

Speech: Helping people from ethnic minority backgrounds into work

Thank you Kirsty and the Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) for inviting me to speak today. It is an absolute pleasure.

But more importantly – thank you for publishing this interesting [Race, Ethnicity and Employment report](#).

We have made huge progress in recent decades to improve the opportunities for ethnic minorities in the UK.

But its studies like this that help us identify where the challenges still lie.

And what we in government can do to tackle them.

I'm going to start by talking about Doctor Who.

For those of you who have heard me speak before you will know it is my go-to programme for anecdotes.

In a recent episode the new Doctor, and what a pleasure it is that we finally have a female Doctor, she and companions travelled back to 1950s Alabama.

On the eve of Rosa Parks' historic bus protest that sparked the Civil Rights movement.

What was remarkable was not only Rosa Parks' personal bravery.

But it was the incomprehension of the characters from 2018 when faced with the institutional racism of 1950s America.

This well-loved family programme brought the subject of racial injustice to Sunday night viewing, making it something to be talked about and not ignored.

And it showed how different the experience of ethnic minorities now is from decades past.

But let's be clear, discrimination does still exist.

And as a recent incident on Ryanair sadly showed, so does racism.

On a personal level, when my father settled in the UK in the 70s, he was not easily able to find a job in line with his experience and qualifications.

There may have been many reasons for this. But I expect his experience may not have been dissimilar from that of others, from an ethnic minority background.

So he set up his own business and, thankfully, made a success of it.

But that was then, of course.

Now we have cause for celebration, as those from an ethnic minority background share in the booming jobs market we have created. Ethnic minority employment is at a record high.

And the employment gap between ethnic minorities and white groups is below 10% for the first time ever on record.

In fact, we are almost three quarters of the way to achieving the government's target of increasing ethnic minority employment by 20% by 2020.

Since 2010 we have seen 3.3 million more people in work overall, of those 1.15 million were from ethnic minorities.

That means growth in ethnic minority employment of 36% – 3 times the growth in overall employment – closing the gap faster than ever before.

Cause for celebration, but not inaction.

The ethnic minority employment rate is 65.5%.

A record high, but that's still the same level as the overall UK employment rate was in 1984.

So I welcome progress, and I welcome the increasing rate of progress.

But when people from ethnic minorities face the same employment prospects that others enjoyed decades ago, that progress will never be enough.

Tackling injustices is at the heart of the Prime Minister's agenda.

When she launched the Race Disparity Audit (RDA) last year it was the first time a UK government looked overall at the impact of race across many aspects of life.

And we are leading the world in this approach.

The RDA has raised a lot of issues.

But above all, it has shown that we cannot treat ethnic minorities as one single group, with the same challenges.

Something I am glad to see ERSA's report also highlights.

To give some examples.

The British black employment rate is lower than that of the British Indian community, at 67.6 per cent.

In the British Chinese community it's 60.6 per cent, while the average rate in the British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi communities is just 54.8 per cent.

British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi workers are far more likely to be in the lowest skilled occupation groups and receive the lowest average hourly pay.

While the British Chinese community has a gender employment gap of just 6.6 percentage points, lower than the white British or UK average, among the British Indian community it's 12.3 percentage points.

And that's exactly why our approach is tailored to the specific challenges of different communities.

My department has identified 20 'challenge areas' across the country.

These are areas where the employment gap is highest and the ethnic minority population is the greatest.

We are targeting these places with specialist support, trialling new interventions.

Including mentoring programmes and targeted projects building on existing community networks.

Youth

Overall youth unemployment may be at a record low, but it is still hard for young people to see themselves in jobs which are effectively invisible to them.

Jobs where they do not see people like themselves succeeding.

That is why our network of mentoring circles helps open their horizons, bringing young people from ethnic minorities together – voluntarily – in their local jobcentre.

These young people are being mentored in our jobcentres by major employers like HSBC and Fujitsu, giving them the self-confidence and skills and aspiration they need.

I have visited one of these mentoring programmes in north London.

And saw for myself how transformative they can be for youngsters.

Particularly when the mentoring is provided by someone from a similar background to them.

So far, 63 mentoring circles have taken place in 21 jobcentres, and more are being prepared for next year.

A lack of expectations can do more than just drain ambition and hope – it can drive young people onto the wrong path.

That is why proactive intervention can be so important in fuelling their success.

Women

British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi women have some of the lowest employment rates in the UK.

Part of the reason for this may be cultural expectations of caring responsibilities in the home.

Determining what is a choice, and what may be the result of a cultural pressure is not straight forward.

But we must ensure that women know that when they choose to work, they can and will be valued.

