

Penny Mordaunt speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Penny Mordaunt, Secretary of State for International Development and Minister for Women and Equalities, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

When we watch the news or scroll through our social media

The world looks like it's falling apart.

I'm here today to talk about those things and those people that pull the world together.

Whether at home or abroad, when you volunteer to Help, you put someone else's needs in front of your own.

Doing that, Stepping up, well, it's the parent of heroism.

And often it takes great courage and sacrifice

It is the finest instinct of humanity.

By any measure, rather than falling apart, the world actually it is getting a better place,

Thanks to people stepping up

Billions lifted out of poverty

Health improving

More than twice the number of kids in school than a decade ago.

And that progress has been made because of the things we stand for:

The liberalisation of trade

Scientific and medical discovery

Rule of law, and property rights

Education and our unshakeable belief in the power of human potential
democracy

And Freedom

What our party stands for ...

What you stand for..

Is heroic

And those who defend those values and beliefs

Are heroes

Putting others first.

Standing up for what you know to be right

Especially when you do so in the face of intimidation or violence

That takes courage and heart.

Heroism can take many forms

Creating jobs is heroic

Scientific endeavour

Medical breakthroughs

Protecting people

Campaigning or Raising funds

Or being one of my ministers!

I am fortunate to work with some amazing people

At dfid, Ministers Alistair Burt, Harriett Baldwin, Lord bates-my PPSs
Micheal Tomlinson and David Warbuton

And at The Equalities Office, Ministers Vicky Atkins, baroness Williams and
our PPS Rachel mclean.

And I'm privileged to work so many other talented and brave individuals who
put others first.

Some are scientists

Some farmers

Others healthcare professionals, or emergency responders

Teachers

Investors

Entrepreneurs

Humanitarians

Our armed forces

What our nation has and is contributing to the advancement of humanity is breathtaking.

This afternoon I could tell you about it I could

But I'd rather show you

So shortly I'm going to clear off this stage

And turn it over to some people who really deserve the spotlight this afternoon.:

Heroic Britons who are changing the world of the better.

Dedicating their lives, Sometimes risking their lives to save others

Why do they do it?

Why do we do it ?

Because that is what great nations do

Conference prepare for your hearts to swell with pride and welcome to the stage, Theo, James, Dom and Eve.

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

[Liam Fox speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018](#)

Liam Fox, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

INTRODUCTION

“Sometimes in political life, the decisions that we take and the implications they have for our country's future can only be seen sometime later – often

well after the event.

This is not one of those times.

The decisions that we take in the coming days and months will profoundly shape our relationship with the European Union and the world beyond as we develop a vision of a truly global Britain.

As we do so we must keep a number of things in mind.

First, we are not passengers in our own destiny but can shape it in line with our own beliefs and values. We simply need to have the courage to do so.

Second, we must stop re-fighting the referendum and come together to honour the democratic will of the British people or we will risk undermining faith in that democratic system itself.

Third, we need to show confidence and optimism in the future if we are to give the British people the leadership they require.

And there is much for us to be optimistic about.

Remember those predictions of the economic shock that we would get if we voted to leave the European Union?

Let's look at how they turned out.

Did we see a rise in unemployment of half a million? No we added 600,000 jobs to the economy.

Did we see investors leaving the UK in droves? No, last year we landed the third largest number of inward investment projects in our history.

Did people abroad stop buying British?

No, in the last year we saw UK exports of goods and services rise to a record £621 billion – that is up over £60 billion.

And what did we sell?

We sold almost £50 billion worth of mechanical machinery, £33 billion worth of cars, £28 billion worth of electrical machinery and £26 billion worth of pharmaceutical products.

So much for Britain not making anything anymore.

And that's before we even consider the services that I will come to later.

It doesn't take an economic expert to understand that improved exports lead to greater profits and generate tax revenues to support the public services

on which we depend – from health to defence.

OUR DIT RECORD

It is just over two years since the Prime Minister asked me to set up the Department for International Trade to prepare Britain for an independent trade policy as we left the European Union.

At the time I was told by some that it wasn't a real Department, that there was nothing for it to do – that I didn't have a real job.

In fact, Nick Clegg said in 2016 that within eighteen months, my department would have nothing to do because the UK would be staying within the Customs Union. You might remember him from when the Lib Dems had a leader!

