

Debbie Abrahams speech to Labour Party Conference

Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, speaking at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

It is, once again, an honour to be speaking to you as Labour's Work and Pensions Secretary. Who would have thought that after leaving school at 15 with just 3 'O' levels I would be standing here today?

The passion I feel about building a fairer society has been with me for as long as I can remember. For more than 20 years, I worked to tackle inequalities in communities and beyond. And that's what drove me into politics. The more you get into what determines inequality, the more you realise that inequality is not inevitable. It's constructed.

The type of society we have, the tolerance and even the trust we feel towards one another, reflects how fairly we divide up our collective wealth. Ultimately these come down to political choices and leadership.

And people are seeing this now. They are seeing the stark contrast between Theresa May's Tories, protecting an increasingly wealthy elite, and Labour, under Jeremy Corbyn, whose entire political life has been dedicated to the many, not the few. His commitment is not a sound bite or a whim, it is who he is and has always been.

Over the past seven years, we have seen the effects of the Tories' ideologically-driven austerity policies. A record 7.4m working people living in poverty. Falling real wages, which remain lower than they were in 2008. An unprecedented rise in foodbank use, rough sleeping doubling, and more than 120,000 children and their families without a home. A typical UK worker would take 160 years to earn the average annual amount handed to a FTSE 100 boss. And for the first time in decades we are seeing life expectancy falling.

Conference, there can be nothing more unjust than knowing how long we live is determined by inequality in income, wealth and social position. It doesn't have to be this way. We are

the fifth richest country in the world. As our Manifesto set out, the next Labour Government, will make different choices, fairer choices. For the many, not the few!

These widening inequalities have stifled growth, too. Differences in growth across the UK have led to inequalities in our labour markets as well. But the Tories' social security policies have failed to respond to this changing world of work, where workers are often stuck in an endless 'low pay, no pay' cycle.

One of my constituents, a single mum who works as a nurse in a local hospital, came to see me at one of my surgeries in Oldham recently. In the process of transferring on to Universal Credit from tax credit,s she had to wait more than 6 weeks for a payment, as over 1 in 4 people do. This delay and a number other administrative issues meant that she couldn't pay all of her rent. When she came to see me, she had just been served an eviction notice.

In another case, Kellie, who's here today, is worried that she will have a similar experience when UC is rolled out in Wythenshawe. Although she's been on tax credits, she is off work from her cleaning job at Manchester airport, waiting for an operation. Being on statutory sick pay has eaten into her savings and she's now in rent arrears. She said if she had to wait at least six weeks to receive her UC payment, she's sure her family would end up being homeless.

Conference, on behalf of these women, and the six and half million families still to move on to Universal Credit, I'm calling on the Prime Minister to halt next month's UC roll out while we work to fix these issues.

Our social security system is also failing sick and disabled people. At last year's Conference I played the trailer from 'I, Daniel Blake', Ken Loach's iconic film about a man recovering from a heart attack, but found fit for work and battling for help from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Its impact in changing attitudes about social security claimants from the Tories' shirker/scrounger narrative, to the reality that the vast majority of claimants have contributed to the system

all

of their lives, cannot be under-estimated. And as Ken is also here this afternoon, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for all he has done.

But while the rhetoric might be changing, the reality is not, with cuts to social security support and the anguish of unfair assessments.

The United Nations' Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recently reported that this Government's policies were leading to a 'human catastrophe'. Increasingly, sick and disabled people are facing poverty and isolation. As my Disability Equality Roadshow revealed, many feel like prisoners in their own homes; with dwindling social security support, too many are dying early, and even taking their own lives.

As we promised in our Manifesto with and for disabled people, Labour will deliver on the rights of disabled people, enshrining the UN Convention into UK law.

Conference, a Labour Government will transform our social security system from one that demonises, to one that is supportive and enabling. Like the NHS, it should be there for any one of us in our time of need, providing dignity and security for all.

For older people, this Tory Government has provided anything but dignity and security. Their failure to grapple with the pensions system has left many with dwindling workplace pensions or worse.

At the same time, the Tories have attacked the state pension, promising to increase the state pension age yet again. This has been most extreme for women born in the 1950s, many of whom have worked for well over 40 years and expected to retire at 60.

The acceleration of women's state pension equalisation by this Government has left hundreds of thousands of women in dire straits. I've heard of women sofa-surfing in their 60s, living off the kindness of family or friends, having used up all their savings, because they can no longer do the work they used to. Too often older people are discriminated at work, as well as when they try to get into work. A Government Minister suggested that women should go and find an apprenticeship during a recent debate!

These women feel understandable anger that they have done the right thing and that the Government has failed to deliver its side of the bargain. I have been meeting with them on my national

pensions tour. We promised in our Manifesto to provide pension credit and additional support to the two and a half million 1950s women still waiting to retire.