That is why in Birmingham Yardley, an area with low employment rates for women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds, we are reaching out to them to build a trusted relationship for the first time.

By building the women's confidence, and their knowledge about job opportunities.

And by working in existing community networks, we can bring them closer to the labour market so they can make a choice about their future in it.

Creating full employment among ethnic minorities communities is not just the right thing to do.

It makes good business sense.

As ERSA's members already know, an inclusive employer is also a successful employer.

And that includes the bottom line.

Full representation of ethnic minority individuals across the labour market, through participation and progression in their careers, would boost the economy by an estimated £24 billion a year.

And it's something the whole of government is acting on.

Take my colleagues in the Department for Education.

They are working with thousands of employers and the National Apprenticeship Service to get more young people from ethnic minorities into apprenticeships, a route into almost any career from nuclear engineering to law.

We have pledged to increase the number of apprentices from an ethnic minority background by 20 per cent by 2020.

And last year 55,000 apprentices came from such backgrounds.

Conclusion

The more we understand about where inequality exists, the more we can do to tackle it.

So again I thank ERSA for this thought -provoking report.

It joins a huge bank of evidence, including the Race Disparity Audit and the future findings from the consultation on the Ethnic Pay Gap.

Our work to tackle inequality is ongoing, and will be for some time yet.

But arming ourselves with this evidence means progress will be quicker.

So that when the Doctor Who of the future travels back to our own time, and she and her companions find it difficult to comprehend the injustices which still exist today – that will be because we have tackled them and created a future where everyone has the same opportunity to succeed in life.

[Press release: FCO statement on the sentencing of Sheikh Ali Salman in Bahrain](#)

Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, said:

I am very concerned about the life sentence handed down by the Appeals Court of Bahrain today to Sheikh Ali Salman, in addition to the sentence he is currently serving. I understand that Sheikh Ali Salman now has the right of appeal against this latest sentence.

The UK continues to encourage the Government of Bahrain to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt [@AlistairBurtUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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[Speech: Supporting Libyan Authorities in Efforts to Build the Rule of Law](#)

Mr President,

I would like to start by congratulating you on China's assumption of the presidency of the Council for November. We wish you all the best for the month ahead.

Mr President,

I would like to thank the Prosecutor for briefing the Council on her sixteenth report on the situation in Libya to the Security Council. The UK remains fully supportive of the ICC's work on Libya to tackle impunity and ensure those responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern in Libya are held accountable.

Mr President,

The Prosecutor's latest report highlights once again the troubling situation in Libya. The United Kingdom has been clear that the status quo is not a sustainable option. The continued political divisions in Libya benefit no-one except certain armed groups, bent on criminality, who have created an environment of lawlessness, intimidation and fear in which ordinary Libyans continue to suffer. The increase in violence in and around Tripoli since August, and the ongoing sporadic violence which has continued since the cease-fire on 4 September, highlights this. These innocent civilians, including many children, deserve better. There is an urgent need to break the political deadlock and bring peace to Libya. To this end, it is vital for all parties to engage in good faith with the UN-led political process and Special Representative to the Secretary-General, Ghassan Salamé.

We must ensure that all those committing human rights violations and abuses in Libya, including unlawful killings, do not evade justice. The United Kingdom has strongly supported resolutions at the Human Rights Council on

increasing accountability, and calling for those committing acts in Libya amounting to war crimes or other breaches of international humanitarian law to be investigated and held to account. We call on all parties to cooperate with the ICC including through the execution of arrest warrants. The United Kingdom is grateful for the Prosecutor's update on the cases against Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al Werfalli and Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled and notes that the Prosecutor's Office believes that al Werfalli is no longer in LNA detention, and is currently at large in Libya.

The United Kingdom will continue to work closely with other Member States, the Office of the Prosecutor and the Libyan Prosecutor General's Office in the investigation of the appalling reports of crimes against migrants, including those perpetrated by militia and armed groups in Libya, and those involving international migrants transiting through Libya. These crimes allegedly include torture, killings, sexual violence and even enslavement of migrants. We are deeply concerned that the number of migrants in detention centres has continued to rise and the United Kingdom will continue to provide assistance to those who find themselves in such centres. In response to the heightened risk of trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence in Libya, we have also provided specific support to assist in the protection for women and girls. We acknowledge the importance of the Office of the Prosecutor integrating a gender perspective into its work, based on its Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom is a strong principled supporter of the ICC. We will continue to provide our full support to the Prosecutor and her team. It is crucial that Member States and relevant international organisations work to assist the Libyan authorities in their efforts to build the rule of law in Libya. We, along with our international partners, will continue to work with Libya to provide it with the support it needs to meet the challenges it faces.

