



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Materion Ewropeaidd ac Allanol
The Committee on European and External Affairs**

**Dydd Mawrth, 8 Mawrth 2011
Tuesday, 8 March 2011**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Nick Bourne	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Morgan	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Stephen Brown	Positive Women
Paul Dunhill	Tîm y Sector Gwirfoddol, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Voluntary Sector Team, Welsh Assembly Government
Lisa Evans	Uned Tlodi Plant, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Child Poverty Unit, Welsh Assembly Government
Siphiwe Hlophe	Llywydd, Swaziland Positive Living President, Swaziland Positive Living
Kathryn Llewellyn	Positive Women
Eleanor Marks	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr yr Is-adran Gymunedau, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Deputy Director of Communities Division, Welsh Assembly Government
Yr Arglwydd McConnell o Glenscorrodale/Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale, Jack McConnell	Aelod o Senedd yr Alban Member of the Scottish Parliament
Claire McDonald	Pennaeth yr Uned Gydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Equality Unit, Welsh Assembly Government
Carl Sargeant	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth Leol) Assembly Member, Labour (The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government)

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Lara Date	Clerc Clerk
Gregg Jones	Pennaeth Swyddfa UE Cymru, Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Head of Wales EU Office, Members' Research Service
Sarita Marshall	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.30 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.30 a.m.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Rhodri Morgan:** Croeso cynnes **Rhodri Morgan:** A warm welcome to iawn i'r Aelodau, y swyddogion ac unrhyw Members, officials and anyone in the public un yn yr oriel cyhoeddus. gallery.

[2] Headsets are available for translation and sound amplification. Translation is on channel 1 and amplification for those who are *trwm eich clyw*—hard of hearing—is on channel 0. If you did not hear that, it is because you are *trwm eich clyw*. Everyone should ensure that their mobile phones and any other electronic devices are switched off completely, because they can interfere with the sound equipment. In the event of an emergency, an alarm will sound and ushers will direct everyone to the nearest safe exit and assembly point. We have a full house this morning, with no apologies. I must now ask Members to make any declarations of interest under Standing Order No. 31.6. I see that there are no declarations, so we will now move on to the substantive business of this, the penultimate meeting of the European and External Affairs Committee of the 2007 to 2011 Assembly.

9.31 a.m.

Adroddiad Etifeddiaeth y Pwyllgor Committee Legacy Report

[3] **Rhodri Morgan:** It is not absolutely obligatory for us to produce a legacy report, but we would probably have general assent that it would be a good idea to do that. We decided that we should try to produce a legacy report in order to highlight the European and External Affairs Committee's priorities to point the way for our successor committee—whatever shape it takes—in the fourth Assembly, which will be elected in two months' time. We have two papers in front of us now. One is produced by Gregg Jones, and we are pleased that you are here with us today, Gregg, and not on the wall, as it were; we are not used to having you here in person. The paper highlights the priority issues and proposals that are expected to come forward after dissolution. The other point that I want to make is that we had hoped to have the Welsh MEPs participate, but that has not proved practicable today. In the last committee meeting, in a fortnight's time, two of the MEPs, namely Jill Evans and Derek Vaughan, are available to give a final update from the MEPs' perspective. However, we now have the European Commission work programme paper from Gregg and also the draft legacy report. So, I would like you to give me any comments that you have. We will start with the Gregg paper. Does anyone have any points on the Gregg paper?

[4] Do I have the right one?

[5] **Jeff Cuthbert:** What is the reference?

[6] **Ms Date:** It is paper 2, the European Commission work programme 2011.

[7] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes. Gregg is technically part of the Members' research service, are you not, Gregg?

[8] **Mr Jones:** Yes.

[9] **Rhodri Morgan:** So it is not the MRS paper; it is the other one, namely the European

Commission work programme 2011, which identifies potential key priorities for the fourth Assembly committees. It is meant to act as an adjunct to the legacy report, so perhaps I should not have taken it first. Perhaps we should take the legacy report first; I am not sure.

[10] **Jeff Cuthbert:** On the draft legacy report, I have a minor point on the page dealing with overview and taking a strategic—

[11] **Rhodri Morgan:** What page?

[12] **Jeff Cuthbert:** The page is not numbered on my copy, but it is paragraph 2. We say that the committee met between 13 and 16 times. When we print it, will we put the real figure in, or is there a reason why it has been put like that?

[13] **Rhodri Morgan:** It is just the minimum and maximum during the three years, which has now almost become four years. Assuming we meet on March 22, what is the actual figure going to be for 2011? It is like a temperature reading—a minimum and maximum. Some years we only met 13 times and some years we met 16 times. I say ‘we’ even though I was only with you for part of it. Do we need to clarify that?

[14] **Jeff Cuthbert:** No, that is fine.

[15] **Rhodri Morgan:** What will the figure be for this year, assuming we do not have an earthquake and we manage to meet on 22 March?

[16] **Ms Date:** The figure for this year is 16. That is intended to try to give an idea of the frequency with which this committee has been able to meet to consider European issues. It has been between 13 and 16 times.

[17] **Rhodri Morgan:** Perhaps we ought to clarify that, because it looks a bit strange. It should say something like ‘for a minimum of 13 and a maximum of 16’. We should reword that.

[18] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I have one other point, if I may. Under the work priorities section for the current term coming to an end, starting with paragraph 6, unless I missed it, there is not a specific reference to the scrutiny that you have done of the programme monitoring committee. On a number of occasions you spoke with me and other representatives of the PMC, but there is no explicit reference to that in here.

[19] **Rhodri Morgan:** That is an interesting point; I think that we ought to remedy that. Did that take place more when Sandy was chairing the committee than it has with me? I think that I have done that once, have I not?

[20] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I think it was twice.

[21] **Ms Date:** Yes, I think it was a couple of times. Obviously, that became a bit subsumed by our work looking more to the future—

[22] **Jeff Cuthbert:** The future of cohesion. Yes, I appreciate that.

[23] **Ms Date:** Yes, and then the Enterprise and Learning Committee took on its own review.

[24] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I think that it ought to be recorded that those meetings took place.

[25] **Ms Date:** Yes, we should record that. Would you like it to be recorded as a separate

item or should we put it under the section on cohesion policy?

[26] **Rhodri Morgan:** It would come under scrutiny.

[27] **Ms Date:** It was not a specific inquiry, but we can include it as an item of scrutiny.

[28] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I would be grateful if you would.

[29] **Rhodri Morgan:** Apropos of this and before the moment passes, because I will not remember otherwise, with regard to Murphy's law—not Paul Murphy's law, but Murphy's law of American aircraft design, which means that any combination of dreadful circumstances that you can possibly imagine will at some point take place—the Assembly will be dissolved on 31 March and it occurred to me, at about 3 a.m. when I could not sleep, what would happen if, during the dissolution month of April, a subsidiary monitoring issue comes up when the Assembly does not really exist. The United Kingdom Parliament has an eight-week window in which to give an amber light to the European Commission over a proposed law, which could relate to an issue devolved to the Assembly. This has not happened during this Assembly, but, under Murphy's law, there probably will be one, and it will be when the Assembly is not sitting. What would we do?

[30] **Nick Bourne:** We have three weeks.

