the individual, whatever their sexuality. It is a violation of everything that the Christian faith is meant to stand for. As a minimum, those states must be urged to act against those who commit acts of violence against LGBTI people.

In its excellent set of recommendations, the UNHCR recommended among other things that those states should:

“Conduct prompt and thorough investigations of incidents of violence against LGBT citizens, holding perpetrators to account and providing redress to victims”.

Further, they should:

“Collect data on the incidence of such offences”.

Of course, such offences are encouraged by the harsh laws, and there can be no fundamental change until the laws themselves are repealed, but states can be urged to see that such violence is criminal even by their own standards, and churches must be forced to see that, whatever their teaching, this kind of cruelty is totally unacceptable and they must speak out against it.

The UNHCR and the Human Dignity Trust outlined various forms of action that can be taken in the way of working for legislative reform, highlighting breaches of human rights according to the UN charter, working with businesses, and so on. All these are important, but behind the opposition to change will be a highly influential culture that has been soaked with religious attitudes, and this must be faced.

I have not addressed this issue in relation to Islam, and I recognise that the challenge there is even greater: first, because of the decisive influence Islam has over so many societies; and, secondly, because of the claim that its teaching applies to all society in all its aspects. The distinction between a secular sphere with its own legitimacy and the religious one is not one that is natural to Islam—at least as it has developed so far—but it has always been a proper option for Christian churches, and it is this that the churches in countries that have harsh penal laws against LGBTI citizens must be urged to see.

As a number of your Lordships mentioned, there is a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta. Some 40 members of the Commonwealth’s 53 countries still criminalise homosexuality: the laws are a hangover from the time of the British Empire. The Royal Commonwealth Society has written about these laws:

“This harsh legal situation is exacerbated by wider discriminatory social attitudes and in some cases violence”.

It states that the situation is now very,

“polarised between those in favour of improving LGBT rights and those who are more reluctant”.

So the November conference is not going to be easy.

Behind those wider discriminatory attitudes there is a strong religious influence because, as I mentioned, most of those Commonwealth countries still have a strong Christian presence and continuing influence. That has to be addressed. I know that the main focus of diplomatic work is Government to Government, but there are opportunities to relate to wider civic society.

My concern, of which I hope that the Government take account, is that all those involved in setting up diplomatic meetings or organising conferences recognise the key role that Christian leaders play in many of the countries which have the most conservative attitudes, such as Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda. If they are not to change their church teaching, they might be encouraged at least to acknowledge, and to help their churches to acknowledge, the validity of the civil sphere in its own right as safeguarding the rights and dignity of all human beings, whatever their sexuality.

I recognise that the main responsibility lies with the Christian churches here to help the churches in those countries to acknowledge the validity of this distinction, but I believe that our Government, through our normal diplomatic channels and intergovernmental agencies, also have opportunities to engage with wider civic society. Here, the Christian leaders, especially in the countries I mentioned, the Anglican archbishops and bishops, have an influential role. They themselves need to be decisively influenced to speak out for the human rights of LGBTI people.

4.24 pm

**Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Lab):** My Lords, with the leave of the House I will speak very briefly on just two aspects of what has been an outstanding debate, moved brilliantly by the noble Lord, Lord Scriven. First, I pick up a point made by the noble Lord, Lord Paddick, when he referred to Northern Ireland. It is worth putting on record our admiration for the people

of the Irish Republic who, with a majority of 62% in May, approved same-sex marriage in a referendum. It is deplorable that the conspiracy of intolerance and bigotry that unites unionists and Sinn Feiners alike in Northern Ireland prevents the same sort of progressive movement there. I think that would certainly be the view of those in this debate.

I also take up points made by the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, in relation to the church. I, too, read with great interest the comments attributed to the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury in today's papers about effectively realising that the Anglican communion is probably two or possibly three different churches, and that an attempt to make them all look alike at subjects such as this is an impossible task. I hope that he succeeds in that and does not attempt to follow in the intolerance in parts of the Anglican communion, particularly in Africa, that we heard about from so many speakers, and that he concentrates on the liberal approach adopted in North America.

In the United Kingdom and Church of England, can we please adopt a sensible, non-hypocritical approach to same-sex relationships? We all know that there are very senior priests and probably bishops who are openly gay and yet unable to openly profess that because of the strange, "Don't ask, don't tell" rule that applies in the Church of England. The sooner the Church of England comes to terms with this and agrees that the exceptions it was granted when we passed the same-sex law should no longer apply to it, the sooner our own society will be more tolerant and a much happier place.

4.27 pm

**Baroness Northover (LD):** My Lords, like others, I thank my noble friend Lord Scriven for securing this debate and opening it so effectively. We heard some extremely powerful contributions, including the searingly brave personal account from my noble friend Lord Paddick.

I am very glad that we are discussing this subject immediately after our debate on the new sustainable development goals. Key to those goals is to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030 while leaving no one behind. We know that those whose sexuality is not accepted in their home countries are particularly likely to be excluded, and in poverty, so those SDGs are absolutely relevant here.

In that debate, the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Sheffield made a very effective contribution. I note that the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of St Albans was down to speak on the dairy industry debate that followed. So I wondered where the Bishops' Bench was for this debate. I was very glad to hear the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, who just spoke, because I noted that there was nobody sitting on the Bishops' Bench, even just to listen. How could that be? I assume that the Church of England must surely move on from appointing women bishops to addressing this issue of human rights. I thought that that lay behind the moves quoted today made by the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury where he spoke of drawing together the communion and

conversation across the whole Anglican communion. I wish them well, even if they are frayed at the edges—as the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, put it.

As my noble friend Lord Scriven said, this is about human rights. The noble Lord, Lord Fowler, put it more strongly, calling it the greatest human rights issue of our time—and he is surely right. My noble friend Lord Scriven paid tribute to my colleague Lynne Featherstone and to me for our work in DfID, and I thank him. It was when my shortly to be noble friend Lynne Featherstone became a Minister in DfID that this subject went on to the agenda. It was Lynne, of course, who in the Home Office brought forward equal marriage. She tried to get a strategy on LGBT within DfID. Although one was agreed internally by the summer of last year, she could not get it published; it was regarded as politically too hot a topic to touch. When I took over from her in DfID in November last year, I sought to take this work further forward, and the strategy was published. I hope that by the time I left we had secured sufficient progress that this was an issue which could not slip back in to the shadows. Like the noble Lord, Lord Collins, I welcome cross-party support on this, but I would like to ask the Minister what DfID is now doing on this agenda. Like my noble friend Lord Scriven, I want to know which DfID Minister is now responsible for this.

I found that officials within DfID were extremely enthusiastic about this agenda. They recognised that development could not be effective if certain sections of the community were excluded. You can look at discrimination through the development lens. We know only too well that discrimination can lead to exclusion from education, healthcare, and economic activity. Aid must be impartial and not based on nationality, race, religion, political point of view, or sexuality. It must be based on need alone. When people are marginalised due to their sexuality, they are likely to be poor. So how do we tackle this? Ensuring that there is international protection of human rights is an important start, but we know that what we do must not expose individuals to even greater danger. So as my noble friend Lady Barker and the noble Lord, Lord Smith, pointed out, we need to work closely with those in countries where they face particular discrimination so that we can work out how best to support them. Supporting civil society is vital. Working through the corporate sector, to which Governments often listen closely, is also essential. My noble friend Lord Scriven and the noble Lord, Lord Black, referred to instances when that has been effective.

