

Provisional edition

Tuesday 9 April 2019, morning

Official report of debates

Opening of the sitting No 12

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: The sitting is open.

At this morning's meeting of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, many amendments were tabled to the proposed text of the Kox report. The Secretariat is in the process of updating the text and will publish the final report, with the compendium of amendments, as soon as possible. In view of the time it will take to complete this work and to give members as much time as possible to consider the text, I have decided to move the deadline from 4 p.m. this afternoon to 6 p.m. this afternoon.

Judges to the European Court of Human Rights

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: Dear colleagues, the order of business calls for us today to vote for two judges for the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of two countries. You can find the curricula vitae in Documents 14846, 14840 and 14855 Addendum 2.

The voting for both elections will take place in the area behind the President's chair. At 1 p.m. the ballot will be suspended. It will reopen at 3.30 p.m. and close at 5 p.m. Counting will take place under the supervision of four tellers, whom we shall now appoint by the drawing of lots.

The names of Mr Vette Wang SOLEIM, Ms Sahiba GAFAROVA, Ms Ganira PASHAYEVA and Ms Emine Nur GÜNAY have been drawn. They should go to the back of the President's chair at 5 p.m.

I hope to announce the results of the election before the end of the sitting this afternoon. If we need a second round of these elections for judges to the Court from Malta and Turkey respectively, a second ballot will take place on Wednesday in the morning and afternoon sittings.

In this report:

- speeches in English are reported in full;
- speeches in other languages are reported using the interpretation and are marked with an asterisk (*);
- speeches in German and Italian are reproduced in full in a separate document.

Joint debate: Strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development / Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: We now come to the joint debate on two reports. We will first hear Mr Adão SILVA present his report, “Strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, on behalf of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy. We will also hear from Ms Petra BAYR, who will present the opinion of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination to that report. Subsequently, Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN will present her report, “Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities”, on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.

I remind members that yesterday morning the Assembly decided that speaking time would be limited to three minutes in this debate. We will have to finish, vote included, by 12.15 p.m., so I will interrupt the list of speakers at about 11.55 a.m. to allow time for the replies and the votes.

I remind rapporteurs that each of them has a speaking time of 13 minutes in total, which you may divide between presentation of the report and reply to the debate. Without further ado, I give the floor to Mr Adão SILVA, rapporteur of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy. You have the floor, sir.

Mr Adão SILVA (Portugal, EPP/CD, Rapporteur): Madam Chair, dear colleagues, in December 2016 the Sub-Committee on External Relations visited New York and I had a series of meetings with United Nations officials. During the visit, many of our counterparts shared with us concerns about the increasing threat and challenge to universal human rights. Moreover, they were worried that the role of key international organisations such as the United Nations was being questioned. More generally, they spoke of the crisis of multilateralism.

These concerns were publicly expressed on numerous occasions by the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres. At the opening of the new session of the United Nations General Assembly last September, he stated *Together, as guardians of the common good, we also have a duty to promote and support a reformed, reinvigorated and strengthened multilateral system. We need commitment to a rules-based order, with the United Nations at its centre and with the different institutions and treaties that bring the Charter to life. And we need to show the added value of international co-operation by delivering peace, defending human rights and driving economic and social progress for women and men everywhere.* In these circumstances it is all the more important that the United Nations as a global organisation can rely in its work on regional partners, in particular values-based partners such as the Council of Europe. That was the starting point of this report.

As I worked on the report, I realised the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for overall United Nations activities. As a result, I decided to focus my report mainly, but not exclusively, on the contribution of the Council of Europe to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and ways to enhance that.

The Council of Europe and the United Nations have been co-operating in many fields since 1951. This co-operation is founded on the community of values and purposes both organisations established in the aftermath of the Second World War, which are meant to protect peace based on respect for human rights. The Council of Europe and the United Nations are complementary in fulfilling their respective statutory goals. You may find in section 2 of the report an overview of our co-operation, and you will see that issues relating to the protection of human rights are at the heart of it. This co-operation must be further enhanced. Moreover, the Council of Europe as an important multilateral player at European level must contribute more actively to United Nations efforts in addressing key global challenges. In this context I stress the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the global summit held at the United Nations in September 2015.

The 2030 Agenda sets out an ambitious transformational vision. It aims to build an inclusive society by addressing the main problems of the modern world. The universality of sustainable development and interdependence among our nations are key principles. The old cleavages between north and south and developed and developing countries must be overcome, and the progress of the global community is only possible through the progress of each Member State.

The agenda aims to achieve sustainable development in three dimensions, economic, social and environmental, in a balanced and integrated manner. The agenda recognises the dignity of humanity and of individuals and it stresses the universal character of the SDGs and targets which are to be met by all nations and peoples and all segments of society. The agenda contains the 17 SDGs which must be completed by 2030.

Section 3 of my report provides basic information on this ambitious document, which will mobilise the efforts of the entire international community in the coming years. For the first time the 2030 Agenda puts the emphasis on human rights, the rule of law and good governance through democratic institutions, which are an integral part of sustainable development. Accordingly, there is a direct link between the agenda and the core values on which the Council of Europe is founded. That is why the agenda is very relevant to our activities, and that is why I believe that our co-operation with the United Nations must be focused on implementing the SDGs.

I remind colleagues that the primary responsibility for achieving the SDGs lies with the national authorities of our Member States. Regional organisations such as the Council of Europe can facilitate the effective translation of global sustainable development policies into concrete actions at the national level. The Council of Europe is already contributing to the implementation of 13 SDGs. Some examples of them are provided in section 4 of my report; the list is far from exhaustive, but I am sure we can do much more on this.

The main strength of the Council of Europe is its system of conventions. We have over 210 conventions and more than 160 of them are open to non-member States. The effectiveness of our conventions is ensured by monitoring and follow-up bodies and processes which assess Member States' compliance on the basis of measurable benchmarks and indicators. Many SDGs and specific targets correlate with obligations under relevant Council of Europe conventions. As a result, our Member States are legally bound to comply with the 2030 Agenda goals and targets. This is an important contribution to the implantation of the 2030 Agenda, which I must remind colleagues is not a legally binding document.

In the draft resolution I list some proposals to make our contributions stronger and more visible, and I suggest they should be addressed to various actors: governments, parliaments, the Council of Europe Secretariat and the United Nations. You will see these in paragraphs 10 and 13 of the draft resolution. Please note that in paragraph 11, which deals with the parliamentary contribution, I refer to the report prepared by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development under the title "Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities", and I stress that the parliaments must play a much more active role in dealing with the 2030 Agenda. They should be fully involved at different stages, including in raising public awareness of the issues and building public support for the 2030 Agenda. I also make some proposals for our Assembly to better reflect the 2030 Agenda in our work. Finally, in the draft recommendation I call on our colleagues at the Committee of Ministers to take some measures at their level.

I look forward to the debate.

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly): Thank you, Mister Silva. You have four minutes remaining.

I now give the floor to the rapporteur for opinion of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination.

Ms Petra BAYR (Austria, SOC, Rapporteur): Our committee was asked for a report of opinion, and our report adopted unanimously yesterday clearly focuses on the issues we usually deal with daily: gender equality and the fight against domestic violence and gender-based violence; the inclusion of people living with disabilities; and the protection of the rights of minorities. These topics also reflect the work of our three sub-committees. In the fight for a life free from violence, the Istanbul Convention plays a crucial role and is a very strong instrument of the Council of Europe, but it is challenged by misinterpretation and false narratives, so it needs support from wherever it can get it – although, as I suggest in Amendment 7, our committee is convinced.

The second focus of our report of opinion deals more with the implementation challenges of the 2030 Agenda and the inclusion of civil society and parliamentarians. My recommendations are rooted in the century-long work and learning on these matters, both in respect of the millennium development goals as predecessors of the SDGs and in the development of the SDGs themselves. We suggest for instance an impact assessment of national legislation which would both help raise awareness within national parliaments and help to mainstream the SDGs in all our policies. It also makes clear that our national laws can have an impact in terms of whether the 169 targets and 17 goals of the SDGs will be met or will be hindered by our national legislation.

Parliaments shall play a stronger role in the monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. The message “leave no one behind” should become a core paradigm of our politics. The Committee and I believe that the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda are an important signpost to a sustainable common future on the planet that we all share – a future in which our grandchildren can live in dignity, prosperity, health and peace, with equal opportunities for everybody and freedom from discrimination. The SDGs are designed to provide a good life for everybody, and we in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe share these goals.

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: Thank you, Miss Bayr. I now give the floor to Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN, the rapporteur of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.

Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN (France, NR, Rapporteur)*: It is my pleasure to present this report. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals that make up Agenda 2030 were adopted on 25 September 2015 by the 193 United Nations Member States. Agenda 2030 is a vision for a fairer, more equal and more environmentally sound future. It is based on three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – as defined in the 1987 report “Our Common Future” by the Norwegian Gro Harlem Brundtland. The primary objectives defined by the signatories were: eradicating poverty, protecting the planet, guaranteeing prosperity, securing human rights for all and leaving no one behind. Some see them as representing utopia, but others see them as a desirable future.

The Sustainable Development Goals are based on the success of the millennium development goals, but the SDGs go further and aim to end all forms of poverty. They remove the divide that existed for too long between the north and the south, imposing the so-called western model on other nations. That bipolarity no longer exists, and northern countries are equally responsible for and concerned about the necessary changes. The high-level political forum that meets every year at the United Nations headquarters in New York offers an opportunity to look at progress. It allows stakeholders to work together on the SDGs on an equal footing and in a multilateral way; such work has faced challenges in recent years.

Our countries are at a crossroads. Our choices will determine our countries’ ability to live in peace and affect the future of human rights across Europe, as defended by the Council of Europe for 70 years. Voices clamour for the primordial values of isolationism and nationalism. A few months away from significant European elections, we must give meaning to the concept of living together.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report of last autumn reminded us that a two-degree increase in temperature would have devastating consequences: rising sea levels, desertification, loss of natural habitats and species, and a reduction in glacier coverage. This is not about the planet; the planet will survive climate change, as it has done for 4.5 billion years. The survival of humanity is at stake. In the struggle for our survival, all nations in this Assembly must reach an ultimate agreement. Climate change will have a huge impact on health, security, economic growth and climate migration. Behind the changes that we must make is an essential question: what kind of humanity do we want tomorrow? We cannot simply continue as we are; we must transform into resilient, sustainable societies in accordance with the objectives of sustainable development.

There are 17 goals and 169 targets, from combating poverty to forming partnerships on water, our climate, infrastructure and prosperity. The programme is very much in line with the mission of our Parliamentary Assembly, and that is why we must take it up. The drafts presented today by me and my counterparts Mr Adão SILVA and Ms Petra BAYR are important. At the last high-level political forum in July 2018, Antonio Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that he regretted the fact that we were falling behind on goal 1, which is “No poverty”; on goal 2, which is “Zero hunger”; on goal 5, which is “Gender equality”; on goal 9, which is “Industry, innovation and infrastructure”; and on goal 16, which is “Peace, justice

and strong institutions". He stressed the progress that had been achieved in reducing maternal and infant mortality, which comes under goal 3, "Good health and well-being". He also emphasised the progress that had been made towards goal 4, which is "Quality education"; and goal 7, which is "Affordable and clean energy."