[31] **Eleanor Burnham:** Christine Chapman has asked, has she not? She has enquired about her status. Can you enquire about your status?

[32] **Rhodri Morgan:** I think that her status is okay because, once you have been nominated by the British Foreign Office, on the nomination of the First Minister or the Assembly, you stay in post—

[33] **Eleanor Burnham:** Even during dissolution.

[34] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes, and you could lose your seat, but you would still be in post until you are changed. However, in this case, there will be no Assembly Members. It is not going to happen, but it just possibly, conceivably might happen.

[35] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Would that be for the Assembly or the Welsh Assembly Government to respond to?

[36] **Rhodri Morgan:** It would be for the Assembly. The Welsh Assembly Government would also be asked to respond, but it is okay because Ministers are still Ministers even though they are not Assembly Members, in the same way that Government Ministers remain Ministers during an election period to cover emergency issues. There are always Ministers, but there are not always Assembly Members, and there will not be any for the whole of April and the first couple of days of May. The Labour group is getting dissolution guidance this morning; I do not know about other groups. I suppose it is one of those things—you can throw them and ask them what is supposed to happen.

[37] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have no doubt that Kirsty is aware of all this, but perhaps this is something that Sir Roger Jones was not competent to comment on.

[38] **Rhodri Morgan:** That is not his fault.

[39] **Eleanor Burnham:** No, no, I am just talking about the chair.

[40] **Rhodri Morgan:** Does anyone else have any thoughts on this before I give my 3 a.m.

thoughts?

[41] **Nick Bourne:** I do not want to create another 3 a.m. moment tomorrow, but I do not think that the issue about the Committee of the Regions is as clear-cut as you are saying. I have mentioned this to Carwyn. I do not think that I am wrong in saying it is not that clear-cut.

[42] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** As I understand the situation, we will have to get re-elected after dissolution, and we will not be able to represent the Assembly. A plenary meeting is to be held on 31 March and 1 April, and we are both hoping to attend on 31 March. Chris will certainly be there, but I am also hoping to be there. However, we cannot attend on 1 April because we will no longer be Assembly Members.

[43] **Eleanor Burnham:** This is a nightmare, is it not?

[44] **Nick Bourne:** It is crazy.

[45] **Rhodri Morgan:** I am sure that Chris will raise that in requesting dissolution guidelines. To give you my thoughts, it seems to me that, in the almost inconceivable circumstances that there would be a subsidiary monitoring issue, which the Welsh Assembly Government will be able to deal with, because it will have the same reference in the ministry of transport, education or whatever, to say, 'Look, this is more devolved than un-devolved. What is your view? You have four weeks', and civil servants are there to advise Welsh Assembly Government Ministers and they will get their six-penn'orth in, the House of Commons and the House of Lords will refer it to us, but there will be no-one here. In theory, someone will have to call me back in, although I will not have access to the building, but I will have to be given it, and I will have to e-mail you, although you do not have access to the building, and ask, 'What do you think?' It is almost inconceivable. All we need is for Lara to have all of our private e-mail addresses and to telephone around.

[46] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have already furnished my private e-mail address to the IT department.

[47] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes, on a just-in-case basis. I cannot see what else you could do. It will not happen, but, if it did happen, you would have to have an informal meeting of a non-committee. Otherwise, the chance is gone, and that would not be right.

[48] **Jeff Cuthbert:** On the issue of e-mail, it is my understanding that our normal Assembly e-mail addresses can be used and that any messages will be automatically forwarded to whatever e-mail addresses we provide the offices here on a temporary basis. As Chair of the programme monitoring committee, which is a ministerial appointment, of course, I have a meeting with the ministerial group in April, following on from the next programme monitoring committee meeting. Presumably, I will have access to the building for such a matter.

[49] **Rhodri Morgan:** That is a matter for the programme monitoring committee and the Minister. Would that be in Carwyn's office or Ieuan's office?

[50] **Jeff Cuthbert:** It would be Carwyn's office. That is where it is normally held.

[51] **Rhodri Morgan:** All right. We have had a discussion, and we will have to have an informal ring around in the very unlikely event that it might happen.

[52] I have heard from Jeff, but are there any other points on the legacy report? Do Members think that the overall drift of the legacy report—its tone and the way that it attempts

to highlight the European and external affairs issue—is roughly right? I take that response as assent. Are there any other things missing other than the points that Jeff has made this morning about the programme monitoring committee? I see that there are none. What about the priorities for the fourth Assembly? Have we missed anything out in respect of lessons learned? Is everyone happy with that? I see that you are. There are references to video-conferencing—our favourite technology.

[53] **Eleanor Burnham:** When we lay this—or whatever the expression is—

[54] **Rhodri Morgan:** Very good; I think that it is ‘to lay’.

[55] **Eleanor Burnham:** Oh, thank you.

[56] **Rhodri Morgan:** I would not have thought of that myself, but I think that you are right. Very good.

[57] **Eleanor Burnham:** Will there automatically be a take-up of this priority document by the fourth Assembly?

[58] **Rhodri Morgan:** By our successor?

[59] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes.

[60] **Rhodri Morgan:** No. It is up to them. This is a pointer.

[61] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, there is no linkage normally—formally or informally—whereby they will read this.

[62] **Rhodri Morgan:** They will read it, but they do not have to follow it.

[63] **Eleanor Burnham:** I know that they are not obliged to do so, but I just wondered what the linkage was. I have not sat on this committee for long, so I just wondered.

[64] **Ms Date:** It is intended for the Members of the fourth Assembly, but it will also be provided to the clerking staff and so forth who will be supporting the future scrutiny arrangements. Therefore, it has two audiences. On both sides we hope that the issues will be taken forward. Gregg will be there as our continuity on these issues.

9.45 a.m.

[65] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is brilliant, because if anyone is listening or watching, they might be interested in knowing how it all works.

[66] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** With regard to the legacy report, I have not noticed any reference to the need to have more meetings with the MEPs. In the past year or so, we have succeeded in having more meetings with them than over the previous 11 years—although I missed a year of this committee from 2007 to 2008. We used to have very little contact with them. So, it has been better over the past year, but we should suggest to any committee that is formed after the next election that it should attempt to have regular meetings with MEPs—I am not necessarily talking about it travelling to Brussels, but for it to hold meetings via video link or whatever.

[67] **Rhodri Morgan:** We have gone to huge lengths to try to arrange the timings so that they are mutually convenient, but it is murderously difficult to do that. I do not know whether Lara or, more likely, Gregg want to say anything about how difficult it is to get committees

and group meetings in the European Parliament not to coincide with the times when we are meeting. The general feeling that I get is that we have been more successful than our predecessor committees. However, I do not know whether it will get worse in the next Assembly and the next European Parliament, or whether we have managed to get to a position where we usually have an update from at least two MEPs.

[68] **Mr Jones:** It is a timetabling issue. We work around our timetable and the European Parliament's timetable. However, certainly in the past two and a half years, since I have been working for the Assembly, there has been goodwill, if that is the right phrase, on behalf of the new Welsh MEPs to meet with the committee. They are very much open to do that. The one MEP who has been unable to meet with the committee on a regular basis, Kay Swinburne, has been unable to do so because she is her group's co-ordinator on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, which clashes with your committee meeting slot. However, that is just unlucky; she does not have the flexibility to drop out of that meeting, because of her co-ordinating role.