When I was in DfID, we sought to map what was happening and who was active in the countries in which DfID worked. We helped to get LGBTI rights on the agenda of the World Bank, which is becoming very supportive in ensuring that development is inclusive. We initiated research at the Institute for Development Studies at Sussex University on sexuality, poverty and law, as we sought to underpin and sustain action by the UK Government into the future. This is one of the first research programmes to look at these important issues. Given the World Bank's economic remit, it was looking at the economic costs of homophobia, undertaking a study in India that highlighted the

[BARONESS NORTHOVER]

enormous cost of healthcare due to homophobia. It noted HIV disparity, depression, and suicide, three health issues that are particularly high among the LGBT population. It estimated that this cost India more than \$700 million in 2012.

This debate is about human rights, but my noble friend Lady Barker is right that it is also worth emphasising to countries the economic benefits of change—what she calls smart economics—just as this has been a way in which gender equality has also sometimes been broached, with more positive results than might otherwise have been the case, in particular to make sure that it is included as part of development initiatives. As we have just debated the new sustainable development goals, we must insist that no one should be left behind. That commitment must now be harnessed to support and protect those who would otherwise be excluded because of their sexuality.

There have been some encouraging developments, as the noble Lord, Lord Smith, and others have noted. They include the incorporation of LGBTI issues in the draft World Bank safeguards and the reference to discrimination in the Commonwealth charter, which is a small step forward. As so many noble Lords have said, the Commonwealth has particularly pernicious laws. The noble Lord, Lord Fowler, is right that we should be emphasising that we have changed our laws and that those elsewhere are now totally outdated. Will the Minister tell me what further progress has been made in regard to Commonwealth countries? Will she update the House on progress on selecting a new Secretary-General and indicate whether she is optimistic that such an appointment will bring progress on this matter?

In DfID I found myself discussing with leading figures in the US Government how we could encourage Americans to dissuade some of their countryfolk, the religious fundamentalists to whom the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, referred, from packing planes flying to African countries to harden policies against LGBTI rights. The noble and right reverend Lord is absolutely right in this regard.

Like others here, I have met some amazingly brave campaigners who knew their lives were at risk, not only because of their sexual orientation but because of their campaigns. I heard some terrible stories. I was delighted that the All-Party Parliamentary Group on global LGBT rights was set up and to be at its first meeting to nominate my noble friend Lady Barker to be an officer of the group.

For me, some of the social and governmental challenges we face were summed up and crystallised when I was attending a meeting at an AU summit earlier this year. This meeting was on child marriage. It was not on LGBTI rights. The President of a particular African country—I can tell noble Lords who he was afterwards—in his concluding remarks, stated, “I oppose child marriage”. There was gentle applause. “But”, he said, in a total non sequitur, “I do not support same-sex marriage”. There was wild applause. That illustrated for me quite how high a mountain we have to climb, and this debate is part of a stage on the way. I thank my noble friend for bringing it forward.

4.37 pm

**Lord Cashman (Lab):** My Lords, it is a privilege for me to stand here for the very first time—I hope not the last—in this extremely important debate. I thank my noble friend Lord Scriven—if I may call him that—for securing this important debate and ensuring that the debate will go on. I am humbled and inspired by the debate this afternoon, but equally I am depressed that in 2015 we have to have such a debate about individual human rights across the world. That is the depressing element. I welcome all the powerful contributions. In particular, I associate myself with the eloquent, powerful and personal contribution of the noble Lord, Lord Paddick, for which I thank him deeply.

The evidence we have heard today should make us all feel not only uncomfortable but ashamed. The statistics on human rights abuses pile high. There are thousands of examples of disregard for someone’s humanity and of the denial of rights. Even the most fundamental basic right of the protection of the law is denied.

Behind all these examples and statistics are ordinary men and women, the sons and daughters of ordinary men and women, who are made extraordinary by society and religion’s obsession with their sexual orientation and gender identity. This persecution and victimisation blights us all. It is carried out in the names of those who look on, do nothing and say nothing. A man who did much and spoke out was the Ugandan activist David Kato, and he paid for that courage with his life. The noble Lord, Lord Fowler, and my noble friend Lord Collins paid tribute to the work done by activists in Uganda. Like them, this morning I was horrified to hear a religious man on the “Today” programme refusing to condemn the criminalisation of LGBTI people.

The discrimination that we see is often done with the excuse of religion, religious belief or culture—or, as the noble Lord, Lord Black, said, toxic culture—as if that is acceptable. As the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, eloquently pointed out, it is not. The protection and defence of religious belief is equally a fundamental human right, but not the right to impose that belief on another and, by so doing, diminish and remove another’s human rights.

The challenge of the worldwide Anglican communion has been referred to by the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury as an impossible task but, if we are to progress the rights of individuals who often remain voiceless and invisible, impossible tasks must be undertaken and achieved. Have we learnt nothing from the cold, humiliating history of slavery and those who used culture, religion and market forces to defend it?

I believe that our ability to imagine separates us from other species. As a gay man, I must imagine, “What if that were me?”. What if I were born in one of those 78 countries that criminalise people because of who they choose to love consensually? What if I were born in any of the eight countries that have the death penalty for homosexuality or being transgender, or where I could simply be stoned to death or thrown from the roof of a building because of who I choose to

love? What if that were me? What if it were any one of us? If it is not right for us, how dare we imagine that it should be right for another?

I believe that we are all connected by a sea of humanity, and we disregard that at our peril. The rights of one another are inextricably linked. We should remember that, too, when we look at men, women and children trudging across the world to achieve sanctuary, safety and human rights. Within those, I include LGBTI people. The treatment of LGBTI people at our borders must be humane, respectful and non-intrusive. I am deeply concerned, as has already been said in the debate, that the recommendations of the Vine report on this subject are yet to be in place. I share concerns, too, that there has been a perceived downgrading of the importance of human rights and LGBTI rights at the FCO. As the noble Lord, Lord Smith, said, these should be at the heart of the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The decision taken by the Foreign Secretary that our embassies shall not fly the LGBT rainbow flag during Pride days or marches is wrong. That simple act of solidarity is of huge significance to LGBT people, local NGOs and activists. It is a reminder to them they are not alone, and a reminder to their Governments and politicians, who often follow public opinion rather than lead it, that we are watching and we are with them. I do not say that from an academic point of view. I have been on those marches in places such as Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania, where there was violence and where there were more people protecting us than were on the march. In those places and elsewhere, the role of our embassies and their visible support were instrumental in the marches being allowed to go ahead and the progress that steadily followed.

