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Annexe

N. B. : Dans un souci de cohérence, les discours compilés dans cette annexe sont structurés tels qu'ils sont présentés sur le site internet du gouvernement écossais, à la seule différence que pour faciliter leur lisibilité nous avons souligné les titres, comprenant généralement les contextes et émetteurs de chaque discours. Lorsque la date, ou une partie de celle-ci, manquait dans le titre du discours nous avons rajouté en français, en police italique et entre parenthèses la date de mise en ligne du discours. Tous les discours ici présentés sont disponibles en ligne à l'adresse suivante : <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/>.

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Annexe I : Discours officiels de Nicola Sturgeon, Première ministre d'Écosse émis entre le 29 mars 2017 et le 29 mars 2019

Scotland's Place in the World (mis en ligne le 04/04/2017, disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-place-in-the-world-1>)

First Minister's speech to Stanford University

Thank you very much indeed, Michael (McFaul, Director and Senior Fellow at Freeman Sprogli Centre).

One of the many interesting things I found out about Michael this morning is that he was born in Glasgow. But Glasgow, Montana, rather than Glasgow, Scotland. But nevertheless I'm going to claim that as a Scottish connection.

It's a fantastic pleasure and privilege to be here at this beautiful university. Undoubtedly one of, if not the most beautiful, university campuses anywhere in the world. I'm here in the USA this week as part of what we call Scotland Week. It was President Bush back in I think 2008 who proclaimed the 6th of April every year as Tartan Day – the key event in Scotland Week, so Thursday of this week is Tartan Day.

Scotland Week and Tartan Day are really intended to celebrate firstly the contribution of Scottish people to the US down the generations but also the very many links and relationships between Scotland and the US. And, most importantly, to look at how we strengthen those links in the future. And one thing that always strikes me as I think about Scotland Week every year is this quite incredible fact: from time to time various surveys that suggest that almost 30 million people in the United States claim Scots or Scots Irish ancestry. However, the official census figure show there are only around 10 million who actually have Scots or Scots Irish ancestry. What that means is this: there are twenty million people in the USA who aren't actually Scottish, but who want to be Scottish! I think that's absolutely fantastic. It's a great compliment but it's also an opportunity, and let me tell you it is an opportunity we are determined to take full advantage of. As far as I'm concerned, if you want to be Scottish, nobody, least of all me, is going to stop you.

There's a more serious point here. Scotland's modern identity, much like that of the US, is an inclusive one. We basically take the approach that if you do want to be Scottish, you can be – and that's very relevant to some of the points I will make later on in this speech.

Many of the ties between Scotland and the US are evident here in Palo Alto and the surrounding area. There's a hill called Ben Lomond twenty miles south of here – close to a town called Bonny Doon, which was named by a Scottish settler. John Maclaren, who was a Scottish emigrant from Bannockburn, everyone here will have heard of the famous Battle of Bannockburn. He worked on Leland Stanford's estate here in Palo Alto, and was instrumental in establishing San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

So the ties between our two countries are longstanding. But it's been very clear to me during the two days I've spent here that the connections between Scotland and California – ties based on culture and history, trade and commerce, family and friendship – continue to flourish. That's something that means a lot to Scotland and it means a lot to Californians as well.

Those international ties are part of what I want to talk about today. I'm going to talk about the desire we have in Scotland – not just to create a fairer and a more prosperous country – but also

as a relatively small country to play a big part and make a positive contribution to the world we live in.

But I should maybe start by looking back at some of the events of the last year and indeed the last week. I think it's fair to say - and I'm reasonably confident that I cannot be accused of overstatement or of exaggeration - that 2016 was a tumultuous year in politics, certainly at home in Scotland, across the UK and of course here in the US. The decisions taken last year will have ramifications for many years to come.

We've seen of evidence of that in the couple of weeks. 10 days ago for example, 27 of the 28 governments across the European Union came together to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome - the Treaty of Rome of course is the foundation treaty of the European Economic Community.

Scotland has been a member of the EEC which is now of course the European Union for more than 40 years. That membership has brought us significant economic, environmental and social benefits. However, in addition to that, the fundamental principle underpinning the EU - that independent nations work together on equal terms for a common good, to tackle some of the problems and seize some of the opportunities that few countries can do alone, that principle appeals to me and to many people across Scotland. As a result, EU membership has become a very important part of Scotland's identity. It speaks to our sense of who we are.

That's why in 2014, when Scotland had a referendum on whether or not to become an independent country, our membership of the European Union was an important issue. Nobody really argued or debated about whether Scotland should be part of the EU - the only debate then was about whether we would be if we were independent.

In particular, many of those who opposed Scotland becoming independent - including the UK Government - argued that leaving the United Kingdom was a risk, that it would threaten Scotland's place in the European Union. So it's somewhat ironic that the opposite has turned out to be true.

When the UK held the referendum on EU membership last year, a large majority of people in Scotland who voted - 62% in fact - chose to stay part of the EU. However we were outvoted by the rest of the UK. As a result of that referendum the UK was the only member state that was not represented at the 60th anniversary celebrations for the Treaty of Rome. Instead, the UK Government last week notified the European Commission of its intention to leave the EU.

And Scotland, despite the arguments that were made in 2014 and how we voted in 2016, faces being forced to leave the EU against our will.

What's even worse perhaps is that the UK is not just leaving the EU; there is a real danger developing that it will leave the EU in the most damaging way possible.

Scotland and the Scottish Government has proposed over the past few months different ways in which the UK could opt to retain membership of what is called the single market, without being part of the EU. Several other countries, such as Norway, have an arrangement like that. But those proposals have been disregarded by the UK Government.

That could potentially have a wide range of impacts - it could mean tariffs for farmers who export, or higher regulatory barriers for trade with Europe. It is already causing deep uncertainty and anxiety for people who have chosen to live in and work in Scotland from other parts of the EU. I take a very simple view of anybody who comes to live and work and study in Scotland - you do us a great honour, a great privilege and a great compliment and we want you to consider Scotland as your home. So the vote to leave the EU and the implications for those who have chosen to live in Scotland or other parts of the UK is a serious one.

But it's perhaps worth looking in detail about what that might mean for Scotland's universities. For Scotland, as for California, our universities are incredible cultural, social and economic assets.

In fact when the Times Higher Education Supplement published its rankings of the best universities in the world last year, it showed Scotland had more world class universities in the rankings, per head of population, than any other country in the world apart with the sole exception Luxembourg. We are determined to beat Luxembourg to the top spot sometime soon.

Indeed, I've just attended an event highlighting the research partnership which Stanford has established with five of Scotland's universities – Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot Watt, St Andrews and Strathclyde.

And I've just welcomed Heriot Watt's decision to launch a new economics scholarship for US students, to be based at Panmure House in Edinburgh – Panmure House is significant and important because it's where Adam Smith lived and worked in the final years of his life.

Those examples demonstrate that our universities have a reach which extends far beyond the European Union. But that said, there is no doubt that in recent years, membership of the European Union has been fundamental to Scotland's academic success. 1/6 of our academic staff are EU citizens from outside the UK. So are 1/6 of our postgraduate students. These EU students are disproportionately likely to be studying in subjects such as science and technology – hugely important areas for any country in the modern world.

If you look at research, Scotland benefits hugely from the opportunities for collaboration which are provided by European programmes.

That's perhaps why at the end of last year the Principal of Edinburgh University – not someone who is terribly known for exaggeration - told a House of Commons Select Committee that the impact of Brexit on Higher Education - and I quote - "ranges from bad, to awful, to catastrophic". It is a very significant and a very serious risk to a sector that is fundamental to Scotland's future.

The reason for running these risks – for leaving the single market as well as the European Union – is that the UK Government has prioritised control of immigration over everything else. But that policy in itself is likely to be damaging to Scotland.

Scotland benefits hugely from the contribution made by people who choose to work or study in our country - from the rest of the UK, from the European Union and, of course, from the USA.

And historically, our level of population growth has been lower than other parts of the UK, lower than many other parts of Europe. So for the sake of our economic prosperity we need to see more people choosing to come and live and work in Scotland.

And so there are two points which perhaps follow from that. The first is that if any of you are uncertain what to do after you leave Stanford, you are very welcome to come to Scotland! We offer a very warm welcome and a fantastic quality of life. The whisky is rather good – in moderation. And our weather is much more interesting than the boring sunshine you get here in California every single day.

However the second point is more fundamental and more serious. In my view, it is totally counterproductive for the UK as a whole to prioritise control of immigration over any other outcome for Brexit.

But it's especially damaging for a country like Scotland. In fact, it is interesting that at a time when debates about immigration rage in many different parts of the world that there is no major political party in Scotland today that would argue for constraints on immigration in the way we hear in other parts of the world, because we know that would be damaging to our interests. This

is a good example of how Brexit is forcing upon Scotland a policy agenda which is not of our choosing and not in our national interests.

So Brexit - and the way in which the UK Government is choosing to impose Brexit upon Scotland – presents Scotland with something of a dilemma. We had, as I have already mentioned, a referendum on independence less than three years ago. That’s why some people in Scotland – entirely understandably - are reluctant to have another one in the next two years.

However if we do not give people in Scotland a choice, we will have to accept a course of action determined by a UK Government that most people in Scotland didn’t vote for– a course which may be deeply damaging to our economy and our society perhaps for decades and possibly for generations to come.

In my view, that is democratically unacceptable. That is why the Scottish Parliament, last week, agreed to seek consent from the UK Government for a further referendum on independence, once the final terms of Brexit deal are known. It will mean that – rather than having Brexit and a future direction imposed upon us – the people of Scotland will have the opportunity to choose our own future, to choose the direction that we want to take. And in doing so we will be considering issues that go far beyond the issue of membership in or out of the EU.

We will be consider what kind of country we want to be, and how we can best achieve that – how we can build a better society at home, and make a positive contribution to the wider world.

One of the things that I encountered time and time again during the independence referendum campaign in 2014 was an overwhelming desire to create a fairer society, as well as a more prosperous one. That desire came from many people who voted against independence as well as those who voted for it.

It's a desire we are seeking to respond to under Scotland's current devolved powers. Shortly after I became First Minister, the Scottish Government revised our economic strategy. One of the biggest changes that we made was that deciding to promote equality alongside economic competitiveness.

That focus is - first and foremost - a matter of basic morality. Everyone in any society should have a fair chance to fulfil their potential.

It’s also an issue of basic economic efficiency. There is strong and growing evidence that inequality in western economies, has harmed growth. The UK is a very good example of that. The OECD has estimated that between 1990 and 2010, rising inequality here reduced growth by 9 percentage points.

Professor Joseph Stiglitz, who taught here at Stanford for more than a decade, is one of the Nobel Laureates who serves on my Council of Economic Advisers. He said at the time that “Tackling inequality is the foremost challenge that many governments face. Scotland’s Economic Strategy leads the way in identifying the challenges and provides a strong vision for change.”

He recognised that a more equal society, where everyone can participate to their full potential, will lead to a stronger and a more sustainable economy in the longer term. And workers who are well educated and trained, well paid and highly valued and supported, will be more productive than those who aren't.

Two weeks ago, in fact, research was published on the happiest countries in the world. As you might expect, countries in developed nations ranked highest. The USA, I can tell you, was 13th, and the UK was 19th. However it was striking that the five highest spots were all taken by small European countries – Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Finland and Switzerland. Two of those countries are EU members, and others members of the European single market. All of those

countries score highly on measures of income equality – they do considerably better than the UK, for example.

So there is really strong evidence for the Scottish Government’s prioritisation of inclusion.

But there’s an important political point to be made here as well – one which I think is relevant here in the US as well as in the UK. Policies such as free trade and free movement of people will very often bring benefits to the economy as a whole, but they also have the potential to disadvantage – or be seen as disadvantaging - particular areas and particular groups in society. So the sustainability of those policies is increasingly dependent on our ability to ensure they benefit not just the few, but the many in our society.

We saw that in Scotland and the UK last year. The vote to leave the European Union had many causes. But we know that people on low incomes were more likely to want to leave. When you allow for student numbers, so too were areas with relatively low rates of employment.

So the EU referendum also posed a challenge for those of us who support free trade, who welcome immigration and who believe that the benefits of globalisation, if they are properly managed, and that’s an important caveat to stress, these benefits should outweigh the costs. It demonstrated that we can only sustain support for a dynamic and open economy if we do more to build a fairer and inclusive society.

That’s in Scotland what we are determined to seek to do. It is one of the most pressing challenges that most developed societies face today. It requires leadership, and while Scotland does not have all of the answers – no country does – I believe that we are at least asking some of the right questions.

I am well aware that even in Scotland, that voted by such a big margin to remain in the EU, more than a third of voters chose to leave. But it is at least possible that one reason why the referendum result was so different in Scotland, compared to the rest of the UK, is that the Scottish Parliament has often adopted policies with fairness and inclusion at their very heart. We have taken action, for example, to mitigate some of the very brutal cuts to social security provision that the UK Government has implemented in recent times. There was maybe less of a sense of people being left behind and disenfranchised.

But that emphasis on inclusion, important for economic reasons, is also important politically as we try to navigate through some of the circumstances that lie ahead.

And that commitment to inclusion is also applicable to another issue that is very close to my heart and that is the issue of gender equality.

I was quite struck, when I read about Stanford University, to see that women were admitted on equal terms as men from the very beginning, at the insistence of the founders of this university. Leland Stanford actually pointed out in a letter in 1893 that “if vocations were thrown open to women, there would be 25 per cent increase in the nation’s production.”

It’s a simple and overwhelmingly obvious point – nations impoverish themselves if they underuse the talents of half of the population – and yet that challenge is one which no nation has yet fully risen to. Scotland is trying to take the lead.

We have launched major initiatives in early years care, primarily because we believe it’s an essential part of ensuring that all children – regardless of their backgrounds– get a fair chance to realise their potential. But it also recognises the importance of childcare in encouraging parents to return to work and in supporting parents, women in particular, to pursue careers.

We also work closely with trade unions and employers together, to try to boost productivity and encourage fair work practices. That partnership approach is very different to that taken by many other governments.

In some respects it's closer – although this is not an exact comparison – to the German economic model developed after the war. That model became known as Rhine capitalism. It was based on a strong sense of partnership between workers, trade unions, businesses and the public sector. It encouraged competitive markets, but combined them with strong social protections. And of course it has resulted in high levels of innovation, high productivity and strong exports.

That approach to the economy was based on a very distinct vision of society. Article 1 of postwar Germany's constitution states that human dignity is the underpinning principle of the entire state. That helps to establish the constitutional principle of the “social state” – a state which strives for social justice.

Now, what we're trying to create in Scotland isn't identical, of course – this is a different time and very different context. But there are similarities. And, as with most countries, our concern for human dignity and social justice isn't confined to our own boundaries – we also want to make a positive contribution to the wider world.

Later today I will fly from California to New York and tomorrow I will be attending meetings at the United Nations. Scotland was one of the first countries back in 2015 to signing up to the UN's sustainable Development Goals. That means that we seek to build a fair, prosperous and sustainable society at home in Scotland, and also around the world.

Scotland, as a relatively small country, has to focus our specific contributions on the world stage. So it's maybe worth talking about two specific areas where we are trying to make a difference.

One of my meetings tomorrow is with the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria at the United Nations. Of course we have seen just today another very stark reminder of the horrific impact of the Syrian conflict and the pressing need to find a route to peace. We will discuss Scotland's Women in Conflict programme. It prepares 50 women every year to play a part in mediation and conflict resolution. Last year, it trained women from 7 countries in North Africa and the Middle East. The programme is Scotland's way of trying to act on the UN Security Council resolution 1325 – which recognises that women bear many of the worst consequences of civil war and conflict, but are too often excluded from efforts at finding peace and reconciliation.

Another area Scotland prioritises in spreading a positive message across the world is tackling climate change.

In 2012 Scotland became the first country to establish a climate justice fund for developing countries. It recognises that the people affected most by climate change are often those who have done the least to cause it.

And in addition to helping other countries to mitigate climate change, we are also determined to be at the forefront of tackling it.

I mentioned earlier the fact that Scotland and Stanford are working together on new technologies in photonics and healthcare. Scotland of course has a long and very proud history of innovation. In fact, we led the world into the industrial age - James Watt's steam engine is arguably the single most important invention of the first industrial revolution.

So we want to apply our innovation and engineering expertise to help to lead the world into the low carbon age. In 2009 the Scottish Parliament passed what at that time were the most ambitious statutory climate change targets in the world. We have already met the first of those targets 5 years early, and are now looking to go further.

We already produce more than 50% of our net electricity demand through renewable energy sources. And we are an important development site for some of the renewable technologies of

the future. The world's largest tidal power array is being developed in our Pentland Firth. The world's largest floating offshore windfarm is due to be built off our north eastern coast.

I had the opportunity to discuss all of this with Governor Brown yesterday. When Governor Brown gave his inaugural address two years ago, or should I say his latest inaugural address, he pointed out that "taking significant amounts of carbon out of our economy without harming its vibrancy is exactly the sort of challenge at which California excels."

He was referring of course to California's astonishing track record of innovation – much of it linked to the work done here at Stanford. For both California and Scotland, innovation is part of our history, and also part of our modern identity. So the Governor and I were discussing ways in which Scotland and California could work together. Both of us want to apply our capacity for innovation to tackling what is arguably the biggest environmental, economic and moral issue facing the world.

There's one final point about the different issues I've talked about in my speech – climate change, peace-keeping, inequality and immigration, the flows of people and talent. And that point is this. All of them are inter-related. Drought, exacerbated by climate change, may well have been an initial cause of the Syrian civil war. The refugee crisis caused by that war arguably had a direct impact on the debate on UK's membership of the European Union.

Immigration of course is a major topic of debate in the USA as well as in Europe, of course. And as we look into the future, we know that the displacement of populations which will be caused by climate change – especially if global warming exceeds 1.5 degrees Celsius – is likely to dwarf the scale of migration that Europe has seen as a result of the Syria crisis.

So all of this is a good demonstration of the fact that no nation is or can be insulated from our reliance on, and our obligations to, the wider world. All independent nations have to accept our interdependence. We have to accept that it's not only our own national interest that matter but the interest of the wider world in which we live.

The best balance between independence and interdependence is of course the question that Scotland once again faces.

Over the past 60 years, the European Union has built a single market and encouraged economic co-operation, while developing common social standards for workers and shared environmental standards. It has enabled independent neighbours to trade and travel freely while respecting the environment and protecting living standards. It has enabled us to work together on some of the world's biggest challenges like climate change.

Brexit puts all of that at risk and forces Scotland to ask itself a fundamental question. Do we remain as we are, facing exit from the EU where we are able to take part in all of that collaboration, exit against our will at the hands of a UK Government that is determined to curb immigration at the expense of many other things, or do we choose instead to become an independent country with the opportunities and the challenges that that will undoubtedly entail – but with the freedom it will give us to be an equal partner with other countries across our British Isles, Europe and the wider world?

My own view, as a supporter of independence, is that we will choose the second course. Independence, combined with interdependence and equal partnership, is the best way for us to build a fairer society at home and to make that positive contribution to the world.

That is something which will be debated and discussed across Scotland as we move forward. And I'm sure that as we do so, there will again be debate and disagreement about how Scotland can best contribute to the world. But I am also sure that yet again there will be very little disagreement about whether we want to make that positive contribution.

Our modern identity will remain open, outward-looking and inclusive. People from around the world will always be welcome to call themselves Scottish if they wish to do so whether they are or are not.

And Scotland will of course continue to build partnerships around the world – including with governments, businesses and universities here in California across the United States.

So in that spirit, it is a real pleasure to be with you today to share some of my thoughts about current events, about the challenges we face and about Scotland's contribution to addressing some of those challenges. I wish you all a happy Tartan Day on Thursday. I hope some of you at least will sport tartan. And I hope that many of you choose to live, work or study in Scotland in the years to come.

I can assure you that you will have the warmest welcome, just as I have had here in Stanford and in California.

Women's role in conflict resolution (*mis en ligne le 05/04/2017 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/fm-speech-to-un>*)

First Minister's speech to the UN

Thank you Teresa (*acting head, Mediation Support Unit*), for your introduction. It's an absolute pleasure to be here with you, at the United Nations today.

Earlier, this afternoon, I did have the pleasure of meeting with the Executive Director of UN Women, and also with the Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights. I'm very grateful to both of you for your time this afternoon, and for having the opportunity to discuss how the Scottish Government can further support the vital work of the United Nations in both of those areas.

And it's really good to see so many of you here today for this discussion about the role of women in conflict resolution. That, obviously, is an issue of significant international significance and importance. But also, an area where I hope that Scotland can make a distinct and positive contribution.

Before I came to New York last night, I was over in California, and one of the events I took part in there was at Stanford University. When I was preparing for the speech I was giving at Stanford, I read up on some of the history of that university. And I was quite interested to learn that the founders of Stanford University, Leland and Jane Stanford, at the very establishment of the university, insisted that women were admitted on completely equal terms to men. And Leland Stanford, actually, in a letter back in 1893, said this: he said "*if vocations were thrown open to women, there would be a 25 per cent increase in the nation's production.*" And I thought that was really striking, that that letter was written 124 years ago. Because it makes a simple, but overwhelmingly obvious point, and a point that is still so highly relevant today – that any nation that underuses the potential of women, that underuses half of its population, is needlessly impoverishing itself.

And yet last year, the World Economic Forum predicted that at our current rate of progress, it would take 170 years for the world to reach genuine gender equality. I don't know about you, but I don't think any of us can afford to wait 170 years, and even if we could, it wouldn't be acceptable to wait that long.

So I'm determined, as the First Minister of Scotland, that my country will take a lead in trying to drive forward progress – both within Scotland, but also, where possible, by helping to promote gender equality beyond our own borders.

I vividly remember, in fact, and this goes to something we were discussing earlier on, when I took office as the first woman First Minister in Scotland – one of the things that really moved

me at the time was the number of girls and women who contacted me to say how much it meant to them to see a woman in the most senior political role in the country.

And that underlined for me the importance of two things: firstly, the importance of making sure we have role models for girls to look to; but secondly, underlining the importance to me, for women in positions of influence, to genuinely lead by example. So I'm determined to try to do just that – to lead by example and use my time as First Minister to improve opportunities for women.

So, at home, the government I lead is committed to tackling violence against women, to closing the gender pay gap, and to ensure that more women work in careers that have traditionally been seen as careers for men. Along the way, of course, we'd like to encourage some men to work in careers that have been traditionally seen as careers for women.

I'm also determined to lead by example in the appointments that I make. So when I became First Minister, I appointed a cabinet that was, and remains to this day, gender-balanced. Now, at the time, I think we learned from the UN that we were one of only three gender-balanced cabinets in the developed world. And I learned today that there are now five. So in two and a half years we've gone from three to five. I suppose we should celebrate all progress, but that really does tell us how much work we still have to do.

But that commitment to gender equality at home is also one that I hope that we can extend to Scotland's work overseas.

A good example of that is our work on climate justice – Scotland has very much been influenced in that regard by the work of Mary Robinson. And of course, so many of our climate justice projects – we were the first country in the world to establish a climate justice fund – helped to empower women. And that's one of the outcomes that we specifically ask all of our partner organisations to measure.

We all know that the worst impacts of climate change are often disproportionately felt by women – women are more likely to be subsistence farmers or to be affected when crops fail. Women are usually the people who get water and have to walk further in areas of drought. It's girls that are more likely to stop going to school when tough times force families to work harder.

And of course, the basic logic of that applies beyond the context of climate change. Women's rights have to be the concern of everybody – not just women. But in order to advance women's rights, we need to make sure that women are in key areas and key positions of influence.

And that brings me, of course, to Security Council Resolution 1325, because that principle applies, I think, very directly and very powerfully to conflict resolution.

Conflicts that target civilians, as so many civil wars do – again, like climate change, often have a disproportionate effect on women. Yet women are too often excluded from having a voice or a say in resolving conflict.

That needs to change. And the new Secretary General of the UN himself has set a very powerful example in how he intends to progress that. And last year, Staffan de Mistura, the UN Special Envoy for Syria invited the Scottish Government to fund a project to train women to be involved in the Syrian peace process. And I was delighted to accept Staffan's invitation.

We had at that stage already committed to accept refugees from Syria. And at present, Scotland is home to almost a quarter of all of the Syrian refugees that have come to the United Kingdom under the resettlement programme.

So we were delighted to help with a project which, hopefully one day, will play a part in establishing peace, rather than simply coping with the consequences of war. And I am really grateful to the UN for giving us the opportunity to do this, to the Mediation Support Unit for helping with it, and of course to Beyond Borders who organised the training programme itself.

The first ten participants in that programme were all from the Syrian Women's Advisory Board. The programme, of course, is helping to ensure that the voices of women are heard in the ongoing Syrian peace process. And of course we've seen, just in the last two days, in the horrific events in Syria, just how urgent it is to make sure that we progress the Syrian peace process.

But we then took the decision to broaden that programme out. And in total, last year, we trained 50 women – from Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria, Turkey and Yemen.

The programme, I think is widely regarded as a success. Scotland is able to provide the women who were participating with a safe space – somewhere where they were able to discuss issues freely and securely, away from the peace process itself.

They attended an event at the Scottish Parliament, and by sheer coincidence, one of the events at the Scottish Parliament took place the morning after our own elections last year. So they had the opportunity to engage with sleep-deprived members of parliament, but members of parliament who had just taken part in a rigorous, rigorous, robust election campaign, but who had immediately come together to accept the outcome of the democratic process. There's also cross-party support for this in Scotland – every party leader was represented at that event. Again, sending a message about the support that exists for it.

And the determination of these women was incredible – the determination to make a difference in circumstances that it is often very difficult for others to fully appreciate or comprehend.

So I'm really delighted that we're in a position today to confirm that we will train 50 more fellows every year from now through until 2021. And in giving that commitment, we're also making the commitment to extend the remit of the programme to include South Asia, South and central America and sub-Saharan Africa as well.

And all of this really is in line with the determination we have in Scotland to be a good global citizen. We were one of the first countries to sign up to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – in doing that, we want to be a model of fair sustainable development at home, and also to promote prosperity, equality and peace overseas.

We want to put rights – including, increasingly, economic and social rights as well as human rights – at the heart of all of our policy-making. And in doing that, of course, we find the framework that the UN provides so very helpful.

We contribute in a range of ways to the work of UN, but part of the reason for being so delighted to be here today, is that I want us to explore ways in which the Scottish Government can further support the work that the UN in its various different forms, is doing.

One of my great heroes, which I'm sure I have in common with many people in this room, and across the United Nations, was Eleanor Roosevelt, and she, of course, was very clear that *“Alone, none of us can keep peace in the world, but if we cooperate together, then we can achieve that longed-for security.”*

So my message today really, to all of you doing vital work across the world, is that Scotland wants to play our part. We are a relatively small country, but a country that potentially can

have a big, positive and powerful voice. And in the work we're doing in peace-keeping and reconciliation, hopefully we can demonstrate that.

So thank you again, for giving me the opportunity to be here today to talk about the work that we're doing and the work that we hope we can do with you in the years ahead. Thank you very much indeed.

[The importance of truth in political debate \(mis en ligne le 12/04/2017 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/the-importance-of-truth-in-political-debate\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/the-importance-of-truth-in-political-debate)

First Minister's speech at Political Studies Association annual conference

It is a huge pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak to you this evening. Scottish Universities, of course, have been involved in the Political Studies Association from its foundation back in 1950, and I know that Scotland has hosted this annual conference on several occasions – most recently in 2010 during your 60th anniversary year. So I'm really delighted that you have again returned to Scotland, and it is, sincerely a huge pleasure, to welcome you all to Glasgow.

It's a particular pleasure because the scale and reach of this conference is truly impressive. You have been discussing issues from environmentalism, to gender and politics – a subject quite close to my heart - to the design of parliaments and how they affect politics. Sessions are being held on political developments in different regions across the world – from North America to South East Asia.

In many ways – and I say this absolutely sincerely – I am sorry that I haven't been able to attend some of these sessions. Because you are, without a shadow of a doubt, addressing issues that are of direct relevance to all politicians – not just in Scotland and the UK, but in Europe and across the world. But more importantly, you have been addressing issues that are of hugely important relevance to citizens right across our work.

And I think one of the things which that demonstrates – as all of us reflect on, what I think I can safely describe with any fear of being accused of exaggeration, as a pretty tumultuous 12 months in politics, and right across the world – is that the work of political studies specialists is perhaps more important and more valuable now than it has ever been before.

And I think it's quite important to stress that point from the outset, because, in the last year, I'm not sure you will always have felt that your work is appreciated by all politicians. One of the most notorious comments of the EU referendum was of course that statement that the public "have had enough of experts". And there has been a sense – fuelled by that referendum and also, I think, by the US election – that evidence-based arguments have somehow stopped being important in political campaigns and in public discourse.

But actually, as all of us know, experts do make an important and positive difference – not just to the academic understanding of political issues, but also to wider public debate and to the very health of our democracy.

And I think that Scotland in many ways in recent years provides a good example of that.

There are some very high profile examples of teams who have made it part of their mission to help the public and the media to understand issues better – for example the Centre on Constitutional Change, or the work on polling at Strathclyde University and through What Scotland Thinks. All of these have had a real public impact. In fact, I often think that sometimes Professor John Curtice appears on television far more often than I do! Actually – Professor John Curtice does appear on television far more often than I do.

But of course there is excellence in all of the political studies teams in Scotland, and that's something that has been reflected in their contributions to this conference.

Their work – and I’m sure this is also true of schools across the UK and around the world – doesn’t simply meet rigorous academic standards. It also makes a real difference to the quality of our public discourse.

All of that is important and encouraging when we think about the current constitutional position here in Scotland, and the prospect of a further referendum on Scottish independence. Something that I know, is of interest much further afield than just here in Scotland.

As most of you know, in 2014, when we debated and voted on the issue of Scottish independence, the European Union was a significant issue in that debate.

And many of those who opposed Scotland becoming an independent country – including the UK Government, it has to be said – argued that leaving the UK was a risk, and said that it would threaten Scotland’s place in the European Union. So it is somewhat ironic that the opposite has turned out to be true. Scotland, despite the arguments that were made in 2014 and indeed, how we voted in 2016 when 62% of those who voted opted to remain in the European Union, it is therefore ironic that Scotland now faces being forced to leave the EU against our will.

And, of course, we face not just being forced to leave, but being forced out in a deeply damaging manner – by a UK Government that seems determined to prioritise control of migration over membership of the free market, thereby making a hard Brexit, all but inevitable.

And of course, that presents Scotland with something of a dilemma. Some people in Scotland – entirely understandably – are reluctant to have another referendum on independence in the next two years.

However if we don’t have a referendum – if we don’t give people of Scotland a choice – we will be accepting a course of action determined by a UK Government that most people in Scotland don’t vote for. And for a course of action that most people in Scotland didn’t vote for. It is a course which may be deeply damaging to our economy and our society perhaps for decades, possibly for generations to come.

In my view, that is democratically unacceptable. That is why the Scottish Parliament, just two weeks ago, agreed to seek consent from the UK Government for a further referendum on independence, once the final terms of Brexit are known. To ensure that our future as a country, whatever that future turns out to be, is decided by us, not decided for us.

So Scotland once again faces a time of intense political debate. And there are two points that I want to make about that this evening.

Although I make these points in a Scottish context, I think they are applicable to elections and to referendums the world over. And perhaps given the climate that we currently live in, fuelled sometimes by the polarising effect of social media, where opinions often matter much more than facts, these points, I think, are worth underlining.

The first of those points is this: that it’s important, in a Scottish context, but in any context, that people asked to make a choice are able to make an informed choice.

And in that respect it’s possibly worth comparing the 2014 referendum on independence with the 2016 referendum on EU membership.

A key difference was that in 2014, the Scottish Government set out a detailed prospectus for how Scotland would become independent. Now – that plan was scrutinised, analysed – and often criticised – by political opponents, by the media, by business groups and wider civic society, and of course by academics.

That analysis wasn't always comfortable for the government – and for those of us advocating independence, of course it wasn't – but it was incredibly valuable. And it fed into a much wider public debate about what kind of a country Scotland wanted to be, a debate that became extremely well-informed.

And it meant that in the summer of 2014, genuinely detailed issues – issues like, for example, who would be the lender of last resort for financial institutions in an independent Scotland – were not just being debated in the chamber of our Parliament or on the television by politicians and commentators and pundits, these issues were being discussed and debated in great detail in pubs and cafes; in hairdressers and bus stops; in workplaces and homes; in every part of the country.

The Scottish population became engaged, educated and informed like never before. And that included young people, a legacy that lives on today, given the lowering of the voting age in the referendum to 16, and something that in passing I would say, if it happened in the EU referendum, the result would have gone the other way.

In 2016, on the other hand, people were asked to vote for a change, without ever really being told what that change involved. A slogan on the side of a bus was as detailed as it ever got. And that detail on the side of a bus of course should never ever be confused with the truth. Nobody who wanted – and I think this is a key point of difference with the Scottish referendum where the Scottish Government was one of the key proponents for change – in the EU referendum, nobody who wanted to leave the EU had any real responsibility for setting out how that might be achieved, or what the implications were. Many big issues – for example the difference between single market membership, customs union membership and World Trade Organisation rules – these issues are only being discussed and debated widely now, when they should have been at the heart of public discussion before the vote took place.

Now – I don't pretend for one moment that the 2014 referendum was perfect. Of course, it wasn't. But I do think it was a far better process for debate and decision than the 2016 vote on the EU was.

And so we want to ensure that the next referendum on independence again gives people the information that they need to come to an informed and considered judgement.

Indeed, that's why nobody wants the referendum to take place immediately. Instead, I believe it should happen once the details of the final Brexit agreement with the EU are known. And based on what the Prime Minister says currently, that is likely to be in late 2018 or early 2019.

And of course, well before the referendum debate, the Scottish Government will also set out our proposals for what an independent Scotland would look like. We will address issues such as the currency, our plans for fiscal stability and the process of securing our relationship with Europe in future. And we will do all of that with as much detail and clarity as possible.

The second point I want to make relates to the tone of the debate. Again, I make this in the context of a Scottish referendum, but it has wider applicability. By and large, and on the whole, I think that the 2014 referendum was a very positive experience for Scotland. But I know that it didn't feel that way for everybody in Scotland.

In my view, a referendum is the only way of resolving Scotland's future constitutional status. However one consequence of a referendum, wherever it takes place, is that it requires a binary choice – a yes or a no – from people who often have nuanced or even conflicting views about something that matters very deeply to them.

Everyone in Scotland knows – from our own experiences in 2014, although this is a point that is usually completely lost – that there was often very little difference between a no voter who was tempted by the ability to take a new path, but who had anxieties about the future; and a

yes voter who felt solidarity with the rest of the UK, but who felt that ultimately Scotland would be better off if we were able to take decisions for ourselves. The polarisation that often seems to exist between politicians rarely exists within the public at large. And fundamentally, all voters simply want the best for their own families, for their own communities and for their countries. They just come to their own conclusions on how best to achieve that.

So the campaign around Scottish independence needs always to respect that fact. We need to recognise the honesty and the validity of people's anxieties, doubts and differences of opinion.

As First Minister, I have the responsibility to lead by example. After all, the Scottish Government has a special responsibility to build consensus where we can. So I will do my best to ensure that at all times we make our case – not just with passion and conviction – but with courtesy, empathy and respect. And I hope very much that all politicians will do the same.

There is a lot of talk in Scotland right now about how an independence referendum would be divisive. But as the Church of Scotland said just a couple of weeks ago, there is nothing inevitable about this campaign or any campaign being divisive. Campaigns and politics are only divisive if we make them so. And we should be determined – all of us – not to make it so.

And as part of that, we should, of course, welcome rather than dismiss the contributions of experts. Independent academic expertise – along with a free and vigorous media and strong civic institutions – form part of the lifeblood of a strong political community, part of the lifeblood of a healthy, vibrant democracy. And that's something all politicians – regardless of our different views and opinions – should cherish and support, rather than seek to denigrate, even when it's not always comfortable for us.

I mentioned at the outset of my remarks that this has been a tumultuous year.

Uncertain and challenging times, I think, demand the very best from politicians, and we don't always live up to that, but all of us have a duty to strive to do so. Times like those we're going through right now also demand the very best of those whose job it is to try to understand and explain the events that are happening all around us. That's certainly true for the media, but I think it's also true for academics.

In many ways this must be a fascinating and invigorating time to work in political studies; but I'm sure it's also a pretty challenging time to do so as well.

And so I hope that this conference has played some part in helping you to rise to the challenges that you face in your day-to-day working lives – I hope that it has helped you as you scrutinise, analyse, inform and enlighten. Because when you do that, when you do it well as you so often do, you are enriching public life and you are strengthening democratic debate.

So that's why I am so genuinely delighted to see so many of you here this evening. I hope you have had a great time in Glasgow, I hope you learned a lot about the political situation here in Scotland, just as you will have taught us much about the political events elsewhere that you know best. So I wish all of you the very best for the remainder of the conference.

[Scotland's energy future \(mis en ligne le 10/05/2017 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-energy-future-1\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-energy-future-1)

[First Minister addresses All Energy Conference 10/05/17](#)

I'm absolutely delighted that I'm able to be here at what, of course, is the UK's largest low carbon and renewable energy event.

There's no doubt it is extremely fitting that we meet for this conference on the banks of the River Clyde. Not just because of sunshine. But it's fitting for other reasons, more important reasons, because the work that took place here, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – in our shipyards, factories and mills – put Scotland at the forefront of the industrial revolution. And now, as we find ourselves in another period of hugely significant change – as the world embarks upon a low carbon revolution – Scotland is again emerging as real world leader.

Back in 2009, the Scottish Parliament set some of the most ambitious carbon emission targets anywhere in the world. And I'm delighted to say that we have already met those 2020 targets six years ahead of schedule. And that is undoubtedly helping us to meet our moral obligations when it comes to climate change. But it also bringing to Scotland really significant economic benefits and opportunities as well.

Our low carbon and renewable sector now accounts for almost 60,000 jobs across our country – and has a turnover of £10.5 billion.

So we want to build on that success. We are determined here in Scotland to develop our low carbon and renewables sector even further. And of course, we also want to continue to support our oil and gas industry.

So that's why, earlier this year we published our draft Energy Strategy. And what that does is set out our long term plan to create an integrated, low carbon energy system – one that will benefit our economy, our environment and the people of this country.

Today, I want to speak about that plan. I want to talk about how we will meet Scotland's future energy needs – and how we intend to transform our energy consumption. I also want talk about some of very real challenges facing the energy sector. And finally, I will speak about our support for local energy solutions.

Now, when it comes to the future of our energy supply, our aim is crystal clear.

We want renewable energy sources to play the major role in meeting Scotland's energy needs.

At the moment, renewables generate almost 54% of Scotland's electricity demand. In terms of our overall energy consumption – for electricity, heat and transport – around 15% is currently met by renewables. It's important to point out that that figure has more than doubled since 2009.

In our draft Energy Strategy we proposed a new target. We want renewable sources to meet the equivalent of 50% of Scotland's total energy needs by 2030.

I don't have to tell anybody that's a hugely ambitious target. But it does reflect the immense confidence we have in Scotland's renewables sector, and it reflects our strengths across the range of different technologies.

Now as all of you know, our primary source of renewable electricity is onshore wind. If you leave this building and look south, you can see the turbines of Whitelee Wind Farm. That's the largest of its kind in the UK – and one of the largest anywhere in Europe. And that's just one of many across Scotland. In fact, our current and consented onshore capacity is enough to power the needs of Scottish households twice over.

That's why we're so determined to ensure that onshore wind has a viable route to market. And as part of that, we've called for Scotland to become the first area in the UK to host a subsidy-free onshore wind farm.

It's a challenge to the industry – but it's also an indication of our commitment to securing the future of onshore wind in Scotland.

Of course, as well as onshore wind, our offshore capacity is also hugely impressive. Scotland accounts for 25% of Europe's total offshore wind resource. Later this summer, the world's largest floating offshore windfarm will be deployed off the coast of Peterhead. And, next year, an even bigger one will be constructed at Kincardine in the North East.

Scotland is also at the forefront of developing marine renewables. Just last month, the world's most powerful tidal turbine – developed by the Orkney firm Scotrenewables – reached peak power at the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney.

And over the past couple of years, Wave Energy Scotland has committed almost £25 million for a series of ground-breaking wave technology projects.

So it's very clear that – across wind, wave and tidal – not to mention hydro and solar as well – Scotland's renewables sector really is a global leader. By setting our new all energy target, we're aiming to ensure that continues – and that all of us can reap the benefit of that. Of course, alongside our support for renewables, it is important that we continue to support our oil and gas sector.

As the International Panel on Climate Change has noted, during the low-carbon transition, hydrocarbons will continue to help meet the world's energy needs. So a secure supply of oil and gas – of course produced to the highest, least polluting standards – will be an important part of Scotland's energy mix for a long time to come.

It's also why we continue to support the industry amid the current challenges that it faces – through initiatives like our Energy Jobs Task Force and our Transition Training Fund.

After all, our oil and gas sector is not just a hugely important part of our economy, supporting over 120,000 jobs. The industry's key strengths – in terms of expertise, infrastructure and supply chain – are also a huge asset to the wider energy sector. It's environmentally and economically essential that we harness all of those strengths to support new low carbon technologies and energy sources.

For example, the experience of our oil and gas industry in working offshore is clearly of real relevance to our offshore wind sector. And that's just one of many ways in which the oil and gas sector can contribute to the growing success of our low carbon economy.

Of course, ensuring that Scotland has a reliable, low carbon energy supply is just one part of our strategy. We're equally focussed on transforming the way that we use energy.

I'll give just two examples of that. The first concerns energy efficiency.

We know that increasing energy efficiency helps to lower energy bills, reduce fuel poverty, and maximise the competitiveness of our businesses.

That's why we have taken the deliberate step of making energy efficiency a national infrastructure priority. We've committed half a billion pounds to Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme, over the next four years. That money will be used to implement energy efficiency measures in homes and businesses right across the country. And I think that's a very good example of an investment which definitely benefits the environment that is also good for families and businesses right across Scotland.

The second example I think it's important to highlight is transport.

We know we need to reduce emissions from road travel. That is a vital part of meeting our climate change targets – but it's also hugely important to protecting public health.

That's why we are seeking to be at the forefront of innovation when it comes to low or zero carbon fuels – like hydrogen. In fact, Europe's largest fleet of hydrogen fuel cell buses is currently in operation on the roads of Aberdeen.

And it's also why we set a new target in our draft Energy Strategy – that by 2032, 40% of all new cars sold will be ultra-low emission vehicles.