Well, we are leaving the Customs Union and the Single Market despite the best efforts of Keir Starmer and the Labour Party to thwart it.

That means over the summer we were able to start our public consultations on future new free-trade agreements with the United States, Australia and New Zealand as well as potential membership of CPTPP, the transpacific trade partnership that includes Japan, Canada and Mexico, some of our most important trading partners and a sign that we are committed to a truly global Britain in the future.

We now have an organisation of some 3,800 staff based in 108 countries around the world.

We recruited one of the best Trade Negotiators in the world to lead over 500 trade specialists and created a new trade profession across Whitehall.

We have started the new National Trade Academy Programme to skill up our businesses on trade issues – and launched our summer trade school to give youngsters a head start on a trade career.

We fulfilled our manifesto commitments to reinstitute the Board of Trade and to create a global network of Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner's, each of whom has responsibility for one of the nine global trade regions.

We have set up 14 trade working groups with 21 countries including Canada, Mexico and South Korea which I will visit this week.

And Ministers have now made 208 visits overseas in support of exports and investment and we are working on trade reviews with India and Brazil.

So much for nothing to do!

And so much of the credit goes to our departmental Whips – Jo

Churchill and Baroness Manzoor and my outstanding PPS Mike Wood; and PPS to our Ministers, Dr Caroline Johnson.

And in our terrific Ministerial team, I would like to thank my deputy George Hollingbery for hitting the ground running in his new post, Baroness Fairhead for leading on the Government's new Export Strategy and Graham Stuart for outstanding efforts in bringing investment into the Country.

EXPORTS

But we have to be honest with ourselves about our country's trading performance. Whether or not we had decided to leave the EU, the UK would still have needed to up our game on exports.

In 2016 the UK was exporting only 28.3% of GDP, a figure that has now risen to 30.4%- broadly similar to France, Italy and Canada, but substantially behind Germany. That is why we announced, in our new export strategy, the ambition for Britain to export 35% of our GDP.

This government, under this Prime Minister, will leave no stone unturned to ensure that Britain claims its due share of global prosperity.

Last year global exports were worth more than double what they were worth in 1997 – and that is despite the global financial crisis.

And the global economy is changing at a staggering pace with new giants emerging to alter the landscape to which we have grown accustomed.

China is expected to have 220 cities with a population of more than a million by 2030. The whole of Europe will have just 35.

We cannot wish away these inevitable changes – and nor should we.

Economies in South Asia, East Asia and Africa are becoming more and more prosperous, driving demand in precisely those sectors in which the UK excels.

UK products enjoy an unparalleled global reputation for quality, and the continued international demand for anything 'made in Britain', from luxury cars to business services, is growing.

Take China – which I have already visited four times this year. According to research by Barclays, 57% of people in China would actually pay more for a product, just because they knew it was made in Britain.

What a reputation to have.

What a head start on our competitors.

What an opportunity.

And despite being unable to negotiate new trade agreements while we are members of the European Union, we have been able to agree new deals to open

up markets to British products, such as the market for dairy products in China worth almost a quarter of a billion pounds over the next four years to the Northern Ireland economy.

And across the world, the public and private sectors alike are seeking UK service exports, in legal services, accountancy, design, project management, insurance and everything in between from improving education to delivering international sporting events.

In the world of the knowledge economy, Britain's shelves are stacked with what the world wants.

The UK has the potential to be nothing less than a 21st century exporting superpower.

INVESTMENT

And what of investment into Britain? What do the holders of global capital think about our country and its opportunities?

Let me tell you.

Not only have we had the third highest number of inward investment projects ever in this country but more venture capital on tech came to London last year than the whole of France, Spain, Ireland and Germany combined.

Not only is London the world's number one metropolitan area for inward investment but the Manchester/Liverpool conurbation and Birmingham have now both joined London in the world's top twenty.

Goldman Sachs now has a £1bn under-construction London headquarters and Deutsche Bank is investing in a new upgraded London HQ in the Square Mile.

Why?

Because Investors recognise the strong fundamentals of the UK economy – our legal system, our skilled workforce, our tax and regulatory environments, our world leading universities, our access to tech and our gold standard IP protection.

Labour

But let me tell you what global investors really fear.

They fear a Corbyn Labour Government that would steal their investments and call it nationalisation.

