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Environmental Audit Committee

Sustainable Development Goals in the UK

Ninth Report of Session 2016–17

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

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Summary

By adopting Agenda 2030 the Government has committed itself to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals - or the Global Goals - in the UK as well as overseas. However, the Government's doughnut-shaped approach - which is to see the Goals as something for the UK to help other countries do, rather than drawing on other countries' experiences in implementing the goals here at home- suggests that it has little interest in, or enthusiasm for, maximising the opportunities and benefits presented by the Goals. Successful implementation would not only encourage greater cross-departmental collaboration and policy coherence in Government, it would bring economic, social and environmental benefits to the UK. The Business & Sustainable Development Commission have estimated that the economic prize to business of implementing the Goals could be worth up to US\$12 trillion by 2030. As the UK leaves the EU, the Government has a once in a generation opportunity to form a cross-party consensus about the direction of travel of the UK. The Goals should form the basis of that new consensus and this should be enshrined into law. All new government policies should be assessed for how they contribute towards achieving the Goals so that Britain in 2030 is a stronger, fairer, healthier society in which no one is left behind.

Raising awareness and encouraging engagement with the Global Goals will increase the number of people and organisations able to contribute towards meeting the Goals. But today few people in the UK know about them. The Prime Minister's recent statement in response to an open letter from leading businesses 'that we, as governments, international institutions, businesses and individuals, need to do more to respond to the concerns of those who feel that the modern world has left them behind' is a good start. However, the Government seems more concerned with promoting the Goals abroad, and has undertaken no substantive work to promote the Goals domestically or encourage businesses, the public sector and civil society to engage with the Goals and work towards meeting them. The Government should work with the BBC and other national media to launch a national campaign to raise public awareness of the Goals. It should also support initiatives designed to encourage businesses and others to contribute towards meeting the Goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals represent a positive and ambitious commitment to develop sustainably from this generation to the next. We will only achieve the Goals if the Government provides strong leadership and a high level of ambition from the very top - something which has been lacking. There is no voice at the top of Government speaking for the long-term aspirations embodied in the Goals and the interests of future generations. In order to address this accountability gap the Government should appoint a Cabinet-level Minister in the Cabinet Office with strategic responsibility for implementing sustainable development, including the Goals, across Government. The Government should also publish an implementation report and commit to participate in a voluntary national review by 2018, and every three years after. We are concerned that the Government appears to have changed its mind about the ONS developing a set of national indicators. This suggests an attempt to bury data which will be seen by the public - and us - as going against the spirit of the Goals.

1 Introduction

1. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030 or the Agenda) is a ‘plan of action for people, planet and prosperity’ consisting of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (the Goals or the Global Goals). A list of the Goals can be found in the appendix. In September 2015, 193 Member States, including the UK, adopted this Agenda and committed themselves to working ‘tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030’.¹ This report looks at what the Government is doing to implement the Goals in the UK.

2. It continues the work of our predecessor Committee, who reported on this issue during the last Parliament.² It also builds on the work of the International Development Committee (IDC) which published its report on this issue in June 2016 and concluded that, ‘the Government’s response to domestic implementation of the SDGs has so far been insufficient’.³ In addition to our inquiry the Women and Equalities Committee recently published a report on the implementation of Goal 5 in the UK.⁴ The Communities and Local Government Committee has asked Ministers about providing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces (Goal 11.7).⁵ Since the Goals were adopted there have also been a number of statements and debates in Parliament on the Goals.

3. Chapter two looks at the importance of communicating the Goals to stakeholders and the public to build awareness and encourage engagement. Chapter three assesses progress being made on developing measuring, monitoring and reporting against the Goals. Finally, many of the issues raised by the IDC have still not been addressed satisfactorily, so chapter four of our report continues to scrutinise the Government’s efforts to implement the Goals in the UK.

4. To support the inquiry, we issued a call for evidence and received 56 written submissions. We held five public evidence sessions where we heard from a range of NGOs, businesses and public bodies, as well as Ministers from the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Cabinet Office. In addition, we met with the Colombian Ambassador to the UK and officials from the Colombian Government in Bogotá. We also organised an outreach event with young people in Birmingham. All written and oral evidence can be found on our website and summaries of the private meeting and the outreach event can be found in the appendix. We are grateful to all those who contributed and to our specialist adviser Farooq Ullah, founder and co-chair of UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD).⁶

1 United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 2

2 Environmental Audit Committee, Second Report of Session 2013–14, [Outcomes of the UN Rio+20 Earth Summit](#), HC 200, para 38–39; Environmental Audit Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2014–15, [Connected world: Agreeing ambitious Sustainable Development Goals in 2015](#), HC 452, para 75

3 International Development Committee, First Report of Session 2016–17, [UK implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#), HC 103, para 74

4 Women and Equalities Committee, Eight Report of Session 2016–17, [Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK](#), HC 885

5 Oral evidence taken before the Communities and Local Government Committee on [5 December 2016](#), HC (2016–17) 45, Q147–149 [Andrew Percy]

6 List of interests: Member, Stakeholder Forum’s Board of Directors; Chair, Future Earth Engagement Committee; Co-Chair, UKSSD; Associate, IISD; Fellow, RSA; Associated Partner, European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN).

2 Awareness and engagement

5. Richard Curtis, Co-founder of Project Everyone, described the Goals as an “extraordinary, urgent and optimistic plan for a new generation”.⁷ It consists of 17 “integrated and indivisible” Goals and 169 targets which balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.⁸ Unlike its predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals are universal, applying to the entire world, developed and developing countries alike.⁹ They have been developed to ensure that the Goals are “met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society” and that “no one will be left behind”.¹⁰

6. The Global Goals are the result of an extensive UN consultation.¹¹ The 70-member “open working group” which drew up the proposed Goals was supported by 11 thematic and 83 national consultations, door-to-door visits and an online survey involving civil society, the private sector, and academia.¹² Despite this inclusive approach to developing the Goals, it is clear that public awareness in the UK is “minimal” and “shockingly low”.¹³ Elizabeth Stuart Head of Sustainable Development Goals at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) told us the Goals have “just not been part of the national dialogue; nobody has heard of them”.¹⁴ The business representatives we heard from also report low levels of awareness of the Goals in the private sector.¹⁵

7. This lack of awareness was worrying. The Goals are not a legally binding framework and will rely on the goodwill of Governments to facilitate its delivery, utilising the power of public sector institutions (e.g. NHS and local government) to deliver the Goals on the ground, and helped by businesses pursuing economic opportunities presented by the Goals and held to account by NGOs monitoring progress. Participation was, therefore, a strong theme running throughout the Goals. Dr Graham Long, Senior Lecturer at Newcastle University told us:

Popular participation is a very strong thread running through the goals. You see it in lots of different target areas. It is one area where there could be a genuine change. That would fulfil the goals themselves and also promote the goals to have that broader participatory component across lots of different areas, so that people are more aware of that, at local level, city level, to Government and beyond.¹⁶

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- 7 Q257 [Richard Curtis]
 8 United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 2–5
 9 Q1 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q21 [Graham Long], Q89 [Dominic White], Q119 [David Pencheon], Q257 [Kate Garvey], Bioregional ([SDG0016](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), WWF ([SDG0027](#)), Learning for Sustainability Scotland ([SDG0028](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), New Economics Foundation ([SDG0050](#)), Institution of Environmental Sciences ([SDG0058](#))
 10 FDSO ([SDG0043](#)), Clean Air in London ([SDG0044](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0064](#)), United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 4
 11 Q29 [Elizabeth Stuart], United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 6, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, ‘[Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals](#)’, last accessed March 2017
 12 Michael Liebreich, [UN Sustainable Development Goals – Let’s Not Sleepwalk to Disaster](#) (February 2015)
 13 Q20 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q121 [Catherine Pearce], International Institute for Environment and Development ([SDG0032](#)), Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Bristol SDG Alliance ([SDG0059](#))
 14 Q20 [Elizabeth Stuart]
 15 Qq74–85
 16 Q21 [Graham Long]

But it is clear that this level of participation won't be achieved until there is greater awareness among all sectors in society.

8. We heard a number of theories as to why awareness of the Goals was low including the complexity of the negotiations to agree the Goals, the UN's use of jargon and the sheer number of final Goals, targets and indicators.¹⁷ Some witnesses, however, highlighted the strength of this large agenda. Richard Curtis emphasised the comprehensive, interlocking and representative nature of the Goals and told us that “everybody finds something in them that they are passionate about”.¹⁸ This is something we found during our event with young people in Birmingham. During an exercise to prioritise the Goals each group came up with its own unique list of Goals it thought was most relevant to the UK context. The challenge was, therefore, not trying to get people to care about the issues enshrined within the Goals but to communicate them in a meaningful and engaging way.

9. It was generally felt that increasing awareness of the Goals among the general public, civil society, businesses and policymakers was important to ensure that the Government was held to account on its progress to meet them.¹⁹ UNICEF UK told us they “will only be effective in so far as they are known and understood”.²⁰ Given the current low profile of the Goals this is a huge challenge. During the course of our inquiry, however, we heard a number of innovative and creative ideas, many from British businesses and charities, helping to raise the profile of the Goals.

Role of charities and NGOs

10. At a global level, the ODI has developed a scorecard for the Goals. Elizabeth Stuart told us this was “useful as a tool to start thinking about the [Goals] and what needs to be done to start getting into the agenda”.²¹ Similarly, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung have developed a Sustainable Development Goal Index and Dashboard which tracks, reports and ranks different countries' progress on the Goals.²² In the UK, several charities have come together to establish UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD), a multi-stakeholder network in the UK aiming to inspire and support public, private and voluntary organisations to transform the UK into a sustainable society.²³ The work of UKSSD was complemented by the Bond SDGs Group, a civil society coalition with over 150 member organisations advocating for the full implementation of the Goals.²⁴

17 Q117 [Carl Wright]

18 Q254 [Richard Curtis]

19 Bioregional ([SDG0016](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), Food Foundation ([SDG0025](#)), Learning for Sustainability Scotland ([SDG0028](#)), Sightsavers ([SDG0030](#)), London Regional Centre of Expertise (LRCE) in Education for Sustainable Development ([SDG0033](#)), Local Government Association ([SDG0037](#)), UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), Rothamsted Research ([SDG0041](#)), British Retail Consortium ([SDG0056](#)), Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Bristol SDG Alliance ([SDG0059](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0062](#))

20 UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#))

21 Q22 [Elizabeth Stuart]

22 Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung, '[SDG Index and Dashboards](#)', accessed March 2017

23 Q112 [Dominic White], UKSSD ([SDG0034](#))

24 Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#))

11. Project Everyone, a UK-based not-for-profit organisation which was founded with the aim of “making the Goals famous” has also been pursuing efforts to promote the Goals globally. Richard Curtis told us that Project Everyone have “been trying to [...] make it as simple and attractive and accessible as it can be”.²⁵ The organisation has been focusing on visualising the Goals and telling stories about them.²⁶ Project Everyone facilitated the development of the striking logo and branding for the Goals. It has also undertaken a number of high profile campaigns and events endorsed by famous actors, artists and musicians. Richard Curtis highlighted a “mainstream TV show” Project Everyone made in partnership with Global Citizen which was shown in 150 countries including on BBC One where a million people watched it.²⁷ Kate Garvey, Co-founder of Project Everyone, told us about another of their big successes, a viral video adaptation of the Spice Girls’ “Wannabe” film which “immediately reached 60 million shared views and now it is 190 [million]”.²⁸ She also said Project Everyone was looking at “gaming” and partnering with “Pokémon Go” to promote the Goals.²⁹