We're already building the infrastructure that will be necessary to achieve and support that. Our network of EV charge points is one of the most comprehensive in Europe – and we'll continue to develop that.

But alongside that, we also continue, through the Energy Savings Trust, to provide interest-free loans to consumers and businesses for the purchase of electric vehicles.

It's just one part of our comprehensive agenda to reduce Scotland's transport emissions. And along with our investment in energy efficiency, that will contribute to the long-term transformation of our energy use.

Now, while we're underlining – and I hope I am underlining for you today – our ambitions for the future, we also must recognise that our energy sector faces very real challenges. I already mentioned the challenges facing our oil and gas industry. Over the past couple of years, there's no avoiding the fact that the low-carbon and renewables sector has also suffered some setbacks.

Our offshore oil and gas fields are potentially the largest carbon storage resource in Europe. We also have a huge amount of expertise in the oil and gas sector and its supply chain. So Scotland should be, and very much is, a natural centre for this vital new technology.

But proving the commercial viability of carbon capture and storage – and of course, Scotland's own capabilities – is absolutely essential.

That wouldn't just help us to lower emissions from power generation and heavy industry. It's also hugely important when we look at future trends in energy generation. Carbon capture and storage – I think – has an important role to play in ensuring that hydrogen is a truly sustainable fuel source.

Now, I welcome today's announcement that EU funds have been awarded to the Acorn Project. This initiative will explore how oil and gas infrastructure in Aberdeenshire could be used for Carbon Capture and Storage. In doing so, it aims to show how a vibrant Carbon Capture and Storage industry could develop in Scotland.

Now so far I've talked about our national policy ambitions and some of the challenges we face, I've focused on the action we're taking to modernise our energy supply and change the way we use energy. But we're also looking to support and encourage local energy solutions. We want to harness the skills, ideas and resources of communities right across the country.

The benefits of this are potentially transformational. Local energy systems, as we know, can help to provide secure, sustainable and affordable energy, that meets the specific needs of different communities. And by supporting a culture of energy innovation, we can keep Scotland at the forefront of the low-carbon revolution.

That's why we're providing £43 million of new funding for 13 renewable and low-carbon energy projects across Scotland. It's part of our Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme – which is joint funded by the European Union.

Today, we're announcing the projects that have been selected to benefit from that funding. Some of them are led by community energy companies, some are led by private companies, others are led by local authorities.

They include a scheme in Stirling that uses the biogas from waste water to produce heat and power; a project on Fair Isle to create a standalone energy system – incorporating wind, solar and battery storage.

Another project involves installing a heat pump on the site of a former shipyard in Clydebank, about 5 miles away from here, helping to provide low-carbon heating for more than 1000 homes.

So the projects support good ideas, but they also have the potential to directly benefit specific communities and businesses. And of course, as we learn lessons from their implementation, they could bring wider benefits to the whole of Scotland as well.

And these local projects are a further example – I hope – of the scale of our ambition for Scotland’s energy future. We are absolutely determined that Scotland will play our full part in reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change.

We’re determined to build a modern, secure energy system that creates jobs and strengthens our economy. And we want our energy sector to be a world leader across all forms of energy.

The truth is, we have all of the raw materials here in Scotland that we need to achieve those ambitions.

Per head of population, we’re one of the most energy-rich nations in Europe. We’ve retained our traditional strengths in construction, manufacturing and engineering. And, of course, with five universities ranked among the top 200 in the world, we also boast an outstanding science and research base.

But for all those advantages, we know, and we have a real recognition, that there’s nothing inevitable about Scotland realising our energy potential. It’s the decisions we make now – and the direction we take – that will determine whether we use these raw materials to fulfil and realise that ambition.

My pledge today on behalf of the Scottish Government is that we will continue to do all we can to support the energy sector through the current challenges. And we will do everything we can to help you seize the opportunities for innovation and growth.

Because I believe that notwithstanding the challenges we face, the opportunities outweigh those challenges. And if we work together, with a clear sense of direction, a clear sense of leadership, I am convinced we can turn those raw advantages into reality and make Scotland’s energy ambitions a reality. For the benefit of Scotland, but also for the benefit of the world overall as well.

National Economic Forum (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/national-economic-forum-1>)

First Minister, Inverness, 12 May 2017

Thank you, Paul (Wheelhouse).

We set up this event quite some time ago. We thought we would be taking advantage of the relative calm and tranquility that would descend on Scotland following the triggering of Article 50 after the local government elections.

As you’ve probably noticed that hasn’t gone quite to plan! But we thought it was important to go ahead with today’s event – because discussions like this matter to the work we do as a government to support our economy.

These National Economic Forums were first established when this Government took office – they were one of our manifesto commitments 10 years ago, in 2007.

We set them up specifically because we wanted to bring together businesses, the trade unions, the third sector and the wider public sector to promote sustainable economic growth – to discuss how we can address shared economic challenges and seize new opportunities.

That purpose remains as important as it's ever been. In fact I would argue that it's more important today than it has been in the last few years. That's why, in addition to myself, there are five Scottish Government Ministers here today. That is an illustration of the importance we attach to these discussions and it's why we're delighted to welcome so many of you to Inverness.

The last decade since we first started organising these forums has been even more challenging for many businesses across the country than could have been expected back in 2007. Scotland's economy, like the UK economy overall, has had to weather the financial crisis of 2008, and many companies – particularly in the north east – are now coping with the effects of the downturn in the oil and gas sector.

So when we consider all of this it's a tribute to the resilience, initiative and hard work of businesses the length and breadth of the country that on many measures – despite these headwinds – Scotland's economy has performed well over the last decade.

We currently have a slightly lower unemployment rate than the rest of the UK – despite being more directly affected by the difficulties in oil and gas. There are 40,000 more people in employment than 10 years ago before the recession – and 60% of that figure is accounted for by a growth in highly skilled jobs – something of course we want to see more of. Very encouragingly, given the long-term damage that we know youth unemployment can do to the very fabric of a society, we have the third lowest youth unemployment rate in the European Union.

We have higher levels of productivity than any part of the UK outside of London and the south east. And we have huge economic strengths which should give us optimism for the future.

Many of those strengths are evident across the Highlands and here in Inverness. Life sciences is a major employer. There are huge opportunities in renewable energy – something I will say more about later. Our food and drink and tourism sector continues to go from strength and strength.

In the last year, we've seen continued growth in the tourism industry, where of course the Highlands is a key part of what is a stunning national success story. And if you look at other areas – for example advanced manufacturing, we've recently seen hugely exciting proposals from the GFG Alliance to use the smelter site at Fort William to make automotive products – potentially creating 1000 jobs directly, and supporting a further 1,000 jobs indirectly. It's yet another example of the fact that the Highlands and Islands, like Scotland as a whole, does have huge economic opportunities in the years ahead that we must make sure we seize and harness.

We are determined as a government, working with all of you, to build on those strengths. For example, Inverness and the Highlands – like all parts of the country - will benefit significantly in the next decade or so from Scottish Government infrastructure investment. Key projects here include the dualling of the A9 and the A96; better rail connections between the highlands and the central belt; and our commitment to make broadband accessible to every home and every business in Scotland by the end of this parliament without exception.

But we also know – despite the many reasons we have for optimism – that we still face economic challenges and there is still a huge amount of work to be done.

Recent economic growth figures for Scotland have been disappointing – so we clearly need to do more to drive growth in our economy. Scotland has relatively low unemployment, but we know we need to reduce our economic inactivity rates. And while our productivity has

performed well recently in comparison with the rest of the UK, it still lags behind nations such as Sweden and Germany and many others across the European continent.

And of course we need to face up to the significant challenges that will be brought about by Brexit.

And so it's highly appropriate that the issues that we're discussing in today's workshops are all central to one or more of those challenges.

For example, quite a few of you will attend the workshop on the enterprise and skills review. Businesses have already had a major input into the review – today's event is a further opportunity for you to feed in your thoughts.

Our enterprise agencies - Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise – already do an extremely good job. For example in recent years they have stepped up their efforts to promote innovation and internationalisation. Six years ago, SDI helped 1,400 companies to internationalise. Now, the figure is more than 2,500.

But we want to be sure that the help our enterprise agencies provide is even better co-ordinated and more effectively targeted. In particular, we want to make it as easy and quick as possible for companies to access business support services.

We're looking at other issues, too. For example in relation to internationalisation, we're assessing how the work of VisitScotland in creating messaging for Scotland – in determining our national “brand” – can best be used by other government agencies, by universities and by individual businesses. It's a step which could play an important part in helping all of us to promote Scotland more effectively right across the world.

That's something which undoubtedly becomes even more important as we face the challenge of Brexit – which of course is the subject of another of today's workshops.

We are determined to do everything we can to make sure that as these discussions progress over the months and perhaps years ahead, Scotland's interests are very firmly to the forefront. And above all, we are determined that Scotland will remain, and be seen to be – across the rest of the UK, Europe and the world – an open, outward looking and international country.

Internationalisation has already been a major focus for this government – that's why, as I mentioned, our enterprise agencies have focused more on support for companies which want to export.

And it's important to say, that as a country, we already does pretty well in the international marketplace. The value of our international exports has increased by 40% in the last eight years. But there's the potential for much stronger growth – right now more than 80% of companies don't export at all at the moment. That's quite a staggering statistic. It shows how much of our exports are concentrated in a small number of companies. Once you get over the shock of hearing that statistic, you can see the potential for growth if we can get more of our companies exporting, then the benefits to our economy are clear for all to see.

That's why we are intensifying our efforts to build connections with our partners in Europe and around the world. We have recently opened innovation and investment hubs in Dublin and in London in order to promote Scotland more effectively to our closest neighbours. We are also planning to strengthen our presence in Brussels and to open an innovation and investment hub in Berlin.

And as you would expect, we are working closely with business organisations. At the end of last year we announced funding for the Scottish Chambers of Commerce to help them to promote trade. After all, the Chambers represent 11,000 businesses in Scotland, but they also have ties to chambers in more than 180 countries around the world. So they are ideally placed

to encourage their members to export. And as a government, it is important that we work in partnership with them as we do that.

That is now happening – just two days ago, Inverness Chamber of Commerce led a delegation of local businesses on a visit to Munich and Augsburg in southern Germany.

It's exactly that kind of initiative – encouraging small and medium sized firms to build links and to develop partnerships – that we need to see even more of.

We know that internationalisation is good for the economy as a whole. It's not just good for our balance of trade, although it is – it also encourages companies to be more ambitious, more innovative and more productive. And so despite the difficulties that Brexit will create, we are determined to work with you to expand the opportunities which are available to Scottish businesses.

And of course that emphasis on internationalisation is also directly relevant to the two other workshops this morning – looking at Scotland's energy industry and the move to a low carbon economy.

I've already mentioned the difficulties that the oil and gas sector has faced in the past two years. One part of our response has been to help the sector to develop new products and to find new markets.

For example, because of our experience in the North Sea, Scotland is currently a world leader in subsea engineering. That's an area where we believe there are further export opportunities in the future.

That's why Scottish Enterprise is confirming today a £1 million investment in the Balmoral Group's project to develop new facilities for subsea testing. That project will make it easier for companies in Scotland to test how products will work in very deep waters.

By doing so, it will help them to develop and manufacture equipment which can then be exported around the world. It's just one example of how we are working with business to increase our international competitiveness.

We are also working with the industry to maximise the economic recovery of our oil reserves – potentially up to 20 billion barrels still in the North Sea.

In doing that, we are also recognising that the oil and gas sector will continue to play an important role in meeting Scotland's future energy requirements.

And of course, the industry also supports skills, investment, research and development, and infrastructure for the wider energy sector. Because of that, it can play an important part in the development of low carbon technologies – for example offshore renewable energy.

That's an area where Scotland is already recognised as a world leader.

Just last month, it was confirmed in tests at the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney, that the world's most powerful tidal turbine had successfully operated at full power. The turbine isn't just being tested in Scotland; it has been developed by a Scottish company – Scotrenewables.

The world's largest tidal power array is currently being developed in the Pentland Firth.

And if you look at offshore wind, the world's largest floating offshore windfarm will be deployed in the North Sea later on in the summer. SSE's Beatrice offshore wind farm is already under construction in the Moray Firth.

It's worth noting that these offshore windfarms are creating jobs at Nigg – just 30 miles north of here – and Wick. The proposed Kincardine floating windfarm is likely to bring 200 jobs to

Wester Ross. Renewable energy is bringing economic as well as environmental benefits to the country.

And of course the wider move towards a low carbon economy creates many more opportunities for us. We're going to need new technologies in heating, transport and manufacturing. Our energy efficiency programme will create jobs, and will also reduce household bills, improve business competitiveness and directly benefit our environment.

Promoting a circular economy – which keeps products and materials in use for as long as possible – can reduce long-term costs and increase our competitiveness and productivity.

And because climate change is a global challenge – one which all countries need to face up to - there is also a massive global market for successful low carbon technologies.

Scotland has undoubtedly got a moral obligation to lead the way in moving to a low carbon economy – we have a duty to do our bit to tackle climate change and we are absolutely doing that. We also have a huge economic opportunity that we can realise from this – we have a chance here in Scotland to develop new technologies, generate new jobs and expand into new export markets. I am determined, as we all are, that we will seize these opportunities in the years ahead.

I started off this morning by looking back to the establishment of the National Economic forum back in 2007. It is beyond argument that we have faced major challenges in these 10 years. But I think it's also important to remember that we have made important progress and we now have important opportunities.

Above all else, the fundamentals of Scotland's economy are strong. We offer a highly skilled workforce, world class universities, immense natural resources, and a worldwide reputation in some of the key economic sectors of the future.

So the ongoing mission of the government is to work with all of you to harness that potential – to make sure we're creating the best environment possible for doing business.

The last ten years have demonstrated that, as we work to achieve that, bodies such as the National Economic Forum continue to be an important asset. As a government, we have benefited hugely, from the expertise, enterprise and initiative of businesses and third sector organisations across the country and we want to continue to do that

That's why these events are so important. I hope you enjoy today – I know we'll benefit from hearing what you've got to say and I hope it deepens your understanding of the priorities and the actions of the government.

[Statement on Security in Scotland \(disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/statement-on-security-in-scotland>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/statement-on-security-in-scotland)

First Minister, Scottish Parliament, 24 May 2017

Presiding Officer,

I'm grateful for the opportunity to give Parliament a further update following the awful events in Manchester on Monday night. In particular, I thought it would be appropriate to set out the implications of the decision taken last night by JTAC, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre to raise the security threat level from severe to critical.

I received briefing last night from the UK government's National Security Adviser on the reasons behind that decision. Indeed, I've spoken to him again in the last hour.

Clearly, it would not be appropriate to go into detail of what is an ongoing investigation.

However, in summary, the increase in the threat level is due to a concern that the attacker who carried out the atrocity at the Manchester Arena may not have been acting alone and that therefore it is possible that a further terrorist attack could be imminent.

However, it is important to be very clear that it remains the case that no specific threat to Scotland has been identified.

In light of the increase in the threat level, I took the decision last night to convene a further meeting of the Scottish Government's Resilience Committee.

That meeting took place in the early hours of this morning, involving the Deputy First Minister, the Justice Secretary, the Lord Advocate, Police Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Regional Resilience Partnerships. The Chief Executive of the Scottish Parliament also took part in that meeting.

That was an opportunity for us to discuss the immediate implications for Scotland of the heightened security status. Clearly, this is something that will be kept under ongoing review, taking account of any intelligence available to the police.

And as the Chief Constable indicated this morning, Police Scotland have now established a multi-agency co-ordination centre at Govan Police Station to lead the response across the country and with key partners.

I will visit the centre later this afternoon to see its operations for myself and to receive further briefing about the nature of the response.

However, I wanted to outline today, as clearly as is possible at this stage, what some of the practical consequences for Scotland are likely to be over the next few days – and what the public can expect to see.

I know that there has been media discussion in particular about the use of military personnel to support the police in their duties, under what is known as Operation Temperer.

Operation Temperer is an established plan for mobilising military support to the police service following a major terrorist attack. The decision about whether to authorise it is a matter for the UK government.

Operation Temperer has two distinct phases. The first phase involves the deployment of the military to sites currently provided with armed policing by Ministry of Defence Police and Civil Nuclear Constabulary. This frees up those armed police officers to support police forces across the UK.

The second phase involves the deployment of military personnel to support the police to guard specific sites under the control and direction of the police.

It is important to stress Presiding Officer, at present, only the first phase of Operation Temperer has been authorised.

What this means in Scotland is that military personnel will be used at civil nuclear and Ministry of Defence sites here in Scotland. There are a total of 12 such sites in Scotland – 9 ministry of Defence sites and 3 civil nuclear sites. These sites, which are not accessible to the general public, will be secured by the military as of today.

The presence of military personnel at sites of this nature both in Scotland and across the UK will free up the armed police who are normally on duty there. These armed police will create a contingency resource which can be deployed across the UK.

Any decision to make use of that contingency resource in Scotland would be for the Chief Constable. However, Police Scotland have no plans at this initial stage to do so. They have confirmed they have reviewed security across Scotland to ensure the right level of policing is in place and that they can provide that level of policing from within their own resources. This is of course something that will be kept under review by Police Scotland.

It is important to point out that Police Scotland has made significant progress in the last year to ensure an increase in armed policing to around 600 trained firearms officers in Scotland. They have also increased the number of firearms officers on duty at any one time.

As a result of the move to critical, Police Scotland has effectively doubled the number of armed response vehicles on patrol since Monday night. It is likely that the public will see more armed policing on the streets than usual, particularly at transport hubs and around city centres.

However – and it is maybe worth stressing this point, given the understandable attention that Operation Temperer is receiving - we do not currently envisage that military personnel will be deployed on the streets in Scotland, or in other public locations. However, as with all operational matters, this will be kept under review by the Chief Constable.

As I said a moment ago, it is likely that for the duration of the increased threat level, the public will see more armed police on the streets than usual, particularly around transport hubs and city centres.

I want to be clear that this represents a specific response to the increased threat level following the Manchester attack. The threat level is kept under review and is only kept at this level as long as an attack is judged to be imminent. Therefore, it should not indicate a more general or long term shift in Scotland to having armed police on regular patrol.

As I said yesterday, the police are also completing a review of every public event due to take place over the next few weeks. This includes a full review, together with the Scottish Football Association, of this weekend's Scottish Cup Final to ensure there is an appropriate deployment of police and stewards.

This work is ongoing and the other major events being assessed include the visit on Friday of President Obama, the Edinburgh Marathon due to take place this weekend and the Lisbon Lions memorial event in Glasgow.

In addition, guidance is being issued to organisers of all large events.

I want to stress the aim here of the police is to allow public events to continue as far as possible as normal.

However, the public should anticipate additional safety measures at these events. These measures may well include full body and bag searches and the presence of armed police.

For that reason, as well as urging the public to cooperate with these measures, I would urge people to make sure that they leave extra time if going to an event, or travelling through an airport or train station.

In all of this, our very clear aim is to strike a balance between protecting public safety and ensuring that day to day life goes on as normal. These enhanced security measures are part of how we aim to do that.

As always, the public have a role to play as well.

My message to the public is this. This is clearly a very anxious time - but there is no need to be alarmed. Many of the steps that are being taken now are precautionary - and I repeat, there is no intelligence of a specific threat to Scotland.

However, I do ask the public to be vigilant and to report any concerns or suspicions that they may have to the police.

I also want to provide a further update to the chamber on the specific impact of Monday night's awful events. My thoughts, and I'm sure those of everyone in this Chamber, remain with the families of those who have lost their lives, those victims who were injured and with the people of Manchester more generally.

I can advise the chamber that Police Scotland Family Liaison Officers are currently in Manchester providing support to the families of Laura MacIntyre and Eilidh MacLeod, from Barra. I am aware that there is significant information in the media about these two young girls, particularly about the condition of Laura.

However, their families have requested privacy at this extremely difficult time and for that reason I do not intend to go into further detail today.

I simply want to assure Parliament that as much support as possible is being - and will continue to be - provided to them at this unimaginably difficult time.

I know, also, that we will all want them to know that they are very much in our thoughts.

More widely, we know that in total, seven people have now presented at hospitals in Scotland. However, I am pleased to report that all have since been discharged from hospital.

It is of course possible that other people who witnessed the terror attack or its immediate aftermath have returned to Scotland and are feeling distressed or upset.

Anyone with concerns about themselves or their children should contact their GP for support. Health Boards have been re-issued with information providing guidance to adults and children who have witnessed traumatic events.

As I mentioned in my statement yesterday, the events of Monday night were upsetting for all of us - but they may have been especially upsetting for young people.

So this is a time to ensure that parents and teachers talk to children about any concerns that they have. We remain in contact with Young Scot, and with Education Scotland and local authorities to provide guidance and support to help with those conversations.

Presiding officer, I know that this is an anxious time for everybody across the UK.

Again, my message is that people should be vigilant, but not alarmed. The steps I have been describing today are precautionary.

Most importantly of all, people should continue to go about their day to day business as normal.

The Scottish Government Resilience operation will remain active for the foreseeable future to ensure strategic co-ordination of our overall response, and I will continue to update Parliament as required.

The Justice Secretary will also be happy to speak directly to any member who has concerns or queries.

Finally, let me end - I am sure on behalf of all of us - by putting on record, again, my heartfelt thanks to our emergency services.

Their bravery and dedication is not news to us - but at times like these, it never fails to inspire. We are grateful to each and every one of them.

Statement on London terror attack (*disponible* à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/statement-on-london-terror-attack>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, 4 June, 2017.

I want to begin by expressing my horror at the despicable and cowardly terror attack that took place in the centre of London last night.

My heartfelt sympathies - and those of everyone in Scotland - are with the families of those who have lost loved ones.

Our thoughts are also with those who sustained injuries. We wish all of them a full and speedy recovery.

I want to also express my admiration of and gratitude to the emergency services.

Last night, we saw yet again the bravery, dedication, selflessness and professionalism of the police and of those who work in the NHS and fire service.

I was briefed directly this morning by the deputy National Security Adviser and updated both on what is currently known about the attackers and also on the reasons for the JTAC decision to keep the security threat level, at this stage, at severe.

I have also in the last hour chaired a meeting of the Scottish Government's Resilience Committee and received a full briefing from Police Scotland.

At this point in time, we have no information to suggest that any of the victims of this attack are from Scotland - however, it is not yet possible to be definitive about that and we are liaising closely with relevant authorities in London as more information becomes available.

Our police and health services have also offered any practical assistance to London that may be required.

To assist with the ongoing investigation, Police Scotland will be active at relevant transport hubs - where appropriate in partnership with BTP - to ensure that any potential witnesses to last night's attack who may be returning to Scotland are identified.

In terms of the Police Scotland response here, it is important to stress that there is no intelligence of any specific threat to Scotland.

However, the police will ensure appropriate protective security measures are implemented.

As was the case after the Manchester attack, the public can expect to see a more visible police presence, particularly in busy areas.

That will include armed police - the number of Armed Response Vehicles on duty today has been substantially increased.

At what I know is an anxious time, my message to the public is to be vigilant, report anything of suspicion to the police - but otherwise continue to live your lives as normal.

Last night's attack was another reminder of the need to challenge extremism robustly and directly.

We must unite as a society to do so.

And as we do, it is my view that two important principles must be adhered to.

Firstly, we must not allow the terrorists to divide us. And we must not allow any community to be scapegoated for the actions of a violent and mindless minority.

Those who carry out these attacks in the name of Islam do not speak for that faith. Indeed, their actions are a perversion of Islam.

It is important to remember that terrorists kill indiscriminately. They do not distinguish their victims on the basis of faith or race.

A Muslim in this country is far more likely to be the victim of a terrorist attack than a perpetrator of one.

We must never forget that - and we must not allow ourselves to be divided.

Secondly, we must take all possible steps to protect the public. In particular, we must ensure that our police and security services have the resources they need to keep us safe.

However, we must not allow the freedoms and civil liberties that are an essential part of who we are to be taken away or undermined.

These issues will undoubtedly be the subject of rigorous debate in the weeks and months to come.

Finally, let us remember this. London is a wonderful, vibrant, cosmopolitan city - it is one of the best cities in the world.

I have no doubt that - just as we saw after previous attacks, most recently the attack in Westminster - the people of London will pull together, in all of their diversity, and refuse to be cowed by acts of terrorism.

As they do so, we stand with them in solidarity and defiance.

Oil and Gas UK Conference (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/oil-and-gas-uk-conference-1>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, Aberdeen, 6 June 2017

Thank you, Deirdre, and thanks to all of you for coming along this morning.

This conference is undoubtedly one of the key events of the year for an industry that is of vital importance to Scotland's economy. I think it is worth reflecting on the fact that this industry supports 120,000 jobs, its supply chain exports to more than 100 countries across the world, and it has generated more than £330 billion in tax revenues for the treasury. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this industry to not just the Scottish economy, but the UK economy as a whole.

It is also of course an industry which has seen tough times – particularly in these last three years.

So I want to start today by paying tribute to the skill, determination and the sheer hard work of so many people in the sector. It is thanks to your efforts that there does now seem to be some genuine signs of recovery.

The average cost of extracting a barrel of oil from the North Sea has almost halved in the past three years - from \$30 dollars a barrel to just over \$15 dollars. I think it's important to recognise that has not been easy to achieve. It has involved many tough decisions along the way. But equally, it's important to recognise that that kind of efficiency and improvement is crucial to the long term sustainability of this industry.

We've also seen some really encouraging news from several major developments this year. Just two weeks ago, BP's Quad 204 field started production - that's one of the largest projects ever undertaken in the North Sea. In late March, the Flyndre field produced its first oil. On the same day, Hurricane Energy produced an estimate that there could be up to one billion barrels

of oil in the Greater Lancaster area west of Shetland. And I'm sure that Amjad will say more about Enquest's Kraken field, which is expected to produce its first oil next month.

The fact that 25 exploration licences were awarded in the most recent licensing round provides grounds for optimism that other new fields may be discovered. And we've also seen a significant increase this year in business activity – such as mergers, acquisitions and asset transfers. That's something which can be particularly important in relation to mature fields. It means that they can be taken over by companies best placed to seize these opportunities in the future. And that will help the industry in its efforts to maximise economic recovery.

All of this provides fairly compelling evidence that – despite the significant difficulties of the last three years – the oil and gas sector is going to continue to be crucially important to Scotland for decades to come.

So because of that, my main message today is a fairly straightforward one. The Scottish Government understands the sector's current, continuing and future importance to our country. And so we are determined to work with all of you to provide the support and the stability that you need to enable you to succeed.

Now, Oil and Gas UK published its Blueprint for Government paper last week. What struck me most strongly was how significant an overlap there is between the asks of that paper, and the work that the Scottish Government is already seeking to do.

For example one of the key proposals in the Blueprint is for the UK government to establish a long term energy policy. Here in Scotland, we published our outline energy strategy in February. I hope that many of you have taken the opportunity to respond to it.

Our draft strategy points out that oil and gas currently provides approximately 75% of Scotland's energy needs. And it makes it clear that even as we reduce overall energy use, and move to low or no carbon technologies, the sector will continue to play a major role in providing secure energy supplies.

In fact in many areas – from hydrogen fuel technology, to carbon capture and storage, to reducing the cost of offshore wind – the oil and gas sector has an important contribution to make. Among other things, you can help to provide the infrastructure, skills and expertise which are required for us to be a world leader in those technologies. The fact that Scotland already has so many world-class oil and gas companies is a major asset as we seek to build a world class renewable and low carbon sector and that's something we should never forget to recognise and make sure we capitalise on.

So the Scottish Government will continue to support the oil and gas sector as strongly as we possibly can. I want to focus today on three different areas where we are seeking to do that – innovation, skills and decommissioning.

All of us know that innovation is absolutely crucial to this sector – for maximising economic recovery, for reducing costs without compromising safety, and for enabling our supply chain to continue to win new business overseas. The main leaders of innovation will always be the oil and gas companies themselves – I know that there have been some superb new products and processes developed in recent months and years to help to reduce costs.

However, there is an important role for government to play as well, working in close

partnership with business. That's why the Scottish Government has already committed £90 million over the next ten years – funding which has been matched by the UK Government - to develop the Oil and Gas Technology Centre. That centre opened in March – and it aims to ensure that the North Sea is recognised as the leading centre anywhere in the world for developing and adopting new technology for mature fields. It is focussing on key issues such as how to reduce the cost of new wells, how to discover smaller oil fields, and how to use data and information technology to further improve productivity.

In addition to the technology centre, we have also provided funding through Scottish Enterprise to promote business resilience and innovation.

Last year, Scottish Enterprise provided £16 million of support for 111 innovation projects. Those projects had a total value of £43 million – that's three times the value of the projects supported last year.

And last month, Scottish Enterprise confirmed a £1 million investment in the Balmoral Group's project to develop new facilities for subsea testing. That project will make it easier for companies in Scotland to test how products will work in very deep waters.

By doing so, it will help them to develop and manufacture equipment which can then be exported around the world. It's a further example of how we are working with businesses in the supply chain to increase our international competitiveness.

And alongside our investment in innovation, we're also very conscious of the need to support skills in the sector. We have a fundamental obligation, of course, to help those who have lost their jobs in recent years. We want to help them to find employment - in other sectors if necessary but where possible, in oil and gas. We don't want to lose people's talent, skills and experience. That's really important as we look ahead to what is a bright future for this industry.

That's why the Energy Jobs Taskforce is working to maximise employment opportunities for people across the sector. As part of those efforts, over 2,000 individuals have had applications approved for our Transition Training Fund. Initial surveys show that it has helped six out of ten participants find employment – with a third of those securing new opportunities within the oil and gas sector.

We are also taking longer term measures – including many of the ones called for in the Blueprint for Government paper. For example we are working to encourage greater take up of STEM subjects at school and university – particularly among girls and young women.

And of course, skills is one of many areas where the oil and gas sector could be adversely affected by Brexit. At present, the sector is heavily internationalised in terms of its workforce and its supply chains. That's something Scottish businesses have hugely benefited from.

That's why the Scottish Government shares the aspirations of Oil and Gas UK's Blueprint – frictionless access to markets and labour, and continued partnership with Europe on energy policy. It's why we have argued for the UK and Scotland to remain in the single market, even after the UK has left the EU. And it's why I'm very concerned, and I think we should all be concerned, about the possible outcomes which will arise – for the oil and gas sector, and for our economy and society as a whole – if we leave the EU through a hard Brexit deal, or perhaps with no deal at all. And that's something all of us have to work hard to avoid happening.

Now, as I've hopefully made clear throughout all of my remarks, the North Sea will continue to produce oil for decades to come. It still contains up to 20 billion barrels of recoverable reserves. Our primary aim – and I want to underline and emphasis this – our primary aim is to maximise economic recovery of those reserves.

But the North Sea is undoubtedly a mature basin – there is no getting away from that fact. After all, it is now almost 50 years since Amoco discovered the Montrose field – the first major oil discovery in Scottish and UK waters. Which is why the final issue I want to touch on today is decommissioning.

Over the next ten years, we know there is likely to be more than £17 billion of expenditure on decommissioning in the North Sea. It is an important and growing economic opportunity for many companies. And it's one which is already benefitting Scotland – Scottish based firms have secured more than half of the value of the total contracts awarded so far from decommissioning activity.

And just last week, Repsol-Sinopec announced that the decommissioning of the Buchan Alpha oil production vessel will take place in Shetland. It's just one of example where the supply chain has worked together to showcase our strengths and compete in what is an extremely lucrative market.

We want to increase our rate of success here. That's why we want to see a deep water port established here in Scotland. And it's why we launched our £5 million decommissioning Challenge Fund. It will help to upgrade ports and harbours - improving capacity, reducing potential bottlenecks, and helping even more decommissioning activity to take place here in Scotland. So it's important that we do harness this opportunity but equally important that we do not allow it to divert us from that principal which is maximum economic recovery. These things should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

I mentioned just now that the first major discovery of oil in Scottish waters was in 1969. In the decades since then, the efforts of hundreds of companies, and hundreds of thousands of individuals, have helped to make oil and gas one of the great success stories both of Scotland and the UK.

One thing which the Blueprint for Government paper makes clear is that those successes are not consigned to our past – if we do the right things now, if we work together now, then we will continue to see these successes many years into the future.

In fact, the paper estimates that if we maximise economic recovery from the North Sea, and promote and support the supply chain as effectively as possible, the oil and gas sector could generate £920 billion for the UK economy. That's almost £300 billion more than if we don't make the right interventions. So that's the size of the prize and it is one we absolutely must seize.

That £290 billion opportunity is something the Scottish Government is determined to help you seize. So I want to end today by underlining and stressing the point that I started with. We are absolutely committed to working with you in the years ahead to provide the conditions that you need to continue to be successful. Because we know that if we do that, we will deliver benefits not just here in the north east of Scotland, but to the country as a whole, for many more years and decades to come.

[One year on from EU Referendum \(disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-speaks-at-royal-highland-show\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-speaks-at-royal-highland-show)

First Minister speaks at Royal Highland Show 23 June 2017

I want to begin by congratulating the Royal Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland for yet again organising such a fantastic event. It's always a pleasure to be here and I'm delighted to be back this morning.

The Royal Highland Show is, of course, one of the great occasions in Scotland's farming calendar – it's a wonderful showcase for the quality of our livestock, food and drink and farm produce.

I'm told that Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary, actually turned into an exhibitor yesterday, where he was asking people to sample his homemade gingerbread. I'm not sure if anybody here got the opportunity to do so but I can tell you, he's never given me the opportunity to sample his homemade gingerbread. That's perhaps a pleasure that I still have to come.

But one of the things I think is worth emphasising about the show is that 30,000 schoolchildren are expected to attend this year's event absolutely free of charge, and I think that's really important because it makes sure that all children – regardless of where they come from in Scotland – get to understand a bit more about farming, about rural life more generally, and also about where the food that they eat actually comes from. I remember coming here on a school trip myself, and having my eyes opened to those things back then, so to give so many children that opportunity is fantastic. And if they can do that in an environment which – as well as being educational – also gives them a great day out, it makes that an even more special occasion. So I certainly want today to welcome the real importance that the Royal Highland Show attaches to education.

Now of course we've already heard that today's event is being held exactly one year after the referendum on EU membership was held.

So on the equivalent Friday at last year's show – the day after the referendum – I'm sure there was an atmosphere of political drama and probably some shock and disbelief at what had just happened.

Back then we were just, all of us, beginning to grapple with the questions that, a year on, we are still discussing now: what does Brexit mean for Europe, for the UK and for Scotland, and what, very specifically, does it mean for the livelihoods of people in the agricultural sector?

So I'm going to focus today on the Scottish Government's approach to Brexit – how we will try to influence the forthcoming negotiations that of course got underway earlier this week, and the priorities that we'll seek to pursue in relation to agriculture.

But I want to put that approach, firstly, into context. The Scottish Government is committed to doing all we can to ensure that all parts of Scotland can succeed and flourish, and by definition, we cannot and will not achieve that unless rural Scotland prospers.

That's why we work hard to support the rural economy. Our investment in broadband, for example, is one example of that – by the end of this Parliament, superfast broadband will be available to every home, every business in every part of Scotland.

We've also invested heavily in rural transport links – from the dualling of the A9 that is now underway to the re-establishment of the Borders railway. And we are supporting sectors – from food and drink and tourism to life sciences and renewable energy – which are important to a strong rural economy.

We also believe that land reform can bring economic benefits, together with social and environmental benefits.

As part of that, we're encouraging more diversity of land ownership and tenure. Through initiatives such as the Scottish Land Fund, we are supporting more opportunities for

communities to own, lease or use land and buildings, and that's an important way of enabling assets to be used in a way that promotes social justice, creates better local amenities and supports local economic development.

And earlier this year, of course, we consulted on a draft statement of land rights and responsibilities, and that statement will be laid before Parliament probably in October.

And among other things, it recognises the importance of good stewardship. And many of you here, whether as landowners or tenant farmers, I know see yourselves as stewards. You need to derive benefit from your land now – for yourself and the public – but also to protect and enhance it, to ensure that it is in a good state for future generations. And that's why good stewardship is one of the key principles that will be reflected in that statement. We want to ensure that the good practice which so many landowners – the vast majority of landowners, including many farmers – exemplify, becomes universal for all.

And of course an absolutely key part of building a prosperous rural economy is to ensure that we have a strong farming and forestry sector.

I know that Raymond (Henderson, Forestry Partner, Bidwells) will speak at more length about forestry later, so I won't go into huge detail this morning. But again, I want to stress, it's an area where we are making important progress.

We have now introduced the first ever forestry bill into the Scottish Parliament. That bill will effectively complete the devolution of forestry in Scotland. And in particular, it will create a new executive agency – Forestry and Land Scotland.

Forestry in Scotland is already worth around a billion pounds per year. It supports more than 25,000 jobs, helps us to meet our climate change targets and contributes to the wellbeing of communities across the country.

And it's also part of our ambitious plans for the future – more than three quarters of the new woodlands created in the UK last year were planted here in Scotland. And we want to do even more to meet the targets that we have set ourselves.

The new legislation provides a framework which will help us do that, and it is a further sign of that commitment to forestry, and our determination to ensure that it delivers economic, environmental and social benefits to the country.

In relation to farming, we're developing an agriculture strategy. We want farmers and the Government to agree together our key priorities.

As part of that, we're looking at issues such as ensuring that farming benefits fully from the huge success of the food and drink sector. We are also taking steps to encourage new entrants into farming – for example, funding a special scheme for young farmers.

In fact, just after this event, I'm visiting a session to launch a report on the contribution women make to the agriculture industry in Scotland. One that for obvious reasons is close to my heart, but also hugely important for the future of farming: we will be better at attracting new farmers if we reach out to all potential young farmers, rather than 50% of them.

And of course in order to secure the best possible future for farming, we need to gain the best outcome from Brexit negotiations.

Now I mentioned earlier that this is the first anniversary of the referendum. And after 12 months, I think it is the case that almost everything that was uncertain this time last year remains uncertain today. Earlier this week saw the start of the most important negotiations in the recent history of the UK. And the UK Government got those negotiations underway without a clear plan or a consensus around what is being sought. And that situation, and I don't say this lightly, is deeply unsatisfactory.

Before the general election, the UK Government appeared intent on pursuing a hard Brexit removal from the single market, not just the EU, and that approach was prioritising control of immigration over free trade. Now I think there is an important chance to reconsider.

And as part of that, I think it's important there's genuine consultation and a truly inclusive approach that takes into account all of the parties and all of the nations of the UK, in an attempt to develop an approach to negotiation that is founded on consensus and a rational view of what is best for the economy.

And the Scottish Government's proposals – which we set out last December – seem to me to provide a possible blueprint which nations and parties could unite around.

We believe that remaining within the European Economic Area (EEA) – the single market – is the least damaging possible outcome for Brexit for the whole of the UK. It would limit economic damage, and it perhaps is the obvious compromise solution in a UK where 48% voted to remain, where two out of four nations of the UK voted to remain as well. And these are proposals that we as an immediate priority will seek to work with anyone and everyone at the UK Government, other political parties, sectors across the economy to try to get traction behind to ensure that we have an approach to Brexit that prioritises the interests of the economy.

And of course in doing that, we know that there are particular issues and complexities relating to farming.

For example, membership of the EEA, the European Economic Area, would guarantee free trade in most sectors of the economy. But it doesn't cover agriculture.

And it matters hugely to Scotland. Four fifths of Scotland's international exports of beef and lamb go to other EU nations. And Quality Meat Scotland has highlighted that meat exports could be hit by tariffs of more than 50% unless we're able negotiate a tariff-free deal.

And that's why, again, the proposals we published in December proposed that the UK negotiate, as a priority, tariff-free access to the single market for products such as beef, lamb, cereals and vegetables.

And that's an issue we will continue to pursue because we know it's hugely important to farmers, and it could have a direct impact on the prosperity and sustainability of rural communities right across the country.

The second issue I want to touch on is freedom of movement. EU workers are important, vital indeed, to almost every part of the modern farming industry – from the laboratories of our research institutes to the fields of our fruit farms.

The UK Government – certainly in its rhetoric before the election – placed a great deal of emphasis on restricting freedom of movement. And that seems to be the key reason why it is not pursuing single market membership.

But Scottish agriculture, indeed Scotland more generally, has benefitted from freedom of movement. So as things stand, there is still a real danger that we will abandon something which is good for Scotland – membership of the single market – in order to restrict something else that is good for Scotland – which is freedom of movement.

And I think that's an example of the absurdity of a hard Brexit approach, and is a good demonstration of why it makes so much sense now to find a different and more rational approach.

The final issue relating to Brexit that I want to deal with this morning is the issue of farm payments.

I'll talk about the future of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in a moment, but I want to begin with an update on the position in relation to this year's farm payments.

We have made a clear commitment to do all we can to make the 2016 Pillar One payments by the end of next week –the set payment period. Although we have discussed the contingency of an extension to that with the European Commission, at present, we've made more than £249.7 million of these payments and, of course, farmers have been given access to loans pending the delivery of their actual payments. We are making significant progress now on payments and on resolving the remaining issues in the system. For example, the application process for 2017 payments worked well, with more people – including, I hope, some of you – opting to apply online.

But I want to assure you today, and Fergus here would absolutely echo these comments, there is no complacency on the Scottish Government's part about this matter. We have already apologised, and we do so again today, to farmers for the failures that have been experienced in the system. And I can guarantee that we will continue to give the matter our full focus and attention to ensure that farmers get the service that they deserve.

Of course, the reason why this is so important is that payments through CAP are vital to farmers and rural communities throughout Scotland. They're currently worth a total of around £500 million a year. So the future of these payments is a matter of such great concern.

For many farmers across the country – especially hill farmers – CAP payments literally mean the difference in ensuring that their businesses are viable. And, of course, Scotland has far more hill farmers than other parts of the UK. So a loss of CAP payments would be deeply damaging not just to the farmers, but to our rural economy more generally.

Now, there is a commitment to protect the budget for CAP payments up until 2022.

But the long-term future is not yet clear. For some time at the UK Government there's been a view that income support payments for farmers should be phased out, and steps in that direction have already been taken with the abolition of England's equivalent of the Less Favoured Area Support (LFAS) Scheme several years ago.

That's why we think it is vital we do get a longer-term commitment to farming support.

The best solution, in my view, for Scotland would be for the funding which currently goes to Scottish agriculture to be allocated to the Scottish Parliament, so that we can take decisions on how best to support farmers in the future.

As yet, we do not have clarity about what will happen to powers as they are repatriated from Brussels, and I do not think it would be acceptable for those to go to Westminster rather than the Scottish Parliament in areas which are currently a responsibility of our Parliament, and that's an issue we will continue to prioritise in discussions with the UK Government.