They fear the dark forces bubbling under the surface of the hard left – anti-wealth, anti-trade and anti-Semitic.

A Labour party whose leader admires Venezuela, where a hungry population, racked with hyperinflation increasingly seeks mass emigration as a solution.

A party which is not the future of the young but the betrayers of the young, whose reckless spending plans would leave an economic wasteland and a generation or more of debt to be repaid.

Frankly, we failed to spell that out at the last election.

We must now call out Corbyn's hard-left Labour Party for what they actually are – a colossal threat to the next generation and to the security and well-being of our country itself.

EU

For our part, we must focus on the national interest and tackle the big issues of the day, including our future relationship with Europe.

As we leave the European Union, will seek to maximise our trading relationship with our EU partners who still make up over 43% of the value of our exports.

But we will do so in a way that maximises our opportunities to exploit those growing markets in the rest of the world.

And remember, the EU itself accepts that 90% of global growth in the next 10 to 15 years will occur outside continental Europe.

We have a right to expect our EU partners to engage seriously, and with respect, on our shared future relationship.

It is simply not acceptable to dismiss the UK's proposals without putting any other alternative in place.

We have made our position clear to them.

We will leave the Customs union and the single market.

We cannot accept the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

We will leave the Common Fisheries policy and the Common Agricultural policy.

We will end free movement.

We will have our own independent trade policy and we will not accept any solution that divides the United Kingdom by treating Northern Ireland differently to any other part of our country.

If they don't like our proposals, let them set out their own.

I'm sure that I wasn't the only one after Salzburg, to feel that taunting Theresa May, one of the most unfailingly polite people I know, was absolutely

beyond the pale.

What the British want is for us just to get on with it.

CONCLUSION

I make no apology for the fact that I believe Brexit brings great opportunities to our country or that embracing a more global view is in line with Britain's long and proud history.

In fact, I am proud to believe it.

And as we take up our independent seat at the World Trade Organisation, next March, we will do so as champions of free trade.

Free Trade that has taken millions of our fellow human beings out of abject poverty and that is the cornerstone of social cohesion, political stability and our collective security.

We must not allow the forces of protectionism to undermine all that we have built.

For us, Brexit is not the occasion to 'pull up the drawbridge' and to retreat into a more isolationist Britain. Quite the opposite – it is a chance to embrace the opportunities that the changing pattern of global trade presents.

We stand at a historic crossroads and the choices we make will require confidence, optimism and courage.

If we are to take advantage of the opportunities that are within our grasp, we must raise our ambitions, widen our horizons and expand our timescales.

Europe is and will continue to be an important market for our goods and services, but, let us be clear to the people of our country, there is a world beyond Europe and a time beyond Brexit.

And as we pursue our first independent trade policy in over 4 decades, we must deliver benefits for businesses, for workers and for consumers alike.

We must make Britain a world capital for investment and strike those new trade agreements that signal our own self-confidence and our commitment to a free trading world.

We should revel in the opportunity to seize these golden chances and deliver

- confidence for our future
- ambition for our country
- and leadership for our world.”

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

[Andy Street speech at Conservative Party Conference 2018](#)

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

Introduction: Welcome to the West Midlands, My Home

We have a big week ahead of us. We face historic challenges, and the country is looking to us for leadership. On some questions, we need to hold our nerve, on others we need bold new ideas.

And I believe there's nowhere better than the West Midlands to find the answers. We have led the world before. The Industrial Revolution was born here.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Birmingham manufactured nearly two million guns for the Duke of Wellington. The Spitfires which won the Battle of Britain were built at Castle Bromwich. Today in Wolverhampton, weapons systems for the F-35 Fighter are coming off the production line.

Perhaps Donald Tusk and Emmanuel Macron should remember that, the next time they pick a fight with our Prime Minister.

So in the spirit of great Brummies of the past, let us make this week a great exchange of ideas, inspiration and energy. I'm delighted to welcome you to Birmingham: my home.

We will show you what Conservatives can do when we win in urban Britain.

And we've even stocked the pubs and bars for you.

Decline and Renaissance

I was brought up here. As a kid, I was often around this part of town. Back then, there was no Symphony Hall.

Instead you'd see trolleys dumped in the canals, derelict buildings and closed factories. A decay that looked like it couldn't be fixed. Most of all, the pride of this great place had been dented.