12. During our event with young people in Birmingham we heard a strong message that it was important to engage with young people through schools from an early age. This was supported by a number of respondents to our inquiry.³⁰ In order to raise awareness about the Goals with young people, Project Everyone has produced a range of teaching materials and was encouraging schools in the UK and around the world to teach children about the Goals. Kate Garvey described Project Everyone’s work in schools:

We have a programme called the World’s Largest Lesson; Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have supported this and it was kicked off in the UK—David Cameron did a message in 2015. The idea is that there is a set of tools for teachers to share with kids about the goals in assemblies, classes, and we have had great support in Britain from people like Sir Ken Robinson and Emma Watson; Malala has also supported this. It would be brilliant for all MPs to take a lesson. I think in Argentina 10 Government Ministers take part now every year. That raises the profile for sure and kids are responding brilliantly to it. [...] If the Department for Education could write to every school that would be brilliant because that could be the pickup. [...].³¹

Role of business

13. The business representatives we spoke to talked of a growing perception that businesses have “moral duties” and that this was starting to drive interest in the Goals.³² Dr Christine Chow, Associate Director at Hermes Investment Management, said that the fundamental role of businesses “is to deliver goods and services that are required by

25 Q253 [Richard Curtis]

26 Q262 [Richard Curtis], Q273 [Kate Garvey, Richard Curtis]

27 Q262 [Richard Curtis]

28 Q263 [Kate Garvey]

29 Q263 [Kate Garvey]

30 Q112 [Dominic White], Q120 [Catherine Pearce], South West Learning for Sustainability Coalition ([SDG0022](#)), Learning for Sustainability Scotland ([SDG0028](#)), Regional Centre of Expertise (LRCE) in Education for Sustainable Development ([SDG0033](#))

31 Q260 [Kate Garvey]

32 Q61–62 [Steve Waygood], UKSSD ([SDG0062](#))

society” but that businesses operate within a “stakeholder system [...] which is part of the licence to operate”.³³ Geoff Lane, Senior Partner in UK Sustainability and Climate Change Team at PwC, summed this up in terms of purpose and trust. He said:

They want to be trusted by their customers, by their employees, by their investors, by the key stakeholders, by the communities in which they operate. They are getting clearer that they want to be seen to have a positive purpose in life, whether that is at a brand level or at a company level. Those two things increase the obligation on businesses to take account of their impact on society and therefore to take account of the sustainable development goals, so therefore a key responsibility to deliver the goals.³⁴

14. Richard Curtis described a change in the level of business engagement over the past 10 years:

I remember in 2005, when we did the Make Poverty History campaign, we could not have any conversations with business. They simply disengaged. I remember they were fundamentally hostile and assumed that we were dangerous left-wing idealists, and the contrast here is extraordinary. I would recommend to you [...] Better Business, Better World, about business and the sustainable goals, which has just come out. It is a really interesting document that talks about the profitability potential in the goals of \$13 trillion of extra money that could be made in all sorts of areas: medicine, energy, food. It is an incredibly good starting point for businesses. We hope that the business argument will not only be moral—we should never forget nor not be passionate about the moral thing—but also work out financially.³⁵

15. The business representatives we spoke to have helped to drive increased business engagement with the Goals. Steve Waygood, Chief Responsible Investment Officer at Aviva emphasised the need for a business case perspective to the Goals. He told us “we are commercial entities and so from a business-case perspective, what the business case associated with sustainable development Goals looks like is crucial”.³⁶ Describing the Goals as 17 market failures he said:

Now, they would not exist as goals if the markets were functioning properly. I think the [Goals] represent 17 market failures. The role of business could be therefore—with Government support, with better-defined markets, with rule of law more clearly specified, with other incentives set out—to help deliver, close gaps and provide solutions, particularly in areas like health care, education, climate-friendly energy solutions. So, there is money to be made with market development. They would not exist as problems if the markets were not failing; it is a self-evident fact.³⁷

33 Q61 [Christine Chow],

34 Q61 [Geoff Lane]

35 Q259 [Richard Curtis]

36 Q61 [Steve Waygood]

37 Q61 [Steve Waygood]

16. Steve Waygood set out the potential opportunities and risks to engaging or not engaging with the Goals. He highlighted a Business & Sustainable Development Commission report that recently estimated that “sustainable business models could open economic opportunities worth up to US\$12 trillion and increase employment by up to 380 million jobs by 2030”.³⁸ Unilever’s CEO Paul Polman has said the Goals offer the “greatest economic opportunity of a lifetime”.³⁹ Steve Waygood told us, however, that risks posed by climate change, for example, could wipe \$43 trillion off the economy in the future.⁴⁰ He said “I think the biggest opportunity to business is avoiding the very significant negative macroeconomic consequences of the markets failing to be sustainable”.⁴¹

17. Steve Waygood suggested incentivising business engagement with the Goals using the power of leagues tables and benchmarks. He highlighted his belief in the power of “name, shame” and “fame” to “drive that race to the top”.⁴² He said that “any board of any real brand would be worried if they were at the bottom of a robust, credible benchmark”.⁴³ Steve Waygood said that this could be achieved by utilising sustainability reporting. He said “[...] we think that the time has come to take the data that companies publish, sustainability reporting, and turn it into a public good”.⁴⁴ He continued:

Some of that information could be turned into a corporate race to the top. If we were to take the [Goals], all the listed companies, map them on to each other, and then, sector by sector, issue by issue, produce these corporate league tables—it is not a trivial task—to build the criteria in an open-source way, with the best expertise of NGOs, policymakers, academia, and others, and companies, and investors, will take time, but it can be done.⁴⁵

18. Dr Christine Chow from Hermes Investment Management highlighted that some of the large European pension funds have already undertaken studies looking at how they could align their investment objectives with the Goals.⁴⁶ In response to the IDC’s Sustainable Development Goals report the Government said that it saw:

Value in international benchmarks that promote responsible business behaviour, and want to equip businesses and investors with the tools they need to assess their progress against the Goals. The Government is discussing benchmarking with partners and may support them providing there is sufficient evidence that they will contribute to more responsible business behaviour.⁴⁷

38 Business & Sustainable Development Commission, [Better Business, Better World](#) (January 2017)

39 Business & Sustainable Development Commission, [‘Why Sustainable Development Makes Good Business Sense’](#), accessed March 2017

40 Q86 [Steve Waygood]

41 As above

42 Q69 [Steve Waygood], Qq77–78 [Steve Waygood]

43 Q69 [Steve Waygood]

44 Q62 [Steve Waygood]

45 As above

46 Q85 [Christine Chow]

47 Qq248–249 [Gwen Hines], International Development Committee, Fourth Special Report of Session 2016–17, [UK implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2016–17](#), HC 673, para 15

19. Both Dr Christine Chow and Geoff Lane described how their companies have been helping other companies to engage, understand and inform their approach to the Goals.⁴⁸ Geoff Lane described the work PwC has done to develop online mapping tools such as its new SDG Navigator App and what he had learnt. He told us:

It is being used to help inform strategy at the top of organisations. [...] We have learned that going with a one-size-fits-all approach on the SDGs into companies does not work. You cannot pre-judge how it is going to work for them. They may be focused on particular countries, particular issues, particular parts of their business. The important message from us is that we want to get people started on this journey and trying to do the whole company in one go is pretty complicated. [...].⁴⁹

20. In September 2016, UKSSD convened representatives from 20 different organisations including major UK businesses to discuss how business could implement the Goals. They heard about the work some businesses were already doing to map their alignment to the Goals and embed the Goals within their operations, despite consensus amongst participants that there has been very little government facilitation or incentive to do so.⁵⁰ Richard Curtis and Kate Garvey from Project Everyone told us about the businesses which they have been working with to help promote the Goals including BBC World Service, HSBC, Google, Bower, Unilever, Virgin and Pearson through outward, public facing and inward employee facing campaigns.⁵¹ Kate Garvey highlighted, for example, how Standard Chartered partnered with Liverpool Football Club to display the Global Goals logos on their shirts in one match in 2015.⁵²

Role of the public sector

21. Local government and public sector institutions have a role to play in facilitating awareness and engagement. Dr Carl Wright, Secretary-General Emeritus at Commonwealth Local Government Forum said that the problem with the Goals was “getting it down to the ordinary citizen”.⁵³ He described how local government could help to localise the goals “making them relevant to things that are being done already and having [...] a bottom-up approach”.⁵⁴ He described the case of South Africa “where there is an interesting debate going on about what is termed localising the development goals and how local government in South Africa is going to be able to implement some of the targets and indicators”.⁵⁵ He said that there were a “lot of local Government tools available” but cautioned that in the UK local government was facing funding cuts.⁵⁶ He said “from a local government perspective, to make that awareness there does have to be collaboration with central government and with other agencies to get the issues across to the community”.⁵⁷

48 Q72 [Geoff Lane]

49 As above

50 UKSSD ([SDG0062](#))

51 Q269 [Richard Curtis], Q283 [Kate Garvey]

52 Q290 [Kate Garvey]

53 Q118 [Carl Wright]

54 Q117 [Carl Wright]

55 Q117 [Carl Wright]

56 Q118 [Carl Wright]

57 As above

22. Dr David Pencheon, Director of the Sustainable Development Unit for NHS England and Public Health England said that the NHS was a “very, very big anchor organisation” and was “very visible in every community in the country so what the NHS does, how it behaves, what it looks like, how you are treated, the dignity you are shown, are very symbolic of what we do as a nation to each other and thus we do with other member countries, so that is very important”.⁵⁸ Dr David Pencheon went on to discuss the role the NHS could play in helping to deliver the Goals through its staff, as the fourth largest employer in the world, and in its central position in many communities.⁵⁹

Role of Government

23. Governments around the world were also developing and implementing techniques to raise awareness and increase engagement with the Goals.⁶⁰ In our meeting with representatives of the Colombian government, we heard how it was using its Sustainable Development Goals Commission (made up of senior government Ministers and officials) to facilitate communication with a range of stakeholders including local and municipal governments, NGOs and businesses. In Norway and Wales the respective Governments have held a series of public consultations and discussions with civil society and the general public to get them to think about sustainable development and how it could be managed nationally. The Welsh Government has passed the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to enshrine domestic implementation of the Goals into law.⁶¹ The Norwegian Government has launched a TV advertisement to raise the profile of the Goals.⁶² The German Government has designated Bonn as a “city of sustainable development” to “promote a feeling of national ownership of this as an issue”.⁶³ James Wharton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at DFID, told us that the Government was sharing best practice with other countries in global forums. However, he told us:

That does not mean we will necessarily want to adopt publicity-style campaigns that other Governments have chosen to do. But if it can be evidenced that there is good value in doing so, and it is a worthwhile thing to take part in, then I would not rule it out as a possibility in the future.⁶⁴

24. Richard Curtis described the passion he had heard the Prime Minister of Sweden, the President of Rwanda and the Presidents of Ethiopia and Guinea and the Vice President of South Africa talk about the engagement of their countries with the Goals. He said that “it will be very interesting to see how the British Government decide to play their level of engagement”.⁶⁵ Richard Curtis said “it would be great to find a moment for the British Government to present, celebrate, think about and challenge on these issues”. He went on to say:

58 Q119 [David Pencheon]

59 As above

60 World Future Council ([SDG0014](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), Office for National Statistics ([SDG0026](#)), WWF ([SDG0027](#)), International Institute for Environment and Development ([SDG0032](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Derek Osborn ([SDG0042](#)), FSDS ([SDG0043](#))

61 Q121–122 [Catherine Pearce], World Future Council ([SDG0014](#)), WWF ([SDG0027](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), FSDS ([SDG0043](#)), Alcohol Health Alliance UK ([SDG0051](#))

62 Q18 [Elizabeth Stuart], Norad, ‘[Global Goals: Opplysningsløypa - verdens vakreste nattevandring](#)’, accessed March 2017

63 Q19 [Elizabeth Stuart]

64 Q235 [James Wharton]

65 Q261 [Richard Curtis]

I am a great believer that it is worth selling things. I don't think any company would launch a new product with a zero marketing budget. I think it is worth talking to them and finding a moment in the busy Government calendar to really focus on them. I remember in the election [...] there was a development day in the election cycle, and you would hope that there would be a sustainable development day in which parties discussed those things and the election process.⁶⁶

25. Raising awareness and encouraging engagement with the Global Goals will increase the number of people and organisations able to contribute towards meeting them. However, few people in the UK know about the Goals. Other countries and organisations have shown there are plenty of opportunities to make the Goals more widely known and understood. By contrast, the UK Government seems uninterested in raising the profile of the Goals, having undertaken no substantive work to promote them domestically. A focus on action abroad has left a doughnut shaped hole in the UK. This has to change. The Government should work with the BBC and other national media to launch a national campaign to raise public awareness of the Goals, and provide the public with ways to get involved and make a contribution. This could take place as part of Red Nose Day and Comic Relief, and link with charities working in the UK and overseas. The Government should look at possible changes to the national curriculum to provide ways for young people to become agents of change and engage with the Goals. This would form part of a national conversation about the Goals with a view to enshrining them in law, so that future Governments put sustainable development at the heart of every new legislative proposal.