Just to conclude, because I want to make sure that we have time for questions this morning, we will, as the Scottish Government, do everything we can to work with others to promote the best possible outcome to Brexit. And that is something that Fergus and Roseanna Cunningham said to Michael Gove when they met yesterday.

We want to play as constructive a role as possible to make sure that the needs of our economy generally, and our rural economy in particular, are absolutely prioritised. More widely, we need to work with you, all of you, to make sure that in our own policies we are prioritising the needs of the rural community.

So thank you very much again for giving me the opportunity to be here and I look forward now to answering some of your questions.

EU Negotiations and Scotland's Future (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/eu-negotiations-and-scotlands-future>)

First Minister, 27 June 2017

Presiding Officer,

Like other countries, Scotland faces big challenges.

Some of those challenges, like Brexit, are not of our choosing.

But we must always remember that Scotland is one of the richest countries in the world, with resources and talent in abundance.

Our task is to make the most of our great potential and build the kind of country we want to be - a fair, prosperous, open and tolerant country.

In working towards that goal, my responsibility as First Minister is to build as much unity and consensus as possible.

That is why, after the election I said I would reflect on the outcome and, in particular, on the issue of an independence referendum.

I have done so carefully, taking time to listen to a broad spectrum of voices.

I want to set out today where those reflections have taken me.

Before I do so, let me underline two enduring points.

Firstly, it remains my view, and indeed the position of this government that at the end of the Brexit process, the people of Scotland should have a choice about our future direction as a country.

Indeed, the implications of Brexit are so potentially far reaching that, as they become clearer, I think people will increasingly demand that choice.

We face a Brexit we did not vote for, and in a form more extreme than most would have imagined just one year ago.

And now, the terms of that Brexit are being negotiated by a UK government with no clear mandate, precious little authority and no real idea, even within its own ranks, of what it is seeking to achieve.

While we must hope for the best, the reality is that with the UK government's current approach, even a so-called good deal will be on terms substantially inferior to our current EU membership.

And, of course, there is now a real risk that the UK will crash out of the EU with no deal or a very bad deal - with deep and long lasting consequences for jobs, trade, investment, living standards and the opportunities open to future generations.

On top of all of that - as we saw so clearly in the deal struck with the DUP yesterday - we now have a UK government that talks about wanting to strengthen the bonds of the UK, but in reality is so desperate to cling on to power at any cost, that it is prepared to ride roughshod over the very principles of the entire devolution settlement.

So if Scotland is not simply to be at the mercy of events, but instead in control of our own future, then the ability to choose a different direction must be available to us.

Secondly, there is no doubt that the Scottish Government has a mandate to offer the people of Scotland that choice within this term of parliament.

We have now won not one, but two elections with that explicit commitment in our manifesto - and the Scottish Parliament has also endorsed that position.

By any normal standard of democracy that mandate is beyond question.

Opposition parties - no matter how strongly they disagree with us on independence, as is their right - should therefore stop trying to turn the basic rules of democracy on their head.

Presiding Officer,

The mandate we have is beyond doubt.

But deciding exactly how and when to exercise it is a matter of judgment - and it is a judgment that must be made in the interests of the country as a whole.

That is what I have been thinking carefully about.

Before, during and since the election campaign, I have had hundreds of conversations with people in every part of Scotland about the issues of Brexit and a second independence referendum.

There are, of course, some people who don't want another referendum, ever, because they oppose independence in all circumstances.

I respect that position.

It is entirely honorable and just as legitimate as the position of those who support independence in all circumstances and want another referendum tomorrow.

But many people - probably the majority - fall into neither of these categories.

Indeed, having spoken to many people who voted Yes in 2014 and to many others who did not but who would be open minded in future, what has struck me is the commonality of their views.

They worry about the uncertainty of Brexit and the lack of any clarity whatsoever about what it means.

Some of them just want a break from the pressure of making big political decisions.

They agree that our future should not be imposed on us, but feel that it is just too soon right now to make a firm decision about the precise timing of a referendum.

They want greater clarity about Brexit to emerge first - and they want to be able to measure that up against clarity about the options Scotland would have for securing a different relationship with Europe.

And, in the meantime, whatever their scepticism about the likely outcome of the negotiations, they want the Scottish Government to focus as hard as we can on securing the best possible outcome for Scotland.

Indeed, that view has even more force now that the general election and the weakness of the UK government has re-opened the possibility, however narrow, of averting a hard Brexit and retaining membership of the single market.

I have a duty to listen to those views and I intend to do so.

The Scottish Government remains committed - strongly - to the principle of giving Scotland a choice at the end of this process.

But I want to reassure people that our proposal is not for a referendum now or before there is sufficient clarity about the options - but rather to give them a choice at the end of the Brexit process when that clarity has emerged.

I am therefore confirming today that, having listened and reflected, the Scottish Government will reset the plan I set out on March 13th.

We will not seek to introduce the legislation for an independence referendum immediately. Instead, we will - in good faith - redouble our efforts and put our shoulder to the wheel in seeking to influence the Brexit talks in a way that protects Scotland's interests.

We will seek to build maximum support around the proposals set out in the paper that we published in December - Scotland's Place in Europe - to keep us in the single market, with substantial new powers for this parliament.

We will do everything we can to influence the UK in that direction.

And then at the end of this period of negotiation with the EU - likely to be around next autumn - when the terms of Brexit will be clearer, we will come back to Parliament to set out our judgment on the best way forward at that time, including our view on the precise timescale for offering people a choice over the country's future.

In setting out this position today, I am also issuing a challenge to the other parties.

The Scottish Government will stand the best chance of positively influencing the Brexit outcome if we are at the table - with the full backing of our national Parliament - arguing for the sensible option of staying in the single market.

So join us now, with no equivocation - back the demands for the democratically elected Scottish Government to be at the table, able to influence the UK's negotiating strategy, and for Scotland and the UK to stay in the single market.

Presiding officer,

The second conclusion I have reached is this.

Over the past few months, the focus on the when and how of a referendum has, perhaps inevitably, been at the expense of setting out the many reasons why Scotland should be independent.

The fact is we are only talking of another referendum so soon after the last one because of Brexit.

And it is certainly the case that independence may well be the only way to protect Scotland from the impact of Brexit.

But the case for an independent Scotland is not just about Brexit - it goes far beyond that.

Many of us already believe that independence is the right and the best answer to the many, complex challenges we face as a country - and also the best way to seize and fully realise our many opportunities.

But we must persuade the majority in Scotland of that.

We have not done that yet - but I have no doubt that we can.

So the challenge for all of us who believe that Scotland should be independent is to get on with the hard work of making and winning that case - on all of its merits - and in a way that is relevant to the changes, challenges, hopes and opportunities we face now and in the years ahead.

That is what we will do.

Of course we won't do it on our own - because the independence case is bigger than us too.

We will engage openly and inclusively with, and work as part of, the wider independence movement.

We will seek to support, engage and grow that movement, and build the case that having decisions made by us - not for us - offers the best future for our country.

We will make, and seek to win the case that governing ourselves is the best way to tackle the challenges we face as a country - from building a better balanced and more sustainable economy, to growing our population, strengthening our democracy, and tackling deep seated problems of poverty and inequality.

Presiding Officer,

My last point, today, is this.

This government has been in office now for ten years.

I am incredibly proud of our achievements - delivered in the most challenging of circumstances and in the face of unprecedented Westminster cuts.

I am also clear about our priorities as we move forward - not just fighting Scotland's corner in the Brexit talks, but also growing our economy and making sure that the public services we all rely on are there when we need them, from cradle to grave.

That means continuing to work each and every day to improve education, equip our NHS for the challenges of the future, lift people out of poverty and build a social security system with dignity at its heart.

But of course any government, after ten years, needs to take stock and refresh.

So over this summer, as we prepare our next Programme for Government and our budget for the year ahead, that is exactly what we will do.

We will set out afresh our vision for the country we lead, together with the creative, imaginative, bold and radical policies that, as far as is possible within the current powers available to us, will help us realise that bold, ambitious vision for Scotland.

We look forward to getting on with the job in the best interests of all the people of Scotland.

[Diversity in the media \(disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/diversity-in-the-media>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/diversity-in-the-media)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Keynote speech at Edinburgh International Television Festival, 25 August 2017, 10am.

Edinburgh is a great place to be all year round, obviously, but a great place to be particularly at this time of year.

It always seems fitting that in August – when Edinburgh and Scotland are the cultural capitals of the world – we also, albeit quite fleetingly, become the media centre for the whole of the UK as well.

And it's particularly appropriate this year. As you probably already know, we're celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh Festivals, and both the BBC and STV have expanded their coverage of those festivals this year. And I think both the standard of the various festivals and the quality of the coverage this year has been really outstanding.

As well as celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh International Festivals, but particularly relevant to this gathering today, we're also making an important anniversary in Scottish broadcasting. This year, in fact next week, marks 60 since Scottish Television – as it was then known – was first broadcast in Scotland.

That marked the very first time that there had ever been competition in Scottish broadcasting. Before the Channel launched, Roy Thompson, the then chair of Scottish Television, promised viewers “*an infinite variety of programmes.*”

I think it's quite interesting to reflect 60 years on that quote. Because viewers in Scotland and around the world do now have access to what seems to be an infinite variety, or at the very least an infinite number, of programmes to watch. But whether diversity has been achieved across all of that programming, certainly, I think, is a much more open question.

And that is the theme which links the two things that I have been asked to talk about this morning. Firstly, women in broadcasting, and secondly, to talk about how we develop production in Scotland.

And diversity links both of those issues. For all the variety of programmes we can and do get, television in my view still doesn't fully reflect the diversity of audiences that broadcasters serve either within Scotland or within these islands across the UK.

Obviously since I first agreed to speak at this event on these particular themes, the publication of the BBC's pay figures has dramatised the issue of the gender pay gap to a greater extent than we might have anticipated.

I think it is quite important to be clear about what gave rise to that publication and to stress the fact that the UK Government, I don't think, was pushing the BBC for greater transparency out of great desire to expose a gender pay gap. It was – perhaps a bit more cynical than that – they were expecting to flush out the very high salaries paid to presenters – some presenters obviously – by the BBC. I think the motivation on the part of the government was clearly to wind up licence fee payers about the high salaries paid to some presenters and to encourage licence fee payers to question what was being done with public money by a public institution.

Certainly it succeeded in winding up licence fee payers – in particularly female licence fee payers – in exposing what looked like and is the gross disparity in salaries between men and women in screen positions at the BBC.

Perhaps the most obvious and unacceptable element of the pay gap that was exposed was to see male and female presenters of the same programme – whether it was BBC Breakfast or the Today Programme – doing apparently the same job, for grossly different salaries.

When I was here two years ago I spoke about how the viewing public was increasingly challenging the lack of women in major on-screen roles. Given that women make up 52% of the population, it seemed odd that men occupied twice as many presenting roles.

I think it is fair to say that in the two years since then progress on that front has been made. We saw the announcement this week that Sarah Smith would be taking over from Andrew Neil on Sunday Politics representing another step in that direction. So progress is being made on that front – but it seems that in considering equal representation on some programmes, the BBC perhaps forgot that there should be equal pay for equal work.

Kirsty was one of more than 40 leading female presenters who wrote an open letter to Tony Hall after these figures were made known. Making quite clear how unacceptable that was and challenging the BBC to accelerate progress and resolving it. Importantly I think in that letter it pointing out that it is not just an issue for those that you would describe as at the top, in the high profile, high visibility roles at the BBC. But this is an issue that goes right through the organisation.

As you would expect, I wholeheartedly agree with the contents of that letter and hope the BBC do take action to quickly resolve what is an unacceptable situation. But it is also important to reflect it is not just the BBC, the BBC will not be the only media organisation that has a gender pay gap. The BBC experience exemplifies the case for much greater transparency in the reporting of companies' pay policies – not just in the media, but more generally. I am not arguing for the revelation of every single contract, but we must have the

information that tells us where gender pay gaps exist, and how big they are. Because we can only call out unacceptable practices when we know they exist.

I think the BBC experience has much wider lessons not just here but for our society as a whole. And of course it would be difficult for me to talk about the issue of women in the media without just briefly reflecting on how women are portrayed by the media, that is something I'm fairly well qualified to talk about. Although I cannot promise to be remotely objective about it. But in my day to day experience, and I'm not alone here, would suggest that women's portrayal, perhaps more by the print media to be fair than by broadcast media we still have got a long, long way to go.

Almost every week I read something about myself, commenting on what I wear or how I look. During the general election the Daily Mail there was a double page spread telling how I had worn the same suit five times over a two year period. What really annoyed me about that piece was the fact it was not the same suit. One as pink the other red. The pictures made it look as if it were the same suit, they did not even get that right.

But more seriously than that and you will remember, and again it was the Daily Mail when the Prime Minister and I met in Edinburgh just a matter of months ago to talk about Brexit, an important issue facing the country. The front page of the Daily Mail the next day had reduced us both to pairs of legs and talked about who won the battle of the legs. Now you can laugh at that and you have got to laugh at that, but there is a serious issue there in terms of how women are portrayed in the media and how that feeds through into women's sense of themselves and women willingness to come forward into high profile or senior roles. So these are really serious issues. Yes we have made progress, but there is still a long way to go.

Coming back to the issue of people in the media, and I've talked about gender so far as equally it is an issue quite close to my heart. These issues are not confined to gender. The BBC's pay data revealed that just one of its 25 best paid stars was from a black or minority ethnic background. That was George Alagiah.

Last month Lenny Henry highlighted research from the Directors Association showing that no talk shows, period dramas, game shows, sketch shows, celebrity TV shows or children's entertainment shows had producers from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. He pointed out that although Ofcom does now plan to ask the BBC to monitor its onscreen racial diversity, the plans for monitoring don't apply to roles behind the camera.

So these are things that in my view are not acceptable anymore. The media also faces real issues in relation to socio-economic diversity. Alan Milburn's social mobility commission last year criticised the "increasing reliance on unpaid work as a point of entry to the profession." That's not surprising - the National Council for the Training of Journalists found that three quarters of new entrants to journalism had done an unpaid internship. If that is the entry into journalism it does not take us long to work out that young people whose parents can support them in that way find that access to journalism is much more difficult.

And this week's provisional report from the Diamond project demonstrating that disabled people and people over the age of 50 are also significantly under-represented in broadcasting. Although to be fair the Diamond project was, very commendably, set up by major broadcasters in order to monitor diversity. It's an initiative which gives some hope that change might be possible.

And change in this respect, and this is a point that should not be lost, is in the interests of the media, as well as being in the interests of the viewing public. As Jon Snow commented on Wednesday night when he spoke here, pointed to the serious problem for all of us in the fact that "*the echelons from whom our media are drawn do not, for the*

most part, fully reflect the population among whom we live and to whom we seek to transmit information and ideas.”

Doing more to protect and promote genuine diversity this is not just true of the media its true generally, it is not just a good thing to do, it is good for business if you can represent demographics of your viewers and benefit from a much broader range of experiences ideal and stories. So these are, I think , fundamental issues and touch on basic principles. Television needs to do more to represent diversity of modern life.

So that is also relative to the second issue I want to talk about today which is how the television production sector in Scotland and how the media in general reflects the nations and regions of the UK.

Now again I think it is important to be fair and recognise that things are much better now than they have been in the past . It's now just over a decade since my predecessor, Alex Salmond, established the Scottish Broadcasting Commission to address concerns – from the public and across all political parties – about the state of Scottish broadcasting.

It's fair to say that in the decade since then, there has been significant progress. In 2008 BBC Alba was launched – it that's been a huge success in terms of its viewing figures and the impact on Scotland's production sector.

And UK network expenditure has increased as well. In 2006 Scotland's share of UK network commissions had sunk as low as 2.5%. Last year, it was 6%.

And it seems almost certain to grow further – the BBC has promised to invest an additional £20m more in network content from Scotland.

The last year has also seen two other very positive developments. STV has joined together its local television stations to create a second channel – STV2 – which includes an integrated news bulletin at 7pm, proving it is possible to have an integrated bulletin in Scotland . Coincidentally, I happened to be in the studio on the night that programme first aired, and was impressed by what they were able to achieve without the resources of other major broadcasters .

And even more importantly, the BBC has announced plans for a new Scottish channel which will launch next year . When I was here two years ago I called for that to happen so clearly I warmly welcome it. But I think there is still more to be done.

There are still a legitimate concerns about how some network spending is classified – whether some productions which are labelled as Scottish really contribute anything to our production sector and our wider creative economy. So I welcome the fact that Ofcom is reviewing that. It's not an abstract issue – under current definitions, Scotland's production sector loses business as each year passes.

In addition, the new proposed BBC channel is set to have a budget of £30 million. There are already legitimate questions about whether that will be sufficient. If you think back to the Broadcasting Commission a decade ago at that time it proposed an annual budget of £75 million for a new network in Scotland. And the fact that the new channel will only be broadcast in standard definition could limit its appeal. For drama, in particular, viewers increasingly expect high definition to be available. At the very least, that issue must be kept under review.

And at present, approximately 72% of the licence fee raised in Scotland will be spent in Scotland. In Wales and Northern Ireland, it is 98%. Even with the BBC's new commitment, we won't have parity with those countries.

The BBC has come a long way in improving choice for viewers in Scotland, and boosting our production sector. I welcome that. But it's hard to escape the conclusion that Scottish broadcasting – for all the undoubted progress – is still being short-changed. And these are issues that still require to be addressed on an ongoing basis

One other issue I know has been discussed a lot over the last few days is the possibility of Channel 4's relocating . Now I know Chanel 4 has reservations about that and I understand some of them but I think that idea has some merit. The Scottish Government has made it clear that if Channel 4 does move out of London, Glasgow would be an obvious base. Channel 4 already has offices in Glasgow . And Glasgow is, after all, a major creative industries hub which is already home to two other national broadcasters.

But there is a broader point here about what relocation is intended to achieve. No clearly I'd be all in favour of Channel 4 moving to Glasgow – apart from anything else it would be moving into my constituency if it went to Pacific Quay – but the point is that basing Channel 4 in Glasgow brings no more benefit to independent producers in Wales or Birmingham, than basing it in Birmingham would bring to Scotland.

So relocation will not be an answer on its own, whatever final decisions are taken there. The key issue is surely to ensure that commissioning power is decentralised through the United Kingdom. That's what the Scottish Government has proposed.

As part of that process, we've suggested the establishment of a centre of excellence for factual programming in Glasgow. And we have also proposed that Channel 4's quota for Scottish programming should increase so that it is closer to our share of the population. We want to see all public service broadcasters do more to commission programmes from the UK's nations and regions.

That's linked to a broader issue. Wales has benefited hugely in recent years from Doctor Who and other drama commissions. And as a result, people sometimes unfavourably compare the drama base in Wales to the industry here in Scotland. I can understand why. But of course, the television production industry in Wales has benefited for more than 30 years from high levels of public funding for S4C. There has been nothing comparable to that in Scotland.

That matters. We're now in a golden age of television content production, and especially television drama production. It's impossible to know whether this trend will continue, or level off, or whether we are currently at a peak. But what does seem certain is that the opportunities for attracting investment in drama, in particular, in the next ten years, will be even greater than we could have predicted ten years ago.

We have already benefited from that- perhaps most prominently through Outlander. In fact since 2012, the value of film and television production in Scotland has almost doubled. But there are opportunities to do far more.

And so one reason we have consistently asked for public service broadcasters to commission more in Scotland, is because that investment can sustain and develop the skills base and infrastructure that we need to take advantage of those opportunities.

But I am also well aware that the Scottish Government cannot simply ask more of broadcasters or indeed the UK Government, without looking to ourselves – without considering the public sector's role. So that's what we are doing.

We have already increased support for the sector – for example through the production growth fund. The first £1.75 million we invested from the fund secured £17.5 million worth of productions. So we will continue to increase the support we are giving . We know that there is a major opportunity here for Scotland – we are determined to seize it.

As part of that, we're addressing concerns that different agencies have overlapping remits. So we are setting up a screen unit based in Creative Scotland to support the economic and the cultural development of the sector.

We are also making progress is being made in film studio facilities – something which has been a running issue for decades.

We are now seeing promising developments. We have said that we are minded to grant planning permission for a development, including a purpose-built studio at Straiton, just outside this city . The makers of Outlander film at Wardpark, and films such as Marvel's Avengers and T2:Trainspotting have used facilities at Pelamis in Leith and Pyramids in Bathgate.

So in terms of investment and infrastructure, we are making progress. That's important in ensuring that we retain programmes and films for significant periods of time, rather than being a base for location shoots.

And we are also working to ensure that people are able to gain and update the skills they need to work in the television and film sector.

That's why I am delighted to announce today that the National Film and Television School will set up a new base in Scotland. The BBC is giving significant support to the venture– the school will be based at Pacific Quay, and will be able to use the BBC's studio facilities.

As many of you will know, the National Film and Television School is the most renowned school of its type in Europe. Its Glasgow base will be its first anywhere outside of London. So today's news isn't just good news for the film and television school, and for hundreds of people who want to make a career in screen – it is also a major vote of confidence in Scotland's film and television sector.

We expect approximately 400 people a year to use the school – including more than 100 full-time students. The Scottish Government is providing start-up funding for the project, and a significant proportion of that will be used for bursaries. We intend to ensure that the new centre encourages true diversity, and gives young people from all backgrounds a chance to develop a career in broadcasting.

So that, takes me back to where I started. Nobody in Edinburgh in August can doubt the diversity and vitality of Scotland's creative talent. But – 60 years on from the advent of multi-channel broadcasting in this country, we are still waiting to see that diversity and vitality fully reflected both on and behind our screens.

My strong belief is that there is a genuine chance to change that. With greater commitments from our public service broadcasters, and strong support from the public sector, we can see significant continued growth in Scotland's television production sector. And the infinite variety of programming available to us, will start to better reflect the infinite diversity of these islands.

[Scotland's economy \(disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-economy\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-economy)

First Minister

Spirit AeroSystems, Prestwick, 31 August 2017

Thank you, Scott and thank you to everybody at Spirit for welcoming me here today.

It's wonderful to be here at Spirit – not just because it brings me back to Ayrshire where I was born and brought up, but more importantly because it brings me to a company whose reputation is based on innovation and excellence. Spirit is one of the largest employers in

Ayrshire, and has consistently supported and developed its workforce – I’ve spoken this morning to some of the apprentices who work here. I also know the company does a lot of work in the local community for example by promoting science, technology, engineering and maths to local schools and we’re very grateful to you for that.

In other words, in so many ways Spirit is exactly the kind of business we want to see flourishing and growing in the years ahead. So this is an ideal venue for a speech in which I want to reflect on Scotland’s economic future.

This is also a highly appropriate time to look ahead to the future we want for our economy.

The Scottish Parliament is about to enter a new session. Our Programme for Government will be published next week. In the next year, we will set up the interim body for the new South of Scotland enterprise agency, and establish a new strategic board to co-ordinate and align the work of our enterprise and skills agencies.

It’s also ten years now since this Government came into office. One of the very early decisions we made back in 2007 - as part of our wide ranging plans to modernise the infrastructure of our country, many of them now realised - was to move ahead with building a new bridge over the Forth.

I’m delighted to say that the new Queensferry Crossing opened to traffic yesterday - providing not just an essential transport link but also, alongside its sister bridges, a stunning new tourist attraction.

The consequences of other economic decisions have maybe been less visible, but they have still been significant. In 2007 we launched a new economic strategy – among other things, that strategy set out key sectors of the economy where Scotland has particular opportunities and strengths.

Many of those sectors – tourism, food and drink and renewable energy - have gone from strength to strength since then. Another step we took back then was to establish the small business bonus scheme. It now benefits more than 100,000 business premises every year.

So I will spend some time today taking stock – but I want to focus more on the future. I want to set out some of the steps we will take now to benefit our economy – in the decade between now and 2027, and hopefully also in the years beyond.

And the first thing I want to note is that – partly because of the decisions we took ten years ago, and notwithstanding the challenges we face – we face the future from a position of some strength.

Despite the scale of some of the challenges we have faced in the last decade – for example the global financial crisis and the downturn in the oil and gas sector - unemployment in Scotland today is close to its lowest ever recorded rate. It is also below the UK level.

Very encouragingly, our youth unemployment rate is now half the level it was at a decade ago – indeed it is now one of the lowest anywhere in the EU. And almost 90,000 more people are in jobs today than a decade ago – with two thirds of that growth being in highly skilled employment.

In addition, our GDP per head is higher than the UK average outside London, and we have virtually closed what used to be a very significant productivity gap with the rest of the UK. In recent years we have also consistently outperformed all parts of the UK, with the exception of London and the south east, in attracting inward investment into our country.

So these figures confirm what most of us already know - Scotland has immense economic potential. Data from just last year suggested that we have the most highly qualified working age population anywhere in Europe. We have more world-class universities per head of

population than any other country in the world, apart from Luxembourg. We also have a global and growing reputation in key industries from tourism, food and drink, and engineering, to informatics, renewable energy and life sciences.

So we can and we must be ambitious, even more ambitious, as we look to the future. Scotland has the natural resources, the skills and the research base to be one of the most prosperous parts of Europe.

But, we also need to accept that we still face some significant challenges. Our productivity levels do not match the rest of the UK's, but remain significantly behind those of many of our partners in the EU.

And the relatively slow economic growth we have seen in the last couple of years – largely caused by the downturn in the oil and gas sector – demonstrates the need to do even more to promote sustainable growth, and to ensure that that growth is spread more evenly across economic sectors and across all parts of our country.

And of course, more broadly, Scotland faces many of the same opportunities and challenges as other developed economies across the world – competing in a globalised marketplace; adapting to an ageing population; moving rapidly to a low-carbon economy; addressing low wage growth and insecure working patterns; and ensuring that society as a whole benefits from developments such as automation, and the use of big data.

So today I want to set out some of the Government's thinking on these wider issues. I won't pretend that we've got all of the answers - nobody in the world does. But I do want to demonstrate that we are asking at least some of the right questions, and that we are determined to work with all of you – with businesses and wider society - as we respond to those challenges.

And the overwhelming point I want to make is that Scotland wants - not just to embrace, but to lead, the key technological and social changes of the future. This is a fundamental point. I want Scotland to be the inventor and the producer of the innovations that will shape the future – not just a consumer of those innovations.

That's partly a matter of necessity. No country can close itself off from the future. But more fundamentally, it's because most of the changes we are seeing either are now – or have the potential to be – hugely positive for society as a whole. New technology is key to the productivity improvements which can then raise living standards for all. A more global economy expands opportunities for our exporters. A low carbon economy won't simply contribute to combating climate change - it will also make our businesses more efficient and the air that we breathe cleaner.

However we also need to manage the consequences of these changes – to be alert to the insecurities they can create and some of the individual and local impacts they can have. In everything we do, we need to recognise that economic policy is a means rather than an end – it is a means by which we help all of our people to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

So today I'm going to talk about how we move more quickly to build an economy for the future. In doing that, I want to focus on two things in particular. I'll talk about innovation – how Scottish businesses can develop and adopt new technologies, products and processes.

And I'll also talk about inclusion, about what all of this means for individuals – how we ensure that everyone is able to benefit from, and contribute to, economic growth.

And as I said earlier, Spirit is a perfect location to talk about all of this. I've just toured the premises here and it really is quite an extraordinary place. The site here includes the Palace of Engineering from the Glasgow Exhibition of 1938. There has been aircraft manufacturing and

repair here for around 80 years now – during World War II, the workshops here repaired Spitfires.

So it's a site which in many respects harks back to a proud tradition of Scottish engineering excellence and innovation. But much more importantly, it's a site with an exceptionally bright future ahead of it.

As Scott indicated, Spirit's Prestwick facility has secured a major order from Airbus to make spoilers. For the non-technical amongst you, those are the wing components you see being raised during descents and landings. That order will lead to investment of more than £20 million in this plant and create over 100 jobs. It also marks a first, not just for this facility, but for the aerospace sector throughout the UK since it involves the industrialisation of the manufacture of composite materials – those are materials which are lighter, and therefore more cost and energy efficient, than the ones used in most current planes.

Now, first and foremost, this success is due to the dedication and expertise of all of the employees here at Spirit. It is a great example of the engineering excellence we have here in Scotland.

But the public sector has also had a part to play. So it's also a demonstration of that partnership we want between government and the public sector and business. The composite technology being used in this new order has been developed and then industrialised with the help of grants from the Aerospace Technology Institute and Scottish Enterprise.

I also remember very clearly four years ago, as Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, having to take the decision that the Scottish Government should buy Prestwick Airport to save it from imminent closure. We did that because we believed then and we believe now, that the airport can have a commercial future – but we were also very aware, at the time, of the airport's strategic value at the heart of Ayrshire's aerospace cluster.

Much more recently, in June of this year, I announced the establishment of a lightweight manufacturing centre at Inchinnan in Renfrewshire. The Scottish Government is helping to fund that centre because we know that there are major economic opportunities for Scotland in manufacturing lightweight materials such as titanium and carbon fibre. And indeed, that centre will support Spirit in developing the composite materials for its wing spoilers.

The lightweight manufacturing centre will benefit many other companies and sectors as well. It's potentially an asset for vehicle manufacturers, renewable energy firms, the oil and gas supply chain and even medicine and life sciences companies.

Now, at present, there are a host of opportunities for Scotland across the advanced manufacturing sector. And so the Lightweight Manufacturing Centre has always been seen as the initial step in establishing a National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland. I'm able to confirm today that the Scottish Government will move forward to establish such an institute.

Indeed, I can announce today that we will confirm both the location and the key partners for that institute before the end of this year. It's a clear demonstration of our conviction that advanced manufacturing will be central to our modern economy in the future. And it's a good, tangible example of our commitment to promoting and supporting sectors where Scottish business has a clear opportunity to grow.

Advanced manufacturing is one of those sectors. But there are many others.

Next week's Programme for Government will see us commit additional support for the financial technology industry.

We will also continue to support the energy sector. We have already committed up to £90 million – matched by the UK Government – in an Oil and Gas Technology Centre. Next

week, we will announce new support for work on carbon capture and storage technology – vital to the future.

We also know there are big opportunities in life sciences. That sector already employs 37,000 people across the country.

Last week I visited Aquila Biomedical. It's a start-up which is based over in Edinburgh's Bioquarter. It's doing amazing work to develop treatments which use the body's immune system to target cancer.

The Scottish Government is trying to support companies like that across the country. So we're encouraging more co-operation between the life sciences sector and the National Health Service.

And we have established a stratified medicine innovation centre. It aims to personalise medical care more effectively by examining data on how patients with different genetic make-ups respond to different treatments. It brings together Scotland's key strengths in life sciences and data analysis – a sector where again Scotland has formidable and leading edge capabilities. Edinburgh University's Informatics School is widely regarded, and rightly regarded, as one of the best of its kind anywhere, not just in the UK or Europe, but anywhere in the world.

And of course there are also huge opportunities in the low carbon sector. That sector already supports almost 60,000 jobs across the country.

The International Finance Corporation has predicted that the new business opportunities created in that sector, between now and 2030, could be worth £23 trillion globally – now to put that in context that's more than 150 times the size of Scotland's current annual economic output. So the opportunities are massive.

Scotland has already gained a global reputation for renewable energy. Right now as I speak, we are currently home to the world's largest tidal array, and the world's largest floating windfarm.

But we have strengths in other important areas, such as battery storage and smart grids. They're actually quite an interesting example. They will become increasingly important right around the world as renewable energy generation increases, and as demand for electric cars rises. So to go back to what I said earlier on – the opportunity globally for Scotland to be an inventor and a producer of these technologies, not just the consumer of technologies developed elsewhere.

And that's one reason why we do see, and put so much stress, on the economic as well as environmental benefits of making Scotland an early adopter of electric and ultra-low emission vehicles.

That's something we will say much more about in next week's Programme for Government. We will set clear and bold ambitions, not just in the interests of the environment important though that is, but also in the interests of our economy. We aim to encourage investment and innovation in technologies where we already have strengths, but also where there will be a global and growing demand in the future.

Now of course, we also know that in the years to come, some economic opportunities will emerge that right now nobody is currently predicting. Technology moves very fast and we also know that *all* sectors in Scotland include companies which are ambitious, and which have good ideas for growth. So I'm not setting parameters here; I'm not constraining our future options. We will need to be flexible in responding to opportunities and in supporting companies across all sectors.

But I suppose the key point I'm making today is this one. Right across Scotland, jobs are already being created in key sectors of the future. And our promise to businesses – whether you're based in Scotland or elsewhere in the world – is that if you invest here, we will provide a stable, supportive, business-friendly environment. We want to be the best place in the world to establish an innovative business.

We also want to encourage businesses to internationalise and export. We know from evidence that companies which do that are more likely to innovate and improve their productivity. Now, our exports have already increased by two fifths since 2007 – we have fantastic companies which are already succeeding internationally.

But our exporting base is still narrower than we would like. For example this is a statistic which shocked me when I first heard it – right now half our exports come from just 70 companies across Scotland. That is both a challenge, but more importantly that is an enormous opportunity for growth and expansion. So we're determined to encourage more businesses to internationalise. That's why, for example, we are doing more at a local level through the Chambers of Commerce network to encourage small and medium sized businesses to export.

We are also seeking to create a culture which is supportive of entrepreneurship. Partners such as Entrepreneurial Spark have already helped to encourage a whole new generation of entrepreneurs and business start-ups.

However, we want to do even more – and so next week we'll be announcing plans to further support graduate entrepreneurs.

And we are working to unlock and encourage investment which helps businesses to grow. That's why we launched the first stage of the Scottish Growth Scheme in June. In that first stage, Scottish Enterprise and the European Union will each provide £50 million for investment in Scottish companies which are looking to expand or raise finance. We expect that investment to be matched by private investors. So it should result in a total of £200 million of investment into Scottish businesses.

We are also looking very carefully at what further steps we can take – in addition to the Scottish Growth Scheme - which will support companies in need of finance. We want to use all the powers at our disposal to help businesses not just to start up but to expand. We'll set out more about that in the Programme for Government next week.

And finally, we want to encourage business's own expenditure on research and development. That has grown fairly strongly in the last decade – but from a very low base. It's a measure where we still lag significantly behind many of our European partners.

That really matters because research and development helps to drive innovation, and therefore makes a difference to productivity and economic growth. Again, Spirit is the perfect example of that. So I can announce today that in each of the next three years, we will increase Scottish Enterprise support for this by almost 70% - from £22 million a year to £37 million.

We expect that £45 million of increased investment from the public sector over the next three years to result in almost £300 million of further research and development expenditure. It's a further sign of our determination to work with businesses to address an issue, that left unaddressed, is harmful to growth.

Now, as I've hopefully made clear, where it makes sense to do so, the Scottish Government will invest additional funding to support innovation and help ambitious companies. The other thing we're determined to do is make the most of the money we already spend. We already invest more than £2 billion a year on skills and business support. For enterprise and economic development specifically, we spend £100 a head more than the UK as a whole.

I mentioned earlier that the new Strategic Board for the Enterprise and Skills Agencies will come into being later this year. One reason for establishing that board, is to ensure better co-ordination of those agencies, and to get the maximum possible impact from our spending.

The quality of the leadership of that board will be absolutely crucial. Which is why I am delighted today to be able to announce that the board's first chair will be Nora Senior. Nora, who is here today, will be well known to many of you. She has had a hugely distinguished career in business and is currently Chair of UK regions at Weber Shandwick and Nora was, until recently, the Chair of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and President of the British Chambers of Commerce. So I think she is the ideal person to lead the new strategic board as it works with business to achieve our shared ambitions for growth.

Now, everything I've said so far has been – unapologetically – enthusiastic about embracing and leading technological change, about Scotland positioning itself to be the leaders of the future global economy. But I'm also acutely aware that as we do that, we must ensure that we are alert to the possible social consequences.

I was quite struck recently when reading a story told by Anand Menon, who is a professor of European Politics at King's College in London. He was speaking at an event in Newcastle before the EU referendum. He was trying to explain what he considered the economic damage that would be caused if the UK left the European Union. In doing so, he said that Brexit would harm the UK's GDP. And he got interrupted by an audience member who said "That's your GDP. Not ours!"

The feeling revealed by that heckle – the sense among too many people in our country that economic growth doesn't benefit them, and that they don't have a stake in their country's economic success – should, I think, make almost every politician in the UK and indeed across the developed world sit up and take notice. It highlights a major weakness in UK Government economic policy in recent years. Too many people and too many areas have been left behind. We need to ensure that growth benefits all parts of the country and all sections of society.

There are of course overwhelming moral arguments for that. And there are also very compelling economic ones. In fact, the OECD has estimated that between 1990 and 2010, rising income inequality in the UK reduced our economic growth per person by nine percentage points.

So ensuring that growth is inclusive – that everyone benefits from it, and that everyone has a fair chance to contribute to it – remains absolutely central to our economic policy and be so while I'm first Minister. That's why the living wage, the Fair Work convention and the Scottish Business Pledge will continue to be vital parts of our approach to economic growth.

It's why we see trade unions as partners rather than opponents, and why we are encouraging greater employee ownership of businesses.

It's why we are determined to use our new powers over social security and employability, to build a system which encourages people into work, but which respects people's dignity while doing so.

It's also one reason why we are investing so much in affordable housing – indeed we are building more housing, proportionately, than any other part of the U.K.

Being able to afford a decent place to live makes a huge difference to people's health, wellbeing and income levels.

And the issue of skills becomes hugely and increasingly important. We already have a good record here – perhaps particularly in relation to young people.

We're implementing the recommendations of Sir Ian Wood's report into our young workforce, and we're expanding the number of modern apprenticeships we make available. I mentioned earlier that our youth unemployment rate is now one of the lowest in Europe. The partnerships we're creating between government, schools, colleges and employers should help us to improve it even further.

But we need to focus on gaps in provision. We know from surveys that businesses themselves are worried about digital skills and also management and leadership skills. So these have been and continue to be priorities for additional funding – not solely for young people, but for people at all stages in their working life.

More generally, we need to ensure that people of all ages are equipped to learn new skills or update their knowledge and expertise. That's an issue which many countries face – it's especially important in cases where, for example, technological change leads to redundancies in some sectors. There are already good examples of good work here in Scotland – for example projects which helped people made redundant from the oil industry, to find work in renewable energy. But we need to do more. And so it's an issue I want the Strategic Board to consider at an early stage.

And of course, just as no person should feel that they have been left behind by economic change, we also need to ensure that no area of Scotland is left behind.

During the next year, we will establish the interim body for the South of Scotland enterprise agency. We want to ensure that the specific needs of that region are properly taken into account.

We have invested heavily to support city deals, and we are also encouraging regional growth deals. I know that the three Ayrshire Councils have put together a joint bid and are working closely with the Scottish Government on its details. Just yesterday, the Scottish Government announced a £5 million investment into one of the projects which has been proposed as part of the growth deal - at the site of the old Diageo plant in Kilmarnock

At a very local level, we want to promote wealth building within local communities – trying to help locally owned shops and businesses by encouraging them to work with and supply larger companies and organisations in the same area. Indeed, one of the issues I've spoken to Spirit about as we've gone round here this morning is developing the supply chain for companies like this.

And of course, we'll continue to invest in skills and infrastructure in all parts of the country. This summer has seen the completion of two massive infrastructure projects in central Scotland – the new M8 was officially opened earlier this month, and, as I mentioned earlier, the new Queensferry Crossing opened to traffic yesterday.

We are making important investments right across the country – the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will open this winter; the dualling of the A9 is the largest road-building project in Scotland in a generation. We are also investing in rail improvements and new train services for communities right across Scotland.

And perhaps our most important investment in connectivity is our commitment to making broadband accessible in 100% of residential and business properties by the end of this parliament – the next stage of which we will procure later this year. That's something which will be vital to the sustainability of rural and remote economies; it will be hugely beneficial to businesses – whether they're bed and breakfasts or creative design companies. And it's one of the ways in which the Government can fulfill our part of the social contract – we can ensure that Scotland's Government truly benefits all parts of the country.

There's one final issue which I want to address before I conclude my remarks today.

By now, you'll have noticed that I have hardly spoken about Brexit so far. That's partly because all of you already know the Scottish Government's position on this – we oppose Brexit, but if the UK government is intent on leaving the EU, our view is that the UK should seek to remain a full member of the single market and customs union.

But the other reason I haven't mentioned Brexit heavily today is because all of the policies I'm talking about today will be implemented regardless of Brexit.

We know that leaving the EU is very likely to make business conditions more difficult – and we will take account of that, and we will do everything we can to mitigate that - but if anything, that fact increases rather than reduces the importance of our focus on innovation and inclusion.

However, one area where Brexit could make action impossible, rather than just very difficult, is in relation to Scotland's demographic challenge.

In recent decades, of the 35 countries in the OECD, Scotland has had the fourth lowest rate of population growth. We've done a bit better in recent years and actually much of that is due to EU migration. However, the UK as a whole has had significantly higher population growth than we've had and that really matters. Over time that will directly affect our living standards. It will mean that fewer working age people can support the pensions and the health care of a larger retired population as our population ages.

That will have inevitable consequences for our productivity and for our public services.

So for politicians, debates about immigration are often not the easiest debates to have. But making sure we can continue to attract the best skills and talent from across Europe and the world is absolutely vital to our economic success now and in the future. So it's really important that we address this debate and don't allow our economic interests to be damaged.

That's why the UK Government's approach to Brexit is so infuriating. It is abandoning something that Scotland's economy benefits hugely from – our membership of the single market – in order to restrict something else which Scotland's economy really needs: freedom of movement for EU workers.

The UK Government already accepts in practice, the idea that different parts of the UK can adopt different immigration procedures. It allows seven cities in the north of England to use special procedures for people wanting to work in technology industries. We believe that it is appropriate, essential in fact, for Scotland to have special flexibility too. We will table detailed proposals on both the case for that and setting out the practicalities of how it would work later this year.

In doing so, we will seek to work constructively with other political parties. After all, there is a strong cross-party consensus in the Scottish Parliament about the benefits of migration. If that consensus counts for anything with the UK Government, it must surely mean that we can come to an agreement that meets Scotland's needs and priorities.

And throughout all of this, we will continue to send an important and consistent message. We welcome people from all around the world. We will encourage and enable you to build successful and happy lives here. Scotland is, and will remain, an innovative, inclusive and open country.

Near the beginning of my speech, I mentioned that this site has been used for aircraft maintenance and manufacture for around 80 years. When the original owners of the site chose a motto after World War II, they took it – very appropriately – from Robert Burns. It said, simply, "The World O'er".