Seeing this happen to my home led me to two decisions which have shaped me:

First, I could see what happens when people couldn't find meaningful paid work – Seeing the importance of thriving businesses to a place like the West Midlands.

That's what made me a Conservative.

And second, I saw the tough times people were going through, and that was why I wanted to be a social worker with Birmingham City Council. But I didn't get the job, so I started with a special company called John Lewis. It was a career I loved, until this dream job came up.

And now, we have started to turn things around. In the last year, the West Midlands has:

- Had the biggest increase in jobs and more startups, than anywhere else outside London
- Been the only region of the country with a trade surplus with China
- Won the City of Culture in Coventry and the Commonwealth Games here in Birmingham

Together we are starting to restore pride in our region.

Supporting Our Businesses

So how are we doing it? Firstly we focused on our strengths. Those industries where we really are the best in the world.

- Autonomous vehicles being tested in Birmingham
- Electric taxis manufactured in Coventry
- and Solihull Land Rovers sold around the globe.

Engineers are heroes in the West Midlands, and not just with cars. In Aston, Fracino makes high-tech coffee machines which are exported around the world, including Italy. I am told there is even one in Downing Street.

A perfect solution after a long Brexit Cabinet meeting at No. 10.

Beyond engineering, our doctors and scientists are focused on the race against diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer's. We have a thriving creative and media scene, led by the youngest, most diverse population in Europe. Indeed, we're hoping that Channel 4 will see our talent, and join us in Birmingham to shape the future of broadcasting.

In all of these sectors, digital is the golden thread, disrupting every business. So we must stay ahead. That's why it is great news that this will be the first region to build out 5G technology;

Making autonomous vehicles safer, connecting ambulances to hospitals in real-time,

and even allowing Jeremy Corbyn to watch "Press TV" on his allotment.

Bringing People Together

I've now been Mayor of the West Midlands for nearly 18 months, and what I see every day inspires me...

From the 50,000 entrepreneurs who have set up their own business since I last stood on this stage.

To the young apprentice at Cadburys who started just three years ago and told me he is now a Manager and has picked up the keys to his first home.

To the Jewellery Quarter café owner who proudly told me that she had taken on a rough sleeper to give them a chance in life.

That is what is going on here.

It means having a positive vision for the future, and acting upon it.

Our United Conservative Team

But we wouldn't be in this position if it weren't for our united Conservative Team.

And that starts with this Government investing in the people of the West Midlands.

- Sajid Javid and James Brokenshire providing the funds to clean up sites that have lain derelict for decades
- Greg Clark supporting our industrial future, like through the UK Battery Centre in Coventry
- Chris Grayling working with us to reverse the Beeching railway cuts

And today I am pleased to announce, with Chris, that the West Midlands will be the first 'Future Mobility Area' in the UK. The Government will invest £20 million in new mobility services, to research and design, new modes of transport, and use data to bust congestion on our roads.

And it has been good to work with our Conservative Mayors across the country: Ben, James, Tim. And I look forward to welcoming Shaun Bailey to the Mayor's club in 2020.

And, thank you to our brilliant volunteers, our excellent Councillors, and our hardworking local MPs. Without this team, so many of the great things going on here simply wouldn't be happening.

But I want to thank two people in particular:

Phillip Hammond, who has shown the confidence to invest in the West Midlands. I thought after many years in the boardroom I knew my way around a spreadsheet, but there's nothing quite like being grilled by the Chancellor!

And of course. To someone I refer to as an Honorary West Midlander, indeed she even has her own seat at the Sedgley Conservative Club, so often has she visited. Somebody who embodies the spirit of hard work, getting on with the job and delivering.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our Prime Minister, Theresa May.

Challenges Ahead

Sharing Success with Everyone

But I cannot stand here and say that these successes are felt everywhere. There are still too many communities not sharing in our progress, and that's not good enough. Our growth must be inclusive – providing opportunity for everyone – no matter what their background.

And, tackling the big issues: youth unemployment, rough sleeping and mental health. These are challenges we must deal with, to truly be a party for everybody.

I said I would be a Mayor for all communities because for years some were left behind, if not simply forgotten.

Under my watch I will never allow that to happen again, because the lesson of history is very clear; when we succeed here in the heart of the country the UK succeeds.

Rebalancing the UK

That's why I'm pleased that it's this government that gets it. We were the ones who devolved power to the cities.

