<u>Jeremy Corbyn speech to the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)</u> conference

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party,

speech to the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) conference:

Thank you for inviting me here today to your annual conference in the year of your union's 120th anniversary.

I want to pay tribute to Russell

Hobby, your General Secretary: a great advocate for head teachers who has overseen you joining the TUC, working with other teachers' and education unions.

I also want to pay tribute to the

next Education Secretary, Angela Rayner, who is a tireless campaigner and passionate advocate for your profession and for children.

It is a great honour to address

you, leaders of one of the most important professions in our society, those who

look after the education, the wellbeing, and the future of our children.

That is why Labour is making our

children's education one of the cornerstones of our General Election campaign.

The choice in this election could

not be clearer — and it's not the re-run of the EU referendum that the Prime Minister wants it to be.

Britain needs a government for the

many not the few — one that's ready to invest in our economy and public services. But the Conservatives have demonstrated that cannot be them, preferring

to give the richest and largest corporations tax hand-outs worth tens of billions.

The NHS and social care have been

pushed into a state of emergency. Housebuilding has fallen to its lowest peacetime rate since the 1920s. Schools across the country face real terms cuts

in funding per pupil, and class sizes are rising — while those young people who

want to go to university face huge debts.

There is no greater responsibility

than ensuring our children get the education that they deserve. I know this, you know this, parents up and down this country know this. But it is clear that

this Conservative Government has its focus elsewhere.

The NAHT has correctly pointed out

that this election is make or break time for our children's education system.

As all of you will know, the

National Audit Office confirms that schools are facing a cut of three billion pounds in real terms by 2020, the first real terms cut in education budgets in

a generation.

This is an absolutely staggering

figure and shows the need for a complete change of direction in how the government of this country treats our schools.

And we have to ask ourselves: is

this how we want to treat the education system of our children? Is this how Britain's children deserve to be treated?

Do our children deserve to be held back by a chronic shortage of teachers?

Do our children deserve to crammed into schools like sardines?

Do our children deserve to be taught by teachers whose morale is at an all-time low?

Not by any fault of the teachers,

they are the people who also bear the burden of government cuts, but the fault

of governments who fail to recognise the importance of investing in the lives of children, and those who teach and support them, up and down this country.

That is why we must value teachers,

because if we don't we lose them. And you know better than anyone there is a recruitment crisis and that crisis will be made even worse if we don't secure the rights of EU nationals.

Last year 5,000 teachers from EU

countries qualified to teach here and there are thousands more working to teach

our children. So that's why, as Keir Starmer set out this week, a Labour government will guarantee the rights of EU nationals living here.

And if we lose teachers, we lose subjects, we narrow the horizons of young people. So that's why I

passionately

believe in an Arts Pupil Premium so that every primary school child will benefit from a £160 million cash boost to help pupils learn to play instruments, learn drama and dance and have "regular access" to theatres, galleries

or museums in their local areas.

And yet, while all this is

happening, while funding to our children's education is cut, multinational corporations have received multi-billion pound tax giveaways

How can it be right that money is

being siphoned straight out of our children's schools and directly into the pockets of the super-rich?

We have to be clear, once and for all, that enough is enough.

Throughout this General Election

campaign, we will be making absolutely clear our commitment to build a country

for the many, and not just the few.

A vital part of that will be

creating an education system that provides for every child regardless of their

background, or their parents' income.

Labour will introduce

a National Education Service, ensuring excellent learning opportunities for all

from early years to adult education.

What we need now — and what you as

teaching professionals need now - are concrete answers and concrete solutions to the problems that our education system is facing.

That is why Labour has set out a

plan to help give every young person the best start in life possible, by introducing universal free school meals for pupils at primary schools. It's a policy that is fully costed, and will be paid for by introducing VAT on private

school fees.

There are clear educational

benefits to providing universal free school meals. It boosts the attainment and

level of education of our children. We know that these early formative years are the most important in a child's education and we have a duty to provide for

our children the best we possibly can throughout that period.

It's a policy that demonstrates

how a Labour government would care for the many, and not just the few.

We will ensure that every single

child receives a healthy and nutritious meal which will not only boost children's productivity in the classroom but also helps to ensure their personal wellbeing, no matter what their background.

Children

eating together is a great start in life.