A survey by the French Association 4D, with which we met last September, indicates that only 6% of French residents know what the SDGs are. Colleagues know about the difficulties that my country has faced over the last few months. What struck me in my discussions with the now notorious *gilets jaunes*, and during the grand debate that followed, was that their demands are so close to Agenda 2030 that they are almost a rewriting of that document. It is a formidable tool that is not yet well enough known, and it cannot simply be kept within governments. We have to review our public policies and adjust them to suit the daily lives of our citizens. We must bring people on board by offering them a common vision for the future.

Agenda 2030 is the business of us all. It was adopted by the United Nations, but Europe must implement it as well. It has come all the way to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and my colleagues are right to stress the importance of co-operation and partnership with the United Nations. We must implement Agenda 2030 and build the necessary bridges. If our citizens do not back this effort, it will not work. Our citizens demand a healthy climate, and the recent appeals from young people have touched all our hearts. We must act in our children's name.

On Friday 15 March, the demonstrators said that a two-degree increase would be a crime against humanity. In my draft resolution, I propose some actions, including legislative changes. Let us co-operate and develop the right laws to generate synergy. Agenda 2030 calls out to us all. It is the ideal way to combat the catastrophic situation that the IPCC has said will occur if we do not act. Let us roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: Thank you, Miss De Temmerman. You have six minutes and 11 seconds of speaking time left to respond to the debate.

I remind colleagues that the vote for two judges to the European Court of Human Rights in Malta and Turkey is taking place behind the President's chair. If you have not yet voted, you can do so until 1 p.m., at which point voting will be suspended until 3.30 p.m.

In the debate I first call Baroness Doreen MASSEY.

Baroness Doreen MASSEY (United Kingdom, SOC, Spokesperson for the group): I commend the rapporteurs on producing two interesting, informative and challenging reports on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals within Agenda 2030. Mr Adão SILVA welcomed the agenda's emphasis on human rights, the rule of law and good governance through democratic institutions, as well as the importance of the Council of Europe's continued work with the United Nations. The Council of Europe has much to offer the United Nations and other multinational and national organisations, particularly when it comes to examples of strategies and the monitoring of conventions. The Council of Europe has also developed reporting procedures, and it supports Member States and identifies challenges. I shall give some examples of those later.

The development goals are ambitious and visionary. In practical terms, they need to be harnessed to deliver results at local levels in countries and communities. Delivery needs to be monitored by governments and communities; indeed, it is in communities that differences can and should be seen as products of the SDGs. For example, are poverty levels being addressed? Are services for health and education improving? Are environmental factors such as pollution being addressed? This concept slides into Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN's report, which calls for mobilisation of parliaments and local communities.

We probably all know that if we walked down a street in our own country and asked people what they thought of the SDGs, there would be silence or bewilderment. It is therefore up to parliaments and local authorities to involve stakeholders, fund initiatives, develop legislation and oversee its implementation in parliaments and communities. Our Parliamentary Assembly could and should receive regular reports about how countries in Europe are performing with regard to the SDGs.

Both reports before our Assembly are general, but there are implications that the goals need to be broken down to monitor impact. In my experience, civil society has a huge role to play in addressing the SDGs. Many are already working to agendas – not necessarily United Nations or Council of Europe agendas, but local agendas that address people's needs and concerns and that involve people.

I am developing a report that addresses goal 16.2, which is to end violence against children. Much has been written about that devastating, terrible problem, and much is being done by nations, by civil society and by organisations such as the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Committee and its children's rights division. The Council of Europe has been very alert to the rights of children, for example in its One in Five campaign and its recent initiative to address sexual violence in sport. I hope to show in my report how discussion of a single issue can provide good examples of involving stakeholders in development, improving data and sharing good practice – all in line with the excellent reports before us today.

Lord David BLENCATHRA (United Kingdom, EC, Spokesperson for the group): I want to talk about Sustainable Development Goals 12, 13 and 15, which I suggest are inextricably linked: responsible consumption and production, climate action and life on land.

The life on land goal is to “sustainably manage forests...halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. Of all the global environmental challenges, the most critical is biological extinction. For one thing, it is the only irreversible global environmental change. Given time, money and willingness on behalf of governments, climate change is something that we can reverse, but once a species is wiped out, it can never be recovered. Thousands of species are being exterminated forever as our rainforests are being destroyed to grow more soya beans to feed cattle to maintain a completely unsustainable meat-eating culture. I eat meat – I am not a vegetarian, nor a vegan fanatic – but the world cannot carry on destroying forests to grow food to feed to animals. We in the West and the United States will have to eat a lot more grains and legumes in future, even with the wonders of genetic manipulation increasing food production possibilities.

How does this tie in with climate change? Quite simply, our forests are the greatest natural carbon sinks on the planet. They are the lungs of the world: they take in poisonous carbon and release oxygen. If we replaced tomorrow all the rainforests that we have cut down in the past 50 years, we would not need to do a single other thing to reduce carbon. There may be merit in reducing carbon-burning vehicles in any event, but we could go at a more sensible and sustainable speed if we planted more trees, which is essential even if we stop producing carbon altogether.

Environmental damage and biodiversity loss in forest ecosystems costs between \$2.1 trillion and \$4.8 trillion per annum, according to a report from a recent meeting in Bonn of parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. When we harm nature, we harm ourselves. Few people realise that our health is tied directly to the health of the natural world. Biodiversity loss is a serious threat to humanity – more so than climate change. Pharmaceuticals, biomedical research, the production of food on land and in the oceans, fibres, fuel, clean water, healthy soil, protection from floods and from soil erosion, storing carbon, which is important in the fight against climate change, and many other things – they all depend on biodiversity.

In conclusion, it is an obscenity to cut down forests, extinguishing species that may be vital to human life, to grow palm oil or food that adds to our obesity and then impose higher carbon taxes on the poor. We should grow more trees, reversing climate change and making ourselves healthier.

Mr Robert TROY (Ireland, ALDE, Spokesperson for the group): On behalf of ALDE, I thank the rapporteurs for their insightful reports. I welcome the opportunity to discuss how the Council of Europe can and must enhance its engagement with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To meet the 17 global goals, the rate of progress in the next 11 years will have to outpace that of the millennium development goal period.

We need to be clear that the challenges to achieving the 2030 goals have only become more prevalent. From the obstruction of multilateral efforts and the rejection of treaty obligations to the global crisis of climate change and increasing environmental degradation, the threats are considerable. In that context, the Council of Europe's core role in promoting human rights, the rule of law and good governance through democratic institutions is a significant asset that should not be underestimated. In particular, we can ensure that state action is framed by the key principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the farthest behind first. The Council of Europe has a major opportunity to support SDG implementation while sharing and promoting an inclusive, rights-based approach to multilateralism. I commend the reports' authors for their detailed analysis in that regard.

In relation to the report on co-operation with the United Nations, the Council of Europe's commitment to international order is rooted in effective multilateralism. The report is extremely helpful in clarifying the contribution of the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly in progressing the implementation of the goals at state level. The 2030 Agenda is a political commitment, not a legally binding one. The reference in the report to the strong correlation between SDG targets and Council of Europe conventions is particularly important. We should be absolutely clear that failure by states to make progress on SDG targets not only goes against the 2030 Agenda, but calls into question the respect for democratic processes and human rights that is the cornerstone of this institution.

We must also be proactive in our support to states. The significant resources required to collect data and report against targets are easily overlooked. The report rightly emphasises how the Council of Europe's monitoring mechanisms can assist states to take concrete actions at national level. The importance of inclusive and participative decision making is recognised in several targets. States must facilitate robust rather than tokenistic participation. We must support the focus on wide-ranging engagement, particularly with young people.

The importance of achieving our goals was best summed up by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon. When pressed on what plan B is, he said *we don't have plan B, because there is no planet B*.

Mr George LOUCAIDES (Cyprus, UEL, Spokesperson for the group): Resolution 70/1, through which world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, is the bedrock on which all countries of the world should base their future development to safeguard their own viability and that of our planet.

The universal and interlinked character of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 targets should guide us all towards sustainable development until 2030. In an interdependent and globalised world, the 2030 Agenda is, by nature, universal and should be implemented by all countries – rich and poor – based on solidarity, mutual accountability and shared responsibility, so that no one is left behind. The ways to achieve sustainable development differ from country to country. Nevertheless, the essential elements that comprise development are common for everyone. They include education; health; gender equality; empowerment of women, girls and young people; support for entrepreneurship, and especially small and medium-sized enterprises; environmental protection; human rights; and the rule of law, with institutions capable of combating corruption and ensuring peaceful, democratic and secure societies.

The pragmatic vision of the 2030 Agenda requires comprehensive political will at local, national and international levels, especially from parliaments, based on the following prioritised objectives. The first is awareness-raising through parliamentary debates, the election of agenda officers or the establishment of parliamentary intergroups serving as agenda focal points. Parliaments are essential in creating supportive environments and creating the necessary political will. Their role is critical in reinforcing a holistic approach that integrates economic, social, environmental and political dimensions of sustainable development. Our parliaments have an essential role to play in integrating the SDGs into corresponding laws or legal frameworks and ensuring legislative implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In budgetary matters, parliaments bear a responsibility for providing adequate funding. They must also ensure accountability for the effective implementation of promised commitments and support reviews of progress achieved at national and sub-national levels.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has a significant role to play, mainly because of how central human rights are to the agenda and to our work. Today's sitting and the resolutions and recommendations before us constitute another important step in our joint endeavour.

Ms Ganira PASHAYEVA (Azerbaijan, FDG, Spokesperson for the group): The Free Democrats Group congratulates the rapporteurs, supports the draft resolutions and believes that the work in Member States towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals should be expanded and accelerated. In particular, we encourage all Member States to pay greater attention to gender equality, which is one of the main goals.

Despite the progress made on gender equality and empowerment of women within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, there is a great need for further work in this area in Member States. We should not forget that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but an essential condition for prosperity and sustainability in the world, where peace prevails. Gender equality indicators, along with the poverty index and the human development index, are important to assess conformity of countries' existing

policies to the sustainable development goals. Gender equality is a key point in the assessment. Choosing the fifth goal as a key direction can therefore contribute to rapid implementation of other goals. We believe that it would be advisable to include the sustainable development goals in Member States' educational programmes. We need to strengthen the fight against gender-based violence, violence against children and human trafficking.

The Free Democrats Group calls for us to fight poverty and for special attention to be paid to the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons. As a representative of a country that has 1 million refugees and IDPs, I would like to say that we all must be seriously concerned about the fact that every day, thousands of people in our world are obliged to leave their homes and seek refuge because of military conflicts and occupations. We should not forget that the highest level of poverty is found in countries that are more unstable and affected by conflicts. We need to strengthen our common efforts to find solutions to conflicts and end occupations. Finally, I would like to stress that many activities, projects and reforms related to the sustainable development goals are being carried out in my country of Azerbaijan. As a result, many successes have been achieved in this area.

Following our discussions, our group supports these proposals. We hope that such discussions and greater attention being paid to these proposals in Member States will lead to more success being achieved. We call on Member States to pay more attention to the issues raised in the draft resolutions.

Ms Sybille BENNING (Germany, EPP/CD, Spokesperson for the group)*: We have to live today in a way that is not to the detriment of the future – that is the watchword of sustainability, and that is why it is so important that we have this debate on the United Nations agenda for 2030. But we need to widen it out from the Council of Europe to our governments and our local communities, and we as individuals have to take on board all these factors if we want to implement these goals. We must have an impetus to act, and we have to combine our environment and our economy in the interests of future generations and of our grandchildren. That must be the overriding goal. When all is said and done, this is all about the politics of values.