And as this Government's continued support for HS2 shows, our commitment to the whole nation is genuine. This morning Chris Grayling and I kicked off the construction work for HS2, which is already having a real impact creating new jobs, building new homes, and improving local transport. We need to stand strong for what is in the national interest.

Making a Success of Brexit

And as we look ahead to rebalancing our relationship with Europe, in the export capital of the UK we stand squarely behind our businesses. We will seize the new opportunities Brexit brings, selling our products around the world. That's why I am travelling to India on Wednesday with James Brokenshire, Midlands Engine Minister, to deepen commercial relationships.

And the next opportunity is to bring power over European regional spending back to Wolverhampton and Walsall, not just to Whitehall. So that local people can decide how that money is invested.

Our Ambition: A Party for Urban Britain

When I stood to be Mayor, I was often called the 'man with a plan'. We were given a chance, against the odds, to show what Conservative leadership in urban Britain could do. And now we're getting on with the job. And that is what people want and expect, here, and everywhere else. And let's be clear it is a job, rather like being a CEO, where you are accountable, but this time it is to two million voters. Success demands teamwork across politics, business, academia and communities. So it is a new type of job, a new type of politics.

Conference, the West Midlands is on the cusp of great things.

As you walk out of this conference centre you will see the foundations being laid before you – HSBC's new headquarters and a new square which even Joe Chamberlain would be proud of.

Urban Conservatism is delivering economic success, it's driven by the diversity which will define modern Britain.

So conference thank you, the stakes here are high, you have brought us a very long way but we have so much further to go to deliver opportunity for everybody.

And this matters more here than anywhere else, in a region where you can see the whole world in seven boroughs.

Thank you for your support."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

Brandon Lewis: A Party Fit For The Future

Brandon Lewis, Chairman of the Conservative Party, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

Introduction & Thanks

"I would like to welcome you all here today to this, your Conservative Party conference.

And I say 'your' deliberately. Because conference is your week. A chance to come together, see old friends, discuss new policies, challenge leading party figures – including me at Challenge the Chairmen this afternoon.

And it is also an opportunity for me to say thank you – all of you, the members of the voluntary party for everything you do – week in, week out, night and day, rain and shine – to champion Conservative values in towns and cities, villages and communities across the country.

I know it's not always easy – particularly in today's political environment where the return of the hard-left has made political debate coarser and more unpleasant than for many years.

But everything you do matters so much. We saw that clearly in May this year, when, because of your efforts, we were able to upset the odds and deliver such a fantastic set of results in the local elections.

We defied predictions and defeated the doomsayers. We held on to Wandsworth, Westminster, Amber Valley and Kensington & Chelsea. And we made gains in places like Bolton, Nuneaton, Wigan and we took back control of Barnet.

They said we couldn't do it, but thanks to you – we did. So on behalf of everyone in our party let me say... thank you.

I would also like to thank one person in particular: our brilliant Prime Minister Theresa May.

When she appointed me to this job in January, she charged me with delivering a set of local election results that would show our ability to take the fight to Labour and win anywhere in the country. That's what we've done together.

And it would not have been possible without the professional and volunteer staff around the regions and in CCHQ, brilliantly coordinated and led by our fantastic

CEO Sir Mick Davis. Thank you Mick for the support you have given to me personally and the years of service you have given to our party.

I also want to thank my brilliant Deputy Chairman James Cleverly, my excellent PPS Luke Hall, and all of our wonderful Vice-Chairs: Helen Grant, Chris Skidmore, James Morris, Dominic Johnson, David Brownlow, Marcus Jones, Rehman Chisti, Helen Whately, Paul Scully, Kemi Badenoch, Tom Pursglove and Alec Shelbrooke – quite a team!

Opportunity For All

For me, standing here today is the culmination of a twenty-year journey. A journey that began on the streets of a ward called Hutton South in Brentwood,

back in 1998.

Then I was a volunteer, delivering leaflets, going door-to-door, and putting my name forward for a local council seat – never for one minute believing I would end up standing before you as the Chairman of our great party, helping to deliver Brexit and backing our Prime Minister to get the best deal for Britain.

That is the opportunity that this party has given to me.

And providing opportunity has always been the driving purpose of my politics, and the driving purpose of our party.