So not only will the policy help

children throughout their time in education, it will also help teachers who will see the benefits of improved concentration and improved attainment in the

classroom.

And it will help parents who will

not only save money but will have the peace of mind in knowing that their child

is getting a healthy school meal during the day

Investing in the health of our

nation's children, is investing in our nation's future.

If we are to truly place value on

our children's education, we must also place value on the teachers, head teachers and other school staff who deliver that education.

We must put an end to the

continual attacks on the teaching profession, end the downward pressure on pay

and conditions, the constant undermining of morale and the erosion of standards

that means we have more unqualified teachers than ever in our classrooms.

That's why, as part of the

comprehensive programme Labour has set out today to strengthen rights at work and end the race to the bottom in the jobs market, we have confirmed a Labour government will lift the cap on public sector pay.

It cannot be right that those who

provide our vital public services have their pay squeezed year after year. Britain's public service employees deserve a pay rise.

And we must give the teaching

profession the recognition it deserves, not only in terms of pay, but also in terms of status in our society.

We need to listen to you, the

teaching professionals, on how you believe schools can be improved and respect

the huge wealth of talent and knowledge that lies in the teaching profession as

a whole.

I have always believed that the

people who know how to a job best are those who do it day in day out. We must start listening to parents, teachers and head teachers: you are the people who

know how schools should be run and you are the people who best understand the needs of our children.

That is why Labour has taken our

lead from the NAHT - and from the other teachers' unions - when we set out in no uncertain terms our opposition to the expansion of grammar schools in this country.

Not only does the mass

introduction of segregation in our education system not help the overwhelming majority of this country's children, it also returns us to what are frankly Victorian notions of education based on a narrow curriculum.

The task is clear: we must build

an education system that suits the needs of our children and the opportunities

they will have in the jobs market of tomorrow.

And if we are to build an economy

worthy of the 21st century, we need a schools system that looks forwards, and not backwards to the failed models of the past.

We must recognise that every

single child in this country has talents and every single child deserves the chance to flourish and thrive to their maximum potential in whichever field suits them best.

But our children's schools do not

exist in a vacuum. I am always in awe of the local head teachers I work with. Like thousands of children, I have learned so much from them.

And what I admire most is their

 $\hbox{commitment-not just to managing their schools and to educating our children}\\$

but the multi-faceted demands of the children in their community: their housing

issues, immigration problems, their mental health. You are the heart of your communities.

You are part of a wider care

system and you need the other parts of that system to work effectively alongside you, youth services, the NHS and social care.

Support for schools by these

services is essential to promote pupil wellbeing. The duty to directly address

pupils' mental health needs ultimately rests with the social and care

services.

No school should be asked to fund

health and social care services from the school budget. That is why Labour has

pledged to address the chronic underfunding for social care and the NHS.

As you all know schools are most

effective as places of learning when they work together with high quality social care and health services to meet the needs of all students but especially those who are most vulnerable.

One in ten children and young people

in this country suffer from a mental health condition and 75 percent of adult mental health problems are found to begin before the age of 18.

We must prioritise the mental

wellbeing of our children. This is the least they deserve.

It is vital that we enable early

intervention and provide support when problems first emerge but to do this we must build an education system that integrates social and health care.

Improving the way our society

deals with mental health is a particular concern of mine because I am passionate to see opportunities for all.

That's why I have been so

impressed by the work so many of you do for children with special needs and how

good special needs co-ordinators can liberate children from what has sometimes

been a lifetime of exclusion.

That focus on the individual child

is what drives our determination to reduce class sizes. We know that half a million children have been landed in super-size classes of 31 pupils or more.

This government is failing on

education on its own terms. The Prime Minister herself has said that super-sized classes are proof of a school system in crisis. So then why is it allowed to continue?

Why are our children's schools,

not getting the funding that they deserve? This is a choice. And it is the wrong choice. The cut to schools funding is also a breach of their manifesto the Conservatives' pledge to protect schools funding.

Labour will ensure schools have the resources they need.

I'm afraid I can't give you a

sneak preview of the full Labour manifesto today but be assured if it's a choice between a tax giveaway to the largest corporations paying the lowest rates of tax in the developed world or funding for our schools. Labour will make very different choices from the Conservatives.

We have already started to set some of that out not just our free schools meals policy.