As a starter, I can announce today that a Labour Government in power now, would allow these women to retire up to two years early.

Conference, this is the difference a Labour Government would make. My challenge to this Government is to do the same and to do it now.

Thank you Conference, thank you to my wonderful team, and to my loving family. Now let's get on with getting Labour into Government!

ends

[Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell speech to Labour Party Conference](#)

John McDonnell MP, Shadow Chancellor, speaking at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

I'd like to thank Ken Loach for that wonderful film and thank Ken for his incredible contribution to our movement. Can I also thank the Shadow Treasury Team: Peter Dowd our Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury; Anneliese Dodds; Jonathon Reynolds; Denis Tunncliffe; Bryan Davies and my brilliant PPS Karen Lee

Only a few months ago we were 24 points behind in the polls. Our opponents and virtually every political commentator = those two groups are often interchangeable by the way – they predicted that we would be wiped out in the general election.

I said then in interview after interview that the polls would narrow and we would shock them all. Not many believed

me.

And let's be honest until you saw the exit polls, most of you were pretty on edge too, weren't you?

Before the election, I said that once we entered the election period and broadcasters were legally obliged to give us some semblance of balanced coverage, we would turn the poll ratings around.

Why? Well, first because people would be given a chance to see Jeremy Corbyn for what he is. The honest, principled and, yes, the strong and determined person and leader that he is. And, second, because people would see in our Manifesto what we really stood for and our vision of hope.

And that is what happened. And it's also down to you, our members, whose overwhelming enthusiasm inspired people in their millions to come out and vote for us. I want to thank you all.

So yes, we have proved that we are an effective campaigning Party. We now have to prove that we will be an effective governing party. A Government that can set the political agenda for a generation.

If you study the history of our Party, you will see that it's always been the role of Labour Governments to lead our country into each new era.

It was the Attlee Labour Government that built a new society from the debris of the bomb sites, in the new era after the Second World War. Those men and women who had endured so much throughout the depression of the 1930s and who had sacrificed so much to defeat fascism, placed their trust in our party.

My Dad was a sergeant in the army and my Mum a welder by day, in a munitions factory, and an ARP warden at night. They came out of the war with that spirit of 1945, inspired in them by the election of a Labour Government.

And the Labour Party fulfilled its promise to them and all the other families by creating the welfare state, providing free education for their children, building them a decent home, investing in an economy based upon full employment. And, of course, creating that jewel in our crown, our NHS.

In the 1960s when the Tories governed this country from their gentlemen's clubs on behalf of the privileged few and held this country back from facing the challenges of the modern era, it was

the

Wilson Labour Government that recognised the potential of a modern Britain, forged, as he said in “the white heat of the scientific revolution.”

For my brother and me, and so many others of our generation, new educational opportunities enabled us to challenge the barriers that had held so many working-class kids back.

And, yes, in 1997, after 18 years of Thatcherism, when whole industries and communities across our country had been destroyed by the Tories and our public services were on their knees, it was the Blair/Brown Government that recognised and delivered the scale of public investment that a 21st century society needed.

We should never forget that we are part of that great Labour tradition and we should be so proud of it.

So as we now enter the next, new era, the era of the fourth industrial revolution, I tell you it is a Corbyn Labour Government that will rescue our country from the long years of austerity. And it will be up to us to lay the foundations of the new world that awaits us.

That new world is being shaped already by the beginnings of the fourth industrial revolution. Huge changes are underway in our society and economy. Technological change is accelerating. This year, Chinese scientists used quantum mechanics to teleport data to a satellite.

We can match that, we've got a Tory Government teleported from the 18th century. We are determined that Britain embraces the possibilities of technological change – scary though that may be. By the middle of this century, it is possible that up to half of all the jobs we do now could be automated away.

The jobs that remain can, if we let them, be exploitative, dangerous, degrading, and dead-end. Or the jobs we create can provide good, secure employment, in work that is fulfilling and meaningful, in communities where pride and prosperity has been restored.

We have already had a foretaste of what this revolution would look like if it was left to the Tories. It is being used to vastly enrich a tiny elite, whilst creating a life for many workers of long hours, low pay, and insecure employment.

There's a choice to be made. We can remain a low-wage economy, specialising in zero hours contracts. Or we can use the state to help shape Britain's future in this new world. We know it can be done.

As the Tories waste time and energy, alienating our closest trading partners, other countries are using state direction of innovation and investment to carve out vital areas of expertise – in robotics, in electronic cars, in cleantech, in the smart city. Though the technologies are new – the British problem is old. The City is not channelling investment into high value, high productivity businesses. Instead, it's channelling investment into property speculation.