The belief – set out so powerfully by the Prime Minister on the steps of Downing Street on her first day in the job – that how far you go in life should be determined not by the circumstances of your birth, but by the dreams you have and how hard you are prepared to work.

That's the very essence of what it means to be a Conservative.

It is the belief that makes us all – every single one of us – part of the Conservative family.

And like all families we occasionally have our differences. We won't always agree.

But the shared belief in delivering opportunity – a belief passed down from generation to generation – will always bring us together. It means this party is bigger than any one issue. Because we are a family.

We have the eyes of the country on us over the next few days, and we as a party have a very simple choice. We can talk only about the things that matter to us, or we can take this opportunity to show people right across the country that we are – as ever – at their service.

That we understand their priorities and hear their concerns.

And that we are alive with the ideas and the energy to make the most of the opportunities ahead as we leave the European Union and chart a new course for ourselves in the world.

I believe that is what we must do. Because we saw in Liverpool earlier this week that the Labour Party wants to undo everything that we have achieved as a country and take us back to square one. In Birmingham this week we are looking ahead, focusing on delivering a great Brexit deal, and on making the most of the opportunities of Brexit too.

Beyond Brexit

Because vital though delivering Brexit is – vital though it is that we get that great deal for Britain and regain control of our money, our borders and

our laws – it is just the place we start.

We have so much more to do.

A stronger, fairer country to build.

A greater ambition to fulfil.

We want to tackle the injustices that hold too many people back – things like homelessness, discrimination and the growing problem of mental health.

We want to get on with delivering our long-term plan for our fantastic NHS...

...and to continue our mission to give the best education to every child.

...and deliver our 25-year environment plan so that we leave the country in a better state for our children.

And we want to celebrate and support the thousands of small businesses and entrepreneurs across the country who I meet week in and week out.

Those who take the risks, put in the work, employ the workers, pay the taxes, who invent and adapt and innovate every day to drive our country forward and keep our economy strong.

And remember, they're also the people we interact with in our own communities every single day. From the publican and the shopkeeper in our villages, to the owners and managers and staff of the firms in our towns and cities.

They're people like my parents, who saw an opportunity, took a risk, gave it a go and grew their own business. People who want to work hard and do the right thing. People who deserve our support.

So these are the things we want to do. The things I came into politics to achieve – and I suspect many of you came into politics to achieve too.

They are the things that I as a husband, as a father, as a Member of Parliament, believe politics should be about.

The simple desires of people to do better tomorrow than they did today.

But also we need to be honest with ourselves that many in our country today feel we have lost sight of these things on many of the issues that are of greatest concern to them – they are not hearing what we have to say.

So this week is an opportunity to set our focus on the things that matter to the people we are here to serve.

Because that is Conservatism at its best. It is pragmatic. It's about getting things done.

It's rooted in the everyday worries people have and in the belief that it is

our job to make their lives that bit easier that bit better.

That it is our responsibility to give them every opportunity to be who they want to be.

So throughout this week together we will set out new policies to help us deliver on the essential Conservative promise of opportunity for all.

A Party Fit For The Future

But as the task begins at home we have to look at our own house. In our party.

Because we can't just talk about opportunity for all. We must act on it. It's the right thing to do, but it also matters because if we don't, we face an uncertain and – let's be frank – an uncomfortable future.

Our country is changing – becoming more diverse. Young people are increasingly politically active, inspired by social media, the referendum and political campaigns. New movements are emerging – putting issues like gender equality, fair treatment and equal opportunity at the very top of the agenda.

So how do we respond?

Now we can be proud of our record. You all know the story.

Which political party in Britain has elected not just one female prime minister, but two? This one.

Which party put the first female Muslim minister in the Government? This one.

Which party appointed the first ever female Lord Chancellor? This party. The Conservative Party.

And we have done so much more.

We are the party that passed the Equal Marriage Act ... recognising in law that love is love no matter who you want to marry.

We are the party that took action by reforming stop and search... so that young black men were no longer unjustly targeted and confidence in the system could be restored.

We are the party that shone a light on the problem of discrimination... with a pioneering audit of the way public services are delivered, designed to overcome that discrimination for good.

It's a proud record. But if we are honest, it hasn't done enough to change the perception some people have of our party today.

So we must do far, far more to show that we understand and reflect modern Britain. That means building a party that is really fit for the future We

have made a start.