At times like that when you are on a march, taking for granted every single right that you have in your own country, you realise that our rights are not universal and that, contrary to the UN declaration and the European civil and political conventions, our rights do not travel with us. Diminished human rights and criminalisation overseas directly affect British citizens too. As other noble Lords have said, it is not just happening in far-flung places such as Singapore, India and Pakistan; it is happening here, in the European Union and on the streets of London. To give a simple example, when a same-sex married couple and their children merely go on holiday—when they are not even working—to certain EU countries, such as Italy, Poland, Romania or Lithuania, their marital rights and their legal rights over their children disappear immediately, the moment they set foot on the territory. If an employer wants to transfer you to, say, Russia, where Section 28 was evilly replicated, or Saudi Arabia, China, Bangladesh, Uganda or many other countries, your rights disappear and you are instantly criminalised.

Here, too, in the United Kingdom, homophobia and transphobia still exist on our streets and in our schools, where children should be informed and, most of all, protected, not bullied and humiliated. That is why we need to do much more at home. On homelessness, the Albert Kennedy Trust revealed that 24% of homeless youth in the UK are LGBT. LGBT sex education is

deeply lacking, as revealed in the NAT study. Homophobia is rife. Trans children are in our midst, and they are diminished by the attacks on their human rights. The noble Lord, Lord Black, referred to conversion therapies, which we must outlaw, and at the earliest opportunity. Northern Ireland is a blight in its attitude to deny the right of same-sex couples the right to marriage.

However, we need to go forward. How do we turn real and deep concern into action that produces tangible benefits? First, as has been said by other noble Lords, DfID must indicate which Minister is now responsible for this particular portfolio. It must restate, along with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, its public commitment to continue to work on these issues and to raise concerns and take action at the highest level, and should do so in concert with other countries, particularly the USA, whose threatened travel ban was extremely useful in curtailing some heavy anti-LGBT political activity in sub-Saharan Africa. I urge the Government to reconsider appointing a global LGBTI envoy. I will explain why—and it is not because I want the job.

In the course of discussions with the USA's State Department special envoy, Randy Berry, it became clear to me that there would be added value in having such an envoy, not only as the Government's highest representative when travelling overseas, but also in the co-ordination of domestic policy and policy coherence when acting externally. A global envoy would send a powerful signal and publicly reconnect the United Kingdom Government to these issues we have discussed, working across government departments such as the Home Office, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, as well as raising the issue overseas. It would ensure that policy coherence and human rights were at the heart of everything we do.

Finally, we know that Governments cannot do it alone. We need to co-ordinate and work with progressives in religious organisations, local as well as international NGOs, and with a new dimension: global and multinational businesses. Businesses promoting their diversity principles in countries that are problematic for LGBTI people is extremely effective. In this respect, I urge the Government to work with Open for Business, a coalition of global companies—IBM, Google, American Express, MasterCard, Standard Chartered—which are making the case that inclusive, diverse societies are better for business and economic growth. Its excellent publication, *The Economic and Business Case for Global LGBT Inclusion*, is published today. These actions by business can be subtly placed diplomatically within the Treasury, and with Business Ministers in all their discussions.

We therefore have an opportunity to bring about a progressive global consensus that can harness the power of business to work with Governments, NGOs and other progressives to deliver real social progress and to help end the culture of persecution and discrimination faced by LGBTI people every single minute of every single day. I thank your Lordships.

4.50 pm

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Anelay of St Johns) (Con):** My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, for tabling this important debate on upholding the rights of LGBTI people worldwide, and for the valuable and moving contributions, as the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, said, from around the House. I again welcome the noble Lord, Lord Cashman, to the Front Bench. He is used to the limelight—this is a little harsher sometimes, but he still glows in it. I also welcome the establishment of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global LGBT Rights. I am looking forward to working with it.

A lot of questions asked: what is the role of the FCO, at home and overseas? I shall try to explain it. There was a feeling from the noble Lord, Lord Cashman, that somehow we have resiled on our commitment to supporting LGBTI rights. That is absolutely not the case; it is core to what we do.

When I looked again at our work after the general election, I started with our manifesto, which makes it clear that we have a commitment to uphold and develop the strength of international human rights. That is what I sought to do. I looked at the way in which we framed our words about human rights, and I was concerned that they provided what looked like a priority list—and when one has a priority list, one can leave people out and have an order that offends. We have done both, quite unintentionally. In having priorities, it was not intended to say that someone at the top was better than someone at the bottom. It was intended to show our focus and how we feel passionate. If I were someone from the LGBTI community and looked at that list of priorities, I would struggle to see my place. I therefore asked our officials if they would reframe the way in which we presented our passion about human rights in a way that ensured everyone was reflected within it. We made sure that we included three things—democratic values, a rules-based international system and human rights for a stable world—so that everyone has a place.

The United Kingdom has been a leader in the United Nations for saying loudly that no goal can be considered met unless and until it is met for all groups in society. That underpins everything that we do. The death penalty, which has been mentioned, is wrong anyway. It is certainly wrong to criminalise interpersonal relationships, but the death penalty is wrong in principle and practice and we campaign worldwide against it.

I was asked about business and human rights, and was very interested in what the noble Lord, Lord Cashman, has just said. My noble friend Lord Black of Brentwood also raised the issue, as did the noble Lord, Lord Scriven. Certainly, that remains core to what the FCO does. Of course, Francis Maude—the noble Lord, Lord Maude—is half a Foreign Office Minister and half a BIS Minister in carrying forward the practical work on that issue. However, I drive it forward at the level of ensuring that it is built into the way in which we approach our work overall. The Government Equalities Office naturally holds the overall lead in government, but all departments have a duty to ensure that all groups in society are part of the

consideration of how we should be fair to all. Therefore, the Foreign Office, far from resiling on our support for promoting the fair treatment of all, is trying to press it even further.

We wholeheartedly agree that human rights are universal and have to apply to all people. The noble Baroness, Lady Barker, raised the issue of the Bill of Rights. She asked whether our policy was going to undermine it. The answer is no. I can say to her that my noble friend Lord Faulks is engaged with his other colleagues in preparing a paper, which will go out to the country for consultation at some time this autumn—I know that definitions of autumn can vary, but I think I know what it means. When I have gone to United Nations meetings, and others around the world, I have always given an undertaking that this country is a compassionate country that believes in human rights. A Bill of Rights will not undermine that. It should reinforce and strengthen, not weaken, human rights.

It is clearly unacceptable that, around the world, people continue to be discriminated against and face violence simply because of who they love. As we have heard today, this happens too often and in too many places. We know that at least 175 million LGBTI people live in countries where they are persecuted and, indeed, prosecuted. The real global scale of the problem is probably much higher than that.

In this regard, I remain deeply concerned that 41 of the 53 members of the Commonwealth still criminalise homosexuality, and I am glad that this matter was raised by so many noble Lords today. We should recall that the Commonwealth charter states:

“We are implacably opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds”.