Sustainable development goal 11 is to make cities “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. We need an environment in which democratic participation is possible, as that is the best breeding ground for cohesive and sustainable societies. Democracy and the rule of law – which, after all, are the core business of the Council of Europe – are reflected in sustainable development goal 16.

If we are to build sustainable cities, we need civic participation at a community level. We need to think global and act local. My home city of Münster in Westphalia has just won a sustainability prize. We have had a sustainability department since 2015, which scrutinises all policies for sustainability, and our leaders and citizens decide on policies together through the “Münster Consensus”. Even children take part. We promote mobility; we have cycle paths, public transport and car-sharing and pooling schemes. Since 2016, we have decided to divest ourselves of climate-damaging assets. We try to avoid emissions in new builds and have a proper public-private mix. There are many good local examples in Europe, many of which can be found online.

What can we as parliamentarians do to push our countries to implement these goals? First, every time a Bill passes through our parliaments, we have to make sure that sustainability is factored in. Here in the Council of Europe, we have to share good practice with one another and make sure that Parliamentary Assembly reports reference the SDGs. I speak from my experience on the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development. We have to mainstream the sustainable development goals. It is important that we pursue sustainability, and that should be enshrined in our constitutions. We have to take responsibility for implementation, and that should be built into any sustainability objective. The Council of Europe should expand its relations with the United Nations to make sure that the rules-based international order and multilateralism are strengthened, as that is particularly important in this day and age.

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: Thank you, Miss Benning. Rapporteurs, you can of course reply directly to the group spokespersons. You have four minutes in total. You can reply now, or you may choose to speak at the end of the debate – which is apparently what you wish to do.

In the general debate, I call Mr Andreas NICK.

Mr Andreas NICK (Germany, EPP/CD)*: I send my warmest thanks to both rapporteurs, who have produced very apposite reports. The 2030 Agenda will necessitate far-reaching changes to our economies and societies worldwide, so that we can try to bring two goals together in harmony. We need to eliminate extreme poverty once and for all and to respect the ecological limits of our planet. That concerns not only developing countries but each and every one of us.

The former President of Germany, Horst Köhler, was involved in a high-ranking advisory panel and in respect of the post-2015 agenda said it was a *categorical imperative to live such that your lifestyle could be assumed by all the other 7 billion people on our planet*. That is why we cannot simply have a business-as-usual approach. We cannot have a continuation of the traditional precepts of development aid; rather, we must consider the contribution of public budgets, which is of course important in terms of not only the proportion of overseas development aid but mobilising private investment and private capital. If we wish to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, those things must absolutely be part of the mix, as must the mobilisation of domestic resources – in other words, the financial potential in developing countries themselves. There is relevant comment on this idea in the Addis agenda for the funding of sustainable development, which is well set out.

One of our main focuses has to be good governance, the fight against corruption and the creation of attractive economic parameters, as addressed in goal 16. Over time we have realised that prosperity will depend on the creation of efficient public institutions, because if we do not have a functioning institutional framework, it is impossible to capitalise on all the talents and potential in a country and therefore to pave the way for innovation and fair competition. That is why we must put good governance, which is of course one of the core tasks of the Council of Europe, centre stage. The Venice Commission has also referred to this issue, and countries from Latin America, Africa and elsewhere are involved. We should continue to fund and support the current approach. We in the Council of Europe have a highly developed view of common prosperity and the need to work together globally.

Ms Marietta KARAMANLI (France, SOC)*: I thank our colleagues, the rapporteurs, for their report and for their clear will to see the United Nations take account of the Parliamentary Assembly's role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The United Nations and the Council of Europe are committed to human rights, but two questions remain before us. The first is the challenge of migration. As was mentioned earlier, close to 260 million people live outside their country of origin. Climatic conditions and internal population movements affect states and their neighbours. They can be the source of economic tension that creates fertile soil for regional military conflicts. We can already feel the effects and the impact on international organisations.

The second challenge is the link between human rights and sustainable economic development. The United Nations mainly deals with the setting of standards and with statistics. The objective is to make social capital an even more decisive factor than financial capital. The fact that people can barely survive and are unemployed is an extremely acute issue. We also have to talk about the quality of growth and the growing inequalities that affect the world.

The report says that the strength of the Council of Europe resides in its system of conventions. Our work has shown the importance of progressive taxation, the monitoring of financial securities, the right to effective and real education and the need for quality public investment to bring growth for all that respects the environment and reduces inequalities. We could help by establishing a list of our proposals in this policy area and proposing a method of evaluating the economic and social impacts. We must be both vigilant and imaginative partners. I encourage colleagues to pursue this path.

Mr Bernard FOURNIER (France, EPP/CD)*: I commend all our rapporteurs, and particularly my compatriot Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN, on the high quality of their work. Their reports are detailed and extremely well documented.

The draft resolutions and recommendations before the Assembly are undoubtedly ambitious. Indeed, they constitute a valuable contribution to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. We live in a time when sadly we see multilateralism being called into question and the contesting of the universality of the values we reaffirmed in 1945. In that context, it is more necessary than ever to strengthen co-operation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, which is longstanding, dating from 1951.

The reports describe how we currently co-operate; we need to do more and to explore the potential for co-operation in greater depth. That is not an ideological position – let us leave ideology to the nationalists and other illiberals – it is, rather, a pragmatic approach. Poverty, climate change and terrorism are problems that scorn borders and affect many countries. Finding solutions to these problems requires a joint approach based on co-operation. It is an illusion to believe that challenges of this kind can be overcome in a purely national context, so the contribution that our Organisation can make is obvious, given our purpose and our normative and monitoring mechanisms. Indeed, 13 of the 17 sustainable development goals relate to our work.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a political commitment. It is not a legally binding document; it is intended to be worked out at national and local levels so that we can take into account the specific features of every country. Partly for that reason, national parliaments are legitimately required to play a key role by ensuring that the goals are reflected in the standards and budgets that they adopt and that they can properly monitor and assess developments. Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN rightly emphasised the need for parliamentary working methods to evolve and become more cross-cutting. That is a challenge, but it is undoubtedly one that we have to meet, given what is at stake, so we can all see that the 2030 Agenda can be a driver for change. It has potential, which we now need to harness.

We need to do more when thinking about how we can provide for parliamentary assessment of the SDGs. I suggest that in a few years' time our Assembly, together with the Committee of Ministers, takes stock of the effect we have given to the actions proposed in the texts we are going to vote on today. That would allow us to see what we have done and to change tack if necessary.

Mr John HOWELL (United Kingdom, EC): I thank the rapporteurs for an absolutely fascinating report. One of the most important things it does is to stress the need to involve all stakeholders in the process. This is not just a question of the involvement of central governments or organisations such as the Council of Europe; it is necessary to bring in a whole range of others. As a result of reading the reports, I am inspired to try to create a debate in my own parliament so that we can help to provide some scrutiny of the issues. However, in order to do that, we need to ensure that we act in the round; a debate in itself is probably not a very helpful thing. There may be a view on the problems that exist, and a debate may even help to provide some scrutiny, but we need to look at this issue in the round to ensure that we use all the parliamentary activities we possibly can.

I was interested to see that the report mentions the work of the International Development Committee in my own parliament, which had called for all of this activity to be brought together across government. However, as I have said, this is a process that needs to bring in all the different activities across parliament. Indeed, the report mentions that.

I will draw attention to goal 13, which is about controlling climate change. In my own constituency, I am working on an initiative called Young Climate Warriors, which brings schools and the Church together, and empowers children to help resist climate change by reducing our total carbon footprint. What the initiative does is to work on trying to create collective action across schools, so that children undertake similar activities on a set day and therefore have a feeling of belonging.

We should not forget how far we have come. I am aware that in my own country wind farms generated more electricity than coal plants on 75% of days in 2017, and that renewables – particularly solar power – outperformed coal for more than half the time. That is a very strong position for renewables. When that is combined with other factors, the result is that since 1990 – I know that is a long time ago – we have cut emissions by 40%. That shows that the £52 billion that we have spent on renewable energy since 2010 has been money well spent.

Mr Jacques LE NAY (France, ALDE)*: The rise in populism and isolationism is bringing into question the multilateralism that has been so important for peace in Europe and around the world. This situation makes it all the more necessary to strengthen co-operation among organisations that promote the same kind of multilateralism, which is true of both the Council of Europe and the United Nations. They both promote – each at its own level and in its own way – dialogue among states, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Such strengthening of co-operation is desired by both organisations and they have both indicated that on several occasions.

Today the Council of Europe takes advantage of a standing invitation to participate in United Nations sessions as an observer. For more effective co-operation, in particular between the two Secretariats, it is necessary that the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General find a solution that would make it possible for the Council of Europe to be represented permanently at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

In the interim, the Council of Europe must actively contribute to the sustainable development programme objectives of the United Nations between now and 2030. The concept of sustainable development includes three dimensions – the economic, the social and the environmental – and of course that is important progress. I particularly stress the environmental aspect; climate change is a major challenge for our societies. The management of resources such as water, the conservation of biodiversity or the combating of pollution must make it possible to guarantee to each and every individual the right to live in an environment that is healthy, as provided for in the European Social Charter.

Furthermore, climate warming in the countries of the south will have consequences in Europe, particularly because of climate migration. Therefore, when it comes to this environmental issue, it is essential that the Council of Europe works hand in hand with the United Nations to guarantee the success of the sustainable development programme.

Our fellow citizens are greatly concerned about this vital issue, so all stakeholders must be mobilised within the Member States of our Organisation. As parliamentarians, we have an important role to play. Indeed, we must promote this programme within our parliaments and make sure, through appropriate laws and budget votes, that the objectives of the programme are achieved.

As a Senator representing local governments in parliament, I am convinced of the particularly important role that these local governments have to play. In fact, local elected representatives are responsible for a number of things that the programme refers to, such as waste management, and they can find the best solutions for the implementation of these objectives.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): Before we continue, I remind members that the vote is in progress to elect two judges, from Malta and Turkey, to the European Court of Human Rights. At 1 p.m., the ballot will be suspended and it will reopen at 3.30 p.m., before closing at 5 p.m. Those who have not voted may still do so by going to the area behind the President's chair.

Let us continue with the debate.

Ms Vanessa D'AMBROSIO (San Marino, SOC)*: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I also thank the rapporteurs for their two resolutions, which are extremely important for everyone's future. If we were to use a slogan or motto to fully express what Agenda 2030 is, we could say that no-one should remain outside or excluded. There are 17 goals to improve everyone's life in all areas, including diminishing poverty and hunger, and they also relate to social security, health, education, access to energy, water and work, gender equality, and the sustainable city. These are some of the objectives in Agenda 2030.

Our Assembly has continued to work on these objectives, but it is absolutely fundamental, as we were reminded by our rapporteurs, that our Assembly makes national parliaments and local authorities aware of these goals, and it must also strengthen the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

So we need to have visible and measurable results. For that reason, we have to involve national governments and national parliaments. It is absolutely fundamental to have co-ordinated work, by identifying the consequences that these interventions may have, be they positive or negative, for these goals.