It's the rentier economy, where wealth is secured not by what you produce, but by the amount of rent you can charge. So we will change that. We'll put taxpayers' money into key research projects; we'll foster the creation of networks and clusters of expertise. To reconnect the financial sector to the economy of research and development and production, we will transform our financial system.

Labour will establish a Strategic Investment Board, comprising the Chancellor, Secretary of State for Business and Governor of the Bank of England, to co-ordinate the promotion of investment, employment and real wages.

In our investment strategy, we will no longer accept the disparities between investment in London and the Home Counties and the rest of the country.

This Tory Government plans to invest in the north just one-fifth of what it will spend on transport per head in London.

We will legislate for a fair distribution of investment. We'll devolve decision making through the Regional Development Banks, our Mayors, and regenerate the powers and resources available to local councils.

We'll build Crossrail for the north, connecting our great northern cities from west coast to east, and extend HS2 into Scotland. We'll deliver the funding for Midlands Connect, overhauling transport across the Midlands. And we'll overturn decades of neglect and lack of investment in the South-West. We'll electrify railway lines from Cornwall right through to London.

The storms and flooding sweeping the

world in these last few months are yet another environmental wake up call. This country has huge natural, renewable resources. And we have an immense heritage of scientific and engineering expertise. Yet this Government has slashed the funding, the renewables industry needs to find its feet.

Labour will ensure we become world leaders in decarbonising our economy. With a publicly owned energy supply based on alternative energy sources. Where the Tories have dithered and delayed, to deliver zero-carbon electricity, we will absolutely commit for example to building projects like the Swansea Tidal Lagoon.

Ours will only become an economy for the many, if we significantly broaden ownership. That means supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, the genuinely self-employed and massively expanding worker control and the co-operative sector.

Building an economy for the many also means bringing ownership and control of the utilities and key services into the hands of people who use and work in them. Rail, water, energy, Royal Mail- we're taking them back.

We cannot allow this dynamic vision for our economy to be undermined by the combination of belligerence and incompetence, displayed by the Tories in the current EU negotiations. Our aim is to create a Britain for the many, not the few. Our conscience doesn't end at the English Channel. We also want a Europe for the many, not the few.

That's why, whilst respecting the referendum decision, we will work with our partners across Europe to create a new European future, based upon collaboration and co-operation.

But we start with addressing the brutal treatment of EU citizens by this Government. We demand that the rights of EU citizens in this country are fully protected, just as we wish to secure the rights of UK citizens in other EU countries.

And I warn the Tories if they try to water down, or undermine protections we have secured on employment, consumer or environmental rights, we will give them the political battle of their lives.

As we go into Government, you know we will have to clear up the mess the Tories will have left us. After their long years of austerity, the Tories are leaving a society steeped in debt and scarred by low pay and insecurity, with our public services in meltdown. We will commission a thorough review of the scale, causes and responses to debt. But

action is needed fast.

First, we will do what the Tories have failed to do, and bring the Government's deficit and debt under effective control. The Tories have borrowed more than any Labour Government ever.

On arrival in office, we will set out plans to eliminate the deficit and reduce debt, based upon our Fiscal Credibility Rule. For each policy in our Manifesto, we are preparing detailed implementation plans. To pay for our public services, we will close the tax loopholes and avoidance scams used by the mega-rich, and we will make sure the rich and the giant corporations pay their way.

Many people are also forced into debt by low wages. It cannot be right that we are the only major developed economy to have grown, while wages are lower than they were before the crash ten years ago.

And as inflation hits, many workers are facing yet another real-terms cut in their pay, while the pay of FTSE 100 Chief Executives is 160 times that of the average worker.

In the election campaign Theresa May was asked why nurses were being forced to resort to foodbanks and she replied that the issue was complex. It isn't complex. It's simple. They just aren't being paid enough.

That's why we insist the pay cap is scrapped once and for all and not just for some, but for everybody. And we demand decent wages for all workers. Britain deserves a pay rise. It's why we will introduce a real living wage of £10 an hour. We will introduce pay ratios at the top. We will address the gender pay gap that leaves women's wages still trailing men's by 14%. And we will ensure every piece of legislation will be measured against its impact on women before implementation.

I am proud to support those brave young people who are campaigning for decent wages now, and those who have joined the Bakers' Union, to take on the might of McDonalds. Be clear, we will restore basic employment rights, repeal the Tories Trade Union Act, set up a new Ministry of Labour and restore collective bargaining.

As wages have fallen behind, more and more families are being pushed deeper into debt. Household debt in this country stands at the record level of more than £1.8 trillion. We have seen with pay day loans; some companies were making massive profits from people's financial difficulties.

Under Labour pressure, the Government was forced to cap interest payments on payday loans. But more than 3 million credit card holders are trapped by their debt. They've paid more in interest charges and fees than they originally borrowed. The Financial Conduct Authority has argued for action to be taken on credit card debt as on pay day loans.