So there is no excuse for members of the Commonwealth to persecute or prosecute those who are LGBTI. The Prime Minister has spoken out on LGBTI rights in the Commonwealth, and I can update the House further on that. Earlier this year, the Foreign Secretary wrote to the Commonwealth Secretary-General and raised the importance of implementing the aims and aspirations of the charter. My noble friend Hugo Swire—I beg your pardon; my right honourable friend, as he is still in the other place—the Minister of State with responsibility for the Commonwealth, has resolutely raised the issue in the past. I suspect that he shall do so again. The UK thinks that the Commonwealth should do more to promote the rights of its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens, who deserve the same rights as all other citizens.

The noble Baroness, Lady Northover, raised the interesting question about whether things will change and perhaps improve with the election of a new Secretary-General. I hope so. We argue that that process should be more transparent and should bring forward, shall we say, more openness than it has in the past. We will look to see how candidates emerge. It has to be the best person for the job, and I think the best person is somebody who will take forward a commitment to human rights in the Commonwealth and not let it stay stagnant, as it appears to be in some countries at the moment.

Our high commissions around the world continue to lobby at the highest level on LGBTI rights where same-sex relations are criminalised. They also fund projects and support local LGBTI civil society groups. The work and the commitment are there.

Furthermore, the abuses of human rights of those in other areas should be recorded. Some have referred to the horrors committed in ISIL-controlled territory, and the UK plays a leading role in a global coalition dedicated to dealing with that. That is why protecting the human rights of LGBTI people is a vital part of the British Government's work at home and overseas.

Government co-ordination was called into question by the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, and one or two other noble Lords. I fully agree that co-ordination across FCO, DfID, the Home Office and, as others have rightly mentioned, DCLG is important, and the Government Equalities Office takes the lead on so many matters. We do work in co-ordination. That is why officials are in regular discussion, most recently on how the whole of Government could follow up on the recent visit of the United States LGBT special envoy. I shall refer to that in a moment, because I had the honour of meeting him. I also assure noble Lords that FCO officials are discussing with DfID officials how we can best support DfID's refreshed approach to LGBTI matters and development overall.

This applies to LGB as well as T. I know that there are differences in the way that some Governments overseas refer to different groups. The noble Lord, Lord Scriven, was absolutely right to refer to LGBTI, and I intend to continue to refer to that overall. I know that it offends some members of the LGB community and some transgender, but I think that he is right in his terminology for this debate today—it helps us.

I was asked also by the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, and there were comments elsewhere, about asylum. It is important to recognise that our policy on asylum is to look at the individual, not at a category. Our policy and guidance are very clear: we do not remove from this country individuals who have demonstrated a real risk of persecution on grounds of sexual orientation. It is clear that, in so many countries now, the activity of their Governments has made it even more obvious that somebody is at real risk of persecution. Other countries should bear in mind when they are passing legislation or encouraging anti-LGBTI activity that that is taken as *prima facie* evidence by us as to what a person would face if they were removed.

I was also asked more generally what we are doing around the world. Our embassies and high commissions work hard to tackle prejudice against LGBTI people. I can say to the noble Lord, Lord Scriven, that they do so by challenging discriminatory laws through direct lobbying of Governments and by supporting civil society organisations on the ground. For example, we regularly raise our concerns about any legislation which would lead to persecution of, and discrimination against, LGBTI people. Belize was mentioned, but that has certainly happened not only in Belize but in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and Uganda—to name just five instances where we press home our argument against such persecution. With regard to Uganda, we are

supporting the police and Uganda Human Rights Commission to improve their response to cases involving vulnerable and marginalised persons, including members of the LGBTI community.

We believe that supporting local actors is the best way for us to achieve a sustained improvement overall. We support, therefore, Ugandan civil society in its work to protect the human rights of LGBTI persons. We continue to support in practical terms training, advocacy and legal cases related to the protection of LGBTI rights, and will continue to raise our concerns about any legislation which could lead to further persecution of, and discrimination against, LGBTI people. In Montenegro, the UK supported a project to improve prosecution of homophobic hate crimes—it is important, on the other side of the coin, not just to prevent persecution but to make sure that measures are in place to tackle those who carry out activities which are homophobic. In Russia, we are supporting LGBTI campaigners, and in the Caribbean we are funding a number of projects, including one that focuses on developing a digital database and online platform where members of the community can then get access to various services throughout the region. We have also funded a human rights workshop for the St Lucia police force.

I can assure the noble Lord, Lord Collins of Highbury, that our public diplomacy forms an integral part of our approach to changing perceptions, securing equal rights for LGBTI persons and demonstrating solidarity with civil society activists. That includes Stonewall, the Kaleidoscope Trust and the Human Dignity Trust.

Staff from our embassies and high commissions regularly attend pride marches. My disappointment when I went to New York for the United Nations back in June was that, when I arrived, I was just too late to join our British ambassador to the UN on his march. I insisted that he then tweeted the photograph of him in a really good, strong T-shirt. It certainly played havoc with the road systems, too, but we got there in the end. We also stage events during Pride Week as well as on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. This year alone, our diplomats have hosted events in Skopje, Riga, Budapest, Zagreb, Kingston, Minsk, Singapore and Brasilia, to name but a few. This week, the British embassy in Belgrade is again supporting the pride parade on 20 September, in which FCO officials will take part. Many of our posts have conducted social media campaigns in a host of other countries, including Turkey, China and Vietnam.

I note what was said about Turkey. That was particularly used to draw attention to the issue of flying the rainbow flag. Perhaps it is appropriate at this moment if I interrupt that narrative to explain that the issue is not that we have anything against the rainbow flag; it is simply a matter that UK diplomatic missions around the world fly the union flag, national flag and the flags of the British Overseas Territories. We do not fly the Commonwealth flag either. We are a member of many organisations and associations such as NATO and we do not fly their flags. We do not fly other organisations' flags. What we do is to reflect the whole nation.

[BARONESS ANELAY OF ST JOHNS]

Having reflected on the way that we represent human rights, let me say that the union flag represents the human rights of all. I recognise that when our ambassadors and high commissioners join in the pride marches, what they do—and I have seen what they do—is to drape the rainbow flag over the floats, including over the UK float. But flying the flag is a national matter for a state, and I am afraid that that is where we are. I do not want to dilute our commitment. That is the fact: quite a simple fact.

**Lord Cashman:** If that is the fact and the reason why the flag is no longer flown, why has it been flown for the past 12 years?

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** My Lords, it is one of those things where someone thought it was an excellent idea at the time without thinking through the consequences of what it does to the other flag being flown. When we fly the flag we look at the country and think, “What is that country doing?”. I am proud of what we are doing. If I want to wear a rainbow outfit on the right day, nothing will stop me doing that either, I can assure the noble Lord.

I shall return to the narrative. Our embassy in Hanoi in 2013 was the first local mission to use its website as a platform for an LGB&T—as it was then—activist blogger. I would also like to draw attention to our consular work, highlighting that some of our posts now offer same-sex marriages, with one such union prompting the Seychelles to reassert its commitment to decriminalise sex between same-sex couples, so things can change. Our embassy in Santo Domingo hosted the first same-sex marriage in the Caribbean on 30 December 2014.