And our commitment to reintroduce the Educational Maintenance Allowance for college students from lower incomes.

We are also committed to restoring

maintenance grants for university students so that no one is held back from realising their ambitions and so that every schoolchild knows that the options

of further and higher Education are available to them.

We must not be ashamed to value education, for education's own sake.

Schools should exist to get the

very best from our children, to give them the best start in life, to enable them to succeed in whichever walk of life they chose.

Whereas Theresa May's government

has repeatedly cut resources and staffing we will invest in our children's futures because they deserve nothing less.

The excuses from the government

come thick and fast. They've blamed teachers for not working hard enough, they've diverted funds to their vanity projects. £138.5 million wasted on schools that have closed, partially closed or never opened in the first place.

We will not bring back a system

that blamed children and parents for not passing the eleven plus and getting into a grammar school.

They blame everybody else, to

divert attention from their own damaging failures. They need head teachers to tell them, own up, take responsibility and say sorry.

Labour will give schools the

funding that our children deserve, the funding that teachers and headteachers deserve and the investment that our country and our economy deserves.

This election can be the chance

for a fresh start, with a Labour government that will invest to create shared prosperity, protect our public services and build a fairer Britain.

A Labour government will work with

you, we will give schools the funding the need and we will ensure you and

your

staff get the respect and resources you need.

We have a duty to our children and we will meet it.

Thank you.

The next Labour government will transform the workplace

Labour's 20 point plan to end the 'rigged economy' in work

Labour is backing a comprehensive programme to strengthen rights at work, make sure new jobs are good jobs, and end the race to the bottom in pay, conditions and job security.

Low pay and insecurity have mushroomed under the Conservatives.

Labour will invest in the jobs and industries of the future, and take action to enforce a floor under employment standards across the board — so that all jobs are decent jobs.

The next Labour government will bring in a 20 point plan for security and equality at work:

· Give

all workers equal rights from day one, whether part-time or full-time, temporary or permanent — so that all workers have the same rights and protections whatever kind of job they have

· Ban

zero hours contracts — so that every worker gets a guaranteed number of hours
each
week

· Ensure

that any employer wishing to recruit labour from abroad does not undercut workers at home — because it causes divisions when one workforce is used against another

Repeal

the Trade Union Act and roll out sectoral collective bargaining — because the most effective way to maintain good rights at work is through a

· Guarantee

trade unions a right to access workplaces - so that unions can speak to members and potential members

· Introduce

four new Bank Holidays — we'll bring our country together with
new holidays to mark our four national patron saints' days, so that workers
in

Britain get the same proper breaks as in other countries.

· Raise

the minimum wage to the level of the living wage (expected to be at least £10 per

hour by 2020) - so that no one in work gets poverty pay

· End

the public sector pay cap — because public sector wages have fallen and our public sector workers deserve a pay rise

· Amend

the takeover code to ensure every takeover proposal has a clear plan in place
to protect workers and pensioners — because workers shouldn't
suffer when a company is sold

· Roll

out maximum pay ratios — of 20:1 in the public sector and companies bidding for public contracts — because it cannot be right that wages

at the top keep rising while everyone else's stagnates

· Ban

unpaid internships — because it's not fair for some to get a leg up when
others
can't afford to

· Enforce

all workers' rights to trade union representation at work — so that all workers can be supported when negotiating with their employer

· Abolish

employment tribunal fees - so that people have access to justice

· Double

paid paternity leave to four weeks and increase paternity pay —
because fathers are parents too and deserve to spend more time with their new
babies

Strengthen

protections for women against unfair redundancy because no one should be penalised for having children

· Hold

Introduce

- a public inquiry into blacklisting to ensure that blacklisting truly becomes and remains a thing of the past
- Give
 equalities reps statutory rights so they have time to protect workers from discrimination
- Reinstate
 protection against third party harassment because everyone
 deserves to be safe at work
- Use
 public spending power to drive up standards, including only awarding
- public contracts to companies which recognise trade unions
- a civil enforcement system to ensure compliance with
 gender pay auditing— so that all workers have fair access to employment and
 promotion
 opportunities and are treated fairly at work

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, said:

"These policies will be the cornerstone of the next Labour government's programme to bring an end to the rigged economy that many experience in workplaces across Britain.

"The scandal of six million people earning less than the living wage, and four million children growing up in poverty are not inevitable. It only takes a change of government to bring these outrages to an end.