26. Several businesses are already engaging with the Goals and looking at how the private sector can contribute to this ambitious agenda. The Government has said that it sees value in international business benchmarks that promote responsible business behaviour and may support them, if there is sufficient evidence that they work. We recommend that the Government commissions research on the costs and benefits of utilising business league tables and report back to this Committee on its findings when it has them. The Government should also support other initiatives designed to raise awareness of the Goals among the business community. Voluntary action by businesses and raising awareness within the business community will not of itself ensure meaningful progress on the Goals. The Government needs to look at what measures are needed to support those companies who are already engaged, and incentivise or require others to do likewise. Action on the EU circular economy package, or waste policy, linked to SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production is a good example of this.

3 Measuring, monitoring and reporting

27. The UN has developed a set of 231 global indicators to ensure individual countries are held to account on their progress towards meeting the Global Goals.⁶⁷ The ONS told us that “during the UK’s time as Chair of the UN Statistical Commission, from March 2015 to March 2016, ONS contributed directly to the development of the global indicator set”.⁶⁸ Respondents emphasised the importance of implementing a robust measurement framework in the UK to hold the Government to account.⁶⁹ The ONS is responsible for this measurement framework and told us it would establish a set of nationally relevant indicators which will complement the global indicators.⁷⁰

28. On 17 February 2017, the Prime Minister wrote in response to an open letter from leading businesses as part of UKSSD stating that “we need a transparent reporting framework. That is why the Office of National Statistics (ONS) will be reporting UK progress, including the contribution of businesses and other stakeholders, towards the SDGs in line with the UN process. The ONS is planning to launch a consultation this year and I encourage businesses to engage with this project”.⁷¹

29. After we finished taking evidence, both the ONS and DFID Ministers subsequently reduced the role of the ONS in creating a set of national indicators.⁷² In evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee, DFID stated that “to highlight the importance of national progress towards the Goals we are embedding them explicitly in Single Departmental Plans. The indicators included in the Single Departmental Plans will also serve as national indicators for the Goals [...]. Reflecting the Goals in the Single Departmental Plans is an important step in demonstrating the alignment between the government’s priorities and the Goals.”⁷³ This implies that the ONS will not now be involved in developing the national indicators. It is also unclear whether the ONS will be responsible for reporting progress against the national indicators.

Determining the scope

30. It was clear from respondents that the global indicators were not perfect. Variations in quality, differences between the indicators and the targets, and discrepancies in the applicability and relevance of the indicators to the UK context affected their “measurability”.⁷⁴ Roughly a quarter of the global indicators, for example, were not deemed to be relevant to the UK.⁷⁵ Abigail Self, Head of Sustainable Development Goals at the ONS said, however, that the global indicators are widely recognised as a “practical starting point”.⁷⁶ Developing national indicators, she argued, would better reflect the UK’s priorities and ensure that data were available and of a sufficient quality to be measured.⁷⁷

67 United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 47–48

68 Office for National Statistics ([SDG0026](#))

69 Q1 [Graham Long], Q79 [Geoff Lane], Q93 [Geoff Lane], UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), Institution of Environmental Sciences ([SDG0058](#))

70 Q3 [Abigail Self], Q19 [Abigail Self], Q21 [Abigail Self], Office for National Statistics ([SDG0026](#))

71 [Letter from the Prime Minister to Mr Ben Stafford](#), 17 February 2017

72 Women and Equalities Committee, [Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK](#), para 142–148

73 Written evidence received by the Women and Equalities Committee from the Department for International Development ([SDG0051](#))

74 Q29 [Graham Long], Q98 [Stefano D’Errico]

75 Q12 [Abigail Self], Newcastle University ([SDG0052](#))

76 Q26 [Abigail Self]

77 Q39 [Abigail Self]

31. The ONS has already made some good progress, securing the funds it needed from Government, establishing a dedicated team and starting preliminary research with Government Departments and non-Government stakeholders. These efforts won it some praise from civil society organisations and business. Nienke Palstra, Policy and Advocacy Adviser at UNICEF UK and representative of the Bond SDGs group, recognised the “incredibly positive role” of the ONS including how “collaborative, open and transparent” it has been during their efforts to develop that national indicator framework.⁷⁸ Steve Waygood from Aviva told us, however, that he was disappointed with what the ONS has done so far and that it was not looking enough at what companies are doing on sustainable development.⁷⁹

32. The ONS’s good progress was checked when, in November 2016, it postponed the launch of its consultation on the national indicators.⁸⁰ The ONS said this was necessary so it could “consider fully all the material received from stakeholders” and “align the Sustainable Development Goals with other UK indicators of progress”.⁸¹ Regarding the ONS’s efforts to develop national indicators, Chris Skidmore, Minister for the Constitution at the Cabinet Office said “it is important that those indicators are created and it is also up to the ONS as an independent statistical body to ensure that it develops the best indicators possible”.⁸² He highlighted that the Government has supported the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, provided \$2 million to the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building and provided the ONS with the money it requested in the last Spending Review.⁸³ When asked about the delay to the consultation, the DFID Minister, James Wharton, said that the ONS was taking the “right approach in ensuring proper, full engagement, in order [...] to understand which of the global indicators are best applied to the UK”.⁸⁴ It is not clear how the ONS’s knowledge and expertise to develop the national indicators so far will be used in light of the Government’s recent decision to embed the indicators in the Single Departmental Plans.

Data collection challenges

33. Catherine Pearce, Director of Future Justice at the World Future Council described the “extremely significant challenge that we have here in terms of the massive data gaps, the massive information gaps”.⁸⁵ These “gaps” exist because only about half of the global indicators have an existing equivalent indicator in the UK or a readily and broadly commensurable measure.⁸⁶ The “gaps” also exist because of the commitment to “disaggregate” all the indicators by different categories - age, sex and ethnicity etc.⁸⁷ In adopting the Global Goals, countries pledged to ensure the Goals and targets are “met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society” and that “no one will be left behind”.⁸⁸ Elizabeth Stuart from the ODI told us this principle was “implicitly threaded”

78 Q103 [Nienke Palstra]

79 Q93 [Steve Waygood]

80 Office of National Statistics, ‘[Sustainable Development Goals](#)’, accessed March 2017

81 Office of National Statistics, ‘[Sustainable Development Goals](#)’, accessed March 2017

82 Q191 [Chris Skidmore]

83 Q196 [Chris Skidmore]

84 Q196 [James Wharton, Chris Skidmore], Q214 [Chris Skidmore]

85 Q125 [Catherine Pearce]

86 Q43 [Graham Long], Q98 [Stefano D’Errico], International Institute for Environment and Development ([SDG0032](#))

87 Q1 [Abigail Self], Q43 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q125 [Catherine Pearce], UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Newcastle University ([SDG0052](#)), Department for International Development ([SDG0057](#))

88 United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 4

throughout the Goals and Abigail Self from the ONS said that it would be “borne out in disaggregation”.⁸⁹ The focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised groups within society would be a challenge because these groups are often the hardest to reach.⁹⁰ Elizabeth Stuart gave an example from the MDGs. Even though poverty reduced over the period of the MDGs, she argued globally that people in the bottom 5% of the income distribution scale saw no progress at all on poverty reduction.⁹¹

34. To tackle this problem the ONS was hoping to start a “data revolution”.⁹² Abigail Self told us that this involved “collecting data from sources that you would not have considered before. It is about joining sources together, official and non-official, in different ways that have never been done before”.⁹³ The ONS has established a data science campus to work on this issue.⁹⁴ We heard from a number of witnesses that using non-official data would allow the ONS to access data it would not otherwise be able to due to time, money and logistical issues.⁹⁵ Abigail Self told us, however, that the main problem with utilising this data would be ensuring they were of sufficient quality.⁹⁶ She said that the ONS was looking into whether it could develop a toolkit that will help assess the quality of data from these sources. She emphasised however that the ONS was “very much at the beginning of this data development” and that it was a “journey”.⁹⁷

35. We heard that civil society, business, public sector organisations and local government were already collecting a huge amount of data and were keen to contribute towards measuring progress against the Goals.⁹⁸ However, each sector highlighted potential issues. Dr Carl Wright from the Commonwealth Local Government Forum highlighted some of the existing UK programmes such as “LG Inform” an online service which allows access, comparison and analysis of over 1,800 items of key performance data for authorities, alongside contextual and financial information. He implied, however, that local government’s ability to drive this forward depended on “budget constraints”.⁹⁹ Dr David Pencheon from Sustainable Development Unit for NHS England and Public Health England told us that the health and care system was “historically quite blessed” but that they “fight a constant battle” to justify maintaining data collection in the face of scepticism over its value.¹⁰⁰ Dr Christine Chow from Hermes Investment Management emphasised that data collection in businesses can sometimes be a challenge especially internationally.¹⁰¹ Geoff Lane from PwC highlighted the importance of aligning the data businesses collect with the measures that Governments were using so that there was comparability between the two frameworks.¹⁰² There was also a need to “translate” data into information which

89 Q4 [Abigail Self], Q14 [Elizabeth Stuart]

90 Q7 [Graham Long], Q58 [Abigail Self], Q125 [Catherine Pearce], Q196 [Chris Skidmore]

91 Q8 [Elizabeth Stuart]

92 Q4 [Abigail Self], Department for International Development ([SDG0057](#))

93 Q4 [Abigail Self]

94 Q4 [Abigail Self], Q30 [Abigail Self], Office for National Statistics ([SGG0026](#)), Office of National Statistics ([SDG0063](#))

95 Q4 [Abigail Self], Q6 [Abigail Self], Q30 [Abigail Self], Q42 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q98 [Nienke Palstra], Q108 [Dominic White], Q125 [Catherine Pearce], Q215 [James Wharton], Department for International Development ([SDG0057](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0061](#))

96 Q6 [Abigail Self]

97 As above

98 Q6 [Abigail Self], Q42 [Elizabeth Stuart], Qq62–69, Q90 [Christine Chow, Geoff Lane], Q94 [Christine Chow], Q112 [Nienke Palstra], Q125 [Carl Wright, David Pencheon]

99 Q125 [Carl Wright]

100 Q125 [David Pencheon]

101 Q94 [Christine Chow]

102 Q79 [Geoff Lane]

the public could easily understand. As well as data partners, Government will need data poets to make it meaningful.