I was asked about the special envoy and I was delighted to meet with Mr Berry last week. We agreed that there is already excellent co-ordination between the UK and the US and discussed what more we could do together. That will be a continuing discussion. I will be listening and learning. He has only just been appointed and we need to see how that develops. We agreed on the need to empower ambassadors to show leadership on LGBTI issues where and when they believe it to be most appropriate.

In the light of this, I have every confidence that we will continue our work overseas and show our strong commitment and vigour in protecting LGBTI rights around the world. That includes the United Nations in New York and the Human Rights Council, where in September last year we saw the passing of a second resolution on sexual orientation, supported this time by more states than ever before. This resolution, tabled by Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay provides the international legal framework needed by LGBT activists to help challenge the views of states that undermine their legitimacy.

I assure noble Lords that we will continue to prevent silence on sexual orientation at the UN and elsewhere, not least because silence is an affront to those people who suffer discrimination and violence. It would weaken the UN’s credibility and ability to address a range of other contentious issues. As such I was delighted to see

that, for the first time, the UN Security Council last month held an informal meeting on LGBTI rights in the context of ISIL. Again, this shows the UK at the forefront in strongly condemning the atrocities committed by ISIL.

**Baroness Northover:** My Lords—

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** My Lords, the time is up.

**Baroness Northover:** Before the noble Baroness actually concludes—

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** My Lords, we have both been Whips. I have exceeded my time in a time-limited debate—

**Baroness Northover:** I look forward to receiving—

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** My Lords, I am not required to take any interventions when I have exceeded my time.

5.10 pm

**Lord Scriven:** My Lords, I thank noble Lords for taking part in this debate, which has been thoughtful, informed and excellent. It has been powerful for a reason that many noble Lords will not know. In the Chamber watching and listening to us are some people I met on Tuesday who are either going through the asylum process or have been granted asylum. Probably for the first time ever they have seen a number of politicians, including someone from the church, who have articulated their human rights and have come together to try to defend their human rights in their country. The debate has been very powerful purely for that reason.

I was deeply moved by some of the interventions, particularly that of my noble friend Lord Paddick in terms of his personal experience and comparing that with what happens internationally. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, for his intervention, and agree with what he had to say. This is the foremost human rights issue of our time and it needs to be systematically addressed by government. I thank the noble Lord for all the work he has done over his long career on championing human rights and LGBT rights. I also thank the noble Lord, Lord Cashman. I know that he has a long history on these issues, having been one of the founders of Stonewall.

I welcome what the Minister said, but I want to raise two issues for further thought; I know that I cannot ask questions at this point. The first one is that three noble Lords asked her which Minister has been given the role in DfID, and I noticed the absence of any response. I know that she cannot answer me now, but perhaps she will write to the noble Lord, Lord Cashman, my noble friend Lady Northover and me. The other issue that we may have to come back to on another day is the Minister’s reference to DfID’s refreshed approach. However, she did not say what that refreshed approach is. I am sure that it is a more robust one, but

we look forward to hearing what it is. I also want to refer to an issue that was raised in an important point made by my noble friend Lady Barker—smart economics. We have to do more thinking both as a country and as a Government about how we use economic and business muscle to deal with these matters.

We had a mountain to climb in our own country. We have not quite reached the top, but we are getting close. However, many people around the world feel that they are at the bottom of the mountain and that they cannot tackle it and get to the top. The role of our Government and of our policy—not only through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office but in DFID, the Home Office and other departments—is sometimes to provide the rope, sometimes to offer encouragement and mentoring, and the whole time to make sure that we are climbing that mountain with people across the world to ensure that their human rights are fundamentally enacted, so that they can love who they wish to love and live in the same way as us, in a free democracy with our freedoms intact.

*Motion agreed.*

## **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Risk of Being Drawn into Terrorism) (Guidance) Regulations 2015**

*Motion to Approve*

5.15 pm

*Moved by Lord Ashton of Hyde*

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 16 July be approved.

*Relevant documents: 2nd Report from the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments, 7th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee*

**Lord Ashton of Hyde (Con):** My Lords, this secondary legislation has been brought forward in respect of Part 5 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which is concerned with reducing the risk of people being drawn into terrorism. It relates specifically to the provisions in Section 26 of that Act, which place a statutory duty on specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism when exercising their functions—also referred to as the Prevent duty.

I should inform the House that the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee has considered and cleared the instrument that we are debating today. I would like to place on record my appreciation of the forbearance shown by the chair and members of the committee in considering these instruments outside the normal timescales.

The Bill was debated by this House earlier this year, and the primary legislation was enacted on 12 February. During Parliament's consideration of the legislation there was widespread recognition of the threat from terrorism and broad support for the measures contained within it. In order to help the House in its consideration of this statutory instrument, I will first briefly outline what the Government seek to achieve by it and why it is necessary for our consideration this afternoon.

In March, guidance was approved by this House for all specified authorities captured by the duty. It included guidance for higher and further education institutions, but not on the specific issue of external speakers and events. Accordingly, the Prevent duty came into force on 1 July this year, with the exception of the higher and further education sectors.

Your Lordships will recall that at the time of the duty's parliamentary debate, it was agreed that it would not be commenced for these sectors until that remaining guidance had been published, and that it would be for the next Government to take this forward in the next Session. The purpose of the regulations contained in this statutory instrument is to do this. The guidance under consideration today sets out the detail of what the duty will mean in practice for higher and further education institutions and explains the steps that should be taken to ensure compliance. It includes the original guidance for these sectors from the document previously published in March, with an additional section on speakers and events. I can assure your Lordships that the original guidance text remains unchanged from that which was previously approved by Parliament, except that the regulations will bring into effect revisions so as to remove the text that has been superseded by this new guidance. As with the earlier guidance, there are also two versions before us: one for authorities in England and Wales, and a separate one for authorities in Scotland.

Let me turn to why these regulations are so important. To start, I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate why the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act and the Prevent duty were introduced earlier this year. The emergence of ISIL, and the number of people—including vulnerable young people—who have travelled to Syria and Iraq, present a heightened threat to our national security. The intelligence agencies tell us that the threat is now worse than at any time since 9/11. The director-general of the Security Service told us this morning that the UK is facing the largest number of terror plots in almost 40 years, and that six attempts at terrorism have been thwarted in the last 12 months. The threat is serious and it is growing. The threat has changed and so must our response.

As part of that response, we must continue to combat the underlying ideology that feeds, supports and sanctions terrorism, and prevent people being drawn on to that path. The Prevent duty is about protecting people from the poisonous and pernicious influence of extremist ideas that are used to legitimise terrorism, making sure key bodies across the country play their part and work in partnership to do this. The regulations before us today are crucial to ensuring that the duty can be implemented effectively. They will mean that higher and further education institutions play their part in tackling this important issue. Partnership working is a key theme for all specified authorities throughout the statutory guidance. The duty needs to be in force for all authorities for these partnerships to work successfully.