[69] **Rhodri Morgan:** I do not think that any of us expect an MEP to give greater priority to being available for a video-conference with us than to a committee meeting to which they have been appointed by the European Parliament. However, the avoidance of the same time slot is just down to luck. So, in general, am I right in thinking that we are more successful now than we have been, even though we are not completely successful?

[70] **Ms Date:** Yes, I would say that that is true. The business clash issues have always been there, so it might be helpful for this committee to write to the Business Committee to raise the issue now for the fourth Assembly, perhaps making it more explicit in the legacy report that it is an issue for consideration, to see whether there is a way to get around it.

[71] **Eleanor Burnham:** Surely, Chair, the issue is that it is not just of great benefit to MEPs and to us, but that it is also of benefit to Wales. If we can co-exist, we will be making much more headway for our constituents.

[72] **Rhodri Morgan:** It is not just that; it is also about keeping the spirit of cross-party working among the four MEPs elected at the last European elections. It is now at a level not previously achieved in 32 years of direct elections to the European Parliament. I would like to think that one of the reasons why they are working across party boundaries better than before is because they acknowledge the benefits that can be achieved by linking in with this committee and with the political frameworks in Wales. If they start to drift away again from having regular meetings with this committee, they might start drifting away from each other as well and become more wrapped up in their groups and, if you like, stop being part of the Welsh team. That has been a pretty notable development within the Welsh delegation of the European Parliament, which we want to further encourage. The only question is whether we need to put more emphasis on that in the text of our legacy report.

[73] **Eleanor Burnham:** I think so.

[74] **Rhodri Morgan:** Where would we put it? Can anyone see an obvious slot, perhaps under lessons learned, best practice and video-conferencing?

[75] **Ms Date:** Yes, perhaps there at the end. We have made brief reference to it earlier on, and we talk about visits to Brussels, but we could perhaps make it more explicit in that section.

[76] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay, so we will include another paragraph in there. Are there any other points on the legacy report? I see that there are not. Are there any other points on Gregg's work programme paper? As he is here, you had better chuck some questions at him.

He has come all this way, and he has not been asked a single question. How was the journey over, Gregg?

[77] **Mr Jones:** It was good.

[78] **Eleanor Burnham:** Was it on the Eurostar?

[79] **Mr Jones:** Yes.

[80] **Rhodri Morgan:** As there are no other questions, we will move on.

9.50 a.m.

Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menywod: Cyflwyniad gan Lywydd yr Elusen Positive Women

International Women's Day: Presentation by President of Positive Women

[81] **Rhodri Morgan:** As it is International Women's Day, I shall start by introducing the witnesses from my left. We have Kathryn Llewellyn, chief executive of Positive Women, and of Swansea, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Swaziland and many other places without rail electrification. [*Laughter.*] To her left, we have Siphwe Hlophe from Swaziland and Positive Women; more importantly, she is co-founder of Swaziland Positive Living and president of Positive Women. Welcome to Wales, as I do not think that you have been here before. The third witness is Lord Jack McConnell of Glenscorrodale, former First Minister of Scotland—my former opposite number. A very warm welcome to you to the Senedd, the Assembly and Wales more generally. Finally, we have Stephen Brown of Positive Women. If Siphwe is the president and Kathryn is the chief executive, what are you, Stephen?

[82] **Mr Brown:** I am the director.

[83] **Rhodri Morgan:** Fine, okay. What I would like to do first is to say a few words about International Women's Day. We are very proud of the fact that, in the second Assembly, we had exactly 30 men and 30 women as Members. The Assembly Government became the first Government of any country in the world to have a majority of women in its Cabinet at some point during 2000. We do not have that majority at the moment, but we currently have four women and five men in the Cabinet. However, by and large, if you averaged it out, I would guess that the figures would come close to equality in terms of Cabinet members during the 12 years of the Assembly's existence. I think that Finland and Switzerland are ahead of us now, but, in terms of trailblazing, I think that we were there first. When we had a majority of women in the Cabinet for the first time, when we thought that it was possibly the first time it had ever happened anywhere in the world, we rang the Scandinavian embassies in London to check that their Governments did not have a majority of women in their Cabinet, because we thought that that was the likeliest place for it to happen. There was a kind of dull thud as people fell off their chairs when we told them that Wales had a majority of women in the Cabinet, and they found it very difficult to believe; they fainted at the news that they had not got there first. Whereas Amundsen beat Scott to the South Pole, we beat the Scandinavians to having the first female majority Cabinet.

[84] **Eleanor Burnham:** What about New Zealand?

[85] **Rhodri Morgan:** All of its very senior offices of state—the Prime Minister, the Governor-General, the Chief Justice to the Supreme Court and someone else—were held by women, but there was no majority of women in the Cabinet, as far as I remember.

[86] There are 364 planned events across the UK for International Women's Day, including activities in the Pierhead building, 50 yards from here, and in this building. The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, Carl Sargeant, will be speaking to us later in the meeting, and he has provided a paper on the Assembly Government's work on gender equality—it is paper 10 on today's agenda.

[87] I invite Kathryn Llewellyn to say a few words about Positive Women, and its work in Wales and Africa.

[88] **Lord McConnell:** We have changed the order, if that is all right.

[89] **Rhodri Morgan:** That is fine; we are happy to accommodate.

[90] **Lord McConnell:** Thank you, Rhodri. It is a pleasure to be here. I did not make it to the opening ceremony of the Senedd when I was the First Minister of Scotland; I believe that I was involved in questions to the First Minister on that day. That has always been a big regret, and it was great to have a look around the building yesterday afternoon. We were shown around by Val Lloyd, and it was nice to see her before she retires this month.

[91] **Rhodri Morgan:** You saw it on a dry day, so you did not see the buckets that catch the leaks, which we see from time to time on a wet day.

[92] **Lord McConnell:** No, I saw it on a good day—it was not just dry, it was nice and sunny. It is good to get some nice, warm weather in Wales. It is also good to be here this week following last week's referendum result. That was a testament to the hard work of Assembly Members over the last 12 years in building up the reputation and the status of the Assembly, and of Wales generally. Given this opportunity, during my last month as a Member of the Scottish Parliament—

[93] **Rhodri Morgan:** Join the club.

[94] **Lord McConnell:** I want to wish you all the best for the new powers that are coming on stream.

[95] One of my interests over the last 12 years—not just as First Minister, but as an MSP, and in other ways too—has been the international development work of our devolved Government in Scotland, in the Parliament, particularly in relation to Malawi. I believe that some information has been circulated to the committee about that work, and the historical links. One thing that I intend to do on standing down as an MSP is to continue much of that international development work, not just in the Scotland-Malawi partnership, but in other areas as well. In the past year, I have come across the organisation now called Positive Women. It was in the course of being formed last year, and Kathryn and Stephen will tell you more about that. Although it is a Welsh-based charity, the work that it does is terrific, and it is appropriate that we are before the committee this morning on International Women's Day. I will be supporting this work over the course of the next few months and years, along with other activities, having left the Scottish Parliament.