I am calling upon the Government to act now and apply the same rules on payday loans to credit card debt. It means that no-one will ever pay more in interest than their original loan. If the Tories refuse to act, I can announce today that the next Labour Government will amend the law. Call it the McDonnell amendment.

Some of the heaviest debt burden has fallen on young people. The Tories tripled tuition fees and allowed the Student Loans Company to hike up interest rate charges. Young people are now leaving university with £57,000 worth of debt. That's why we put forward our fully-costed commitment to scrap tuition fees.

And we will.

The Tories, with the connivance of the Liberal Democrats, have created a totally unsustainable situation. Three quarters of students will never fully repay their loans. So it's not just bad for students; it's a bad deal for the taxpayer too.

As a result of Labour pressure, the Government is now being forced into discussing reducing interest rates or raising repayment thresholds. If they bring forward effective proposals we will support them. But that won't go nearly far enough. We can't afford another five years of spiralling student debt.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and our independent research, writing off the Tories' student debt now would cost £10bn by 2050. Waiting until 2022 could treble the cost of a write off. I am calling on the Chancellor to act now, before the situation becomes unmanageable.

It's the Tories who have got young people into this mess, they should take some responsibility for getting them out of it.

It's not just students and households with credit cards who are being ripped off. The scandal of the Private Finance Initiative, launched by John Major, has resulted in huge, long-term costs for tax payers, whilst handing out enormous profits for some companies. Profits

which are coming out of the budgets of our public services.

Over the next few decades, nearly two hundred billion is scheduled to be paid out of public sector budgets in PFI deals. In the NHS alone, £831m in pre-tax profits have been made over the past six years. As early as 2002 this Conference regretted the use of PFI.

Jeremy Corbyn has made it clear that, under his leadership, never again will this waste of taxpayer money be used to subsidise the profits of shareholders, often based in offshore tax havens. The Government could intervene immediately to ensure that companies in tax havens can't own shares in PFI companies, and their profits aren't hidden from HMRC.

We'll put an end to this scandal and reduce the cost to the taxpayers. How? We have already pledged that there will be no new PFI deals signed by us. But we will go further. I can tell you today, it's what you've been calling for.

We'll bring existing PFI contracts back in-house.

The Tories have tried to change people's view of what is normal and acceptable in our society. They want us to accept that in the fifth richest country in the world it's normal and acceptable for people to be saddled with debt; for people to have to work long, often insecure, hours, stressed out, struggling to find time with their family; for people not to have a pay rise for years no matter how dedicated you are or how hard you work; for young people to have no prospect of owning their own home; for disabled people to be pushed to the edge by the benefits system; or for carers to be struggling without support or recognition.

Let's make it clear – we will never accept that this is normal or acceptable.

Yes we will increase GDP, close the current account deficit and increase productivity. But life is not just about statistics. As Bobby Kennedy said almost 50 years ago:

“The gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry.” (18 March 1968)

The performance of our Government will be measured by the care we show to all our people and the richness of their

lives.

We proved in the election, and we will now go on to prove in Government, our belief that:

Hope will always overcome fear.

Kindness and generosity will always overcome greedy self-interest.

And that the flame of solidarity in our society will never be extinguished.

For years we have proclaimed that "Another World is Possible."

I tell you now, that world is not just possible, it is in sight.

Let's create it together.

[Emily Thornberry speech to Labour Party Conference](#)

Emily

Thornberry MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary, speaking at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Chair, Conference – It's a pleasure to be back here in Brighton and Hove.

A city which we can say – once again – has no Tory MPs. And it's a pleasure to be taking part in a debate where our delegates have such a strong voice,

And we should all thank Kate Osamor and Nia Griffith who have allowed me to speak on their behalf today so our delegates could have more time. And let me say as well – it's an honour to be on this stage with our leader, my friend, this country's next Prime Minister – Jeremy Corbyn.

You know, some people might remember a certain viral video from election night of a bit of high-fiving gone wrong. But that's not how I'll remember that evening. I'll just remember seeing a friend of mine who had

defied all the pundits, all the doubters

and all the expectations. Someone who had proved during the election, who has proved throughout his leadership, who has proved all his life, that nothing is stronger, nothing on earth than a person of principle.

And it is that strength and those principles, those unshakeable values that are going to take Jeremy into Downing Street and put Labour back into power. After all, it was on this very stage two years ago that Jeremy declared his mission:

“To put Labour values – the people’s values – back – into – politics.”

And he has achieved that. But thanks to Jeremy’s inspirational leadership, thanks to the brilliant efforts of everyone in this room, we can now set our sights even higher.

It is time to put Labour values, the people’s values back into Government.

