

# Speech: Focusing on ability, not disability

Distinguished delegates,

The United Kingdom supports persons with disabilities and their empowerment.

We focus on ability, not disability.

Employment provides economic independence, the pride of work and improved wellbeing.

I am proud that under our government the number of persons with disabilities in work has increased by almost 1 million over the last 5 years alone.

And our radical welfare reforms, through Universal Credit, will support more persons with disabilities into work.

This creates huge opportunities for businesses. Having worked in business for much of my life, I can tell you that if you're not recruiting disabled talent, your competitors probably are.

Which is why we have partnered with employers to give them the tools, knowledge and confidence to hire persons with disabilities.

And this has delivered huge success. 11,500 employers have signed up to date and we aim to almost double this to 20,000 by next year.

Not only should businesses be run by persons with disabilities, but they should be run for them.

So we work with 18 industry leaders who encourage employers to make their sectors accessible and attractive because persons with disabilities should not be on the side lines of society, but our beating heart.

As shown by the world's reaction to the London Paralympic games, where we cheered, celebrated and commiserated along with every single Paralympian involved.

I remember at the Winter Paralympics, 6 years later in South Korea, sharing the joy of the mother of a Paralympian who had just won gold, through a tearful embrace.

I understood the sacrifice, dedication and work that created that moment.

We will remove barriers to enable persons with disabilities to submit themselves for elected office, providing support such as transport and accessible campaign material.

Because political leadership only succeeds when it fully reflects society.

Our Inter-Ministerial Group will co-ordinate actions across Government, and ensure we are implementing the Convention and promoting the human rights of persons with disabilities.

We are removing day-to-day barriers that persons with disabilities face and so investing £300 million to make our railways more accessible.

And we know that assistive technology is life-changing.

We are building on Convention commitments made at our 2018 'Global Disability Summit' by providing assistive technology to 500 million people by 2030, through a new Global Partnership.

We will continue to work with our global partners, businesses and especially persons with disabilities themselves to empower them to meet their limitless potential every single day.

Thank you.