[96] As I believe Hilary Benn said at the time that we both developed our programmes—in Cardiff and in Edinburgh—in relation to international development, global poverty and injustice, there is more than enough work to go around, and it cannot just be restricted to one level of Government. Local authorities all over Britain are making some kind of contribution, whether it is in supporting Fair Trade, or in supporting local organisations in their activities, and it is entirely appropriate that devolved Parliaments and Governments do the same thing. I hope that that work will continue into the Assembly's fourth term. Today, you have an opportunity to hear about a great Welsh charity that is doing terrific work, and one that might

deserve some support over that next period in the Assembly.

[97] I will hand you over to Kathryn, who will tell you a little more about that.

[98] **Ms Llewellyn:** I wish to echo the thank you from Lord McConnell for inviting us to speak to you today, on International Women's Day. I have been in Cardiff for the past few days with Siphwe Hlophe, who is an activist from Swaziland, Lord McConnell and Stephen, partly to mark International Women's Day, and partly to launch our new, amazing charity, Positive Women.

[99] I am originally from Swansea. I studied for my masters degree at Swansea University, and then went on to do my first development experience with Oxfam Cymru, in Cardiff. Since then, as Rhodri alluded to, I have been travelling around Africa quite a lot, working on a range of different projects, from what was the anti-apartheid movement, to activism in Zimbabwe. Most recently, I was the chief executive of Pump Aid, which is a water sanitation charity.

[100] No matter where I have been, or what I have been doing, in Africa, I have come across amazing women, who are making the most extraordinary changes in their communities and countries. As they are so extraordinary, and fighting against such difficult situations, they are often not well liked, or looked after, by their Governments. Siphwe will talk to you in more detail about Swaziland, and her particular situation. However, for me, it felt as if there was a huge gap.

10.00 a.m.

[101] There was a grass-roots movement of women who were trying to make enormous changes and who were sacrificing an awful lot, but they were not being given the financial support that they needed or the international voice that they deserved. That is why I have founded Positive Women. At the moment we are working just in Swaziland, and there is a reason for that. That country has the worst statistics that I have ever heard. It has the lowest life expectancy in the world, the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and an unemployment rate of 40 per cent, to name but a few. It also has an absolute monarch. I will hand over to Siphwe, who will highlight what that means, and she will talk a little about Swaziland. I just wanted to talk about the context of why we are here today.

[102] **Ms Hlophe:** I am Siphwe Hlophe, and I am from Swaziland. It is a pleasure to be here as we celebrate International Women's Day. I am happy to be here—although we in Swaziland do not celebrate International Women's Day—to discuss issues of women's rights and the way in which women are treated.

[103] As Kathryn has said, we have a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which is at 26 per cent, and the life expectancy in Swaziland is about 35 years. I am in God's hands, as I am 53 now. I am a woman living with HIV/AIDS. Swazi law and custom dictates that HIV/AIDS is spread by women in any homestead. Our culture does not allow a woman to access health services without consulting or getting the permission of her husband. Even when you go to the health centre, when you come back you have to disclose what the doctor said. Unfortunately, if you disclose that you are HIV positive, you will experience domestic violence, you will face physical violence, you will be told that you have diverted from society's social norms, and you will face discrimination. Power lies with men. For example, you cannot practise safe sex because the decision lies with your partner, not with you as a woman. We do not experience women's rights. The world today is celebrating what women have achieved, but, as for us, we are saying that maybe one day we will achieve women's rights.

[104] There is an issue with regard to legal reform and laws. Laws in Swaziland favour men. For example, there is a law called the Deeds Registry Act, whereby a property or a piece of land that you as a woman acquire should be registered in your partner's name. If you go to the bank, you cannot access credit; your partner has to come in and sign on your behalf. We are treated as minors, rather than as partners or as human beings. Five years ago we wanted to redraft the Marriage Act, and we did so. We introduced a small clause, as a result of which the parliamentarians, especially the men, became fed up. We talked about marital rape. They said, 'There is no marital rape in this country, because you are our property; we bought you. So, you belong to us. Why should that be marital rape?'

[105] The Administration of Estates Act says that, if my husband dies, the family has to have a meeting to choose an executor. I am not allowed to be an executor. That makes us inferior, because the family can choose anybody and they have to choose a man, not a woman. So, you are automatically not allowed to inherit the estate of your husband. Women living with HIV/AIDS have been experiencing property grabbing from widows. If a woman's husband dies, she will face the prospect of her property being grabbed; her in-laws and her husband's family will come and take everything to make sure that they punish her, because she is seen to have infected their son, their cousin or their brother with HIV/AIDS. So, currently, my organisation, Swaziland Positive Living, in conjunction with the new organisation that we are launching, has been empowering women by informing them about their rights and telling them how to protect themselves. We have been providing a legal service—on a small scale, because we are not a big organisation—to reclaim widows' properties. We have also been providing school fees, with help from Kathryn, for about 378 orphans and vulnerable children to make sure that they go back to school. We do not have free education, like here, so every child has to pay school fees.

[106] We have been empowering women on issues of property grabbing, by telling them about their rights regarding the ownership of property. However, the law contradicts what we have been saying. We have been talking about the issue of Swazi law and custom. We wanted Swazi law and custom to be codified, but when it comes to the codification of Swazi law and custom, the regime says there is no way that it will happen, because the law changes and varies according to what the regime thinks is right for it. To give an example, in 2008, I organised a march of 2,000 women against the King's wife, who went to Dubai to shop because our King and the country were turning 40—it was called 40/40. I was called all sorts of names. People said 'Where is her husband?', 'Women are not supposed to march' and 'This is a taboo'. However, with the new Positive Women that Kathryn was talking about, we think that we can reach more women in Swaziland and, maybe five years down the line, we will be talking about achievements in this parliament.

[107] **Rhodri Morgan:** Stephen, do you want to add anything to that?

[108] **Mr Brown:** To summarise, we believe and it is our experience that the women in these countries will make a real change. They are the real change-makers. What we want to do with Positive Women—Kathryn might add something on this—is to provide sustainable income for the organisations that are running such vital programmes for the women, children and vulnerable children in those countries. If we can provide a sustainable income to ensure that they are not being held to ransom by Governments or absolute monarchs, we will see that as a big success. However, we also feel that, by having access to Governments in the UK and across Europe, we can raise the issue of Swaziland politically. It has a population of just under 1 million, and so, many people tend to forget it and do not care about what is happening there. However, we see it very differently. We think that it has a population of only 1 million people and we can have a massive impact. I hope that our presentation today will convince you to support Positive Women to do that in the future.

[109] **Rhodri Morgan:** I was struggling last night to try to work out how much I knew

about Swaziland, and the first question that you always ask yourself, as a former class swot, is whether you know the capital of Swaziland, and I must admit that I could not say. Does anyone here know the capital of Swaziland?

[110] **Nick Bourne:** You could tell us and I would have to check; I have no idea.

[111] **Ms Llewellyn:** It is a pop quiz.

[112] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I have been there; it will come to me in a moment.

[113] **Rhodri Morgan:** Never mind. You have told us a very inspiring story, Sipiwe. Is it generally the case across Africa that the lower the status of women in politics, property ownership, law, custom and practice, and attitudes to violence—all of which are exaggerated by the HIV/AIDS crisis—the greater the dependence on women for what you would call community development, raising children, and earning an income? That is, the women have to do all the work, despite the fact that their status under the law and in the politics of the country is very low indeed.