Because if June’s election taught us one thing, it’s that if we stand behind Jeremy’s principled leadership, if we stand united as a Party, and if we stand on a radical manifesto, there is absolutely no seat that we can’t win. And no Tory that we can’t bin.

So next time, we’ve got to take the fight into their backyard. Let’s go round the coast to Hastings. And end the ambitions of Amber Rudd. Let’s go to Chingford. And send Iain Duncan Smith to the Job Centre. Then let’s go to Uxbridge. And make sure Boris Johnson never, ever gets into No.10.

But Conference, please let’s just take a second to sympathise with poor old Boris. Oh come on, just a second. He’s not been happy lately. Apparently he’s sick of being blamed for the way Brexit is going and all the broken promises of the Leave campaign.

I’m sorry, Conference? I’m sorry? Who does he think made all those promises? Who does he think was in charge of the Leave Campaign?

I know Boris doesn’t like paternity tests, but we might need one for Brexit. We need to get him in a studio with Jeremy Kyle.

“Yes, I’m sorry, Mr Johnson...

“We’ve got the results back...

“It looks like this one is yours...

“It must have been that wild night out you had with Michael Gove.

“I’ve calculated your maintenance payments...

“That’ll be 350 million a week.”

But Conference, what a contrast. Here on this stage, you’ve got Labour’s Brexit team – myself, Keir and Barry working every day in harness with Jeremy, John and Diane. All pulling in the same direction. All focused on the same three priorities. The three priorities we’ve had since Day One after the Referendum – Jobs, Jobs and Jobs.

While next week in Manchester, we’re going to see six Tory rats, fighting in a sack, not worried about protecting the jobs of the British people. Just every one of them looking out for their own.

Last Friday, Theresa May said we need to be “creative and imaginative” to get a good outcome from Brexit. Well I’ve got a creative idea for her step aside, end your shambles of a Government, and let the grown-ups on this stage take charge.

And talking of grown-ups I’m proud to be here representing our great Shadow Foreign Office team: Liz McInnes; Fabian Hamilton; Khalid Mahmood; Helen Goodman and Ray Collins. And I’m proud as well to be speaking on behalf of my friends, Kate Osamor and Nia Griffith. Kate, our Shadow Secretary of State For International Development, facing a world in now constant humanitarian crisis, not least as a result of climate change.

As Kate would say, in that world, we’ve got a decision to make. Either tackle head on the root causes of these crises or spend more and more every year dealing with the consequences. And, under a Labour government. That is a decision we will not duck.

And Nia, our Shadow Defence Secretary, who has shown that Britain under Labour

will be a strong leader within NATO, committed to spend 2 per cent of our national income on defence. And committed to ensure that those who put their lives on the line for this country the real-terms pay rises and the decent living conditions that their service and their sacrifice deserves.

In dark, dangerous times for our world Britain must be equally strong and equally committed to defence, development and diplomacy. That is what we offer on this stage. And that is what Labour in government will guarantee.

But Conference, make no mistake. These are indeed dark and dangerous times for the world. And too many times, the problems we face come

down to people abusing their power and ignoring the rules and values that should govern our world.

From Venezuela to The Philippines we see the rule of law ignored and originally democratic governments turning into increasingly autocratic regimes. From Myanmar to Yemen we see human rights ignored and flagrant attacks against ordinary civilians qll too often using British-made weapons.

From Kashmir to Israel and Palestine we see efforts at diplomacy ignored and actions taken on both sides which will make peace harder to achieve.

From Syria to Sudan, we see the Geneva Conventions ignored and despots committing war crimes with total freedom and impunity.

All across Europe we see the basic rules of humanity and the basic lessons of history ignored as cowardly terrorists stalk our city streets and vicious extremist parties rise in the polls.

And of course, in North Korea we see the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ignored with all the terrifying consequences the world is now facing today.

Taken altogether what we are seeing today is the biggest challenge to the world order since the 1930s and the collapse of the League of Nations. And if you believe as I do in what Jeremy has called...“A world based on rules and laws” then this is the time, more than ever, when we need our leaders to stand up for that world order. To stand up for human rights and international treaties. And to insist on working through the United Nations for peace.

But instead, Conference we now have a President of the United States who believes that none of these rules and laws apply to him.

- Imposing a travel ban on Muslims;
- Equivocating over illegal settlements;
- Reneging on the Paris climate treaty;
- Imperilling the nuclear deal with Iran;
- And threatening to “totally destroy” North Korea. A country of 20 million men and women. And 5 million children.

This is not what we need from the leader of the free world.

To be honest, Conference it’s more like what we would expect from a rogue dictator. And what makes it even worse is to see this Tory government

and this Tory Prime Minister pathetically going along with it all walking hand-in-hand with Trump at the White House, supine, sycophantic and spineless.