Reporting on the Goals

36. One of the first jobs of the ONS SDG team is to establish a baseline from which future progress on the Goals will be judged.¹⁰³ This will also be important for prioritising policy areas (described in the next chapter) and enabling the general public, civil society and Parliament to hold the Government to account.¹⁰⁴ Prior to the ONS’s consultation being postponed, Abigail Self told us that the ONS was required to report on the Goals at a UN level by autumn 2017.¹⁰⁵ This timeline now seems ambitious. Indeed, Abigail Self said “how complete that will be is very difficult to say at the moment”.¹⁰⁶ Respondents argued that rather than try and achieve “perfection” the ONS should aim to start measuring as soon as possible.¹⁰⁷ Catherine Pearce highlighted the urgency of the agenda and that we “cannot afford that element of delay”.¹⁰⁸ Dominic White, Head of International Development Policy at WWF, highlighted that the ONS already has access to a lot of useful data such as the national wellbeing and sustainable development indicators which it could utilise for reporting against the Goals.¹⁰⁹ Dr David Pencheon argued that “it is not an area where you need everything absolutely right. You need things good enough to understand how well we are progressing”.¹¹⁰

37. Several respondents to our inquiry highlighted the need to translate data collected by different organisations and countries into meaningful information which could be understood and used to track progress against the Goals. Stefano D’Errico, from the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) said that we needed processes in place “that will go beyond the numbers” to “establish value”.¹¹¹ Catherine Pearce from the World Future Council highlighted the importance of “painting a picture” with data so that we understand how progress can be improved.¹¹² The ONS set out its ambition to report on the Goals in a useful and accessible way. Abigail Self from the ONS said that:

At a very minimum we will provide a tool where you can interrogate for each Goal and for each indicator what data exists with some supporting charts and tables. Also, ONS has various different digital communication channels now, so breaking things down, providing commentary on areas of interest, and we continue the work we have done with the national wellbeing agenda, which has very much had the public and users at its heart, as to how they would like to receive that information.¹¹³

103 Q8 [Abigail Self]

104 Q38 [Graham Long], Q98 [Nienke Palstra]

105 Q41 [Abigail Self]

106 Q40–41 [Abigail Self]

107 Q7 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q108 [Dominic White], Q143 [David Pencheon, Catherine Pearce]

108 Q143 [Catherine Pearce]

109 Q108 [Dominic White]

110 Q143 [David Pencheon]

111 Q107 [Stefano D’Errico]

112 Q125 [Catherine Pearce]

113 Q21 [Abigail Self]

38. Headline indicators were one idea we heard about which could facilitate communication of key messages.¹¹⁴ The witnesses we heard from were, however, careful in qualifying their use. Elizabeth Stuart, whose organisation has produced an SDG Scorecard to assess the scale of the challenge, cautiously endorsed the idea suggesting that it could be useful for highlighting the extent to which the UK was on or off track to meet the Goals.¹¹⁵ Dr Graham Long, argued, however, that determining a set of headline indicators was “itself an exercise in policy formation”.¹¹⁶ Abigail Self agreed saying that the ONS was “not terribly supportive of headline indicators”. She acknowledged that they were useful as a means of communication but said that they “can be quite a dangerous way of looking at things because of the things that you miss”.¹¹⁷

39. As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the Global Goals encourage member states to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven”.¹¹⁸ These Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the Global Goals.¹¹⁹ Twenty-two developed and developing countries participated in the first round of VNRs, held during the 2016 meeting of High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the UN’s platform for follow-up and review of the Global Goals.¹²⁰ We heard repeated calls for the Government to put itself forward for a VNR at the earliest opportunity (estimated to be in 2018) and at least three times between now and 2030.¹²¹ We did not get a firm commitment from the Government on this issue but Gwen Hines, Director in the International Relations Division at DFID said they were looking into whether the Government should do it in 2018 or 2019.¹²²

40. Progress on developing measurement frameworks for the Goals is too slow. We recognise the progress of the Office of National Statistics to date and commend its efforts to engage with stakeholders and draw on non-official data sources as a way to fill the “data gap”. However, it is now almost two years since the Government adopted the Goals. During that time we have seen delays from both the Government and the ONS. Delays to the ONS’s work means delays to the UK’s achievement of the Goals. We are concerned about the amount of time it is taking to develop the national indicators given the ONS “contributed directly” to the development of the global indicators between March 2015 and March 2016. It should be a priority for the ONS to establish an early baseline from which we can judge the Government’s future performance against the roadmap it sets out. Perfection should not be the enemy of the good, so we recommend that the ONS focus its efforts on ensuring it meets its autumn 2017 deadline to report on the Goals to

114 Edward Clarence-Smith ([SDG0009](#)), Bioregional ([SDG0016](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), New Economics Foundation ([SDG0050](#)), Institution of Environmental Sciences ([SDG0058](#))

115 Q23 [Elizabeth Stuart]

116 Q24 [Graham Long], Newcastle University ([SDG0052](#))

117 Q24 [Abigail Self]

118 Q19 [Graham Long], Q24 [Abigail Self], Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity ([SDG0035](#)), United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 79

119 Q98 [Stefano D’Errico], Q107 [Stefano D’Errico], UKSSD ([SDG0034](#))

120 Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), Office for National Statistics ([SDG0026](#)), WWF ([SDG0027](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Bristol SDG Alliance ([SDG0059](#))

121 Q108 [Dominic White], Q142 [Catherine Pearce], Q260 [Richard Curtis], Green House Think Tank ([SDG0015](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), Sightsavers ([SDG0030](#)), UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Bristol SDG Alliance ([SDG0059](#))

122 Q169 [Gwen Hines]

the United Nations. The ONS requires secure and sustained funding to carry out its job in relation to the Goals, and the Government should set out how much funding the ONS will receive at the start of every Parliament.

41. *However, we are concerned that the Government appears to have changed its mind about the ONS developing a set of national indicators. This suggests an attempt to bury data which will be seen by the public - and us - as going against the spirit of the Goals. This would undermine UK leadership on the Goals. If this is the case then two years of work by the ONS will have been wasted by the Government. It means there will be no aggregate scorecard or baseline against which to measure progress towards the Goals. This will harm public accountability and moves the country away from achieving the Goals. We can see that integrating the indicators into the Government's Single Departmental Plans will ensure they are taken seriously by individual departments. But the move risks reducing the level of engagement and participation from non-government bodies and it increases the temptation for the Government to cherry-pick indicators and focus on areas where it is performing well. It is also not clear how well equipped Government departments are to ensure proper data disaggregation and therefore focus on the hardest to reach groups in society. The Government must clarify urgently in its response to this report whether the ONS will report on national progress towards the Global Goals. It must also ensure a timely and transparent release of information that monitors progress against the indicators. We expect these to be produced and managed in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics to ensure confidence in their implementation.*

42. *A key part of increasing awareness of the Goals will be using data to "paint a picture" about the UK's progress against the Goals. The ONS has indicated a willingness to provide a narrative on the data it collects. The ONS could be much more ambitious, especially in working with business. We recommend that it should hold an open competition seeking ideas for how the results could be branded and communicated and look for partnerships with organisations who have expertise in communications and marketing, as well as working with stakeholders, effectively to communicate its findings in an accessible way and promote them to the widest possible audience.*

43. *The Voluntary National Review is an important process to help member states publicise and measure progress towards the implementation of the Global Goals. A large number of developed and developing countries have already participated in or put themselves forward for the VNR. We are disappointed that the Government has not yet participated in this process but we are heartened by the Prime Minister's statement about the importance of a transparent reporting framework. In order to show international leadership and demonstrate the UK's continuing commitment to implementing the Goals in the UK, we recommend that the Government volunteer to participate in the national review as soon as practically possible - ideally in 2018.*

4 Implementation

44. The benefits of implementing the Goals are multifaceted. They can help governments to adopt more “integrated” and “holistic” sustainable development governance frameworks.¹²³ They can be “nationalised” to take account of an individual country’s specific context, they can help to prioritise specific issues following assessment against the Goals, and they serve as a “floor” rather than a “ceiling” to drive up ambition in all the areas covered by the Goals.¹²⁴ They also promote “partnerships” between different groups to support meeting the Goals.¹²⁵

45. The Government has said that it “is firmly committed to implementing the Goals both internationally and domestically”.¹²⁶ It also claimed that “the UK has already met, or is on track to meeting, many of the targets”. However, the IDC and respondents to this inquiry were not convinced that the Government has shown much, if any, evidence to support these statements.¹²⁷ A key issue was the lack of transparency around leadership, ambition and the governance arrangements to ensure the Goals are integrated across Government and specific actions to ensure the Goals and targets are met.

Providing leadership

46. Nienke Palstra from UNICEF UK said that “what we want to see is leadership and that is one of the things we have been missing. The tone from the top really matters and we have not seen many public statements that refer to the [Goals]”.¹²⁸ When asked about this, DFID Minister, James Wharton, said that “the Prime Minister has reaffirmed the UK’s commitment and her commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals”.¹²⁹ He pointed to a speech she gave at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2016, where she mentioned the Goals twice, and one newspaper article where the Goals were mentioned once in relation to modern slavery.¹³⁰ On 17 February 2017, the Prime Minister wrote in response to an open letter from leading businesses as part of UKSSD stating that it was her “firm belief that that we, as governments, international institutions, businesses and individuals, need to do more to respond to the concerns of those who feel that the modern world has left them behind”. The Prime Minister also said that it was the responsibility of Government departments to deliver their own commitments related to the Goals and stated her belief that the Government’s proposed Industrial Strategy will have a “significant positive impact” across many of the Goals.¹³¹

123 Q100 [Dominic White], Bioregional ([SDG0016](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), WWF ([SDG0027](#)), Learning for Sustainability Scotland ([SDG0028](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), New Economics Foundation ([SDG0050](#)), Institution of Environmental Sciences ([SDG0058](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0061](#))

124 Q1 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q97 [Dominic White], Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), WWF ([SDG0027](#)), International Institute for Environment and Development ([SDG0032](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), Derek Osborn ([SDG0042](#)), New Economics Foundation ([SDG0050](#)), Newcastle University ([SDG0052](#))

125 Q60 [Graham Long], Q103 [Dominic White], Q124 [Carl Wright], United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 39

126 Department for International Development ([SDG0057](#))

127 As above

128 Q97 [Nienke Palstra]

129 Q156 [James Wharton]

130 Q149 [Chris Skidmore]

131 [Letter from the Prime Minister to Mr Ben Stafford](#), 17 February 2017

47. James Wharton also told us that “it is undoubtedly the case that the Secretary of State for DFID in particular has overall responsibility for oversight of the Sustainable Development Goals”.¹³² We were, therefore, disappointed that she was not willing to appear before us to discuss the issues raised during our inquiry.¹³³ This represented a break from the past where Cabinet-level Ministers have represented the Government in front of this Committee on the issue of sustainable development and the Goals in particular.¹³⁴

48. DFID taking overall responsibility for domestic implementation was something the IDC, the Women and Equalities Committee and respondents to our inquiry raised as a concern because of its international focus and limited ability to ensure coordination between departments.¹³⁵ Both the IDC and Women and Equalities Committee recommended that responsibility for the Goals should sit within the Cabinet Office, not the Department for International Development.¹³⁶ Nienke Palstra told us “it does raise questions about whether this is seen as simply an international agenda as opposed to a domestic one”.¹³⁷ DFID Minister, James Wharton, acknowledged this problem telling us “the challenge that exists, of course, is that DFID is primarily an outward-looking Department. We have relatively few, if any, domestic levers [...]”.¹³⁸

49. James Wharton said that this was why DFID was “working closely with the Cabinet Office to ensure that the Goals are incorporated throughout Government structures”.¹³⁹ We learnt that, in practice, the role of the Cabinet Office was to ensure that the Goals were integrated into departments’ Single Departmental Plans.¹⁴⁰ It became clear that DFID and the Cabinet Office’s responsibility for the Goals were limited to putting in place governance arrangements and not for ensuring the Goals are actually met. When asked about specific policy areas in relation to, for example, malnutrition in the elderly, Cabinet Office Minister, Chris Skidmore, said:

When it comes to looking at the goal, which is to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, obviously that is a wide goal. I am sure DFID can set out where we are in terms of some of the policy specifics. [...] When it comes to elderly people, obviously

132 Q146 [James Wharton]

133 Q146–149 [James Wharton, Chris Skidmore]

134 We have heard from Cabinet-level Ministers in relation to sustainable development and the Global Goals on the following occasions: during our 2015 inquiry into the Government’s approach to Sustainable Development (Rt Hon Oliver Letwin, former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster); during our 2014 inquiry into the Sustainable Development Goals (Rt Hon Justine Greening, former Secretary of State for International Development); During our 2012 inquiry into Outcomes of the UN Rio+20 Earth Summit (Rt Hon Caroline Spelman, then Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). In addition, the International Development Committee heard from Justine Greening, and Oliver Letwin during its 2016 inquiry into the Sustainable Development Goals; and the Liaison Committee heard from Rt Hon Nick Clegg, former Deputy Prime Minister in an oral evidence session on the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012.