Agenda 2030 is a challenge for everyone. It is a challenge because we have to go beyond the present economic and development model that exists. We need to have development that will be sustainable; in fact, we have to make sure that research and technology are used to protect the environment. Also, governments must reflect on the fact that people are not trained for many new jobs that are being created. We need to invest in education, instruction, and access to health and services. That means equality and self-determination. Nobody should remain behind. That would be a world that is truly interconnected – not virtually interconnected, but truly connected on the basis of a common vision. It can be achieved.

What I have said could be regarded as pie in the sky. However, there is a word that should be used: “glocal”, meaning what is both global and local. You have to think globally but act locally. That means that, if each and every person here focuses on the 2030 objectives in their respective countries, and if we can plan things properly, then we would really achieve enormous progress with regard to Agenda 2030.

Mr José BADIA (Monaco, EPP/CD)*: Since the 2030 development agenda was adopted, we have all been committed to facing up to the challenge of transforming the world in which we live. Through the goals and targets set out in the agenda, there is a commitment to fight against all forms of poverty and inequality, to create peaceful, robust and inclusive societies. There is a commitment to think about the future of our planet and the well-being of future generations. All nations and peoples at all levels are concerned – no one is left out. We all know what is at stake. We all know that the attainment of the goals will require national legal frameworks that are appropriate to different contexts. That is why people all over the world are counting on their parliaments to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is fully implemented as we move towards 2030.

Let us not forget that Mr Ban Ki-moon, the former Secretary-General, talked about the central role that parliaments can play by ensuring that policies are properly crafted and implemented. They can guide national programmes to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. We are here to reaffirm that solemn commitment entered into by our countries. We are committed to facing up to this historic challenge and to shouldering our responsibility. The Principality of Monaco is firmly committed to that: the Prince has personally committed to attaining the goals and our parliament is entirely onboard. At the High-Level Political Forum associated with ECOSOC, which was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York in 2017, the Principality of Monaco indicated that it was willing, on a voluntary basis, to submit its assessment of what progress had been made towards meeting eight goals. It focused on targets relating to climate change and preservation of the oceans, because they are of particular importance to His Royal Highness our Prince.

Given what has happened recently, the Principality of Monaco exerts an influence well beyond its geographical size. We have always been very committed to peace, human rights, sustainable development and the preservation of our environment. His Royal Highness the Prince has always upheld those values, and we have always upheld them on his behalf in all international bodies, as I am doing today. We are willing to play our part in the ongoing Global Compact and to use all the resources available to us.

Ms Sahiba GAFAROVA (Azerbaijan, EC): It is well known that one of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals is to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal leadership opportunities at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life. We should not forget about the women who have to live as refugees, IDPs and migrants as a result of armed conflicts that have blighted the lives of millions of people in recent years.

The question we need to address now is: what can be done to help conflict-affected women to reintegrate back into society, have a meaningful and productive life under new circumstances and contribute to a gender-sensitive implementation of the 2030 Agenda? I will speak about the major impact of armed conflict, with a focus on displaced women and children, and showcase the experience of my country in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable victims, helping them to adapt to new circumstances in the context of goal five of the 2030 Agenda. As a result of Armenia’s occupation of 20% of Azerbaijan’s territory, we have 1 million refugees and IDPs, many of whom are women and children. The war and forcible displacement brought a disproportionate burden on women. Along with the direct casualties, women have suffered from indirect consequences, including economic and social damage, violence and displacement. Women refugees and IDPs have to overcome physical and psychological trauma from different forms of violence in conflict.

Another challenge relates to the issue of missing persons and hostages. Often, women bear the burden of those left behind as they strive to establish the fate and the whereabouts of relatives. That makes their reintegration in society even more difficult. I would like to highlight the importance of political will, which can mobilise support for refugee and IDP women. In Azerbaijan, special attention is paid to such issues as enhanced access to economic and social services, education opportunities and skills development training. Awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality can be instrumental to promoting refugee and IDP women’s participation in political, economic and social spheres. In my country we have undertaken complex measures to enable the equal participation of refugee and IDP women in public life. In the framework of projects such as strengthening women’s political participation, women in local governance and others, the capacities of refugee and IDP women have been strengthened, and their representation in local governance has increased considerably.

Let me underline that the 2030 Agenda is a global framework. Governments, international organisations, the private sector and civil society have to work together to translate the 2030 Agenda into reality. To achieve that goal, we have to find durable solutions to conflict situations. I strongly believe that the most sustainable solution is resolution of conflicts and ensuring the right of those expelled from conflict-affected territories to return to their home in dignity and safety.

Mr Christophe LACROIX (Belgium, SOC)*: This report rightly criticises parliamentarians' lack of awareness of the 2030 Agenda, but in fact the problem goes much further, extending to all society, whether elected representatives or not. I wanted to speak in this debate to share my local experience and the synergies that we can and must find among the different levels of power, in order to achieve these essential goals. Previously, the Millennium Goals resulted in a lot of success. We can all read in the resolution that the success of the economic, social and environmental transformation that is necessary to achieve the SDGs is possible only if local and regional authorities are fully onboard.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are designed as a global response to the worldwide challenges that we all face. To meet them fully, citizens must be involved. We must raise awareness about sustainable development in its three dimensions: the social, the environmental and the economic, in co-operation with civil society. As the mayor of my municipality of Wanze, I am also convinced that local governments, be they rural or urban, must ensure the consistency of our actions, especially awareness raising about the different objectives. The local level is not far from international objectives; on the contrary, it is closer to the concerns of our citizens and it is where concrete and tailor-made actions can be carried out. It is an area where the congress of local authorities and the Council of Europe can be involved.

Among the 17 goals, social protection, women's rights, education, the defence of food security, combating poverty, the rights of trade unions and the promotion and sexual and reproductive rights are priorities. In fact, I have written them into the programme for my new mandate that voters in my municipality gave me last October. I am thinking in particular of the inclusion of environmental and social clauses in the conditions of public contracts, raising citizens' awareness of climate change and solidarity at a very young age, and continuing the dynamic inscription of my municipality as a fair trade municipality. Streams become rivers – concrete actions are essential. It is not enough to make beautiful speeches in international forums; they must be implemented at local level. I close by highlighting paragraph 7.6 of the resolution, which talks about awareness raising through education actions, because 2030 is tomorrow.

Mr Claude KERN (France, ALDE)*: As our colleagues Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN and Mr Adão SILVA rightly point out in their excellent reports, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, is ambitious. The challenges must be dealt with in a consistent, well-balanced context, in solidarity with countries, populations and generations.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are not binding. These commitments must be integrated locally and nationally. In 2016, France undertook a voluntary national examination of its progress, and it will do the same next year. All parties should undertake such an examination. France is particularly committed to the goals that are in line with its international priorities and its national specificities. I refer particularly to the Paris agreement and the fight against the erosion of biodiversity. My country has some of the greatest maritime spaces, and is one of few industrialised countries with a tropical forest.

We want to recover world biodiversity and so help to meet the United Nations goals, but that can be done only with the involvement of the private sector, as was set out in the Addis Ababa action programme adopted by the United Nations in 2015. The programme was devised to deal with shortcomings in the area of infrastructure. Public funds should help leverage private funds for sustainable development. That is particularly important in Africa, where entrepreneurs do not have access to the banking sector or financial markets. We have already earmarked €1 billion for the private sector, because we know that the African continent will require 450 million jobs by 2025, but government development aid is also crucial if these objectives are to be met in developing countries.

Mr Paul GAVAN (Ireland, UEL): I congratulate the two rapporteurs on these fine reports.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals aim to achieve human rights for all by eradicating poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity. Each one is as important as the next, and we cannot achieve them in isolation from each other. Our planet is in serious social, economic, and environmental distress. We can solve the global issues we face only through international co-operation, but there is much that we can do nationally and locally, too.

Public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals is weak, and I think we can all work to improve that by rigorously implementing the proposals in the reports. To meet the SDGs, European countries need to focus on their domestic as well as international goals, and need to create a whole-of-government approach to delivering them. All too often, that does not happen. For example, my country, Ireland, is suffering from serious crises in health and housing because of continued economic policies by the Irish Government that favour transnational capital over the needs of its citizens. We also must ensure policy coherence across governments if we are to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

In trying to achieve the goals, we must ensure that one arm of government does not undermine another. For example, Ireland has an excellent overseas development programme called Irish Aid. It is regularly peer-reviewed and praised for its accountability, and for the fact that its aid is 100% untied. However, Ireland's domestic approach to corporate taxation is clearly at odds with our development objectives, as we are effectively a tax haven for transnational capital. Indeed, Ireland's status as a tax haven has been recognised by academics, the International Monetary Fund, Oxfam and the European Parliament, among others; €91 billion of international funds were directed towards Ireland in 2017. Long-term viable solutions to global poverty and inequality are being undermined by the scale of global corporate tax avoidance, which drains much-needed financial resources from low-income countries.

To conclude, we need to change radically our approach to harmful tax policies, create socio-economic policies that deliver these SDGs, and save our planet from endemic poverty, inequality and climate disaster.

Mr Frédéric REISS (France, EPP/CD)*: Europe, and particularly the Council of Europe, have a key role to play in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The reports before us call us to action. Although achieving some of the 17 goals might appear to be a dream, or something for a Utopia, we can work effectively with the United Nations on issues such as gender equality and the fight against poverty. Gender equality is certainly an area in which the Council of Europe has real expertise available to it. Gender equality is at the heart of the Parliamentary Assembly's commitment to partner for democracy countries.

Other objectives and goals are also attainable, such as ensuring access to drinking water, sanitation and clean energy, but those things will happen only if politicians agree to shoulder their responsibilities. In all these areas, the international community needs to take strong, courageous measures that will not always be popular. On climate change, decisions taken at successive conferences of the parties will be effective only if as many countries as possible co-operate, because unilateral measures to save the climate can cause collateral damage. We have had some experience of that in Alsace, through the effect here of the carbon tax that was imposed on German truckers. Multilateral co-operation and co-ordination is vital if we are to preserve our economies. North-south co-operation and the electrification of Africa are also issues that we have to tackle with courage. Joint development is key to meeting not only economic and climate goals, but democratic goals.

The Council of Europe must commit to action on parts of the agenda relating to democracy. Through our experience and expertise, we have been able to draw non-European countries into our convention system, which is a great success, and something that we do not talk about enough. Also, we have been able to tackle the issue of migration, be it political, economic or, as it will be in the near future, climate-driven. We have welcomed countries into our partnership for democracy, and we have strongly condemned the death penalty in associate or observer countries. Whether we are talking about the right of minorities in Cameroon or human rights under the mullahs in Iran, Europe cannot be silent when rights that we defend here are flouted elsewhere. Co-operation with the United Nations becomes fully meaningful if we bear all that in mind, because we are upholding values that are sadly fading away in certain parts of the world.

Let us shoulder our responsibilities and be proud to uphold democracy, proud of our convention system, proud of our expertise in human rights, and proud of the great success story that is the Istanbul Convention.

Ms Eglantina GJERMENI (Albania, SOC): The SDGs are a blueprint of our present, and remain the rhetoric behind our daily efforts to achieve a sustainable future for ourselves, our communities and the next generations. It is historic that all peoples of the planet have agreed to the same comprehensive agenda – Agenda 2030. We need to take accelerated efforts, achieve concrete results, and mobilise regional partnerships to help achieve a global response that means that nobody is left behind.