And why? All in the vain hope that Trump will ride to the rescue after Brexit with some fantasy free trade deal. Because, for this Tory government that's what their foreign policy has come down to no values or ethics, no rules or principles just a simple case of what works best for the bottom line. How else do they explain why – last week – Theresa May was in New York, finally announcing the suspension of cooperation with the military in Myanmar because of their actions in Rakhine.

While on the very same day, Michael Fallon was in Jeddah, signing a deal to increase our cooperation with the military in Saudi Arabia wantonly ignoring their actions in Yemen. It is rank hypocrisy. But it also illustrates a basic fact that the world we want to see – a world governed by ethics and values, a world based on rules and laws will never truly exist as long as governments and world leaders get to decide for themselves when it suits them to play by the rules and when the rules can be safely ignored.

The world we want will never exist when governments like Theresa May's think it's perfectly OK to loudly condemn those they regard as enemies but then fall utterly silent when it is their friends in Bahrain rounding up, torturing and executing civilian protestors or their friends in Saudi Arabia dropping cluster bombs on innocent children in Yemen.

In fact, if they were just silent that would be an improvement. Instead, we have to listen to Michael Fallon saying that the thousands of children killed and injured by air strikes in Yemen are just a consequence of Saudi Arabia "defending itself"...

..."Defending itself".

But Conference, it does not have to be this way. Labour can and will do things differently when we are back in power.

And there is one concrete step we can commit to today.

For too long successive governments in this country have taken decisions on granting arms export licences behind closed doors and shrouded in secrecy.

Just two months ago we had the ludicrous situation where the campaigners trying to stop arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen had their Judicial Review rejected on the basis of government evidence presented in closed court a secret court so they were not even allowed to hear the evidence let alone challenge it.

The fact is that arms export decisions made by Tory Ministers are entirely subjective assessments taken without proper Parliamentary scrutiny without listening to independent, expert advice, but listening far too much to lobbyists for the arms trade and repressive foreign regimes. A process that leads to nonsensical double-standards, where the Government can decide too late that selling arms to Myanmar is wrong but immediately increase its sales to Saudi. It is an arms control regime that was already outdated. but which the Tories have systematically abused, undermined and left fatally discredited.

And as the four shadow ministers responsible, Barry, Nia, Kate and I have agreed that it must change. So just as the new Labour Governments elected in 1997 and 2001 Immediately reformed the way decisions were made on monetary policy and competition policy, the next Labour Government will immediately reform the way decisions are made on the export of arms.

A wholesale reform of the legal and regulatory framework fully implementing the International Arms Trade Treaty with clear rules, tests and criteria for decision-making, based on independent, expert advice and the objective assessment of evidence. A new system, that will prevent the misuse or abuse of licences and adhere to the principles of transparency, true Parliamentary accountability and freedom from undue influence.

Because Conference, it is not enough for us just to be better than the Tories, we must set an entirely new standard for Britain and a shining example to the world.

And if that sounds like setting our ambitions high, well you're damn right it is and we should not apologise for that.

You know, I heard Chuka say yesterday:

"Overpromising and under-delivering..."

"...Is one of the reasons..."

"...there was such fury with the Blair government."

And when it comes to foreign policy, I totally agree with that statement. But the way we avoid that mistake next time round isn't to water down the promises we make, it's to keep the promises we make and make sure we deliver them.

We will be a Government that will never put the interest of the rich and powerful above human Rights, The Rule of Law, and the lives of innocent children in Yemen...

A Government that will never put our principles up for auction.

And if we are going to be the kind of government we could be, we do not just need what Robin Cook called for, twenty years ago, when he set out his Mission Statement for the Foreign Office.

We do not just need an “ethical dimension” to our foreign policy, we need to go much further than that.

We need what Martin Luther King called for 50 years ago, when he set out his case against the Vietnam War.

- We need “a revolution of values”.
- “A genuine revolution of values”.
- “A radical revolution of values”.

Because if our mission back when Jeremy was elected, was to put Labour values back into politics and our mission today is to put those values back into Government, then our mission for the years to come must be equally ambitious and equally radical. It must be to put Labour values at the heart of the world order, to be a beacon in every corner of the globe for the values we believe in here at home.

We have the leader in Jeremy to do it. We have the team on this stage to do it. We have the members in this hall, and all across the country, who will hold us to it.

So let us make that our mission. And this time – this time – let us make it our record.

[Keir Starmer speech to Labour Party Conference](#)

Keir Starmer MP, Shadow

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, speaking at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Thank you conference. Thank you to everyone who has taken part this morning. Thank you also to Labour’s fantastic Shadow Brexit team: Jenny Chapman; Paul Blomfield; Matt Pennycook; Dianne Hayter; Karin Smyth; Emma

Hardy; and Jess Morden. ardBelieve you me, they could all have chosen easier jobs in the last year.