"The measures we are planning will make that possible, update our country for the $21^{\rm st}$ century and prepare us for the economic challenges ahead.

"They will also underpin the values we want to see in the British economy, and underline the scale of Labour's plans to transform the workplace from the shop-floor up to the boardroom.

"When voters go to the polls on 8th June they should know that if they vote Labour, they will be voting for a change in the balance of power not only in society but in their places of work.

"It will mean tearing up the Tory status quo that allows most people's wages to fall behind prices, and allow them to start to share in the wealth they help to create.

"Only a Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn will stand up for the many in our offices and factories, while the Tories are only prepared to protect big business and a wealthy few."

Rebecca Long-Bailey, Shadow Secretary of State for Business,

Energy and Industrial Strategy, said:

"Labour's 20 point plan on employment rights seeks not only to extend the rights of workers but enforce them too. For too long people have

fallen through the gaps in the law or suffered because the law is simply inadequate, we intend to stop this. This election offers a clear choice: do you

want a labour market run for the many or the few."

<u>Jeremy Corbyn speech - Stepping up for</u> Britain

Jeremy Corbyn speaking in east London today, said:

This morning I'm going

to say a few words about you. And even some about me. But if you don't mind, I'll come to that later.

First I want to say that

this general election more than any I have previously fought will define our times.

Last week, I said the

dividing lines in this election could not be clearer.

I pointed to a clash of

interests between working people on the one hand, and the privileged and super-rich on the other.

This is not about a

government getting its priorities muddled. And it's not simply a case of saying

one thing and doing another.

It's about presiding

over a rigged system that shapes all our lives.

Of course that's not

something the Conservatives want to talk about. It's why, I think, they're so desperate to make this general election all about Brexit.

Don't be taken in.

The Conservatives would

much rather make incredible promises about Britain's future outside the EU

than

talk about a scorecard of broken promises and neglect stretching back seven years.

Even their approach to

Brexit betrays what they're really about.

Unlike Labour's

jobs-first plan, it is both reckless and rigid. And entirely in keeping with their record in government.

Make no mistake; a

Brexit for the few is being cooked up by this government.

One where any money

saved is handed out as tax cuts to the super-rich and their corporations.

Where new trade deals

with the US and elsewhere are used to drive down our working conditions, environmental regulations and food standards.

I think you can guess

what is likely to happen to the many in a rigid and reckless Brexit. But what about the Conservatives themselves, and their friends and backers?

Do you think their

personal prospects will suffer? Do you think their lives will get harder as wages slide and jobs become even less secure?

Unlikely, I think you'll

agree. And that's because the Conservatives and their backers can afford to opt

out when things go wrong. They've been doing it for decades.

They already send their

children to the most exclusive schools and universities. They already dominate

the upper rungs of every career ladder.

In truth, they have a

get out of jail free card when the Conservatives are at the controls.

So I have a message for

you all today: Unless you too have a get out jail free card, it's time to Step Up.

And when I say Step Up,

I mean register to vote. Claim your future.

You have till 22 May!

Over 2.4 million young

people are missing from the UK's electoral register. Barely 40 percent of 18 to

24-year olds turn out to vote.

The Conservatives are

more than happy with this state of affairs. Apathy and resignation will secure

them seats on election day.

I ask you to Step Up

because when I talk to people all over the country, I'm struck by something troubling.

It's not

that our young people don't have the energy and talent to succeed. Our country

is full of potential.

But

something hangs in the air. It typically goes unspoken.

It's the unheard story

of why so many of us are scaling back our hopes and dreams in favour of just getting

by.

It's the reason why this

country is unable to unleash its potential.

Because as families,

communities — entire regions — we are all being held back.

If you're

young — like many here today — it's a familiar feeling:

If you feel trapped in a

job that barely covers your rent.

If you feel anxious

about keeping on top of credit cards and loans.

If your heart sinks each

time you see the prices of homes displayed in estate agent windows.

Then you're being held

back.

In a Fairer Britain,

government would be bending over backwards to unleash your potential.

You're our future after

all.

You'd be supported to be confident and equipped for higher paid and secure jobs.

You'd be able to look ahead without mounting debt taking away your choices.

And you'd be able to

enjoy the security and rewards of one day bringing up a family in a home of your own.

