

Opening statement on Global Britain debate

I am delighted to open this debate on Global Britain, when for the first time in forty-eight years we now have full control of our trade policy.

Back in 1846, Richard Cobden inspired people in Manchester with his belief that free trade would be

“the greatest revolution that ever happened in the world’s history...drawing men together, thrusting aside antagonism...and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace.”

That revolution continues today, as for the first time in nearly half a century, we are a sovereign trading nation free to pursue British interests while promoting British values.

Our newly independent trade policy will create jobs, grow our slice of the global pie and unlock great swathes of the world to the best of Britain.

As we recover from Covid-19, we need to think radically about how we generate economic growth...

...about how we are going to use our new global platform in 2021 to promote free and fair trade...

And how we are going to take on those countries who try to cheat and undermine free enterprise.

In 2020, we negotiated trade agreements covering 63 nations and the European Union.

In 2021, we will use this year, including our Presidency of the G7, to champion free and fair trade in an era rife with pernicious practices...

We will promote modern rules that are relevant to people’s lives for digital and data trade... We will champion high environmental and animal welfare standards in a science-led approach...

And we will push for modernisation of the World Trade Organisation and trade agreements to reflect our values of free enterprise and fair play.

We will also be build an advanced network of trade deals, from the Americas to the Indo-Pacific...

...with the UK at its heart as a global services and technology hub.

We have already reached deals covering 63 per cent of UK trade – well on our way to our manifesto target of 80 per cent in three years.

We want to hit that target...and deepen our existing relationships in areas like services and technology.

Exports are equivalent to nearly a third of our national income.

Trade equals jobs.

A job means independence and security... the realisation of our dreams... funding public services and the future prospects of our country.

The deals we have done with the EU and our partners across the world, from South Africa to South Korea, mean that our traders continue to enjoy preferential access to world markets.

We have secured arrangements with Turkey which mean that Ford in Dagenham can continue to export their engines tariff-free...

We have secured access to the Canadian market for our beef producers like the Foyle Food Group in Northern Ireland...

And we have secured tariff-free access into Mexico for our car exporters like Jaguar Land Rover...

While Scotch whisky – one of our biggest exports – continues to enter markets like Singapore tariff-free and stays recognised.

All in all, this adds up to £885 billion worth of trade that we have secured.

And in addition, we have been able to go further and faster in our deal with Japan

- protecting the free flow of data which benefits industries like fintech and computer gaming
- regulatory dialogue on financial services and improved mobility provisions including allowing spouses to travel with businesspeople
- we have secured additional protections for our fantastic creative industries from music to TV
- and recognition for geographical indications across the United Kingdom from Welsh Lamb, Scotch Beef, Armagh Bramley apples to English Sparkling Wine, subject to Japanese domestic processes.

This platform allows us to step up this year to show our full potential as president of the G7 and as an independent trading nation.

At the G7, we will work to reform the WTO, make progress on data and digital trade, and promote greener trade.

Our new UK Global Tariff will see around 57% per cent of our imports entering our market tariff-free, more than the 44% we had under the EU.

It will eliminate tariffs, in particular, on over a hundred green goods.

In short, our new tariff regime is lower, simpler and greener.

Furthermore, we are going to be working with our friends and family across the world to drive forward free and fair trade... setting the global standard for trade in the 21st century.

We are already in deep negotiations with the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

And this year, we will apply to one of the most dynamic trading areas on Earth, the Comprehensive and Progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Joining is part of our plan to grow our economy by making it far easier for British goods to reach our friends in Asia and the Americas.

This high-standards agreement would align the UK with some of the world's fastest-growing economies in a free trade area covering nearly £9 trillion of GDP.

We are also going to be deepening our relationships with countries such as Canada, Mexico, South Korea and Israel.

As well as this, we are working closely with India – the world's largest democracy – on an enhanced trade partnership, reflecting our mutual interest in technology and innovation.

We are also in talks with Brazil and our allies in the Gulf.

But I want to reassure the House, we are going to ensure that no country is left behind without the benefits of free and fair trade with the United Kingdom.

Later this year we are launching an emerging markets trade scheme, which will offer the lowest income countries a better deal when they are trading with the UK.

It will be more generous than the EU scheme and help those countries onto the ladder towards prosperity through the enterprise and ingenuity of their people.

We want to encourage British business to take advantage of all these opportunities that we have either negotiated or are negotiating.

Therefore, we will be loudly and proudly championing exports in our key industries, from our food and drink, to services and technology trade.

We have a network of trade advisers across the country, ready to help our businesses go global.

They can be proud to put the Union Jack on their pack, which is one of the most recognised symbols around the world.

With our GREAT campaign, we are showing partners worldwide that Britain is "ready to trade". In December, the Prime Minister launched our new Office for

Investment, under the leadership of Lord Grimstone.

It will work tirelessly to secure investment in every nation and region across Britain, backing jobs and livelihoods.

More than 56,000 new jobs were created last year through foreign investment in the UK, with over 9,000 others secured.

We will also be founding our first new Freeports, which will drive enterprise and growth in port cities and towns across the country as we turbocharge trade around the world.

Of course, many are sceptical about globalisation and the benefits of trade.

And the reason is that too many unfair practices, and cheating, have been allowed to undermine real free trade.

That is why we are establishing the Trade Remedies Authority, headed by Oliver Griffiths, to protect UK industries from unfair practices.

It is not right that ceramics manufacturers in Stoke on Trent can be undercut by goods subsidised by state-owned enterprises.

...And our innovators can have the fruits of their work taken under forced technology transfer. Or that goods can come into this country that have been produced through forced labour in abhorrent conditions

That is why we are pushing the World Trade Organisation for greater transparency and reform of the rules.

And joining CPTPP, with its ambitious digital and data provisions and clear rules, we will pile further pressure on the WTO to reform.

As an independent trading nation, we are setting our own path... and rejecting the twin errors of values-free globalisation and protectionism.

Instead, as a United Kingdom we are rooting our approach in our fundamental values of sovereignty, democracy, the rule of law and a fierce commitment to high standards.

That is why we are bringing together a coalition of like-minded nations to advance high standards worldwide, from food and animal welfare to the environment and data.

With fellow democracies like Japan and Canada, we are championing innovation, a cleaner planet, women's economic empowerment...and much more.

We have demonstrated this through the fantastic deal we have struck with the EU to ensure we can keep trading freely with zero tariffs and zero quotas, alongside deals covering 63 countries.

No other nation has ever negotiated so many trade deals simultaneously, and I am proud of the results we have achieved.

At this tough time, we need to embrace our future as a confident, optimistic, and outward-looking Global Britain: delivering jobs and prosperity at home while helping lead the fight for free and fair trade abroad.

My hope is that all sides of the House can join me in celebrating how far we have come and the huge opportunity we have in 2021...

...Striking deal after deal with our friends and family worldwide to support our values and full economic potential...

This is Global Britain in action.