

Speech: Priti Patel: Speech at 'What the world needs from Global Britain' event

Introduction

I really just want to say thank you for bringing so many friends from the development community together, but also giving us the chance post-election – now that we have all recovered – to really stand back and reflect upon the great work that we do in terms of UK aid, but also Britain's place in the world and how UK aid in particular helps us to stand tall in the world with the work that we do.

I want to pay tribute to our two amazing speakers, who have spoken to you with such great empathy and shown from a personal point of view how they have contributed to that key point – helping Britain stand tall in the world, saving lives, changing lives, but also being such powerful advocates for exactly what we all care about, which is really about UK aid, where we stand in the world, but also recognising many of the serious threats and challenges of global instability, the challenges we face, poverty, international terrorism, diseases, human suffering – and this is what unites us all and what brings us all together here tonight. From my perspective, I believe that this is really what helps Britain's leadership on the world's stage, and demonstrates why that leadership is so valuable, so vital and so important.

Of course, that leadership is really the difference between hope and despair in so many countries in the world. You have just heard about Ethiopia, but there are so many other countries that we work with where there are desperate places and where, through our leadership, UK aid is providing that badge of hope across the world, through our global influence.

That leadership is built upon partnerships – the very partnerships that are here in the room tonight – amazing partnerships, expertise, a collective commitment to defeat extreme poverty, the amazing NGOs, the charities that also bring expertise when it comes to changing lives and saving lives.

So today, I really want to take this opportunity to outline how we are using our aid support, our aid budget, yes, to lift people out of poverty – none of us can ever underestimate the powerful drivers of UK aid when it comes to lifting people out of poverty – but also in terms of promoting our own national interest, how we stand tall in the world and how we stand up for the values we believe in around the world as well and how we use our leadership position to challenge change and reform the global aid system so that it is ready for the challenges of the 21st Century.

Finally, how we will continue to build a great British offer on development that draws upon our fantastic organisations – the work that you all do – our civil society organisations, our faith organisations, our business community,

our science community, to tackle the many, many global challenges that we face now but also to prepare for some of the challenges that we will be facing in the years ahead.

I do want to look at this through the lens of Africa, which is why I am really pleased that we had two really powerful speakers touching on Ethiopia and Nigeria. For the British public, many of the public look at Africa through some of the famines that we have seen over the last thirty years, through Live Aid, for example, and through a really binary view of development, and not necessarily a really holistic view where we look at some of the big challenges that we face. That's good news, I think, when we think of the challenges we have faced over the years and we think about that development trajectory, we have seen massive progress – huge progress – in terms of human development across Africa, when we think about infant mortality, which has halved in the last 25 years, when we think about Malaria deaths which have also halved in the last 15 years, and UK aid and civil society organisations. You have all been at the forefront of driving that change, being inspired in your commitment to really push forward those issues that make a difference.

The reality is that something else has hindered human development, which is economic progress, which has lagged behind the whole agenda of human development. Across Africa, it is a fact now that we have seen some growth but not nearly enough growth and, crucially, not the type of sustainable and inclusive growth that delivers for everyone, everyone irrespective of ages, irrespective of generations, but also will look to the future when it comes to young people in Africa as well.

On top of this we have some even harder challenges – Africa remains the most fragile continent in the world and it is highly vulnerable to economic conflict and environmental shocks. We are seeing this, if you look at the big challenges that we have faced this year alone, if you look at the drought in Ethiopia, in North East Nigeria, if you look at Somalia, and then, of course, if you look at countries like South Sudan in particular, which is suffering from a man-made crisis that has killed thousands of people, forced millions to flee their homes. We have this huge catalytic effect right now, which is having a really devastating impact.

On top of this, we are seeing poisonous ideologies – extremist causes take root in some of the most fragile countries in Africa. Across the Horn of Africa, we are seeing terrorism now destroying people's way of life. We are seeing the conflated influences having this awful effect in Africa, having an impact on high population as well. High population growth is also an area that we need to look at as well.

So Britain, and all of us as partners, are stepping up in terms of what we are doing for UK aid, whether it is through famine and drought. Let's not forget the amazing DEC appeal, which raised £55 million this year in such a short period of time. And through, of course, our partners, who deliver food, water, aid and shelter to millions of people who need it. Of course this highlights the type of crisis that we are facing and the challenges that come to us as well, and how we must do more to respond to the crisis. Of course,

this is a challenge because Africa is on the doorstep of Europe, and with a fast-growing population in Africa, a restless population in Africa, mired in conflict and instability. Many young people in Africa have remained excluded to jobs, growth, economic prosperity, and of course that brings many, many development challenges to us.

When we look at Africa, we know that 18 million jobs need to be created every year until 2035, just to absorb new entrants into the labour force. Of course, we need those jobs to be created in Africa to give people hope and opportunity in the future.

Supporting Africa to rise

Now that economic dimension is really important to us, which is why I am pretty unequivocal in my own quest, through DFID, to ensure that we enable the poorest countries in the world to industrialise faster, to create jobs, to look at how Britain can lead through much of the work that we do – not just as we leave the European Union, but also as we work through international financial institutions that contribute, through UK aid to many of the initiatives and industrialisation journey as well.

Of course, alongside that we have got to accelerate the progress when it comes to human development to ensure that we can bring stability in the long run, to fulfill major commitments on health, education and water because there are so many people who still do not have access to the basics, and in a fragile context we have to marry that up alongside major investments and the economic agenda, looking at creating more jobs and being highly ambitious for people – not just for today but for the future.

We are, of course, in the UK, a global leader on supporting sexual health and women's rights and in the next couple of weeks, we are going to be taking a very big leadership stand when it comes to the Summit that we will be hosting here in London on family planning, which is just so vital to continents like Africa but also to help support people's future economic potential, giving them greater support.

Of course, being ambitious when it comes to economic development – and it is not coincidence that I launched DFID's first economic development strategy in Ethiopia this year in January, in the middle of an industrial park, an industrial park that is now going to be supported by British firms, who will be helping to create jobs in Ethiopia. We are training women to give them the chance of gaining employment for the first time there as well. So industrialisation, diversification, helping to take forward a new generation of British firms to support a new generation of in Africa as well, to give them employment opportunities.

Something else that I have been pretty focused on is to ensure that London and our financial markets can become the global market when it comes to financial expertise, when it comes to supporting countries to industrialise and to stand on their own two feet, to defeat poverty through jobs and industrialisation. That is a clear example of this government's determination to use UK aid and policy leaders to support development going forward.

Multilateral reform

There is something else here – UK aid is an amazing brand, and it is a badge of hope across the world, and it is one that we are proud of.

But you know what? We can't carry out this agenda on our own. And one of the biggest challenges that we face – and I think we face this year as well, through the humanitarian crisis that we have seen – is how we can get others to step up too.

And we need to partner with other influential countries, and that's why we are supporting Germany's G20 Presidency and its crucial focus on Africa, and you're going to hear loads more of this going forward, I think it's such an exciting area, working with our international counterparts on jobs and economic development. The Prime Minister will be leading this agenda at the G20 Leader's Summit in July. But importantly, we need to shift the international development system to get work into being so much more effective and better at investing when it comes to Africa and development as well.

The multilateral system that we have today was designed for a very, very different era, and, frankly it has not adapted to the realities that confront us all when it comes to the realities of migration, counter-terrorism – the real challenges that we are seeing. The challenges of fragile states, cross-border conflict, global migration and, of course, climate and environmental concerns as well. And at a time when global cooperation is more necessary than ever for tackling these challenges, there is a real danger that the international institutions could literally move to the sidelines if we don't pick these challenges up and address them robustly enough.

Now the UK is committed to making these 20th Century organisations more than relevant to the 21st Century, using our leading position to lead reform and challenge ways of working. We are pushing for greater cost effectiveness, efficiency and transparency, but also a multilateral system that is open and effective – not just when it comes to spending money, but also when it comes to achieving outcomes as well.