The Council of Europe and its activities contribute significantly to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, because the core values of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law are shared by all Member States. At the same time, the Council of Europe could strengthen its role and its contribution to meeting the SDGs through taking a standard-setting role, its multi-stakeholder structure, its monitoring and reporting machinery, and its position as a platform on which all countries can exchange information and share best practice.

Albania immediately embraced the SDGs, at their very naissance. We have worked hard over these years to find ways to uncover accelerators for sustainable development. With reference to the draft resolution on “Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities”, the Government of Albania remains the driving engine to ensure the implementation of reforms that lead to the achievement of two complementary agendas: SDGs and European Union integration. None the less, being a Member of Parliament, I can say that the Parliament is the home of actions that ensure oversight, transparency and increased accountability for the achievement of results.

We members of the Parliament of Albania – representatives of the majority and the opposition – committed through a resolution to achieve the 2030 Agenda at country level in December 2017. By this act, Albanian lawmakers are committed to promoting, implementing and monitoring the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals through drafting laws, budgets and the oversight and representative functions. The resolution was followed by an action plan on SDGs, establishing SDG focal points in each parliamentary committee. SDG indicators are integrated in the monitoring plans of the independent institutions and SDG criteria are included in draft laws. These actions are just a few of what we do as parliamentarians.

We believe that national ownership is an essential condition for the success of SDGs. That is why this year, we aim to prepare a mid-term roadmap report on the achievement of SDGs, as well as the definition of intermediate targets and indicators. Engagement of all society’s layers with a proactive parliament, an energetic civil society, resourceful academia and a responsive private sector are a priority in the SDG journey.

Ms Ingjerd SCHOU (Norway, EPP/CD): Time is running out fast. We have only 11 years left to implement history’s most ambitious set of goals, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs hold the promise of putting the world on to a sustainable course by 2030. It might seem overwhelming but if we all pull together in the same direction, I believe we can make the necessary changes. In June 2017 I tabled a motion for a resolution, “The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – how parliaments and Member States of the Council of Europe can contribute”. I thank the rapporteurs for the excellent work they have done to follow that up.

The Council of Europe needs to take a stronger and more visible part in the implementation of the SDGs. The Organisation should take a leading role in the implementation of goal 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions. The targets of goal 16, such as enforcing the rule of law and fighting corruption, are key in developing strong and sustainable democracies. Ensuring inclusive societies also presupposes that everyone can live a life free from abuse and violence. The Council of Europe has the conventions, monitoring systems and bodies needed to implement the targets of SDG 16, and it should use this infrastructure to follow up Member States’ implementation.

As parliamentarians, we also play a vital role. Being responsible for law making, budgeting and oversight functions, national parliaments are imperative to the implementation process. We can ensure democratic legitimacy and government accountability. Moreover, I believe that we as parliamentarians have a democratic duty to stimulate inclusive debates with a wider public. We need to foster a better national and local ownership of the SDGs. As a politician, mother and grandmother, I cannot think of a more important task than to shape a sustainable world for the next generation. But in order to make it, we need to act fast and smart, and be co-ordinated.

Ms Sevinj FATALIYEVA (Azerbaijan, EC): Sustainable Development Goals are essential and integral elements in achieving a prosperous, stable and sustainable future for all human beings, no matter where they live. This is an extremely important agenda for the decades to come and its successful implementation

requires the collective efforts of the international community. I therefore find this debate timely and pertinent. I hope that this joint debate will serve the aim of consolidating our efforts to have better implementation of the goals in the years ahead.

I am pleased to use this opportunity to briefly inform you about the approach of my country, Azerbaijan, to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Building inclusive and sustainable growth, ensuring steady and stable development and investing in human capital are among the priorities of the national policy agenda of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan was one of the first countries to set up a National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development. The co-ordination council acts as an important mechanism in ensuring inclusive stakeholder participation and translation of the sustainable development goals agenda into a national context, by aligning national plans and strategies with the goals. Furthermore, a sustainable and operative social protection agency was established to reach out to vulnerable people by using more accessible and modern services. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability are essential elements in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Necessary measures have therefore been put in place to ensure statistical systems are available to allow the tracking and evaluation of progress, with a broad involvement of all stakeholders including civil society organisations. It is also worth mentioning that, as a sign of the importance attached to implementing SDGs, Azerbaijan submitted its first Voluntary National Review report on their implementation in 2017 and intends to submit its second report in 2019.

My country has been committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and actively supporting and promoting the 2030 Agenda within different international and regional platforms. It will not be surprising if I declare our full support for this debate today. We see a relevant role for the Council of Europe, which has been contributing to 13 of the 17 SDGs. In a way, we view today's debate as another contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Needless to say, we also support a closer link between the programme of activities of the Council of Europe and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as strengthened co-operation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations in this regard.

Ms Shpresa HADRI (North Macedonia, SOC): The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals offer a unique framework for having transformative pathways towards sustainability worldwide. It is universal, to be implemented by all countries within their national context, while calling on all sectors, levels and actors in society to work coherently. As the broadest, most ambitious development agenda ever agreed at global level, the SDGs will be realised only by joint action across every sector and area of human activity. Multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources are necessary to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries.

Parliaments are expected to promote the SDGs, since they reflect the needs and aspirations of the people. Parliamentarians have influence and access; they can broaden the support base for SDGs. They can contribute to greater visibility and, through a range of channels, share information to move the SDG agenda forward. The core parliamentary functions of law-making and oversight, as well as their role in the budget cycle, present opportunities to advance both the 2030 Agenda as a whole or to champion specific SDGs.

In any given national context, implementation of the SDGs is likely to take a partly legal form. While legislation is rarely the complete policy response necessary to tackle the objectives affirmed in the SDGs, it is often a critical first step or component of action. During the law-making process, MPs can check whether the law is consistent with the SDGs and parliamentarians can also ensure an ongoing dialogue with civil society over this matter.

All stakeholders have to be committed to the implementation of the SDGs. Anyone can also make use of dedicated online tools that are tailor-made for every type of stakeholder.

To conclude, there is no time to wait until innovations at the bottom come to the top or until steering from the top reaches the bottom; a way needs to be found to link efforts with progress and support at international, European Union and national level. We also need the answer to this question: what kind of governance do we need to boost implementation?

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): Thank you, Miss Hadri. Mr Iulian BULAI is not taking the floor, so I call Mr Killian MUNYAMA.

Mr Killion MUNYAMA (Poland, EPP/CD): I congratulate the rapporteurs on raising awareness among parliamentarians about this very important topic. The Council of Europe is founded on the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Our contribution must therefore focus on these root values, which are not only values in their own right but important factors of sustainability for any societal model.

In 2015, 193 countries worldwide adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to underline three issues in this respect. While some countries have already put in place the mechanisms to involve parliaments in the process of implementing and monitoring these goals, they are often limited to a role of passive consultation. It is equally unfortunate that, in general, members of parliament are not familiar with the 2030 Agenda. In that context, the Assembly welcomes the major awareness-raising and capacity building work for parliamentarians done by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Secondly, it is also important to underline the role that local authorities play in the success of the economic, social and environmental transformations needed to achieve the SDGs. When it comes to the management of public investment, those closest to the situation on the ground and to the citizens are in an ideal position to address shortcomings in the area of sustainable development.

Thirdly, this achievement in SDGs will lead to the reduction of both economic and climate migration constraints that we have observed in recent years. On the other hand, migration is one of the defining features of the 21st century and significantly contributes to economic and social development everywhere. As such, migration will be key to achieving all 17 sustainable development goals.

In conclusion, we have to underline that in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, all citizens from both developed and developing nations should come on board.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): Mr Andrea ORLANDO is not present, so I call Ms Gabriela BENAVIDES COBOS.

Ms Gabriela BENAVIDES COBOS (Mexico)*: I congratulate the rapporteurs on the reports. The discussion will be fundamental in making sure that people understand Agenda 2030. The 17 goals are well known in my country. We have to commit to the future; we can ensure that only if we all undertake strong actions to make sure that we have a bright future – a world of peace, without hunger, where there is access to health and gender equality, and no pollution. That would set an example to each and every one of us.

As the report states, the Sustainable Development Goals are universal, indivisible and multi-sectoral. We have to understand them and implement them. Our parliaments should undertake legislative measures. As parliamentarians we must make people aware that it is very important to achieve these goals. If we implement them, all our citizens will benefit. It is therefore important to be consistent when we enact laws in our countries and to make sure that they do not have a negative impact. In that way, we will achieve the future that we are looking for.

Ms Irina PRUIDZE (Georgia, EC): The world needs sustainable development, because we all want it to be a place free of poverty, discrimination and disasters. We want it to be peaceful, prosperous and inclusive. The goal of sustainable development is to meet the needs of today, without compromising the needs of tomorrow.

In 2015, world leaders promised to end poverty, reduce inequalities and tackle climate change by 2030, but all that is impossible without the meaningful involvement of all stakeholders. Both reports presented today argue that parliaments' role in this process is hard to underestimate. However, at the same time, we see that only handful of parliaments in Council of Europe Member States have recognised this need, and fewer of them have started to take the relevant measures.

It is worth mentioning that the Parliament of Georgia has acknowledged the importance of its role in SDG implementation, has already made a self-assessment of SDG readiness – last year – and has started to develop a long-term strategy and two-year action plan for the promotion and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy and action plan will institutionalise this process in the parliament.

Our goal is to ensure that parliament's policy making and legislative process facilitates the implementation of the SDGs; that the budgetary process reflects SDG implementation needs; that parliament efficiently controls implementation of the SDGs by the government; and that parliamentary legislative and oversight activities are open, transparent and accessible for citizens.

Moreover, some concrete steps have also been taken. Parliamentary committees are tasked with adding a section in their action plans determining the compliance of their activities with Sustainable Development Goals and objectives and demonstrating a close connection between the national policy and the global agenda, increasing various stakeholders' awareness of SDGs in the process. A number of committees have already committed through their action plans to review the reports of relevant ministries on the progress made towards implementing the SDGs.

We should remember that parliaments need to develop efficient internal co-ordination mechanisms and should raise MPs' awareness on SDGs, simultaneously ensuring maximum openness, transparency and accountability of the process, so that no one is left behind. To make this process successful, we have to join forces, co-operate and share best practices with each other. International co-operation is crucial for ultimate success in this endeavour. That is why it is so important to maintain this issue on the agenda of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Ms Sirkka-Liisa ANTTILA (Finland, ALDE): I thank Mr Adão SILVA for his good report, "Strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The 2030 Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including our common values like human rights, the rule of law and good governance through democratic institutions. The United Nations and the Council of Europe need to continue this work together within their respective mandates. The Council has to work more actively for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

The main strength of the Council of Europe is our convention system, whose effectiveness is ensured by unique monitoring mechanisms including follow-up bodies and processes. The aim of this system is to assess the Member States' compliance with the conventions on the basis of measurable benchmarks and indicators. These procedures provide us with unique and vital data for identifying existing challenges and areas where additional progress must be made.

The monitoring process of the conventions requires yet further development. We have unfortunately seen that today the commitment of some Member States is not strong enough. The commitments must be taken seriously because the main target of the monitoring process is to ensure that the values of the Council of Europe are fully respected in all countries. This requires genuine commitment on behalf of all Member States. We also need a better toolbox for this process.

