

Statement to Parliament: PM statement on G7 summit: 11 June 2018

Introduction

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a Statement on the G7 Summit in Quebec.

The G7 is a forum that allows close allies with shared history and values to discuss issues that affect the security and prosperity of our people – and of the world at large.

Discussion at this year's summit focused on our shared efforts to promote the rules-based international order; to advance free and fair global trade by making the global economy work for everyone; to strive for equal opportunities for all our citizens; and to drive further action to protect the environment, and in particular our oceans.

As was clear over the weekend, there was strong debate, and disagreement on some issues. But after detailed discussions between both leaders and our teams, we were able to find common ground and draw up a communique which reflected these discussions and the agreements we reached.

I want to pay a particular tribute to Prime Minister Trudeau for his leadership and skilful chairing, which enabled us – after two days of negotiation between leaders – to agree actions and a shared approach on some of the most pressing challenges facing the international community and our citizens.

And the United Kingdom fully intends to honour the commitments we have made.

Upholding international law

Mr Speaker, recent events have underlined the importance of a strong international response to malign state activity.

We cannot stand by when international law is undermined, when the security of our citizens is compromised and when foreign interference in our democratic institutions threatens the values and interests that we share.

So at this Summit, we agreed to establish a new Rapid Response Mechanism.

As a result G7 nations will work together to share intelligence, co-ordinate action and develop new strategies to tackle this growing threat.

We also agreed that we must maintain the global norm against the use of chemical weapons – and that we will strengthen the ability of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons attacks.

And we all agreed in our discussions and our communique that we need to maintain sanctions on Russia in light of its failure to fully implement the Minsk Agreements in Ukraine. And that we stand ready to take further restrictive measures if necessary.

Making the global economy work for everyone

Turning to trade and the global economy, it is clear that in many of our countries some people feel left behind by globalisation. And not all countries are playing by the rules.

We must address this.

We need to make the international rules-based trading system work better, so the benefits of free trade can be felt by all. And that includes encouraging the World Trade Organisation to operate more effectively in supporting a global economy that works for everyone.

Multilateral action is the right way to achieve this.

It cannot be done by taking unilateral action against your partners.

So at this Summit, we expressed deep disappointment at the unjustified decision of the United States to apply tariffs to steel and aluminium imports.

The loss of trade through tariffs undermines competition, reduces productivity, removes the incentive to innovate – and ultimately makes everyone poorer. And in response, the EU will impose countermeasures.

But we need to avoid a continued tit-for-tat escalation.

That is why it was right that we had such an open and direct discussion at this Summit.

And why, as a champion of free trade, the UK will continue to support a constructive dialogue.

As long-standing allies we do not make progress by ignoring each other's concerns; but rather by addressing them together.

Championing equality

Turning to equality, there was a special session at this Summit focused on empowering and supporting women and girls around the world.

Efforts to tackle global poverty are fundamentally undermined for as long as millions of girls are not getting the education they deserve.

So at this summit, the UK announced £187 million of new funding to support over 400,000 girls in developing countries in getting 12 years of quality education.

We also called for new action to prevent gender-based violence, abuse and harassment online.

Women and girls must be able to use the internet without fear of being subjected to online rape threats, harassment, cyberstalking, blackmail and more.

Following the UK's call for action last year, tech companies have made real advances in tackling online terrorist propaganda.

So in Canada, I called for this work to be extended to end the abuse targeted specifically at women and girls.

And we committed in particular to new joint working on stopping the internet being used to facilitate people trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Sustainability

Finally, on World Oceans Day, the UK sought to build on the international agreements we reached at the Commonwealth Summit in April by calling for a global effort to protect our oceans from avoidable plastic waste.

This is one of the great environmental challenges facing the world today.

This Summit recognised the need for global action, including working with business, industry and Non-Governmental Organisations to find innovative solutions.

The UK is continuing to lead by example at home through our 25 Year Environment Plan. And on Friday we proposed to extend the blue belt protecting sea life around the English Coast with a further 41 new Marine Conservation Zones.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, this was a difficult Summit with, at times, some very candid discussions.

But the conclusion I draw is that it is only through continued dialogue that we can find ways to work together to resolve the challenges we face.

The countries round the G7 table have been pillars of the rules based international order which has benefited all our citizens and, I believe, the world as a whole.

The United Kingdom, with our allies and partners, will continue to play our part in promoting that order to the benefit of all nations.

And I commend this Statement to the House.