

C/o Scotland's International  
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28 June 2023

Shona Robison  
Deputy First Minister  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

By email to [dfmcsf@gov.scot](mailto:dfmcsf@gov.scot)

Dear Deputy First Minister

### **Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill**

On behalf of a diverse group of organisations interested in furthering wellbeing and sustainable development in Scotland, we would like to extend our congratulations on your appointment as Deputy First Minister.

We are writing to express our collective support for the government's commitment to introducing a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill (WSD Bill). As organisations working to promote the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the environment, both here and globally, we firmly believe that such legislation is essential to create a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable Scotland.

This Bill would help to ensure actions in Scotland contribute to the betterment of wellbeing, both here in Scotland and elsewhere, as we navigate out of converging global crises. By enshrining principles of sustainable development and wellbeing in law, we can ensure that they are considered in all policy decisions, while also giving clarity to how public bodies and other actors deliver policy on the ground to support a positive impact on the wellbeing of people and the planet.

This legislation should define sustainable development and make it a statutory requirement for all public bodies and local authorities in Scotland to take full account of the short and long-term sustainable development impact of their decisions, both in Scotland and elsewhere. The legislation should also relocate and strengthen the duties on Ministers and public bodies relating to the National Outcomes so that they more clearly drive policy and spending decisions. This would include requirements to produce delivery plans, engage in meaningful and ongoing public engagement, ensure regular and accessible reporting on progress and strengthen the links between the National Outcomes and the Scottish Budget. Ultimately, we believe this legislation can be world leading and help us ensure the National Outcomes become the golden thread underpinning public life in Scotland.

We would therefore like to emphasise the significance of connecting the ongoing review of the National Outcomes to the development of the WSD Bill. The legislation can provide the necessary

foundation and guidance to ensure that the next iteration of the National Performance Framework truly becomes Scotland's 'National Wellbeing Framework' and fulfils its role as our localised delivery mechanism for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By doing so, it will contribute to the realisation of our shared vision for a thriving Scotland that considers the local and global implications of decisions and actions, both now and in the future.

Lastly, we would like to underline our support for the introduction of an independent Wellbeing and Sustainable Development or Future Generations Commissioner to support implementation of the Bill. Such a Commissioner would:

- be placed on statutory footing as part of the WSD Bill to signal the importance the Government places on sustainable development and the wellbeing of current and future generations;
- provide a space for learning to coalesce;
- help build the capacity of public bodies and support them to understand and implement duties relating to sustainable development and the delivery of the National Outcomes;
- monitor the implementation of sustainable development duties through scrutiny and investigative powers;
- assess delivery of the National Outcomes and address the implementation gap;
- be an ambassador to engage the wider public, and provide advice and scrutiny to the Scottish Government.

Above all, the creation of a new Commissioner would support a shift towards long-termism in policy making. Current political structures reward short-term policy interventions, even when they incur future costs, on health, the environment and so on. By bringing a future generations lens to decision making, a Commissioner could help to embed the principles of long-termism, and as such should be seen as an investment in prevention, not a cost.

Once again, congratulations on your new role, and we look forward to working together to promote the wellbeing and sustainable development agenda. We would be delighted to have the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these matters further, allowing us to explore how our collective efforts can create a positive and transformative impact for people everywhere and the planet.

Yours sincerely,

Action to Protect Rural Scotland (APRS)  
Bat Conservation Trust  
Butterfly Conservation  
Carnegie UK  
CEMVO Scotland  
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management  
Christian Aid  
Community Enterprise in Scotland  
Corra Foundation  
Emma Sedgwick - Rural Communications  
Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland  
Ethnic Minority Environmental Network  
Friends of the Earth Scotland  
Generations Working Together  
Global Justice Now

Marine Conservation Society  
National Trust for Scotland  
NCD Alliance Scotland  
One Parent Families Scotland  
Overstory Finance  
Oxfam Scotland  
Quakers in Scotland  
SCIAF  
Scotland CAN B  
Scotland's International Development Alliance  
Scottish Community Safety Network  
Scottish Fair Trade Forum  
Scottish Wildlife Trust  
SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)  
THAW Orkney  
The Froglife Trust  
The Poverty Alliance  
Transform Scotland  
University of Strathclyde Centre for Sustainable Development  
Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland