

# International Relations in the 21st Century

Debate Transcript



HOUSE OF LORDS

Chamber Event 2017

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## Introduction

### **Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler):**

Good afternoon. I hope that everyone is comfortable on these red benches. This thing here is not quite as comfortable as yours, but there we are. My name is Norman Fowler and I am the Lord Speaker. It is a role that I was elected to in July 2016 by peers here, and it involves sitting here in the chamber when we have debates.

Above all today, I am very pleased to welcome you all to the House of Lords for this important debate. It is the 11<sup>th</sup> time we have opened up the chamber and invited those who are not members of the Lords to come and express their views from the red benches. I am delighted that the House of Lords is hosting this intergenerational event with representatives from the British Council, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK, the Commonwealth Common Ties Network and the Royal Commonwealth Society.

We also have students from: Archbishop Beck Catholic College, Liverpool; Broxburn Academy, Edinburgh; Cardinal Wiseman Roman Catholic High School, London; De Aston School, Market Rasen; Holy Family Catholic School and Sixth Form, London; Hunter House College, Belfast; Newham Sixth Form College, London; Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall; Turnbull High School, Glasgow; and Whitley Bay High School, Tyneside. You have travelled from all over the United Kingdom to share your thoughts and opinions on the important issue of the United Kingdom's role in international relations, and I and my colleagues are looking forward to hearing your views and personal experiences.

I shall just say a few things about the format of today's debate. First, we will start with a vote to see what you think now, before the debate has begun. Christine Salmon-Percival, sitting opposite me, will time the speeches today using the digital clock. Christine also has a bell to signal that you are running out of time, or have run out of time. We do not actually use that in House of Lords debates—but, frankly, at times I think it would be a good idea if we did.

We will open with six main speeches from the three different teams who will each address the primary question underpinning today's debate from a different perspective. That question—"What are the challenges for international relations in the 21st century?"—will then be opened up to the floor, when I will call on some people by name, and on others who may simply raise their hand if they wish to make a contribution. We will try to get as many of you in as we conceivably can. If you wish to speak during the floor debate, please clearly raise your hand and, if I select you, state your name. I will also remind you that you should speak for the option you agree or disagree with—it does not matter where in the chamber you are seated.

Please take care to abide by the rules of debate. I have some rules here, but I think that you know most of them: for example, be constructive and respectful. And it says here, "Please don't swear"—but I do not think that most of you would in this context. Following the floor debate we will have the closing summary speeches, after which there will be a chance to vote again for the option you find the most compelling—in other words, we will know what impact the debate has had on your voting.

Those of you on the red benches now have the opportunity to vote for the options as we test what everyone thinks before the debate begins. There will be three votes, and you may vote only once. Please raise your hand clearly so that the Doorkeepers can see you and count your vote. You will remember that there are three perspectives.

**Perspective 1.** The United Kingdom should aim to work closely with the Commonwealth, European countries, the European Union and global partners to achieve common regional aims.

**Votes:** 124

**Perspective 2.** The United Kingdom should aim to be a global leader.

**Votes:** 37

**Perspective 3.** The United Kingdom should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems.

**Votes:** 12

We will see how it ends up after the debate when the final figures come through. At the moment the first perspective is winning by quite a margin, but that does not necessarily mean that that is how it is all going to end.

We will now start our debate. Opening speakers will each be given up to three minutes to make the case for their particular motion. Christine will ring the bell once when they have 30 seconds left and twice at the end of their three minutes. Once I have called each speaker, it is very important that you give encouragement to them and show your appreciation by offering them a big round of applause.

As I said to most of you before the debate, please do not be overawed by these splendid surroundings. It is a debating chamber, so just forget for the moment about all the history and pomp that goes with it.

I now call upon Meg Wishart to open the case for perspective one, “The UK should aim to work closely with the Commonwealth, European countries, the EU and global partners to achieve common regional aims”.

## Opening speeches

### **Meg Wishart (Broxburn Academy):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker and ladies and gentlemen. We live in an era when the human race is growing on an unprecedented scale. During the 21st century the challenges we will be presented with will be international and alarming. Every individual in this chamber will be impacted by climate change. There is nothing we can do independently to defend ourselves. Individually, we are powerless.

Our very existence is endangered by climate change: our homes, our families, our friends—everything of importance. Since 2008, more than 21 million people have been forcibly displaced as a result of climate change. This should not be a situation that separates “them” from “us”; there should only be an “us”. And while none of us as an individual can control these events, as one country and as one unified human race we can control them. Working with our global partners around the world will enable us to safeguard people’s homes, families and friends.

Undoubtedly, everyone here today has witnessed the devastation that has plagued the people of Syria in recent years. We have all witnessed the harrowing plight of refugees in their desperate search for safety. It is almost impossible to forget the image of a drowned toddler washed up on a Greek island. This was a heartbreaking representation of what happens when countries do not work together. He was deprived of his childhood because EU countries did not work together to safely transport refugees. Instead, the EU became a benevolent shroud behind which individuals were able to neglect their responsibilities.

EU countries should have worked in conjunction to accept and resettle refugees evenly throughout Europe, consequently ensuring that single countries were not overwhelmed in comparison to their population. EU countries should have invented a system to allow refugees to cross the Mediterranean without having to resort to smugglers. Italy had an operation called Mare Nostrum that did this—but, due to a lack of financial assistance, it was abandoned. Because we did not work closely with the EU, thousands of people were deprived of their future.

So what does this mean for our future? The Syrian refugee crisis is abominable. However, it will pale in comparison to the crisis due to those seeking refuge as a consequence of climate change in the next few decades. Countless projections see regions of sub-Saharan Africa evolving to be entirely uninhabitable. This will displace millions of people. To solve this, the UK has a moral responsibility to work in conjunction with our global partners to pre-emptively act against this: for example, by implementing policies such as setting up safe zones in north Africa for refugees to be processed. It is our moral responsibility to bring all refugees to areas of safety.

These are not innovative policies, so why are they not happening already? They are not happening because people are more concerned with their own lives. There has to be public support. So, most significantly, we need to work in union with our global partners to enable the refugees to integrate into society and be welcomed. This is not an issue that can be solved without difficulty. However, resistance to aiding others is a concept founded primarily on learned behaviours. The solution is that the UK must work closely with other nations to generate a positive example for our people. Regardless of our differences, we are still all one human race. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much. I now call on Emily McConnell to open the case for perspective two, “The UK should aim to be a global leader”.

### **Emily McConnell (Hunter House College):**

Good afternoon, Lord Speaker, fellow speakers and ladies and gentlemen. “The UK should aim to be a global leader”. What is a global leader, and what should a global leader look like? What about a nation that educates one in four leaders of the world? Or a nation that, despite its size, has the third-largest diplomatic service in the world? Or a nation that is ranked second in the world for higher education and science? Or a nation that gives 0.7% of its gross national income to overseas aid, despite outcries from some of its own people? That, Lord Speaker and honoured guests, is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

It is indeed the case that the United Kingdom should aim to be a global leader. We should not forget that it is one already. It is not that we should dwell on the past, as if legacy is all we have to offer. But we should take courage in the truth that is our great nation. We should not let the narrative of decline dominate our mindset, as it dominates our television and tablet screens. We should not be misled by the fake news from media sources that lie in our own country and further afield. We need to tell the truth, about ourselves and to ourselves.

What are some of those truths? We have educated one in four of today’s world leaders. Why did they come to the United Kingdom? It was because we are a global leader. We have more universities in the top 10, 100 and 200 than any other country except the United States. In the educational index we come third, after only the United States and Germany. We have more Nobel Prize winners than any other country except, you guessed, the United States.

So, as well as the United States, we are a global leader in the realm of education. And we are willing to share. The United Kingdom knows that not everyone who needs a good education will be a global leader or be able to afford to come to one of our great universities. But the United Kingdom cares about the illiterate and downtrodden across the globe. Spending 0.7% of our gross national income means that we are proud to be a global leader in world compassion. Our helpers provide not only fresh water but fresh opportunities—opportunities for liberty and control over one’s life. Liberty is something to be prized and something to be desired in a global leader. Our geopolitical strength will enable us to wield our soft power to help continue to bring increasing liberty and improved governance across the world. With continued investment in all that makes our United Kingdom great, we should not only aim to be but should continue to be an outstanding global leader. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much again. The next speaker I will call on is Elizabeth Negus, who will open the case for perspective three, “The UK should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems”.

### **Elizabeth Negus (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker and fellow debaters. I fervently believe that the UK should focus on its affairs here at home, instead of focusing on the problems of other countries.

On 23 November 1918, a well-known politician asked: “What is our task?” This was followed by, “To make Britain a fair country for heroes to live in”. The 21st century has presented Britain with problems of such great magnitude that finding solutions seems virtually impossible. Globalisation and the increasing rise in technology have contributed to the immigration crisis, homelessness, joblessness and religious conflicts, to name but a few. These issues have put a

tremendous strain on Great Britain. Consequently, it stands to reason that, if we are to help and support other countries, we must first and foremost strengthen our economy; in particular, our health and education departments.

UK public spending faces continued funding shortages and Brexit, which is looming on the economic horizon, will further weaken our personnel and resources. Just look around and think about Britain in the 19th century, when it was a great empire. A strong country can do unprecedented deeds for countries impoverished by wars, famine, sickness et cetera. So I believe that the key to Britain’s survival in the 21st century is focusing on its own affairs instead of interfering with the problems of other countries. Thank you for listening.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much, Elizabeth. Now, to continue the debate, I call on Michelle Hurd to continue the case for perspective one, “The UK should aim to work closely with the Commonwealth, European countries, the EU and global partners to achieve common regional aims”.

### **Michelle Hurd (British Council):**

Thank you. That the UK should aim to work closely with the Commonwealth, European countries, the EU and global partners to achieve common regional aims is even more critical today than at any other time in the past. The challenges that international terrorism brings, conflicts in the Middle East and tensions between global powers require a collaborative and co-operative response, with the widest range of countries and international alliances, to secure peace and security at home and abroad. Taking an isolationist position at this stage would bring a greater threat to UK security and long-term peace. This is not to minimise or sideline other global challenges such as climate change, for example. But securing peace and security underpins tackling other international priorities.

While the UK must invest in its own security via its Armed Forces and strategic defence policy, at a recent G20 summit a leading politician reminded participants that international terrorism knows no borders and is a threat to us all. The UK has a history of working closely with others to tackle shared threats and has accomplished much as an active partner in NATO, the world’s most successful defence and peacekeeping organisation. Its contribution to a number of stabilisation and reconstruction programmes following international conflicts, and more recently its role in the creation of the G20 group of nations, are witness to this. The latter has enabled joint commitments and actions to tackle 21st century international terrorism, through a greater sharing of information and data and the setting up of the Financial Action Task Force to tackle the financing of terrorism.

Effective action on global threats such as terrorism can also take place more indirectly. The British Council is the UK’s international cultural relations organisation, acting preventively through culture, education and civil society programmes in order to change the course of individual lives. By giving people positive and constructive routes through life, communities and ultimately nations are strengthened. Strong, stable and democratic nations that are responsive to their citizens’ needs can contribute greatly to tackling terrorism and other threats to international order.

These examples demonstrate the essential requirement for international collaboration to achieve regional aims. Specifically, if the UK is to develop a long-term response to achieving peace and security on a global basis, it has to maintain and potentially expand its alliances and collaborations with others to address the root causes of instability worldwide. Economic prosperity and tackling poverty and disease rely on this collaborationist approach, but there

cannot be prosperity and the eradication of poverty and disease without security and peace first and foremost. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Michelle, thank you very much indeed for that. I now call on Praise Johnson to continue the case for perspective two, “The UK should aim to be a global leader”.

### **Praise Johnson (Archbishop Beck Catholic College):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

To discuss whether the UK should aim to be a global leader, we must determine what it means to be a world leader in the first place. Global leaders today help to advance the world, be it through fashion or technology. The definitions of what makes a global leader are wide-ranging, but they all boil down to one thing; they reflect an aspect of the ideal. To be a global leader means being a point of reference for what the masses need, such as ideal healthcare and education. While they may not be the utopia of what is wanted, they still reflect the best exemplary model that is desired. To lead the world in education, economics and even healthcare would mean that domestically the standard would have to be high. Therefore, the first group to benefit from this increase in standards would be those living in the UK.

In so many ways the UK is already regarded as a global leader. Look at our values. The rule of law underpins the legal and practical structure of so many countries. We are in the mother of all parliaments, with the Westminster model influencing parliamentary democracy all over the world. On the domestic front, our established National Health Service is admired internationally. Currently the NHS stands to emerge as a world leader in digital health, pioneering a direction for other countries.

What I am saying is that, given our current position in the world, with our great assets, it is our duty to aim to become a better global leader in order to help the lives of many around the world. We have the assets in our nation to do so. For example, our strong economy, the fourth largest in the world, will allow us to specialise in banking, high technology and complex electronics. Now that we have withdrawn from the EU, we can establish new trade deals with 192 countries. In diplomacy, taking a greater lead in the UN Security Council will allow us to field more diplomatic missions and, for example, establish peace talks in the Middle East.

For a small nation, we have an extremely advanced military that will allow us to conduct peacekeeping operations and deal with global threats if necessary. As a final result, we can aim to contribute to progress all over the world, and to the betterment of society. We cannot let the betterment of human lives be confined by citizenship. Thank you very much.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Praise, thank you very much for that. I now call on Marie-Gabrielle Gbondo to continue the case for perspective three, “The UK should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems”.

### **Marie-Gabrielle Gbondo (Holy Family Catholic School and Sixth Form):**

Lord Speaker and fellow debaters, imagine a world where thousands of people are homeless, where you cannot even get to a train station without someone begging for money, and where you cannot receive the healthcare you need. Well, ladies and gentlemen, you do not have to imagine it because it is the world we are living in now. My house believes that the UK should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems.

First I should like to clarify some things. The UK will remain in all the organisations we are part of currently, such as the Paris climate agreement and many more. We have to honour our commitments. My next point is that for many years the NHS has been neglected by the government. They have failed to fund the NHS with a sufficient amount of money, to the point where it is facing a humanitarian crisis. As a British organisation said, the NHS is facing a humanitarian crisis as hospital ambulance services struggle to keep up with rising demand. For example, patients do not have enough beds and are waiting for trolleys and assistance. Our junior doctors are not being paid enough for the number of hours they work. They get paid less than the average wage in the UK. This is an abomination. How can some of the most skilled people in our society be neglected and underpaid? How can we focus on other countries’ humanitarian problems when the UK has its own to solve?

My second point is that the UK should not get involved with other countries’ affairs, because of what has happened in the past. In the past, the UK took it upon itself to help other countries, but somehow hindered them. India is a good example. At one point the relationship between India and Britain was that between trading partners. But by 1858 India was under the direct rule of the British Crown. During that period Britain helped India with infrastructure. However, Britain took millions from taxpayers. It took advantage of and exploited people who could not pay their taxes. The people were treated as second-class citizens in their own country. This is why the UK should not get involved in other countries’ affairs—because, when it does, it often oversteps the mark. What Britain did to India still affects some of the poorest people in its society. The majority of the time, when Britain gets involved with another country, it ends badly.

In conclusion, my house believe that the UK should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems. I urge you all to agree with my house’s motion. Thank you for listening.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed for that. I must thank all the opening speakers for the way they put their case, and also for the way they kept to time. As my colleagues here will know, that is extraordinarily unusual in this House.

We will now begin the floor debates, where we will hear prepared contributions from speakers whose name I will call out. They should be no longer than 90 seconds. Those of you who wish to make impromptu contributions and whose hand I select from those raised may also take up to 90 seconds. Christine will ring the bell once to signal that you are out of time. Please, if you are speaking from the back benches and your name has not been announced, let us know who you are.

I should also say, as I mentioned this morning, that, in line with normal Lords procedure, I will hand over at some stage in the floor debate to my colleague Lord Lexden, who is one of our Deputy Speakers. However, I will rejoin you later.

I now call on Charlotte Marriott to continue the argument for perspective one.

### **Charlotte Marriott (De Aston School):**

Lord Speaker and fellow debaters, the Commonwealth, European Union, European countries and global partners are significantly important in terms of achieving common regional aims. As someone who lives in the United Kingdom, I believe that these aims will benefit not just us but our surroundings. They will help us grow overall as a society.

For example, the Commonwealth provides a space where big and small nations can speak as equals. It is a voluntary association that allows everyone to have a voice. Additionally, the Commonwealth encourages developing members to raise their standards of democracy, rights and governance, and encourages all 52 members to come to collective agreement. Furthermore, despite popular belief, the Commonwealth does not consist just of countries that were British colonies but includes new members such as Rwanda, Mozambique and many more. Moreover, as Her Majesty the Queen said on Commonwealth Day, the cornerstone on which peace is founded is simply respect for and understanding of one another. Working together, we build peace by defending the dignity of every individual and community. This is one of the more popular regional aims. As the Queen said, "Working together, we build peace."

On 12 September 2017 the UK offered a deep security partnership with the EU, post-Brexit, in the face of current global threats, with the aim of working closely together to prevent illegal migration, terrorism, cyber threats and state-based threats. By creating this partnership, we will not only work closely to achieve said aims but will work towards an alliance with the European Union. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed. That speech was notable for a number of reasons. I think that it was the first time until now that anyone has mentioned Brexit, which is extraordinarily unusual in these debates. I will now take a view from the floor, so please raise your hand if you would like to speak.

### **Jack Welch (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK):**

Thank you very much, Lord Speaker, and good afternoon fellow debaters and noble Lords in the chamber today. Seventy years ago this year, the UK formally legislated to end its rule over the nation states of India and Pakistan. While this can only have been right and just according to the historic assessment afterwards, Britain has seemingly entered an identity crisis in the decades since as it tries to forge a new role for itself. With a changing landscape and without the clout of imperial reach across continents, the argument is that there will be only a decline in our fortunes and in the worldwide perception of us.

This is simply untrue. Yes, I accept that certainly we have declined in relative terms, and some might describe this as talking Britain down in one form or another, but the detractors often overlook the readjustment of the UK towards using its power for the development of other nations alongside our international allies: namely, through soft power. Whether it is through our role in establishing the European Convention on Human Rights, sadly, much undervalued these days, or in supporting the empowerment of countries facilitated by the 0.7% in foreign aid, we can take heart in our capacity for altruism and influence. Today, coincidentally, is also World AIDS Day, for those who are not aware of it.

Britain has changed, and the days have gone when power was a byword for domination and supremacy. While we cannot cure the world's ills with our international allies, we now co-exist among world partners to stand for humanity, for hope and open hearts and minds, and for acting as a global ally. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed. I now call Frances O'Mahoney-Ekers to argue for perspective two.

### **Frances O'Mahoney-Ekers (Whitley Bay High School):**

Lord Speaker and fellow debaters, I will start my speech by defining what a modern-day global leader looks like. A global leader sets an example to the rest of the globe of what a peaceful and successful society looks like, and aids other countries when needed. It does not necessarily mean building an empire and forcing our power on other countries. We should aim to do this because we are the fifth-largest economy in the world, out of 195 countries, which for us, we can all agree, is very beneficial.

But why not share this strength and success with other people in other countries whose need is equal if not greater than ours? We could use our strength to aid humanitarian crises such as the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and to advocate for people who do not have people to advocate for them.

As a diplomatically powerful country we do not necessarily use the physical force of the military, but we could use our power to aid other countries through other means such as communication or, more extremely, economic sanctions. If we advocate for peace globally, it will cause other countries to follow and, with a domino effect, hopefully other countries will follow and eventually the world will become a better place for everyone globally, allowing everyone to prosper. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed. Now a view from the floor.



## Floor speeches

### **Thrinayani Ramakrishnan (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

Good afternoon, Lord Speaker. My name is Thrinayani and I am the British Youth Council's UK ambassador to the Commonwealth. I chose to stand for the position of Young Ambassador to the Commonwealth and to work to raise the UK's youth voice within the Commonwealth because I strongly feel that Britain should work with the Commonwealth and other global partners to create positive change through collaboration. This is why I am advocating for Motion 1.

The Commonwealth embodies almost one-third of the world's population and is predominantly made up of young people: more than 60% are under 30. With such a strong network, bursting with refreshing, rich and diverse thoughts, why should we not harness this opportunity to work together and achieve regional aims?

The UK will be hosting the Commonwealth Youth Forum for the first time in history in April 2018, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will be held soon afterwards. This will provide the greatest opportunity for us to move forward, to challenge ideas and to be challenged, as well as to work with a vibrant group of countries to discuss prosperity, sustainability, fairness and security.

Unity is the biggest strength, which is why I believe that for the UK, working closely with the Commonwealth, EU and other global partners will be the right choice. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed. Now a view from the floor.

### **Daniel Southern (Whitley Bay High School):**

For too long, taxpayers have had a huge proportion of their income taken away in order to provide support for other countries. I am not saying that helping foreign countries is bad, but we are currently in a crisis. More and more employed people are having to visit food banks in order to survive. The fact that workers cannot even afford the basics like food and water proves that we cannot afford to help other countries. Figures for 2016 show that we paid £13 billion in foreign aid. Why are we spending an unnecessarily large sum of money on other countries rather than using it to support our country, our economy, our people? We need to focus on making Britain strong and wealthy. Then, and only then, can we begin to help other countries.

Even if we could afford to give foreign aid, which we cannot, whenever we try to help out with foreign crises, we do not seem to have much success. An example of this is our intervention in Afghanistan, which led only to the deaths of innocent people and British soldiers. We tend not to be impartial when dealing with conflict. Another example of this is how we choose to ignore human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia. We tend only to make problems worse for other countries and therefore it is in everyone's best interests that we British should focus on our own economy, our own people and our own problems. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. Let us take a view from the floor.

### **Sereno Kean (Broxburn Academy):**

The United Kingdom should aim to be a global leader as the main challenge we face today is neglect: neglect of responsibilities, of the rights of others and of international incidents. One simply has to look at the news to see that all the major incidents which are reported are from western countries, not poorer ones. We have seen "Pray for Paris" and "Pray for Manchester", but we have not seen "Pray for Lebanon" or countries in a similar situation. Just this week it came out that African citizens are being sold as slaves in Libya, something which has reached our attention only because of shares on social media, not from any major news outlets. If the UK stood up vocally against this, would it stop? We cannot be sure, but we must try. We cannot sit back and do nothing. To quote a famous London artist whose parents are from Nigeria, one of the countries from which people are being stolen and sold as slaves, "That is not me and it should not be the rest of us either." Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed. Now another view from the floor.

### **Kanika Thakur (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

I would like to speak in favour of the role of the United Kingdom in building relations in the 21st century by working in close collaboration with the countries of the Commonwealth as well as the European Union. I will focus on the two most important things, the first of which is terrorism. The human race is facing a major threat: the terror threat. Conflicts in the Middle East and the recent London and Manchester attacks signify that this is a problem not only for the Commonwealth and the developing nations but also for the developed nations, including the UK and the US. Secondly, the UK already has a tangible role to play in the achievement of the sustainable development goals set up by the United Nations. They include alleviating poverty, homelessness and climate change, to name a few. The history of Europe strongly signifies that when people come together, great things are done, so having the UK working in close collaboration with other countries is needed to achieve not only regional aims, but also those of security and international peace. Working together, we can bring peace and protect the integrity of every individual. This can be made possible only by practical and tangible collaboration. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much. Now, Namir Chowdhury.

### **Namir Chowdhury (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK):**

We now mark 99 years since women gained the vote and more than 50 since discrimination was outlawed, yet we live in a society that is as fragmented as ever. Every day seems to bring a fresh crisis and yesterday's is simply lost. If we go back just a year, only one topic dominated the country. Yes, it was a momentous decision that will shape us in the years to come, but it demonstrated an internalising mindset which shows how easily we can forget about the rest of the world. That is a risk we cannot afford to take given the issues that affect us all. I am a proud British Bangladeshi, but I watch as climate-change-fuelled disasters ravage my country, including one that affected 8.5 million people, destroying livelihoods and even lives. Bangladesh lies helpless in the midst of its flooding. Meanwhile we can see the brutal ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims and 130 innocent Yemeni children dying daily in a crisis that we are complicit in. These are two of the most devastating humanitarian crises that we have ever faced and yet we are doing nothing. Have we become desensitised? Seeing a Syrian child washed up on the shore does not seem to make us cry anymore. But it does not have to be this way. The UK can champion global partnerships across the world and challenge these issues. Despite decades of colonisation, the Commonwealth remains an exciting partnership of rising states, and with 60% of its population aged under 30, its potential is limitless. So let us approach these tumultuous times with an outward perspective, a determination



to embrace our differences and a desire to be part of a generation that truly works together to create a legacy of hope. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you, and now a view from the floor.

### **Ben Carr (Queen Mary's Grammar School):**

I put it to you all that the United Kingdom has a moral responsibility to be a global leader. In days not too far gone by, we were once the colonial rulers of the world, holding more than a quarter of the world's population and landmass. We must not forget this, although we must also not dwell on the past. We must ensure that these nations can continue to prosper and grow. While they are not there yet, it is our duty as a world leader to bring this to them. I need not remind you that many countries which were former colonies of the United Kingdom are now in a dire state. It is up to us to save them because no other nation cares enough. There are so many debates like this going on in the world now which the right wing seems to win. We seem to have abandoned what we have held so dear. To neglect our responsibility in the world as a global leader is to neglect what built this House, this nation and the world: the United Kingdom. Thank you.

### **Lord Lexden:**

Thank you. Let us take another view from the floor.

### **Mohammed Ahmed (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

In light of the challenges currently being faced by the United Kingdom is the risk that will be posed by Brexit. After that, the UK may be working in some if not complete isolation. It is extremely important for us to work closely with the Commonwealth and with European countries, and that we have global partners to achieve a secure and prosperous future for our children. In relation to the Commonwealth, formed of a diverse group of 52 countries that includes both developed and developing nations, these markets offer a wealth of opportunity to United Kingdom businesses in all sectors from the primary to the tertiary. That certainly shows that working closely with these countries will help us to achieve a stronger and more united Britain.

Moving on to European countries, the UK has a strong history of collaborating with its European partners on science matters and of developing EU, pan-European and bilateral initiatives. To make the most of this opportunity to continue with scientific collaboration with the EU, the government must start making firm commitments on migration, regulations and on scientific funding which all move in the same direction to ensure that the UK can truly benefit from being a partner of other European countries. My fellow debaters, it can clearly be shown that it will benefit us to maintain relationships with global partners to achieve common regional aims. Thank you.

### **Lord Lexden:**

Thank you. I would now like to call upon Kate O'Donovan to speak in favour of perspective two.

### **Kate O'Donovan (Broxburn Academy):**

I passionately believe that the UK, acting as a global leader, can make the world we all live in a better place. We see a multitude of problems around the world that no one is dealing with. The UK should stand up and be counted. We have a strong history of working against injustice. We stood against fascism and defeated Nazi Germany. We stood against communism and authoritarian regimes in the Cold War. Why should we not stand against injustice today? If we want to, we will.

Muslims are facing forced relocation and ethnic cleansing in Myanmar. The shocking civil war in Syria rages on, creating more and more refugees. Violence against women is still prevalent all around the world. While our country is not without its faults, we must stand up and lead the fight against these injustices. We cannot be passive bystanders in such an iniquitous world. It seems like almost a daily occurrence that we see more and more stories of sexual harassment by people in positions of power. This all came from one person being brave enough to stand up and act against injustice. If we were to stand up and challenge injustice around the world that could have a snowball effect. An example of that is the UK's controversial trade deals with countries where women are seen as second-class citizens. If we set the example of not dealing with such countries, that could be a positive force for good in the world. There are people all over the world who are just waiting for someone to stand up for them, and that should be the UK. We must learn lessons from history and take up the role of a global leader. We must speak out for those who do not have a voice. Thank you.

### **Lord Lexden:**

Thank you, and now a further view from the floor.

### **Ivan Stebyluk (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

I represent the University of Worcester and I extend my thanks to the Royal Commonwealth Society for its invitation. Today I will be arguing in favour of the UK withdrawing from the affairs of foreign nations and instead focusing on our problems within. The idea of pax Britannica has existed since the early 1800s when Britain held the Empire, an idea that is still mentioned today by many politicians in this House. I believe that this ideal is outdated. The current party line still seems to focus on the UK being the world's hegemon. Unparalleled access to social media and information has plainly changed politics. People now have the ability to pass instant judgment on all foreign policies. Any intervention is scrutinised at a microscopic level; think of the shelling in Gaza and the drone strikes in Syria.

Getting straight to the point, western colonialism and neo-colonialism is undeniably responsible for the considerable destruction of human lives, most of it performed in the name of democracy and freedom. To illustrate my point, 55 million people have been killed as a direct result of western-initiated wars and pro-western coups since World War Two. That is equivalent to the entire population of the UK in 1968 being wiped out. Hundreds of millions more have died silently of starvation and poverty, so why continue to engage in the influence of foreign governments? In a politically unstable time, isolationism and the creation of manufacturing jobs is the answer. Thank you.

### **Lord Lexden:**

Many thanks. I would now like to call on Marianne Hamill to speak for perspective three.

### **Marianne Hamill (Hunter House College):**

The United Kingdom is a nation full of animal lovers, so let me present my argument with this analogy. If I decided to adopt a puppy, it would be imperative that I attend an interview with the sanctuary. I would have to prove that I am wise, level-headed and financially capable. But the key question is this: can I take care of myself, never mind a puppy? If those are the small questions asked when someone wants to adopt a puppy, let us ask the same questions about the UK's capability to feed, train, shelter and clean up after the other nations of the world, especially when they have left a horrendous mess all over the floor. It is about time we put a leash on this.

Let us be real and take a look at the UK. Are we even capable of looking after ourselves? Are we capable of looking after our people, never mind the nations of the world? We talk about feeding other nations, but look at our food banks. We talk about bringing shelter to other

nations, but look at our homeless. We talk about bringing peace to other nations, yet enjoy being at each other's throats. I would not like the UK to look after a puppy, never mind lead global affairs. If we do not have our own house in order, the puppy will just bite us back. Thank you.

**Lord Lexden:**

Very many thanks. Let us take a further contribution from the floor.

**Harry Cook (Whitley Bay High School):**

I am here to talk about the UK and Europe, and I believe that I am the first speaker to mention Brexit by name. I do that with no joy and I am as bored with it as you are, but still. The UK and Europe have caused many wars throughout our history, especially in the colonial years. All the problems that previous speakers have mentioned have been caused by us and other European countries. It is not only our moral right but our obligation to fix the problems that we have caused, and we do not have to do this alone. Whether or not we leave the EU is not an issue because we still have one common ground: we are European and we have a history together. I believe that these issues can be fixed by working together. As a previous speaker mentioned, we have a huge number of diplomats that go around the world in order to try to fix these issues. We have so many other problems that can be fixed, not just the ones that we have caused. I mention climate change and others that must be dealt with, but we cannot do it alone and we cannot focus only on ourselves. Our relationship with other countries which not only did we help to found but have given independence to really should come first and we should help them. Thank you.

**Lord Lexden:**

I should now like to ask Emma Skelton to contribute to the debate.

**Emma Skelton (British Council):**

Trust is the basis of all relationships be they between people or between countries. As the UK navigates its departure from the EU, trust will be crucial to Britain forging or maintaining relationships with other countries. Increased levels of trust are associated with increased interest in doing business with the UK, visiting the UK as a tourist and studying here. Various studies also show links between increased trust leading to increased interest in foreign direct investment and exports. Trust therefore not only increases the UK's standing in the world, it also paves the way for a more prosperous Britain.

What makes people trust the UK? Often cited are the UK's strengths in its higher education system and cultural institutions. In particular, participation in cultural activities with the UK is associated with a 10-point increase in trust, be it through experiencing UK arts, culture or education, learning the English language or benefiting from UK expertise in sports, science or civil society projects. In general, the people of the UK and its institutions are and continue to be widely trusted, but we cannot afford to be complacent. This is why the UK should focus on strengthening cultural and educational ties with other countries if it aims to maintain and strengthen its relationships on the world stage. Thank you.

**Lord Lexden:**

Thank you. I now call for a further contribution from the floor.

**Vincenzo Sinaguglia (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK):**

Let us continue talking about Brexit. I would like to introduce an aspect of this debate, which has been largely overlooked or not deemed to be relevant in government negotiations in Brussels regarding our future outside the European Union. This concerns the importance of the views of young adults on which direction the nation should take, be it a hard or soft Brexit approach. As the next generation of leaders of this country, it is paramount that our collective ideas are listened to and considered by the Brexit Secretary and his team with absolute respect. That is because, to be perfectly frank, it is the present leaders of this country who are in effect the custodians of our future, one that hangs in the balance on a wide range of major issues to young adults, ranging from the impact of Brexit on the student population to attracting the finest young brains and skilled blue-collar workers from around Europe, which we have been doing for many years. It is these young people who have proved to be the solid bedrock of the multi-skilled and talented workforce that the UK can pride itself on having today. It is the ability of us as a united nation, one that is inclusive of the opinions of all in a famously democratic society, to include the voice of young adults among us all that truly makes us the global leader. As the individuals who are going to live and work within a UK outside the European Union, we are the next generation that will have to deal with its repercussions, negotiating a different-looking jobs landscape. Thank you.

**Lord Lexden:**

Many thanks. We will now take another contribution from the floor.

**Saira Bano (Newham Sixth Form College):**

I will be speaking in favour of the first perspective, which is about the UK working closely with the Commonwealth and global partners to achieve common regional aims. It is impractical for Britain to seclude itself from foreign countries. The UK is a part of strategic alliances made around the world such as NATO, and giving up these connections would pose a great threat to both the British economy and the security of its citizens. Britain has a longstanding history of intervention around the world, most notably its Empire which controlled large parts of the world for many years. Because of that, the UK has treaties and agreements with its former colonies called the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth countries support each other, and Britain is the most important of these. For example, we buy bananas from the Caribbean. The livelihoods of small producers are highly dependent on continued trade with the UK. Stopping that trade would be disastrous for many Commonwealth countries and would reduce British economic growth. The world is becoming even more globalised. Trade between countries is increasing so isolation is not the correct approach we should take. When we take into account that we will be leaving the EU, trade is more important than ever. We need foreign relations to maintain the security of British citizens and keep the economy strong, so let us not distance ourselves. Thank you.

**Lord Lexden:**

Thank you. Let us have another view from the floor.

**Lucy Boardman (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK):**

International relations are all about the way in which countries and non-state actors interact with each other on the global level. As the world becomes increasingly more globalised, countries are having to co-operate with each other more and more. As such, it is vital that the UK does not choose to isolate itself from the international community. Worldwide issues such as global poverty and climate change cannot be tackled alone, and domestic issues relating to trade, the economy, security and social affairs are undoubtedly linked to those of other nations.

That is why the UK should aim to work with the Commonwealth, European countries, the EU and global partners to achieve common goals. We must not forget about our independence as a country. Instead of making unilateral decisions, regular, open and transparent dialogue is needed to ensure productive collaboration between states. This is how the UK can support and contribute to international relations in the 21st century and help to produce well thought-out productive policies that work towards common regional aims and a safer future. Thank you.

#### **Lord Lexden:**

Thank you. We will take another view from the floor.

#### **Rohith Mukkapati (Queen Mary's Grammar School):**

You may be aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently released the Budget. A popular newspaper described his policies as "unobjectionable, but also weak". That is not the Chancellor's fault. Britain has fallen down the ranks from being the fifth to the sixth strongest country in the world. Living standards are stagnating and wages have not risen since the financial crisis in 2008. The forecast for productivity, which is the main factor not only for our current but also our future economy, has been set at a much lower rate than previously, and even that is optimistic. It does not consider the fact that net migration may fall due to Brexit and we even encounter a no-deal Brexit, which is still possible. We are currently in a weak and vulnerable position, not only economically but also politically.

For the first time since it was established in 1941, the International Court of Justice does not have a British judge among its ranks. This is of concern to a nation that claims to be a global power and influence. Our politics at home are also facing many problems. Although it is not as prominent in the UK as it is in the USA, we can see a rise in populist policies. On that note, I would like to refer to a point made by an earlier speaker. In order to help other nations around the world, Britain must first seek to become strong and united. Thank you.

#### **Lord Lexden:**

Again, many thanks. I would now like to call on Chloe Chook argue for perspective two.

#### **Chloe Chuck (De Aston School):**

As a privileged country that is wealthy both in terms of money and expertise, we should aim to be a global leader. Countries less advantaged than ourselves need a confident, capable leader to point them in the direction of change, and we could be the catalyst of that change. Undoubtedly, we are a nation that can revel in a wonderfully diverse heterogeneity of talent. We have world-renowned mathematicians, doctors and writers. We have had, do have and will have people who are single-handedly capable of altering the way we see, think and create. With such capacity and potential, would it not profit us all if we shared our talents? We should be the world's pioneering leaders. From our world-class knowledge and prowess, diseases that wipe out millions in third world countries could be eradicated. Innocent lives could be saved merely by showing a bit of compassion. In 2014, the NHS was declared the best healthcare system by a panel of experts that rated its care superior to that of countries which spend far more on health. In the USA, for example, babies are born already in debt. The delivery itself can cost upwards of \$10,000; compare that with the UK where prenatal, birth and postnatal care are all free. Having a family member die simply because they could not afford a procedure is unimaginable to someone who has lived in the UK for their entire life, but this is the harsh reality for millions around the globe. It is so easy to ignore when it is not your child, your mother or your grandparent. Thank you.

#### **Lord Lexden:**

Thank you for that contribution. Let us take another speaker.

#### **Joe Porter (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK):**

I am a Stonewall young campaigner and a local councillor in North Staffordshire. Our United Kingdom has a proud recent history on human rights issues. I believe that LGBT issues are human rights issues and that they are a priority which we need to push forward as we leave the European Union. In the 50 years since homosexuality was partly decriminalised, this year is the 50th anniversary which we have been celebrating. Britain has become a more modern, inclusive and tolerant country. Recently we had same-sex marriage, gay and bisexual men are now able to donate blood, and homophobic bullying is finally being prioritised thanks to the work of our current education Secretary, who has really pushed this forward. However, this is not the case across the entire Commonwealth. In fact, in 36 out of the 52 Commonwealth nations, homosexuality is still illegal, and that is shocking. In some of those countries people can even be given the death penalty for being a gay man like I am. If I went to Nigeria, in some parts of that country I would face the death penalty for any homosexual acts, even though it is my right to choose who I love. As we leave the European Union and become a more global Britain, we should aim to reach out to the world. We should aim to come out for LGBT people. When we form trade deals with these countries, we should raise human rights issues like the ones I am talking about and we could make that a priority. So let us come out for LGBT and make the world a more loving and accepting place for all, regardless of who we choose to love. Thank you.

#### **Lord Lexden:**

Many thanks for that contribution. I would now like to call on Pavandeep Josan to argue for perspective three.

#### **Pavandeep Josan (Queen Mary's Grammar School):**

We have heard many impassioned arguments from all sides of the debate. However, while much has been made of our economic power, my honourable friend mentioned that we are the fifth largest economy in the world, this economic growth and expansion is founded on the actions of multinational firms with profits that leave our borders. We are no global economic leader, we are merely a marketplace where the biggest firms in the world come to trade. Just look at the inflation in property prices, especially in London but also across the country as a whole. The next generation will be called Generation Rent for a reason. They will never be able to own their own homes; that will become a dream that is unattainable and unachievable. Food bank use has increased by 40% over the past five years, and this is the greatest betrayal of all. We are no global military leader too. Our huge military budget has not stopped us from getting involved and stuck in the quagmire of Iraq or Afghanistan, leading to the loss of British lives in countries that have no connection to us and with people who have nothing to do with us. Imagine if that money was spent on our own problems, because the crux of this argument is the state of our public services and the fact that food bank usage has increased so much. Given these severe problems at home, should we not focus on those first rather than try to take a position of global leadership that we no longer possess? The days of our Empire are long gone and let us not pretend that they still exist. Thank you.

#### **Lord Lexden:**

Many thanks. I would now like to call on Pearce Robinson to contribute to this debate.

#### **Pearce Robinson (Commonwealth Common Ties Network):**

The United Kingdom is at an inflection point in its history. Strategic foresight and global alliance building will be critical to maintaining its position as a global agenda setter and a pillar of international liberal architecture. As the Brexit negotiations continue, Britain must look to a future beyond Europe to its most steadfast alliance, the Commonwealth. The chairman of this House's

international relations committee has said that the hope for democracy, good government and the rule of law, and the projection of our values through soft power, is increasingly going to have to be realised through the rest of the English-speaking world; in other words, the Commonwealth. The point is well taken. The Commonwealth represents 52 nations that are scattered strategically across the world. They represent 2.4 billion people, which is one third of the world's population. This means that the Commonwealth can become what the EU has not, a bulwark against the rise of illiberal organisations, state-run capitalism and a truly global alliance that is bold in its advocacy of democracy and universal rights. The Commonwealth as a strategic central alliance along with a renewed relationship with the EU is essential for Britain's foreign policy position going forward to achieve common global and regional objectives, and that is why I encourage this House to join me and stand in support of perspective one. Thank you.

### **Lord Lexden:**

Thank you. We will take another view from the floor.

### **Catherine Woolley (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association HQ):**

I want to address two of the main issues which have been raised. The first is how we are meant to give foreign aid while also looking after our own country domestically and, secondly, whether we should provide foreign aid. Domestically, if we want to see the continuation of the NHS and if we as a generation want to be looked after into our old age, we need economic growth and restructuring. The NHS is not sustainable as it is at the moment. If we want to see the reduction of homelessness and unemployment, we need economic growth and restructuring. We also need to look at giving foreign aid. It is only 0.7%, which is a pitiful crumb from the cake we indulge in. Of that 0.7%, in 2015 only 17% went towards humanitarian aid, which means that only that percentage went into looking after people. The rest was given to the UN and other states. We need to restructure this and look at what we are doing because that 0.7% could be used so much better and help many more people. Those we help through foreign aid are our trading partners of the future. We cannot turn in on ourselves but we cannot seek to be a leader because that inflates our own self-worth. We need to look outwards and better ourselves through international respect. That is why I support perspective one. Thank you.

### **Lord Lexden**

Thank you. I would now like to call on Lewis Longman to speak for perspective one.

### **Lewis Longman (Archbishop Beck Catholic College):**

Our great nation is built upon the foundations of trade, co-operation and liberty, always remaining at the head of world humanitarian and diplomatic efforts. It is a leader and guardian of basic human liberties, a true force that spreads the values of democracy and fair governance. Britain stands as a bastion for all nations. However, we are at a pivotal moment in the development of the world political stage. As an international community, we must stand steadfast against ideological shifts such as the rising tide of populism and xenophobic far-right views that challenge our modern and progressive values. The rampant breeding ground of hate that our poorest communities have become has resulted in an upheaval in the world political landscape. More and more we see extreme views becoming mainstream party rhetoric, normalising these views across Europe and beyond. This cannot continue. As a nation we must stand and fight through peace, trade and understanding, working with our international partners to achieve our goal of a truly free and equal world. We must work to improve the situation of vast numbers of our people who have flocked to the ideological extremes. As our Prime Minister has said, these are challenging times, but I am confident that a global Britain has the ability and indeed the responsibility to rise to the moment, so let us step up to the task and do so together with the confidence and conviction of a truly global Britain. Thank you.

### **Lord Lexden:**

Thank you. Let us have another view from the floor.

### **Patrick Green (Cardinal Wiseman Roman Catholic High School):**

I am a member of the Co-operative Party and co-operation is the topic that I would like to discuss. For centuries, the great European powers were fighting. Now, thanks to the advent of the European Union, it is laughable to think that France, Germany and Spain would ever go to war with each other again. Instead, trading was considered the best way to develop the prosperity of our country. The misery of war has not been repeated on these shores since the European Union was founded.

Co-operation has helped this country greatly and we should all unite against the greatest threats to this world. All countries should unite against the terrorist threat, which threatens to ruin our way of living, and against climate change, which could ruin the very planet. If we co-operate, we can achieve these goals; if we co-operate, we can defeat these threats. If not, we will continue squabbling while these threats will continue to encroach on our privacy, our rights and our nation. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. Now Andrew McNeil will argue for perspective two.

### **Andrew McNeil (Cardinal Wiseman Roman Catholic High School):**

Good afternoon, Lord Speaker and fellow debaters. The country has voted. It is clear to see that we are not okay with our once prominent voice being drowned out by the sheer multitude of other countries in the EU, which were not allowing us to flourish independently and not allowing us to lead as we have many times before. Now it is our chance. It is our chance to grasp the opportunity to reinstate ourselves as the global leader we can be and once were and to develop our already redeeming qualities, such as education.

However, I believe that this does not have to mean self-segregation. Taking us off the playground that we shape with other global leaders, such as Canada, Germany and France, seems completely counterproductive. Complete isolation is not the best route to take. We need to strike a balance. As a confident and collected country, we must have the ability to work closely with other countries when that is needed, as on global issues such as the environment, but we should not be thrust into situations like an economic crisis that we do not want to be in. That is the best way for us to become a global leader. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

I call the lady right at the end of the second row.

### **Hannah Graham (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

The UK should absolutely aim to work closely with the Commonwealth, European countries, the EU and global partners. Individually, we are but one drop. Together, we are an ocean. Despite the environment meaning the air that we breathe, the water that we drink and the food that we eat, it is not talked about enough in British politics.

Climate change is the poster child for global diplomacy today. In fact, it can be regarded as the most complex global policy disaster of our lifetime. Climate change is global in both its cause and its effect dimensions. 2016 was the hottest year on record. The target set in the Paris Agreement will be breached within just a few years if we do not hurry up. Forty thousand premature deaths



a year are attributed to air pollution in the UK. Our wildlife and nature are in crisis, too: 60% of species are in long-term decline, while 15% are at risk of extinction. I should not have to mention the thousands of innocent people who will lose their lives and homes every day due to climate-related disasters.

The main creators of climate change are the rich, predominantly white industrial countries of the western world. We suffer the least, while the poor, predominantly black and minority ethnic origin, countries of the global south suffer the most, while contributing least to the problem. How is this fair? Climate change is a collective action problem and there should be a built-in compulsion for addressing the root causes through international co-operation. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. Now I call Isabel Younane.

### **Isabel Younane (British Council):**

Lord Speaker and fellow debaters, the UK has pledged to embrace the world and to seek to build a global, outward-looking Britain that is confident on the world stage. We have sought to be a leader, to strengthen international connections and to forge new trade agreements. But I think the phrase “global leader” begs the simple question: what does it mean to lead? We are a nation that comprises less than 1% of the world’s population. Militarily, we are outperformed by global heavyweights such as the US, China, Russia and India.

That is why we asked 11,000 aspiring young leaders this question: “What does good leadership mean to you?” Despite the fact that they hailed from 11 different countries with vastly different systems of governance, we found the same priorities for leadership: collaboration and teamwork, bringing people in rather than locking them out and bridging divides rather than building walls. The traditional military metaphor of leadership is beginning to look a bit outdated. We see this in real life as well. You are usually likely to have more friends if you can attract people with your wit, humour and sincerity, by the things you have in common and by your shared values.

This is how cultural relations work. It helps to create the trust that is essential for realising a state’s international objectives. In the words of a famous life coach, it helps us to “win friends and influence people”. Mutuality is the defining element. It is a two-way process—it can be a student-teacher relationship in a language class, for example. These mutually beneficial and long-lasting connections are a vital aspect of the UK’s national reputation. As a global cultural leader, the UK can maintain a position of influence. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. Now a view from the floor.

### **Jarrold Grant (Broxburn Academy):**

Lord Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, fellow debaters, I feel that we must first acknowledge where the UK sits on the ladder of global power and influence. We do not sit at the top any more. Soaring above us are powerhouses such as the United States and China. To further illustrate my point about just how powerful the United States is, in the United Nations, if the US does not back a plan, the plan fails. It is a global leader. We are not the US. We do not have that power, nor is it tangible that, in our current state, we will ever have that power.

That is why I feel that we should not be a global leader and why we should work with the EU and other global partners to try to establish tangible methods to achieve common regional aims, such as helping to alleviate poverty in the third world and in Europe as a whole. We cannot isolate ourselves and say, “We must focus on only our country”. Due to our past of colonialism and

other such matters that we have been involved in, we have caused various amounts of these issues. We cannot shove someone in the dirt and then say, “Well, we still need to work on ourselves”. Thank you for listening.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. Now Caleb Davidson.

### **Caleb Davidson (Broxburn Academy):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker. Using teamwork and climate change have been discussed a lot during this debate, but I feel that there are a few inherent problems with the views of perspectives 1 and 2. The view in perspective one does not simply solve the world’s problems. Let us take the Paris Agreement, for example. This is a relevant recent incident in which the UK has worked closely with other countries from around the globe to try to achieve not only a regional aim but a global aim. This teamwork is wonderful in theory but, quite frankly, it has not achieved anything at all. In fact, we are still producing a large quantity of carbon emissions and we are on track to produce a greater quantity than we did before the agreement was signed.

Concerning perspective two, once again using the Paris Agreement as an example, we can see that global leaders do not really have much influence over anyone. The US, one of the world’s most important leaders, recently pulled out of the agreement and it has been condemned for it. No other country has followed suit. In fact, even its own people do not agree with its decision. If a global leader like America holds such little sway over other countries, what hope does the UK have to influence anyone if we were to seek this leadership position?

What is more, is it even possible for one country to be a global leader in this context? Look at China. It is a global leader turned baby sitter to North Korea. But it has no power here, at least in this instance. It cannot stop North Korea throwing its toys out of the pram. But the issue is that the toys are missiles and the pram is right next to South Korea and Japan. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much. I will go to the crossbenches because you have been rather ignored up to now.

### **Amy McInerney (Archbishop Beck Catholic College):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker. I am opposing the argument for global leadership. When we think of global leaders, we can always assume that we will be thinking about the United States of America. Now, from a picturesque view, we see a nation that is rich and powerful, but look behind the mask and façade and you will see a nation built on the oppression of minorities. Is it morally right to be a global leader when we as people have a history similar to that? The President of the United States of America, who is ignorant and neglectful of America’s own history, is sitting in a house built by slaves who were stolen from other countries.

Should we truly neglect our own history? Should we truly be a global leader when we as people already have hate crimes happening on our own streets? Should we be a model example for countries that are less economically developed when there are still people who are being hated and killed for their religion, their race or their sexuality? Should we, or should we sort it? We already have a culture that has intervened with oppression. I think we should sort this before we become a global leader. We may have things such as the NHS, which is free, but only when our ideology meets our technology can we truly be a global leader. As a really clever mind once said, we are living in space-age times with stone-age minds. Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed. Max Earnshaw will now argue for perspective one.

**Max Earnshaw (Whitley Bay High School):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker and fellow debaters. We are at a crossroads. Where do we go after Brexit? The sensible, logical and correct thing for us to do is engage with countries with which we share regional matters and a close history, and over which we have a deal of moral influence, from Europe and from the Commonwealth. This is the start of the path that will lead us to prosperity. What we must not do is transition into isolationism.

Isolationism is a method of governing that is historically anti-trade and anti-immigration. With fewer immigrants we could see an increase in hate crime. As the percentage of people in the UK with foreign heritage decreases, it will give rise to people with intolerant views, who will spread them. Socially it is imperative that we move forwards, not backwards. Furthermore, a key feature of any isolationist regime is import tariffs. Their introduction would antagonise our international partners and the economy would begin to crumble. America's so-called patriotism has just this week led to the President sharing unverified and xenophobic content from a vile organisation on social media. This just goes to show how uncontrolled nationalism can very easily become radical, hate-filled, chauvinistic jingoism. Blame and hate campaigns will inevitably, as has always happened throughout history, take it out on vulnerable people with their divisive messages. This would damage our quality of life and set our country back. How can we ever justify this? Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much. The gentleman right at the end on the front row.

**Michael Yip (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker. Many of my fellow debaters today have spoken in favour of perspective two, which argues that the UK should be a global leader. To them I offer a cautionary warning: "ought" implies "can". That is to say, if we should be a global leader, we must have the means to be so. In some areas this is possible: for example, in healthcare, education, technology, professional services and so on. But in others, not so much, for example in our military interventions in North Africa and the Middle East. We should never lose sight of this.

My second point is that, in the areas where we choose to be a leader, we must not fixate on sharing, exporting and disseminating. Being a leader is also about learning from, encouraging, inviting the best from the other countries around the world that may not share the historical, economic and political clout that we have. In sum, to be a leader is to be humble. We should not lose sight of that, either. Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. I now call Cara Moran.

**Cara Moran (Holy Family Catholic School and Sixth Form):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker. The UK should be a global leader as we are a significant performer on today's global stage and we have a vital opportunity to showcase the strengths of the UK. Globally, all eyes are on us to see whether we can cope with Brexit. Instead of coping and surviving, we should strive to be a prosperous country. Our membership of the EU has always been complicated, but now we are leaving, we have the opportunity to set our own agenda.

For example, something that is very important to me is that we are the second-largest development donor in the world and we have an even greater chance to be pragmatic and to push human rights as well as our conflict resolution agenda. Brexit will give the UK the opportunity to have its own

free trade policy with the rest of the world, without the unnecessary burden of the single market. While many fear globalisation, the PM herself has said that the answer cannot be to retreat, to turn to protectionism and to abandon free trade. I agree and believe instead that countries should work harder to ensure that everyone, including in the developing countries, utilises the opportunities given by Brexit. Britain, with its unique history, culture and networks, reinforced by a strong economy, can now have a new and truly international identity. As opposed to dwelling on whether we should leave or remain, we should deal with the issues at hand, grasp opportunities with both hands and truly prosper. Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. I will take another view from the floor, right at the back there.

**William Burley (Queen Mary's Grammar School):**

Ladies and gentlemen, I argue that we must work strongly with the Commonwealth to project our values. From the start of the Commonwealth we have projected the values of democracy and human rights. We have promoted these values and, even today, we must continue to promote them, because there is so much going on in the world that we cannot ignore, including ethnic cleansing and the migrant crisis in Europe. We cannot selfishly ignore them in favour of strengthening our own wealth. Despite the many problems in our country, we have a moral obligation to the world to project these values, give foreign aid and work with the Commonwealth against, for example, the President of America, who promotes populism across the world. We must share these values with the rest of the world, because if we do not, who will? Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much. I now call Emma Bailey.

**Emma Bailey (Archbishop Beck Catholic College):**

Lord Speaker and fellow debaters: in case of an in-flight emergency, please make sure that all personal safety measures are carried out before assisting others. This surely should be the case for our own country. In 2015 the United Kingdom spent £12.1 billion on foreign aid. In June of the following year, after the Brexit referendum, our country's economic position plummeted to its lowest point in 30 years. Just imagine how we could have spent the £12.1 billion.

Recently, the chief executive of the National Health Service delivered a speech in which he cited the leave campaign's pledge of £350 million more a week to be spent solely on the NHS. The situation faced by the jewel of the British social fabric is appalling and our government should be doing all they can to preserve the fragile beacon of our nation. We are clearly a country in crisis, so why on earth should we focus our attention on the rest of the world's affairs? It is paramount that we as a country should unify and protect the heart of this fine state. I am certain that you will all agree with the fact that the foundations of our own country should be our main priority. As a famous doctor once said, help yourself before you consider helping others. You cannot give anything to anybody without having something to give.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. I will not get everyone in, but I will do my best.

**Sol Elliott (Whitley Bay High School):**

Contrary to the wishes of many of the MPs who sit in the House of Commons, we are not living in a time of strength and stability, we are living in a time of change and great disorder. I will use the example of Brexit and the mass migration that is going on in Europe now. More than ever, the Christian and Muslim worlds are clashing. For these cultures to get along together, Britain needs to assimilate with these people because free movement will cause a certain amount of conflict that



we cannot control just through EU regulations. We need to control immigration so that we can solve the completely contradictory values of the two cultures. By doing this, we will act as an example of a leader to the rest of the world. That is because instead of just pushing the problem away and not helping these people, we should come together, take the best from each other's cultures, and accept and try to help others. We cannot do this by simply accepting other cultures, we need to co-operate. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much, and now Emilija Budryte.

### **Emilija Budryte (Hunter House College):**

As an American Senator recently said, we are stronger together. If we take a look back through history, we can see that only way we got through the atrocities and horrors of World War Two was through international co-operation. The darkest time in the history of our world was combatted by unity. This is why we need to use the UN and the EU to embrace unity and not turn our backs on peace and stability. If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past.

In the last 24 hours alone, I have worn clothes from Indonesia, watched movies filmed in America, eaten food originating in Italy, used a phone manufactured in China and boarded a plane whose parts were made in Japan. Why on earth should the UK not continue its partnership with the countries of the world in order to maintain these basic yet essential ingredients that make our lives richer? As the world progresses, we are becoming globally interdependent. We need all nations to continue to communicate. We do not need politicians to breed exclusion and racism, especially not in today's progressive society. Multinationalism is something that UK citizens are proud of. As Albus Dumbledore once said, "We are only as strong as we are united". Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much. We will take another view from the floor.

### **Royce el Maury (Holy Family Catholic School and Sixth Form):**

I believe that the UK should strive to become a global leader without taking an apathetic perspective on the matter of international relations. Although some attempts to aid neighbouring foreign countries have been in vain, neglecting to avoid various other countries economically, socially and environmentally causes us to be perceived as concomitant associates with the causes of depravity. Choosing to contribute to the betterment of deprived countries will enable us to juxtapose history into a more diverse geographical angle while becoming a relevant example of a leading country. Conclusively, I think that we should aim to acknowledge depravity to the best of our reasonable capability globally as we as a country are deprived. Although my motion proposes that we should assist others, we must consider that we as a country are more sustained in most aspects as compared with various regions of our international community. By becoming an improved version of our country, we will be an exemplary model for other regions of the world. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much indeed, and now Lewis Fraser.

### **Lewis Fraser (Queen Mary's Grammar School):**

The 20th century may have seen the sun finally set on the British Empire, but the 21st century has seen a new dawn for the UK as a modern global pioneer. This is not so much a question of aiming to become a global leader, but recognising and consolidating the influence that we already wield on the world stage. Having the world's sixth largest economy, for instance, is far from the realms of simply aiming for isolationism or regional goals. In the way that the United States is revered for its military power, the UK is respected for its soft power and diplomacy that spans the globe. The close friendships we have fostered not just with the 52 Commonwealth states and their 2.3 billion residents, but across the world, make us an esteemed diplomatic presence and role model for developing and developed countries alike. A former PM actively led the global response to the financial crisis and the 2005 third world debt relief effort, even ahead of the United States. The 21st century is a fantastic opportunity for the UK to complete its transition into a leading global pioneer, capitalising on our current geopolitical influence and never underestimating the potential we have. Without the shackles of the European Union, we will be able to expand our outlook even further across the world to countries that may have been sacrificed in favour of the EU. We should be confident at the negotiating table, knowing that the respect we have across the world means that we do not need the European Union to be a global leader. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you.

### **Samuel Whitehouse (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association HQ):**

I will speak in favour of perspective one. Last Saturday was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, a cause that the UK government strongly support through their 2016 women and girls strategy. This is just one area in which the UK can strive to achieve through co-operation with our European allies and Commonwealth family. No longer does the UK dominate and dictate global affairs, but nor should we turn our back on global injustices. The creation of international institutions such as the Commonwealth can serve as the platform for international dialogue and underline the need to build consensus. If the UK government are seriously committed to ending violence against women, I suggest they do so by raising the issue at next year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London which is to be chaired by the Prime Minister herself. The Commonwealth is an organisation of 52 nations spanning six continents with a population where half are under the age of 25, the demographic which comprises the most likely victims of gender-based violence. I therefore speak in favour of perspective one. Thank you.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you for that. Now another view.

### **Anna-Louise Leyden (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

Listening to the debate today, it is very clear that we live in an unstable UK and that we live in an unstable world as well. One thing that is clear in my head is that it is almost like we are in a playground of countries all fighting to have a little bit of that playground. Think back to being in a playground yourself, the primary school playground when you are fighting to make friends but you feel lonely. The playground is unstable. What I want to say is this: think of being an individual who is trying to make their way in that playground, listening to questions about whether we should become global leaders, solve our own problems and so on. Actually, the only way to make friends and become part of the established playground is by working together with everyone else. We must listen to other people's thoughts from wherever they are in the playground and we must learn to play and communicate together. That is why I am supporting perspective one. Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Let us take the last speech from the floor. As I have missed out the crossbenches almost entirely, I will take a speaker from them.

**James Murray (Archbishop Beck Catholic College):**

I would like to start with a quote from a great author: some men are more equal than others. Is this true? Well, some people seem to think so. If you say that the problems of people in Britain deserve precedence over those of people in other countries, you inherently imply that the people of Great Britain are more important than those of other countries. In a society where we want everyone to be equal, even implying that should be appalling. The UK should aim to be a global leader in foreign aid, in helping other people, if in nothing else. That is because it is something truly good that we could all be proud of. It would make Britain truly great and we would be helping other people who cannot help themselves. Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you to everyone who has spoken. You have run like an express train and come in absolutely on time, which again is something that we are not totally used to in the House of Lords. I am grateful to you all for your contributions. I apologise to those who were not called. Those of us like Lord Howell and other peers who are present will remember that in the House of Commons it is quite common to have a speech that you wish to make, one that you want to make really forcefully, but you are not called to actually make it at all. However, you will find that there are other occasions when you can do so. That, at any rate, is our experience. We now move on to the closing speeches which again will be a maximum of three minutes per speaker.

**Harrison Worley (Queen Mary's Grammar School):**

I am aware that we are all quite tired, so I shall keep my speech short. We have heard throughout the debate just how many problems the world has: climate change, rapid population growth and terrorism. All of these are problems that we cannot solve on our own. It has been stated that we are a global leader. I ask you this: would a global leader succumb to the demands of European countries in, I am sorry to mention this, the Brexit negotiations? The prime and current example of this is the outrageous divorce bill which we are being forced to pay, now rumoured to be around £50 billion. However, despite not being a world superpower and not being able to compete with countries such as the USA in terms of economic prowess and military might, we do foster extremely good relationships with the world superpowers and other countries around the world. These are relationships which have been built up over the previous two centuries and which we can now take advantage of. An example of this is China. The growing NIC had its leader come to this very building just two years ago. We can develop new and existing relationships to allow us to create new trade partnerships which will help to build our economy and strengthen our country.

It makes little sense to adopt isolationist policies, much as America is starting to do, and cut ourselves off from the countries we already have links with. It makes logical sense instead to use these links to our advantage in a way we previously could not due to being constrained by EU regulations. Let us work together with the countries that we already have links with not only to make the world a better place, but to make our country better as well. Thank you.

## Closing speeches

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you. Let us now hear the closing speech in support of perspective two.

**Usman Ali (Royal Commonwealth Society):**

I am an associate fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society and Scotland's first Queen's Young Leader. The United Kingdom should be a global leader. That is what we have all been debating today, so let us seek mutual agreement across the chamber to make our great nation the global leader that others look to in good times and bad, a leading nation that we can all be proud of. What does "global leader" mean? It does not mean absolute isolation from others in the world, but nor does it mean having complete control over everything that happens. Instead, being a global leader is about achieving a fine balance, and in doing so we in the United Kingdom must stand resolute in defending our values and what we believe in. But it must also mean that we have to work together with other states and non-governmental organisations to achieve common goals or resolve common challenges. Surely working with others to achieve a greater impact is what the United Kingdom believes in and what being a global leader is about. By taking this approach we are not protecting but enhancing our national interest because having the United Kingdom as a global leader is in our national interest.

I should like to turn to the substantial points made in the course of the debate. We have heard the introductory speakers talk about our values such as the rule of law and the Westminster model on which so many parliamentary democracies across the world depend. We have heard about our brilliant NHS and we have also heard about the impact we make across the globe in terms of our aid budget and peacekeeping missions. Let me also turn to some of the issues raised by those who have spoken from the floor. Let us be honest, the United Kingdom has made mistakes in the past, but this generation and the next generation can lead in the development of a new vision. We are leaders today, not just tomorrow. Our time is now, so let us take that time and deliver the new vision.

Let us be outward looking as well as looking at what kind of society and country we want to be. If we care about the food banks in Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff and London, why should we not care about the food banks in Paris, Beirut, Nairobi and Delhi? What kind of world would we be living in if everybody across the globe just turned in on themselves and did not care about anyone else? I agree that we should be looking after our own citizens too, so let us build an economic, socially progressive and just society. Let us improve our public services and use opportunities such as CHOGM and the democratic will of leaving the European Union to look for chances to enhance trade and technological developments as we go forward. Thank you.

**The Lord Speaker:**

Thank you very much. Lastly, I call Sarah Gadalla to summarise the case for perspective three, "The United Kingdom should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems".

**Sarah Gadalla (De Aston School):**

Thank you, Lord Speaker and fellow debaters. While all the perspectives have their share of valid arguments, including moral obligations towards the less fortunate and the oppressed, and the importance of international co-operation, they come also from a place of idealism rather than realism. The UK should not interfere in every conflict that goes on the world; it is neither our right nor our responsibility to wade into the affairs of countries to which we have no ties. This hardly ever brings about significant betterment, for the world or for ourselves. It just creates international enemies. We need to focus on our own problems in our own country before we start, often unnecessarily, trying to fix everyone else's problems.

The first thing I will talk about is domestic investment. The UK is subject to terrorism attacks, is in financial deficit, and has its own problems of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, tax avoidance from the super-wealthy and poor educational standards compared to other developed countries. In maths the UK is ranked 27th in the world, its lowest position since 2000. In reading we are ranked 22nd in the world. This is another thing that could be improved if funding was not so low. The NHS social care and mental health systems are crumbling due to lack of financial investment. Only when we have sorted our problems can we be a global leader. This will also put us in a better position to help others in future.

The second thing I will talk about is why it is ineffective to intervene in the affairs of other countries. Often, foreign aid spending has been wasted or has contributed towards fraud and corruption. India and China, which receive millions of pounds in UK aid, have active space exploration programmes. These countries need to learn to manage themselves instead of relying on wealthier countries for aid. They will never be truly self-sustaining unless we cut aid and force them to manage their budgets in a more responsible way. It is unrealistic to think that aid to these countries will last forever. It simply is not possible for them to climb out of their cycles of poverty without managing their budgets in a realistic and responsible way, which will be impossible if the UK's foreign aid spending is there to stop them ever being held accountable for the mismanagement of their country's budgets.

Less than one-tenth of Britain's £12 billion aid budget goes to humanitarian or emergency aid. Most is actually development aid of dubious effectiveness, and too much of it goes to inefficient and wasteful multilateral organisations or gets paid directly into the treasuries of corrupt or incompetent governments. This is why the UK should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems. Only when we have sorted our own problems can we be a global leader.

### The Lord Speaker:

Thank you very much indeed. I would like to thank all the speakers today, both on the frontbench and on the other benches, for what has been an excellent debate in which all views have been expressed—and expressed extremely well. Again, I apologise to the many people who were excluded from speaking in the debate by the confines of time.

We now move to the final votes. As before, there will be three votes and, as before, you may vote only once. Please raise your hand to do so, so that the doorkeepers can see you clearly and count your vote.

**Perspective 1:** The United Kingdom should aim to work closely with the Commonwealth, European countries, the EU and global partners to achieve common regional aims.

**VOTES: 113** – down nine from the first vote.

**Perspective 2:** The United Kingdom should aim to be a global leader.

**VOTES: 43** – up six from the first vote.

**Perspective 3:** The UK should keep the affairs of other countries at a distance and focus on its own problems.

**VOTES: 21** votes – up nine from the first vote.

So those are the final results, and they obviously show that the debate had some effect and impact on your views.

Before we bring proceedings to an end, I would like to call on one or two distinguished Lords who have been here for the debate. We are very honoured today because we have the top of the House of Lords as regards international development. We have people on the frontbench here with enormous experience in the area of international development. First I call on Lord Howell of Guildford. We worked together in Cabinet for many years in the 1980s and he is now chairman of the new International Relations Committee of the House of Lords.

### Lord Howell of Guildford:

Thank you, Lord Speaker. We have heard many positive speeches, with a marvellous emphasis, which pleased me, on the Commonwealth network. And there was not too much on Brexit, which was a relief, because we spend far too much time on that. There was also of course a very heavy emphasis from almost every speaker on the need to co-operate internationally. We can argue about how we should do that and what procedures we should go through, but everyone was rightly saying that, to meet the colossal challenges of the world, we have to be part of the network.

I emphasise “network” because I am with those who say that we cannot just walk out into the show and say, “We’re the boss, we’re the leader, follow us”. We have to walk out and say, “This is our example, this is what we have done in the past, this is that we can do by helping you and this is the way we can join the great networks of the future”—which, we should remember, will be dominated increasingly not by Europe and the West but by Asia, China and the rising powers of Africa and Latin America. That is the new world. The Commonwealth can help us enter that world and I must say that the speeches have been wonderful in making me feel confident that your generation understands that point and that, if we work at it, we can do very great things from this country to help the world move to greater stability and be a better place. Thank you very much.

### The Lord Speaker:

I now call Lord Collins of Highbury. He is the Opposition, Labour, spokesperson for international development and a great fellow campaigner for LGBT rights.

### Lord Collins of Highbury:

Thank you, Lord Speaker. I must admit, because of the quality of this debate, I have never felt so intimidated in speaking in this chamber; you have been fantastic and enjoyable. I hope you noticed that we did not fall asleep once, which just shows what a fantastic debate it was.

One thing that struck me and, I am sure everyone else, was that the questions you responded to today are not mutually exclusive. Of course global co-operation is part of our daily world, particularly if we want to succeed as an economy in terms of trade. And whatever question you focused on, you all had respect for your fellow human beings. That, for me, was the most important element of today's debate.

Of course the ingredients of a thriving democracy are not limited to parliaments and parliamentarians. It is about civil society, including churches and trade unions; they are often the groups that guarantee democracy and ensure the human rights of everyone. So whatever you end up doing in future, always remain engaged. The key to changing the world, and what our development work is so specialist about, is not helping people or giving to them but ensuring that we empower the powerless. Thank you.

### The Lord Speaker:

Thirdly, I call Baroness Sheehan, who is the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for international development and who also speaks with great experience.

### **Baroness Sheehan:**

Thank you all very much. I start by adding my congratulations to those of Lord Collins to every speaker who had the courage to stand up and speak with conviction. I know that at lunchtime, when I was talking to one or two of you, you were a little nervous because you were being asked to argue a position that you did not hold yourself, yet I could not spot which of you it was. You argued your positions with such conviction, so well done and congratulations indeed.

The debate today took me back two years to when I made my maiden speech on the Liberal Democrat Benches. My speech was made just after the Paris COP 21 climate change agreement was signed. It was something that was very close to my heart, and I know that for a number of you it was very close to your heart, also. The thrust of my speech was that climate change was so important because it was causing a lot of the problems that were leading to the refugee crisis that we were beginning to see. We had not seen the full force of it. Alan Kurdi's little body had not been washed up on a beach in Turkey at that point, but it was very clear to me that climate change was contributing to the largest mass movement of people that we had seen in Europe since the Second World War. So that took me back a few years.

As so many of you said, it is so important that Britain stays in the global arena and shapes the response to global issues that do not respect borders, such as immigration, refugee movements, terrorism, climate change and air pollution. Thank you very much for bringing that to our attention again.

### **The Lord Speaker:**

Lastly, I call on Lord Bates, who is a government minister and has his hands on the levers of power; we think that, at any rate. He has an impeccable reputation on all sides of the House. He is the Minister of State for International Development.

### **Lord Bates:**

Lord Speaker and fellow speakers, I was struck by Baroness Sheehan speaking just now about maiden speeches. It made me wonder how many maiden speeches I was listening to today. How many of you, in 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 years' time, if you are coming to the House of Lords, possibly even 60 years' time, will we hear again in this place? I found it absolutely inspiring.

I must admit that I spent more time taking notes of what you were saying than making notes for what I was supposed to say, so I will not take long. Suffice it to say, first, that I am an optimist about the world. I believe that the world is getting better. Contrary to what you see in many places, the efforts that we are making to eliminate disease around the world and increase the number of people who are getting the opportunity of an education are incredible. The way that we are breaking down barriers around the world, particularly on gender discrimination, is amazing. Economic growth has lifted one billion people out of poverty so far this year. So there are reasons to be optimistic about the world.

The final thing I will say is that in both Houses of Parliament, it is said that there are only two types of people. There are those who want to be here because they want to be something and there are those who want to be here because they want to do something. I hope that many of you, as you go back tonight, having had the enormous privilege that very few people in this country have had of being in the mother of parliaments, will think to yourselves, "It's not so much about what I am, but how I can use it to advance the world and make it a better place and be the change that we want to see".

### **The Lord Speaker:**

I think you showed by your applause there how much those words struck home. I also think about what David Howell said. You cannot instruct, or lecture other nations; what you can do is show by example what you can do to change the world. My thanks to all four of you.

So the majority of you here today think that, "The United Kingdom should aim to work closely with the Commonwealth, European countries, the European Union and global partners to achieve common regional aims. In spite of the arguments put against that, it was carried with a majority that all parties would be perfectly happy to arrive at in any election.

Thank you so much for your contributions and participation. You all did a wonderful job and should feel very proud of yourselves and what you achieved today. I for one was very impressed by the arguments and the way you put them. For those of you who shared personal experiences, I thank you for your honesty. I hope above all that you have enjoyed today as much as I have.

I emphasise that a day such as today could not happen without a great deal of work behind the scenes from a great many people organising this event. Much is owed to the English-Speaking Union staff, including Eliot Pallot and his team of mentors, who worked so hard to prepare today's speakers, as well as devising and delivering the debate model.

We also owe thanks to our other event partners, the British Council, the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association HQ and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK, the Commonwealth Common Ties Network and the Royal Commonwealth Society, who all contributed a great deal in the run-up to this event.

Our thanks go also to, I cannot see him at the moment, the Yeoman Usher, Neil Baverstock, who supervised the security for this event and made it possible for it to go ahead; and to the Second Principal Doorkeeper, Mr Evans, and his team. We thank you for coming in on this non-sitting Friday to ensure that today ran as smoothly as it did. Our thanks also go to John Vice and his Hansard team for doing the honours on the day. We are very grateful and we look forward to getting the splendid transcript of the debate that I know is coming and which I am sure we all look forward to reading.

Thanks to Ellen Large, Andrew Hickey and all members of the House of Lords staff who have worked so hard to make today a success. But most of all I would like to thank today's participants: those of you who contributed speeches in the debate and those who attended to lend their support to friends. The totally friendly atmosphere in which the debate took place was a lesson to us all. Without all of you, we would not have had a very important debate and I am grateful to those who took the time and trouble to journey here over long distances. As a thank you for your contribution today, we will shortly be sending you in the post a transcript of the debate and a certificate.

I am going to leave the chamber in a moment in the same way that I came in. I will ask the doorkeepers to show you out after I have left. Before I do that, I thank you very much for the contribution that you made. It was a really good debate and, as my colleagues said, truly uplifting. Thank you very much and have a safe journey back.

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