It's a motto that continues to speak to this day to our internationalism and our ambition.

Scotland should aim to welcome people the world o'er to visit, work, study or invest; to compete the world o'er in new markets and technologies; and to be renowned the world o'er for the quality of our products and for the social benefits created by our innovations.

I believe passionately that we are well placed to do that. My hope is that when we look back in 2027, we will see that decisions taken now helped to place us at the forefront of embracing change and addressing challenges; and that innovations developed here in Prestwick and other parts of our country helped to address the major social, environmental and technological issues that are faced by societies around the world.

By doing that, we can, as a relatively small country, contribute hugely to the wider wellbeing of the world. And we can create the strong economy which enables all of us to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

2017-18 Programme for Government (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/2017-18-programme-for-government>)

First Minister

Statement to Parliament, 5 September 2017

Presiding Officer

Over the past ten years, this government has expanded free childcare, removed university tuition fees for students and abolished business rates for 100,000 small businesses.

We have invested in the NHS, scrapped prescription charges and protected free personal care.

We have built social housing at a faster rate than any other part of the UK.

And we have placed Scotland firmly at the forefront of the global fight against climate change.

Today, our unemployment rate is close to a record low.

Youth unemployment is half what it was ten years ago.

Our hospital A&E departments are the best performing anywhere in the UK.

And crime is at a 42 year low.

And, as illustrated by yesterday's official opening of the new Queensferry Crossing, the nation's infrastructure has been transformed.

This is good progress - but it is time to take stock of our achievements, refocus our efforts and refresh our agenda.

We live in a time of unprecedented global challenge and change.

Rapid advances in technology; a moral obligation to tackle climate change; an ageing population; the impact of continued austerity and deep seated challenges of poverty and inequality; and an apparent rise in the forces of intolerance and protectionism.

These challenges are considerable, but in each of them we must find opportunity.

This Programme for Government is our plan to seize those opportunities.

To build the kind of Scotland we all seek - an inclusive, fair, prosperous, innovative country, ready and willing to embrace the future.

It is a Programme to invest in our future and shape Scotland's destiny.

Ensuring that we have a highly educated and skilled population, able to adapt to the needs of a rapidly changing economy, is vital to our future prosperity and our wellbeing.

That is why improving education - and closing the attainment gap - is our number one priority.

As of this summer, parents of all new born children now receive a Baby Box.

That box encapsulates an important principle - that all children, regardless of their parents' circumstances, deserve the best possible start in life.

That principle is one that will follow the Baby Box generation as they grow up.

They will be the first to benefit from our next transformation in childcare.

We have already expanded early years' education and childcare, but by the time the Baby Box generation reaches nursery, we will have almost doubled the amount of free nursery education that children receive.

Over the next year, to lock in that expansion, we will guarantee a multi year package of funding for local authorities to support the recruitment and training of staff and the delivery of new premises.

And to support private and third sector providers of childcare, we will also introduce rates relief for day nurseries.

The massive expansion of nursery education is the first strand of our transformation of Scotland's education system.

The second is school reform.

A new Education Bill will deliver the biggest and the most radical change to how our schools are run that we have seen in the lifetime of devolution.

It will give headteachers significant new powers, influence and responsibilities, formally establishing them as leaders of learning and teaching.

Our premise is a simple, but a very powerful, one: the best people to make decisions about a child's education are the people who know those children best, their teachers and parents.

Our reforms will be matched by resources. We will build on the early success of the new Pupil Equity Funding so that, over time, more of the money that funds our schools goes directly to those in our classrooms.

Of course, we know that the whole education system must work together if we are to see the kind of improvement in schools that we all want to see.

So new Regional Improvement Collaboratives will be established to provide support to teachers, including access to teams of attainment experts and subject specialists.

We will also reform the way that teachers are recruited and educated throughout their professional careers.

We will introduce new routes into teaching, to attract the highest quality graduates into priority areas and priority subjects, and broaden the pool of talent available.

These changes will be underpinned by the new standardised assessments being taken by pupils in primaries 1, 4 and 7 and S3 from this autumn.

These assessments will not raise standards in and of themselves - but they will help ensure that parents, teachers, policy makers and the wider public have access to high quality and reliable information about the performance of our schools.

The third strand of the transformation in education comes beyond the school years.

We are determined to open up university to all who have the talent to attend.

We will therefore take forward the recommendations of the Widening Access Commission to ensure that young people, regardless of their background, have an equal chance of going to university.

And to make sure they get the help they need, we will set out plans to reform student support based on the findings of the independent review that is due to report in the autumn.

We will also ensure that those who take vocational qualifications have the opportunities that they need.

In particular, we will continue to increase the number of modern apprenticeships to meet our objective of 30,000 a year by 2020.

Across all three strands of reform - in our nurseries, in our schools and in our colleges and universities - we are driving change.

Our clear purpose is to ensure a first class education for all young people, no matter the disadvantages that they might face.

That is my top priority and I recommit to it today.

A good education is important for its own sake. It contributes to the health, happiness and fulfillment of all of us as individuals.

But it is also vital to building a modern, successful, dynamic economy.

Last week, I set out our vision for the economy we want to build.

To succeed, Scotland must lead change, not trail in its wake.

We must aspire to be the inventor and the manufacturer of the digital, high tech and low carbon innovations that will shape the future, not just a consumer of those innovations.

To support innovation, we will increase government investment in business R&D by 70% - generating an estimated £300 million of additional R&D spending overall over the next three years.

To help businesses increase their exports, we will appoint - this autumn - a network of Trade Envoys to champion our businesses' interests in key markets overseas.

Our network of Investment Hubs – currently confirmed in London, Dublin, Brussels and Berlin – will be expanded to include Paris, maximising opportunities in France, our third biggest export market.

The support we provide on innovation and on internationalisation will be backed up by help for key growth sectors.

Scotland has the potential to be a world leader in advanced manufacturing.

We are right now investing £9 million in a new Lightweight Manufacturing Centre in Renfrewshire.

That's helping companies develop a global competitive advantage in the manufacture of lightweight, environmentally friendlier materials like titanium and carbon fibre.

The Centre is just the first step. Later this year, we will take the next step by confirming the location and key partners for the new National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland, with work starting on site in 2018 - a clear demonstration of our conviction that advanced manufacturing will be central to our modern economy.

We will also support financial technology - Fintech – as a key growth sector.

Our ambition is for Edinburgh to become one of the top 10 global fintech centres. So we will invest in the establishment of FinTech Scotland, an industry-led body that will champion, nurture and grow our fintech community.

We will continue to champion clean energy. The North Sea is potentially the largest carbon storage resource anywhere in Europe.

The UK government's withdrawal of support for key Carbon Capture and Storage initiatives risks that potential. Westminster does hold the key levers, so we will continue to press for the right policy and financial framework to be put in place.

However, we will do more than that.

I can announce today that we will provide direct Scottish Government funding for the feasibility stage of the proposed Acorn Project at St Fergus in Aberdeenshire.

Today's Programme sets out the range of actions we will take to support other highly successful growth sectors, from food and drink, to tourism and life sciences - sectors which through their determination and innovation are securing jobs now and for the future.

However, I want to make specific mention here of creative industries - a sector that is important both for our economy and our cultural wellbeing.

We live in a golden age of film and TV production. Over the next decade, the opportunities for attracting investment to Scotland will be considerable.

We have already increased support for the screen sector, and last month I was delighted to announce that the National Film and Television School is setting up a base in Glasgow - the first of its kind outside of London.

But I can announce today that we will go further and do what those working in the sector have asked of us - in next year's budget we will provide an additional £10 million to bring screen development, production and growth funding to £20 million a year.

As well as supporting key sectors, we must support those whose ideas and ingenuity create new products, services, jobs and wealth.

The entrepreneurial spirit that forged Scotland's reputation in the past must drive our success in the future. That doesn't just mean helping young innovators start their businesses, it means helping those businesses scale up as well.

Organisations like Entrepreneurial Scotland, Elevator and Codebase are building the innovative culture and leadership ambitions of our people and our entrepreneurs.

To complement that work, we will establish and fund a new 'Unlocking Ambition Challenge'. Each year, we will offer intensive support for up to 40 of the most talented and ambitious entrepreneurs, to help them bring their ideas to market and create jobs. Candidates will be chosen and supported by established entrepreneurs who will give their time and commitment.

Across the economy, we are determined to have a supportive business environment.

To promote this we have reformed our enterprise and skills agencies.

Next month, we will establish the new Strategic Board, to be led by Nora Senior, former Chair of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce. Its task will be to ensure that the £2 billion each year that we invest in enterprise and skills is delivering exactly what our economy needs to grow and succeed.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise has been successful in taking account of the needs of the north of Scotland. We will establish a new South of Scotland enterprise agency to champion the needs of that area as well.

To ensure competitive taxes for business, we will quickly take forward the Barclay review of business rates - initial steps are included in this Programme and an implementation plan will be published by the end of this year.

We will also introduce a new Planning Bill, to support the efficient delivery of the developments our communities need, including vital infrastructure.

A significant constraint faced by many businesses with growth potential is access to long term, patient capital.

The Council of Economic Advisers has made clear the importance to our future economic success of continued infrastructure development, adequate finance for high growth businesses and strategic investments in innovation.

We have already taken steps to improve access to finance through, for example, the establishment of the Scottish Growth Scheme.

However, if we are to succeed in raising our ambition even further, this is a challenge we must do more to address.

We believe that the time is now right to take a new approach on capital investment.

I can therefore announce today that we will begin work to establish a Scottish National Investment Bank.

Benny Higgins, CEO of Tesco Bank has agreed to lead work on developing the Bank's precise remit, governance, operating model and its approach to managing financial risk - vital steps that will see this new bank up and running and providing the patient capital investment that the Scottish economy needs for the future.

Presiding Officer, alongside this commitment, we will provide the infrastructure that is needed for Scotland to be a world leading economy.

We will complete the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, deliver the electrification of the railway between Edinburgh and Glasgow, bring on stream new and refurbished trains and continue to push ScotRail to meet the highest standards of performance.

We will also do what Conservative and Labour governments have failed to do over so many years, and identify a public body that will be able to make a robust, public sector bid for the next Scotrail franchise.

These, and many more transport plans across the country, will benefit our people and our economy.

They will be matched by infrastructure investment for the digital age.

Later this year, we will procure the latest phase of our project to deliver, by 2021, next generation broadband to 100% of residential and business premises - an investment that will be transformational for our economy in general, and for rural Scotland in particular.

That is a significant step, however we are determined to do even more.

To encourage others to see Scotland as the place to research, design and manufacture their innovations - for us to become a laboratory for the rest of the world in the digital and low carbon technologies we want to champion - we must also become early adopters of them. We must be bold in our ambitions - just as we have been in renewable energy.

Let me set out today one area where we intend to do just that.

The transition from petrol and diesel cars and vans to electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles is underway and it is gathering pace.

We intend to put Scotland at the forefront of that transition.

I am announcing today an ambitious new target.

Our aim is for new petrol and diesel cars and vans to be phased out in Scotland by 2032 - the end of the period covered by our new Climate Change Plan and eight years ahead of the target set by the UK government.

As members will be aware, we don't currently hold powers over vehicle standards and taxation.

However, we can and we will take action.

Over the next few months, we will set out detailed plans to massively expand the number of electric charging points in rural, urban and domestic settings; plans to extend the Green Bus Fund and accelerate the procurement of electric or ultra low emission vehicles in the public and private sectors; plans for pilot demonstrator projects to encourage uptake of electric vehicles amongst private motorists; and plans for a new Innovation Fund to encourage business and academia to develop solutions to some of our particular challenges, for example charging vehicles in areas with a high proportion of tenements.

We will also make the A9 – already a major infrastructure project - Scotland's first fully electric-enabled highway.

This is an exciting challenge and one I hope all members and the whole country will get behind.

It sends a message to the world - we look to the future with excitement, we welcome innovation and we want to lead that innovation.

This ambition will help stimulate economic activity - but it is also part of our plans to improve our environment and the quality of the air that we breathe.

In the coming year, we will introduce a new Climate Change Bill that will set even more ambitious targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and ensure that we meet our obligations under the Paris Accord.

Air pollution is a significant risk to public health – it is particularly harmful to vulnerable groups like the very young and the very old.

We have already committed to the introduction of a Low Emissions Zone in one of our cities by the end of next year and we will confirm its location shortly.

However, I can announce today that we will go further. We will work with local authorities to introduce low emission zones in each of our four biggest cities by 2020 and in all other Air Quality Management Areas where necessary by 2023.

We will also do more to support the circular economy and reduce waste.

I can confirm today that we will design and introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, as an important part of our determination to tackle litter and clean up our streets.

For the sake, not just of our environment, but of our health, we will also take further steps to support walking and cycling - active travel - by doubling the amount spent on it within Transport Scotland's budget from £40m to £80m a year.

And we will also introduce a new Transport Bill which will include measures to improve public transport - from provisions on smart ticketing to giving local authorities a range of options to improve local bus services.

Presiding Officer, I've spoken a lot today about measures to support the economy.

A successful economy also needs strong public services.

The quality of our schools and hospitals, the safety of our streets and communities, the supply of skills and good housing and infrastructure are just as important as rates of tax in growing our economy and attracting investment to Scotland.

Of course, our most cherished public service is the NHS. In the last ten years, the budget of our NHS has increased by £3 billion and its workforce by around 12,000.

To equip it for the challenges ahead, we will ensure that the NHS budget continues to grow - we will deliver at least a real terms increase in the revenue budget next year as part of our commitment to increase funding by a further £2 billion by the end of this Parliament.

We will continue to develop the NHS Workforce Plan and we will also introduce a new Safe Staffing Bill to make sure we have the right staff in the right places.

Increasing funding for the NHS is vital, but it is not enough on its own - we must also reform how it delivers care.

We have integrated health and social care, and over the next year we will take forward our Health & Social Care Delivery Plan and continue to support a shift in the balance of care and resources towards primary, community and social services. This will not always be easy but it is right and necessary.

We will also expand our focus on the prevention of ill health. Over the next year, we will deliver a refreshed framework setting out the next steps in our work to tackle alcohol misuse.

However, we must match our actions on smoking and alcohol with bold initiatives in other areas too.

In addition to our plans to tackle air pollution and boost active travel, I can announce that we will take forward a new strategy to tackle obesity, including measures to restrict the marketing of foods high in fat, sugar or salt.

In the year ahead, we will also progress the implementation of our new Mental Health Strategy with its focus on prevention, early intervention and access to services.

Part of the challenge for health services the world over is to reduce unnecessary admissions to hospital - providing more of the care that people need in their own homes or in a homely setting is key to meeting that challenge.

One of this parliament's flagship policies - free personal care for the over 65s - was designed with precisely that purpose in mind.

But there are some people under the age of 65 who also need personal care - for example, those with early onset dementia or conditions like MND.

The campaign for what has become known as Frank's Law - named after Frank Kopel - advocates the extension of free personal care to the under 65s.

The Scottish Government undertook to carry out a study into the feasibility of making this change.

That study has been published today and I am pleased to announce that we will now begin work to fully implement Frank's Law.

There is one further piece of health legislation that we will introduce in the next year.

The Organ and Tissue Donation Bill will establish - with appropriate safeguards - a 'soft' opt out system for the authorisation of organ and tissue donation, to allow even more lives to be saved by the precious gift of organ donation.

Keeping people and communities safe is one of the most important responsibilities of any government.

In Scotland today, crime is at a 42 year low. However, the nature of crime and people's expectations of the police are changing.

We will continue to ensure that our police and fire services are equipped for the challenges of the future - in particular, we will protect the frontline police budget and support the police as they modernise the way they work.

Over the next year, we will also create a new criminal offence of drug driving, which will come into force in 2019.

For some people, a period in prison - sometimes a lengthy period - is the only appropriate sentence.

However, we also know that community sentences, where appropriate, are much more effective in reducing re-offending.

Indeed, as a result of decisions we took ten years ago to reform our justice system and more community based alternatives to prison being available, the re-conviction rate is now at an 18 year low.

However, we must now be even bolder in our efforts to keep people out of prison and reduce re-offending further.

While sentencing is always a matter for the judiciary, I can announce today that we will extend the presumption against short term sentences from 3 months to 12 months.

We will commence this change once the relevant provisions of the Domestic Abuse Bill are in force, to ensure proper protection for those who are victims of domestic abuse.

We will also introduce a new Management of Offenders Bill to extend the use of electronic monitoring in the community and enable the use of new technology where appropriate.

In the coming year, the Vulnerable Witnesses and Pre-Recorded Evidence Bill will also be introduced, to reduce even further the need for children and other vulnerable witnesses to give evidence live in a courtroom.

A further piece of justice legislation that we will introduce this year is the Sexual Offences (Pardons and Disregards) Bill.

I can confirm that this Bill will ensure that people convicted of offences related to same-sex sexual activity that is now legal will receive an automatic pardon.

The Bill will also enable those pardoned to apply to have such convictions removed from criminal records.

Above all this Bill will right a historic wrong and give justice to those who found themselves unjustly criminalised simply because of who they loved.

Ensuring justice for the victims of crime is an essential element of a fair society.

So too is delivering social justice for everyone.

Our aim is to make Scotland fairer and more equal.

Over the next year, we will continue our work to build a Scottish social security system based on dignity and respect.

The Social Security Bill will complete its passage this parliamentary year, and in the next few weeks we will confirm where the new Social Security Agency will be based.

Next summer, we will deliver the first of the new devolved benefits - an increased Carers' Allowance. The increase will be backdated to April 2018.

We will also prepare for the delivery of the new Funeral Expense Allowance and the new Best Start Grant by summer 2019.

The Best Start Grant is particularly important - it will provide additional help for low income families at key transitions in their children's lives and help tackle child poverty.

Our Child Poverty Bill - which sets statutory targets to tackle child poverty - will also complete its parliamentary passage later this year.

We have recently established the new Poverty and Inequality Commission to advise and challenge the government on further actions to reduce poverty, and we will now consider options to place it on a statutory footing.

Among other things, we will seek the advice of the Commission as we establish a new 'Tackling Child Poverty' Fund. The Fund will be worth £50 million over the next 5 years, and will enable new approaches to be piloted or scaled up in the short term.

Over the next year, we will also introduce a financial health check for low income families and bring forward a new package of support for young carers.

Tackling poverty of course involves many different approaches.

I am extremely proud that Scotland is one of the first countries in the world to tackle so-called 'period poverty' through the current pilot scheme in Aberdeen - and I welcome the cross party support for that approach.

We will consider further action to help women on low incomes across Scotland in light of our learning from this pilot.

However, I can confirm today that we will provide free access to sanitary products to students in schools, colleges and universities.

Some local authorities have already made this commitment in relation to schools, so we will work through CoSLA and with other partners to consider the options for delivery.

This Parliament is providing real global leadership on this issue and we should all be proud of that.

While we must take a range of actions now to tackle poverty, we should also consider options for more fundamental reform in the longer term.

One idea that is attracting interest, not just here but internationally, is that of a citizens' basic income.

Contemplating such a scheme inevitably raises a number of practical issues and questions, not least around the current powers of this Parliament - and undoubtedly there are arguments for and against.

But, as we look ahead to the next decade and beyond, it is an idea that merits deeper consideration.

I can therefore confirm that the Scottish Government will work with interested local authorities to fund research into the concept and feasibility of a citizens' basic income, to help inform Parliament's thinking for the future.

One of the most important contributors to a good quality of life of course is housing.

Good quality, warm and affordable housing is vital to ensuring a Scotland that is fair for this and future generations.

Over the next year, we will make further progress towards our target of 50,000 affordable homes by the end of this Parliament.

Our new Planning Bill will also help secure the housing development that the country needs.

We will also continue work to improve the quality of our housing stock.

A new Warm Homes Bill will set a statutory target for the reduction of fuel poverty.

We will also introduce new energy efficiency standards for the private rented sector to improve the quality of accommodation and help lower fuel bills for those, many of them young people, who rely on privately rented accommodation.

Scotland has a good record on housing - we are building social housing at a faster rate than any other part of the UK and we have protected social housing by removing the right to buy.

However, as Westminster austerity and welfare cuts take their toll, we are seeing worrying signs of an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping.

We are not prepared to tolerate that.

Let me restate today a conviction that I hope will unite all of us.

It is not acceptable for anyone to have to sleep rough on our streets.

We must eradicate rough sleeping.

However, in setting that national objective, we also must recognise that it requires more than just housing. Every individual has unique needs and challenges.

We will therefore establish a short life expert group to make urgent recommendations on the actions, services and legislative changes required to end rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation.

To support its recommendations, we will establish a new £10 million a year 'Ending Homelessness Together' Fund.

And we will invest an additional £20 million a year in alcohol and drug services, to help tackle some of the underlying problems which so often drive homelessness.

In tackling the challenges of building a fairer Scotland, national government can do a great deal - but often the best solutions are found by communities themselves.

That is why we will continue work to empower communities across Scotland.

Next year, we will launch a comprehensive review of local governance ahead of a Local Democracy Bill later in the parliament.

And we will continue to work with local authorities to ensure that at least 1% of council budgets are controlled by communities themselves.

We will introduce a Crown Estates Bill to establish a framework for the management of assets and ensure that local communities benefit from the devolution of these powers.

We will continue to implement the 2016 Land Reform Act and shortly approve the first strategic plan of the new Land Commission. It will outline a programme of research to inform options for future change - for example, possible measures to tackle constraints on the supply and cost of land for housing, and possible tax and fiscal reforms, including the potential for some form of land value based tax.

Scotland has a well-earned reputation as a leader in human rights, including economic, social and environmental rights.

We will therefore oppose any attempt by the UK government to repeal the Human Rights Act or withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights.

I intend to seek independent advice to help us ensure that all existing and, where appropriate, future rights guaranteed by EU law are protected in Scotland after Brexit.

We will take forward the actions in our 'Fairer Scotland for Disabled People' strategy, publish a new Race Equality Action Plan, progress the Gender Representation on Public Boards Bill, work with the TIE campaign to tackle LGBTQ bullying in schools, and consult on reforming the gender recognition laws.

Of course, next year is our Year of Young People.

Scotland has always taken a progressive approach to the welfare of children and young people in the criminal justice system.

The Children's Hearing system remains a jewel in the crown.

But in the Year of Young People, we will go further.

We will introduce a Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill to increase the minimum age of responsibility from 8 to 12, in line with international norms.

I can also confirm today that, while it is not our proposal and indeed it may be an issue on which parties will give their members a free vote, the Scottish Government will not oppose John Finnie's proposals to prohibit the physical punishment of children. It is worth noting that approximately 50 countries around the world including France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Republic of Ireland to name a few, have already successfully made this change.

Finally, over the next year we will consider how to further embed the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into policy and legislation, including the option of full incorporation into domestic law.

Of course, Brexit will provide the backdrop to much of what we do over the next year.

We are determined not to allow it to stand in the way of the ambitious Programme I am outlining today.

However, we are equally determined to protect Scotland's interests.

The UK government's EU (Withdrawal) Bill represents a power grab. It seeks to replace EU law in devolved areas with unilateral Westminster decision making. That is simply unacceptable.

As it stands, the Scottish Government will not recommend to this Parliament that we approve the Bill.

We will continue to seek the agreement of the UK government to amendments that will address our concerns.

However, in case that proves impossible, we are also considering the option of legislation in this Parliament to secure the necessary continuity of laws in Scotland.

We will also continue to argue the case for continued UK membership of the single market and customs union. Leaving either will have deeply damaging consequences for our economy and our wider society.

As I said in June, we will consider again the issue of a referendum on independence when the terms of Brexit are clear.

However, in the coming months we will publish a series of evidence based papers setting out how enhanced powers for this Parliament in key policy areas will allow us to better protect our interests and fulfill our ambitions for the country. These papers will cover immigration and its importance to our economy; welfare; employment and employability, and trade.

We will seek to work with other parties and with civic Scotland to build a consensus on the powers that this Parliament needs.

Later this year, we will also publish our draft Budget Bill. The detail of our spending plans for next year will be set out then. However, there are two particular issues I want to address today.

Firstly, I can confirm that we will lift the 1% public sector pay cap.

The pay cap, while never desirable, was necessary to protect jobs and services.

However, with inflation on the rise, it is not sustainable. Our nurses, teachers, police officers and fire fighters deserve a fairer deal for the future. Indeed, the need to recruit the staff that our public services depend on also demands a new approach.

We will therefore aim to secure pay rises from next year that are affordable, but which also reflect the real life circumstances our public servants face and the contribution our public services make to the overall prosperity of our country.

The Budget Bill process will also set income tax rates for next year.

We will always exercise the utmost responsibility in setting tax rates.

And we will not simply transfer the burden of austerity to the shoulders of those who can least afford it.

However, I am also mindful that as a minority government we must build alliances across Parliament in support of our Budget.

For all of us, it must be the interests of our public services, households and economy that drive our decisions.

We know that continued Westminster austerity, the consequences of Brexit and the impact of demographic changes will put increasing pressure on our public services and on our ability to provide the infrastructure and support that our businesses need to thrive.

So the time is right, in my view, to open a discussion about how responsible and progressive use of our tax powers could help build the kind of country we want to be - one with the highest quality public services, well-rewarded public servants, good support for business, a strong social contract and effective policies to tackle poverty and inequality.

Ahead of the budget, we will publish a paper that will set out the current distribution of income tax liabilities in Scotland; analyse a variety of different options, including the proposals of the other parties across Parliament; explain the interaction between tax policy and the fiscal framework; and provide international comparisons.

The purpose of this paper will be to inform the discussions we will have with other parties ahead of the Budget.

I give an assurance today that the Scottish Government will go into these discussions with an open mind and with the best interests of the country as a whole as our guiding principle, and I invite other parties to do likewise.

Presiding Officer, Three Bills of a more technical nature - the Damages Bill, the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax Bill and the Prescription Bill - will complete the 16 Bills that make up our legislative programme for the year ahead.

Presiding Officer,

The Programme that I have set out today, the policies and the legislation, is fresh, it is bold and it is ambitious - and because of that, aspects of it undoubtedly will be controversial.

That is inevitable - indeed it is necessary. No one has ever built a better country by always taking the easy option.

As we debate this Programme in the days, weeks and months ahead, members will focus on and scrutinise individual aspects of it. That is right and proper.

But I invite Parliament - and indeed the public - to also see this Programme in the round.

It is about equipping Scotland - not just for the next year - but for the next decade and beyond.

And at its heart is this ambition - to make our country the best place in the world to grow up and be educated; the best place to live, work, visit and do business; the best place to be cared for in times of sickness, need or vulnerability; and the best place to grow old.

I commend this Programme for Government to Parliament.

Dublin Chamber of Commerce (*mis en ligne le 05/10/2017 disponible à*
<https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/friendship-with-ireland>)

First Minister

Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Dublin

I want to start by adding to the many tributes which have been paid to Liam Cosgrave. He was, I know, a giant of Irish politics – someone whose life spanned the lifetime of the Irish state; who was foreign minister when Ireland joined the United Nations; and who became Taoiseach in 1973 as Ireland was beginning, in his words, “*a new career of progress and development in the context of Europe*”. I am sure that all of us today are thinking of his children and loved ones.

I also want to add my congratulations to Jim and to Dublin for winning this magnificent Sam Maguire Cup for a third consecutive year. It is an outstanding and of course historic achievement.

I hope you’ll forgive me, though, if I confess that my thoughts this evening are more with current events at Hampden Park rather than recent ones at Croke Park.

I’ve been discreetly trying to receive regular updates on Scotland’s world cup qualifier against Slovakia – I’m grateful to the chambers for scheduling my speech to start straight after the final whistle!

Those of you who are aware of Scotland’s group position will understand that I am also closely following England’s game against Slovenia - everybody in Scotland is passionately supporting England tonight, which, of course, is always the case!

And finally, and very very importantly, I also of course wish Ireland well in your match against Moldova tomorrow night.

In some ways it is appropriate that I’m starting my remarks - unusually for me - with some football references. I understand that the last Scottish person before me to deliver the keynote address at this dinner was Sir Alex Ferguson, in 2014. Unlike Sir Alex, however, I will try to stay away from divisive and controversial subjects - such as Roy Keane - and stick instead to safer, more consensual ground - such as Brexit...

Before I do that, however, let me say what an honour it is to address this annual dinner – the largest and most prestigious gathering in Ireland’s business calendar.

I understand that the Dublin Chamber of Commerce has been in existence since 1783, when tumultuous political times – such as the end of the War of American Independence - were thought to require “*a general union among trades and a constant unwearied attention to their commercial interests.*”

For over 200 years that unwearied attention has benefited Dublin’s business community and this city more generally.

That’s something which, of course, matters deeply to all of you. But actually, it matters to me and to Scotland as well.

I have lived all of my adult life in Glasgow. And so I see every single day the extent to which Scotland is shaped by the bonds we share with Dublin and with Ireland. Those ties - of trade, friendship, culture and kinship - enrich both of our countries.

I’ve just come from a meeting with the Taoiseach. And one point we both absolutely agreed on is that those ties now are not just stronger than ever - they are also more important than ever.

That’s partly because of the shared challenge that Ireland and Scotland face in Brexit. But it’s also because of the shared opportunities we have for economic co-operation. So the main message I want to convey tonight is that there are major benefits – for businesses in both our countries – if we can build even closer connections together.

However as you might expect I will start by commenting on Brexit. As I’m sure many of you know, 62% of the people who voted in the EU referendum in Scotland chose to remain in the EU.

That’s maybe not surprising, especially perhaps from an Irish perspective. As a small nation, Scotland has been pooling sovereignty, in one form or another, for many years – and that wouldn’t change if we became independent. We’ve become comfortable with the idea of overlapping identities – whether those identities are Scottish, British, European, Celtic, Polish or Pakistani.

And the sense that small countries can be equals in a partnership of many, is something that appeals to us.

And so in Scotland –and this is contrary to a point the Prime Minister made in Florence two weeks ago –many people in recent decades have felt absolutely at home in Europe.

The fact that the UK Government is committed to leaving the EU means that that Scotland – like Ireland, and like Northern Ireland – now faces a dilemma which is not of our choosing. We want to remain a full member of the EU but face being taken out against our will.

We deeply regret that. However we believe that if the UK is determined to leave the European Union, it should remain a member of the single market and the customs union.

In my view, that is the obvious compromise solution. It’s democratically justified – the vote to leave was a very narrow one across the UK, and two of the four nations of the UK chose to remain.

It’s also clearly economically desirable. Leaving the single market will be deeply damaging for Scotland’s businesses, for our universities, for trade and for jobs.

In addition, the difficulty of attempting to find solutions outside the single market is becoming clearer by the month.

I watched the Prime Minister’s Florence speech two weeks ago. Like many of you, I suspect, I welcomed some elements of that speech.

The acceptance of the need for a transition period was long overdue. There was also finally some recognition that the UK must agree a financial settlement. And the high level aspirations that the Prime Minister expressed in relation to Ireland were vitally important and were also, I am sure, ones that all of us share.

But regrettably, there is still very little detail about how the UK Government's proposals might work in practice.

Part of that is because of the inherent complexity involved in trying to achieve the UK Government's aims. As it is discovering, it is very difficult to leave the single market while also forming a "comprehensive and ambitious economic partnership with the rest of Europe".

But in addition, the UK Government has taken a remarkably long time to face up to issues which could have been addressed more quickly - such as the financial settlement, and even more importantly, the rights of EU citizens. And failure to address these issues - and the rights of EU citizens is a moral as well as a practical issue. I feel very strongly that people who have chosen, whether they come from Ireland or Germany or any other part of the European Union, if they've chosen to make my country, Scotland, their home then they are welcome there and we are thankful for their contribution. So that is a moral issue. The failure, even in a practical sense, to resolve these issues inevitably delays the proper consideration of detailed technical issues that require to be resolved.

The impact of those delays is particularly important here in Ireland. There is widespread agreement on key aims – such as preserving the gains of the Good Friday agreement, and ensuring there is no physical border between the north and south. But the UK Government's vagueness – more than 15 months after the referendum - makes it hard to understand how those aims will be achieved. That needs to change quickly.

I mentioned earlier that I've just come from talking to the Taoiseach. I was reminded that the first time he was ever eligible to vote, was in the 1998 referendum which ratified the Good Friday Agreement.

I was very struck by that – partly, I have to say, because it's quite rare for me to meet national leaders who are younger than I am! So it was slightly disheartening to realise that by the time the Taoiseach was casting his first vote, I had already stood as a candidate – unsuccessfully, I may add – in two UK Parliamentary elections!

But more importantly, I was struck by that point because it's a reminder of the extent to which the Good Friday Agreement has become part of the fabric of everyday life in Ireland. It's been in place for the entirety of many people's adult lives.

It's the vital importance of it that makes it so shameful how little attention was paid and still is paid – in discussions in the UK media and the Westminster parliament – to the possible implications of Brexit for Ireland and for Northern Ireland. In fact to my mind, one of the strongest of many strong arguments for remaining in the Customs Union, is that it will make the issues facing this island easier to resolve.

And so I suppose my first message to you all is this. On virtually every issue of substance relating to Brexit, the Irish Government – and the Irish business community as a whole – has an ally in Scotland.

Like you, we didn't want Brexit. Like you, we support single market and Customs Union membership. And like you, we know that Ireland's circumstances require particular and careful attention, and we will argue strongly for an open border. We believe that those positions are in the best interests of Scotland, of Ireland, and of everybody on these islands.

There's one further issue relating to Brexit which I want to raise this evening, since it links to the economic points I'm about to come onto.

The UK's vote to leave the EU had many causes. But it seems likely that one of them was economic inequality – inequality which feeds a sense of disillusionment and disenfranchisement among many people.

That sense of disillusionment is not confined to the UK. John Simpson was the keynote speaker at this dinner last year. I understand that he made a prediction about the US elections. He said *“I personally don't think he's going to get elected. I really don't.”*

John Simpson was of course expressing a widely held opinion – and maybe also a widely held hope! The political events of the last 2 years have taken many people by surprise. But actually, if too many people feel left behind by the status quo - if they don't feel that they benefit from a global economy – then we really shouldn't be surprised if that is reflected in how they vote.

That's why I think that political developments around the world have posed a challenge for those of us who support trade, who welcome immigration and who believe that the benefits of globalisation, if properly managed, should outweigh the costs. They challenge us to do even more to build a fair and inclusive society. It is the best, and perhaps the only, way to sustain support for a dynamic and open economy.

In Scotland, inclusive growth is already a key part of our economic strategy. One element of that is that we recognize that there is a strong economic imperative behind many of our key social policies – such as expanding childcare, and improving attainment in education.

We also understand the importance of housing. In fact, housing – together with homelessness – is one of the issues I've just discussed with the Taoiseach. I'm well aware that it is a major issue here in Dublin. Scotland has a reasonably good record. We are building new homes at a faster rate than anywhere else in the UK - but we know we need to continue investing.

We also need to do more to make sure that work pays and that people who work hard feel that work is fair. And we are doing that in many ways in Scotland, not least through promotion of a proper living wage. We have a living wage accreditation programme in Scotland, encouraging companies to do the right thing and then be accredited for it.

When I became First Minister in 2014, there were approximately 50 accredited living wage employers in Scotland. Now, there are more than 900. A higher proportion of employees in Scotland are paid the living wage, than in any other country in the UK.

Scotland certainly hasn't got everything right, but - like Ireland - I think that we are at least facing up to the right issues. That's important from a political, social and moral perspective – and it's also crucial to ensuring that our economic policies are successful and sustainable.

In addition, Scotland, like Ireland, is not going to win from a global race to the bottom. We need to compete instead on quality, innovation and high skills levels.

Last month, the Scottish Government's Programme for the year ahead set out how we intend to do that. A key point about our programme was that in many ways, it wasn't just a set of proposals for the next year – it was a plan for the coming decades.

There are some parallels here to the work the Chambers is doing to think about what Dublin will look like in 2050.

And in fact, I was quite struck by a comment made last year by Derry Gray when he was talking about that work. He acknowledged that nobody can predict the future, but then said - “it's not about being right, it's about being ready”.

Scotland, too, is making itself ready for the decades ahead. For example last month we announced plans for all new cars in Scotland to be electric or ultra-low emission vehicles by 2032. We are making infrastructure decisions now – for example when widening or building roads - to make that change possible.

We see environmental benefits in that step. And we see big economic benefits too. Scotland already has strong capabilities in technologies such as smart grids and battery storage – and if we set a clear ambition to lead technological change, not trail in its wake, we will better position ourselves to be the inventor and producer of new technologies, not just the consumer of them.

We are taking other steps to promote innovation. We're significantly expanding our support for business research and development – an area where Scotland currently lags quite a long way behind Ireland. We're also establishing a National Investment Bank to provide long term patient capital for businesses in Scotland. And we're supporting sectors - such as fintech and the screen industry - where Scotland clearly has major growth opportunities.

In all of this – even as we look to the future - Scotland starts from a position of significant strength.

We have outperformed every part of the UK apart from London for attracting inward investment. We have a highly skilled workforce, and more world class universities per head of population than any country in the world, except for Luxembourg.

We have an international reputation in established sectors such as advanced manufacturing, financial services, oil and gas, life sciences, food and drink and tourism.

And we also have key strengths in important areas for the future – such as informatics, data analysis, sensor systems and renewable energy. If you look at renewable energy, for example, Scotland has extraordinary capabilities. We're already home to the world's largest tidal power array, and in two weeks' time, I will open the world's largest floating windfarm.

But we still need to do more. We must build on our strengths, not rest on our laurels. And I believe that Scotland, like Ireland, is well placed to meet the challenges of the decades ahead.

Because of that – and this links back to my views on why Brexit is such a mistake – we want Scotland to be an outward-looking, internationalist, dynamic economy. We want to export goods around the world, and we want to attract talent from the rest of the world.

That is reflected in Scotland's approach to immigration. We benefit hugely from the fact that so many people from around the world – including 15,000 people from Ireland - have chosen to live and work in Scotland. We are delighted that they do us the honour of making their home in Scotland.

There are similarities there with Ireland. But whereas Ireland and particularly Dublin are planning for significant population increases, Scotland faces a risk – because of Brexit - that we could have a declining working population again. That's why we are now arguing for immigration powers to be devolved to Scotland.

And, as well as encouraging people to come into Scotland, we are encouraging Scottish businesses to look outwards. In recent years we have expanded our enterprise agencies' presence in key markets around the world.

Since the EU referendum, we have placed a particular emphasis on Europe. So we are doubling the number of people employed on mainland Europe by Scottish Development International.

We are also establishing innovation and investment hubs in Berlin and Paris, to complement those we have already established in London and here in Dublin. Despite Brexit, we want to

strengthen rather than diminish the links we have with some of our closest neighbours and biggest trading partners.

And few places are more important to us than Ireland.

Ireland is already Scotland's 6th biggest export market. More than 100 Irish companies currently invest in Scotland. Many of you are represented here tonight. I thank you for the work you do in Scotland.

These connections are already bringing benefits to employees and customers in both Scotland and Ireland.

For example, I mentioned renewable energy earlier. When I came to Dublin last year, I visited the headquarters of SSE Airtricity. While I was there, I heard about their Galway wind farm project. It is helping Ireland to meet its renewable energy targets.

Meanwhile, Irish firms are helping Scotland to meet our targets. Mainstream Renewable Power has been given consent to build a major offshore wind farm off the East coast of Scotland. When it is completed, it will provide enough energy to supply almost 300,000 homes.

Now, there will inevitably be occasions when Scotland and Ireland are competitors – for example when we seek inward investment. But the opportunities for mutual benefit are far more numerous. I believe we can build much stronger links – a Celtic Business Corridor, if you will – which would benefit all of us.

There is certainly the political will to develop closer connections.

But of course the key to closer economic links lies with all of you and with your businesses. That's why I'm delighted that the West Lothian and South Dublin Chambers of Commerce - who signed a memorandum of understanding last month – are both in the room tonight. We also have a delegation here from the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, who are discussing how they can work more closely with the Dublin Chamber of Commerce.

And I know that PWC are organizing an event in Dublin next week. It will bring together companies and leaders from the Scottish and Irish financial services sector. Several of Scotland's fund management and fintech firms will be there – as will Derek Mackay, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution. The companies will be thinking about the scope for future collaboration, for example in the development of supply chains.

There are many other sectors where Scotland has key strengths and where Ireland also has important interests – for example tourism, creative industries and digital technology. Irish investors play a big part in Scotland's food and drink industry – which has been a huge success story in recent years. In all of these areas, a sense of enlightened mutual self-interest might guide us to work more closely together.

After all, when you consider our geographical proximity, our historic and cultural ties, and also the many economic opportunities and challenges we share – when you consider all of those, I believe that co-operating more closely is not just desirable, but essential.

At the start of this speech I mentioned the fact that these Dublin Chambers were established in the same year that the American War of Independence ended. The connections between Ireland and the USA are of course an enduring part of Ireland's story, and they are relevant to the quote I want to end with tonight.

One of the finest speeches given in Ireland's post war history was the one delivered by President Kennedy to the Dail Eireann in 1963. He was speaking at a time when, as he put

it, “*modern economics, weapons and communications have made us realise more than ever that we are one human family and this one planet is our home.*”

In that context, he spoke approvingly of Ireland’s role as a “*prospective member of an expanded European Common Market*”. And he expressed the view that Ireland’s “*remarkable combination of hope, confidence and imagination... is needed more than ever today.*”

Those words seem to me to be as relevant now as they were in 1963.

Brexit will undoubtedly cause Ireland difficulties in the years ahead, just as it will cause difficulties for Scotland. However in my view, our anxiety about those difficulties should be balanced with optimism – optimism about the immense potential of our nations: based on our international reputation, our natural resources, and most of all, our people.

So let’s work together – with hope, confidence and imagination - to maximise that potential. Let’s devote “unwearied attention” to developing the links between our nations . And let’s work ever harder – not just to address the challenges of the modern world, but to seize the countless opportunities we have for economic and social progress.

By doing that, we can bring benefits to Scotland and to Ireland, and hopefully to all of the peoples of these islands.

[Inclusive growth conference \(mis en ligne le 20/10/2017 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/inclusive-growth-conference\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/inclusive-growth-conference)

[First Minister delivers speech at Glasgow University.](#)

It’s always a great pleasure for me to be here at Glasgow University – where I spent five very happy years as student. It feels like yesterday but I can tell you it’s a lot further back in the past than that. Back in those days I would never have seen inside a lecture theatre on a Friday morning. So this is at least one marked difference from my student days.