[114] **Ms Hlophe:** A lower status for women subjects them to dependency on their partners. For instance, if you are economically independent, you can take your own decisions rather than having to rely on and consult your partner with regard to the things you want to do. If we talk about economic or community development, it is where we can get in to ensure that we raise standards for women so that they are free, even to advocate for the law that I am talking about. When we advocate for further laws, if we are many and we push, like we did in 2008, to become empowered and enabled with regard to our rights, with the income-generating projects that you were talking about, we can achieve our goal of not being dependent on men.

[115] **Ms Llewellyn:** It needs to be both. Clearly, we want to educate women about their rights, but in a country like Swaziland, where they are economically disempowered and they have no access to the economy, what will they do with that new-found information? It will just make them unhappier and further dissatisfied. We are therefore trying to run a parallel programme in which women are educated about their rights and can readily demonstrate them. We are also trying to help with meeting their basic needs so that they are not spending all of their time as the major care-givers or in walking to fetch water and all the other things that take up all of their energy. The last part is the income-generation projects, in which we give them the access to the economy that the country does not.

[116] **Rhodri Morgan:** Right. Jeff is next, then Eleanor, then Nick.

[117] **Jeff Cuthbert:** It is delightful to meet you. I was in Swaziland about a year ago with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which held its executive meeting in the capital, whose name, I am terribly embarrassed to say, I have forgotten.

[118] **Ms Hlophe:** It is Mbabane.

[119] **Jeff Cuthbert:** There we are. I spent about five days in Swaziland, and then went on a horrendous 14-hour drive in a small car to Lesotho, with which Wales has traditionally had many links through Dolen Cymru—a Welsh-based charity—the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Those visits were remarkable. In Lesotho, as in Swaziland, HIV is a huge problem, but I was told that type 2 diabetes is an even greater problem. It is a very serious condition that is not generally understood, and the medications that we have here are just not available there, which means that the condition has a massive impact.

[120] How can we in Wales do more to help? We have links with Lesotho. Those links are being reviewed to establish whether they are as effective as they could be, but I see no reason why we could not work with people in Swaziland as well. I understand the problems of having an absolute monarch—we actually met the King, and that was a very interesting visit. The Swazi delegates to the meeting made us well aware of the economic problems, the medical and health problems and the issue of women's status in society, which is a constant theme for the CPA, especially in the African branches. How can we in Wales do more, to be involved, to make people understand?

10.15 a.m.

[121] **Ms Llewellyn:** We have been in Wales for the past couple of days and we have met with some organisations that are already working to support African programmes. There is the Wales for Africa programme and the Wales Africa Community Links. I am very hopeful that by Positive Women being here women's issues can be put even higher on the agenda there. I know that there are Swaziland-specific issues as well, and we have a number of programmes that we are hoping to talk to the Government about around funding and linking what we are doing. In terms of the situation in Swaziland, we need people to talk about it. I feel very much that we have been a lone voice, both in Westminster and here, when the issue of Swaziland is raised. No-one knows the capital city or knows where it is. Siphwe has stories about people thinking she is from Switzerland. It happens a lot.

[122] **Ms Hlophe:** It does happen a lot. Last month I was in Dakar. Ten of us booked in, with two of us from Swaziland. We were put in one room, although we had booked different rooms. When we asked the hotel staff about it, they said that they were waiting for two women from Switzerland. I said that we were those women, and they said 'Oh, we thought they would be white women'. [*Laughter.*]

[123] I think that the other thing that you should do here in Wales is move the Government to talk about the issues in Swaziland, especially the issues of good governance and the issues that are subjecting us to oppression—the issues of women and the issues of the constitution. We have a parliamentarian in Swaziland, who is heading the Pan-African Parliament. He is very vocal, but when it comes to the real issues, he does not talk about some things. It may be the way our Parliament is formed, because there is not a party system, as you have; someone is chosen to go to the Parliament, and in the Parliament they are not representing you, so they do not want to expose that to the world. One time I asked the EU why it could not sanction Swaziland so that no parliamentarians could come here and take part. All of your MPs are from parties, but ours are not from parties. So, that would just be a way of telling Swaziland that something is wrong and that you should be participating here.

[124] Also, the commonwealth needs to be pushed—the commonwealth meets with the King now and again, but what they talk about there is against our will, because they approach the King and the King will say, 'Oh, don't worry'. We are moving to ask for the democratisation of Swaziland, and we are moving to ask for law reforms. We tried to draft a law to protect women, which is called the sexual offences Bill. It has been a Bill for 15 years.

[125] **Eleanor Burnham:** I suppose for me the question is: where do you start? How should your strategy be formed and on whose template? If you think about Britain, we were in exactly the same position 150 years ago. My question, which is almost impossible to answer, is: how do you move a society that has such an adverse, negative view of women to allow it to understand how much the empowering of women would benefit its development, and, if you look at pockets of the economy, how much more the economy could develop? I presume that it is almost impossible at the moment for you to access birth control. I do not want to be too intimate in this committee, but the diaphragm is perhaps still the only way that you can control that. Therefore, how do you get even that attitudinal improvement and physically get

hold of those unmentionables that I have just mentioned, so that you at least have access to them, and—sod the men—are able to do your own thing? Seriously, it is very sad to have this awareness, which we obviously need, about something that we sorted out 150 or 100 years ago. I look forward to talking to you further during this important day. It is wonderful to have you here. Croeso i Gymru.

[126] **Ms Hlophe:** Thank you.

[127] **Lord McConnell:** May I just say a bit about one of the reasons why I am so enthusiastic about what Kathryn and Sipiwe are doing here? These changes are sustainable only if they are led in the countries themselves. They are particularly more likely to be sustainable if they are led by the women in these countries. One thing that I like about how the new Welsh charity has been set up is that the philosophy is that Positive Women will almost have franchises in different countries. There will be a women-led organisation in the country, which Positive Women will raise funds and sponsor projects for. It started in Swaziland with SWAPOL, Swaziland Positive Living, which is Sipiwe's organisation, but there are contacts already in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Liberia, which are difficult countries to organise in. The philosophy of Positive Women, to support the local organisation to lead the change there, is much more likely to be successful than simply raising money and handing it over or trying to do things for people, duplicating what is going on already.

[128] **Eleanor Burnham:** We do not want to end up with the situation that we are seeing in north Africa, for instance. We are discussing something really topical at the minute—overthrowing despotic, tyrannical regimes that are totally entrenched.

[129] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes, although the women are still invisible.

[130] **Eleanor Burnham:** Absolutely.

[131] **Rhodri Morgan:** I will bring Nick in now.

[132] **Eleanor Burnham:** Sorry, Nick, but we did not have the answer to my intimate question. As a woman I am very interested in how you do this.

[133] **Ms Llewellyn:** SWAPOL has been very clever. It has a mobile health clinic that it takes into communities. People will come to SWAPOL because they want to access the clinic. Men and women come for that service and, while they are there, Sipiwe's staff members will go to sit with the community members and show them how to put condoms on and how to use femidoms, and they will talk to them about women's rights. So they use that opportunity to start having those conversations. They are difficult conversations to have. It is a Swazi women-led initiative. They are talking to Swazi women in a way that allows them to be empowered. Do you want to add to that, Sipiwe?