Thank you Mr President.

Press release: Gulf security tops agenda at Chiefs of Defence meeting

UK Chief of the Defence Staff Sir Nick Carter and Omani Chief of Staff SAF Lieutenant General Ahmed bin Harith al Nabhani co-chaired the meeting that discussed issues of mutual security, including maritime security, and defence reform.

Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:

As Chiefs of Defence we share a long-standing friendship, respect and understanding of the regional challenges in the Gulf.

The UK is committed to sustaining security in the region and will continue to work in partnership with our allies to uphold the stability on which it depends.

At the meeting, the Chiefs gave their assessment of the current issues affecting maritime security and discussed proposals for increasing cooperation and information sharing. They also commended the fact that for first time all three Coalition Maritime Forces Task Forces are under command of GCC nations.

In addition, the Chiefs shared their experiences of defence reform as the UK and many regional partners are currently undergoing, or considering, reform and modernisation programmes.

They also discussed the common challenges, how to tackle them collectively, and how the constantly evolving security context and risks drive defence's objectives and procurement choices.

The meeting follows the success of Exercise Saif Sareea 3 which saw over 70,000 UK and Omani personnel live, work and train side by side over the past five weeks. It also marks the beginning of a wide-ranging defence engagement programme which will see the UK Armed Forces work with every single one of our Gulf partner nations in a combination of engagements in the air, on land, and at sea in the coming months.

Speech: When we speak for ourselves, we flourish – and our status in the WTO is no exception

As part of our work to set up the UK's own trade policy for the first time in over 40 years, we are currently establishing our independent goods "schedule" at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The UK is a full and founding member of the WTO and our status is no different from that of, say, Canada or Japan. But under the EU treaties, EU member states have agreed to speak with one voice on trade. In the WTO that means the Commission represents the member states. It also means the UK's rights and obligations are bound up with those of the other EU member states in common "schedules". One for goods and one for services, these are the

official WTO documents that describe the tariffs, quotas, subsidies, and regulatory commitments that underpin our position in the multilateral trading system.

Before we leave the EU, the UK needs to separate its schedules from the EU's. As part of this process, WTO members have a chance to respond. A small number expressed reservations and would like to discuss further. Last week, I announced that the UK intends to open negotiations at the WTO to address these concerns. This has been purposefully misunderstood by those wishing to stop Brexit as evidence that our WTO strategy isn't working.

They are wrong. It's not unprecedented for a WTO member to trade on schedules that have not been approved by every other WTO member. In fact, the EU hasn't had an up to date certified goods schedule since 2004, and certainly doesn't have an updated services one.

The government's policy since October 2016 has been to establish the UK's independent position in the WTO by March 2019 so that we are prepared for a range of possible Brexit outcomes. That remains our policy, and last week's announcement is evidence that it is on track, not that it has failed.

Under WTO procedures, if changes to a country's schedule are of a purely technical and formal nature, members can use a process called "rectification" to make those changes. That is why we decided to replicate, as far as possible, the UK's existing rights and obligations. We have replicated thousands of tariffs lines in our EU schedules into our UK-only schedules.

We always knew agricultural quotas and subsidies would be different. You cannot copy and paste a quota or subsidy for the EU into the UK schedule: it would represent a major change to our agricultural trade on the one hand, and a major increase in the UK's rights to subsidise agriculture on the other. The UK and the EU came up with a methodology last year for dividing the EU's existing agricultural quotas and subsidies, based on existing trade flows with third countries. We knew there would be objections, because the countries that rely most on these quotas – the US, New Zealand, the major Latin American exporters – have been telling us, and the EU, from the outset.

We nevertheless used this methodology in our goods schedule and submitted it to the WTO membership, for 2 main reasons. First, we believe this represents a fair reproduction of the rights under the EU's existing schedule. And second, our priority was to first establish the UK's separate schedule in the WTO and only then to use other WTO processes that exist to address any objections to specific elements of it.

The objections we have received were therefore neither unexpected, nor a failure of our strategy. We have always been open to having more detailed discussions with partners once we had established our own schedule. That is why I have announced our intention to launch negotiations on these objections.

This process is unlikely to be fully complete by the time we leave the EU. But objecting WTO members cannot veto the UK trading on our uncertified

goods, or services, schedules after next March. In the unlikely event of a “no deal” between the UK and EU, we will be able to take full control of our trade policy in March 2019 based on the schedule we have set out.

As the Director General of the WTO has said, the consequences of no deal would not be a walk in the park but nor would it be the end of the world. There will be difficult moments, but the UK will be ready to take back full control in the WTO from next March.