What a year it has been. Article 50 triggered. A snap election. It was meant to be a coronation, but it left us with a broken Government. Too weak to govern. Too divided to negotiate Brexit. Constructive ambiguity is now official government policy.

It would be funny, if it wasn't so tragic.

Britain's place in the world is at stake. People's jobs are at stake. People's mortgages are at stake. People's futures are at stake. And who are the authors of this Tory tragedy?

First, David Cameron, who gambled his country, because he couldn't hold his party together. Then, Boris Johnson, standing in front of his red bus, with a lie on the side – a false promise of £350m a week for the NHS. Ruthless about his own ambitions, but reckless about our country.

Now Theresa May, robotically marching towards an extreme Brexit – focussed on her own survival not the national interest. Maybe the Tories can afford this disastrous approach to Brexit. Maybe the Tories would benefit from a Brexit of deregulation, where rights are put at risk.

But you know, and I know, that millions of working people cannot. Whether you're in the front seat with Theresa May, or in the backseat with Boris Johnson, there's nothing patriotic about joy-riding our country's economy off a cliff.

This has to stop. It's time for a different approach. So let me share with you Labour's approach. An approach that is both democratically legitimate and economically sensible. That respects the referendum result and puts jobs and the economy first. An approach rooted in our core values. Values that bind us together. Labour values.

Values of internationalism: we have always been an internationalist party; reaching out to Europe and the rest of the world rather than turning inwards. Values of

co-operation, solidarity, and a simple belief that we achieve more together than we do alone. An unflinching commitment to human rights, the rule of law, rights at work and the protection of our environment. Fairness, equality and social justice in our economy and in our society.

As we exit the EU, we should not abandon these values. On the contrary, these values should drive everything we do in these uncertain times. That is why, over the summer, Labour reached an agreed position that transitional arrangements on the same basic terms that we currently have with the EU are in the national interest. For Labour that means that during the transitional phase, we would remain in a customs union with the EU and within the Single Market.

The Government on the other hand spent their summer squabbling in public. So dysfunctional had it all become, that the Prime Minister had to fly to Florence on Friday, only to accept Labour's position on transitional arrangements. Let's see if that survives contact with Tory party conference.

But let's not be fooled by what the Prime Minister said in Florence. All she has done is to delay the cliff edge. All her ideological red-lines remain. She still prioritises arbitrary immigration targets over jobs and the economy. She has no answer to fundamental questions in Northern Ireland. And she still insists – in spite of all the warnings – that no deal is a viable option.

The Labour Party rejects that approach. If we were in Government, we would build a new progressive partnership with the EU. We would negotiate a final deal that ensured continued co-operation and collaboration with our EU partners in all fields. And a final deal, that retained the benefits of the Customs Union and the Single Market. Options for achieving this should not be swept off the table.

Subject, of course to negotiations, remaining in a form of customs union with the EU is a possible end destination for Labour.

We are also flexible as to whether the benefits of the Single Market are best retained by negotiating a new Single Market relationship or by working up from a bespoke trade deal. No rash, ideological red lines preventing a sensible deal. No fantastical, 'blue sky' proposals. A pragmatic approach. Labour are now the grown-ups in the room. We stand

ready to take charge of the negotiations. Not acting for narrow political gain.

But in the national interest.

Conference,

the way the Tories are handling Brexit tells you a lot about their competence

–

or should I say incompetence. But it

also tells you about their character. About their dogmatic disregard of the national interest; about their sheer sense of entitlement; about their post-imperial delusions; about their willingness to put other people's jobs at

risk.

Our

country today is so much better than our Government. This is a country yearning

for change. Theresa

May – and whichever Brexiteer replaces her – cannot deliver that change. The old

politics and the Tory old guard have had their day.

We need a transformative Labour Government. Not just

to break the impasse in Brexit negotiations and to deliver a progressive new partnership with the EU – vital though that is.

But to

tackle the wider injustices and inequalities we see all around us. To give hope that our society, our public services and our economy don't have to be like this. That we can build a better, fairer and more inclusive Britain.

That's why I came into politics. That is why you

are in this hall. It's why Jeremy has been able to mobilise 600,000

members ...and inspire the support of over 12 million people. It's why the clock is ticking for this Prime Minister and this Government.

We

have come a long way in the last year. Now is the time for us to lead. To bring

a divided country back together. To mend our broken politics. This is Labour's

opportunity. This is Labour's responsibility. And, working together, this can be Labour's achievement.

Delivering

a Government for the many, not the few.

Ends

Glenis Willmott MEP speech to Labour Party Conference

Glenis

Willmott MEP, Leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party, speaking at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK
AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Conference,
this is my final speech as Labour's Leader in the European Parliament. Next week I will be retiring as an MEP. And while I must sadly, inevitably, talk about Brexit, perhaps you can indulge me for a minute in a little nostalgia.