And it’s a particular pleasure to welcome all of you here today. This is, I can safely say, an extremely distinguished international gathering. I know we have guests here today from Australia, New Zealand and Costa Rica, as well as representatives several of our European neighbours and indeed from across the UK.

So I welcome all of you very warmly to great city of Glasgow. As First Minister I probably shouldn’t show favouritism when it comes to adjudicating the various merits of different Scottish cities so I will settle with welcome to the wonderful city of Glasgow and I hope you enjoy all of the hospitality that Glasgow and Scotland has to offer. Although some of the most famous hospitality, I should say, should probably enjoyed in moderation. I hope you have a wonderful time here.

The Scottish Government really values the chance to engage with international experts. Indeed that’s one of the reason I am so delighted that this conference also sees the first meeting of the ‘Wellbeing Alliance’. It’s a partnership, between different regions and countries, that seeks to develop a sustainable economic model focussed on wellbeing. This is really important work and I’m delighted Scotland is playing a leading role.

Today’s conference is important and there are two reasons why the conference is also very timely. We live in a world where it can appear isolation and protectionism are on the rise, so against that backdrop it’s all the more important that different countries and like-minded people come together to learn from each other and both imagine and realise how we can advance a better world, if I can be as idealistic as that. In my view politicians are perhaps not as idealistic as we should be.

The second reason this is timely is that we now have a situation where the topic of inclusive growth is talked about in a more mainstream way than has ever been the case before. I

remember around three years ago when the Scottish Government started talking about inclusive growth it sounded like quite a niche subject. That's different today, as international organisations like the IMF and OECD, and countries across the globe, have placed inclusive growth much higher up the agenda.

So we have made significant progress in changing, or starting to change, the narrative about what we should be seeking to achieve through economic policy. But we still have a way to go in determining the actions we must take to give some substance to that agenda. And that is the second reason why I think today's conference is really timely, because it allows us to come together to look not just at the theory of inclusive growth but how we advance the practice of it. So for both these reasons we could not have a better time to gather people here to discuss this important issue.

Right now, in the UK and in Scotland, we don't have to look very hard for tangible and practical examples of why this agenda matters. Just last week the Office for Budget Responsibility set out just how deep-seated and damaging the UK's productivity crisis has been during the decade since the financial crisis. And that combined with inequality – inequality that is being exacerbated by stagnation in real wages and also the attack and undermining we have seen of the welfare social safety net - all of that has contributed to some of the the political shocks we have seen, and will continue to see, not just in this country but across the world.

Here in the UK there is no doubt that sense of legitimate dissatisfaction around living standards, inequality and the economic status quo was one of, and perhaps the biggest, factor in the outcome of the EU referendum. It's also undoubtedly one of the factors in the outcome of the other politicised developments we've seen across the world - perhaps most notably in the USA.

So the issues we're talking about today really matter and that's why it's so important to have all of you here to turn your minds and attention to how we address these factors.

Before I talk a little bit about what Scotland is doing to try and address these issues it's probably a good idea to give some context on our position at the moment and the measures, over the last decade, against which we are doing relatively well. I want to stress and for you to keep that word in mind – 'relatively'. What I'm about to say here is not some kind of complacency around our progress, so that word 'relative' matters.

So, on some measures we have done relatively well. For example over that ten year period we have virtually closed what was a long-standing productivity gap with the rest of the UK. We also have lower income inequality levels than the UK as a whole. But our income inequality levels are still far too wide. The value of our international exports has also increased in the past five years by two fifths. And we have also seen unemployment levels at or near a record low.

These are all measures where we are doing relatively well – and we shouldn't dismiss that. They reflect many of economic strengths we have as a country. For example, we have more world-class universities per head of population than any other country in the world bar Luxembourg – and we have Luxembourg firmly in our sights.

That is part of the reason we have what has been described as the most highly qualified population anywhere in Europe. We are clearly an attractive place to work, to live, to do business. We are also the most successful part of the UK outside London, when it comes to attracting international investment.

We have a well-deserved international reputation in a range of sectors of the economy that are important now and will continue to be important in the future. Sectors like life sciences,

creative industries, food and drink, tourism, energy – not just oil and gas but renewable energy as well. Energy is a good and timely example. Earlier this week I had the privilege of opening the world's first floating wind farm, 25 miles offshore in the north east of Scotland. Now that's an incredible example of the scale of Scotland's renewable energy resources, and also of the technological ingenuity that is now starting to harness those resources. One of the big challenges for us in the future is that we make sure that more of the economic benefits are realised here in Scotland.

So on the face of it, Scotland is a nation of great wealth. But like most advanced economies, we also face long term, structural challenges.

Although, for example as I said a moment ago, Scotland has closed its productivity gap with the rest of the UK, we still lag significantly behind countries such as Sweden, Germany and the USA. We, like countries across the globe, need to adapt to an ageing population, we make progress towards the low-carbon age and we must ensure skilled and well-paid job opportunities in an age of increasing automation.

And of course, deep inequalities still exist in our society. These are reflected in reduced educational outcomes, poorer health and lower life expectancies, which are big challenges for any country. Of course, in Scotland and across the UK they are made all the more acute and difficult by the shadow of Brexit, which looms over everything we do. There is no doubt that Brexit, particularly if we end up outside the European market, will make it harder to address many of the issues we are talking about. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't and mustn't do everything to address these issues, it simply heightens the responsibility that is on our shoulders. So we must use the potential we have to become a more productive economy, as well as a fairer and more equal society.

One of the things we have sought to do since we decided to prioritise inclusive growth, and many other countries are now doing as well, is increasingly recognise that those two challenges, of competitiveness and equality, are not competing with each other but two sides of the one coin. We will have an even more productive and competitive economy, if we had a fairer society.

It's where I think in Scotland we have made significant progress in shifting the terms of that debate, but there is more work still to do. And that point is now borne out by a really significant body of analysis. OECD, for example, estimate that between 1990 and 2010, rising income inequality in the UK reduced our economic output per head by 9 percentage points – to put in context, that's approximately £1,600 for everyone in the country. So this is hard evidence that rising inequality harms economic growth and the living standards of people right across the country.

Later today you'll hear from Gerry Rice of the IMF. The IMF just last week published a report which set out how measures like more progressive taxation could tackle inequality. The report also made it clear that inequality can "*erode social cohesion, lead to political polarization, and ultimately lower economic growth*".

I think it's really important that we have the evidence to back up what many of us have believed instinctively for a long time. That the greater the inequalities in your society, the less you will be able to reach your full potential.

It stands to reason, when you take a few seconds to think about it, that societies are more likely to succeed if every individual within a society has a fair chance to flourish. That's what we've always believe instinctively but it can't be overestimated how important it is to have the evidence to back that up.

This is the view that the Scottish Government has not only been talking about but sought to put right at the heart of our economic approach. When we revised our economic strategy back in 2015, we based it upon 4 interdependent themes,. For reasons that will become immediately obvious to you, we describe this as the four i's - innovation, internationalisation and investment were three of them, and the fourth was inclusive growth. So we put inclusive growth right up there with the other objectives at the heart of the strategy.

What does that mean in practice? Well it means a number of things. I don't have time to talk about all of them, but it means a shift in how we see policies that are traditionally seen as social policies. Expanding childcare, for example, which we have ambitious plans to do, raising attainment in schools – these are important social policies but they are policies that have a very significant economic impact as well. It has meant intensifying our efforts to tackle poverty.

We in Scotland intentionally choose to mitigate the worst aspects of the welfare reforms we are seeing across the UK because those have the effect of driving more people into poverty. More fundamentally, and within admittedly limited powers here in Scotland, we are legislating for targets to reduce, and ultimately eradicate, child poverty. Legislating for targets is the easy part, we are also backing that with a range of policies to deliver on those targets.

We also understand the fundamental importance of place. The investments we're making in transport and digital infrastructure are designed to improve connectivity across our country – particularly for rural, coastal and island communities. One in five of the Scottish population live in what would be described as a rural community so that is really important.

We have established the Scottish Cities Alliance – a partnership between the Scottish Government and the leaders of our seven cities – and that's working increasingly closely with the OECD, on things like the New York Proposal for Inclusive Growth in Cities, and the Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative.

We are taking steps to promote greater gender equality. Talking to Gerry earlier on he made the comment that the single most important thing that can be done to reduce inequality is to invest in women, which I agree with wholeheartedly.

Promoting greater gender equality the workplace and across society is not only the right thing to do, it matters hugely to our economy. As Gabriela (*Ramos, of the OECD*) pointed out earlier, if as many women as men were in work, the total output of OECD countries would be 12% higher over the next 20 years. So that is hugely and fundamentally important to what we are talking about.

And more broadly what we are developing in Scotland – and I would say, while we have made great progress, it's still at an early stage – is developing our approach to that we are calling fair work. And when I say this is at an early stage it's simply to remind ourselves that we still have work to do to ensure it's more than a tick box exercise about specific fair work practices, important though they are, but about embedding a different approach to the workplace through everything we do.

As part of that we are encouraging employers to boost productivity by investing in their workforces – not just as it's the right thing to do but because it will see them become more profitable and successful. We have put particular focus on the living wage, for example. When I became First Minister, we had around 50 companies in Scotland accredited living wage employers. Now, there are more than 900. A higher proportion of employees are paid the real living wage in Scotland than in any other country in the UK.

We have developed the Scottish Business Pledge, which celebrates companies which voluntarily agree to progressive business practices. I am delighted that Dougal Baillie – a consultancy and engineering firm, who are here at today's event – has just become the 400th company in Scotland to sign the business pledge.

A key point here, the fundamental point, is that inclusive growth isn't and cannot be separate from other strands of our economic strategy. All of them are interdependent. The Scottish Business pledge in some ways epitomises that point by celebrating and encouraging internationalisation and innovation as progressive business practices - alongside employing young people, promoting gender equality and paying the living wage.

Our vision overall for Scotland – and our programme for government this year is very clear on this – is to be a country whose economy is based on innovation and internationalisation. And of course those two things are very closely linked. We live in a world this is changing at a more rapid pace than has been the case at any time in my lifetime.

Our challenge in Scotland - our ambition - to be a country that develops, manufactures and exports the innovations of the future, not just simply consumes and deploys them. So we need businesses, across all sectors, to have that ambition and to see themselves as innovators in their own fields.

We've announced some significant measures in recent months to promote innovation – and in doing so advance the inclusive growth agenda - increased funding for business research and development; provided additional support for manufacturing and key sectors of the economy; increased investment in skills and in our enterprise agencies.

We've also set out what I think is a really important intention, to create a Scottish National Investment Bank. My Council of Economic Advisers, which advises me and the government – some of whom are here today, including the chair – identified that such an institution could help deliver support for infrastructure development; more finance for high growth businesses; and strategic investments in innovation. Today, we are launching a consultation on the detail of how the Bank can achieve those aims.

However, we recognise – coming back to the point of today – that inclusive growth is an essential part, not an add on or a luxury, of that focus on innovation and productivity.

So we've also announced a range of measures to ensure that as we transform our economy, we're doing everything possible to ensure that no one in society is being left behind.

For example, we will establish a Just Transition Commission – which will be a panel of experts from across society to advise us on making the move to a low-carbon economy as equitable as possible.

We are looking at ways in which we can support the growth of employee ownership, a key part of our fair work agenda.

And, despite the fact this has some critics, we are also going to work with interested local authorities to fund research into the feasibility of a citizens basic income scheme. I should stress that our work on this is at an early stage. It might turn out not to be the answer or feasible - but as work and employment changes as rapidly as it is doing I think it is really important to look at and be open minded about different ways we can support individuals to participate in the new economy.

Of course, all of this will continue to sit alongside our wider action to tackle poverty and raise attainment in schools and promote gender equality, to give life to that belief that, if our economy is going to be more successful, we must have a society that allows every individual

to participate to their full potential. That then is our commitment to building a truly inclusive economy.

When you came up here today some of you will have undoubtedly passed and perhaps photographed the statue of Adam Smith. Adam Smith was, of course, a student and later a professor here at Glasgow University.

Smith is – and this is a source of frustration I think to many of us in Scotland – one of the most misquoted and misinterpreted economists in human history. He’s often held up as this believer in untrammelled free markets. But actually, when you read Adam Smith, you quickly understand that he would have been an enthusiastic proponent of what we are talking about here today.

As he wrote in “The Wealth of Nations” - *“What improves the circumstances of the greater part can never be regarded as an inconveniency to the whole. No society can be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable.”*

So Smith recognised that the major choices we make in economic policy aren’t about what sort of economy we want to create, they are about what kind of society we want to live in.

That’s something I hope is reflected in our wider approach to Government. GDP is an important indicator of economic performance, but it is not and shouldn’t be the only one. That’s why we link our performance to a wider range of indicators and why we are have – and indeed are one of the first countries – to adopt the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

I hope that gives you a sense of what we are doing in Scotland. But if I could finish on this final point, which brings us back to why we are here today. We are proud of the work we are doing in Scotland but we don’t have all of the answers and there are more things that we can and should be doing. So we want to hear from you as well as share what we are doing, and for you to take that experience back to your own countries. We want to learn from you as well.

Please enjoy today’s session. We certainly look forward to hearing your contributions. Together we are at a really opportune moment in history when we can perhaps change the paradigm of economics, putting inclusive growth not just at top of the agenda in theory but at the top of the agenda in practice as well. In so doing we can change the lives and life chances of the people we are here to represent and serve.

[Institute for New Economic Thinking Annual Conference \(*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/institute-for-new-economic-thinking-annual-conference>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/institute-for-new-economic-thinking-annual-conference)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Edinburgh - 21 October 2017

Thank you, Lord Turner. And thanks to everyone at the Institute for New Economic Thinking for asking me to address such a distinguished and international gathering. I understand that almost two thirds of today’s audience comes from beyond the UK so it is a pleasure to welcome you all to our beautiful capital city Edinburgh.

In many ways, you have chosen a perfect location for a conference of this kind. I know that, although this institute exists to promote New Economic thinking, you have a deep respect and a regard for economic pioneers of the past.

As Adair has just said, your first annual conference was in the Cambridge college where John Maynard Keynes wrote his General Theory. Your second was at Bretton Woods – the site of the conference which did so much to shape the post-war global economy.

So it is fitting that for this conference, you have chosen a city which was the beating heart of the European enlightenment, a city which has contributed hugely to the development of economic thought. It's not surprising that Adam Smith has already been mentioned several times this morning. Adam Smith was of course the founder of modern economic thinking. He lectured at Edinburgh in the 1750s, and then lived and worked for the final years of his life at Panmure House, a mile or so from here. His statue is on Edinburgh's high street, and he's buried slightly further down in Canongate Kirkyard.

I know that you have a very busy agenda - I believe that I am just one of 85 speakers you will hear over the next three days! But if you do have time, I hope you'll be able to explore this beautiful city, and as part of that perhaps visit Adam Smith's statue or his grave.

The origins of the Institute for New Economic Thinking lie in the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008.

And I know one reason behind the setting up of this Institute was a feeling that the crash resulted – in part – from shortcomings in modern economics and the work of economists. I should be very clear here – I know those shortcomings won't have belonged to any of the economists in this room... they of course were the shortcomings of other economists! And it's maybe also worth being clear that since my party was not elected into Government until 2007, those shortcomings weren't ours either!

But my main focus today isn't really on the work of those other economists or politicians. Instead I want to reflect a little about the wider issue of how your work relates to policy making or how it should relate to wider policy making. I know that's a subject Lord Turner has also raised in the past.

It is probably appropriate to start with a reflection about the financial crisis. Looking back, one of the most striking things about that crisis is that it occurred at a time when there was actually overwhelming policy consensus on certain key issues – for example, the question of risk dispersal across the financial system. And therefore, when the crisis struck, seemed to take governments and the wider establishment by surprise.

And yet, when you look a bit closer and scratch the surface, that should not have been the case because the consensus at the time didn't necessarily reflect academic opinion. Some very distinguished economists held dissenting views. But their voices didn't seem to carry any weight as economic thought got translated into public policy.

That's an easier problem to diagnose with hindsight than it was at the time – but it is something which should be very high in the mind-set of any modern politician as we seek to avoid repeating in the future the mistakes of the past.

One of the famous, or it could be more accurately described as infamous, quotes of the EU referendum here in the UK was from a prominent leave campaigner, now a member of the UK government when we said he thought people had had enough of experts. I think that's a quote that will haunt him for the rest of his life.

Of course, politics is about values judgements as much as it is about facts and figures and I accept that and think that's as it should be. But I think the imperative for politicians today is not to think about how we listen less to the views of experts. I think the imperative and the challenge for modern politicians is how we open our thinking to a broader range of expert opinions and in particular, those opinions that challenge our view of the world. Not just opinions that reaffirm our view of the world. And let's be frank about it, that at a human level can be quite a challenging thing to do.

Politicians usually – although you may be sceptical about this – have very clear and strong principles and beliefs. I think that’s a strength, but it can mean that we are more likely to be swayed by the evidence which most easily fits with our worldview. Of course if everybody is signed up to the same worldview, it makes decision-making much more straightforward and simple. But the risk is that what develops is a group think and we blind ourselves to real risks and opinions that might alert us to those real risks.

So it’s never easy to reconcile diversity, disagreement and complexity, with prompt decision-making and clear communication. But it is essential that we strive to do so. The financial crisis – and the extent to which large elements of policy making were out of kilter with reality in the run up to 2007 – provides overwhelming evidence of the need to listen to opinions that challenge our view of the world, not just those that reinforce and reaffirm that view.

After all, here in the UK we are still living today, ten years on, with the consequences of not doing so in the years before the crash. Just last week, the UK’s Office of Budgetary Responsibility produced a report which set out the extent to which the UK’s productivity has stalled during the last decade. And of course dissatisfaction with stagnating real wages and rising inequality – partly a result of low productivity – is widely seen, and rightly seen, as a factor in the political shocks we have seen in the recent years, including Brexit.

I won’t pretend that the Scottish Government has all of the answers on this – on how we properly use the full range of academic expertise to improve practical policy making while still being guided by principle and values – but I can set out some of the ways in which we are trying to at least to engage with these issues.

I’ve been First Minister since 2014, but as I mentioned, the party I lead first came into government in 2007, when I was Deputy First Minister. And one of our early moves we made in 2007 was to establish a Council of Economic Advisers. The Council is international, diverse, and is unquestionably expert. Two of its current members, Professor Joseph Stiglitz and Professor Mariana Mazzucato, will participate in this conference. I know that another member, Professor James Mirrlees has spoken at previous conferences.

It is important in our view that we have that range of expert opinion and advice to draw on.

In Scotland we face the same challenges as other developed nations do – how to improve productivity, adapt to an ageing population, make the transition to the low-carbon economy of the future and ensure skilled and well paid job opportunities in an age of automation.

And of course, more particular to Scotland and the UK, Brexit – especially if we end up outside the European single market – will cause serious harm to businesses and the overall economy in Scotland. So it is essential as we navigate those challenges that we draw on the best international advice we can.

The Council of Economic Advisers has a real and significant influence on Government thinking. The most recent example of that is the announcement last month that the Scottish Government would establish a National Investment Bank in Scotland. That decision drew on advice from the council which highlighted the role investment banks already play in other European economies and highlighted that, by providing patient capital, the bank could influence areas which are highly relevant to our productivity performance – support for new and growing businesses, and investment in science, research and innovation. Yesterday, we published a consultation paper, seeking views on how an investment bank can best fulfil that role.

The council has also in the past provided us with detailed advice on the economic and social impact of one of our other key policy objectives which is dramatically expanding early years education and childcare provision. Looking at that from an economic perspective, not just a social perspective. It is currently assessing some of the issues that would be associated with the potential of having different top rates of income tax in Scotland compared to the UK – an issue which is very important now because the Scottish government has more extensive tax and social security powers. The advice we get from the Council is very clearly, independent – but it's hugely valuable as a source of outside expertise as we make some pretty fundamental decisions about the direction of the country.

The existence of that council shows that, if it is at all possible, the Scottish Government wants to be engaged with relevant, and at times challenging, expert economists.

For similar very reasons, just yesterday, the Scottish Government convened an international conference on inclusive economic growth. It included experts from the OECD, the IMF, and from a range of countries such as Costa Rica, New Zealand, Sweden and South Africa.

As part of that conference the Wellbeing Alliance met for the first time. That's an alliance which is bringing together nations and regions – and Scotland is playing a leading role in it – looking at how we use wellbeing, and not just GDP, as a measure of our economic performance.

This issue of inclusive growth is central to our economic thinking here in Scotland. When we published our new economic strategy two years ago, we included a major focus on addressing inequality – through a range of measures including tackling poverty, supporting skills, and promoting gender equality. Professor Stiglitz said at the time that “Tackling inequality is the foremost challenge that many governments face. Scotland's economic strategy leads the way in identifying the challenges and provides a strong vision for change.”

We see that focus on inclusion as being an essential part in having an innovative, open economy. Firstly – and this is demonstrated by the political shocks I referred to earlier – we must build a fairer and more inclusive society, if we are going to sustain popular support for a dynamic, open and competitive economy.

In addition, we know from a wealth of evidence that inequality actually undermines our efforts to increase productivity, and to prosper through innovation and internationalisation. We do have that wealth of evidence now.

We know that inequality is not simply a price that has to be paid for economic growth. We know that it hampers and constrains economic growth. The OECD estimates that between 1990 and 2010 income inequality in the UK reduced economic output per head by nine percentage points. To put that in context, that amounts to £1,600 for every person in the UK. We've got to act on that evidence. Just as we have to act on the evidence of other forms of inequality that are not just morally wrong, but economically damaging. An issue very close to my heart is gender inequality. Again we know from the evidence, citing OECD research here, that if women participated in the workforce at the same rate as men, the output of OECD countries over the next 20 years would be 12 per cent higher. So this is hard evidence now that we must act on.

In Scotland we have a range of policies to boost innovation, increase our international exports and increase our productivity. But we know all of that will be weakened if inequality is too high. Apart from anything else, we know that many people who could be the researchers, the engineers and the entrepreneurs of the future will not get a fair chance if we allow income

inequality, gender inequality to prevail. We need to have an approach to building an economy that allows everyone to contribute their talent, their ideas and their energy.

Inclusive growth is linked to the final point I want to make. When I was looking through your conference programme I was struck by just how relevant the issues you are discussing are – gender equality, the media, immigration, intergenerational issues and, perhaps a bit more alarmingly, “past democratic collapses”. It is clear that this is a conference that is deeply engaged, as it has to be, with wider social issues.

That’s another factor which links you to the legacy of Adam Smith – someone whose legacy is not always well served by some of his ultra free-market supporters. Adam Smith’s economic science was rooted in a clear vision of society – he knew that although self-interest will motivate people, sympathy, empathy and concern for others is also a defining characteristic of being human. As he famously argued in the Wealth of Nations – “No society can be flourishing or happy, of which the greater part of the members are poor and miserable.”

Adam Smith knew that ultimately, the major choices we make in economic policy aren’t just about what kind of economy we want to create, they are about what kind of society we want to live in. Ultimately, economic policy is a means to an end – it’s the means by which we enable people, or don’t enable people, to live happy, healthy fulfilling lives.

In Scotland, we are trying to tackle these big economic issues in the right way, as we build – not just a stronger economy, but a better and fairer society. But we know that as we do that, we have a huge amount to learn from expert analysis and international perspectives.

That’s why we have our council of economic advisers. It’s why we welcome events such as yesterday’s conference. And it’s why I’m delighted that this conference is taking place in Edinburgh. It’s a gathering which is in the best traditions of Scotland’s past, but which will also, I hope, deliver some of the fresh thinking which we need as we look to the future.

Lord Turner said that we want Scotland to be an open, outward looking economy and that’s the point I want to, as I finish, emphasise. One of the frustrating things for me in the EU referendum was how much that debate was driven by opposition to immigration. So we ended up taking a decision to leave the European Union to try and restrict something – immigration – that actually we need more of in order to thrive as an economy. So being open and outward looking, recognising that we need to use the biggest and brightest brains and talents from across the world is fundamental to our approach, not just to what we do here in Scotland but to the contribution we make to the world.

So have a wonderful time in Edinburgh, and I wish you all well for the remaining 83 speeches of the conference!

[Startup Summit – Unlocking Ambition Challenge \(disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/startup-summit-unlocking-ambition-challenge\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/startup-summit-unlocking-ambition-challenge)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

Edinburgh, 1 November 2017

Thank you, Bruce. And thanks to all of you for coming to the Assembly Rooms this morning. I’ve just toured the exhibition area and the energy in the room was quite incredible.

This is a great venue for an event like this. I don’t how much you know about the history of the building but it has a really a distinguished role the history of our country. Over the last couple of hundred years it has hosted talks by Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and William Gladstone, among many others. It is quite something to be standing here given the history of the venue.

Scots history, distinguished though it is, doesn't mean we don't have to look to the future and support the people with the best ideas. So hopefully the discussions you're having here today will play a really important part in doing just that; shaping and building the future of the country. Hopefully people will look on the discussions we're having here as just as influential as those that took place here, all those years ago.

I've just had the opportunity to speak to some of the established entrepreneurs here - James Watt, the founder of Brewdog, Callum Murray from Amiqus and Sarah Stenhouse, who started up Pixey, and others.

And it's very striking that at an event like this to have a company like Brewdog – a hugely globally successful company – but one that was actually was only founded 10 years ago. When we talk about BrewDog it seems like it's been around a lot longer than that.

Pixey and Amiqus hadn't been founded when I became First Minister – that's less than three years ago. And now they are successful companies going from strength to strength.

It's an important reminder that there are people in this room who at the moment only have a good idea and lots of enthusiasm - or who have maybe only been running a business for a few weeks or months. Not long from now, you could be the businesses standing up here sharing your experience with others. It could be you that creating new jobs, developing new products, and making a very significant contribution to our economy and our society.

The people that you hear from today, those who have travelled the journey that you are about to travel, I hope that inspires and motivates you to take your ideas and turn them into in the companies and solutions of the future.

So I think this Startup Conference is undoubtedly one of the most exciting events I'll attend all year. It is hugely important I think everyone owes a real debt of gratitude to Bruce and to everybody else who has helped to organise it.

In the last few recent weeks, I've been talking an awful lot about the future of Scotland's economy. The reason I've been doing is because it's important that countries have a strong and vibrant economy. But we live just now, and Scotland is not unique here – countries across the world are living in and adapting to rapid change.

The world around us has never changed as fast as it is now. Probably never more so than in our lifetime has it changed as fast as ours is. Some of those changes - the technological changes, the transition we are in the midst of, the move to a low carbon economy, the changing demographics and aging population – all bring challenges and pressures. At no time in my lifetime has the world been changing as fast as it is now.

When this happens countries everywhere have a choice to make. Will they be the leaders and shapers of change or we can sit back instead. And I think Scotland absolutely should have the determination to do the former. Just as Scotland has done through past generations.

One of my favourite books is – and if you haven't read it I'd recommend it – called How Scots Invented the Modern World. And it's written by a Canadian. What he does is look at the period of the enlightenment and all of those Scottish people who literally created much of the modern world we live in today. This generation can have great pride when you think of the list of inventions as long as your arm, of things that originated or were invented here in Scotland or by Scots.

I think one of the things we need to strive to do right now is do the things that mean, 100 years from now - when people are looking back on this period - that somebody then can write a book on how Scots invented the modern world to come.

So if we decide we're going to be the entrepreneurial innovators of the future, we can know we were also the entrepreneurs of the past. That means being at the forefront of economic and technological change in the years and decades ahead. That means that we want to invent, design and produce the innovations of the future – not just use innovations from other countries. That's a big challenge but one that should focus all of us.

We are taking steps, important steps, to support businesses and promote innovation. For example, we're in the early stages of establishing a new national development bank. We're substantially increasing funding for business research and development – we know without research and development we won't create the innovations we need.

We're providing additional support for manufacturing and have announced the location for a new manufacturing institute, and also promoting other key sectors like fintech. And we are continuing to invest in skills and in our enterprise agencies, so they can give support to companies that need it.

One of the most important things we are doing, and most relevant to our discussions here today, is our support of entrepreneurship. Our prosperity, today and in the future, depends on successful new ideas and new businesses being created here in Scotland, so it stands to reason that entrepreneurs will be fundamental to generating jobs and future economic growth.

In past years, we have worked with the private, public and third sectors to develop the Scotland CAN-DO framework. It sets out our very firm ambition for Scotland to be a world-leader in enterprise and innovation. And it aims to ensure that people no matter where in Scotland they live, have the confidence, encouragement and practical support that they need to become entrepreneurs and set up their own businesses.

One way of achieving that is through our education system. When I look back, 30 years now, when I was at school, no one was encouraged to start up their own business. We must make sure that that's not the case today.

Young Enterprise Scotland have been doing some really vital work in our schools, colleges and universities. Now more than 400 schools across Scotland now take part in our Enterprising Schools Network. We need to do more of that and see that extended more widely across our education system

We also need to do more to encourage more women to establish businesses. I spoke last Thursday night at the Business Women Scotland and Women's Enterprise Awards. It was great to see so many talented and successful female entrepreneurs already established in Scotland.

But it's still the case, and this should give us pause for thought, that men are currently twice as likely as women to start up businesses. And that has implications for our economy. If women started up business at the same rate as men, then that would be worth millions of pounds every year to our economy. We are taking steps to tackle that – for example, by doubling our support for Investing Women.

In addition to supporting start-ups, we're also encouraging businesses to scale up. That's one reason for establishing the investment bank, which I mentioned a moment ago. It will give Scottish firms the opportunity – which they would not otherwise have – of accessing long term, patient capital they need to grow. And that's particularly important with businesses that are innovative – doing the things that haven't been done before – as there is a greater level of risk attached, which may mean traditional banks are less likely to invest.

These are the things we are trying to do to support an entrepreneurial culture, which is so important for our country's future. It stands to reason that government can't do this alone and everyone has to work together to make it a reality.

One of the things I've found very encouraging in recent months – at today's event, or last week's Women's Enterprise Awards last week – is that there is now a real sense of shared purpose in encouraging new start-ups within Scotland. I'm struck, and this is backed up by some of the conversations I've had this morning, by how many entrepreneurs say they know the support they get here in Scotland. Not just financial support, but the community and network, the ecosystem support – is better than any other country they have knowledge or experience of.

The Scottish Government's actions sit alongside a whole range of schemes that are helping to transform Scotland's business culture. Some are supported by Government, but many are led by individual and entrepreneurs themselves. You'll be familiar with some of the many examples - Entrepreneurial Spark, which has provided support for over 600 businesses, the EDGE Fund — which is backed by the Hunter Foundation and the Royal Bank of Scotland – and has already supported more than 250 companies.

Tech incubators like Tontine in Glasgow and Codebase in Edinburgh – and the Biocity life sciences incubator in Lanarkshire – all of these and more are supporting the development of ambitious new businesses in their specific sectors. They're providing a base – and more importantly, an environment – where entrepreneurs can collaborate and share their expertise, contacts and ideas, giving each other moral support and encouragement.

And of course, organisations like Women's Enterprise Scotland and Entrepreneurial Scotland are also helping to inspire, develop and connect current and future entrepreneurial leaders.

Events like this one are a really important part of it – they enable hundreds of ambitious and talented people can gain advice, support and inspiration from a quite incredible line up of investors and entrepreneurs. So for those of you who are just starting out in your business careers, I hope you'll get the sense today that you're not on your own - you are in Scotland part of a movement, an entrepreneurial movement. And it's one which the Scottish Government is determined to support.

This takes me to what I specifically want to talk to you today. As we expand our entrepreneurial aspirations, we want attract and nurture the brightest talent – from within Scotland and across the world. People from other countries can be encouraged to come here and develop their ideas and establish their businesses.

That's the purpose of the initiative I want to talk to you about – and encourage some of you to apply to. The Unlocking Ambition Challenge is one we announced in our Programme for Government in September, and it will open for entry early in 2018.

This is an invitation to entrepreneurs from Scotland and from right across the world to submit ideas which have the potential to be transformative. You don't have to be in Scotland or Scottish – you can be anywhere in the world to apply. The only condition is you agree to relocate or establish your business here in Scotland.

Every year we will select up to 40 individuals – who will be chosen by established entrepreneurs and on the basis of their own potential, the quality of their ideas, and the contribution that they might make to our economy and to wider society.

The individuals who are successful will receive intensive support and advice from established entrepreneurs, and help with living costs, for at least a year and possibly two years. It's an initiative which will be funded by the Scottish government – we will allocate up to £4 million towards it – and which has already received from organisations to partner with us, such as Virgin, Entrepreneurial Spark, Entrepreneurial Scotland, Elevator, the EDGE fund and FutureX.

We have a range of entrepreneurial mentors who will be part of this, including James Watt from Brewdog, Leah Hutcheon from Appointedd, Cally Russell from Mallzee, Amy Livingstone of Cheeky Chompers, and Chris van der Kuyl, the co-founder of 4J studios.

I hope you think that's an exciting opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs. We will announce details on how to apply very soon – and I hope some of you will do just that.

The Challenge is, first and foremost, a practical measure to encourage innovation. It relates back to what I spoke about at the start. It's a changing world and if we want to succeed in that world we need to be inventing and creating in the year ahead.

It's also though more than practical support. It's intended to epitomize and publicise our determination – not just to encourage entrepreneurs within Scotland, although that is hugely important, but also to attract the most talented and ambitious people around the world to see Scotland as the place they want to establish their business. We hope it will play an important part in achieving our ambition of turning Scotland into the best place in the world to do business.

There's one final point I want to make which is central to the government's support for entrepreneurship. We talk a lot about investing in new ideas, new products and new technologies. But the single most important factor in the success of companies is investment in people.

For all of the people here who support start-ups, it's important that we invest – through money or through advice and mentoring – in developing the skills and talents of Scotland's entrepreneurs.

Similarly, for all of you who have set up, or will go on to set up businesses, investing in the people you employ will be a huge factor in your future success. That focus – not just on products but on people – must always be fundamental to our approach.

That's why the Unlocking Ambition challenge – which is focussed upon helping and supporting people - is something we see as being so important to Scotland's future. And it's why this conference - and the support and advice it can provide for individuals – is such a welcome and inspiring event.

I hope you have a great day and I wish all of you, every success for the future.

[Discussion on the role of income tax \(disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/discussion-on-the-role-of-income-tax>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/discussion-on-the-role-of-income-tax)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

Edinburgh, 2 November 2017

Good morning everyone. Many thanks for coming along today.

Thanks also to the Royal Society of Edinburgh for hosting us.

One of the founding members of this Society was Adam Smith.

His thoughts on the subject I am speaking about today are worth reflecting on.

Adam Smith observed that:

“The subjects of every state ought to contribute towards the support of the government, as nearly as possible, in proportion to their respective abilities...”

That may seem like a statement of the obvious, but it goes to the heart of the discussion we want to have about fair and proportionate taxation - and about how, particularly in a time of austerity, we can continue to make the vital investments that enable our economy to grow and our public services to deliver the support that all of us rely upon.

Scotland's tax powers remain limited. More than 60% of Scotland's spending power is still dependent on decisions taken at Westminster.

However, it is the case that Scotland now has a greater measure of fiscal control than at any time since the start of devolution.

By far the biggest fiscal lever we have is income tax - with 30% of Scotland's budget now coming from income tax receipts.

Of course, with that greater ability to levy tax comes a corresponding duty to do so responsibly and in a balanced way, and my government will always do exactly that.

In our recent Programme for Government, I expressed the view that the time is right to consider afresh the role of tax in our budget decision.

And I made a commitment to publish a discussion paper ahead of the draft budget in December.

Today we meet that commitment, with the publication of this document – *“The Role of Income Tax in Scotland's Budget”*.

Before I talk about the paper in more detail, it is worth reflecting on the financial context and wider backdrop to the decision that Scotland faces.

The UK Government has imposed almost a decade of cuts to Scotland's budget.

The cut to the Scottish Government's discretionary budget between 2010 and 2020 will amount to £2.9 billion in real terms.

As well as continued austerity, we also face the damaging impact of Brexit.

Previous analysis indicates that Brexit could cost 80,000 Scottish jobs over a decade, with more than £11 billion a year wiped off our economy by 2030.

So there is no doubt that Brexit - coupled with austerity - will make the job of properly funding our public services in the years ahead more difficult.

And all of this comes at a time when an ageing population - a good thing - is placing ever greater demands on services like the NHS, social care and housing.

Over the past few years, we have worked hard - with significant success - to balance all of these pressures.

Despite cuts to Scotland's budget, we have protected NHS funding. We have shielded local services as best we can.

We have continued to invest in the small business bonus and in the infrastructure and business development support that the economy needs.

We have mitigated the worst impact of Tory welfare cuts.

And we have safeguarded the social contract - delivering public service provision and a range of social benefits that far exceeds what is available anywhere else in the UK.

Indeed, it is worth pointing out that the value of university tuition, personal care, prescriptions and eye tests far outweighs the impact of any of the four possible alternative approaches discussed in Chapter 7 of this paper.

So I am proud of what we have been able to deliver in the most difficult of circumstances.

That progress, though, has involved sacrifices on the part of some, and it is important that we remember that.

Our public sector workers, for example, have had years of pay restraint.

So as the impact of austerity, Brexit and changing demographics bears down even harder, it is now time to ask ourselves some tough questions.

None of us want to see our cherished public services increasingly constrained in what they can deliver.

Very few people, if any, will want to see the social contract eroded, with young people having to pay thousands of pounds a year to go to university or older people having to pay for personal care.

And it would not be in the country's best interests to scale back on some of our vital ambitions for the future - like increasing the NHS budget to meet the demand of an ageing population, expanding childcare, giving headteachers more money for our classrooms, extending broadband, building more affordable houses, giving public sector workers a fair pay rise, and investing in the transport infrastructure, research and development and support for entrepreneurs that the economy needs.

It is crucial that we protect the next steps in creating that better future for our nation.

So with all the pressures we now face, we must consider if the time has come for those who earn the most to pay a modest amount more to enable us to do so.

It is to help aid and inform that discussion that this consultation paper is being published today.

The paper explains the composition of the Scottish budget and how it is changing.

It looks at the operation of the fiscal framework and sets out our high-level expectations of the UK budget later this month.

It provides detail about the income tax base in Scotland - who pays what and how much each group contributes to the overall budget.

It looks at the scale and scope of our income tax powers, the limitations on them and how they interact with reserved powers. It also sets out some international comparisons.

And, crucially - indeed, in my view most importantly of all - it sets out four key tests that we believe any responsible and progressive use of Scotland's tax powers must meet.

In line with these tests, any alterations to tax rates will need to:

- Maintain and promote the level of public services that the people of Scotland expect;
- Ensure that lowest earning taxpayers are protected and don't see their taxes increase;
- Make the tax system more progressive and reduce inequality; and
- Together with our corresponding decisions on spending, support the economy.

I believe that these tests reflect the views of the majority of people in Scotland – namely, that we want world-class public services; that we shouldn't ask the lowest earners to shoulder more of the burden; we should do all we can to make the system fairer and reduce inequality; and that supporting the economy and sustainable growth should be absolutely central to our approach.

This paper analyses and applies these four key tests to the tax policies of each of the main parties in last year's Scottish election.

And, in Chapter 7, it applies these same tests to four possible alternative approaches, which consider a range of alterations to both tax rates and tax bands.

Let me stress that these alternative approaches are not at this stage firm policy proposals - that will come in the budget. Nor do they form an exhaustive list.

They simply illustrate some of the options open to us.

We do however believe that the alternatives outlined in Chapter 7 better meet the four key tests than any of the parties' manifesto commitments from last year.

And they provide a starting point for discussion.

We go into these discussions with an open mind and a willingness to listen - but the four key tests we set out today are the criteria that will now guide our decisions.

In respect of the first test, all of the alternative proposals in Chapter 7 raise additional revenue for investment in public services and the economy.

Indeed that is also true, to varying degrees, of all the parties' manifesto proposals, with the exception of the Tories who would cut the money available for public spending.

Looking at the second test, all of the four alternative approaches - at the least - protect those earning less than the median income, which is £24,000.

Indeed, when the increase to the personal allowance is taken into account, none of these approaches would see anyone earning up to £31,000 pay a penny more than they do now.

And in all four approaches, more than 70% of all adults would continue to pay no tax at all or no more tax than they do today.

All the alternative approaches would also satisfy the third test in that they would make the tax system more progressive than it is now and help to tackle inequality.

The fourth test relates to our duty to support the economy through both our tax and our spending decisions.

This government is totally committed to supporting sustainable growth and to giving businesses the best possible opportunity to contribute to that growth.

We have delivered substantial savings through initiatives like the Small Business Bonus. We have invested heavily in the infrastructure business needs to thrive. And we have taken a range of actions to support employment.

But too often, in my view, the relationship between growth and tax is mischaracterised.

Debates about tax become falsely polarised between the needs of the economy on the one hand and the needs of our public services on the other.

I think that is the wrong approach. The taxes we pay fund the support for business and the economy, as well as our public services.

And our competitiveness as a country is about more than just our tax rates.

It also depends on the strength of our public services, the skills of our people and the quality of our infrastructure.

Everybody knows that a good society needs a strong economy.

But it is equally true that no economy will reach its full potential without a strong, fair, inclusive society.

That's the question that should drive this debate - and unite us all - that question is that of what kind of country do we want Scotland to be.

I hope this paper will help inform that debate.

As a Government, we will not propose alterations to income tax lightly.

But after rigorous, careful and considered discussion, we will bring forward policy proposals that we consider to be in the interests of the country as a whole.

My final point is this. In publishing this paper today, I acknowledge we are a minority administration. That means we must always look to build consensus.

If all parties stick doggedly and rigidly to their manifesto positions, our Parliament will not be able to pass a budget, and that would be to fail in our duty to the Scottish people.

Today, I am making clear our willingness to compromise - I hope other parties will do likewise.

And then, together, we can work to build consensus around a fair and balanced tax policy and a budget that works for all the people of Scotland.

Cross-border rail improvements (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/cross-border-rail-improvements>)

First Minister

Gateshead, 6 November 2017

It's a pleasure to come back to Gateshead and to the north east.

As many of you will know, the north east of England is an area which is very dear to my heart.

My grandmother was born in Ryehope, a coastal village just outside Sunderland. I enjoyed many, many childhood holidays there and this is a part of England that I have great affinity with and it's always a real pleasure to be back here.

I'm of course just one of the many, many Scots who have a great affection for the north east of England - not simply because it's a beautiful and welcoming part of these islands – although it most certainly is – but because of the enduring ties of family and friendship that we share.

Those ties are of course reflected in the many cultural, educational and economic links that we also share.

Scotland's universities collaborate with north eastern universities in fields as varied as, biotechnology, subsea energy and medical research.

The offshore renewable energy catapult has its headquarters in Glasgow, and has an offshore wind demonstrator base at Blyth. It's a really good example of the significant capability we both have in energy technology.

And of course many significant companies - the financial services sector provides some good examples - have major offices both in the north east and in Scotland.

And I suppose the main message I want to take the opportunity to put across today is one which applies regardless of what Scotland's constitutional future might be - and that is that these are connections that we value very highly; we know how much they enrich and enhance the lives of people across Scotland and also the north east; and we want to work with you to strengthen and deepen those bonds between us.

That is not simply a message from the Scottish Government. It is also, as you would expect, a sentiment that is shared by people across Scotland and by the Scottish business community.

I'm delighted that Liz Cameron and Tim Allan from the Scottish Chambers of Commerce are both here today. I know that the North East Chambers has developed a very good working relationship in recent years with the Scottish Chambers. I hope that that relationship continues and strengthens in the years to come.

There are certainly, in my view, important new opportunities and needs for further co-operation. For example Scotland is currently committed to establishing a South of Scotland

Enterprise Agency, focussed on the specific needs of the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. That body will, inevitably, be strongly aware of the potential gains for us all in developing cross-border connections.

In addition, recent years have seen the growth of the Borderlands initiative, something which is enthusiastically supported by the Scottish Government. An initiative which brings together the five local authorities with boundaries on the Scotland-England border – the Scottish borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Carlisle, Cumbria and Northumberland.

Those authorities are working to develop proposals for a Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. It's been inspired in part by City Deals, and is a potentially valuable way of encouraging stronger growth and closer co-operation across the north of England and the south of Scotland.

But the issue I want to touch on in a bit more detail about today is transport. After all, it matters to every person in this room, to every person in this region and to people in Scotland as well.

More than 50,000 vehicles cross the border each day and more than 15,000 people a week travel by train between Scotland and the north east of England. Those links provide vital connections for families, visitors, businesses and freight. For example access to the Port of Tyne is crucial for Scotland's exports to Europe and the wider world.

So reducing journey times, and making it easier for people and goods to travel across the border, will bring big benefits for all of us.

Last year, the Scottish Government signed a memorandum of understanding between Transport Scotland and Transport for the North.

Officials now meet regularly to discuss progress and to share information. It's a simple way of ensuring that our key transport agencies work in partnership rather than in isolation.

And alongside that, the Scottish Government is looking at projects which could bring significant benefits to the south of Scotland and also to the north of England. For example Transport Scotland is currently examining the business case for – among other projects - improving the A68 and the A1.

We are also working closely with the UK Government to improve cross-border rail links. In 2016, we jointly commissioned work to identify options for improving the east and west coast lines, so as to deliver three hour journey times between London and central Scotland.

The first phase of that work has been completed. I can confirm today that we are commissioning two studies to investigate the requirements, costs and benefits for the potential improvements which were highlighted by the first phase.

The east coast study will focus on the line south of Dunbar towards Newcastle. It is expected to confirm that these improvements could reduce the journey time between Edinburgh and Newcastle by a third. So instead of being approximately an hour and a half, the journey time could be reduced to just one hour.

Now, it's important to be clear – what we are doing today is commissioning a technical analysis; we're not making a firm commitment to invest. But I hope, that by doing this, we are sending a very clear signal of seriousness and intent, and underlining the determination that we have to further improve cross-border rail links.

To achieve that, we're not simply waiting for high speed rail to come from the south – we're working constructively with partners like Transport for the North and the UK Government, so that everybody can benefit.

It's something that I'm very passionate about and believe very strongly in - that often we should try and make these benefits go from north to south, rather than wait on them coming from south to north.

The last area for co-operation I want to highlight is that there will be many occasions when businesses in Scotland and businesses in the north east of England can find a common cause - supported where appropriate by the Scottish Government - in seeking to influence UK Government policy.

The UK Government's proposed Industrial Strategy is a good example. Scotland and North East England were both disproportionately affected by the deindustrialisation of the 1970s and 1980s, but we both retain great strengths, and even greater potential, in areas like advanced manufacturing. So making sure that a UK industrial strategy benefits every part of the UK is really important for all of us.

More broadly, the Scottish Government will always, as you might expect, be on the side of further decentralisation and greater devolution of powers.

I know that some of you might have concerns that the Scottish Government could use our powers to give ourselves a competitive edge over other parts of the UK. In my view, the solution to that doesn't lie in removing powers or not giving additional powers to Scotland. The solution to that lies in greater devolution of powers and greater flexibility to other regions across the UK, including the north east.

The detail of how that is done is of course mainly a matter for you and for the UK Government - I know that different councils in the north east have taken different stances on whether, for example, to have an elected mayor.

But the fundamental principle is an important one. The level of centralisation in the UK's economy and in Westminster politics is not helpful to any of us - so in Scotland, you will have, where you want it, an ally, and possibly sometimes a useful example, in promoting change that could benefit the north east of England.

And in my view, Scotland and the north east will also over the months and perhaps years to come, share many common interests and concerns in relation to the Brexit process. I understand that that's an issue Vince Cable also raised when he addressed your annual dinner last week.

Now, I understand and respect the fact that the majority of regions in the North East voted last year to leave the EU. However it is clearly essential that - even as the UK leaves the European Union - we strive to do so in a way that will be least damaging to business interests and interests more generally.

Businesses in Scotland have significant concerns that I would imagine will be shared by many of you. Businesses in Scotland want to continue to be able to hire and retain EU workers; they want to continue to benefit from trade without tariffs or regulatory barriers; they want our universities to continue to flourish through international collaboration.

To my mind the best way of achieving these outcomes is for the UK to remain a member of the single market and the customs union. That perhaps is also, democratically, the obvious compromise solution for a state which only narrowly voted in favour of Brexit, and where two out of four nations of the UK voted to stay.

So that is what the Scottish Government is arguing for.

We have significant concerns, not just about the Brexit principle, but about the process and how that process is being taken forward, and we think that the current approach has the

potential, which may quickly turn into the reality, of doing real damage to businesses and others right across the UK.

One final point about Brexit, is that the potential harm it will cause to international ties - indeed to the UK's international reputation - and that has for us in Scotland provided an added impetus, to remain outward looking and internationalist.

A good example of that is our decision recently to expand Scotland's representation in key European cities and markets. For example we recently opened a new office in Dublin; we will shortly open one in Berlin.

And of course a crucial part of looking outwards, is that we don't just look to other EU countries and the wider world – a key part of looking outwards is making sure we are strengthening the links with our very closest neighbours, partners, friends and family across these islands.

That, of course, includes the north east of England. The prosperity of the north of England will always matter deeply to Scotland; and the prosperity of Scotland will always matter deeply to the north of England, such are the interconnections between us.

There will of course be times when Scotland and the north east are in competition – when it comes to attracting inward investment, for example.

But I believe there will be many, many more occasions when it makes sense for us to work together and to collaborate.

And when you look at how much we have in common – not simply our geographic proximity, and our ties of family and friendship, but also our common strengths in sectors like energy and advanced manufacturing, tourism, financial services and education – the obvious solution and conclusion is that we both have a huge amount to gain from creating even deeper and stronger links.

That is why I am delighted to have had the opportunity to be here today - to return to my roots as was suggested earlier on - and it's fantastic to see so many of you here. My hope and expectation is that by working more closely together, we can deliver real, practical, tangible benefits for Scotland, for the North East, and indeed for all of the nations of these islands.

So I wish you all the best, and I look forward to many more years of friendship and partnership between Scotland and the north east of England.

[Statement on Historical Sexual Offences \(Pardons and Disregards\) \(Scotland\) Bill \(*disponible* à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/statement-on-historical-sexual-offences-pardons-and-disregards-scotland-bill>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/statement-on-historical-sexual-offences-pardons-and-disregards-scotland-bill)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, 7 November 2017

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the chamber. Today marks an important milestone in achieving true equality for Scotland's LGBTI community.

This morning, the Historical Sexual Offences (Pardons and Disregards) (Scotland) Bill was published.

Scotland has travelled so far in recent years, in relation to LGBTI equality, that it still shocks to recall that as recently as 1980 – well within my lifetime - consenting sexual activity between men was still classed as a criminal activity in this country. And the age of consent was only lowered to 16 in 2001, two years after this parliament came into being. Before then, hundreds of people in Scotland were liable to be convicted as criminals, simply for loving another adult.

Presiding Officer, the words inscribed on this Parliament's Mace set out the values which we seek to uphold and promote – integrity, wisdom, justice and compassion. Yet even within the lifetime of this parliament, this nation's laws created suffering and perpetrated injustice.

The legislation we have published today addresses that injustice. It provides an automatic pardon to men convicted of same-sex sexual activity that would now be legal.

In addition, the bill establishes a new procedure, so that people can apply to the police for their offence to be disregarded from criminal records. This means it will never appear on a disclosure certificate.

The legislation therefore has both a symbolic and a practical value. The pardon sends an unequivocal message to everybody convicted of an offence for an activity which is now legal. The law should not have treated them as criminals and they should not now be considered to be criminals. Instead, this parliament recognises that a wrong was done to them.

And the disregard has an important practical consequence. It allows people to ensure that their past criminal record will no longer have an impact on their day to day life. That will change people's lives.

At present, as the Equality Network and others have highlighted to us, there are some people convicted merely of showing love and affection to their partner, who still have to explain their criminal record every time they move job or apply for an internal promotion. That is unacceptable and we are determined that it will end.

So the bill we are publishing today rights a historic wrong.

However Presiding Officer, I want to go further today and do something that legislation on its own cannot do. A pardon is, of course, the correct legal remedy to apply for the convictions we are talking about today – but the term “pardon” might still, to some people, imply that Parliament sees them as having done something wrong. That is, after all, a common context in which a pardon might be granted.

However, as all of us know, that is not the case here. For people convicted of same sex sexual activity which is now legal, the wrong has been committed by the state, not by the individuals. Those individuals deserve an unqualified apology, as well as a pardon.

That apology can only come from the government and from Parliament - not from the justice system. After all, the courts, prosecutors and the police were enforcing the law of the time.

The simple fact is that parliamentarians in Scotland over many decades supported or, at the very least, accepted laws which we now recognise to have been completely unjust.

Those laws criminalised the act of loving another adult; they deterred people from being honest about their identity to family, friends, neighbours and colleagues; and by sending a message from parliament that homosexuality was wrong, they encouraged rather than deterred homophobia and hate.

So today, categorically and wholeheartedly, as First Minister I apologise for those laws, and for the hurt and the harm that they caused.

Nothing this parliament does can erase those injustices. But I hope that this apology, alongside our new legislation, can provide some comfort to those who endured them. And I hope that it provides evidence of this parliament's determination, in so far as we can, to address the harm that has been done.

The final point I would make is that today's legislation marks an important milestone in Scotland's progress towards LGBTI equality. However our journey is not yet complete.

Considering how recently it is, that the laws I have just discussed were in force, it is remarkable and inspiring that Scotland is now considered to be one of the most progressive countries in Europe when it comes to LGBTI equality.

One of the proudest moments of my 18 years as an MSP – and, I know, one of the proudest moments for many MSPs across this chamber - was in February 2014, when people from all parties came together to support equal marriage.

But as all of us know, until we live in a country – in fact, until we live in a world - where no young person suffers hate or fear or discrimination or prejudice, simply because of their sexual orientation or their gender identity, then we have still got work to do.

That's why we have promised to improve our gender recognition legislation. We know that we need to ensure that it reflects the experiences and needs of transgender and intersex people.

It's why I attach such importance to the Scottish government's work with the TIE campaign – ensuring that our young people do not have to fear bullying in school.

It's why we are reviewing hate crime legislation – to ensure that our laws provide the right protections against bigotry and hatred.

And it's why I hope that today's apology – in addition to its specific significance for gay men – sends out a wider signal to the LGBTI community. The Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament are utterly committed to delivering true equality for LGBTI people in Scotland. Wherever there are societal, cultural, legislative or regulatory barriers to achieving that, we will seek to remove them. We will never again accept laws or behaviours which discriminate against you and hurt you.

And so although today is a day for looking back and apologising for past wrongs, it is also a day which points to a better future.

And it is a day when this chamber promotes, and lives up to, our shared values - integrity, wisdom, compassion and justice.

High-level closing of Global Climate Action (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/high-level-closing-of-global-climate-action>)

First Minister, 15 November 2017

Bonn, Germany

Prime Minister,
United Nations Secretary General,
Executive Secretary,
Fellow panellists,
Distinguished guests,

Good evening and bula vinaka

Two years ago, UN member states in Paris reached one of the most important international agreements of our time.

Our obligation now is to turn the ambitions of Paris into reality.

We remain some distance from doing that. The specific commitments made at Paris would result in global warming of well over 2 degrees Celsius.

That would make the UN's Sustainable Development Goals unattainable.

It would bring rising ocean levels, more famine, a higher incidence of hurricanes and cyclones – and, almost certainly, a displacement of populations far beyond what we have seen from

recent and current conflicts. It would be deeply damaging for all nations, and catastrophic for some.

So we must urgently make the specific pledges - and agree the operating manual - which enable us to limit global temperature increases to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

That doesn't simply require impressive targets for the next two decades – it requires urgent action in the next two years.

And it requires all countries – developed countries especially - to contribute fair shares.

It is hugely to your credit, Prime Minister, that in creating your Talanoa dialogue, Fiji's presidency has recognised the role that non-states can play – businesses, wider civic society, and of course cities and the regions and devolved governments that I speak on behalf of today.

My country, Scotland, is determined to lead by example.

We made a commitment 8 years ago to reduce our 2020 emissions by 42%. We are on course to meet that target, and are now proposing to increase our ambition for the years beyond. That includes coming to an early decision on when we will aim to reach net zero emissions.

Scotland works closely on climate change with partners around the world, from California to Malawi.

We also work with the UK Government. We welcome the strength of their commitment to the Paris Agreement.

However Scotland will go further where we can. We established a Climate Justice Fund and will establish a Just Transition Commission. We have recently set an earlier target than the UK for phasing out new diesel and petrol cars.

Scotland provides just one example of the contribution devolved governments can make.

In the last week the Bonn zone has heard from the Under2 coalition, the Frontline Cities and Islands initiative, the West African partnership for localising finance and many more.

When I arrived here, I was heartened to walk past the “We're still in” zone established by US states and city governments. In total, more than 1000 different governments in 86 countries have made significant pledges. That is in addition to the 7,000 cities represented by the global covenant of mayors.

There is no doubt that devolved, regional and local governments are emerging as a powerful force for good in the fight against climate change.

We recognise the economic and social opportunities of a just transition to create new jobs; to protect our natural environment; and to tackle pollution and save lives.

But, above all else, we understand this - tackling climate change is an overwhelming moral obligation that we owe to this and future generations,

When Ban Ki-Moon addressed the Paris conference, he referred to climate change as “the defining challenge of our times”.

The message of cities, regions and devolved governments around the world to UN member states is this - our ambitions must live up to the scale of the challenge, and our actions must live up to our ambitions.

If they do, we will stand with you as proud partners. We will work with you to go further and faster together.

And we will help you create the coalition for action which is so essential to the wellbeing of all the peoples of all our nations.

[Arctic Circle Forum Scotland \(disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/arctic-circle-forum-scotland>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/arctic-circle-forum-scotland)

First Minister, 20 November 2017

Thank you. It's a real honour to welcome you all to Edinburgh for the 2017 Arctic Circle Forum.

I want to thank former President Grímsson and the Arctic Circle Secretariat for their part in bringing the Forum to Scotland. The presence of over 300 people – from across Scotland, the Arctic region, and beyond – is testament to the importance of this event – and of the issues we're discussing.

Now, I've made this point before – but it bears repeating: Scotland is geographically the Arctic's nearest non-Arctic neighbour. The northern part of Scotland is closer to the Arctic than it is to London. It makes perfect sense for us to play an important and a full role in the Arctic Circle deliberations.

We share ties of history, friendship and culture which in many cases go back centuries. For example, the Icelandic sagas of the 13th century chronicle the early history of our Orkney Islands.

You can see a more recent link on the Mound, at the very heart of our capital city. Last night saw the lighting of Edinburgh's Christmas Tree. The tree is a gift from the community of Hordaland, in Norway. It recognises the fact that during the Second World War, Free Norwegian Army Units found a home here in Scotland.

So these ties in terms of history and culture are strong and should be celebrated.

Of course, the focus of this Forum is not our shared past – important though that is. It is about the future – and specifically Scotland's modern relationship with the Arctic region.

Now, our similarities – both geographic and cultural – mean that Scotland and the Arctic states often face many of the same issues. In fact, we're seeing that more and more, as our nations adapt to major economic and environmental changes – from the onset of global warming to the effects of globalisation.

It means that, now more than ever, there is a need – and indeed an opportunity – for us to work together on shared priorities. That's fundamentally what this Forum – and our concept of the 'New North' – is all about.

Perhaps the most important of those shared priorities is global warming. When Ban-Ki Moon addressed the Arctic Circle Assembly in 2016, he described the Arctic as the "ground zero" of climate change. He highlighted that a temperature increase of 2% worldwide might well mean an increase of 4 or 5 degrees within the Arctic Circle. That's one reason why many Arctic states are at the forefront in tackling climate change.

Scotland is also leading by example. Last week, at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, I spoke about the specific steps our country is taking.

We've already set – and are well on course to meet – some of the most ambitious emissions targets in the world. We're now in the process of making those targets even tougher. As part of that we have committed to an early decision on when Scotland will aim to achieve net zero emissions. Our targets for renewable energy generation and the early adoption of electric vehicles are the most stretching in the UK.

And since 2012, Scotland's Climate Justice Fund has provided £21 million for projects in sub-Saharan Africa, which help communities there combat the effects of climate change.

Of course, in many areas – such as renewable energy generation – we recognise that while we are doing well, we are still a long way behind countries such as Iceland and Norway. And so increasingly, we want to work with and learn from countries in the Arctic to help achieve our ambitions.

Just last month, I had the honour of opening Hywind Scotland, off the north east coast of the country. It's the world's first floating windfarm – and it has been developed by the Norwegian state energy company, Statoil. It's a hugely exciting project, which could transform the development of offshore windfarms in deeper waters. It's one example of the international collaborate that Scotland seeks to be involved in.

We are also a world leader in marine energy. More wave and tidal power companies have demonstrated their technologies at the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney than at any other site in the world - including firms from Finland, Sweden and Norway.

And we're collaborating with Arctic nations on essential scientific research. Scottish universities and research institutes have worked with partners in Norway and the United States to study the Greenland fjords. Their research aims to predict how melting ice sheets will affect sea levels.

This is the kind of collaboration that is helping us to fulfil our moral obligations in relation to climate change. But it's also helping us to realise significant economic benefits. The low carbon sector here in Scotland currently employs almost 60,000 people.

Working together on climate change is first and foremost essential for the future of the planet. However, it will also bring economic benefits to communities across the New North. I've focused on climate change so far, because it's so fundamental to the future of all of our nations. But the programme for the next 2 days demonstrates there's much more scope for collaboration.

If we take tourism, as one example – that's a sector which is expected to grow dramatically in the Arctic, over the coming decades. And it's an area where Scotland has particular strengths. Our tourism industry accounts for over 200,000 jobs across the country. So we have a lot of expertise in developing sustainable tourism. But we're also keen to learn – and create new tourism links - with our Arctic neighbours.

That's why, late last year our tourism agency signed a memorandum of understanding with Iceland's tourism board – to share ideas, knowledge and best practice. And that kind of collaboration will be particularly important as more remote areas become accessible for tourism.

We're also working with our partners to equip communities – particularly those in remote areas – for the economic and environmental changes we will see in the future. After all, these changes will have a major impact at the local level. So we need to ensure our communities have the resilience and the ability to thrive.

One of the discussion sessions of this Forum focuses on the work of Lateral North – a design collaborative from my home city of Glasgow. For the past year, they have been working with the Anchorage Museum in Alaska on the 'Mapping Anchorage' project. It involves helping three Anchorage communities to become more resilient and connected – by identifying challenges and opportunities, and proposing solutions.

Now, tourism and design are, of course, just a couple of the issues being covered as part of this Forum. Over the next couple of days, there will also be sessions on planning and

transport; new shipping opportunities; local energy solutions; marine development; young people in remote communities; air travel; and business cooperation. The variety of sessions I think demonstrates the extent of our shared priorities – and also the scale of the opportunities for further collaboration.

And of course all the issues we are discussing are linked – directly or indirectly – to a much larger theme. One of the questions which countries across the world are struggling with at present is how to ensure that a dynamic, open and innovative economy goes hand in hand with a fair, inclusive and sustainable society.

No country has all of the answers to that question, but Arctic countries on many measures are doing pretty well. For example, they account for 5 of the top 11 countries in the United Nations Human Development Index. So for Scotland, it makes sense for us to look north as well as south when we tackle major social and economic challenges.

Our hope is that by working more closely with the Arctic Circle – on the environment, on business links, on improving local communities – we can help build a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable society within Scotland. But we also believe we can play a part – together with all of you - in bringing benefits to nations across the Arctic and around the world.

That's why I'm so delighted and honoured that Scotland is hosting this year's Arctic Circle Forum. I hope all of you find the sessions enjoyable and informative. And I hope that this event will mark the start of even closer relations between Scotland and our neighbours in the New North.

Kilbrandon lecture, Strathclyde University (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/kilbrandon-lecture-strathclyde-university>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, 23 November 2017

It is a pleasure to be here and an honour to give this lecture. I know that in doing so I'm following in some distinguished footsteps – including Sir Harry Burns, Sir Neil MacCormick and of course Donald Dewar, the first First Minister, when he was Secretary of State for Scotland.

It is also a pleasure to pay tribute to Lord Kilbrandon. Lord Kilbrandon of course produced a hugely important and influential report on constitutional change in 1974, which led indirectly to the first devolution referendum in 1979. He was also one of the outstanding Scottish judges of his generation.

Even if he had never produced his report on children and young people, therefore, there is no doubt he would be remembered fondly today as someone who had a significant, enduring and beneficial impact on modern Scotland. I am delighted that Heather Shaw, his granddaughter, is in the audience this evening.

And of course his finest and most lasting achievement – the one we are marking this evening – is the report of 1964 which led to the establishment of the children's hearings system in 1971.

When we read now the remit that Lord Kilbrandon was given back in the early 1960s– with its focus on “the treatment of juvenile delinquents” - we can see immediately that its tone and language belongs to a different era.

It is a tribute to the brilliance of Lord Kilbrandon and those who worked with him - not just that they had a vision for doing things differently, but also that they could set out practical steps to achieve their vision. It is a vision that endures half a century later - something that should still inspire us today.

When Lord Hope gave this lecture three years ago he returned to an idea that he had used in one of his judgements - that the “special genius” of the Kilbrandon report lay in the distinction it draws between establishing the facts of an offence, and deciding on what is best for the child.

That distinction remains central to children’s hearings. In fact, that belief that we should be driven by the best interests of children is enshrined in law, but is a principle we should abide by across all our efforts in government.

That notion – that the welfare of children is paramount, not just in the children’s hearing system, but in society as a whole - is central to my vision for a fairer and more prosperous Scotland for this generation and the next.

In fact, if you were to ask me to sum up what I consider to be my mission as First Minister, it would be this - the mission of making real progress towards genuine equality of opportunity.

If we fail in that mission, not only will we be letting down our young people, but we will all be diminished. For every young person who cannot fulfil their potential, all of us lose out on the talent, ideas and initiative of someone who could be contributing so much to our society.

Getting young people to see how much they can achieve, then kindling that awareness into a spark or fire of ambition, and then enabling them to realise that ambition – that is one of the key responsibilities today for government and for wider society.

Giving children the best possible start in life is essential if we are going to rise collectively to that challenge. Now, that of course involves a vast range of different policies which I can’t focus on this evening– for example combatting poverty, investing in housing, promoting healthy, active lives.

It also requires strong support for high quality universal services. In particular, many of the improvements we are making to universal services will benefit all children, but will particularly benefit children from deprived or disadvantaged backgrounds. That is particularly important because of the removal of stigma.

If you take education, I have made it clear that I am prepared to be judged on whether this government succeeds in closing the poverty-related attainment gap between children from affluent areas and children from deprived areas.

Our expansion of high quality childcare, to be overseen by Maree Todd, over the next three years will help to give every child the best possible start in life, while also making it easier for parents, especially mothers, to return to work, if that is what they want to do and that is what they see as best for their families.

And since August, parents of new born babies have received baby boxes. Baby boxes bring significant practical benefits. They include household items – such as a thermometer, a travel changing mat, a selection of clothes – which are useful to parents, and which in some cases the parents wouldn’t be able to buy for themselves.

However alongside those practical benefits, the baby box also has a symbolic value. It is provided to all babies, regardless of their background. It sends out a signal that in Scotland, we value all children equally – and we will do everything we can to support and encourage their potential. That should be the hallmark of this country’s approach.

However my main focus today is on how we support children and families who most need it – and in particular, how we respect their rights and listen to their voices, views and needs, as an essential part of providing help.

The guiding principle behind “Getting it Right for Every Child” is that children get the right support from the right people at the right time.

It is a principle which Lord Kilbrandon would have recognised. He sought to reduce what he called “the arbitrary effects of what is still too often a haphazard detection process” for identifying children who experienced what we now know as adverse childhood experiences – whether they involve abuse, neglect, violence or poverty. So we are working to prevent those experiences, to help children to heal from trauma, and to improve the wellbeing and resilience of children who encounter them.

It’s worth noting that this emphasis on prevention and joint working lies behind our proposals for named persons. This is not about meddling in family life. Better information sharing between different services is an important part of ensuring that children get the right support from the right people at the right time. Children will therefore be less likely to fall through any gaps between services.

As we do that, we need to ensure that this support is consistent with, and serves to enhance, children’s rights.

One of the biggest changes since Kilbrandon has been our growing understanding of children’s right to be heard and to be listened to.

When this lecture series was established in 1991, the first speaker was Professor Sanford Fox of Boston College Law School. He had advised on the drafting of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. He reflected on the fact that in many ways the Kilbrandon Report was ahead of its time, and said that the “idea that children should be active participants in decisions affecting them...has only recently been enshrined in the new ...Convention...although these values have been the foundation stones of Scottish juvenile justice for 20 years now.”

Scotland has, through the UK, been a signatory to the Convention from the very beginning. But we now want to go further, and look at how the Convention can be better embedded into Scottish legislation and policy. This includes the option of full incorporation of UNCRC into our law.

However there are areas where we can start now. For example we will raise the age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12 – a step which puts us in line with international standards.

And we will support legislation to offer equal protection for children on physical punishment – enabling Scotland to join some 50 other countries around the world which have already successfully made that change.

In addition, we are starting a three year programme to raise awareness of the rights of children and young people. We recognise that laws in themselves - although important -aren't enough. They need to be accompanied by a change in culture – that’s what will lead to a significant, positive and sustained change in children’s experiences.

One crucial part of that is ensuring that our children and young people not only get a chance to be heard, but that they are listened to – they should feel they have a full place in society, and that they have some ability to shape their own futures.

Next year is Scotland’s year of Children and Young People. I had the privilege of launching the programme for the year a couple of weeks ago, at the Oasis Youth Centre in Dumfries.

A key thing about the year is that it is being shaped by children and young people themselves. They have decided that it should concentrate on people between the age of 11 and 25; they have determined the programme of events; they have influenced the aims of the year. As a result – and this is really important – I’m sure we will have a better outcome. The year will

be a celebration of young people's achievements and potential which is enjoyed by, and has meaning for, young people.

There is of course a much bigger principle at stake here – that children need to have a genuine say in the decisions that affect them.

That is maybe more important now than ever before. We saw in 2014 during the referendum, when 16 year olds were allowed to vote for the first time, that our young people are the conscientious, compassionate, thoughtful citizens we always knew they would be. The decision to give them a vote and a voice was regarded as a success by virtually everyone.

But we have also seen in recent years – perhaps most prominently during the EU referendum – decisions taken by the population of the UK as a whole which young people almost certainly wouldn't have taken for themselves. That will, of course, inevitably sometimes happen in any democratic society. But it perhaps increases the need for us to ensure that young people have a genuine say in shaping their own future.

We have been trying to lead by example. That is why the Scottish Cabinet held a joint meeting in February with representatives of the children's parliament and the youth parliament. We discussed issues ranging from mental health to Scotland's relationship with Europe. We all agreed to make the Cabinet an annual event.

Away from the Cabinet table, we also need to ensure that children have an influence on the key decisions affecting their day to day life.

That principle has to apply in particular to children who need particular care or consideration from the state.

After all, a key test of any society is how we support and care for children who require special protective measures – as the Convention on the Rights of the Child would put it. We need to take extra steps to give them true equality of opportunity. That includes giving them a voice when decisions are being taken that could change the course of their lives.

That's what we have tried to do in recent years in relation to children's hearings. As a result of our overall approach to children's services, and the move we are seeking to make to prevention, rather than dealing with problems once they have arisen – the number of children referred to children's hearings has declined by almost three quarters in the last decade. In 2006 it was 56,000; in 2015 it was 15,000.

It's maybe worth noting that that mirrors the reductions we have seen in the youth justice system. In 2006, the number of 18 year olds in custody was 223; last year it was 81.

With children's hearings, the commonest reason for a referral is now a concern about the child's welfare, rather than a concern about offending behaviour. 80% of children who are now on compulsory supervision have only ever been referred because of the possible need for compulsory care or protection. Back in 1971, 85% of cases were on the basis of possible offences.

Progress flows from putting children at the centre. That progress has allowed us to look at how the system works.

The consultation we initiated on reforms to the system, back in 2010, demonstrated that the children's hearing system is still very highly valued. The views we heard came from professionals, volunteers, academics, and from young people themselves.

That is in itself, of course, a testament to the far sightedness and wisdom of the Kilbrandon Report. But it is also a tribute to the expertise, dedication and compassion of the people involved with children's hearings.

Observers from across the world have at times spoken admiringly of the principles or the system set out by Kilbrandon. But of course it is people who make that system work.

That includes the Area Support Team volunteers who help to monitor and support children's panel members. It also includes the panel members themselves who give up so much of their time - for very little public recognition, and no financial reward. There are many children's panel members who end up considering the cases of more than 1,000 children.

The positive difference they make through their contribution – to those children, to their families and to local communities – is extraordinary. That also applies, of course, to the Children's Reporter staff and all the other professionals who support children's hearings. I want to put on record, on behalf of the Scottish government, indeed on behalf of the whole country, my gratitude to each and every one of you.

But it is our duty to ensure that our responses to children's needs are modern, updated and fit for purpose.

The reforms we legislated for in 2011 have strengthened children's rights and clarified roles and responsibilities. For example we established a role of National Convener, supported by Children's Hearings Scotland, who has statutory duties associated with the recruitment, selection and training of children's panel members.

We also improved the training and recruitment of safeguarders – the independent representatives who assess children's best interests and provide advice when, for example, there is a dispute between different agencies. And we have made it easier for children to gain access to legal representation.

Now, I believe that these changes have delivered improvements and will continue to deliver improvements. I think the children's hearings system is wonderful. But we must not rest on our laurels and we should not pretend the hearings system is perfect. We need to push for even higher standards precisely because the role it performs is so valuable.

The Education and Skills committee of the Scottish Parliament earlier this year highlighted concerns from young people which are similar to the ones which I have heard: for example about how difficult it can be to understand the information they get before the hearings - including their own "child's plan" - and the fact that they are not always as aware as they could be of their rights to participate in their hearing.

One measure which will help to address some of those problems was included in the 2011 Act. It provided for a nationwide advocacy service – one where an independent representative can speak up for the child's interests and concerns. That person will be available for children who have expressed an interest in advocacy support, and for those who might not otherwise be able to participate fully in their own hearing.

I am delighted to confirm today that, having run several pilots across the country, we are allocating additional resources to ensure that a truly nationwide service will be up and running from 2019. Independent advocates can help us to ensure that children's hearings become even better at hearing from children. By doing so, they can give an effective voice to some children whose views might not otherwise be properly heard.

A fundamental principle of the children's hearing system is that parents are usually the best people to bring up their own children. They should be encouraged and enabled to do so whenever possible.

When that isn't possible, children should be settled into a loving permanent home as soon as possible. In those cases – depending on what is in the best interests of the child – options such as foster care, kinship care, residential care or adoption should be explored.

Maree Todd, the Minister for Childcare and Early Years, who is here this evening, is at an event tomorrow to mark National Adoption week. I am sure she will stress the point I want to make this evening – how grateful we are to adopting parents, foster parents and carers who choose to provide a loving home for children.

Many children with experience of care will go on to do brilliantly - through their own efforts, and also because of the people who love them and care for them.

In fact, outcomes for the 15,000 looked after children in Scotland are improving. In 2010, only 4 out of 10 looked after children were in employment, training, or further or higher education after leaving school. Now the figure is 7 children out of 10.

But even so, some of the statistics surrounding children in care are deeply concerning. Indeed they are unacceptable if we are to get it right for every child. For example only 1 in 16 goes to university. And it is estimated that a third of the prison population is made up of people who lived in care when they were growing up. Some sources suggest the proportion could be higher.

While we have statistics like that, we simply cannot be satisfied. That is why we launched the root and branch care review earlier in the year.

Fiona Duncan is chairing the review, and will I know do a fantastic job.

A fundamental principle of the review is that it will be driven by the involvement and views of children who have experience of care. Their views and their stories will be at the very heart of shaping what the best care in Scotland should look like.

On a personal level, I have promised, over the duration of the review, to listen to at least 1,000 children and young people who are in care or have experience of care – so far I have spoken to and met with more than 150.

In fact, one of them was with me the last time I was in this hall. Calum Lynch is an ambassador of WhoCares? Scotland, who graduated in Management and Marketing from Strathclyde Business School two weeks ago. I had the pleasure of going to his graduation service as his corporate parent.

I think he might have invited me half as a joke – I don't actually know if he expected me to agree! It was an absolute privilege to attend. Calum is living proof of the fact that, with the right support, young people who grow up in care can achieve their dreams just like any other young person.

The state owes it to all young people to ensure that that they all have that opportunity.

In fact, I'm not sure that the state has a more important, a more sacred duty, than the one that we owe to children in care. And for all the superb work that is being done by people across the country, we know we still need to do better.

In particular, children and young people in care need to know that they are cared for and loved.

I've stressed the importance of young people's rights throughout this speech.

Arguably the most important right of all is the right to be loved unconditionally as a precious, unique, special human being. I grew up in that sort of environment, and I'm sure that the majority of you did too. It is, almost literally, the birthright of the vast majority of children in

Scotland – and those who grow up without it are disinherited in ways which we can scarcely begin to imagine.

So we must, and we will, make sure that the way in which we provide care for them puts love at its heart. Every young person has a right to be loved.

At the start of my speech I quoted the opening words of Lord Kilbrandon’s remit. I want to end with an excerpt from the end of his final report. Speaking of the young people in the juvenile courts at that time, he said that it was necessary “to extend to this minority of children... the measures which their needs dictate, and of which they have ...been too often deprived.”

The language may now sound very slightly dated, but the meaning is as relevant now as it was in 1964. We must ensure that we provide additional help, support, care or protection to the young people who need it most. It is an essential part of providing every child with the best possible start in life.

That needs strong support for universal public services. It requires a continuing focus on improving children’s services specifically. It involves respecting, protecting and enhancing children’s rights. And in my view, it means involving and listening to young people whenever we make decisions about their lives.

By doing that, we can deliver on the aspiration that the welfare of our children is paramount. We can build, together, a more prosperous, fairer, happier Scotland. And we can live up to the inspiring and challenging legacy of Lord Kilbrandon.

World Forum on Natural Capital (*disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/world-forum-on-natural-capital-1>*)

First Minister, 27 November 2017

Thank you, Jonny (*Hughes, Chief Executive of the Scottish Wildlife Trust*), and thanks to all of you for attending.

Scotland hosted the first two World Forums on Natural Capital in 2013 and 2015, and we are delighted to be hosting this third one.

I’m grateful to the Scottish Wildlife Trust for organising this event. I also want to thank the associate partners – the United Nations Environment Programme; the Natural Capital Coalition; the Green Economy Coalition; the World Business Council for Sustainable Development; and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

This is actually the third big environmental event I’ve had the privilege of speaking at in the last fortnight.

Two weeks ago I addressed the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn, and last week I welcomed delegates to Edinburgh for Scotland’s first ever Arctic Circle Forum, which had a strong environmental focus.

At both of those events, I’ve stressed – as you might expect – Scotland’s continued commitment to tackling climate change and protecting our environment.

And I’ve also highlighted our deep desire to collaborate with partners around the world as we do that.

After all, the environment, is, by definition, an international issue. It therefore requires international agreement and co-operation. And we will make better progress if governments, individuals and organisations from around the world share their expertise and experience.

So I am absolutely delighted that the 700 or so delegates here today come from approximately 60 countries around the world. That demonstrates the sheer scale of international interest in this subject. I want to extend to all of you, the warmest possible welcome to Scotland.

You are visiting a country which earlier this year was voted by Rough Guide readers as the most beautiful in the world - ahead of Canada, New Zealand, Italy and South Africa.

That accolade is something which we are very proud of – however it also demonstrates something extremely important, and something extremely relevant at this forum.

Scotland's natural environment is, first and foremost, important because of its intrinsic value. Biodiversity and beauty are precious in and of themselves. You cannot put a price on the sense of joy, happiness and wellbeing that people get from nature.

However acknowledging all of that doesn't take away from the fact that our natural environment is also of great economic significance. It is believed to account directly for more than 60,000 jobs here in Scotland. It is also vital to our tourist industry, which employs more than 200,000 people across the country. And it is essential to Scotland's food and drink sector, which is currently enjoying enormous success.

I'm well aware that some people still have concerns and scepticism about the very concept of natural capital. However the Scottish Government's view and approach is very clear. We believe that we're more likely to abuse nature, if we think it is free, and to treat it with care if we have an understanding of its value.

The Scottish Government in recent years has tried to lead by example on environmental issues and the issue of natural capital.

We were one of the first countries in the world to sign up to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

We have set – and are well on course to meet – some of the most ambitious targets in the world for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, playing our full part in meeting the aspirations of the Paris agreement.

I have also made it clear in the last couple of weeks that we are committed to an early decision on when Scotland will aim to achieve net zero emissions.

Two months ago we published our Programme for Government. Friends of the Earth welcomed it as the most environmentally friendly set of proposals published in the 18 year history of the Scottish parliament. We also received praise from the United Nations Environment Programme.

We set out proposals – among other things – to double our investment in promoting cycling and walking; to establish clean emission zones in our cities; to further promote renewable energy generation; and to remove the need for new petrol or diesel cars by 2032 – eight years ahead of the target set in the rest of the UK.

We see the move to a low carbon economy, first and foremost, as an overwhelming moral imperative – especially, perhaps for a developed economy like Scotland's.

But we also see it as a massive opportunity. It's an opportunity, by reducing pollution, to improve the health and wellbeing of people across our country, and make our contribution to improving the health, wellbeing and security of people across the world. The low carbon transition is also, of course, a major economic opportunity.

I want Scotland to be at the forefront of economic and technological change – to be a country which develops, designs and produces the technologies of the future, rather than simply consuming them.

We have opportunities to do that in many low-carbon technologies – for example we are internationally recognised for our capabilities in renewable energy, smart grids and battery storage.

One interesting example – which is directly relevant to natural capital - is the progress we are making towards a more circular economy; one where materials are used and reused in a way that retains their value for as long as possible. In fact, earlier this year, Scotland's efforts in this area were recognised at the World Economic Forum's Circulars Awards.

In the manufacturing sector, there are big opportunities in repairing and remanufacturing items. That's why we have established a Scottish Institute for Remanufacture.

And if you look at the bioeconomy, it has been estimated that in some key parts of our food and drink industry, a more circular approach could save businesses up to half a billion pounds a year.

Some Scottish companies are already doing amazing work – for example by taking the residues from whisky production to create biofuels, or using coffee grounds in the production of cosmetics.

It's a further example of how the need to reduce waste is creating exciting new business models. And it helps to highlight the benefits of making a rapid and just transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy. We can enable our communities to prosper, while also allowing our environment to flourish.

The Scottish government sees the concept of natural capital as an important tool for making better decisions as we look towards that better world.

That's why natural capital is embedded in our performance framework, and also in our national economic strategy.

And it's why in 2013 we established the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital. That forum brings together the public, private and third sectors, and it aims to ensure that natural capital isn't simply recognised as a valuable principle; but also that it works to influence practical decision making as well – turning the rhetoric into reality.

One example of that relates to the Natural Capital Coalition, and the protocol it has developed - which helps managers to identify both the impact of their businesses on natural capital, and also the extent to which their businesses depend on natural capital.

The Scottish Forum is currently exploring how that protocol is being used in practice by land-based businesses. It's working on that project with Crown Estates and representatives of major landowners in Scotland.

The trial is still in its early stages. But it is potentially hugely significant. If we can encourage more businesses and landowners to use the protocol, the importance of our natural heritage will be reflected a bit more accurately in our day to day decision making. That will be good for the environment, and it will also be good for businesses.

In 2013, Scotland also became the first country in the world to establish a natural capital asset index.

You can see some of the implications of having to calculate natural capital when you look at our treatment of peatlands, for example. Peatland doesn't have much obvious financial value, by many conventional accounting measures.

But Scotland's peatland stores over 1,500 million tonnes of carbon. That's equivalent to 140 years' worth of Scotland's total annual greenhouse gas emissions. Peatland also enhances biodiversity and improves water quality.

And of course peat is central to one of Scotland's best-known products. Our multi-billion pound Scotch whisky industry would be very different without peat. If any of you have any doubts on that score, you might want to try a malt later on this evening.

So for all of these reasons, instead of reducing our peatland, we're restoring it.

We're taking other very significant measures to enhance our natural capital. For example we're creating new woodlands. In fact, in recent years, Scotland has been responsible for almost three quarters of the UK's new tree planting. These trees help to store carbon dioxide, they can help to alleviate flood risks, and they improve biodiversity and enhance our landscapes.

These investments might not be obvious priorities at a time when public finances are tight. But when we consider the contribution they make to Scotland's natural capital, their value becomes much clearer.

You can apply a similar logic to our marine environment. Our marine protected areas alone are thought to store the equivalent of four years' worth of our annual carbon emissions.

So looking after them is a necessity. That's why we have committed to a new research programme to understand better the role of our oceans in storing carbon.

In addition, there has been growing concern in recent weeks about marine litter. It's been prompted by some of the extraordinary footage that's been shown on the "Blue Planet".

