

# Karen Bradley speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Karen Bradley MP, Secretary of State of Northern Ireland, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

***(Check against delivery)***

“Two days ago I was at the National Police Memorial Day in Belfast.

And there could be no more appropriate part of the United Kingdom to mark the bravery and sacrifice of those who protect us on a daily basis.

While I was there I met many relatives and colleagues of those who were murdered by terrorists during the troubles for defending democracy and the rule of law.

It served as a stark reminder ... as if one were needed ... of the debt we owe the police and our armed forces for the role they played in bringing peace to Northern Ireland.

And in this party we shall never forget it.

Thanks to their efforts ... and yes political leaders ... Northern Ireland is today a place transformed.

And under this Conservative Government it is thriving.

Unemployment at near record lows ... employment close to record highs ... and all driven by the private sector.

Exports rising... and NI has proven itself to be a top destination for inward investment from companies based overseas and within the UK.

And last week in America I met a number of businesses who are investing and creating highly skilled, well paid jobs.

Tourism is also booming ... with visitors enjoying Northern Ireland's stunning scenery, amazing hospitality and world class attractions.

All of this is underpinned by the strength and security that Northern Ireland gains from membership of our precious Union.

But what we're seeing today is only a glimpse of the potential Northern Ireland has to offer.

And to unlock that we really do need to see the restoration of devolved government.

It's a source of immense frustration that in this 20th anniversary year of the historic Belfast Agreement there is no government at Stormont.

That's why my absolute priority is getting Stormont back to work ... and last month I announced a plan to help get us there.

What was achieved 20 years ago was of such magnitude that we owe this and to future generations to make it work.

And this Conservative Government ... along with this Secretary of State ... will not be found wanting in our efforts to deliver it."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.