Universities and colleges were made subject to the duty in recognition of the very real risk of radicalisation in those institutions. Young people continue to make a disproportionately high number of those arrested in

[LORD ASHTON OF HYDE]

this country for terrorist-related offences. Radicalisation on campus can be facilitated through events held by extremist speakers, while radicalised students can act as a focal point for further radicalisation through personal contact with fellow students and through social media activity. It is therefore imperative that universities and colleges start to implement the duty as soon as is possible.

Finally, I take this opportunity to set out the steps that the previous Government and this Government have taken to ensure that this guidance is suitable and workable for institutions. Noble Lords will recall that during previous debates on this matter concerns were raised in both Houses as to how the duty would be implemented in higher and further education institutions, particularly where there are existing requirements on these bodies relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

I emphasise that the issue of how universities and colleges balance the Prevent duty with the need to secure freedom of speech and to have regard to the importance of academic freedom is, in the Government's view, extremely important. Indeed, on account of this and the strength of the views expressed in this House, the previous Government amended the legislation to ensure that institutions pay particular regard to the importance of academic freedom and freedom of speech when complying with the Prevent duty. Since then, we have worked with the sector and across government to ensure that the guidance on speakers and events is right, including reflecting comments received as part of the formal public consultation that took place on the draft guidance during the passage of the Bill.

It is now the Government's belief that the revisions to the guidance and the amendments to the Act address the concerns that have been raised by Parliament and the sectors about this duty. We must now get on with ensuring that our colleges and universities are as safe as possible from the risk of radicalisation.

These regulations are needed to implement effectively the Prevent duty across England, Wales and Scotland, which will ultimately help the Government and law enforcement agencies to keep the country safe from terrorism. I therefore commend the instrument to the House and beg to move that it is approved.

**Lord Rosser (Lab):** I thank the Minister for explaining the purpose and objectives of these regulations, which we support in principle. I was somewhat interested to read a press story this morning stating that the Home Office was concerned that Peers could reject the regulations. I only wish that somebody had told me that. Had I known that, I would have prepared a rather different speech from the one I have. If the newspaper report is anywhere near accurate, perhaps someone might explain to the Home Office that the revolution does not normally come during last business on a Thursday afternoon before a three-week recess.

As the Minister said, the regulations were discussed in the other place last week. I shall make a few points in the light of the Government's response to that brief debate, which ended in a ministerial crescendo, with references to Hegel and Edmund Burke. That must

have had the committee on the edge of their seats at 3.45 pm on a Thursday. My first point relates to what was said in the other place and is on paragraph 19 of the guidance, which was queried by Universities UK, which felt that it needed to be changed. The Minister himself raised that point. He said that it was consistent with the Prevent duty and strategy, but that the Government would look at it closely again. If that has not already been done, will the Minister say how the outcome of that further look will be communicated?

The Government also said in that debate that if there was any significant revision to the guidance, it would, "in the spirit we have enjoyed today", be brought back to Parliament. Does that mean that in the Government's view there is no requirement under the Act to bring back any revision of the guidance to each House of Parliament for approval, and that doing so is dependent on the attitude and willingness of the Government of the day?

I accept that I may not be referring to the relevant section in the Act, in which case I am sure the Minister will no doubt put me right, but Section 29(5) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 states:

"Guidance ... takes effect on whatever day the Secretary of State appoints by regulations made by statutory instrument ... A statutory instrument containing regulations under this subsection may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before each House of Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House".

Subsection (7) of that same section then confirms that subsection (5), to which I have just referred, has,

"effect in relation to any revised guidance".

So clarification of the Government's position on that point, in the light of the Commons Minister's statement, would be extremely welcome so that it can be placed on the record.

The Minister in the Commons was also asked how he would monitor the use of the documents we are considering, how he would ensure that they served their purpose, and whether he would come back to Parliament to report on how they had been used. In response, the Commons Minister said that he did not think that enough work had been done on the issue of monitoring and reviewing, and that there was a need for close evaluation. He also went on to say that he thought there had been insufficient oversight of Prevent, and that he wanted to see what could be done on that score as well. When do the Government expect to conclude their consideration of these particularly important issues referred to by the Commons Minister, and how will they communicate the outcome of that further consideration?

This point about reviewing and monitoring is one on which the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC, has expressed a view because in his latest annual report, published today, he says that he has previously recommended that the Prevent programme should be reviewed by independent people with a range of expertise. Perhaps the Minister could say whether that recommendation is being considered as part as the Commons Minister's consideration of monitoring and reviewing arrangements, which he indicated he would be undertaking.

The independent reviewer also goes on to say in his latest report that his own contacts indicate that while good work is undoubtedly done under Prevent, it is also the focus of considerably more resentment among Muslims than either the criminally focused prohibitions or the executive orders. He goes on to refer to the broad reach of Prevent in terms of both the number and age group of persons that it touches and its capacity to target the expression of non-violent views which may be associated with religious and cultural norms. David Anderson also refers to submissions made to him by the Muslim Council of Britain, on which he makes clear he cannot comment on the accuracy or otherwise of the cases raised, but does make the general comment that any state activity which seeks to monitor the expression of opinions, however well intentioned, is liable to be perceived as directed to not just the risk of terrorism but to culturally specific activities from which any possible link to future violence is indirect and even tenuous. I raise these points made by the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation because they are relevant to a discussion on the Prevent duty guidance, and indicate quite clearly that concerns about what could happen are legitimate and evidence-based.

A great deal is going to depend on how all the guidance is actually applied, and not just that which we are considering today, including what action is actually taken if a decision is reached that guidance is being ignored. The guidance on further education institutions points out that encouragement of terrorism and inviting support for a proscribed terrorist organisation are both criminal offences. It then says that institutions should not provide a platform for these offences to be committed, before saying that if views being expressed, or likely to be expressed by a particular speaker, constitute extremist views, the event should not be allowed to proceed except where institutions are entirely convinced that such risk can be fully mitigated without cancellation of the event. Inevitably, interpretation of that guidance is going to be subjective. I hope the Minister agrees that if the guidance we are considering is applied and enforced in a cack-handed way, there is a danger that it will create more problems than it is intended to resolve.

5.30 pm

We have newspaper stories today that are nothing to do with good investigative journalism and everything to do with simply repeating a government briefing. They state that the Government's new extremism analysis unit claims that at least 70 events featuring hate speakers were held on campuses last year—or alternatively, that in total 70 events involving Islamist preachers were held on campuses last year. It would be helpful if the Minister could provide details, following this debate, to interested Members of this House of the complete list of 70 events and the names and organisations of the speakers involved.

In urging the Government to ensure that common sense prevails—I am sure that this is what they are seeking to do—over the interpretation, implementation and ultimate enforcement of these guidelines and previous guidelines, I simply draw the Minister's attention to the reports in the media today, which he has probably

read, about the 14 year-old Muslim boy who was arrested, handcuffed and fingerprinted by Texas police for bringing a home-made clock to school because the device was thought to be a hoax bomb. I hope, and I am sure that this is the Government's objective, that under these regulations and guidelines we are not going to see in this country young children arrested, handcuffed and fingerprinted before somebody questions the validity and justification for the actions being taken. The Government have a duty to make sure that that kind of thing just cannot happen. We have seen how the health and safety Act can be used as a cover to try to justify ludicrous decisions. We do not want to see attempts to use this legislation and guidance in the same kind of way.