Across the system, we need more controls but also more accountability when it comes to the basics: daily allowances, travel expenses, pay, and the way the Boards of many organisations work. Agencies must really now work together – we have the grand bargain on humanitarians, and I think that's a fantastic blueprint that we should be channelling into the aid institutions and the development institutions across the board.

And the UK is going to lead on this agenda – we will be tough on this agenda. We have introduced the first ever performance contracts with both the World Health Organisation and the Global fund as well. We will be linking up to the 30% of our new core funding to the UN development and humanitarian organisations to drive improved results and to drive reform priorities as well.

That is how we will stand up for the world's poorest. That is how we will

deliver greater development outcomes for the world's poorest, and that is also how we will be sure that UK funding is not taken for granted. We will not shy away from being challenging and robust when it comes to many of those cruel decisions that need to be taken.

I am clear that the multilateral system has more to do with stimulating private sector investment. We are here because we all signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals. Governments alone cannot deliver the world's Sustainable Development Goals at all. We need the private sector to be at the forefront of tackling those goals and providing the resources to deliver those through international financial institutions, who must not compete with the private sector. They should be catalysing private sector investments and doing more to share and underwrite risk going forward as well.

We are leading this agenda, and I am really proud to be leading this agenda – whether it is with the World Bank whether it is with the IFIs, whether it is with the United Nations, but also with finance ministers around the world because we can achieve so much more by catalysing private sector funds, investment in the toughest markets, but also providing through our discussions with the World Bank, more and more ring-fencing to ensure sure that our money goes where it needs to go in the changing world and meeting our development objectives.

That is why we are challenging when it comes to ensuring that the international development system is fit for purpose going forward, and making sure that our aid effort is more effective at incentivising genuinely pro-development spending, and I look forward to working with all of you in this space as well because this is crucial if we are going to meet the Sustainable Development Goals but also making sure that money goes towards helping the world's poorest, to continue – not just on water, on sanitation, on infant mortality – but creating economies and developing countries that can stand on their own two feet.

British development

I want to finish by talking about the British development offer itself. Britain boasts what is surely the most vibrant and diverse civil society in the world, with charities who are respected around the world – for both their courage and commitment, for standing up, really, in some of the most difficult and fragile countries in the world. All of you are key partners and allies in our work.

But it's not just about the big organisations. The small organisations that are represented in the grassroots in our countries do amazing and very humbling work. They are highly trusted and highly valued by their local communities, in particular those who draw on an army of dedicated volunteers, thousands of people up and down the country who are passionate about doing good in the world. These, often, are organisations that make direct connections with those who we are trying to help. But I know that, for the most part, smaller charities have not had the opportunity to work with DFID, have not had the opportunity to have access to UK aid, and they have not had the opportunity to share in that funding stream that others have benefited

from. I am pleased to confirm this evening that our small charities challenge fund is going to go live next week – this fund is specifically for small, UK-registered charities with an annual income of less than £250,000. These charities will now be able to bid for grants up to £50,000.

This is the first time that we have ever done anything like this – setting up a fund dedicated purely to small, UK based charities across the country. Not only am I looking forward to welcoming their bids but I am looking forward to partnering with them, to support them in the development objectives that they want to see make happen.

I know that many parliamentarians are very engaged with fantastic small charities, and I take the view that this is their chance to give a stronger voice to their charities in their constituencies but also to give those charities a stronger voice when it comes to delivering international development and bringing that badge of hope – that UK aid badge of hope – to their communities and their constituencies across the UK. It is clearer now, more than ever, that we need a wide range of players to be our advocates and to be our voice, but to also help us deliver that hope and defeat poverty for good, particularly, as I have said already, many times, that the world is changing and the global challenges that we face are far more inter-connected than we have seen in the past.

I want to conclude by saying that no one partner has the answer – no one organisation has the solution to meeting these many, many challenges that we face, but I think it is important to reflect on the amazing work that everybody does but also the fact that the UK does lead the world when it comes to development. Our aid helps to really support those who are less fortunate than ourselves, but also brings hope to those who don't have hope, and I look forward to working with all of you to deliver this long-term agenda and to continue to be the badge of hope – the voice of hope – but also the voices of change that we need to see within the international development system as well.