[134] **Ms Hlophe:** What you just said is correct. That is what we are doing with our mobile clinic, providing health services in remote areas. We can empower these women with knowledge about their rights, making informed decisions and family planning. Some of them come to us and say that they were taking contraceptive tablets but that their husband complained. We ask them, 'Why do you have to show them anything? You can hide the tablets.' So there is that problem. By going to these women we start income generation. We also empower them with knowledge about their rights. That is how we manage to put them on the right road. We are working with the rural community, providing services, and starting the income-generating project and economic empowerment. Meanwhile we are talking about their rights. If we can go to them, sit with them, talk with them and empower them or capacitate them, we can move forward. I nearly said that we can make a revolution, but I will not. [*Laughter.*]

[135] **Eleanor Burnham:** A quiet one.

[136] **Ms Hlophe:** I hope that I am not being recorded here. [*Laughter.*]

[137] **Rhodri Morgan:** A quiet social revolution; that is fine. I call Nick, another revolutionary.

[138] **Nick Bourne:** I thank the four of you for the presentation, which was stunning. I have one question on one point. How have you managed to do what you have done in a society such as you describe? It is awesome that you are here and that you have done what you have done. It is mind-boggling how you have managed to do that on a personal level. More broadly—this is partly a question and partly a point, I suppose—the paper suggests some things that the Assembly can do: that Assembly Members talk about Swaziland whenever possible, and that we write to Henry Bellingham. That is fine; we can do both of those. However, we were discussing our legacy report earlier, and it seems that we will just skim the surface of Swaziland and the women here today. I just wonder whether we could put something in the legacy report and perhaps link it with what Lord McConnell has done on Malawi. It was an inspiring speech, which I read last night. It is true that we do some stuff with Lesotho, but I think that there is something—perhaps ‘project’ is not quite the right word; it sounds patronising—that we could do as an Assembly in relation to Swaziland if we made it more of a long-term issue for consideration in this committee. There is such a lot to do, but, on the back of International Women’s Day and so forth, it would be good if we could do something constructive in that way.

[139] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. How did you survive, Sphiwe?

[140] **Ms Hlophe:** When I started working in 1984 in the ministry of agriculture, I started an organisation, a trade union, within the ministry of agriculture after seeing its conditions of service. I was in the trade union for a long time. I saw the violation of workers’ rights, and then it grew up in my heart that, as a woman living with HIV/AIDS, experiencing stigma and discrimination within the community, I could involve other women who were experiencing the same. It is my passion within women’s work to ensure that I move forward with them. I am experiencing some threats within Government; I told Kathryn that my organisation was to be deregistered. Fortunately, I was at the G8 meeting in 2009. I had to mobilise the G8 countries to put a threat on Swaziland that, if my organisation was deregistered, there would be no funding coming in. Therefore, I am surviving by mobilising and making sure that if there is a threat, the international world knows what is happening, and then the Government would say, ‘Leave it’. [*Laughter.*]

[141] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay. I call on Rhodri Glyn.

[142] **Nick Bourne:** Sorry, on the second point, Rhodri, on the legacy report—

[143] **Rhodri Morgan:** Sorry. I tried to nod assent while you were asking the question.

[144] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I want to echo what Nick has said about the legacy report. I think that it is very important to include something. I also read your speech last night, Lord McConnell. It was very inspiring and important. We have a lot to learn from the partnership between the Scottish Parliament and Africa, particularly Malawi. We have tried to do some work in Lesotho. I remember that, several years ago, we had a debate, which you led, Rhodri. It was in the old Chamber, so it was several years ago. I do not recall us repeating that exercise since then. I think that it is something that we should revisit, as a committee and as an Assembly. Although it is not a devolved area, and what we can do as a devolved institution is limited, there are things in terms of best practice and shared practice that we could do. So

not only should we put something in the legacy report, but I think that we should also revisit that whole discussion that we had about the contribution that the Assembly, as a body, can make in developing countries.

[145] **Rhodri Morgan:** It will always raise this issue of the degree to which Wales should attempt to specialise or major on issues in Lesotho, or should spread its efforts around to Somaliland, the Horn of Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Uganda—where we have strong links—and so forth. There is a balance of advantage and disadvantage between concentrating on one lead country, as Scotland does with Malawi, and not, as we have tended to do, with half a dozen places in Africa, even though it is not a devolved issue. Jack, do you want to comment on those issues?

10.30 a.m.

[146] **Lord McConnell:** Yes, I have a couple of things that I want to say. I recognise the dilemma of how to make the most impact on what seems like a massive challenge. When I first went to Malawi in 2005, it had dropped into the world's bottom 10 countries with regard to GDP and life expectancy, which, even though not quite as low as in Swaziland, had dropped below 40. I visited the worst maternity hospital in the world—that was how it was described internationally—although the new hospital, which I visited last year and which was largely funded by a public television-led funding campaign in Scotland, is now, remarkably, the only hospital in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa where a woman can have a baby in a private room without having to pay for it. That has been a turnaround in five years, which is a testament to the people-to-people links. We decided that we would not try to copy or duplicate what the Department for International Development does; that is the UK Government's responsibility. However, we decided that what we could do was build and support a link between the people of Scotland and the people of Malawi.

[147] You have an opportunity here to do something similar. We chose Malawi largely because there was already an organisation that we could build upon. So, what you have here is a little bit of a link between Wales and Swaziland that you could build upon; it does not threaten the link between Wales and Lesotho, but supplements it. In some way, there may be a similarity, because what you have here are two very small countries right on the southern tip of Africa that are both facing huge challenges. There is an opportunity for you to support this Welsh-based organisation that will trumpet the cause of Swaziland. It is a little acorn that could grow. As your colleagues suggested, the next Assembly could look at this and chart a way forward. I am absolutely certain that Sipiwe would come back to take part in informal or formal discussions about that, as I would be happy to do as well, if that would be helpful.

[148] I know that some of the ideas that were kicking around yesterday included making the issue of gender and women's position one of the main strands in the programme that the Assembly and the Government could support. We also had an interesting discussion yesterday with a main training organisation here in Cardiff about, perhaps, involving some young trainees in Wales in developing their skills by helping develop skills in Swaziland, which would be a mutual-benefit-type arrangement that would be very positive for both sides. So, there are some ideas, financial and moral, that Assembly Members could support, and Kathryn, given that she is local to you, would be happy to take part in discussions, as would Sipiwe and I.

[149] **Rhodri Morgan:** I have one last question. You mentioned issues about access to family planning, but what about access to antiviral drugs? Sipiwe, what is the current position with regard to women with HIV/AIDS like yourself being able to get a consistent supply of the antivirals that you need to prolong life and to be able to contribute economically to the community?

[150] **Ms Hlophe:** You can now access antiretroviral drugs through the health centres, funded through the Global Fund. However, there is a threat to that funding, because we recently received a letter from the Global Fund stating that all countries must have their funding cut by 20 per cent because it is underfunded. Our Government is not committed to the issue of ARVs, but we, as an organisation, have engaged with it to explain the current situation. If the Global Fund moves away from us, we will not have the funding that we were getting.