I repeat our support in principle for these regulations. I am well aware, from conversations I have had with people directly involved, that Prevent seeks to address real and not imaginary issues of concern, even among children of primary school age. However, I am also aware of the need to apply common sense and avoid stereotyping in their application if we are to secure the widespread acceptance of the need for these regulations, across all sections of society, which will be needed to deliver the objective they are intended to help achieve: of an even safer, happier and more secure society for the benefit of all our citizens.

**The Earl of Erroll (CB):** My Lords, I want to say a few things about these regulations because of the opportunity they give me, as the revised Prevent duty guidance is also being reissued in general. I rise because my wife is the chair of governors of a moderate learning difficulty academy in Bedford. She was finance governor for a long time and then took it to academy status as chairman. She has worked very hard for it for many years but the burden on the governors now of all these sorts of things is becoming unbearable, to the extent that all the good people will probably be lost. She has been told several times by the local authority that she has a strong board of governors but they are reaching the end of their tether because of the weight of things that come up under inspections, criticism and provisions such as these. Your Lordships should realise that the academy is not a large establishment.

When the school's member of staff who was the child safeguarding officer, and who was therefore Prevent-trained, happened to leave they suddenly realised, because something had changed, that the person they thought was properly trained was no longer properly qualified. So suddenly, overnight, they were threatened with closure—the advice given from outside was that they should not open over the weekend—because they would not have a member of staff who had the right training in position on the day. They got around it because over the weekend one of the governors went through online training, which was held to be adequate. However, there is the weight of trying to get through this sort of stuff for a person who is trying to do another full-time job. People are well qualified in other areas but they all now have to know about it. It is not just this but all the other stuff that goes with it for the school.

[THE EARL OF ERROLL]

In those governors' case, because they are dealing with children with difficulties they also have to understand all the different monitoring systems for achieving targets. They have to monitor whether statements are being upheld while maintaining privacy and anonymity, because they are not allowed to know who the children are—only certain members of staff can. At the same time, they also have to make sure that these systems all work. If they fail, the governors are held responsible now, as there is a legal requirement for them to do that.

I am saying this only because the regulations are very well meaning. We do not want this sort of stuff going on in our schools: we do not want what is now called radicalism preached or people's minds being warped. I entirely agree with that. But the Government must just be careful when they introduce these regulations that they do not lose all the good people who are currently, voluntarily, running schools and such like. Otherwise, who will run these things? The Government will have a big and expensive problem, because they will have to pay people to do it properly. They will not find enough people, because the other thing we have noticed is that when these schools need to hire new people, the staff are not available—there is huge competition for people in this area. The Government will suddenly find that they have to close schools because of the regulations, as they cannot get the people. That will be a problem, and children will just not be educated. I do not know what the Government are going to do about that. It is a government problem, so it goes back over to them. This is only a general point, so I do not particularly need a reply, but I would like the Minister to take this back to the Department for Education and to all the other bodies that these things come out of and just ask them to look at the compound effect of all these things.

**Baroness Sharp of Guildford (LD):** My Lords, I thank the Minister for introducing these regulations and for reminding us of the lengthy debates that we had last January, particularly on the issue of freedom of speech in universities and the tension that is created between the Prevent duties that were then being proposed and the right of freedom of speech. Picking that up, we on these Benches very much welcome the new guidance that is being issued on external speakers and events. Gone is the prescription of the draft regulations that were presented to us in January—Members may remember that it was suggested, for example, that all external speakers should be required to provide a summary of what they were going to say 14 days in advance. Those of us who come from a university background knew quite well that it would be practically impossible to persuade people to do that sort of thing.

We very much welcome the much more down-to-earth and, I think, reasonable and sensible advice. Most further education colleges and universities are already co-operating fully with the authorities on the Prevent duty. Recent events, such as young people and families disappearing off to Syria to fight for ISIS and some of the events here at home, make everybody well aware of the dangers that we face these days from young people being drawn into terrorism in one form or another. There is also the power of the internet and social

media in this respect. The main difference now between what was being proposed and what is now being proposed is that the Prevent duty is, as we stressed when we discussed the Bill, going to be compulsory: it is now statutory, and no longer a voluntary activity. In that case, it requires a different set of guidelines.

Some of the issues I want to raise with the Minister overlap with those already mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, and therefore I will not go into detail about them. First, as the Minister explained, various sets of guidance are being issued here. Not only is there the separate guidance for Scotland from that for England and Wales but there is the older guidance, which has already been issued, relating to schools, the health service, prisons and so forth. This really picks up the points made by the noble Earl, Lord Erroll, because this guidance was discussed at some length in March. I think he is right. The issue of the burden placed on schools, for example, and many authorities in terms of implementing this guidance, and their ability to do that, was raised. I would also question the degree to which the collaboration that is written into the guidance is feasible.

One difficulty that one faces when bodies—schools, health authorities, youth services, police, and so forth—are required to collaborate is that it requires setting up meetings, which is often extremely difficult. Time is very pressured for those people. The aspiration that there should be collaboration all round is sometimes honoured as much in the breach as in the—what is the word? What is required is aspirational more than anything else.

I was somewhat intrigued to see that the reissued guidance points up the fact that it has been revised. The Minister today and the Minister in the House of Commons last week stressed that there were no substantive differences in the guidance, and I take it that that is the case. I assume that they are purely drafting changes, because if there are any substantive differences it would be helpful to know about them.

In relation to the genuinely new guidance about how to handle speakers and events at universities and further education colleges, I very much welcome the degree to which the new regulations leave decisions to the relevant authorities and have dropped the prescriptiveness of the draft regulations that we saw in January. In particular, I welcome the recognition that the authorities need to balance the risk of exposure to extremism with the legal duty to ensure freedom of speech.

I echo the query raised by the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, on whether the authorities—the universities and colleges—should be entirely convinced that any risks that they incur through having speakers on the premises who might be regarded as extreme can be fully mitigated. As Universities UK says, there will always be some level of uncertainty involved. The double requirement of being entirely convinced that the risks are fully mitigated is practically impossible to fulfil, and could be interpreted as providing a de facto ban on such speakers. In his response to the Commons, the Minister made it clear that that did not constitute a blanket ban on such speakers. I ask the Minister today whether it would therefore be fair to interpret

that instruction as meaning that the authorities can go ahead with inviting a “risky” speaker if they are satisfied that, as far as they can be, the risks are mitigated and that they have taken all reasonable action to ensure that.

I also assume—again, perhaps the Minister would clarify this—that in such circumstances it is vital that there should be an audit trail if these issues are to be monitored. In other words, if anything should go wrong, it is vital for the university or college to have the evidence to show that it took all reasonable action to mitigate the occurrence.

I also pick up the point about paragraph 19 and the comma. The Minister offered to look at the issue of the comma again, and I wondered whether he had done so. As was pointed out, in grammatical terms, there is a different interpretation if the comma is there.