We as parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that the Member States, including our own countries, take full advantage of the work of the monitoring process. Finland joined the Council of Europe in May 1989, some 30 years ago. I was a member of our first delegation to this Council. I have served as minister in the Finnish Government, as deputy speaker of the Finnish Parliament and as member of the European Parliament, and as member and vice-chair of the Finnish Parliamentary Assembly delegation. I have immensely enjoyed my work here. I really hope you, the members of the Assembly, will play a stronger role in solving different problems.

Today, unfortunately, we too often see confrontational attitudes. We need more diplomacy, mediation and co-operation inside the Assembly, between Member States and especially between political groups. I call for a stronger position in terms of the political groups in order find good solutions. I wish you all the best for the future and thank you for your attention.

Mr Sos AVETISYAN (Armenia, NR): I thank the rapporteurs for their excellent work.

Since yesterday, the word "synergy" has been recurring. Leaving aside the epistemological shades of this word, one should really delve into understanding how the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to be realised and how this Council's support for its realisation can be effectively reinforced. The realisation of the 17 SDGs, which range from the eradication of poverty to peace and justice, from quality education and gender equality to decent work and economic growth, is, simply, everyone's agenda. Only once this is realised can we state that no nation is left behind.

The fulfilment of the SDGs is primarily about people; it should not be confined by political suitability and should be for everyone, and the co-operation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is of paramount importance. The Parliamentary Assembly, whose members are representatives of the legislative power in their respective countries, has the capacity and also the obligation to promote the SDGs. The human-centric nature of the SDGs helps to ensure universal co-operation.

In July 2018, after the democratic and peaceful revolution, Armenia submitted the voluntary national review of the SDG implementation at the bi-annual United Nations high-level political meeting. As reported earlier, during the implementation of the voluntary national review, the understanding was that SDG implementation would be impossible without the active and concerted participation of all layers of society. The dream of a secure, developed Armenia where human rights are enjoyed and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed is based on the popular mandate to secure democracy, efficient and effective government, increased levels of transparency and accountability in public governance, the fight against corruption and the rule of law. The Armenian Government has already taken tangible steps to guarantee comprehensive implementation of the SDGs. Alongside the United Nations, it has established the Armenia national SDG innovation lab, a unique space where innovation, experimentation, collaboration and analysis are produced in co-operation with leading innovation and technological centres. Furthermore, in order to craft more target-oriented policies, the national SDG statistical platform was put in place, with clear assessment mechanisms.

The VNR indicated that Armenia was successful in implementing the SDG targets such as health, protection of the child and maternal health, access to safe and secure water supplies in rural and urban areas, and universal access to reliable energy. We are doing more work to overcome poverty and in ensuring gender equality and quality education for everyone.

To conclude, the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires every nation's effort, as well as openness and willingness to learn from each other.

Ms Haya MUFLIH (Jordan): Good morning from here, the house of democracy and equity. We thank the rapporteur from the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for this fruitful report that contains a lot of facts and information about adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and about co-operation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe in implementing its goals.

The world has become a small village. Because of the wide use of the Internet and social media websites, we can see that human rights are increasingly being challenged, so we wish to express our respect for and gratitude to the United Nations for setting out the agenda and our continuing thanks to the Council of Europe for adopting the agenda in order to strengthen co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the goals for sustainable development in the coming years, not just for us but for coming generations.

The decision to adopt the agenda shows the extent to which the Council of Europe focuses on human rights and protecting peace all over the world. We are very lucky to have the chance to be partners for democracy and wish all countries around the world to be partners for democracy in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

We hope to live in a world that does not have poverty or hunger, and that has good health, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and reduced inequalities and so on. We all know that the successful implementation of the 17 goals requires concerted effort from Council of Europe Member States and observer States. We in Jordan, as partners for democracy, want to participate, and to support you and co-operate with you.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): I must now interrupt the list of speakers. The speeches of members on the speakers list who have been present during the debate but have not been able to speak may be given to the Table Office for publication in the Official Report. I remind colleagues that typewritten texts can be submitted, electronically if possible, no later than four hours after the speakers list is interrupted.

I call Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN, the rapporteur, to reply. You have six minutes.

Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN (France, NR, Rapporteur)*: I congratulate Ms Ingjerd SCHOU, who drafted the motion that resulted in this report. I hope that the report honours her original intention. I agree with Baroness Doreen MASSEY that the Parliamentary Assembly should receive more reports about progress towards the achievement of the SDGs. We started with two fairly general reports to get the discussion going and put Agenda 2030 on the Parliamentary Assembly's agenda, and perhaps colleagues will now zero in on the individual goals.

Lord David BLENCATHRA stressed the importance of sustainable consumption and forest management. Last year, France enacted legislation about healthy and sustainable food. One obstacle is the European issue, and the Parliamentary Assembly should take up the subject and jointly agree recommendations to enable us to make progress. I am aware of Ms Sybille BENNING's report on SDG 11, which concerns socially inclusive and green cities. She has said that we must make sure that our legislation is consistent with the SDGs. Germany has established a system for doing that, as I mentioned in my report, and I think all countries could usefully do the same.

My French colleagues Ms Marietta KARAMANLI and Mr Bernard FOURNIER said that we had to work in partnership, although it was sometimes difficult to do so, and I agree. I have set up a study group in the National Assembly to work on the SDGs. I met two Senators, Franck Montaugé and Jérôme Bignon, who talked to me about what was being done in the Senate. The study group will be chaired by Ms Marietta KARAMANLI, and I invite all French parliamentarians to join it if they are interested. I encourage other colleagues to do similar things in their own national Parliaments.

On the issue mentioned by our Belgian colleague Mr Christophe LACROIX, I will be organising a forum in my electoral district on 24 and 25 May. I think we are duty bound to communicate at a local level what we are doing nationally and internationally. I will be meeting pupils on 24 May, and on 25 May NGOs and elected representatives will meet to discuss what they are doing to achieve the SDGs. Mister Lacroix, you are almost a neighbour – you are just across the border – so come and join us.

Many colleagues have stressed parliamentarians' important role in the achievement of the SDGs. In France, we are often criticised for being useless and impotent, and we need to be more proactive and reactive. We are all parliamentarians in this Assembly, and we must promote what we believe in and have a greater impact on decisions.

Last week in the French hemicycle, our regional development spokesperson talked about the importance of tailoring the budget to the SDGs, as is being done in Finland. Another of my French colleagues raised the interesting idea that the Parliamentary Assembly should review what it has done over the years to promote objectives such as the SDGs. I congratulate the representatives of all the countries that have taken steps to do so, such as by establishing special commissions.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): Does the Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development wish to speak?

Mr Stefan SCHENNACH (Austria, SOC, Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development): As Chair of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, I congratulate all the rapporteurs, but especially Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN. She has brought the report down to the local level – to the cities and the villages – where democracy is born. That is where we can and should act.

The Friday demonstrations all over Europe show us that young people are not satisfied with how policy is working at parliamentary level. We have these wonderful Sustainable Development Goals, but we should back them up with action, just as Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN says. In her report, she made an important link with our Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Social Affairs Committee is the link to that congress, but it is also the link to the North-South Centre. I think she will soon be a guest of both of those Council of Europe institutions.

I thank all the members of the Social Affairs Committee who have taken part in this debate. Let me take this opportunity to thank Ms Sirkka-Liisa ANTTILA for her impressive work during her time at the Council of Europe. She has been a very active member not just of the Social Affairs Committee, but of the Council of Europe as a whole. I am sad that she is saying goodbye, but I thank her for her work.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): I call Mr Adão SILVA to reply. You have four minutes

Mr Adão SILVA (Portugal, EPP/CD, Rapporteur)*: I thank colleagues for their contributions to this debate. There was unity in this debate, which concerned two reports about Agenda 2030. Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN and I co-operated on something that is really important for all countries, and for all of mankind. I stress the idea of co-operation. The implementation of the SDGs in Agenda 2030 requires co-operation above all. Let us not forget that the 2030 SDGs target is practically tomorrow already – it is very, very near.

Implementing the goals has a lot of challenges. As Baroness Doreen MASSEY said, the goals are ambitious and visionary, and they involve civil society, which has a really important role. As Lord David BLENCATHRA said, the SDGs are inextricably linked. They are a challenge that demands solidarity and responsibility; as Mr George LOUCAIDES said, leaving nobody behind is the most important approach.

The debate needs to be widened, because there are a lot of questions, problems and challenges: eliminating extreme poverty; tackling growth inequality, as Ms Marietta KARAMANLI said; questions about migration; and, most of all, the involvement of all stakeholders. As Ms Sahiba GAFAROVA said, women's participation and gender equality are very important issues for the Council of Europe – they are at the heart of our work. I was impressed by something that Ms Ingjerd SCHOU said: the 17 SDGs seem overwhelming, but we have to be fast, smart and co-ordinated. I agree.

I hope that our debate today will raise public awareness of the 2030 Agenda. I call on all members to make sure that their parliaments are fully involved in the implementation of the SDGs and grant them their support. I conclude by thanking the many officials of the United Nations in Geneva and New York who made important contributions; the Chair of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, Ms Ria OOMEN-RUIJTEN; and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, especially Pavel Chevtchenko.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): Does the Chairperson of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy wish to speak?

Ms Ria OOMEN-RUIJTEN (Netherlands, EPP/CD, Chairperson of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy): Only two sentences. The committee accepts Mr Adão SILVA's report unanimously and is very happy with his co-operation with other committees. We, as politicians, have committed to the goals, but now we have to work on reaching them with our Member States and with the NGOs involved.

Ms Martine LEGUILLE BALLOY (France, NR)*: *Speech not pronounced (Rules of Procedure, Art. 31.2), only available in French.*

Mr Ziya ALTUNYALDIZ (Turkey, NR): *(Undelivered speech, Rules of Procedure Art. 31.2)*

I would like to thank the rapporteurs for their awareness-raising reports on this important issue.

The sustainable development goals are a transformative, universal agenda with an imperative of “leaving no one behind” and require each country to commit to its priorities with a monitoring and reporting mechanism. At the same time, the sustainable development goals also create massive challenges for all countries to ensure financing and effective implementation by incorporating them into their national policies.

It is vital for national parliaments to play a significant and informed role for the goals to be achieved in any of our countries. The laws needed to create the legal framework including the annual state budget for sustainable development goals will have to be scrutinized and adopted by national parliaments.

Parliamentarians have an opportunity, and a constitutional responsibility, to play a significant role in supporting and monitoring the implementation of sustainable development goals. Members of parliament are uniquely positioned to act as a bridge between the people and the state, and to promote and adopt people-centered policies and legislation to ensure that “no one is left behind”.

We must also remember that the concept of inclusive development emphasises the social, ecological and political dimensions. In this context, it is vital to use the tools of good governance in achieving the sustainable development goals, especially in eradicating poverty, providing quality education, establishing gender equality, reducing inequalities, promoting affordable and clean energy, creating equal work and fostering economic growth.

Recognising the valuable contribution parliamentarians can make to sustainable development is particularly critical as the world moves towards implementing the new Agenda 2030. I firmly believe that these reports will constitute a valuable guideline for us, the members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, to encourage national governments to exert more effort towards the realisation of these aims.

Ms Emine Nur GÜNEY (Turkey, NR): *(Undelivered speech, Rules of Procedure Art. 31.2)*

I thank both rapporteurs for their reports.