135 Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals ([SDG0023](#)), Food Foundation ([SDG0025](#)), WWF ([SDG0027](#)), International Institute for Environment and Development ([SDG0032](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), FDS ([SDG0043](#)), British Retail Consortium ([SDG0056](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0061](#)), International Development Committee, [UK implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#), para 74

136 International Development Committee, [UK implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#), para 74–77; Women and Equalities Committee, [Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK](#), para 53

137 Q97 [Nienke Palstra]

138 Q146 [James Wharton]

139 As above

140 Q146 [James Wharton], Q152 [James Wharton], Q163 [Chris Skidmore]

there is a key issue of ensuring that we have a sustainable state pension and that we give greater security, choice and dignity in retirement for elderly people.¹⁴¹ [...]

I am not going to get into a debate about individual Departments' responsibilities; it is up to individual Departments. You are welcome to bring the relevant Departments to the Committee and look at their policies. I am here to talk about the implementation of a framework by which Government as a whole can ensure that the [Goals] are established, and that is the supporting role that the Cabinet Office plays.¹⁴²

We believe it is the Minister's job to co-ordinate cross-government working, not the role of this Committee.

Raising ambition

50. Elizabeth Stuart from ODI told us that the Goals were “designed to be starting from the point of where a country is and as a tool to ratchet up ambition”.¹⁴³ In order to identify an appropriate level of ambition, several respondents suggested that a country should undertake a transparent and evidence-based assessment of its performance against the Goals (the practicalities of which we discussed in the previous chapter).¹⁴⁴ This would enable the Government to identify, in partnership with other interested parties, strategic areas where it was already doing well and areas where more effort was required.¹⁴⁵ Dr Graham Long from Newcastle University, described how the SDG targets could help to identify “hidden pockets” or unexpected areas which required attention.¹⁴⁶ As examples of this, Dr Long highlighted figures which showed that three million people in the UK are malnourished, of which 1.3 million are elderly,¹⁴⁷ the regional difference between 16–24 year olds not in education, employment or training, which is 10.7% in the South East of England and 18.9% in the North East of England,¹⁴⁸ and the fact that a third of rented homes in England do not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard.¹⁴⁹ Undertaking such an analysis in the UK would, respondents argued, help the Government to prioritise its efforts to tackle the Goals while avoiding accusations of “cherry-picking” the issues which it believes would be the easiest to tackle.¹⁵⁰ The evidence to support such an analysis could come from existing as well as new data and information.¹⁵¹

141 Q187 [Chris Skidmore]

142 Q189 [Chris Skidmore]

143 Q28 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q97 [Nienke Palstra], Q98 [Dominic White, Stefano D'Errico], Q100 [Dominic White]

144 Q1 [Graham Long], Q90 [Geoff Lane], Q98 [Nienke Palstra, Stefano D'Errico], International Institute for Environment and Development ([SDG0032](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), FDS ([SDG0043](#)), Alcohol Health Alliance UK ([SDG0051](#)), Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Bristol SDG Alliance ([SDG0059](#))

145 Q100 [Dominic White]

146 Q7 [Graham Long]

147 BAPEN, 'Introduction to Malnutrition', accessed March 2017

148 *NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training*, Standard Note SN06705, House of Commons Library, November 2016, p6

149 Shelter, *Safe and Decent Homes: Solutions for a Better Private Rented Sector* (December 2014), p7

150 Q8 [Graham Long], Q24 [Abigail Self], Q28 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q29 [Graham Long], Q102 [Dominic White, Stefano D'Errico], Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), Sightsavers ([SDG0030](#)) Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), New Economics Foundation ([SDG0050](#)), Institution of Environmental Sciences ([SDG0058](#)), Fairtrade Foundation ([SDG0060](#))

151 Q108 [Dominic White], WWF ([SDG0027](#)), UKSSD ([SDG0034](#)), Woodland Trust ([SDG0036](#)), UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), ShareAction ([SDG0046](#)), Newcastle University ([SDG0052](#)), Society for the Environment ([SDG0053](#)), Institution of Environmental Sciences ([SDG0058](#))

51. To our surprise and disappointment, the Government appears not to have adopted this approach. Ministers told us that the Conservative Party’s Manifesto for the 2015 election (published five months before the Goals were agreed and limited in time to 2020, the end of this Parliament) “sets out the policy areas through which the UK will make its contribution to implementation of the Goals.”¹⁵² We find this to be an extraordinary statement. The Government’s written evidence highlighted the Government’s “strong starting point” and set out a number of things it was doing to meet the Goals, from conserving seas and planting trees to fighting forced marriage and female genital mutilation.¹⁵³ While these are worthy pursuits, the Government was unable to provide any substantive evidence of how the Global Goals has informed its approach to tackling these issues or what they have done differently as a result of the Goals.¹⁵⁴ We need to see from the Government a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the role of the Goals in trying to ensure a more ambitious policy agenda across the board, rather than simply more of the same.

52. Dominic White from WWF told us that “what would be so helpful would be a Government plan for domestication of this agenda [...]”.¹⁵⁵ We heard that this approach has been adopted in other countries such as Germany, Finland and Colombia.¹⁵⁶ During our meeting with Colombian officials, we heard that Colombia has integrated the Goals and its peace process as, in its view, the peace process was intimately linked with the three pillars of sustainable development.

53. A national plan could provide transparency on the Government’s ambition beyond its 2020 Manifesto. It would help to ensure a strategic, policy-coherent approach was used for implementing the Goals to make sure the policies of one department do not undermine the policies of another.¹⁵⁷ It could also set out “stepping-stones” between now and 2030 against which progress could be measured.¹⁵⁸ In its report, the IDC said that such a plan should constitute a “substantive cross-government plan for implementation of the [Goals]”.¹⁵⁹ The Women and Equalities Committee similarly recommended that ‘the Government should take greater leadership by bringing together the elements of Single Departmental Plans that support the Goals in a co-ordinated National Implementation Plan’.¹⁶⁰ NGOs and businesses alike stressed that a plan from Government would help their sectors get behind the Goals. Geoff Lane from PwC said “if you give business people a plan, then they can get on and do things”.¹⁶¹ Nienke Palstra said:

I think what we would want to see is a strategy that [...] makes clear that this is a cross-Government agenda and that there are clear lines of accountability and specific departments will be responsible for delivering on the agenda. By having a strategy, this will go a long way to creating a

152 Qq183–185 [Chris Skidmore], Qq222–227 [James Wharton], Department for International Development ([SDG0057](#))

153 Department for International Development ([SDG0057](#))

154 Q185–186 [Chris Skidmore, Gwen Hines]

155 Q112 [Dominic White]

156 Q105 [Nienke Palstra], Institute of Development Studies ([SDG0012](#)), World Future Council ([SDG0014](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), Rothamsted Research ([SDG0041](#)), Derek Osborn ([SDG0042](#)), FDS ([SDG0043](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0061](#))

157 Q102 [Stefano D’Errico], Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0022](#)), UNICEF UK ([SDG0038](#)), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([SDG0039](#)), Newcastle University ([SDG0052](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0061](#))

158 Q15 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q16 [Graham Long], Q165 [James Wharton]

159 International Development Committee, *UK implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*, para 90

160 Women and Equalities Committee, *Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK*, para 53

161 Q95 [Geoff Lane]

domestic accountability agenda as well where civil society and the public will know what the UK Government sets out to do on this agenda and can hold them to account for that. In the absence of having one, we do not have clarity on how they intend to take this forward.¹⁶²

54. The Government has failed to publish such a plan.¹⁶³ A year after agreeing the Goals, the Government stated in response to the IDC report that “the forthcoming report will set out a clear narrative for the Government’s approach to implementing the Goals both internationally and domestically, including key principles, flagship initiatives and expected results and further information on how the government is set up to contribute towards achievement of [the Goals]”.¹⁶⁴ Almost two years after the Government agreed the Goals, the Government has not provided a date for publishing the report.¹⁶⁵

Ensuring good governance

55. One of the Government’s justifications for not publishing a national implementation plan was, it argued, because its Single Departmental Plans - the existing Government infrastructure - fulfilled this function already.¹⁶⁶ However, the Government’s current Single Departmental Plans for all departments only mention the Goals twice in passing.¹⁶⁷ Beyond specific references to the Goals, Abigail Self from the ONS said that “it is fair to say that there are aspects that are represented in single departmental plans, purely because the Sustainable Development Goals cover pretty much everything anyway”.¹⁶⁸ Dr Graham Long told us that it would be an interesting exercise to map the Single Departmental Plans against the Goals and “see whether the level of ambition is slightly different, which of those should be the right ones, which ones are thoroughly covered, which are not so thoroughly covered”.¹⁶⁹

56. The Government recognised that the Single Departmental Plans needed updating and told us that we could expect to see updated versions in April 2017.¹⁷⁰ This would help to “mainstream” the Goals and provide “accountability mechanisms”.¹⁷¹ Cabinet Office Minister, Chris Skidmore, sought to reassure us that they were “the highest form by which we could ensure that there is consistency across Government”; that “they are taken incredibly seriously by Departments” and will ensure that Departments are “held to account through the annual reports”.¹⁷² Civil society organisations remained concerned, however, that the Government’s focus on Single Departmental Plans meant that it has failed to understand the underlying purpose behind the Goals. These were to encourage

162 Q101 [Nienke Palstra]

163 Department for International Development ([SDG0057](#)), Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0061](#)), International Development Committee, *UK implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2016–17*, para 25

164 HC Deb, 24 November 2016, [col 407WH](#) [Westminster Hall]

165 Q174 [Gwen Hines]

166 Q194 [Chris Skidmore], HC Deb, 24 November 2016, [col 407WH](#) [Westminster Hall], International Development Committee, *UK implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2016–17*, para 25

167 Q101 [Nienke Palstra]

168 Q12 [Abigail Self]

169 Q14 [Graham Long]

170 Q169 [James Wharton]

171 Q245 [James Wharton]

172 Q193–194 [Chris Skidmore]

cross-government and cross-departmental working on sustainable development. This would help to identify the interconnected nature of the issues set out in the Goals and realise the co-benefits of integrated policy-making.¹⁷³