Being held back means we

can't provide the life that we want for ourselves and those closest to us.

And it hurts. It makes

people angry and worst of all resigned to the idea that nothing can be done about it. We end up blaming ourselves or each other.

This is life in Conservative Britain.

It's why a Fairer

Britain has to be the choice at this election.

It's also why Labour

will unveil plans to upgrade our economy.

Because unless we move

from a rigged to an upgraded economy, there can be no Fairer Britain.

That is what June 8th is all about.

Don't let the

Conservatives hold you back.

Don't let the Conservatives

Hold Britain Back.

And now for a sentence

I've yet to utter in my political life: Enough about you, what about me.

I've just laid down the

gauntlet and asked you to Step Up.

Each and every one of us

must Step Up for Britain. Including me.

In the 34-years since I

became a MP, I have been attacked for what I believe in. But it has not changed

my core values — and sadly many of the problems we faced then are still with us.

In 1983, I

stood up in Parliament for the first time and used my maiden speech to condemn

deeply damaging cuts in public services and the NHS.

It's a tragedy that I

could make a very similar speech today and it would once again hold true.

Between then and now I

learned first-hand how the privilege of being an MP could help achieve change.

Profound and lasting change.

At the time, young

protesters were being shot dead on the streets by the racist apartheid regime in South Africa — Nelson Mandela and hundreds of ANC leaders were in prison.

The Conservative

Government refused to impose sanctions, entertained the leaders of the regime and banned protests outside the South African embassy in London.

Being an MP helped bring

attention to that ban and the wider cause of South Africa's liberation — and got a group of us arrested.

But the space for people

in Britain to organise in support of freedom in South Africa was defended and strengthened.

And I realised then that

political leaders can, if they want to, create and preserve the space for others to organise and transform countries.

My role is different now

but there is a common thread: we should act together, to overturn unfairness and create a better society.

It became my yardstick

for measuring the performance of governments going back three decades, Labour and Conservative.

In that time, I've seen

Prime Ministers and Leaders of the Opposition come and go.

But for all their

achievements and failures, what I didn't see was a sustained attempt to rid this country of what really holds people back.

I never heard a

clear invitation for everyone in the country to work together and create a real alternative to our rigged economy.

So when I was asked to

put my name forward in Labour's 2015 leadership election, I felt I should step up.

I didn't expect to win.

But under my leadership,

we have forced the Conservatives into one U-turn after another: over cuts to tax credits, disability payments and their recent attempt to increase national

insurance for the self-employed.

And I

respect my critics when they make a reasoned case. They are doing what I have often tried to do — and that is to challenge leadership.

It reminds me of the

1990s when the political mainstream bought into Conservative ideas about markets, finance and the economy. It ultimately left us with no defence against

a global financial crisis that had its roots in another country's housing market.

Again, it taught me that

if leaders go unchallenged, they can make some of the most damaging mistakes. And if party leaders put themselves ahead of serving the people, they stop listening and even put our country at risk.

Barely nine months into

Theresa May's premiership, there are clear warning signs that she and her closest advisers are slipping into that presidential bunker mentality.

Whereas it is the job of

leadership to hold open the space for dissent, new thinking and fit-for-purpose policy.

So while it might not be the stuff of soundbites, I have always believed in standing firm and empowering others to make up their minds and come on board when they are ready.

It is the mind-set that gets community centres and nurseries built. And increasingly defends them from closure.

It is the mind-set that negotiates hard for better conditions in the workplace.

It is the mind-set that serves the many not the few.

For many

years, I couldn't see much beyond how so many political leaders manipulated us

while giving in again and again to vested interests.

I didn't

want to be like that. And it wasn't clear to me there could be another way.

But I've

learned there is.

Whereas

insecure leaders want to feel stronger by asking you to give them more power.

I recognise

strong leadership as equipping you with more power.

And that starts with

encouraging you to Step Up and register to vote — as part of a wider engagement

with your community.

Because there's no doubt

that these are anxious times.

Individually, more of us

face uncertainty at work.

Nationally, we wonder

how we will make the transition out of the EU in a way that protects jobs and living standards.

And globally, we wonder

how safe we are as extreme right wing movements and violent conflicts spread.

I hope you can see now

that there is more than one way to respond.