[151] On the issue of women, we have problems in rural communities, because women have to hide from their husbands that they are taking the drugs, because of the violence that they face or that they are experiencing. They sometimes go to get the ARVs when it is time for refilling, but if they do not have the bus fare, they cannot go—so they will wait. Women trying to access to drugs in mobile clinics will only do so on refilling, and not on initiation.

[152] **Rhodri Morgan:** It has been a very inspiring story, and I am sure that something will come of it, even though I will long be out of public life by the time that it happens. Anyway, best wishes for the future, and best of luck in continuing to empower women in Swaziland.

[153] Diolch yn fawr am eich presenoldeb Thank you for your attendance this morning.
y bore yma.

10.36 a.m.

**Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth Leol: Y Wybodaeth
Ddiweddaraf am Weithgareddau i Hyrwyddo Blynnyddoedd Ewropeaidd 2010 a
2011 a Chydraddoldeb Rhywiol**

**Minister for Social Justice and Local Government: Update on Activities to
Promote European Years 2010 and 2011 and Gender Equality**

[154] **Rhodri Morgan:** I am sorry that we are bit late in reaching this item, but I am glad that the Minister was able to pick up some of what was said by the previous witnesses, as it was an extraordinary story. I welcome Carl Sargeant, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, and his team, who are here to give us an update on activities to promote European Years 2010 and 2011 and gender equality more generally. Carl, over to you.

[155] **The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Carl Sargeant):** Good morning, Rhodri, and committee; it is a pleasure to be with you this morning. It was enlightening to hear the contribution from the previous speaker; it was heart-moving to hear of the difficulties that people outside Wales experience, and for people to come here to deliver such a moving tale. As the Minister with responsibility for gender volunteering, the anti-poverty agenda and social inclusion, it was very useful to spend five minutes of my day sitting at the back of your committee room.

[156] I am very conscious of the time, Chair. I have sent an update paper to the committee, and I would be happy to answer questions on any issues that you wish to raise with me on gender volunteering and the anti-poverty agenda for which we are responsible.

[157] **Rhodri Morgan:** Okay, let us do it that way. How does the Assembly Government promote women's equality? If you were producing an annual report for the people of Wales on International Women's Day and where we stand, how we are doing, how we are promoting best practice, the status of women, the earnings of women, the place of women in society, access to education and even women in the boardroom—not that we have many boardrooms in Wales—what would you say?

[158] **Carl Sargeant:** As you said, today is International Women's Day, and we are supporting many of its events across Wales. As I mentioned earlier, the way in which we support women and gender issues across Wales takes up a lot of my time and my officials' time, but it is the right thing to do. A report issued by the BBC today said that south Wales has the highest proportion of forced marriages, and today we also recognise that the Welsh Assembly Government is flatlining its domestic abuse budget during the very difficult time in which we find ourselves. We recognise that, for every pound that we spend in supporting anti-domestic abuse programmes, we get back a buy-in of about £4 or £5. So, we recognise this scourge in trying to support organisations in moving forward with that.

[159] You raised an important point. I am just trying to look for the statistics, Rhodri, about promoting women in the boardroom. Someone in the team will have some important statistics—I have seen them—on the percentage of women at different levels of public life, and I would be happy to share that paper with you. Across some of the public sector in Wales, there are no women in senior positions. In the top 100 private sector employers, 1 or 2 per cent of high-profile posts are occupied by women. We have to promote and support women in that regard. As you see, two of my top team here supporting me are women.

[160] **Rhodri Morgan:** You only promoted them yesterday, Carl, I know. They will be back in their old jobs and making the tea tomorrow. [*Laughter.*]

[161] **Carl Sargeant:** Absolutely not. [*Laughter.*] The Assembly as a corporate body has gone a long way in supporting gender equality. Over 50 per cent of your Cabinet were women, but that was unique in the UK. It is not something that we should be complacent about. We should be supporting council leaders—9 per cent of whom are female. In the NHS, 23 per cent of chief executives are female. So, there is a marked difference between women holding high-profile and high-paid jobs in Wales, and this is something that we should look at more closely.

[162] **Eleanor Burnham:** This morning on the news, I saw Kate Bennett from the Equality and Human Rights Commission—

[163] **Rhodri Morgan:** Yes, many of us will have seen that.

[164] **Eleanor Burnham:** She was not just making the point about the statistics that you have just mentioned around how few women are in key positions, but making the important point that, from her point of view and from all the research that the commission is doing, family and caring commitments prevent many women from even becoming middle-tier employees. So, they do not have a hope of moving from middle to senior level. What can we all, particularly the Government, do to improve this? After 10 years, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Having said that, only 9 per cent of council leaders are female—is it two ladies in the whole of Wales? I believe that one of them is leaving Wrexham council as we speak.

[165] **Carl Sargeant:** You raise an important point. We have to take this in the context of how we support women. We are doing a lot of work from the grass-roots level, right the way through. We support the advancing equality fund and some great initiatives. I visited one initiative last year, Cardiff Women's Workshop, which is about empowering women to have the confidence and ability to move forward across all sectors and walks of life. There are many challenges, from childcare to access to employment, language issues and other barriers, that we need to support. That is something that we wish to promote through the projects that I support with the advancing equality fund. We were talking specifically about the high end of opportunity for women, but there is also an issue around how we enable people at the other end of the spectrum to access employment and to move into education and so on. Through Communities First and so on, that is something that will wrap support around the family.

Sometimes, something as simple as childcare might prevent people from moving into the employment market. The ability to move up that ladder can sometimes be made easier through simple interventions.

[166] **Eleanor Burnham:** On a television programme last night, they were talking about police taking two kids into care because their mother was at work when they knocked on the door. I used to sit in court as a magistrate; why is it that women are always deemed to be responsible for issues around childcare? How can we move to a society where men have to be seen to be sharing childcare duties and perhaps be seen as being just as guilty of neglecting childcare?

10.45 a.m.

[167] **Carl Sargeant:** I am not familiar with the specific case that you are talking about. However, I think that you can generalise in that way. We are moving towards a more modern society. Traditionally, people thought that it was right that mum would stay at home, look after the children and do the cooking. We are moving very quickly towards a more open and equal society, and we are trying to promote that equality element. Either mum or dad should be able to fulfil those roles, and their position within the family, in terms of looking after children, should be equal. I am keen to push that idea through my department and to ensure that people understand that this is the right thing to do, not the wrong thing.

[168] **Nick Bourne:** Are we are asking Carl any questions about volunteering today?

[169] **Rhodri Morgan:** We have a very wide brief. You can ask Carl about anything.

[170] **Carl Sargeant:** That is why I have such a big team with me.

[171] **Nick Bourne:** Okay. Having said that, my main question was on women's issues, which Carl covered very well in his introduction.

[172] Minister, we have the statistics that you mentioned relating to local authorities and local health boards. I do not know whether we have any separate statistics relating to the private sector. I accept that we do not necessarily have many companies headquartered in Wales, but there are some. It would be good to know how many female company directors there are. I saw something on television either this morning or last night—I cannot remember which—that said that companies with women on their boards or at the helm were trusted more by the public and investors than those that had no women in such positions. I was not totally surprised by that, but it was interesting. Do you have anything on that, Minister?