Look back with me to a simpler time. Before the Tories' EU referendum divided our country. When Britain was known around the world for its values of tolerance and fairness at home and for its international leadership on the global stage.

It was a time when if Britain's negotiations went badly in Brussels, all we had to fear – if you believed the papers – was quieter hoovers and slightly straighter bananas.

It is not that long ago, but it feels like a different world to today. And while you can still find bendy bananas on the shelves of our supermarkets, a lot of changes did come through our membership of the EU, that have made Britain a better place.

Now, we might not have not solved all the problems facing our country. but I am proud of the work of Labour's MEPs who have, working through the EU, helped in the fight to overcome them:

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Better workers' rights, such as equal pay for part-time workers and guaranteed paid holiday;

.
Investment

in poorer parts of the country at a time when the Tory government was unashamed in its disregard for our industrial communities;

.
Environmental standards making the products we buy safer and helping to clean up our beaches and the toxic air in our cities;

.
Improved financial regulation, to tame the casino capitalism that led to the last global financial crisis.

Conference,
I never claimed the EU was perfect, but as we now prepare to leave, we need to remember the victories we have won. Because let us be in no doubt: many of the politicians who are leading our country through the EU exit door want to leave those rights and protections behind.

It is one of the things they always hated about the EU – their desire for a free-market free-for-all has been tempered by European values of social justice and equality, by a belief in government stepping in to help the most vulnerable.

And as our country enters its most important negotiations in my lifetime, there is a real danger that Britain will plummet out of the European Union with no deal in 18 months.

And no deal is not better than a bad deal: our country will become poorer; jobs will be lost; whole sectors of the economy will grind to a halt.

It is more than a year since the EU referendum. Six months since the triggering of Article 50. So it is a good moment to take stock of those Brexit promises.

Remember?
International trade deals ready to go; British trade with Europe to be guaranteed. Nobody, be they EU citizens in Britain or Brits abroad need worry about their status.

Conference,
the government is no nearer to moving forward on these issues than it was
when
Theresa May first entered Downing Street.

Now,
the government will claim the problems lie with the EU. Theresa May has
called
on EU leaders to be creative and to show more imagination.

But
our colleagues in Europe simply see a government stuck in a world of its own
imagination: an expectation that we be released from the rules of European
trade, but then just continue to trade like we used to; the idea of putting
up
a new customs border that both exists and doesn't exist at the same time.

Conference,
it's not creative, it's science fiction. And I'll tell you something else
that's science fiction: the outrageous claim that our NHS will get an extra
£350 million a week because of Brexit. It isn't true. It was never true.
Shame
on you Boris Johnson.

Conference,
I raise these examples because there is a danger that the prime minister
leads
the country into Brexit in the same failed way she led her party into the
General Election.

Back
in May and June, Theresa May kept proclaiming herself to be a strong and
stable
leader, when all around her could plainly see she was anything but. She was
the
only person left believing her own propaganda. And once again her strategy is
failing.

She
chose to start negotiations on a note of confrontation putting her party
before
the country. She tried to regain lost trust with her speech in Florence, yet
all can see that her government policy is still just broad aspiration at
best.

From
manufacturing to medicine, financial services to food processing, sector
after
sector of our economy is facing uncertainty. Investment decisions are
delayed.

So

let's be clear: the government's fly-by-night negotiating strategy is a threat to jobs, it is a threat to tax revenues, and, in undermining the economy of our country, it is a threat to the future of our public services as well.

Conference,

I'm not going to stand up on this stage and tell you that I think Brexit is the answer to our country's problems. I don't. I put my heart and soul into campaigning in the referendum for Britain to stay in the European Union, to maintain our alliances, to protect our trade and the jobs that depend on it. It

is what I think would have been best for the country. But, and it really does pain me to say this, we lost.

And

just like after any electoral defeat, we need to pick ourselves up, look at the challenges facing our country, and begin the next campaign.

So

now Labour MEPs are looking ahead to what will probably be their final vote: sometime in the next 18 months the European Parliament will have to decide whether to approve – or not – the final Brexit deal.

And

on behalf of my Labour colleagues, and on behalf of our sister party colleagues across Europe, I can tell you:

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There

will be no backing for a deal that undermines the peace process in Northern Ireland;

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There

will be no backing for a deal that fails to give peace of mind to EU citizens in Britain and Brits who have made their home abroad;

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And

there will be no backing for a deal that opens the door to attacks on workers' rights and safety standards.

So

conference, as the Brexit talks continue, let's stand united in holding the Tories' feet to the fire. In challenging the heartlessness of the right-wing vision for Brexit Britain. And let's stand united as Labour campaigns as the true voice of our country.