But of course, as all of you will be aware, the harms caused by ocean litter have been evident for several years now. It is a worldwide issue which also has very specific local impacts. Here in Scotland, some places such as Arrochar, on Loch Long on the West coast of Scotland, have had to endure very serious litter sinks.

That's why two years ago, our national marine plan addressed this issue. It required developers, and other people who use our seas, to take steps - where possible - to reduce marine litter.

We have also promised to legislate, along with the rest of the UK, to ban the manufacture and sale of cosmetics and personal care products containing micro beads.

In addition, the underlying principles of a more circular economy are directly relevant to marine litter. After all, a circular economy is partly about a change of culture - we need to move away from assuming that we throw things away after just one use.

In our latest programme for government, we promised to explore a levy on single use items such as disposable cups. We're also introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers such as glass and plastic bottles. These steps won't just benefit our towns and countryside, they will also benefit our seas - after all, 4/5 of marine litter originates on land.

Finally, since litter in our seas is a global problem, we recognise that it requires global action. That's why Scotland is hosting an international conference on marine litter in 2019. We want to share ideas and expertise with partners across the world. We believe that by doing so, we will improve our own efforts here in Scotland, and also play a part in tackling a growing problem around the world.

Which, in conclusion, brings me back to the central purpose of this conference. In Scotland, we believe we are making progress in creating a better environment and a better society.

But we recognise there is much, much more to do and we know we have a huge amount that we can learn from the experiences and insights of partners from around the world.

So my hope is that over the next two days we can continue to make vital progress towards learning how we can measure and enhance our natural capital.

By doing that, we will bring benefits to the people of all of the countries we represent. And we will give ourselves a better chance of making better decisions, for a better world for future generations.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon - St Andrew's Day Message (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-nicola-sturgeon-st-andrews-day-message>)

First Minister, 30 November 2017

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said:

St Andrew's Day is a very special occasion in Scotland. It is a time when we come together to celebrate Scotland's history, culture, and people.

This year, nine major St Andrew's Day events will take place right across the country – from a fire show and fireworks display in St Andrews to a week-long celebration of music and film in Stornoway.

Together, these events mark the start of Scotland's Winter Festivals – which open with St Andrew's Day, followed by Hogmanay, and then Burns Night. The Winter Festivals are expected to attract well over 100,000 people – from across Scotland and around the world. And I can guarantee that each and every person attending will receive the traditional warm Scottish welcome.

But of course, the celebrations aren't just taking place here in Scotland. In nations right across the world, people with Scottish heritage – and people who are Scots at heart – will celebrate St Andrew's Day – and all that is best about our country.

This year we're looking to harness that kind of enthusiasm for a very special cause.

The values of compassion and solidarity are central to the story of St Andrew. They are also a big part of Scotland's national identity. So we're encouraging everyone to celebrate these values, by performing an act of kindness on St Andrew's Day. That could mean helping out your neighbours; giving time or money to charity; or simply offering friendship and company to those who need it most.

It's a great way of marking this special day – and of making life a little bit brighter for our friends and neighbours.

So wherever you are on 30 November – whether you are in Scotland or overseas – I hope that you will enter into the spirit of the occasion. And, of course, I hope you all have a very happy and enjoyable St Andrew's Day.

Scottish Chambers of Commerce Annual Dinner (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scottish-chambers-of-commerce-annual-dinner>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Glasgow, 7 December 2017

Thank you very much indeed to the Scottish Chambers of Commerce for inviting me again here this evening to address this wonderful event. Thank you, Tim.

Tim, your first state of the nation address as president I thought was excellent. Words of real inspiration, particularly at the end there, but also some important messages for both Scottish and UK Governments and it's important that we listen to those messages.

You did make fleeting reference to the Scottish Government's budget, which will be presented to parliament one week today, so I thought I would start by a reference to that myself.

I can't go into detail but I want to say this to you about it: when it is presented next week I hope what you will see is that it has been a very, very challenging financial time to balance a range of priorities - a range of priorities that all have one objective: to make sure that Scotland is a fantastic place to live, to study, to work, to invest and to do business. That is my objective, that is your objective and working together we will be better placed to deliver upon it.

Specific mentions of the budget will recognise that the strength of our society, and this is true of any country, depends on having strong thriving businesses in a strong growing economy. But of course to help businesses to thrive and to prosper, it is also important that we have the ability to continue to invest in good infrastructure, whether that's transport or digital infrastructure, in support for our businesses like support in research and development, or in initiatives like City Deals. So, the ability to invest in all of those things that are important to businesses the length and breadth of our country is very much in our minds as we finalise those budget details. So when it is unveiled to parliament next Thursday I don't expect that anybody in this room, or indeed anybody across the country will agree with every single proposal in it, but I hope you will agree that it seeks to strike that balance in the right place.

Returning to the event that we have the honour of being at this evening. It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak again at this annual dinner. You know the turnout this evening demonstrates that the Chambers network really does continue to go from strength to strength, and we've heard from Tim many of the successes of the network. I'm sure that strength will continue, and that the co-operation agreement you announced last week with Strathclyde Business School, will improve further your ability to serve your members well.

One of the big privileges of my job is that I get to go out and about all over Scotland to visit businesses and business organisations – and so I have the opportunity to see on a daily, weekly or monthly basis what a big and positive difference the chambers make to companies right across our country.

In recent years you have mentored more than 10,000 businesses.

Glasgow Chambers, which I'm sure is well represented here this evening is closely involved in the delivery of next year's European Championships here in the city of Glasgow.

And you also have an important and growing international profile – that's something I'll return to in more detail at the end of my 45-minute speech.

I would focus this evening, as you would expect me to, on some key areas where the Scottish Government is supporting business – particularly around innovation and internationalisation. But – as you might expect, given the quite extraordinary events of the last few days – I will touch firstly, and you'll be relieved to know, relatively briefly, on the issue of Brexit.

The first – actually the most fundamental – point I want to make about it is this one: I think the events of this week have given further weight to an argument that has been made by many people, and an argument that the Scottish Government has made consistently now for well over a year. By far the best – or perhaps it's more accurate to describe it as the least-worst option in the face of Brexit - is to ensure the UK as whole remains within the single market and customs union

I think that's the most appropriate democratic option, given how close the original vote was, given that two of the four nations in the UK voted to remain within the European Union. But it's also the least damaging option for our economy – the Fraser of Allander Institute just last week highlighted that 136,000 jobs in Scotland are directly linked to our EU trade.

And that option also increasingly, in the light of events this week, looks like the only viable practical option. It avoids difficulties, especially in relation to the island of Ireland, issues that

have always been apparent, but which are becoming ever more obvious as the rhetoric surrounding Brexit finally confronts the reality of Brexit.

So in these circumstances, single market membership is, in my view, overwhelmingly the most sensible solution, short of retaining full membership of the EU, which would be my preference. Staying in the single market avoids some of the biggest practical problems of Brexit, it prevents the worst economic harms and it should provide a compromise that can unite different opinions.

So the Scottish Government will continue to make common cause with anybody and everybody, across all parties and all parts of these islands - who will argue for that continued membership of the single market and customs union, because it is the best approach not just for Scotland but for all the nations of these islands.

The second point I want to make - and this will be the focus of the rest of my remarks - is that whatever happens under Brexit, the Scottish Government will continue to focus on making sure that Scotland is a great place to do business, in making sure that we have the best possible environment for all of our businesses here in Scotland right now and for those who want to locate here.

That's why, for example, we moved quickly to implement most of the recommendations of the Barclay review on non-domestic rates – something that I know has been widely welcomed.

It's also why we continue to invest so heavily in the infrastructure of our country. The dualling of the A9 will be Scotland's largest road infrastructure project in at least a generation. The improvements to central Scotland's motorway network are already reducing journey times on the M8 by up to 20 minutes and in the coming months, we'll see the first electric trains on the Edinburgh to Glasgow rail line.

If you take digital – an area which has been the subject of lots of discussion recently – Scotland is making quicker, faster progress in its broadband deployment than any other part of the UK.

By the end of this year, just a few weeks from now, fibre broadband will be accessible to 95% of properties across our country. That's good progress but it's not far enough, which is why Scotland is now the only country in the UK which is committed to investing (details will be in the budget) to achieve 100% coverage of superfast broadband by 2021.

We've made that commitment partly because, as a matter of basic social justice, it's vital that all parts of the country have access to broadband. Digital access these days is as crucial as turning on the lights or the tap but it's also essential to the health and the success of our economy.

We know that rural Scotland is crucial to our future economic success – that's self-evident if you look at sectors such as tourism, food and drink and renewable energy. And we know that broadband is essential to the sustainability and prosperity of our rural communities.

Of course there is always more to do – and I am very well aware that statistics aren't at all particularly helpful for any business or family which doesn't yet have access to good broadband – but we are making significant, rapid progress. And we are doing that in a way that will bring major benefits to every part of the country.

And as part of that support for businesses, we are also prioritising some very specific measures to support innovation and boost productivity.

The strategic board of the enterprise and skills agencies will have its first meeting next Wednesday. It will play a crucial part in ensuring that all of our public interventions - around

£2 billion that the Scottish Government and our agencies invest every year in skills and enterprise - will have the biggest possible impact. And of course, Nora Senior, a past president of the Scottish Chambers, will chair the board, and Liz Cameron, your Chief Executive, is one of the members.

The work of the board is important. I think we're at a really important time globally, but also for the Scottish economy. I've said on a number of occasions in recent months and will say it again this evening that our collective aim as a country should be to make sure we are in the forefront of economic and technological change in the years and the decades ahead. We should aim to be the inventor, the designer, the producer of the innovations that will shape the future – not just a user of those innovations. And next week's budget will deliver support that we believe is needed to help achieve that aim.

For example, we will set out increased funding for business research and development by 70%. In addition Benny Higgins is leading work to establish a Scottish National Investment Bank. And we are providing significant additional support for entrepreneurs – for example through the new £4 million 'Unlocking Ambition' programme.

We are also taking steps to better promote certain sectors of the economy where we know that we have specific opportunities and strengths.

To give just one example of that, I'll announce on Monday the location of our new national manufacturing institute. We know that advanced manufacturing offers big opportunities for businesses across Scotland, so we will ensure that companies in the sector have access to the specialised expertise and support they need to succeed.

Of course our commitment to innovation goes hand in hand with a focus on internationalisation.

That's an area where we have already had some significant successes.

The value of Scotland's international exports has increased by 2/5 in the last seven years.

That's good – we should celebrate it - but we know there is still much to do. As I have already said, Brexit – particularly a hard Brexit – presents a genuine danger to exporting businesses.

And even as things stand, more than half of all of Scotland's exports come from just 70 companies across our country. Every time I sight that statistic I'm struck by the challenge of that, but also by the enormous opportunity that that presents to broaden our export base and encourage more small and medium sized businesses in particular to think about international markets.

As Tim outlined, the Chambers network has an extremely important role to play. I've seen very recently – when I've spoken at major Chambers of Commerce events in Dublin and Gateshead – just how highly regarded the Scottish Chambers are by their partner organisations. And I know that that's not just true on these islands, but in towns and cities around the world.

When I spoke at this dinner last year, I announced Scottish Government funding to help the Scottish Chambers to develop better connections with overseas chambers.

It's fair to say you've done a huge amount with that funding. In fact, you've strengthened links with chambers in more than 20 different countries – I think that is absolutely fantastic progress – countries in Europe and right across the world, from Kenya to Canada. In China, for example, there is now a Scottish Chambers trade hub in Yantai, on the Yellow Sea coast.

And so two weeks ago, so pleased have we been at that progress, the Scottish Government announced further funding to help the chambers create local export partnerships across the country.

These partnerships will bring together Scottish Development International with local authorities and local support organisations.

They will offer support and expertise to companies – especially small and medium sized enterprises – which don't currently have experience of exporting. By doing so, they will play a vital role in helping us meet our overall aim of getting more and more businesses to internationalise.

And the partnerships, I think, are a further demonstration of the point I made at the outset. The Chambers of Commerce network makes a significant and positive difference to businesses the length and breadth of our country.

Locally you provide detailed support and advice for companies; nationally you provide a strong voice for business, often a challenging voice to government, as is rightfully the case; and internationally, your networks help to promote Scotland and Scottish products around the world.

So, as the Scottish Government seeks to build a fairer, more competitive, more internationalised economy in the years ahead, your contribution will, I am sure, become ever more important.

That's why we are so supportive of the work that you do; and it is why it is such an enormous pleasure for me to be with you this evening. So I hope you now do enjoy your dinner. Let me wish you a pleasant evening and if not too early let me also wish you the best of the festive season.

National Economic Forum (*disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/national-economic-forum-4>*)

First Minister

13 December 2017

We're gathered here at a really important time. Last Friday of course saw some progress in the Brexit negotiations – something I'll say more about in a moment.

Two days ago, I announced the location of the new National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland.

Today sees the first meeting of the new Strategic Board of the enterprise and skills agencies.

And of course tomorrow sees the publication of the Scottish Government's draft budget for the coming year.

That budget will set out our tax and spending decisions for the year ahead. I can't talk about it in detail this morning, but I can give you a flavour of the basic approach the government is taking.

Essentially, we are aiming to strike a balance in very difficult times.

We know we need to keep our income and business taxation rates competitive. So we will implement most of the recommendations of the Barclay review on business rates – something which has been widely welcomed by businesses across the country.

However at present, our block grant for day to day expenditure is decreasing in real terms, at the same time the need for investment is growing – whether that is investment in first class public services, a 21st century NHS at a time when the population is aging, a strong education system, vibrant universities; and of course in skills, city deals, housing, infrastructure, low carbon innovation, and research and development. All of the areas of investment that

businesses need to thrive. So we have to consider whether it is necessary, and indeed potentially beneficial, for us to increase the revenue we are able to raise and invest in building the kind of economy and society we want to see.

After all, those services I've mentioned are part of Scotland's overall offer to business – they are part of how we create both a good society and a competitive economy. Now, I don't expect that anybody in this room, or indeed anyone across the country, will agree with every single proposal unveiled in the budget tomorrow. But I hope when you see the detail of the budget you will agree that it seeks to strike the right balance – that it is aimed at making Scotland an even better place in which to live, study, work and invest.

In particular it will have a very firm focus on innovation and economic growth. I've said before that I want Scotland to lead technological change in the years ahead, not trail in its wake. We must aspire as a country to be the inventor and maker of the innovations of the future, not just a consumer of them.

And so today I want to set out some of the ways in which we are working with business to achieve that. I'll talk in particular – as you would expect, given the title of this conference – about how we are seeking to build a high technology, low carbon, inclusive economy.

But I will start – briefly, but almost inevitably, given the times we live in – with Brexit.

I welcome the progress that appears to have been made last Friday. For example the agreement to recognise the rights of EU citizens living here – although hugely overdue – is very welcome and will bring reassurance to those who suffered great anxiety over recent months.

However, reaching an agreement on the principles, not the details of exit – however tortuous that process may have appeared – will when looked back on in years to come will turn out to be the easy part of the process. The negotiations that will get underway over the course of next year about the future relationship between the UK and the European Union will of course be more challenging – considerably more challenging – than just agreeing the terms of the UK's exit.

Now, in my view and the view of the Scottish Government, many of those challenges that will be faced as those negotiations get underway, could be removed or at the very least mitigated if the UK government was to do what I think is overwhelmingly the sensible thing, which is to seek to stay within the single market and the customs union.

There are copies here today of the Scottish Government's recent publication "Brexit: What's at stake for businesses". That publication summarises the potential impact of Brexit on trade, staff recruitment and regulatory certainty.

And it illustrates again that – although all forms of Brexit are likely to be detrimental to business and the economy – a hard Brexit, which would see us not just outside the European Union but outside the customs union and the single market, is likely to be especially damaging.

So my hope as we go into the next phase of these talks is that the UK Government will voluntarily, or because it is forced into this position by votes in the House of Commons, end up in the position which should always have been their starting point which is seeking to stay in the single market and the customs union. Because that is, if not the best option, it is the least damaging option particularly for the economy.

It certainly is an option that would help to resolve difficulties in Ireland in terms of avoiding borders.

It also significantly reduces the economic harms of Brexit. And it perhaps provides some possibility of uniting different strands of opinion. It is after all the most obvious democratic compromise for a state where 48% of those who voted wanted to remain, and where two of the four countries that make up the UK voted to remain.

So staying in the single market and the customs union even as the UK leaves the EU, is in my view the best option that we could pursue. And that is the case that the Scottish Government has pursued and argued for over a year now will continue to do so.

But the other point I want to make – and I hope the rest of my remarks will demonstrate this – is that Brexit doesn't, and must not, distract from the other actions we take to support the economy. In fact if anything, Brexit heightens and underlines the importance of those other actions.

Our efforts to promote trade are a good example of that. We must work really hard to ensure that Scotland remains an open, outward-looking, internationalist country.

It's an area where we have had some successes in recent years. Scotland's exports have increased by two fifths in the last seven years. Some sectors- food and drink is a good example – have seen quite spectacular growth. That's good news to be celebrated but we must be frank with ourselves.

We still face some significant challenges. Brexit, of course is one. In addition, we know our export base is still far too narrow. I quite often cite the statistic that more than half of Scotland's exports right now are accounted for by just 70 companies across our country. What a massive opportunity this is to grow our export base. If we can get more businesses – particularly small and medium sized businesses – to start to look to overseas markets, with a relatively small increase in that number we could deliver significant benefits to our economy.

Last week I spoke at the annual dinner for the Scottish Chambers of Commerce – with support from the Scottish Government, they are doing some fantastic work on this very issue. In the last year they've helped to forge links with chambers in more than 20 different countries around the world.

These are important efforts and complement the work of our enterprise agencies. Since 2012, Scottish Development International has doubled the number of companies it helps to internationalise, and has increased its presence around the world.

In the last year, we have opened investment hubs in Dublin and London - giving us a stronger presence among our closest neighbours. We are now establishing hubs in Berlin and Paris. And the number of people who work across Europe for Scottish Development International will double. Regardless of the outcome of Brexit, we will intensify our efforts to promote Scottish businesses in Europe and around the world and help Scottish businesses to export and get that number I cited earlier to change markedly.

And of course that focus on internationalisation, is important in its own right but it has another benefit as well and it links to another of our key objectives. Companies that are active in the international field, companies that export are also companies that are more likely to innovate. They learn new ideas, adopt new technologies and grow in confidence and ambition. So internationalisation and innovation are absolutely closely linked.

Innovation will be a key theme of tomorrow's budget. It is vital to raising our productivity. And we know higher productivity is crucial to raising living standards for all.

The budget tomorrow will confirm increased investment on business research and development by 70% - from £22 million a year to £37 million next year. We expect that funding from government, in turn, enable a further £90 million of research spending from businesses.

We have announced our intention to set up a Scottish National Investment Bank. Benny Higgins is currently advising us on the best approach to establishing the bank. The Council of Economic Advisers has already highlighted the fact that investment banks are central to how many of our European neighbours support economic growth. This is an area which Derek McKay will talk more about tomorrow.

We're also paying particular attention to sectors of the economy where Scotland has specific strengths and opportunities.

We have funded innovation centres over the last three years – helping to bring universities and businesses together in areas like biotechnology, data science and digital health.

We are committing almost £90 million to the oil and gas technology centre. That centre, incidentally, is a good example of an area where we are working very well with the UK Government – that's an example of good joint working and we hope to do more of that in the context of the industrial strategy.

And on Monday, I announced that the Scottish Government would invest an additional £48 million to establish the new National Manufacturing Institute at Inchinnan, near Paisley. It's an area where Scotland has historic strengths, and massive opportunities in the future. Manufacturing is already hugely important in our economy and accounts for more than half of our exports, and more than half of our research and development. But there is massive opportunity for further growth. Often there is a perception now that manufacturing is a sector in decline. Nothing can be further from the truth. The opportunities in advanced manufacturing are massive and this new centre of excellence we will create will help us make sure that Scotland is at the leading edge and firmly on the map when it comes to what will be an increasingly important part of our economy.

And of course, in addition to the sectors I've already mentioned, there are a host of others. Life sciences employs nearly 40,000 people across the country. Sensor systems employ 16,000. We have significant opportunities in financial technology. Established sectors such as food and drink and tourism are flourishing right now, and have potential for even greater growth.

And one of our biggest opportunities – which is why it is a theme of today's forum – is the low carbon sector. We already have a well deserved global reputation for renewable technology. We are home to the world's first floating offshore windfarm, and the world's largest tidal array. We're developing an international reputation in sectors such as the circular economy, battery storage and smart grids.

The low carbon sector in Scotland already supports almost 60,000 jobs. That's one reason why we see economic, as well as environmental, benefits in our climate change targets, our forthcoming energy strategy and our commitment to make Scotland an early adopter of electric and ultra-low emission vehicles.

By setting clear ambitions, we believe we can encourage investment and innovation in technologies where we already have real strengths, and where we know there will be a global demand in the years to come.

There are two other points I want to make about innovation. The first is the importance of encouraging entrepreneurship. Something Scotland has been known for down the generations and we should be determined we will be known for in the future. That is also the subject of the Scotland CAN-DO workshop session later this morning.

Some of the most inspiring events I've been to, in the last couple of months, have been gatherings for entrepreneurs. The atmosphere at the start-up summit in Edinburgh last month was incredible – mainly because of the support that was on show, not solely or even primarily from government, but from mentors, investors and other businesses.

So we're determined to do more to help that entrepreneurial movement. To take just one example, tomorrow's budget will confirm investment in our Unlocking Ambition challenge. It will support up to 40 people from Scotland and around the world to come to Scotland to develop their world-changing ideas. It exemplifies – and publicises around the world – our determination to make Scotland the best place in the world to start a new company.

The second point I want to emphasise is that innovation isn't simply about new companies, new sectors or cutting-edge products.

All of us know that there are ambitious and successful companies in every sector of our economy and every part of the country. And of course there are also companies which might be doing fairly well at the moment, but which could still benefit from raising their sights that bit higher.

So we want to ensure that businesses are encouraged and enabled to adopt new technologies, techniques and processes. That's something which will potentially have a massive impact on our productivity.

There's a parallel with the point I was making earlier about internationalisation, and the need to widen our export base – our approach can't just be about helping a relatively small number of companies, it must be about encouraging and enabling small and medium sized businesses right across the country.

Now, without wanting to put too much pressure on Nora for her remarks, the role of the new strategic board for enterprise and skills is hugely important in all of this.

I talked about our budget choices earlier. In Scotland we already spend more than £2 billion a year on enterprise and skills. We actually spend around £100 per head more on enterprise and economic development than the rest of the UK.

That support is worthwhile. It helps us deliver successes in a whole range of areas.

But that level of spending means that every penny of our support has to count. That's why I am delighted that we've been able to appoint people with such a breadth of expertise to the strategic board. We need to make sure our public spending is having the biggest possible impact on jobs, innovation and productivity.

The final point I want to make is that as we build this high technology, low carbon economy, we have to make sure that it is an inclusive economy.

That is important in and of itself – it's right that economic growth should contribute to the health, happiness and wellbeing of everybody in the country.

But it is also important economically. It stands to reason that we are all better off, if everybody has a fair chance to contribute their skills, talents and energy to our society. And economic growth anywhere will be stronger and more sustainable if it is broadly based.

That's why some of our most important economic investments are our support for childcare, for closing the attainment gap in schools and for skills. These are often seen as social investments and in many ways they are. But good childcare is as much an investment in our economy as it is in our society.

That's also why we place such an emphasis on fair work. Businesses are more productive when employees are engaged and fairly rewarded.

And it's why we ensure that infrastructure investment is distributed across the country. The last few months have seen important developments here in central Scotland – such as the opening of the Queensferry Crossing and the improvements to the motorway network. The first electric trains started running on the Glasgow to Edinburgh line on Sunday.

But these investments are matched by others around the country – the dualling of the A9 and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Just last week, ground investigations began for the Maybole bypass – a really important improvement to the A77 down to Stranraer.

Our investment in broadband is perhaps an even better example. By the end of this year, 95% of properties across Scotland will have access to fibre broadband. And we are currently the only part of the United Kingdom which has a clear commitment to deliver superfast broadband to 100% of premises by the end of this session of parliament. In the budget tomorrow the Finance Secretary will set out the next steps in that process and also the scale of investment that will be made by the government to support it.

That's because broadband in this day and age is critical to every community including our remote and rural communities. And it also reflects that broader philosophy. All people, should have a fair chance to contribute to our economic growth.

That ability to help people to contribute to the economy is central to the thinking behind the budget tomorrow. We know that we need to ensuring that taxes are fair and competitive. But we also need to invest in the infrastructure, the research and development, and the capacity for innovation that we know the economy needs to thrive in the future.

That's the balance we are looking to strike – not just tomorrow but well into the future. I said earlier that nobody will agree with everything in the budget – that's not how tough budgets work. But I do hope you will be able to see that the interests of businesses, and the importance of growing our economy, have been absolutely central in every stage of our thinking.

They will continue to be central as we implement the budget. That's one reason why forums like this are so important. It enables us to hear directly from you what we need to be doing to pursue and meet those objectives I've set out.

Thank you for being here today and participating in these discussions.

[Hampton-Alexander Review business briefing \(disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/hampton-alexander-review-business-briefing\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/hampton-alexander-review-business-briefing)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

11 January 2018

I want to start by paying tribute to the late Dame Helen Alexander. Dame Helen was of course a hugely successful businesswoman in many different roles – including as Chief Executive of the Economist Group, as the Chair of UBM, and as the first ever female president of the CBI.

She was also a strong champion of diversity in companies, and a role model for many women in business.

The diligence and rigour of the Hampton-Alexander report – and because of that, the impact it is having – is in itself a testament to her influence, and also, of course, that of Sir Philip. I am delighted that he is here this evening.

Now, the case for gender equality on boards is an overwhelming one. Firstly, there is a basic moral issue at stake. It can't possibly be right that women, who make up half of the population, make up just over a quarter of board positions. That injustice on its own should drive action by government and by business.

However there is also an important economic point. It stands to reason that we will do less well as a country, if we systematically underuse, ignore or discriminate against the talents of half of our population. Yet that is what we have been doing for countless generations

The Hampton-Alexander review shows why this matters for individual businesses. It brings together and highlights the evidence that “*diverse teams produce better results*”, and that “*women often represent a valuable and under-utilised talent pool*”. It helps to reinforce the fact that gender inequality isn't simply immoral – although it is – it is also economically damaging.

So improving women's participation – not simply at board level, but across the economy as a whole – must be a priority for all of us. And it's an area where I believe it is important we should acknowledge the important progress that has been made

As recently as 2011, if you looked at the boards of companies on the FTSE-100, only 1 in 8 members was a woman. Now, the proportion is above 1 in 4. In 2011, 20 companies in the FTSE-100 had no female board members at all. Now, that figure is zero.

And the progress report for the Hampton Review which was published two months ago included some hugely positive stories of companies which are becoming better businesses by making changes – sometimes quite straightforward ones – which have significantly improved the diversity of their boards.

I understand that at least 5 of the companies highlighted in the report - Bar Systems, Lloyds Banking, Sainsbury's, Senior PLC, and Virgin – are here this evening. I'm glad they - amongst the many other companies who are here tonight - have been able to recognise the benefits of gender equality and have taken steps toward making it a reality.

But we know that we still need to do far more. 1 in 4 board members is certainly better than 1 in 8, but it is not nearly enough.

And although I've emphasised some of the good news contained in last November's progress report, some of its statistics were actually quite concerning. For example, the progress we saw between 2011 and 2016 seems to have slowed down or even stalled in the last year.

So instead of progressing to equal representation, there is a danger that without a renewed impetus and continued momentum, by 2020 we could still have a situation where fewer than a third of board members are women.

And there also remains a significant under-representation of women on executive committees, and among people who are directly managed by executive committee members. Across the FTSE-100, less than a fifth of Executive board members are women. And if you look at the FTSE-250, the proportion is less than a sixth. So clearly that isn't enough and we need to do even more.

We don't just need women on boards, we need women at all levels in every business. One of the realities that many companies will often cite to me is that unless we see women at all levels of the economy, getting that representation on boards will continue to be challenging.

My message this evening is twofold. Firstly, to celebrate the progress made, and we mustn't lose sight of that. And also to urge greater progress and ensure all of us do not take the foot off the pedal.

The Scottish Government is determined to work with businesses, supporting them in whatever way we can to take action.

Now of course, no element of gender inequality exists in isolation. The lack of women on boards is a symptom, as well as being a cause, of wider gender inequality.

So I am very conscious of the need to take steps to promote gender equality across all of society more generally – such as tackling violence against women both through legislation and changing culture; it's important to addressing gender stereotyping, in both directions.

We also must invest in childcare, which we must see not any longer as just a social issue but a core economic issue. Good quality childcare is part of the essential infrastructure of a country. It's as important to parents, and women in particular, when it comes to getting to work in the morning – just in the way good transport links are. So we must see these kinds of issues as central to what we are trying to achieve.

I recently appointed a new advisory council on women and girls, bringing women and girls from a broad spectrum of society together to further advise me and my government on what steps we can take to support greater gender equality, and support action to make the environment easier for businesses to take the steps we are asking of you.

We are also taking very specific steps to promote equality in business and across the economy. Our 50/50 by 2020 campaign encourages organisations and businesses to achieve gender balanced boards by the end of the decade.

I know businesses feel they would like to have 50/50 representation, but if you commit to even 40% then we can get to that goal as a result. In Scotland we have more than 200 organisations have already signed up - including Virgin Money, Alliance Trust, National Theatres Scotland and many more.

We're also taking some practical steps to help deal with the barriers achieving equality. We have established a returner's programme to help women to re-enter the workplace following a career break. That helps to address one of the key barriers that women face as they make progress throughout their careers.

We're encouraging more women to set up and run their own businesses and to become entrepreneurs. This is a statistic that I cite often as I think it does a lot to illustrate the point I made earlier – that we need greater representation of women to support our economy.

The statistic is this: If as many businesses in Scotland were owned by women, as are currently owned by men, it could boost our GDP by 5% - creating new jobs and opportunities across the country. So that brings home the economic consequences of what we are talking about.

And I am determined, as First Minister, that as well as asking all of you to do the right thing, my government has a duty to lead by example. One of my first actions as First Minister I decided to appoint a gender balanced cabinet - something I am disappointed the Prime Minister did not take the opportunity to do earlier this week.

After I appointed a cabinet that was equally balanced with men and women I received some messages that were really quite eye opening. I received emails and letters, including from women – and many were very positive – but many asked how I could know whether all the

woman in my cabinet where there on merit. I didn't get a single letter asking me how I knew all of the men were there on merit. And that I suppose illustrates a key point.

Women, as we all know, make up around 50% of the population. So unless you take the view that women are somehow inherently less able than men, the alarm bells about merit should be ringing when boards and workforces are not gender balanced. That is a point I think we must never forget.

As well as within the cabinet, the Scottish Government is also trying to lead by example when it comes to public sector boards, demonstrating that it is possible to try and form gender balanced boards. Not overnight, but over a reasonable time.

When I became First Minister in November 2014, the proportion of women on those boards stood at just over 38%. Now, it is almost 46%. Last year, 59% of new board appointments were women, and by 2020 all public boards will be 50/50.

This demonstrates that progress can be made reasonably quickly. And that's why we have legislated to introduce the Gender Representation on Public Boards Bill.

If I am going to ask businesses to try and achieve this on company boards, I think we have a duty to show it can be achieved on public boards. And that is why it is important that we continue to see momentum and the kind of progress that we have seen in the last few years.

Just as I conclude my remarks I want to end by being optimistic. I actually feel that not just on equal representation on boards but across the whole spectrum of issues where we still have gender inequality, I believe that now in 2018 we are potentially at a tipping point moment. If we can keep the momentum then we could see progress across a range of issues that see long standing inequalities resolved.

It's worth just thinking about some of the things that have happened over the last year alone. That includes the solidarity shown by actresses at the Golden Globe awards in the face of the sexual harassment allegations that have been seen in recent months; the resignation of a member of UK Government's Office for students because of the language he had used – including language that diminished women on social media; and the outpouring of support shown following the resignation of Carrie Gracie as the BBC's China editor due to unequal pay.

These are all very different examples and people will have different views on some of them, but I think they do tell us that there is greater transparency and scrutiny than ever before – not simply about sexist comments or conduct, but about institutional behaviours over board appointments and pay structures – and this can be a powerful agent for change.

And that transparency does and can pay off. In recent months, the publication of information about pay differentials between men and women has rightly provoked significant public concern. It has also given women the information they need to argue for equality, and - if we are honest – to embarrass some businesses into action.

In addition, the public's willingness to tolerate or accept gender inequality has probably never been lower. Women and men, to their great credit, are speaking out about unacceptable and discriminatory attitudes in society at all levels - and the reputational damage which can result from continuing to promote unequal practices has never been higher.

In my view there are now great risks for any organisation – certainly including businesses, but also of course including political parties and others – if they act too slowly to support diversity and equality.

There are also huge opportunities if they act quicker. If we can seize this moment we can secure significant advances towards gender equality in the years ahead. I think we can achieve that increased pace in the years to come.

2018 will see the centenary of women's suffrage in the UK. There will be many commemorations of that anniversary throughout the year. But by far the best way of remembering the advances in women's rights gained by earlier generations, would be to take further concrete steps this year, to secure genuine and lasting gender equality throughout the country.

Just as our generation of women owe a huge debt of gratitude to the suffragettes for the rights we today take for granted, I think our generation of women have a responsibility to win the outstanding battles so the next generations doesn't have to fight them.

The day I became First Minister I was with my then eight year old niece who was watching for the public gallery at Parliament. I said that I wanted, in whatever small way I could to use the influence I had as First Minister to make sure we are building a world for her and her generation where things like the gender pay gap, and inequality on boards, are battles they don't have to face as they have already been won. We are in touching distance of doing that, but to achieve that we must continue to make the progress we have made so far.

The Scottish Government is determined to play our part in achieving that. We know that many businesses are too – in fact, the attendance here this evening demonstrates that. You understand – as the Hampton-Alexander Review highlights so well - that more equal representation for women isn't just the right thing for society as a whole, although it is, it will also improve your businesses and benefit your bottom line, making our country stronger and more fairer as well.

So I look forward to working with all of you in the months and years ahead. If we can make greater equality in the boardroom a reality, this can help the wider progress we need to see.

Scotland's Place in Europe: People, Jobs and Investment (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-place-in-europe-people-jobs-and-investment>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

15 January 2018

A warm welcome to all of you.

It is a pleasure to be here in one of Scotland's world-class universities.

Of course this month marks the 45th anniversary of the UK's membership of the European Union.

Of course the EU is not a perfect organisation by any means but it has undoubtedly helped to preserve peace on our continent, and its member states benefit from being part of the world's largest economy.

The Scottish Government believes very strongly that the best option for Scotland, and indeed for the UK as a whole, is to remain within the European Union.

Indeed, that is what 62 per cent of people in Scotland voted for in the referendum in 2016.

But we recognise we must also be pragmatic and it is our duty to seek to protect Scotland's interests in all circumstances.

That is why just over a year ago we published *Scotland's Place in Europe*, setting out a compromise proposal of retaining membership of the European single market.

With the next phase of talks to determine the future relationship between the EU and the UK due to begin in the next few weeks, it is time now to make that case for continued membership of the single market even more loudly than before.

Today we do exactly that, backed by new evidence of the importance of single market membership to our economic and social prospects.

The first phase of the talks between the EU and UK – which let's remember was meant to be the easy part - ended, after months of wrangling, only when the UK effectively agreed to all of the positions set out by the European Union at the very start of the process.

I think there is an important lesson to be learned here as we enter the talks on the future relationship - the UK Government mustn't waste time in this next phase, seeking what they know to be unachievable. Common sense and hard headed economic considerations should prevail from the start this time.

What the modelling in this paper that we are publishing shows, beyond any doubt, is that if the economy, living standards and investment are our priorities, staying within the single market is absolutely essential to minimise the damage of leaving the EU.

The analysis that we publish today is more detailed and extensive than anything so far provided by the UK Government. And that in itself speaks volumes about their reckless and irresponsible approach.

This paper looks at the only three realistic outcomes of Brexit.

These are, firstly, staying in the single market.

Second, concluding a free trade agreement similar to that between the EU and Canada.

And, third, reverting to World Trade Organisations terms - the so-called 'no deal' option.

Our modelling takes account of the impact on trade, productivity and migration of each of these possible future relationships.

Let me be very clear - this analysis shows that none of these options are as good as staying within the EU. Our economy will take a hit under all of them.

However, the least damaging option, by far, is staying in the single market.

Let me outline, as briefly as possible, with apologies for the flurry of statistics you are about now to receive, the key implications for our economy by 2030 of each of these options compared to what the situation would be if we stayed in the EU.

Under the so-called 'no deal' option - a WTO based relationship - our GDP will be 8.5% lower by 2030 than if we were to remain in the EU .

That is equivalent to £12.7 billion or £2300 for every person in Scotland. Under this option, real disposable income would also be 9.6% lower and business investment 10.2% lower.

Under the option of a free trade agreement, GDP would be just over 6.1% lower - equivalent to £9 billion or £1600 for every single one of us in Scotland. Real disposable income would be over 7.4% lower and business investment lower by almost 8%.

And staying in the single market, compared to full EU membership, would reduce GDP by 2.7% - that's equivalent to £4 billion or just under £700 per head of population. Under this option, real disposable income would be 1.4% lower and business investment lower by just under 3% than if we were to stay in the EU.

So it is clear from these figures that staying in the single market does not insulate us from the costs of leaving the EU - but it will minimise those costs.

Indeed, compared to a hard Brexit, staying in the single market will benefit us to the tune of £1600 per head. £1600 for every person in Scotland.

Now much of the Brexit debate so far has understandably focused on the prospects for trade. But within Scotland we know that it is our need to grow our population and improve productivity that are most often cited in our current economic debates.

Indeed, these factors featured prominently in the Scottish Fiscal Commission's recent growth forecasts published alongside our draft budget.

So it is striking that when you read the details of the analysis we published today that it shows that the economic hit we will take comes not just from a loss in trade, but actually more so especially in the longer term, from losses in productivity and population - the very things we need to improve on if we are to boost growth, jobs and living standards.

So the evidence we present today is clear. The best way to minimise the economic damage of Brexit is to stay inside the Single Market.

It is also in my view the best way to safeguard workers' rights and the social, consumer and environmental protections that we have come to take for granted.

Of course, so far I have talked about the benefits of staying in the single market as it is just now.

But the single market is not yet complete.

The paper also sets out the future opportunities of continued membership for services, energy and the digital economy in particular.

It seems inconceivable that while 30 countries of the European Economic Area, and those still to join, will enjoy the benefits of that growth while we will be left outside.

Indeed, that is particularly frustrating a prospect as Scotland is very well-placed to take advantage of the developing and deepening Single Market.

Our world-class universities, our potential in renewable energy, our life sciences, our digital sector and other key areas of the Scottish economy are all in prime position to reap the rewards of these developments.

And that would mean more jobs and higher wages.

So it would be a tragedy for future generations if we let that opportunity pass us by.

In services, for example, where both Scotland and the UK as a whole have a comparative advantage, the long-term potential gain from completing the single market is estimated to be of the order of 2.4 per cent of EU GDP.

A boost of national income of that size in Scotland would be equivalent to £3.6 billion, or almost £700 per person.

Enhancements to the Digital Single Market could mean a further increase in EU GDP of nearly 2%.

For Scotland, that would be equivalent to almost £3 billion, or over £500 per person.

So this paper sets out the positive case, and the significant economic benefit for Scotland, if we retain our place in the Single Market, compared with all of the other Brexit options.

And finally, before I hand you over to Michael, the paper looks at the issue of migration, which I recognise is not always an easy subject for politicians.

The paper briefly explains free movement in the EU context - what it does and does not mean, its restrictions as well as its entitlements.

But more importantly it sets out why our continued ability to attract EU nationals to live and work here is so essential to our future economic prosperity.

Growing our population, and particularly our working age population, is perhaps the greatest national challenge that we face.

Over the past 15 years, EU migration has helped to turn around the long term decline in Scotland's population and mitigate the impact of an ageing society.

But we still face a big demographic challenge. Over the next 25 years, our own projected birth rate will not be sufficient to grow our population.

In the period to 2041, all of our projected population growth will come from inward migration. Without that, our population could go into decline and with it our ability to grow our economy and fund our public services.

So that would be the stark reality for Scotland of a restriction in our ability to attract people to our country.

And that is why, as First Minister, I have a duty to make the case for free movement no matter how difficult that is sometimes perceived to be.

Of course, the opposition to free movement on the part of some people is often based on the view that migrants are somehow a burden and that could not be further from the truth.

The contribution of our fellow EU citizens is far more than just economic. Those who do us the honour of making Scotland their home make our country stronger in so many ways.

But the economic benefits are clear and this paper sets them out.

For example it finds that each EU citizen contributes, on average, £10,400 in tax revenues.

That is tax revenue that helps fund our NHS and our other public services.

So in short, free movement should not be a barrier to staying in the single market - on the contrary, our demographic challenge makes it all the more important that we do so.

So in conclusion, this paper provides a far more comprehensive assessment of the different post Brexit options than anything so far offered by the UK Government.

It demonstrates beyond doubt that if Brexit is to proceed, then staying in the single market is the only option that makes sense.

Over the coming weeks and months the Scottish Government stands ready to work with others to minimise the damage of Brexit.

We will continue, as we have been doing, to reach out and engage with businesses, civic organisations, other political parties and government administrations, and with people across Scotland, the UK and the rest of Europe.

The weight of evidence in favour of staying in the Single Market is compelling - and I believe there is a majority there to be harnessed that can achieve at least that outcome.

So I hope that the UK Government will now start to listen to this evidence.

Scotland's Disabled People's Annual Summit (*disponible* à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-disabled-peoples-annual-summit>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

16 January 2017

Events like this one are good opportunities to highlight and discuss the issues that matter most to disabled people. They're also a good opportunity to recognise the important role that

Inclusion Scotland plays – ensuring that the views of disabled people are heard loudly; and that they are able to inform and help develop the policies that affect them most.

The Scottish Government, and I want to put this very firmly on record today, highly values the work that Inclusion Scotland does. And in partnership, over the past few years, I think we have been able to make a real difference to the lives of disabled people across Scotland. We recognise we have more work to do, but I think we can be proud of the work that we have done jointly together.