Promoting partnerships

57. The Goals encourage and promote “effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships [...]”.¹⁷⁴ The appetite for building partnerships with Government from the witnesses we spoke to - representing civil society, business, public health and local government - was strong.¹⁷⁵ This was emphasised by UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD), a multi-stakeholder network in the UK aiming to inspire and support all stakeholders to transform the UK into a sustainable society.¹⁷⁶ It was clear that many of these organisations and networks were already trying to tackle sustainable development and/or address the Goals. The Goals also offer opportunities for public services, and the NHS’s Sustainable Development Unit told us the health service could save £180m “through the adoption of 30 interventions across the NHS”.¹⁷⁷ For businesses in particular there were strong social and economic reasons for pursuing the Goals (discussed in chapter one).¹⁷⁸

58. We asked the Government what it has been doing to forge partnerships to support the implementation of the Goals in the UK. The Government highlighted some good *international* examples - such as sharing best practice with other countries on women’s economic empowerment and supporting the work of the Business and Sustainable Development Commission - but provided no *domestic* examples.¹⁷⁹ In relation to local government specifically, DFID Minister, James Wharton, said that he saw the opportunities that exist but told us:

[...] ultimately this is a matter for local government Ministers and local government itself. The Department for Communities and Local Government will be expected, like all Departments, to recognise the contribution it can make to the [Goals], and that will be written into its single departmental plan.¹⁸⁰

59. *Despite adopting the Sustainable Development Goals and committing itself to working “tirelessly for the full implementation of [the Goals] by 2030”, the Government has shown little interest in, or enthusiasm for, implementing the Goals in the UK. The Government, worryingly, seems to regard the Goals as simply the Millennium Development Goals Mark II, and shows a marked reluctance to take this forward as a domestic agenda. Since the abolition of the independent Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) in 2011, Governments have failed to prioritise sustainable development. While this Government is making big claims about what it can do to implement the Goals on the international stage our inquiry has revealed that it is doing*

173 Q21 [Graham Long], Q101 [Nienke Palstra], Q102 [Dominic White, Stefano D’Errico]

174 United Nations Resolution [A/RES/70/1](#), para 17.17

175 Q18 [Elizabeth Stuart], Q32 [Abigail Self], Q60 [Graham Long], Q97 [Dominic White], Qq102–103 [Dominic White], Q124 [Carl Wright], Q133 [Carl Wright]

176 Q112 [Dominic White], UKSSD ([SDG0034](#))

177 Sustainable Development Unit for the NHS, public health and social care system ([GSD0021](#))

178 Q61 [Steve Waygood, Geoff Lane, Christine Chow]

179 Q62 [Steve Waygood], Q185 [Gwen Hines], Q198 [Gwen Hines]

180 Q243 [James Wharton]

very little at home, leaving a doughnut-shaped hole in place of efforts to implement the Goals in the UK. The fact that Cabinet-level Ministers were not willing to appear before us (a break with the past) is a worrying sign that this issue has been downgraded in Government. There is no voice at the top of Government speaking for the long-term aspirations embodied in the Goals. There is no strategy or vision to achieve the Goals in the UK. Without strong and maintained leadership from the top, the Government is unlikely to achieve the cross-government working and policy coherence that the Goals are designed to produce. To address this accountability gap the Government should appoint a Cabinet-level Minister in the Cabinet Office with strategic responsibility for implementing sustainable development, including the Goals, across Government. The Government should also assign a Minister in the Treasury to help co-ordinate national implementation of the Goals, so that economic and fiscal policy is joined-up with efforts to implement the Goals. The Treasury should assess the need to create pricing mechanisms to correct the market failures which the Goals represent.

60. *The Government should keep its promise to publish a report setting out how it intends to take an integrated, cross-government and policy-coherent approach to implementing the Goals in the UK and how it will bring together the elements of the updated Single Departmental Plans that support the Goals. It should do so by summer 2017. The Prime Minister should take personal responsibility for ensuring the report is implemented. She should publically endorse timely and regular Government updates, through a Cabinet Committee set up for this purpose, on progress to achieve the Goals in the UK to Parliament and to the public in an annual report. As the UK leaves the European Union, demonstrating a deep and meaningful commitment to meeting these global commitments domestically would send a powerful signal about the Government's ambition for a "Global Britain" in which no one is left behind.*

61. *In a resource constrained economy it is logical that the Government should do everything it can to support partners (government agencies, local government, civil society, business and the general public) to contribute towards delivering the Goals. Some multinational businesses, for example, are already taking a lead on tackling the Goals in areas where we might have expected Government to do so. Partnering with these organisations would increase the Government's chances of achieving the Goals and reduce the burden on Government. However, we have seen little evidence that it is doing this in the UK. The Government should immediately establish an SDG Partnership Working Group with the Cabinet Minister responsible, representatives from business, civil society and local government and develop and publish a strategy by 2018 setting out how it will support all stakeholders to contribute towards meeting the Goals in the UK by 2030.*

62. *The Government has said that it wants to utilise existing government infrastructure to deliver the Goals. However, we believe there is a need for an independent scrutineer of progress made by this Government and subsequent Governments on domestic implementation of the Global Goals. The Government should establish an independent advisor on sustainable development in the form of a new statutory public body advising the responsible Minister and the Prime Minister. This should be modelled on the independent Committee on Climate Change. It should be run by a committee with members drawn from academia, business, and civil society and independently chaired. Utilising the data collected by the ONS it could produce regular audits on the*

progress towards achieving the Goals and provide evidence-based advice on what the Government could do to promote sustainable development and progress towards the Goals.

63. The Government should work with public institutions such as local government, the NHS and police to create partnerships to deliver the Goals. Public services such as the NHS and the police will be key to delivering the Goals, by creating a healthy society and resilient communities, respectively. The Goals offer economic opportunities for businesses, but also for public services, in particular the health service. The Government should embed the Goals into the mandate of public services, such as the NHS.

5 Conclusion

64. By adopting the Global Goals the Government has committed itself to implementing the Goals in the UK as well as overseas. The Government's doughnut-shaped approach - seeing the Goals as something for the UK to help other countries do, rather than drawing on other countries' experiences in implementing the Goals here at home - must change if it hopes to fulfil its commitment to work 'tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030'. We are deeply sceptical and concerned about the Government's view that updating the Single Departmental Plans to incorporate the Goals will do this. It is a necessary but not a sufficient mechanism. While it is positive that the Government is utilising existing governance infrastructure which Departments take seriously, it will not be enough to encourage cross-government working and policy coherence on sustainable development.

65. The Government should demonstrate leadership and ambition from the very top of Government, set out in a report how it intends to take an integrated approach to implementing the Goals in the UK, and utilise partnerships with businesses, civil society and the public sector, some of which are already taking ambitious steps to tackle the Goals to establish national consensus. As the UK leaves the European Union a re-evaluation of Britain's national economic, social, and political purpose is under way. Demonstrating a deep and meaningful commitment to meeting Global Goals domestically would send a powerful signal about the Government's ambition for a "Global Britain" in which no one is left behind, and help forge a new cross-party consensus in the way that the creation of the NHS and the welfare state did after the Second World War.

66. This report represents the start of our work to hold the Government to account on the Goals. We intend to monitor the Government's progress over the course of this Parliament and will undertake any work we deem necessary to scrutinise the Government's efforts and highlight any successes and failures to implement the Goals in the UK. In particular, we will look at the extent to which the Government's updated Single Departmental Plans will facilitate a cross-government and policy coherent approach to tackling the Goals. The current and past inquiries undertaken by other select committees, along with the substantial number of statements and debates in Parliament, demonstrate that this ambitious and far reaching agenda needs to be scrutinised across the whole of Government. We will strongly encourage other parliamentarians and select committees to continue this work over the lifetime of the Goals.

Conclusions and recommendations

Awareness and engagement

1. *Raising awareness and encouraging engagement with the Global Goals will increase the number of people and organisations able to contribute towards meeting them. However, few people in the UK know about the Goals. Other countries and organisations have shown there are plenty of opportunities to make the Goals more widely known and understood. By contrast, the UK Government seems uninterested in raising the profile of the Goals, having undertaken no substantive work to promote them domestically. A focus on action abroad has left a doughnut shaped hole in the UK. This has to change. The Government should work with the BBC and other national media to launch a national campaign to raise public awareness of the Goals, and provide the public with ways to get involved and make a contribution. This could take place as part of Red Nose Day and Comic Relief, and link with charities working in the UK and overseas. The Government should look at possible changes to the national curriculum to provide ways for young people to become agents of change and engage with the Goals. This would form part of a national conversation about the Goals with a view to enshrining them in law, so that future Governments put sustainable development at the heart of every new legislative proposal. (Paragraph 25)*

2. *Several businesses are already engaging with the Goals and looking at how the private sector can contribute to this ambitious agenda. The Government has said that it sees value in international business benchmarks that promote responsible business behaviour and may support them, if there is sufficient evidence that they work. We recommend that the Government commissions research on the costs and benefits of utilising business league tables and report back to this Committee on its findings when it has them. The Government should also support other initiatives designed to raise awareness of the Goals among the business community. Voluntary action by businesses and raising awareness within the business community will not of itself ensure meaningful progress on the Goals. The Government needs to look at what measures are needed to support those companies who are already engaged, and incentivise or require others to do likewise. Action on the EU circular economy package, or waste policy, linked to SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production is a good example of this. (Paragraph 26)*

Measuring, monitoring and reporting

3. *Progress on developing measurement frameworks for the Goals is too slow. We recognise the progress of the Office of National Statistics to date and commend its efforts to engage with stakeholders and draw on non-official data sources as a way to fill the “data gap”. However, it is now almost two years since the Government adopted the Goals. During that time we have seen delays from both the Government and the ONS. Delays to the ONS’s work means delays to the UK’s achievement of the Goals. We are concerned about the amount of time it is taking to develop the national indicators given the ONS “contributed directly” to the development of the global indicators between March 2015 and March 2016. It should be a priority for the ONS to establish an early baseline from which we can judge the Government’s future*

performance against the roadmap it sets out. Perfection should not be the enemy of the good, so we recommend that the ONS focus its efforts on ensuring it meets its autumn 2017 deadline to report on the Goals to the United Nations. The ONS requires secure and sustained funding to carry out its job in relation to the Goals, and the Government should set out how much funding the ONS will receive at the start of every Parliament. (Paragraph 40)

4. *However, we are concerned that the Government appears to have changed its mind about the ONS developing a set of national indicators. This suggests an attempt to bury data which will be seen by the public - and us - as going against the spirit of the Goals. This would undermine UK leadership on the Goals. If this is the case then two years of work by the ONS will have been wasted by the Government. It means there will be no aggregate scorecard or baseline against which to measure progress towards the Goals. This will harm public accountability and moves the country away from achieving the Goals. We can see that integrating the indicators into the Government's Single Departmental Plans will ensure they are taken seriously by individual departments. But the move risks reducing the level of engagement and participation from non-government bodies and it increases the temptation for the Government to cherry-pick indicators and focus on areas where it is performing well. It is also not clear how well equipped Government departments are to ensure proper data disaggregation and therefore focus on the hardest to reach groups in society. The Government must clarify urgently in its response to this report whether the ONS will report on national progress towards the Global Goals. It must also ensure a timely and transparent release of information that monitors progress against the indicators. We expect these to be produced and managed in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics to ensure confidence in their implementation. (Paragraph 41)*
5. *A key part of increasing awareness of the Goals will be using data to "paint a picture" about the UK's progress against the Goals. The ONS has indicated a willingness to provide a narrative on the data it collects. The ONS could be much more ambitious, especially in working with business. We recommend that it should hold an open competition seeking ideas for how the results could be branded and communicated and look for partnerships with organisations who have expertise in communications and marketing, as well as working with stakeholders, effectively to communicate its findings in an accessible way and promote them to the widest possible audience. (Paragraph 42)*
6. *The Voluntary National Review is an important process to help member states publicise and measure progress towards the implementation of the Global Goals. A large number of developed and developing countries have already participated in or put themselves forward for the VNR. We are disappointed that the Government has not yet participated in this process but we are heartened by the Prime Minister's statement about the importance of a transparent reporting framework. In order to show international leadership and demonstrate the UK's continuing commitment to implementing the Goals in the UK, we recommend that the Government volunteer to participate in the national review as soon as practically possible - ideally in 2018. (Paragraph 43)*