[173] I have no questions on the poverty and social exclusion theme. You seem to have accepted everything that we have asked for, in principle at least. However, I did have something on volunteering. Could you provide an update on the preparations for that initiative? It sounds promising. I am referring, for instance, to green volunteering, and to highlighting volunteering within different ministerial portfolios. How do you intend to achieve that in the next Assembly?

[174] **Carl Sargeant:** Regarding gender-related figures in the private sector, I can quote you a figure relating to the chief executives of the top 100 private companies in Wales: 100 per cent of the chief executives are male.

[175] **Nick Bourne:** Really?

[176] **Carl Sargeant:** We may be able to drill down into that figure to find out some more details. If I have those details, I will be more than happy to share them with the committee.

Even if the actual figure is not 100 per cent, it is very high. It is quite a stark statistic.

[177] I will now move on to the issue of volunteering, and I thank you for your question, Nick. This year is the European Year of Volunteering, and member states are required to nominate a national co-ordinating body. The UK Cabinet Office is the lead partner and agency for that. We are closely involved with this process, and my officials talk to the Cabinet Office in London about how things are progressing. The ethos and concept of European years are great; they highlight the relevant issues for everyone, and no devolved nation is left to promote a single issue on its own. The European element gives them extra publicity, and I am pleased that we can take part in them.

[178] In terms of financial contributions, we have to be very careful about how we fund European years and the part that we are expected to play in that. I will provide one example. We were asked to contribute around £48,000 to support one of the European years, with a return of around £13,000. I thought that that was probably not the best value for money, so we decided to stay out of that programme. However, the programme was ultimately fully funded by the UK, and we have been able to use that funding internally in Wales. Regarding some of the projects that we are driving forward in promoting volunteering, national volunteers' week starts on 1 June, and we have been able to support and fund that in Wales. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action regional policy awards will be held in April, and that is another thing that we are promoting and supporting financially. There is also the volunteering conference in September. I do not know if I will be back, or whether I will be the Minister involved in the next term, but I am sure that the Minister, whoever he or she may be, will be able to update you specifically about the financial support and the out-turns of the programmes.

[179] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I will not abuse my temporary position and bring myself in next. Rhodri Glyn.

[180] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** You are quite enthusiastic about the concept of European years, Carl. How do you ensure that there is a legacy? Last year was the European Year for Combating Poverty and 2011 is the European Year for Volunteering. How do we ensure that there is a lasting legacy? For example, with regard to 2010, will the Welsh Assembly Government be taking part in any kind of research throughout Europe on poverty and social exclusion, or is it just about highlighting the issues for a year and then forgetting about them?

[181] **Carl Sargeant:** That worries me very much. We have the big fireworks display at the start of the year and then it comes to an end and that is it. The legacy programmes that move on from the European years programmes are the most important part of it, as is the best practice and learning that we pick up, not only from what we are doing, but from the work that is done across the European Union. As I said earlier, the Department for Work and Pensions is leading on some of these projects. Proposals will be assessed, and the best practice will be drawn out from that across Europe. I will ensure that, when that report comes back from the DWP, officials will follow this up. However, as to how we share information with the rest of Europe, the structural funds play an important part in this as well; the report goes to the monitoring committee, which considers best practice, and that will influence the committee on taking forward further structural funds in order to provide follow-up support. While being enthused about the 'European year of the whatever' is really important, the most important part of it is the legacy, how we take that forward, and what we learn from that. The work on that is ongoing, and it is something that I am very keen we build on and take forward into further years.

[182] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What about the issue of European research? Would that be something that you would hope the Assembly Government would take part in?

[183] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes. We are involved in that process. One of the team will be able to

give you more detail. Child poverty in particular is one area where we are looking at what other countries are doing and taking that work forward. I am not the Minister for children, but I know that my colleague, Huw Lewis, is working with a professor from, I think, Bristol University. Lisa may be able to give you more detail on that.

[184] **Ms Evans:** A member of our social research division sits on an EU-level group, which is a funded study of poverty and social exclusion at a UK level for 2011. The aim of the study is to assess current levels of poverty and social exclusion in a large-scale survey that follows on from the family resources survey. Work is ongoing at the moment, and as the Minister said, the study is being led by Professor David Gordon, who also sits on the child poverty expert group.

[185] **Rhodri Morgan:** I have one final question. With regard to the issue of how women get from their excellent education—as, in general, they exceed the performance of boys in school and university—into careers, because, due to childcare responsibilities, they may fall seven, eight, or maybe 10 years behind men in the promotional career structure, and quite often do not make that up later on. When we have female vice-chancellors—the first two have been appointed in our universities in the past couple of years—and women reaching senior positions in industry, either through their own efforts in small firms or in large companies with management structures, what can we do to get those women, without feeling self-consciously obliged to be role models all the time rather than just getting on with their jobs, to inspire other women to aim high and to feel that there is not a glass ceiling?

[186] **Carl Sargeant:** That is another important aspect that we are trying to support and promote. One of the great programmes is Women Making a Difference, which provides mentoring through shadowing. It operates in the Assembly, with women shadowing Members in their work.

[187] This point is anecdotal, but it might be useful. The women working at a high level, as directors and chief executives who I am aware of are very proactive in promoting their work. I have not seen anything negative about how they take that forward. It is about taking people with you. We recognise that there are many men in high-profile jobs and in councils, and the Proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure that I am taking through identifies the fact that most councillors are white, elderly and male. This is something that I am trying to address through the proposed Measure. It is separate to this point, but we have to try to change the ethos of what is acceptable—

[188] **Rhodri Morgan:** There is also the segmentation with regard to where women do well and where they do not. In Wales, with our background in coal and steel, the opportunities for women would have been very restricted. Women do extremely well in a narrow range of businesses that are not well represented here, such as the media and retail, especially more fashion-oriented retail and clothing. In the media, the women in the top positions are mainly in the publishing houses such as the Pearson Publishing Group, or WHSmith, which is run by a woman, or you think of fashion and retail. This is not true across the board in all industries, however. If we do not have many big media or retail companies, we will not have women using that route, in which they are usually seen to be good candidates, nor are we going to see them coming through in steel companies or engineering—not yet, anyway.

[189] **Carl Sargeant:** That is an interesting point. Big businesses such as Airbus and Tata Steel recognise the skill sets that women can offer or develop. Heavy engineering is perhaps not as prevalent as it was, although women are now coming to engineering. It is much more difficult to attract them into that field, but once they are in, they are real high-flyers.

[190] **Rhodri Morgan:** The steelworks at Port Talbot does have one senior woman manager. She is not No.1, but she is certainly No.2 or whatever.

[191] **Carl Sargeant:** The paper mill at Shotton is another example of a business that has a senior female manager in position. Its apprentice of the year was a female electrician. That is fantastic.

[192] **Rhodri Morgan:** You get areas of industry where women almost have a monopoly, such as human resources, which is seen as a traditionally female-oriented industry.

[193] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes.

[194] **Rhodri Morgan:** So, there is still a lot of work to do. Thank you, Carl, and your team, for giving us an overview this morning. That brings this penultimate meeting of the committee to a close. We look forward to seeing you for the final meeting in a fortnight's time.

[195] Diolch am eich presenoldeb. Thank you for your attendance.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.58 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.58 a.m.