The millennium development goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 were revolutionary, as it achieved a global consensus on a number of goals ranging from ending poverty and hunger to achieving gender equality. With the expiration of the millennium development goals, the sustainable development goals adopted by the General Assembly in 2015 covered broader areas and were far more ambitious goals focusing on the environmental, societal and economic aspects of development.

Since the adoption of millennium development goals in 2000, Turkey has been among the top performers in implementing and achieving these goals, especially in the area of eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and improving accessibility to drinking water and sanity. In addition to this remarkable progress at national level, Turkey, as an emerging donor in the field of development co-operation, increased official development assistance over the years; this amounted to over \$8 billion in 2017. With this success and experience in mind, Turkey has adapted itself to the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

As is rightly stated in the report, successful implementation of the sustainable development goals requires involvement of “all relevant stakeholders, including parliaments, local and regional authorities”. Although parliaments do not carry out an executive function, they have their own way of contributing to the achievement of these goals. The oversight function of parliaments provides necessary tools and opportunities for parliamentarians to monitor government progress. Oversight tools such as questions, establishing inquiry committees and general debates are at the disposal of us parliamentarians to scrutinise government work on sustainable development goals. Besides the oversight tools, legislation and budgeting are other areas where parliaments may integrate their perspective on the goals.

All in all, parliaments should assume a proactive role in making sustainable development goals feasible. We should be aware of our unique role on this matter and utilise all the parliamentary tools to urge our governments forward in pursuing sustainable development goals.

Vote: Strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development / Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): The debate is closed.

I remind members that the vote to elect judges from Malta and Turkey to the European Court of Human Rights is in progress. The ballot will be suspended at 1 p.m., reopened at 3.30 p.m. and closed at 5 p.m. Members who have not yet voted may do so behind the President's chair.

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy has presented a draft resolution, to which seven amendments have been tabled, and a draft recommendation, to which no amendments have been tabled.

I understand that the committee wishes to propose to the Assembly that Amendments 1 to 6 to the draft resolution, which it has unanimously approved, should be agreed by the Assembly. Is that so, Miss Oomen-Ruijten?

Ms Ria OOMEN-RUIJTEN (Netherlands, EPP/CD, Chairperson of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy): Yes.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): Are there any objections? That is not the case.

Amendments 1 to 6 are adopted.

We will now consider Amendment 7. I remind members that speeches on amendments are limited to 30 seconds.

I call Ms Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO to support Amendment 7 on behalf of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination.

Ms Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO (Monaco, ALDE)*: The Istanbul Convention deals first and foremost with gender equality. By referring to the convention, the Parliamentary Assembly would send a strong message in favour of equality. I therefore call on members to support the amendment.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): Does anyone wish to speak against the amendment? I call Mr Adão SILVA.

Mr Adão SILVA (Portugal, EPP/CD, Rapporteur): I do not deny that the Istanbul Convention is very important, but the Council of Europe has 166 conventions with other countries, so we should maintain the wording of the resolution in global terms rather than referring to individual conventions. Such conventions are important, but they are balanced by the others.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): What is the opinion of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy?

Ms Ria OOMEN-RUIJTEN (Netherlands, EPP/CD, Chairperson of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy): It is against.

Ms Inese LĪBIŅA-EGNERE (Latvia, EPP/CD, President of the Assembly): *The vote is open.*

Amendment 7 is rejected.

We will now proceed to vote on the whole of the draft resolution contained in Document 14848, as amended.

The vote is open.

The draft resolution in Document 14848, as amended, is adopted, with 84 votes for, 11 against and 6 abstentions.

We will now proceed to vote on the whole of the draft recommendation contained in Document 14848.

The vote is open.

The draft recommendation in Document 14848 is adopted, with 82 votes for, 9 against and 5 abstentions.

Congratulations.

The Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development has presented a draft resolution, to which no amendments have been tabled. We will therefore proceed to vote on the draft resolution contained in Document 14851.

The vote is open.

The draft resolution in Document 14851 is adopted, with 97 votes for, 5 against and 2 abstentions.

Congratulations.

Questions to Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: We now have question time to Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Many members would like to ask questions, and I remind them that their question must be limited to 30 seconds. They must put one question and not make a statement.

Secretary General, welcome to the Chamber. We have all perused your report. It is particularly important because we face an unprecedented crisis that requires a consistent response from all institutions and everyone in our Organisation. I am sure that members will have a plethora of questions.

Mr Franz Leonhard ESSL (Austria, EPP/CD)*: The funding of the Council of Europe is a perennially central issue. Member States fund the Organisation, but you are now thinking of alternative sources of funding, such as the European Union. The only concern is that Member States still must fund the Organisation. The second possibility is that we will have to seek voluntary contributions from other institutions. If that were the case, do you think the independence of the Council of Europe could be endangered?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): First, I would like to say that I am glad to be here again.

That is a very important issue. The question is, should we go to other institutions outside the Council of Europe to get the funding we lack because of the shortfall due to the non-payment of the Russian Federation? That may be solved, but if it is not, we have a huge gap, and how will we fill that?

The European Union is a very good partner. It finances a lot of our projects – for instance, in Ukraine and the south Mediterranean – but the European Union is not a cashpoint, and it is clear that it does not have legal grounds for financing our permanent budget. As I see it, the budget has to be financed by Member States and by public money. We are upholding public order on the entire continent, and therefore governments should finance the Council of Europe. There are, of course, possibilities for targeting financing like the European Union does on several projects, and perhaps other institutions would like to contribute in that way, but the current problems we face cannot be fixed by asking others to pay for us. I have put forward several proposals on how that could be done in my annual report, which will go to the Committee of Ministers meeting in Helsinki. We have to be very cautious when it comes to receiving funding from outside sources. That is my principled position.

Mr Frank SCHWABE (Germany, SOC, Spokesperson for the group): We have discussed a new procedure for how to deal with countries that break our fundamental rules. How can the Assembly be involved in such a procedure? I have another question about local elections in Turkey. It is the right of every party to ask to count votes again, but we have concerns that the ruling National party is not prepared to accept a close race. What can we do to prevent a critical situation?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): With regard to the latter question, we are keeping our eyes closely on what is going on with counting or recounting in Istanbul. Our Congress of Local and Regional Authorities was the only international institution present during the elections in Turkey, and I am sure that it is also observing closely what is going on.

With regard to the procedure for how we deal with member countries that are in clear breach of the Statute or the articles in the Convention, we have a very clear procedure in the Statute: if there is a blatant breach of the Statute – for instance, Articles 3 or 1 – Member States can invoke Articles 7 and 8 of the Statute. That happened many years ago, when there was a military coup in Greece. The Parliamentary Assembly recommended to the Committee of Ministers that the process under Articles 7 or 8 should start. That happened, and Greece understood where it went. There were many violations also found by the Court. Greece withdrew under Article 7, but the Committee of Ministers made it clear that if that did not happen, Article 8 would be applied.

The procedure is there, but it can be put into more detail, so that we can achieve better co-ordination between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers. The whole point must be that we avoid getting to the point we got to with Greece. If a member country is clearly on the wrong track, there should be some kind of co-ordinated action between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers to put in place procedures and a request for enhanced co-operation, which could rectify the problems that have been identified. If not, the last resort is to invoke Articles 7 and 8 of the Statute. This is already in place – it is clearly defined in the Statute, and it has been applied before. It was not only the Parliamentary Assembly that was involved; it came from the Parliamentary Assembly, and the Committee of Ministers followed up.

Mr Serhii KIRAL (Ukraine, EC, Spokesperson for the group): Yesterday the Russian State media reminded us of the decision of both Houses of the Russian Duma not to send a delegation to the Council of Europe and not to pay their contribution, at least this year. At the same time, we are asked to make more concessions and to do more for the Russian Federation, without even a guarantee of getting anything in return. Looking back at the past two or three years, do you regret your decision to support this path of appeasement? Perhaps we should be thinking less about geopolitics and more about core pillars and how to make the Organisation more resilient to the growing challenges.

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): I have already said that it is a necessity to get the Organisation to be more resilient or assertive with regard to the upholding of its standards. By the way, we have done lot. The Court is stronger than ever in respect of the execution of its judgments. We have a good record. We have to go back 10 or 15 years to see better execution of judgments than we have now.

In respect of the Russian Federation, my point from the very beginning has been that the mandate of the Council of Europe is to protect individual rights in Member States. For instance, the Court handed down a judgment regarding Mr Navalny, who in response wrote on social media: “I am sure this ruling will have important consequences for all those in the Russian Federation who are constantly subjected to this kind of lawlessness.”

Lyudmila Alexeyeva was the most prestigious, outstanding person in the Russian Federation from the 1970s until the present day, working at the right hand of Andrei Sakharov, and right before she passed away she said that she was horrified to learn it was a possibility that the Russian Federation could fall out of the European Convention on Human Rights and that people would not be able to go to the European Court of Human Rights. This is the issue of the Council of Europe. I can give many more examples of how this Organisation, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Court have helped so people in the Russian Federation over all these years.

Mr Mart van de VEN (Netherlands, ALDE, Spokesperson for the group): On 23 January 2019, we discussed the financial crisis in the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, in your presence, Mister Jagland. A request was made to investigate alternatives to the proposed cuts to the Council of Europe’s activities and staff. Why do you present no alternatives to your contingency plan?

Yesterday, we spoke to the two candidates to be your successor as Secretary General of the Council of Europe. In ALDE’s meetings with the two candidates, it became clear that both of them want to have some room for manoeuvre to solve the current financial crisis in the short term without any cutbacks. What are your arguments, Mister Jagland, for your legacy being the shipwrecking the Council of Europe under your contingency plan? Is not the presentation of alternatives for solving the financial crisis part of leaving behind a sustainable organisation for the future?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): I am very much in favour of alternatives, but I am against some of them. I am against what you proposed at the time, Mister van de Ven – namely, that we should go to the private market and somebody should buy up our debt. Others have said that we should go to a bank and ask for a loan. Let us be serious: no bank will lend us the shortfall of the Russian money. I cannot go to a bank and say, “Will you please give me a loan for €33 million per year? I don’t now how long it will last; perhaps it will come to an end next year, but maybe it will last 10 years.” No bank would say yes to that, particularly because the Member States would have to guarantee such a loan. I do not see the Member States being willing to guarantee a loan for the foreseeable future to pay the contribution of a Member State that is not paying its fee.

I come back to what I have said before. We are upholding the public order on the entire continent with our Convention and nearly 200 other conventions. That has to be paid for by public money.

There are alternatives that I am in favour of. One is that Member States' contributions should go from zero nominal growth to zero real growth, so that we can get compensation for inflation. Another proposal, which is in my annual report, is that we should set up a so-called Helsinki fund, to which Member States can contribute so that we can mitigate serious economic problems when they occur. We already have such a fund for the European Court of Human Rights; why not have one for the whole Council of Europe? I have a proposal to set up a third category of member. We have the grand payers and the normal payers; why not put in place a third category between those two? There are Member States that want to contribute more to the Council of Europe's ordinary budget on a permanent basis, so why not give them the chance?

I presented those kinds of proposals to the ministerial meeting in Helsinki, but we have kept going for two years with the non-payment of the Russian Federation, so we have had to borrow from the Organisation's cashflow. From June, that cannot go on any longer, so if the Russians are not back in June, from July this year we will need to start to implement the contingency plan that I have presented. The other proposals to which I referred can be implemented, but not soon enough to rescue us from that particular situation. The solution to that problem is to solve it.