Implementation

7. *Despite adopting the Sustainable Development Goals and committing itself to working “tirelessly for the full implementation of [the Goals] by 2030”, the Government has shown little interest in, or enthusiasm for, implementing the Goals in the UK. The Government, worryingly, seems to regard the Goals as simply the Millennium Development Goals Mark II, and shows a marked reluctance to take this forward as a domestic agenda. Since the abolition of the independent Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) in 2011, Governments have failed to prioritise sustainable development. While this Government is making big claims about what it can do to implement the Goals on the international stage our inquiry has revealed that it is doing very little at home, leaving a doughnut-shaped hole in place of efforts to implement the Goals in the UK. The fact that Cabinet-level Ministers were not willing to appear before us (a break with the past) is a worrying sign that this issue has been downgraded in Government. There is no voice at the top of Government speaking for the long-term aspirations embodied in the Goals. There is no strategy or vision to achieve the Goals in the UK. Without strong and maintained leadership from the top, the Government is unlikely to achieve the cross-government working and policy coherence that the Goals are designed to produce. To address this accountability gap the Government should appoint a Cabinet-level Minister in the Cabinet Office with strategic responsibility for implementing sustainable development, including the Goals, across Government. The Government should also assign a Minister in the Treasury to help co-ordinate national implementation of the Goals, so that economic and fiscal policy is joined-up with efforts to implement the Goals. The Treasury should assess the need to create pricing mechanisms to correct the market failures which the Goals represent. (Paragraph 59)*
8. *The Government should keep its promise to publish a report setting out how it intends to take an integrated, cross-government and policy-coherent approach to implementing the Goals in the UK and how it will bring together the elements of the updated Single Departmental Plans that support the Goals. It should do so by summer 2017. The Prime Minister should take personal responsibility for ensuring the report is implemented. She should publically endorse timely and regular Government updates, through a Cabinet Committee set up for this purpose, on progress to achieve the Goals in the UK to Parliament and to the public in an annual report. As the UK leaves the European Union, demonstrating a deep and meaningful commitment to meeting these global commitments domestically would send a powerful signal about the Government’s ambition for a “Global Britain” in which no one is left behind. (Paragraph 60)*
9. *In a resource constrained economy it is logical that the Government should do everything it can to support partners (government agencies, local government, civil society, business and the general public) to contribute towards delivering the Goals. Some multinational businesses, for example, are already taking a lead on tackling the Goals in areas where we might have expected Government to do so. Partnering with these organisations would increase the Government’s chances of achieving the Goals and reduce the burden on Government. However, we have seen little evidence that it is doing this in the UK. The Government should immediately establish an SDG Partnership Working Group with the Cabinet Minister responsible, representatives*

from business, civil society and local government and develop and publish a strategy by 2018 setting out how it will support all stakeholders to contribute towards meeting the Goals in the UK by 2030. (Paragraph 61)

10. *The Government has said that it wants to utilise existing government infrastructure to deliver the Goals. However, we believe there is a need for an independent scrutineer of progress made by this Government and subsequent Governments on domestic implementation of the Global Goals. The Government should establish an independent advisor on sustainable development in the form of a new statutory public body advising the responsible Minister and the Prime Minister. This should be modelled on the independent Committee on Climate Change. It should be run by a committee with members drawn from academia, business, and civil society and independently chaired. Utilising the data collected by the ONS it could produce regular audits on the progress towards achieving the Goals and provide evidence-based advice on what the Government could do to promote sustainable development and progress towards the Goals. (Paragraph 62)*
11. *The Government should work with public institutions such as local government, the NHS and police to create partnerships to deliver the Goals. Public services such as the NHS and the police will be key to delivering the Goals, by creating a healthy society and resilient communities, respectively. The Goals offer economic opportunities for businesses, but also for public services, in particular the health service. The Government should embed the Goals into the mandate of public services, such as the NHS. (Paragraph 63)*

Conclusion

12. By adopting the Global Goals the Government has committed itself to implementing the Goals in the UK as well as overseas. The Government's doughnut-shaped approach - seeing the Goals as something for the UK to help other countries do, rather than drawing on other countries' experiences in implementing the Goals here at home - must change if it hopes to fulfil its commitment to work 'tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030'. We are deeply sceptical and concerned about the Government's view that updating the Single Departmental Plans to incorporate the Goals will do this. It is a necessary but not a sufficient mechanism. While it is positive that the Government is utilising existing governance infrastructure which Departments take seriously, it will not be enough to encourage cross-government working and policy coherence on sustainable development. (Paragraph 64)
13. The Government should demonstrate leadership and ambition from the very top of Government, set out in a report how it intends to take an integrated approach to implementing the Goals in the UK, and utilise partnerships with businesses, civil society and the public sector, some of which are already taking ambitious steps to tackle the Goals to establish national consensus. As the UK leaves the European Union a re-evaluation of Britain's national economic, social, and political purpose is under way. Demonstrating a deep and meaningful commitment to meeting Global Goals domestically would send a powerful signal about the Government's ambition

for a “Global Britain” in which no one is left behind, and help forge a new cross-party consensus in the way that the creation of the NHS and the welfare state did after the Second World War. (Paragraph 65)

14. This report represents the start of our work to hold the Government to account on the Goals. We intend to monitor the Government’s progress over the course of this Parliament and will undertake any work we deem necessary to scrutinise the Government’s efforts and highlight any successes and failures to implement the Goals in the UK. In particular, we will look at the extent to which the Government’s updated Single Departmental Plans will facilitate a cross-government and policy coherent approach to tackling the Goals. The current and past inquiries undertaken by other select committees, along with the substantial number of statements and debates in Parliament, demonstrate that this ambitious and far reaching agenda needs to be scrutinised across the whole of Government. We will strongly encourage other parliamentarians and select committees to continue this work over the lifetime of the Goals. (Paragraph 66)

Appendix

List of the Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. No Poverty - End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2. Zero Hunger - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal 3. Good Health and Well-being - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4. Quality Education - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5. Gender Equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6. Clean Water and Sanitation - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 7. Affordable and Clean Energy - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Goal 10. Reduced Inequalities - Reduce income inequality within and among countries.

Goal 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal 12. Responsible Consumption and Production - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goal 13. Climate Action - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy.

Goal 14. Life Below Water - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal 15. Life on Land - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Goal 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Goal 17. Partnerships for the Goals - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Birmingham youth event

On November 25 2016 the Environmental Audit Committee held an event in Birmingham with a group of 20 young people, or people who work with them, who have an interest in the Sustainable Development Goals. The aim of the event was to hear their views on how the Goals could be communicated to a range of stakeholders and what should be done to encourage and support involvement in achieving the Goals in the UK.

Prioritising the Goals

The session began with an exercise to prioritise the Goals. Each group was asked to select and then rank their top five Goals, according to their perceived relevance to the UK. Initially there were discussions amongst most of the groups that the Goals should be considered as a whole and that their interconnectedness made it hard to separate them. Despite this, the following Goals were highlighted by the groups as a whole.

Climate Action (13) was selected by every group as part of their top five Goals because they felt that maintaining a healthy planet was the starting point for global sustainable development. At least half of the groups considered the following Goals to be important for the UK: No Poverty (1); Decent Work and Economic Growth (8); Sustainable Cities and Communities (11); Responsible Production and Consumption (12); and Partnership for the Goals (17).

When the groups explained their choices it was clear that they favoured overarching Goals which could encompass aspects of other Goals and targets. Reduced Inequalities (10) was selected by some groups because of its link to other Goals including Quality Education (4) and Gender Equality (5). Partnership for the Goals (17) was highlighted as an important Goal to ensure that all the Goals are met by 2030 both in the UK and globally.

Communication, awareness and involvement

Each group was then allocated a specific Goal and were asked to discuss how to improve communication, increase awareness and encourage involvement from a range of sectors in helping to achieve the Goals. The four Goals being discussed were: Climate Action (13); Reduced Inequalities (10); Sustainable Cities and Communities (11); and Partnerships for the Goals (17).

For each Goal the groups came to a number of conclusions which have been summarised below.

Methods of communication

‘Using the right forum’ for communicating the Goals was considered an essential way to encourage engagement effectively. They highlighted social media sites, such as Facebook, as ‘key players’ for influencing and informing the general public. One group noted the successful launching of an SDG app in Finland, which allows users to log their activities and share their experiences on helping to achieve the Goals. They advised that the use of social media and the internet to communicate the Goals should be limited on those which are non-political, thereby ensuring the information is considered trustworthy.

Advertising was highlighted as an important tool for communicating the Goals that is currently not being utilised. The groups felt that the Government could take a more proactive approach to promoting the Goals by using advertising. It was suggested that ‘shock tactics’ advertising, like that used on cigarette packets to dissuade the public from smoking, could be applied to the Goals to inform people of the consequences of failing to meet the Goals.

Importance of partnerships

Every group noted the importance of partnerships for promoting good communication, engagement and encouraging involvement in achieving the Goals. They are important for coordinating the efforts of stakeholders, like NGOs and local government. Those with common objectives are likely to have greater success through working collaboratively.

The groups raised the importance of the relationship between the Government and local government. They told us that the Government should provide more support to local authorities who are actively trying to promote and contribute to the Goals. For example, one participant noted the success of the ‘Challenge Days’ she had helped organise in Birmingham, which successfully brought communities together around a particular issue that was relevant to them.

Some groups felt there was a need to ‘re-humanise’ the Goals, and that this could be achieved through partnerships between NGOs, charities and the Government. They should work together to promote the Goals in a way that expresses how the Goals could benefit everyone, both in the UK and abroad, and the importance of this.

Engaging from an early age

The groups all agreed that it is important to engage people at an early age, when they are still in education. One group felt the Government should focus, particularly, on raising awareness amongst university age people because they felt this was the age at which people will start to care about sustainable development. The groups suggested that schools should be ‘green and forward thinking’, and that teachers should be educated about the Goals and their relevance to the UK, enabling schools to lead by example.

The role of business

The groups felt that businesses have a responsibility to contribute to the sustainable development agenda. They told us that businesses should set an example by implementing the relevant Goals within their operations. This would make employees aware of the Goals, particularly those that directly affect them, and would encourage engagement with the agenda. Working closely with likeminded organisations, would enable them to share best practices for implementing the Goals within operations and create joint policies and initiatives to implement the Goals on a wider scale.

The role of local government

The groups felt that the Government needed to clearly define the responsibilities of local government for contributing to the Goals. Clarifying the position of local authorities would enable them to develop a level of ‘ownership’ over their sustainable development

programmes. They noted the benefits of metro mayors playing a greater role in the development agenda for their area, highlighting the success Bristol's mayor has had in environmental policies.

The role of the government

It was clear that every group felt there was an important role for the Government to play in communicating the Goals and encouraging wider engagement with them. They felt that the Government should seek to, once again, be viewed as a 'role model' to encourage both UK and global citizens to engage with the Goals.

Recommendations made by the groups mostly focused around providing greater support to stakeholders contributing to the development agenda. They felt the Government should support local governments with the power and funding to enable them to play an active role. They also told us that the Government is key to supporting engagement at the public level, through providing citizens with practical advice outlining how they can get involved.

Meeting with Colombian officials

On Wednesday 11th January we held a private meeting with His Excellency Néstor Osorio Londoño, Colombia's Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; German Espejo, Deputy Head of Mission; and, via video conference, Felipe Castro, Technical Secretary for the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Implementation of the Goals and Director of Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies, National Ministry of Planning. The purpose of this meeting was to hear about Colombia's progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and any lessons they have learnt that could benefit the UK.