Finally, I pick up the point at the end of the guidance to universities. The Minister made it clear that the authority that will monitor this will be the Higher Education Funding Council for England, for England and Wales. What sanctions will it be able to impose on universities? The regulations just state that the Minister will appoint an appropriate body and that a separate monitoring framework will be published. The Minister announced in the Commons debate that HEFCE is to be the body for higher education institutions. Are we likely to get any more detail about that?

For example, in relation to the further education institutions, it is made quite clear that Ofsted is the monitoring body and that if that institution does not come up to scratch, various sanctions can be imposed: withdrawal of funding through the Skills Funding Agency, reconstitution of the governing board and even dissolution of the college as a whole by the Secretary of State. HEFCE does not have quite the same clout as the Skills Funding Agency since universities now receive much of their funding through fees and separately. Nor does the Secretary of State have the right to dissolve any university. Are we likely to see more detail on how HEFCE will exercise these responsibilities? In general, from these Benches we welcome these new regulations and regard them as a very great improvement, certainly on the draft regulations as we saw them in January.

5.45 pm

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** My Lords, I thank noble Lords who replied to this debate. They did so in a very constructive way—as when the original Bill went through the House and we received close attention but in a most constructive way. I particularly pay tribute to the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, for his support during the passage of the Bill, and other noble Lords who managed to stay here for the last business before the Recess. Let me deal with some of the points made by noble Lords during this brief debate.

The noble Lord, Lord Rosser, brought up the exciting speech of my right honourable friend the Minister in the other place. I am afraid that there will be no crescendo or diminuendo from me. I will just continue in my normal monotone and I hope we will get through this quickly without any histrionics so that we can all go home.

The noble Lord mentioned the speech and some of the commitments made by my right honourable friend. One that was referred to was the way that any changes would be brought back here. When my right honourable friend referred to the spirit enjoyed in the Committee meeting in the other place, I think that he was referring to the constructive approach of all parties. Of course, he is fully aware that, however constructive that approach, he would have to bring back any revisions to be approved by both Houses. It is quite clear in Section 29(7) of the Act that subsection (5) will,

“have effect in relation to any revised guidance”.

Subsection (5) clearly says that any changes or instruments will be,

“laid before each House ... and approved by a resolution of each House”.

The noble Lord, Lord Rosser, also asked if there was any obligation in the Act to keep guidance under review. We will keep the guidance under review. Again, my right honourable friend made that promise. There is no statutory obligation to do that. Section 29 of the Act requires that any revisions must be brought back—as I said. On how the revision will be monitored, we will have a monitoring process. It will be looked at over the next year or so. Then, if need be, it will go before the Prevent oversight board. If it is deemed necessary, any revisions will indeed come back.

In talking about oversight and evaluation, I can tell the noble Lord that the Prevent duty guidance sets out clear responsibilities for the oversight of Prevent, including evaluation and monitoring of the duties of the Prevent oversight board. He mentioned independent representation; at that moment, that is the presence of the noble Lord, Lord Carlile, the former independent reviewer of terrorism, who is an independent member of that board.

The noble Lord, Lord Rosser, made a very good point about common sense. I assure him and the House that common sense is exactly what we want applied in this matter. As the guidance makes clear, the duty should be implemented in a risk-based and proportionate way. We do not expect—and this addresses the point made by the noble Baroness—all events with external speakers, even if they might have extremist views, necessarily to be cancelled. What we do expect is that institutions put in place a system for assessing risk and taking appropriate action, which might include a challenge to those views. We talked about the 70 hate speakers who have addressed universities in the past year; it does not necessarily mean that 70 of those hate speakers would not be able to speak at those universities, but there has to be a risk assessment, and the risks have to be borne in mind—and appropriate mitigation, which would include challenge, should be put in place. As for interpreting the measure, higher and further education Prevent co-ordinators are available to provide support and guidance to institutions in implementing the duty.

The noble Lord mentioned some recommendations today from the Anderson report—the independent reviewer of terrorism’s annual report—which came out today. I am afraid that I have not read it yet, so I cannot comment on it. He mentioned that the

[LORD ASHTON OF HYDE]

interpretation was subjective and could, if handled in a cack-handed way, create more problems than already exist. I completely agree with that. We absolutely expect it to be implemented in a common-sense way, and the Government have no reason to go steaming in prescribing these things. We have left a lot of interpretation to the universities and further education colleges and, as the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, said, common sense will prevail.

The noble Earl, Lord Erroll, talked about special schools and young schools in particular. That was part of the conversation and the debate in March, and he very kindly said that he did not expect any answers. Although the statutory instrument refers only to higher education and further education, I take his point—it will be monitored. He also, usefully, said that I should take his points back to the Department for Education, which as the Home Office Whip I will be delighted to do.

I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Sharp, for the acknowledgement that the measure has significantly improved. She mentioned, for example, the original requirement in the Bill that all speakers should notify of the content of their speeches 14 days in advance. Of course, the Government have agreed to amend that. Politicians around Parliament acknowledged that and realised that it was impossible. Most politicians only make up their speeches on the train on their way to events, so they realised that that was not actually a practical proposition. The noble Baroness also made the point that there is a problem in collaboration if it is too burdensome. Again, that is a general point for the guidance to which we referred in March, but the Prevent oversight board will take that into account and will review how this is working in practice. We do not believe that if it is interpreted sensibly it will be too burdensome.

The noble Baroness said that if you have to be entirely convinced that there is full mitigation, this might end up as a de facto ban. We think that, with sensible interpretation and a decent risk assessment

with challenge and mitigation, it is not a de facto ban. It is certainly not intended to be one. The Minister made that clear in the other place.

As the noble Baroness said, the Higher Education Funding Council for England is the body that will do the monitoring. When we talk of sanctions, that body will monitor them. The idea is that if there are difficulties—and we do not expect them, because many, if not most, universities are doing most of this already—the sanction would be that, having discussed them with the university or further education college, there is the possibility that the Secretary of State can give direction, but only after that has been agreed by the Prevent oversight board. Ultimately, in theory, there could be a court order if the university did not abide by that. That is certainly not anticipated, but it could happen if the worst came to the worst.

I think that that covers most of the points. The noble Baroness also mentioned partnership working. It is quite right that a number of institutions are already delivering on requirements for the Prevent duty. The guidance makes it clear that there should be a risk assessment. The partnership working will flow from that assessment. As I said, a number of institutions are working well in partnership with other agencies. The Higher Education Funding Council for England will consult shortly on the monitoring framework and any sanctions will flow from the Secretary of State.

This secondary legislation is needed effectively to implement the Prevent duty across England, Wales and Scotland. It will ultimately help the Government and law enforcement agencies to keep the country safe from terrorism. Universities and colleges remain subject to the duty in recognition of the very real risk of radicalisation in those institutions.

I am most grateful to all noble Lords who have remained for this last business before the Recess. I wish all noble Lords a peaceful and relaxing three weeks, although for some it may be less relaxing than for others. I commend the instrument to the House.

*Motion agreed.*

*House adjourned at 5.57 pm.*



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