We could seek a fragile

calm. And hope someone in power knows what they're doing and will guide us through.

That means looking to

whoever's in charge and welcoming their reassurance. We don't look further, we

don't ask questions.

It's the response the few have bet on the many settling for.

I'm in this job because

I believe there is a better way to respond.

It's about rejecting

fake reassurances or simple slogans from government.

It's about sharing ideas

and deciding upon real and lasting answers.

We are not going to have

free thinking shut down by a hostile media or an elite that scoffs at anyone who dares to step out line.

No, each of us has a

contribution to make. We have ideas for a better tomorrow and we are going to respond together.

We are a party that

wants to bring together people and ideas, and harness the thirst for real and lasting change.

If you agree our times

demand a response from all parts of our society and all corners of our country,

then I am proud to be your leader.

And if you want someone

to hold that space open for you to help change the direction of your life and our country, then I am proud to be your leader.

Because it's only

through unleashing our talent that Britain will succeed on the world stage.

Since its foundation,

the Labour Party has believed we are richer together. Seven years into Conservative government, we are poorer for being apart.

Across the country,

people are being held back like never before.

Unless we change course,

expect more insecure work for less pay. More stress for less time with our families.

It's gone too far and the country knows it.

Quite simply, only the Labour Party can deliver a Fairer Britain.

But we need your help to do so.

Please register to vote.

Step Up for Britain and vote Labour on June 8th.

ENDS

The Government have refused to set out their state pension age plans — McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on the Government's refusal to set out their State Pension age plans, said:

"Today the Government have refused to set out their plans for the State Pension age before the election, despite the legal requirement to report to Parliament before the 7th May.

"It comes on the back of the Prime Minister's continued refusal to commit to the State Pension triple-lock.

"This is yet more worrying news for pensioners already hit by a squeeze to their living standards. Labour is calling for clarity from the Tories on their plans for the future of the State Pension age.

"Pensioners, and working people, cannot afford not to know the future of the State Pension age.

"This is more evidence that this election is a choice between a Tory party that fails working people and a Labour Party that will stand up for working people and deliver a better, fairer Britain."

Ends

<u>Labour's unequivocal pledge to</u> <u>Gibraltar - Emily Thornberry meets</u> <u>Chief Minister Picardo during a two</u> <u>day visit to the territory</u>

Labour's unequivocal pledge to Gibraltar

A future Labour government will guarantee the continued sovereignty of Gibraltar and make its future economic prosperity a priority during the Brexit negotiations. Labour's pledge to Gibraltar came at the end of a two-day visit to the territory by Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry.

Ms Thornberry met with Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, and other members of parliament. She toured the air terminal and frontier area, and attended the Workers Memorial Day service at the Alameda Gardens. She also met with representatives of Gibraltar's workforce to discuss their views on the post-Brexit economy.

Speaking after her meetings, Emily Thornberry said:

"I have been delighted to spend this time with Chief Minister Picardo, members of his Cabinet, and representatives of Gibraltar's workforce. Ahead of the General Election in June, I have reinforced to all of them that the Labour Party remains unequivocally committed to protecting the sovereignty of Gibraltar and the right of its people to self-determination.

"We are also determined to protect Gibraltar's economy and ensure that its government can continue to create jobs and prosperity in the years to come. Under a Labour government, those principles will never be subject to compromise, bargaining or trade — whether in the Brexit negotiations or beyond — but will instead remain as solid as the Rock itself.

"I also reassured the Chief Minister that — along with London, the devolved administrations, and other overseas territories — Labour will ensure that Gibraltar is closely consulted throughout those Brexit negotiations, so that together we can safeguard economic growth in every region and territory, and get the best possible deal for all British citizens.

"Britain's overseas territories are a fundamental part of our national history and Labour will always stand up for the rights, interests and self-determination of their citizens, whether that means protecting the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands against anyone who would seek to challenge it, or supporting the right of the Chagos Islanders to return to their homelands in Diego Garcia."

Chief Minister Picardo welcomed Ms Thornberry's visit, saying:

"It has been a pleasure to welcome Emily to Gibraltar. She is a good friend and a defender of Gibraltar in Parliament in her role as Shadow Foreign Secretary. Her visit, even during this election period, demonstrates her deep commitment and that of her party, to the people of Gibraltar and our right to determine our own future."

Ends