Millennium Development Goals

As part of the process of implementing the Millennium Development Goals Colombia had already discussed embracing the development agenda on a wider scale. As a result, they were able to 'fast track' the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Their existing National Development Plan, and subsequent inclusion of 92 SDG targets in this Plan, enabled Colombia to build an institutional framework with which to implement the Goals nationally.

The Peace Process

The Peace Process has been at the heart of Colombia's Sustainable Development Goal agenda, with at least 68 of the SDG targets forming part of the agreement. Poverty has been a concerning issue for Colombia, therefore as part of the Peace Process, emphasis was placed on the inclusion of Goals which have a positive social impact and would contribute to reducing poverty.

Commission and stakeholders

An important mechanism for advancing the sustainable development agenda in Colombia has been the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Implementation of the Goals. The

Commission is made up of seven cabinet level ministers, including a delegate from the President's office, and has so far been an effective tool for arranging the Government to act on the sustainable development agenda.

One of the key features of the Commission is its ability to act as a bridge between Government and other stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, businesses, the media, NGOs and academics. It has worked to build a strong network of enterprises, businesses, unions and universities to increase awareness of the Goals and encourage collective ambition for achieving them. The Commission hopes to introduce a recognition or incentive scheme to reward those organisations who are most engaged with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Colombian Government has identified 88 targets in which it believes the private sector has an important role to play. The Government has therefore been encouraging businesses to embrace the sustainable development agenda and explore how sustainability can benefit their operations, as well as help them fulfil their social responsibility. The Commission has been working with the Government procurement agency (National Public Contracting Agency) to explore the use of incentives to promote the Sustainable Development Goals agenda within the private sector. There is, however, already consideration of environmental factors in the operations of both the public and private sectors, not least because environment protection is one of the priorities of the Colombian Government.

The Colombian Government has recognised the effectiveness of using the development agenda to overcome any differences between actors during discussions of multi-stakeholder approaches to implementing the Goals. As a result, meetings between the Commission and their stakeholder group have been able to identify targeted solutions with actions from all sectors and actors to meet specific targets.

Nationalising the Goals

We heard that Colombia is working to 'nationalise' the Goals. The Government recognised that many Governments across the world already have policies in place which can directly, or indirectly, contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They, therefore, used this as a starting point. They identified their own existing policies which already address Goals and used these to then identify those that needed further action to achieve them.

The Colombian Government's view is that the Goals cannot be achieved from a sectorial point of view, rather a number of different Ministries must work together to achieve them. For example, reducing poverty levels in Colombia (Goal 1) has required action from several Government Ministries, including health, education, assets allocation, etc. The first step, to 'nationalising' the Goals, was to identify those in which every level of Government had something to contribute, and then articulate these clearly. This was effective because attempting to tackle the development agenda at every level of Government would have been very difficult operationally.

As part of nationalising the Goals, the Colombian Government considers the local aspects of the Goals, as it is the people on the ground who will have to deliver them. They have worked closely with local government, in a technical capacity, to assist them in the creation

of their Local Development Plans. As local government has a high level of autonomy in Colombia, it was ultimately their decision whether to include the development agenda in these plans. Fortunately, however, most have seen the benefits of including the Goals, through specific programmes or by setting targets for the principalities.

Raising awareness

Raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals in Colombia has been an important aim for the Government, particularly amongst the general public. This required translating the agenda into the aspects of people's lives which are affected by the Goals. By informing people of the ways they can actively contribute to the sustainable development agenda, the public can help to support Government's efforts to meeting the Goals and targets.

The Colombian Government highlighted their campaign to reduce national food waste, one of the targets within Goal 12, as a positive example which has increased awareness of the Goals in Colombia. The Commission worked to raise awareness across all levels of Government and as a result, a bill was brought forward specifically aimed at reducing food waste. This was a problem that the general public did not know about, but raising awareness amongst Colombian citizens encouraged them to actively work to reduce the amount of food waste produced by their household.

Monitoring, reporting and enforcing

We heard of the importance of having reliable information to monitor progress against the Goals. Colombia currently has around 54% of the data it needs to measure their progress. Some of the challenges they have faced in collecting this data include: low frequency, with some surveys only carried out every five years; and disaggregation, which hides some of the inequalities within, and between, territories in Colombia.

Colombia's National Planning Department has been very effective for monitoring and reporting data. The NPD works with the Finance Ministry to coordinate the investment plans of every Ministry in the Government. This enables them to monitor and analyse the progress of investments aimed at contributing to the development agenda.

It has been important for the Government to make reporting against the Goals more visible. It has been exploring the possibility of creating a website containing all of the data collected on progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. This would enable them to clearly report on Colombia's progress whilst also allowing others to hold the Government accountable for their actions.

Colombia and the UK

The strong relationship between Colombia and the UK was highlighted to the Committee. We heard about the value of the support given to Colombia by UK development programmes, foundations including the Princes' Trust and universities, with over £100 million being invested in Colombia by UK organisations. As part of a Colombian State Visit in November 2016 the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Rt.Hon. Theresa May, agreed on a 'roadmap' for

sustainable development for the next ten years. In a joint declaration both countries committed to supporting development initiatives such as Visión Amazonia and pledged continuing bilateral cooperation to promote the sustainable development agenda.

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 21 March 2017

Members present.

Mary Creagh, in the Chair:

Peter Aldous	John Mc Nally
Caroline Lucas	Dr Matthew Offord
Scott Mann	Joan Ryan
Kerry McCarthy	

Draft Report (*Sustainable Development Goals in the UK*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Paragraphs 1 to 66 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

A Paper was appended to the Report as Appendix 1.

Resolved, That the Report be the Ninth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[The Committee adjourned]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 15 November 2016

Question number

Abigail Self, Head of Sustainable Development Goals, Office for National Statistics, **Dr Graham Long**, Senior Lecturer, Newcastle University, and **Elizabeth Stuart**, Head of Programme, Sustainable Development Goals, Overseas Development Institute

[Q1–60](#)

Tuesday 23 November 2016

Steve Waygood, Chief Responsible Investment Officer, Aviva, **Geoff Lane**, Senior Partner, UK Sustainability and Climate Change Team, PwC, and **Dr Christine Chow**, Associate Director, Hermes Investment Management

[Q61–96](#)

Dominic White, Head of International Development Policy, WWF, **Stefano D'Errico**, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Manager, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and **Nienke Palstra**, Policy and Advocacy Adviser, UNICEF UK

[Q97–116](#)

Tuesday 6 December 2016

Dr Carl Wright, Secretary-General Emeritus, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, **Dr David Pencheon**, Director, Sustainable Development Unit for NHS England and Public Health England, and **Catherine Pearce**, Director of Future Justice, World Future Council

[Q117–145](#)

Tuesday 17 January 2017

James Wharton MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development, **Chris Skidmore MP**, Minister for the Constitution, Cabinet Office, **Gwen Hines**, Director, International Relations Division, DFID

[Q146–252](#)

Tuesday 24 January 2017

Richard Curtis and **Kate Garvey**, co-founders of Project Everyone

[Q253–292](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

SDG numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Alcohol Health Alliance UK ([SDG0051](#))
- 2 Aviva Plc ([SDG0055](#))
- 3 Bioregional ([SDG0016](#))
- 4 Bond ([SDG0022](#))
- 5 Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0061](#))
- 6 Bond SDGs Group ([SDG0064](#))
- 7 Bristol Green Capital Partnership/Bristol SDG Alliance ([SDG0059](#))
- 8 British Retail Consortium ([SDG0056](#))
- 9 Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) ([SDG0035](#))
- 10 Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals ([SDG0023](#))
- 11 Clean Air in London ([SDG0044](#))
- 12 Compassion in World Farming ([SDG0008](#))
- 13 Department for International Development (DFID) ([SDG0057](#))
- 14 Environmental Services Association ([SDG0031](#))
- 15 EV HUB UK ([SDG0001](#))
- 16 Fairtrade Foundation ([SDG0060](#))
- 17 FDS ([SDG0043](#))
- 18 Food Foundation ([SDG0025](#))
- 19 Green House Think Tank ([SDG0015](#))
- 20 IIED ([SDG0032](#))
- 21 Institute of Development Studies ([SDG0012](#))
- 22 Institution of Environmental Scientists ([SDG0058](#))
- 23 Institution of Occupational Safety and Health ([SDG0047](#))
- 24 International Association for Community Development ([SDG0003](#))
- 25 Just Fair ([SDG0029](#))
- 26 Learning for Sustainability Scotland ([SDG0028](#))
- 27 Local Government Association ([SDG0037](#))
- 28 Local Government Association and Commonwealth Local Government Forum ([SDG0065](#))
- 29 London Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development ([SDG0033](#))
- 30 Ministry of the Environment, Government of Montserrat ([SDG0011](#))
- 31 Mr Derek Osborn ([SDG0042](#))
- 32 Mr Edward Clarence-Smith ([SDG0009](#))

- 33 New Economics Foundation ([SDG0050](#))
- 34 Newcastle University ([SDG0052](#))
- 35 Office for National Statistics ([SDG0026](#))
- 36 Office for National Statistics ([SDG0066](#))
- 37 Office for National Statistics ([SDG0063](#))
- 38 Overseas Development Institute ([SDG0048](#))
- 39 Population Matters ([SDG0004](#))
- 40 RSPB ([SDG0039](#))
- 41 ShareAction ([SDG0046](#))
- 42 Sightsavers ([SDG0030](#))
- 43 Society for the Environment ([SDG0053](#))
- 44 South West Learning for Sustainability Coalition ([SDG0020](#))
- 45 SUEZ ([SDG0013](#))
- 46 Sustainable Development Goals Fund / UNDP ([SDG0040](#))
- 47 The Geological Society ([SDG0045](#))
- 48 The project: Towards Sustainable And Resilient Agriculture (TSARA) ([SDG0041](#))
- 49 The Woodland Trust ([SDG0036](#))
- 50 UK Health Forum ([SDG0021](#))
- 51 UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([SDG0010](#))
- 52 UKSSD ([SDG0034](#))
- 53 UKSSD ([SDG0062](#))
- 54 Unicef UK ([SDG0038](#))
- 55 World Future Council ([SDG0014](#))
- 56 WRAP ([SDG0054](#))
- 57 WWF-UK ([SDG0027](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2016–17

First Report	Soil health	HC 180 (HC 650)
Second Report	Flooding: Cooperation across Government	HC 183 (HC 645)
Third Report	Environmental impact of microplastics	HC 179 (HC 802)
Fourth Report	Sustainability in the Department for Transport	HC 184 (HC 819)
Fifth Report	Sustainability and the HM Treasury	HC 181
Sixth Report	The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum	HC 599
Seventh Report	The Airports Commission Report Follow up: Carbon Emissions, Air Quality and Noise	HC 840
Eighth Report	Sustainability and HM Treasury: Government's Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1049
First Special Report	EU and UK Environmental Policy: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2015–16	HC 644
Second Special Report	Flooding: Cooperation across Government: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2016–17	HC 645
Third Special Report	Soil Health: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2016–17	HC 650
Fourth Special Report	Sustainability in the Department for Transport: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2016–17	HC 819
Fifth Special Report	Environmental impact of microplastics: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 802

Session 2015–16

First Report	The Airports Commission Report: Carbon Emissions, Air Quality and Noise	HC 389
Second Report	The Future of the Green Investment Bank	HC 536
Third Report	EU and UK Environmental Policy	HC 537
First Special Report	Local Nature Partnerships: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 377
Second Special Report	Climate change adaptation: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 590