I have set an ambition to ensure 50% of the people on our candidates' list are women, with a plan to make it happen. Within two months of announcing that ambition, almost 100 women have signed up to take the first step on their journey to Parliament. That's a great start.

We are focusing on attracting more young people to our party – and I am pleased to say we have record numbers of young people at our conference this week.

But our greatest challenge still lies ahead: winning more support from black, asian and minority ethnic communities.

I don't underestimate the size of this task. Our vote among ethnic minority voters is stalling. Yet we can be their natural home.

Because these are the people who have done so much to build Britain.

100 years ago, in the First World War, at least 1.3 million Indians volunteered to fight for the British Army.

70 years ago, many travelled from around the world to make their home in this country and help build our fantastic NHS.

Today, Muslim communities in Britain give more to charity than any other group – donating around £100 million to charities every year, a stunning example to us all.

And the values that these things speak to – country, aspiration, self-reliance, hard-work – are our values too. They are Conservative values.

So I want us to become the natural home for ethnic minority communities within a generation.

Since our last conference we have appointed two Vice Chairmen responsible for reaching out to Britain's diverse communities.

And we need to open up a real conversation with communities where we are under-represented, helping us to better understand where we not doing enough and to know how we can turn it around. That is why we are expanding our outreach team.

And we have set up a Communities Working Group to ensure every community is part of our policy-making process, so that we better understand how every policy will impact on the lives of those who too rarely have a voice in British politics.

And today I can announce that we are establishing a dedicated mentoring fund to support those who are under-represented in our party. A fund to provide guidance and training to help them pursue a life in public service, and to

encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to stand for Parliament, become MPs and help us truly represent the face of modern Britain.

For if we don't make these changes, this party – the oldest political party in the world – faces a challenging future.

This is essential to our continued success as a party. To our ambition to remain the most successful electoral force anywhere in the world and to our determination to represent and serve every community in our country. To live up to our name as the Conservative & Unionist Party.

The Fight Ahead

Our voice and place at the heart of British politics has rarely been more important.

Because as we saw last week, the destructive and divisive spectre of socialism is back. The belief that the government knows how to run our lives better than we do has returned. The dangerous dogma that says there is no problem that can't be solved by simply throwing more and more of your money at it, is alive once again.

So we are engaged in a fight for the very future of our country. A fight with a Labour Party that wants to unravel the policies that have made our economy strong, unwind the Brexit people voted for and take us back to square one.

That would be a disaster for Britain.

Because we know that even the best Labour governments end up leaving the country in the same state: out of money. Out of ideas.

And today's Labour Party does not represent the best of Labour – it's the worst.

An unreconstructed party of the hard-left. A reversion to the bleak days of the past. A time that we thought was long gone. A time of militants, Marxists and misogynists. Of nasty prejudices and nonsensical ideas.

So we must engage in this battle and turn our fire on the enemy: Jeremy Corbyn and his dangerous hard-left ideas.

For when we focus only on ourselves we lose sight of the real threat to the future of our country. It brings us closer to a government led by him.

So let us come together and take the fight to Labour.

Because the choice in British politics has rarely been so important or so clear.

It's between a Conservative Party – the party of the union – that wants to spread opportunity and bring people together...

and Jeremy Corbyn, a man who sanctions and tolerates division and hate...

turns a blind eye to anti-Semitism...

embraces militants and extremists...

and supports our enemies against our friends...

a man who through his actions and his words over many years has shown himself to be unqualified, untrustworthy and unfit to govern this great country.

Conclusion: Opportunity For All

So it is up to us take the fight to Labour. To show people around the country what we stand for and to say how we will shape a brighter future for us all.

To fight and win the battle of ideas that rages in our politics today.

To show how the essential Conservative beliefs of freedom, fairness and opportunity can build the stronger Britain that we need.

Let that be our focus as we join together this week.

As we look beyond Brexit to the future.

As we show how we will make the most of the opportunities ahead.

As we work together as one Conservative family and take the fight to Labour.

So we can build a country – and a party – of opportunity for all.”

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

[Environment Secretary Michael Gove talks about Britain taking...](#)

Environment Secretary Michael Gove talks about Britain taking back control of its territorial waters as we leave the EU, deciding who comes into our seas, who fishes and making sure that more of what is caught in our own waters is caught by British boats and landed in British ports.