Regardless of whether the problem is solved, we need better funding of the Council of Europe, and governments must take responsibility for that. They have the money. For instance, we saw reports in the media the other day that because of Brexit there will be a big shortfall in the European Union budget. It was said that Germany is bound to pay €1 billion – that is Germany's share – and the German Government said, "We'll pay." That is three times the Council of Europe's budget. I say to the governments of Member States that they should stop saving small amounts of money here and paying big money elsewhere. I really mean it. If you are serious about the role of human rights, you have to pay for that. A very small amount of money is needed to make us even more forceful.

Mr Andrej HUNKO (Germany, UEL, Spokesperson for the group)*: Secretary General, you have now been in office for 10 years. As you hand over to your successor, we are at a critical phase in the life of the Council of Europe. If you look back over the past 10 years, what is your message – what is the most important piece of advice that you would give to your successor from your perspective as Secretary General?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): First, as I have said in my annual report, we need to protect or preserve – whatever word we choose – the huge acquis we have in the shape of the European Convention on Human Rights, the social charter and the many conventions in specific fields, ranging from those on the protection of personal data, violence against women and the abuse of children, to three important conventions in the field of sport. By the way, the other day I got a message saying that the Council of Europe has been awarded a prestigious prize from Spain because of our cultural roots across the continent. I could mention many more examples and we should not give up on this work. We should preserve the broad acquis that the Council of Europe has.

The second thing is that we have to protect the European Court; if the European Court cannot work properly, then we are nothing. That is straightforward. When I took office in 2009, the Court had about 130 000 to 140 000 pending cases. Individual petition to the Court was no longer really possible. The Court reformed that system, because the Russian Federation ratified Protocol No. 14, which was about that reform. The Russian Federation had failed to ratify it for seven years. Then we redeployed our resources out in the Member States, so that we could help them to reform their legislation. For instance, in Kiev now we have 50 people on the ground to help the Ukraine Government to establish the right laws, and we also have people elsewhere. So we have decentralised our resources. We have to keep doing that and expand the acquis. I have mentioned two areas. The first is artificial intelligence, whereby the Council of Europe can again play a global role in setting standards, which nobody else has been able to do. Secondly, we must fight the cruel phenomenon of modern slavery on the European continent.

We must protect what we have and move forward to face new challenges. I hope that that will happen after me, led by whoever it will be.

Mr Roger ZAVOLI (San Marino, FDG, Spokesperson for the group): Thank you, Mister Secretary General, for your remarks. We read with great attention the report by the Secretary General for the Ministerial session in Helsinki. We are particularly interested in understanding the reasoning behind the change in the election procedure for the Deputy Secretary General. Also, can you tell us what the advantages of this new procedure are?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): It is not so much a new procedure; it confirms what we had already agreed when we changed the sequence of the elections. The Deputy Secretary General should be elected after the Secretary General, so that the Secretary General can also have an influence on who his or her partner will be. It was also said that the Deputy Secretary General should have certain tasks, in particular governing the Organisation on a daily basis. What I would like to secure is that the new Secretary General gets what I have had, namely a Deputy Secretary General who comes from the Organisation, who knows the Organisation and who therefore is able to help him or her with governing the Organisation on a daily basis. You will recall that, when Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni was re-elected, it was – what can I say? – with my support and she was elected unanimously in this Assembly. So I would simply like to secure the continuation of this system, because it is normal in all other international organisations.

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: We will now group the following questions in groups of three, so that we can process as many of them as possible.

Mr Jacques LE NAY (France, ALDE)*: Secretary General, in 2015 the Council of Europe established, in co-operation with a number of NGOs, a platform dedicated to the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists. We know that the situation of journalists today is increasingly alarming. How do you assess the work of the platform? Do you think that the level of co-operation from states is, generally speaking, satisfactory or not?

Lord George FOULKES (United Kingdom, SOC): Secretary General, given the severity of the financial crisis, can you give us a guarantee that there will be no salary or pension provision increases for the top staff of the Secretariat?

Mr Ruben RUBINYAN (Armenia, NR): Secretary General, Armenia is one of the beneficiaries of an action plan – the comprehensive co-operation framework that the Council of Europe has with some of its Member States. We value this tool greatly and we hope to launch the new action plan in the coming months. How do you assess the overall effectiveness of action plans and what are your expectations regarding the new action plan with Armenia?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): First, regarding the platform for journalists, 12 of the most important and most prestigious journalists' organisations in Europe are our partners. They are very satisfied; I had a meeting with all of them not so long ago and they are very satisfied that they have it and that it is working. I do not know whether I should say it has been working "very well" or "well". There have been some problems with the responses from Member States, but all in all I would say that Member States are co-operating very well. And we have resolved several issues, in what I would say is a good way.

Lord George FOULKES asked me for a guarantee about the top officials with regard to their salary and pensions. I am probably not the right person to guarantee that; the new Secretary General must do that. However, as a matter of fact we have had a freeze of all salaries in the Organisation for quite a long time, contrary to what other international organisations have had. If you look at the salaries that have been accepted in other international organisations, you will find that our salaries are quite a bit below them.

I am not speaking for myself, because I am leaving, and I am not speaking for the leadership of the Organisation, but I will say here and now that we should be very glad that so many officials have stayed in the Organisation during these turbulent times, because they have committed to work with us. Others have left and

gone elsewhere. Many of our officials can go elsewhere; their expertise is needed in Vienna, in Brussels and in Paris. Strasbourg is not far from those cities, where there are other international organisations that need our expertise, but we have been able to keep many of our officials and I thank them for that. However, we should not play with fire here.

Regarding the action plan for Armenia, I thank the Armenian Government for its co-operation; for instance, in the constitutional process it took on board all the advice that came from the Venice Commission. We have had strong interaction with the Armenian Government on all the existing difficulties and issues. That is a very good example, but there are others. Without mentioning everybody else, I would say that there is another good example here, as the Georgian Government have done exactly the same as the Armenian Government. They have seen the benefit of co-operation with us. They do not see our involvement as a problem but simply benefit from the expertise that we can deploy in Member States. So I thank those two governments.

Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV (Azerbaijan, ALDE): In recent years, Western attempts at exporting democracy to the Muslim Middle East have ended with painful consequences. Instead of becoming more democratic, the world has gained millions of new refugees and seen the destruction of pearls of ancient civilisation in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Egypt. Now, the new challenges of the West herald the spreading of that devastating wave to Iran and Saudi Arabia. The reality demonstrates that all those developments are harmful. The Council of Europe has great accountability for preventing the horrific developments that lead to major tragedies. How long will we continue to analyse the consequences of the disasters, instead of taking preventive measures?

Mr Imre VEJKEY (Hungary, EPP/CD)*: In recent weeks, the Ukrainian Parliament has debated the new language law, the text of which is very worrying. What is your view? Will you call on the Ukrainian Government to submit the draft text to the Venice Commission?

Mr Giorgi KANDELAKI (Georgia, EPP/CD): Can we take your answer to Lord George FOULKES' question on pensions to be an unequivocal yes? I am sure you would agree that if the Council of Europe had been able to find a solution to the financial problem earlier on, it would have been in a stronger position vis-à-vis the Russian Federation. Why, for two years, were you unable to take onboard some of the many suggestions to solve the issue, so we would not have to wrestle with pressure from the Russian Federation to accept mechanisms for their return? Why were you unable to do that for two years?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): First of all, what Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV said was very important and I completely agree. We should be very cautious about the business that became popular of exporting democracy and human rights by certain means. If it does not come from the bottom up in the societies themselves, it fails. It was successful in Tunisia, because it came from the population and certain institutions were already in place that could handle the situation, whereas in other places it became a catastrophe. I did not say that we will not argue for our values everywhere in the world – we will – but we have to be cautious about how we do that.

Mr Giorgi KANDELAKI, you give me the impression that you want me to stay after the end of my mandate, although that was not my impression before. I will not be in charge of pensions after I leave – that will for the new Secretary General. I can guarantee only that Member States have certain pension liabilities. There is a first pension scheme and a second pension scheme, and I have no proposals to change them. It will be for the next Secretary General, and the Committee of Ministers, to decide all that.

Why not take on board all the proposals? There are not so many proposals to solve the Russian Federation's non-payment. I have already touched on them; for instance, somebody went around saying that we could easily go to our bank in Paris to say that it should give us a gift or a loan. The bank is not owned by all the Council of Europe Member States; it has never granted us anything and it has a policy not to do so. I do not think we could go to the bank to get a loan to fill the gap for one, two, three, four, five or six years – I do not know how many. Many are talking about solutions, and unfortunately they give staff the impression that there is an easy solution – for instance we could go to our rich uncle in the European Union. That is not possible. It is not possible to take out a loan. The problem is that the staff are being given the wrong impression. We have to be honest with them and tell them about the situation. The real solution to the problem is a political one. I hope you are willing to act on that.

Mr Pieter OMTZIGT (Netherlands, EPP/CD): Last October, eight MPs from the four biggest political groups wrote you a letter about specific allegations concerning the former ambassador of Azerbaijan. One hundred and eighty days later, we have not had a reply. I have only one question: would you be willing to reply to that letter and to the allegations? I think you should be very precise about what did and did not happen. He said that there had been private talks in which, around 2012, you were informed about Azerbaijan corrupting this Organisation. Can we have a reply to that letter?

Lord Don TOUHIG (United Kingdom, SOC): You have warned that if the Russian Federation left the Council of Europe, we would see a different the Russian Federation. Will it cease to be a Russian Federation that invades a neighbour? Will it cease to be a Russian Federation that annexes another country's land? Will it cease to be a Russian Federation that attempts murder on the streets of Britain? Will it be a Russian Federation that respects the rights of its citizens? How will this new the Russian Federation be different from the Russian Federation that exists now?

Mr Jacques MAIRE (France, NR)*: Secretary General, from 23 to 26 May, we will have European elections. Already, the electoral campaign is under way on social media, we have seen aggressive campaigns and hate speech, and outside influence has been alleged. In future, should not the Council of Europe take an interest in European Union elections, as we do in national elections and referendums?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (Secretary General of the Council of Europe): Mr Pieter OMTZIGT, I have answered that question at least two times in this Assembly, so I do not think it is necessary to go into that again and take time from others who want to ask a question.

On how we would get another the Russian Federation if it stayed in the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe was not set up to change governments, or put aside elections or parliaments. We are here to protect the individual human rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. I am sure, however, that if the Russian Federation leaves the European Convention, it will be a different the Russian Federation – and a different Europe; we will once again have a dividing line running through it, with 700 million people under the protection of the Convention on one side, and 140 million people not protected by the Convention or the Court on the other. It will immediately be a new Europe.

As far as I know, the Parliamentary Assembly has not been invited to observe the elections to the European Parliament, but perhaps I am not well informed on that.

Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER (Switzerland, SOC, President of the Assembly)*: We must now conclude questions to Mr JAGLAND. On behalf of the Assembly, I thank him warmly for his answers.

Dear colleagues, it is 1 p.m, so the voting for the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights is suspended. It will reopen at 3.30 p.m. and will close at 5 p.m.

The Assembly will hold its next public sitting this afternoon at 3.30 p.m. with the agenda that was approved on Monday morning. The sitting is closed; enjoy your lunch.