For example, we've been able to identify and then go some considerable way to mitigating many of the effects of the UK Government's welfare reform programme, particularly the impact that has on people with disabilities. The Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities described these welfare changes as, 'a human catastrophe', and that's not something in Scotland that we're prepared to stand on the side-lines and do nothing about, so we've taken a range of actions to mitigate the impact of those cuts. For example, we know that the 'bedroom tax' – a piece of legislation that we will overturn as soon as we have the ability to do so - disproportionately affects disabled people in Scotland so we invest almost £50 million every year, making sure nobody has to pay the 'bedroom tax'. That's just one example of the mitigation efforts that we are making.

In addition to that, we've established our own Independent Living Fund, to replace the one that was shut down by the UK Government.

Over the past several years, we have worked to redefine social care in Scotland by implementing self-directed support. By doing so, we've given disabled people, their carers, and their families more choice and more control over their own lives.

We have also created a comprehensive Delivery Plan to help Scotland meet the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I think it should be a source of pride and satisfaction to all of us that in its most recent report, the UN Committee actually recognised Scotland's distinctive approach to protecting the rights – and also improving the lives – of people with disabilities.

So I think it is reasonable for us to say that by working together we have taken some important steps and can be proud of that, but the main topic of discussion I'm sure for all of you today, and the substance of my remarks, is focussing on what more we need to do because we have got work still to do. The Delivery Plan sets that out very clearly. This forum and all of our discussions should be very much focussed on how we go further to bring about fundamental change.

As all of you know, just around 43% of disabled people in Scotland are in work. For the rest of the population, that figure stands at around 80%. That very clearly illustrates the work we still have to do.

Now we know that, due to individual circumstances – work is not always a possibility – or always a desirable option – for every person with a disability. But we also know that far too many disabled people are being denied a route into work, or they lack the support they need to take up employment opportunities, and that is what we have a duty to tackle.

We know that there are many underlying reasons for that. As a society I think we too often we focus on what disabled people cannot do rather than focussing on what they can do. As a result, some disabled people can lack the confidence they need to pursue employment. We also know that some employers – consciously or perhaps more often subconsciously – can be biased against having disabled people working for them. And even when disabled people are in employment, they can find it hard to declare their impairment – due to a fear of stigma or rejection. So all of that can mean that getting a job, holding down a job – and thriving and

progressing at work – is much more difficult, or can be much more difficult for people with disabilities than it is for others.

The consequences of that are clear. First and foremost, it means that too many disabled people are unable to fully contribute their talents and their abilities, and that means that all of us lose out. This is an important point. If we have a society or an economy where some people face barriers to contributing their talents then we all lose out, not just the individuals who face those barriers. People with disabilities also miss out on the economic benefits of employment – as well as the potential boost that we all get from employment to our independence and sense of self-esteem.

So all of that, I would say, is unacceptable from a moral perspective. But it also has very serious implications for our economy and our society, more broadly.

No country, whether it's Scotland or any other country, can afford to neglect or underuse the talents of so many of its people. The evidence is clear that increasing the number of disabled people in work - and therefore expanding our labour market – will help to support greater economic growth and output overall, and it helps to ensure that the prosperity of our country is shared more equally – reducing inequality, exclusion and social deprivation.

So what we are talking about today is important for individuals, it's important for all of you and for others all across Scotland, but the important collective point I want to make is this one – it's important for all of us. This is a shared responsibility because it is for the good of our society overall if we ensure that those with disabilities have the same opportunities as the rest of the population.

So for all of those reasons, and I'm sure many more, halving the employment gap between disabled people and non-disabled people is a key commitment of our Delivery Plan that I've already referred to, alongside consulting with disabled people's organisations and the public sector on setting targets to redress the imbalance of disabled people in our public sector workforce.

We have set out a range of actions to help achieve this.

Our commitment to improve access to Modern Apprenticeships is a good example. In the past year, the proportion of disabled people or people with a long term health condition who started a modern apprenticeship has doubled.

We've also provided Inclusion Scotland with the funding to build on their own internship programme for disabled people. By 2021, that programme alone will deliver 120 placements at public and third sector organisations – including the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament.

Alongside that, our Access to Elected Office Fund has supported 30 disabled candidates to run for public office. Fifteen of those candidates were actually elected – proving that politics and government should be open to anyone who has the dedication, talent and determination. And again this is an important point in principle – whether it's equality for women or equality for the LGBTI community, or equality for those with disabilities, we're more likely to achieve that faster if the councils and the governments and the other bodies taking the decisions are themselves reflective of the population that they serve, so initiatives like the Elected Office Fund are really important in trying to bring that about.

Another initiative I wanted to mention was our new devolved employability service which from April of this year will go live – Fair Start Scotland. We recognise very centrally the impact of empowering people rather than threatening people with sanctions – so those participating in this service will do so by choice and not through fear that not doing so will affect their existing benefits. I'm completely opposed to the punitive sanctions regime that

currently characterises the welfare system and as we build our own employability and welfare services I don't want that punitive approach to play any part in it.

For those who choose to be involved in that scheme, it will offer a personalised, tailored service – including pre-employment support, and opportunities for in-work support.

A really important point in all of this is that the views of disabled people's organisations have played an important role in shaping Fair Start Scotland. That's taken place through engagement events; the formal consultation exercise; and forums like the Devolved Employment Services Advisory Group – which I'm pleased to say Sally from Inclusion Scotland is part of.

We absolutely recognise that the people who know best how to improve services are always those who have direct experience of them. That doesn't just apply to people with disabilities, that applies right across the board. You will get a better outcome from any process if you involve from the start those who have direct experience.

That principle underlines our entire approach to building our new social security system. We are determined to create services that help people; services that value and take account of people's individual needs and circumstances; and which above all else treat people with dignity and respect.

Now I've spoken about some of the ways in which we're looking to support disabled people into work. However, your theme for today – 'Employer-ability' – identifies another key challenge that we know we need to address.

Support for disabled people is important – but we also need to ensure that employers are ready to play their part. That means ensuring they have the understanding, the information and the support that they need to be successful employers of disabled people.

Last July, the Scottish Government launched a 4 week engagement and marketing campaign aimed at highlighting to employers the benefits of hiring disabled staff. The campaign also involved providing advice and support particularly to small and medium-sized companies across the country.

I think that was a good start, but here we readily acknowledge we need to do more – and actually in this area I think we need to do a lot more.

That's why in March, we will hold a major Congress on disability, employment and the workplace. To help shape the focus and agenda for the Congress, we've held events across the country – in Glasgow, Dundee and Inverness – involving representatives from disabled people's organisations, local government and the third sector.

Today's Summit and the discussions that you have will also be able to play a big part in setting the agenda for that Congress. So it's really helpful and welcome that today's seminars cover each stage of the employment process - from getting ready for work; getting in to work; staying in work; and finally, getting on in work. I'm very much looking forward to hearing the detail and the outcomes of these discussions, and making sure that we act on them through the Congress and beyond.

After all, your experiences, your expertise and your ideas are probably the most important asset that we have when it comes to improving the lives and the experiences of disabled people. The work that you do – in highlighting key issues, mobilising public opinion, putting pressure on government and crucially also helping us identify the solutions – all of that will help us to address these challenges, build on the progress we've made and ultimately make Scotland a better country, not just for people with disabilities but for everybody who lives here.

So I want to end by thanking you, thanking you on behalf of the government, but beyond that by thanking you on behalf of all of the people of our country. By working together, so far we have been able to achieve a lot. If we continue to work together we can achieve so much more, and we know the need to do that.

As First Minister one of the reasons I wanted to be here today was to give you my personal commitment on behalf of the whole government that we will continue to work in close partnership with all of you.

These partnerships between government and organisations and individuals like this one doesn't mean we always agree on absolutely everything. There'll always be areas where you disagree with government policy or you want us to go further and faster. That is in the nature of democracy, but by working together I think we've proven that we can make a difference, so my personal commitment to you today is that we are committed to continuing to do that – to listen, to act and to collectively do what we need to do to make Scotland the best possible place to be if you live with a disability. That we can not just uphold but advance the rights of disabled people and we can continue to make sure that in actions not just in words and rhetoric we continue to build a Scotland that is more inclusive, more prosperous and more equal society. That is the aim that I have every day as First Minister, and working with you we can help to deliver that.

Scotland after Brexit (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotland-after-brexit>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

David Hume Institute

16 January 2018

Thank you, Jane-Francis (Kelly). It's a pleasure to be here again.

The meet the leaders session has become a new year tradition – it's almost becoming part of the winter festival programme. This series of events is a really good and powerful demonstration of the institute's role in leading and informing public debate in Scotland. I greatly value – as I am sure all the party leaders do – this opportunity highly because it is an opportunity to discuss with you some of the key issues facing Scotland now and in the future.

All of the leaders this year have been asked to speak about Brexit specifically. In doing that, the second half of my speech I will focus on an issue I was talking about yesterday and that is the issue of migration – an issue which is of considerable importance to Scotland, and one where Brexit presents us with very distinct challenges which, to my mind, require some distinct solutions.

Before I turn to that, I thought it would be useful to give a brief overview of where I think the Brexit process is now – and give you my views and what the Scottish Government's priorities for seeking to influence that process as best we can in the year ahead.

Next week marks five years since David Cameron delivered the speech in which he committed to having a referendum on EU membership. Perhaps one of the most significant and fateful political speeches in the UK's recent history. He made that speech at the Bloomberg offices in London and announced that if the Conservative party won the 2015 general election, he intended to hold a referendum on EU membership.

In that speech he set out his belief that "Britain's national interest is best served in a flexible, adaptable and open European Union, and that such a European Union is best with Britain in it". Of course the eventual consequences of that speech, as we now know, turned out to be the exact opposite of what he intended.

Today we stand just 14 months away from the date when the UK is set to leave the EU. Let me be clear, I still don't want Scotland, or the UK, to leave the EU – my preference is, and will continue to be, for Brexit not to happen. My preference is for Scotland to be an independent member state of the EU. I think that would serve our interests best.

However, as First Minister of Scotland, I have a duty to do all I can to protect Scotland's interests in all circumstances. Tonight I want to concentrate on how we are seeking to influence the situation now and how we will do that in the crucial week and months that lie ahead in order to help shape the best possible outcome for not just Scotland, but the UK as a whole.

I've got to be frank with you in saying how disturbing I think it is that just 14 months away from the planned exit from the European Union, the UK government's plans still seem to be – and I am putting this as mildly as I can – in a state of chaos.

That's partly, I think, because there still seems to be a wilful denial of the complexities that are associated with Brexit. The leader of the House of Commons said last week that "It will be easy for the EU and the UK to agree to continue to do things with...zero non-tariff barriers". That's not a statement which has any roots in reality. Avoiding non-tariff barriers, which I'm sure everyone wants to do – requires agreement on harmonised regulations and a whole range of other matters – it is not something which will be easy to agree. In fact the trade deal between the EU and Canada took almost a decade to negotiate.

The Prime Minister, meanwhile, continues to suggest that no deal is a viable option for the UK – without acknowledging that no deal is, almost by definition, a terrible deal for the UK. My very simple view is that no Brexit has to be preferable to no deal.

And the UK Government, perhaps most fundamentally of all, is still delaying setting out a clear proposition on the big issue it faces or what the end relationship is that it is seeking to negotiate. Everybody knows that, as in any negotiation, there will require to be trade offs – for example, between abiding by European regulations in order to gain access to the single market on the one hand, and on the other hand having the freedom and flexibility to negotiate separate trade deals outside of the EU.

In fact, the UK Cabinet has scarcely even begun to discuss some of these issues, let alone agree or articulate a clear position on them. Instead, we are still told that the UK can have everything it wants – regulatory flexibility, the freedom to strike trade deals with other countries and the full benefits of the single market – despite all of the evidence to the contrary.

So I think 2018 – a crucial year in so many different respects – is going to be inevitably the year that rhetoric finally meets reality. And when we look back over the last six months of last year, what we saw was that on every issue of substance where agreement in the first phase of negotiations had to be reached – for example the timetable for talks, on much of the situation around EU citizens or on settling the UK's budget obligations – the UK Government started with a completely unrealistic position, and then on all of these issues was forced to capitulate and finally agree position that had been the starting point of the EU all along.

That is almost certain to happen all over again if the plan is to stick to unrealistic positions. Far better, surely, to stop wasting time and to stop squandering goodwill and instead embark on this next phase of negotiations with a sensible and credible position at the outset.

In my view and the view of the Scottish Government, the only sensible post Brexit position for the UK is continued membership of the Single Market and Customs Union.

Let me be clear, I don't think that is a perfect position – it is not as good as membership of the EU. The EU is not a perfect institution – it has many flaws but I think our interests are best

served being in rather than out. Being in something short of that is not the perfect position but being in the Single Market is far preferable to any of the quite limited number of alternative future relationships.

In my view – and of course you won't be surprised to hear me say this – every month that has passed since the referendum has borne out the logic of that position. If the UK leaves the EU, the least damaging way of doing so is to retain membership of the Single Market and Customs Union.

The economic importance of that was highlighted in the paper the Scottish Government published yesterday. Yesterday we published the most extensive economic modeling of the potential future relationships that has been done by anybody so far, which perhaps speaks volumes in itself about the approach the UK government has taken. They have yet to publish modeling and impact assessment of that nature of their own.

The modeling that we published yesterday shows very clearly that, although all forms of Brexit are likely to harm our economy in some way – for example reducing our exports to the UK's largest market but also by extension reduce our productivity and over the longer term restrict our ability to attract talent to our country. So all of our future options will do some damage to our economy. There is no doubt that harder Brexit will cause significantly greater damage. Our modelling looks at what are, probably the only three realistic options when the UK leaves the EU for the future relationship. They are the so called no deal option where the UK reverts to World Trade Organisation terms. Secondly, there's the option which the UK government says is its favoured option – the negotiation of a free trade agreement, perhaps similar to the one with Canada with bits added on to it. Or thirdly, Single Market and Customs Union membership.

What the evidence we published yesterday shows is that the no deal outcome will cost our economy by 2030 around £2300 per head of population, compared to what our economy would do if we stayed in the EU. With a free trade agreement the loss in GDP will be around £1600 per head. And if we stay in the single market, that loss will be around £700 per head.

So, there is no cost free option to leaving the EU – but staying in the single market minimises the damage and that surely must be a priority for all of us.

There is also, in addition to the economic argument, to my mind, a fundamental democratic point here. The EU referendum gave no clear mandate for leaving the single market – in fact, during the campaign leave campaigners were often very confused among themselves about this issue of the Single Market.

So the idea that leaving the EU requires us to leave the Single Market is simply an assertion. It is an interpretation of the referendum result, I don't think it is more than that.

And actually, given the closeness of the EU referendum result across the UK – And indeed the fact that two of the four nations in the UK actually voted to stay in the EU – surely a soft Brexit, rather than a hard Brexit, should be the default position?

Single market membership isn't just the best way of minimising the economic harm of Brexit; it is the obvious democratic compromise in a UK where opinion on this issue is deeply divided.

So my priority for the year ahead in terms of trying to influence the UK's approach to this is to make the case for Single Market and Customs Union membership.

I believe that is a position which can and should command majority support both across the country and in the UK parliament. As First Minister and as leader of my party, I will try to work with anyone and everyone – across the political spectrum and across the UK generally –

to contribute towards what I think is not the best option for the UK but the least worst option if the UK is intent on leaving the EU.

The duty to proceed in a way that respects the views of all parts of the UK is also relevant to the current debate over the EU Withdrawal Bill. That bill is back in the House of Commons this evening before it goes next to the House of Lords.

That bill is important – it is a highly technical piece of legislation but it is an important one. It is currently the subject of discussions between the devolved governments and the UK Government. Both the Welsh and the Scottish governments have indicated that in its current form we couldn't recommend to our respective parliaments that they approve that bill. It is subject to the legislative consent process.

Now I should be clear that we as the Scottish Government, although we oppose Brexit, we accept the basic intention behind the bill. If the UK is to leave the EU, no matter how regrettable that is, there has to be a legal mechanism which allows EU law to be carried over into English and Scottish law at the point of Brexit.

However, the way in which the UK Government has chosen to enact the bill runs completely counter to the basic principles of devolution. In particular, clause 11 of the bill prevents the Scottish Parliament, post Brexit, from making any changes to devolved areas, such as justice or agriculture, if those changes would not have previously been allowed under EU law. However, it allows the UK Government to make changes in these areas. So effectively, the bill as it stands, gives the UK Government complete freedom to legislate in areas currently devolved to the Scottish Parliament without first getting the consent of the Scottish Parliament.

These provisions are hugely problematic. On a practical level, they massively increase the complexity of the devolution settlement. For example as the EU's own rules evolve and change, it will create an ongoing uncertainty about what the Scottish Parliament is and isn't allowed to do in devolved areas.

But more fundamentally than that, they undermine a basic principle of devolution – the whole principle underpinning the Scotland Act that is the the foundation legislation of the Scottish Parliament is that all policy matters are devolved to Scotland unless they are specifically reserved under the Scotland Act. Effectively it is saying that in these matters that are repatriated, everything is reserved unless the UK government in future decides to devolve them. That is why Professor Nicola McEwen, of the Centre on Constitutional Change, said a few months ago – “Clause 11 cuts across the existing devolution settlements. UK government ministers... do not seem to get this.”

Just last week the Scottish Parliament's Finance and Legislation Committee unanimously recommended that consent should not be granted to the EU Withdrawal bill in its current form. It's worth repeating that point – all parties agreed that consent should not be granted. It's fair to say that Scottish political parties don't often come together and unite on constitutional questions – so that gives some idea of the scale of the UK Government's achievement here!

It was actually in my speech to the David Hume Institute this time last year that I first raised this prospect, this concern that the Scottish Government had. This process of Brexit was going to result in a power grab – I remember making that speech and lots of the commentary from other political parties and media was that was nonsense and I was scaremongering. Here we are a year on and there is unanimous opinion in the Scottish Parliament that that is in fact what that bill represents.

So we have work to do if we are to protect the principles of devolution to change that bill before it passes. We were promised UK Government's amendments would have been lodged by this stage. I think all parties have been unanimous in their disappointment that has not happened. In fact there won't be amendments lodged before the House of Commons – the amendments will have to be lodged in the House of Lords which actually raises its own democratic issues. On a matter of such fundamental importance to devolution and the principles underpinning it, it will be the House of Lords that has to decide on these amendments.

I hope we can reach a settlement and an agreement on this and we are still working hard to do that. But I think it is fair to say that while there is still the prospect of reaching agreement, and we will continue to do what we can to deliver that, the prospects are reducing rather than increasing.

As a result, the Scottish Government – with some regret – has been required to prepare our own EU Continuity Bill. It means that even if we cannot reach an agreement on the UK's withdrawal bill, Scottish legislation will be able to protect Scotland's laws from disruption caused by Brexit. That is not our preferred way forward. There is an argument that this legislation should be done UK wide but we cannot allow it to be done in such a way that it fundamentally undermines the very principles our parliament is built. So I hope we will reach agreement but we are prepared for the eventuality in which we don't.

The challenges posed by Brexit – and they are many and varied – are at least in part best met by a further devolution of powers throughout the UK, not a further centralisation of powers. The Scottish Parliament would benefit in particular from further powers over immigration, welfare, trade, employment and employability. But in particular, given some of the challenges we face, the Scottish Parliament would benefit hugely and Scotland would benefit hugely with greater powers and greater flexibility over migration.

Migration is the issue I want to focus on for the rest of my speech this evening – since it was so central to the EU referendum debate, but more importantly, it's an area where Scotland's needs and requirements are actually very different from the rest of the UK that the case for a different approach here is, to my mind, overwhelming. Not uncontroversial, but overwhelming in face of the evidence. I say not uncontroversial because I am aware – and John Curtice produced very interesting research on this last week – that there isn't yet a clear public consensus behind having a distinct migration policy in Scotland.

Add to that, the fact immigration is not an easy issue for politicians to be talking about.

But, given some of the stark projections that I am about to talk about, I believe really strongly there is a duty on us – on politicians across the UK, and particularly here in Scotland – both to spell out the importance of being able to attract skills and talent from other countries and also to provide evidence and reassurance where it is needed about the benefits that migration brings to our economy and our wider society.

I think there is a pressing need for all of us to try and change the narrative around immigration and free movement. When the impact of ending free movement within the EU is discussed, a lot of the focus tends to be on the immediate consequences for specific sectors of our economy. That's very understandable. For many core public services, and key sectors for our economy, EU migration is absolutely crucial.

More than half of the people who work in food processing industry are EU citizens; so are more than a quarter of our higher education researchers, and almost a tenth of the workers in our tourism sector.

The potential consequences of reduced migration to those sectors are very important. And they are certainly one reason – among many – why I have been so determined, ever since the referendum, to ensure the rights of EU citizens are given priority and protected, and that EU citizens know that Scotland welcomes the contribution they make here and we want them to stay and to keep making that contribution.

I want to focus today on an issue which transcends the immediate consequences of Brexit on specific sectors and talk instead about the consequences of any restriction in our ability to attract skills and talent here for our overall population level and economic prospects well into the future.

The figures here are stark. They should make all of us sit up and take notice. If you look at population projections for the UK as a whole, over the next 25 years, three fifths of the predicted population increase for the UK is projected to come from immigration, and two fifths is projected to come from natural change - births will outnumber deaths.

In Scotland though that is not the picture. All of our projected population growth is estimated to come from inward migration. Births are not expected to outnumber deaths in any of the next 25 years.

So without inward migration, our population will start to fall rather than rise. So we need to think seriously about this in terms of our prospects for the future. If we see our population, particularly our working age population, decline at a time we know people are living longer so our pensioner population is growing, then we will see that affect our overall economic growth. We will see it have an impact on our living standards. We will see the number of people in the workforce decline – that will make it more difficult to fund our public services. Actually the Scottish Fiscal Commission pointed to this as a real concern in their economic and fiscal forecasts last month. They've predicted reduced income tax receipts as a direct consequence of less immigration and a lower working age population is something that we need to think about.

Now, there is evidence that support for parents can increase the birth rate. So the package of policies which we're adopting with the aim of making this the best country in the world to grow up in are important – all of that in time could lead to a higher birth rate. But that isn't certain, and of course it takes around two decades before an increased rate of childbirth leads to an increased size of workforce. So in the short and medium term, and probably in the long term, we have a significantly greater need for migration in Scotland than the rest of the UK.

This isn't a new issue. This was an issue faced at the outset of the Scottish Parliament and it was an issue that was recognised very expressly in those early days. That's why the previous Labour - Liberal Democrat administration – with cross-party support at the time – worked to introduce the Fresh Talent initiative in Scotland. It allowed people to stay and work in Scotland for up to two years after they had finished studying even when they weren't allowed to do that in the rest of the UK.

However the Fresh Talent initiative – perhaps because of its success - was then included within the wider UK immigration system. And when the UK Government decided to restrict immigration in 2012, they ended the post-study work visa – because it was by then a UK policy and that meant it ended in Scotland as well.

I think that Fresh Talent is worth mentioning because it is a good example of how sensible, practical, proportionate immigration policies have been enabled in order to allow us to address a particular problem

And Fresh Talent is important for another reason because it demonstrates that it is possible – that a distinctive immigration policy, which is often thought to be something that is

completely unworkable in Scotland has actually, on a relatively small scale, has been demonstrated to be possible and to work in the past.

We also know differentiated migration policies work in other countries. If you take Australia as an example, different states have discretion to set different immigration standards and requirements. South Australia has its own immigration office. The same is true in Canada. And in Switzerland, cantons have the autonomy to run their own immigration systems.

So it's not surprising that three years ago, the Smith Commission – whose recommendations were signed off by all parties – recommended the reintroduction of the post-study work visa.

That has not been implemented yet, and there are no plans on the part of the UK government at this stage to do it. But I think these things have to be looked at again if we are to address these real challenges that we face.

That's why the Scottish Government will soon publish proposals for powers over immigration to be devolved. The reintroduction of the post-work study visa is one of those proposals.

We also argue that students in Scotland should not count within the UK's targets and will argue for a more distinctive approach on family migration. We believe that it is counterproductive to restrict the ability of British citizens to bring family members home. So these are concrete proposals we'll put forward in the near future and I hope they meet with a constructive attitude.

The last point I want to make here, is this argument for a distinctive immigration policy, which, although it is meant to address a distinctive challenge we face, also I suppose is a recognition that the debate about Scotland's place in Europe isn't simply about trade rules and regulations – important though they are. It's fundamentally a debate about who we are, about what sort of country we are and what kind of country we aspire to be in the future. It is so important for us in these crucial months that lie ahead to do everything we can to ensure that we remain an inclusive, welcoming, outward-looking country – a country which is determined to continue to contribute to the world in which we live, but one which is also open to new people and new ideas. We want to attract to our shores the best talent from anywhere in the world.

I began this speech by mentioning David Cameron's Bloomberg speech five years ago. 2018 also, of course, sees the 20th anniversary of the Scotland Act's passage through the UK parliament.

And so twenty years ago last week, that bill was being debated on the floor of the House of Commons. Donald Dewar, introducing that debate, made several remarks which turned out to be prescient. He described the Scottish Parliament as offering "a new dimension" to Scotland's representation in Europe.

We must be determined throughout this year, throughout the twists and turns the year will take, to do everything we can to maintain and strengthen that voice and that role in Europe and the wider world. That's why arguing at least for us to remain in the Single Market and Customs Union is important for economic and for wider reasons. But it is also why it is so important that we don't allow the devolution settlement to be undermined; and it is why it is also important that we seek the new powers for immigration or in other areas that allow us in Scotland to retain and to build and to enhance that place in Europe and the world.

2018 provides a lot of challenges but it also provides a lot of opportunity – as the realities of Brexit finally have to be confronted – to build support for these measures, not simply in Scotland, but across the UK. Because if we do build that support and that consensus we'll minimise the economic harms of Brexit but we'll also be able to safeguard Scotland's place as a good global citizen. And in doing that, I think we'll bring benefits, not just to Scotland, but

to people right across the UK. That is what I hope we can achieve in the year ahead to make sure the future for our country remains a bright, open and welcoming one.

First Minister speech at Muriel Spark - Creme de La Crème (mis en ligne le 31/01/2018 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/muriel-spark-creme-de-la-creme>)

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

It is a privilege to be here tonight to celebrate the genius that was Muriel Spark.

Like many, I devoured Spark's novels in my teenage and student years.

Having just recently started re-reading them, I am discovering all over again the sheer joy, entertainment, and rigorous intellectual stimulation that they provide.

It's hard, I think, to sum up the work of Spark.

Multi layered, complex and yet somehow totally accessible.

On one level, quirky stories and gripping mysteries that draw the reader in and transport us to a world that can seem much simpler than the one we inhabit today.

And yet...and yet...

She offers an exploration of moral and philosophical issues that leaves you thinking long, long after the last page.

One of my favourites of her novels is *The Driver's Seat* and yet even now, almost thirty years since I first read it, I'm not entirely sure I fully understand it - it still provides the curious mind with endless potential for interpretation as well as great enjoyment.

Truly the mark of a literary phenomenon.

Faith, very often through the eyes of the convert, mortality, sanity and insanity, reality and illusion - these are just some of the themes that recur time and again throughout her work.

Her novels are very much of their time - and yet also timeless and, in many cases, still highly topical even today.

I'm re-reading *Memento Mori* just now - a glorious reminder of her ability to be hilariously comical, usually in a dead pan, dare I say it, quite Edinburgh way, and also deeply dark, very often on the same page.

I had a laugh out loud moment reading it late last night as Godfrey is lamenting the inability of the police to apprehend the man who is terrorising the old folk with phone calls reminding them that they must die. If it continues, he exclaims, I will be forced to write a letter to the Times!

Comic genius - in a novel that is truly timeless in its themes of ageing and dying.

She was also highly topical. *The Abbess of Crewe* - perhaps the best political novel I've ever read - was surely motivated by the Watergate scandal and published while it still dominated the headlines.

Up to the minute topicality at the time - and yet, with surveillance and political intrigue as its core subjects - still hugely relevant and resonant almost half a century later.

Her characters burst onto the page fully formed - and yet, one of the things I love about her work, she leaves much to the reader's imagination to piece together their past lives and, also, for those lucky enough to survive her pen, their futures too.

And all of this created in prose that is truly lyrical in its beauty and craftsmanship - reminding us that while she will be remembered and celebrated best as a novelist, she was - first and foremost - a poet.

Earlier this week, there was a quite wonderful piece about Muriel Spark in the Guardian, written by one of our finest contemporary writers, Ali Smith.

Since I can never, ever hope to express anything better than Ali, I thought I'd end with her words:

“I can't think of another novelist who unites the heart, the soul and the intellect with quite such interrogatory merriment, or who's seen so clearly the 20th century for the industrial spinner of fictions it became, then seen our lives across and after that century with such fused lyricism, liberation, merciless understanding and forbearance.”

Muriel Spark - truly the *creme de la creme*.

Which leads rather nicely to this reading from what is, undoubtedly, her most celebrated work...

Debate: Celebrating 100 Years of Women's Right to Vote (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/debate-celebrating-100-years-of-womens-right-to-vote>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

06 February 2018

Presiding Officer,

It is a pleasure and a privilege to move today's motion. There's an old Scots proverb which was used on suffragist and suffragette banners. The first part later provided the title for a history of our suffragist movement. It says simply “a guid cause makes a strong arm”.

The guid cause we're honouring today was given further strength by the commitment of tens of thousands of women, and also many men, from right across the country. By 1914, there were suffrage associations in every part of Scotland – from Orkney and Shetland to Kirkcudbright and North Berwick.

Indeed, if you look for them, you can see powerful symbols of the suffrage campaign across Scotland. When I was a student at Glasgow University, I must have walked on countless occasions past the Suffragette Oak in Kelvingrove Park.

The First Minister's residence at Bute House overlooks Charlotte Square – which was the starting point for the Scottish suffragists' march to London in 1912. Occasionally I look out of the window on Charlotte Square and find myself wishing that I could spend a few moments with those women to pay tribute to their courage and their sacrifice, but also to thank them for enabling a woman like me to occupy the office that I do today.

Of course Charlotte Square is also where Elsie Inglis, one of the very greatest of Scottish suffragists, went to school. And this morning, with the suffragette flag flying outside, I chaired a meeting of our gender-balanced Scottish cabinet in Saint Andrew's House, which of course stands on the site of the old Calton Jail, where many suffragettes were imprisoned in the years before World War 1.

And that last poignant fact is a reminder that many of the people who campaigned for the vote made immense sacrifices – sacrifices that are beyond our imagination.

Some – especially those who adopted militant tactics in response to government intransigence – were not just jailed, but horribly mistreated and even force-fed.

Many more devoted countless hours of their time to their cause.

And all suffragettes and suffragists risked public disapproval, or anger, or contempt. We in this generation know even today that it's not always easy for women to speak up in public life

today; but whatever the challenges we face now, it must have been far more difficult then. The Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Association described what a woman often went through: *“she defies convention and throws aside that much-prized virtue – respectability. She gives up friendships that she values; often she renounces all her past life.”*

So when I stand here in this chamber - as a female First Minister, to be followed by a female leader of the opposition - my overriding emotion today is one of deep gratitude. All of us – but women in particular – owe an immeasurable debt to the suffragettes and the suffragists that we honour today.

For that reason, this centenary is being marked – not just by this parliamentary debate, but by events and commemorations across the country.

The Scottish Government confirmed yesterday that we will provide funding for local projects which will mark the anniversary. We will also support the Glasgow Women’s Library, which is developing a programme of commemorative events.

In addition, we are organising a cross-party event for young people here at the parliament. And we will fund projects to improve women’s representation and participation in public life.

And these final two strands to the programme that I’ve mentioned are important. These commemorations should not simply be about marking our past; they should also look to our future.

After all, some women secured the parliamentary vote a century ago. They have had equal voting rights to men for 90 years. But the uncomfortable truth is that gender equality is still an unwon cause - an unwon cause that it is the duty of our generation to win.

A century on, the gender pay gap still stands at 9% in the UK, and almost 7% in Scotland.

Women are more than half the population, but only make up 27% of members on the boards of the UK’s largest companies. And we still need to address the gender stereotyping which means that just 6% of our engineering modern apprentices are women, while only 4% of our childcare modern apprentices are men.

It’s worth thinking deeply about all of this. A key reason for women getting the vote was the contribution they made to the war effort – from the munitions factories of Clydeside to the field hospitals of the Balkans. They demonstrated – quite irrefutably – that women’s competence and capability was equal to men’s. But 100 years later, that equal capability still isn’t reflected in equal pay or equal status.

In addition, we’ve been reminded all too recently that sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexist behaviour are still far too widespread across our society.

Inequality also persists when it comes to political representation. When this Parliament was first elected in 1999, more women were chosen to represent Scottish constituencies than had been elected at Westminster in the previous 80 years. But the hard reality is that there has been little progress since then.

The proportion of women MSPs in the parliament was 37% in 1999, and now stands at just 35%. In my own party, it is 43% - which represents progress since 2011, but that also means, as with all parties, that we need to do more.

However, there are also areas where this parliament has genuine grounds for pride. Just last week, every single member of this chamber supported the Domestic Abuse Bill – legislation which has been acclaimed as setting a new gold standard in protecting women from coercive and controlling behaviour.

Last week we also approved legislation to ensure 50% female representation on public boards – ensuring that the public sector will lead by example on appointing women in leadership positions.

And this parliamentary session will also see a massive expansion of childcare – something which will help parents, particularly mothers, to return to work and pursue careers. And much of Scotland’s international development work in Africa and Pakistan prioritises the empowerment of women.

We still need to do far more. But we can and we should draw strength from these significant recent accomplishments.

And when you look at some of the wider social developments of the last year – such as the public response to stories of harassment and unequal pay, and the development of the “me too” and “times up” movements – I think that there is a chance to achieve even more significant and rapid change.

After all, public scrutiny of discrimination has never been higher. And public tolerance of it has never been lower.

That gives all of us - not just an obligation, but also a huge opportunity – to make much greater progress towards true gender equality. It is an opportunity we must all work together to seize.

When I was first elected as First Minister by the Parliament in 2014, I commented on the fact that my niece- who was then 8 years old – was in the public gallery. I said that my fervent hope was that by the time she was a young woman, she would have no need to know about issues such as the gender pay gap, or under-representation, or the barriers, like high childcare costs, that make it so hard for so many women to work and pursue careers.

I hope that this parliament can play a vital role in consigning those issues to history. I want young people in the future to be able to see them in the same way that we see voting rights for women – as a cause that was argued for, and won, by earlier generations.

Because Presiding Officer, we’re here today to honour the perseverance, courage and self-sacrifice of the Suffragists and Suffragettes.

But ultimately, the best way of doing that is not through parliamentary debates, or commemorative events – important though they are. It is by renewing our own resolve to use the powers we have – powers which in many ways we owe to the suffrage movement – to make the world a better place for the girls and young women who are growing up today.

If we can add our strength to that great cause, we will pay a fitting tribute in this centenary year. It falls to us on our generation – through deeds, not words – to complete the work that the suffrage movement started, to ensure that no longer will gender be a barrier to any women achieving their dreams. That, in my view, is the only truly appropriate way of for us to repay our enormous debt to the heroic movement that we celebrate and honour today.

Care Day (disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/care-day>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

16 February 2018

It is very special to be here today. I want to start by welcoming Noel here to Glasgow. It’s fantastic to have you here, you are an inspiring young man with a powerful story. You are also a powerful role model and you should be very proud of yourself and what you’ve achieved.

Last year on Care Day Callum invited me to attend his graduation and I had the privilege of watching Callum graduate at Strathclyde University. It was one of the most special experiences of my life so let me take this opportunity to thank you Callum for allowing me to be part of such a special moment in your life.

Callum, like so many of the care experienced young people I've met, is a very special young man. Someone who is already making his mark on the world and I have no doubt will go on to make an even bigger mark on the world.

We've actually just found out that Callum has been successful in his application to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust – a phenomenal achievement. The Trust provides funding for UK citizens to travel overseas and explore how other nations are addressing important issues that we all have in common. It means Callum will be spending six weeks of this year abroad, meeting care experienced people from across the world to discuss how the voices of care experienced people can be better heard better and louder – not just here in Scotland but internationally.

Through all of you here today and other care experienced young people across the country, we learn and get to know the huge success stories that come out of the care system. It is really important that we never lose sight of that. We should never talk about care experienced young people as if they are statistics or numbers. We should never assume that because a young person grows up in care or experience the care system, that they are destined to fail. That is not a reality that we should ever accept.

So it is really important to hear these success stories and allow these stories to inspire us. But to inspire us, to make sure that the kind of success stories we're hearing about today, are not the exceptions for care experienced young people, that they become the norm for care experienced young people.

We know for all of these success stories, we fail as a society, too many of our young people who experience the care system. We know, and it is painful to hear and admit, that too many care experienced young people will end up homeless, will end up in prison, will experience mental health problems. Too many care experienced young people will end up dead when they are still young and should be enjoying life to the full. We know that care experienced young people are less likely to go to university than people who don't grow up in care.

We must not shy away from these facts. We must resolve to do something about them. It is our responsibility, starting with me as First Minister, and in my view encompassing every single adult in this country. There can be no more important moral responsibility for anybody than to care properly for a young person that they have responsibility for – whether that's a parent, a guardian, a carer or the state. It is the most important responsibility that we can have. That's why I am so serious when I say as First Minister, that I want to work with you and everybody who has had experience of the care system to make it better so that these success stories are not the exception, that they become the norm.

Every care experienced young person is an individual just like every young person is an individual. Every individual will have their own experiences in life and will have their success and their failures. But what we must be aiming for, is to make sure that being care experienced doesn't make you less likely to have your successes in life than any other young person. And that's something we should be absolutely determined to achieve together.

For me as First Minister, there is nothing more important to me than what we are talking about today. Because the measure of any society, fundamentally and ultimately, is how we care for, look after, love and support those who are most vulnerable. This matters to care experienced young people, it matters to the care family. But it's bigger than that and it's more

than that. It matters to all of us because ultimately how we care for young people is a measure and a mark of what kind of country and what kind of society we are.

That's why this is so important. That's why the Scottish Government has set up the Care Review. When we set up the Care Review with Fiona chairing it, one thing I was determined about was that we weren't going to set up a Care Review and then say nothing can change or get better until some distant point in the future when the Care Review has done its work and reported. As a politician, one of the easiest things you can do is set up a review of something because sometimes it's a way of abdicating responsibility rather than taking responsibility. Setting up a review of something can be a way of avoiding taking decisions in the here and now. I didn't want the Care Review to be like that. I think it's a really important and necessary thing we are doing but it doesn't mean we can't start to change things now.

That's why we have taken decisions to do a number of things. In the grand scheme of things, are relatively small but with a big impact. Whether that's making sure for any care experienced young person that has the grades, is guaranteed a place at university; that student loans have effectively been abolished; that there are guaranteed bursaries for care experienced young people going to university and the exemption from council tax. It's why the 2014 Children and Young People Act, and continuing to implement it, is so important.

All of these things, relatively small in the grand scheme, but really important both in a practical sense to young people, but also as a down payment on the part of society to care experienced young people – a symbol of our seriousness and intent.

And we've just taken a decision about our Employability Fund. At the moment, if you're on certain benefits, you have to wait 13 weeks before you can access our Employability Fund – which provides support for training to help people back into employment. So what we've decided, for care experienced young people, we're abolishing that waiting period – for support to help people into employment. You'll be able to access that support from day one. Another relatively small thing but an important signal of our intent that we are determined to level the playing field.

The purpose of the Care Review is to look at our system in a much more fundamental way than just some individual changes and initiatives, it's about fundamentally looking at how we care for young people – looking at what we do well but perhaps more importantly, looking at what we don't do well and need to do better.

At the heart of the Care Review, as was the case with the 2014 Act, has to be the voice of young people with care experience. One of the things that's often said to me, is that often young people feel that care is something that is done to them, not something that's done with them, by them and for them. The Care Review can't be like that. It must be guided and directed and shaped by the voices and experiences of young people themselves. I know Fiona is working hard to make sure that is the case.

Personally, I've made the commitment to speak to 1,000 care experienced young people. I can tell you I'm at 150 – so only 850 to go! That for me has been really profound. That commitment I made is to underline the importance of hearing the voice of young people and making sure that voice is at the centre of everything we do.

I'm not going to pre-empt the outcome of the Care Review – it still has a lot of work to do. But I know that some of the points that the Care Review is considering very carefully are the points I've heard time and time again. The one I've spoken about – we need to change a system that feels as if it's doing something to people instead of with young people. Removing a sense of stigma – it really struck a chord with me hearing Kevin talk about how he went right through university without telling anyone he was care experienced. Being care

experienced is not something anybody should feel ashamed of. It should be part of your identity that you are proud of. That is something we need to work on to make the changes necessary to make that a reality.

And lastly of course is the word that is more important than any other word any of us will ever use, and that is love. At the end of the day, love is the most important thing any of us has got. When you strip everything else away, all we've got in this life is each other and how we treat each other, how we care for each other, how we love each other is the most important thing of all. A care system that doesn't have love at its core, doesn't deserve to be called a care system to start with. Love should be the foundation stone. But so often I hear from those who've experienced the system or work in the system is that they feel that there is no love there. And for those who work in the system that they're not somehow allowed to love. That I think is something that runs through our culture and society. Often the implication is to keep an emotional distance from people, don't get emotionally involved. That's not the kind of country I want to lead or to live in. We should get emotionally involved in things that matter and nothing matters more than how we care for our young people.

Love should be the foundation stone of the care system that we need to create and to build and that's what the Care Review is all about.

I'm under no illusions that this is not something you can just snap your fingers and change and create a perfect care system. Maybe we'll never have a perfect care system but we should aim to have one that gives young people the best environment to grow up in. One that gives young people every support and opportunity to fulfil their potential as young people and go on and have a happy and fulfilling adulthood. I don't think that's something we should think is beyond us as a country.

So, that's what the Care Review is about and it will take all of you and all the other care experienced young people out there to make sure we get this right. If we do get it right, and Scotland is known for so many fantastic things internationally, imagine how special it would be if a generation from now, the First Minister of the time is standing in front of a global audience saying the thing they're proudest of is that Scotland is known as the first country to create a care system where every person is loved and supported and given the chance to succeed in life.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of this very special day.

Association of British Insurers annual conference (*disponible à*
<https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/association-of-british-insurers-annual-conference>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Association of British Insurers, London

Tuesday 27 February 2018

It's a real pleasure to be at this ABI conference. There is no doubt whatsoever that the businesses represented in this room make an enormous contribution to companies, and indeed communities, across Scotland. You provide literally millions of people with practical help or peace of mind; you enable and encourage our businesses to grow; and of course you directly employ thousands of people throughout the country.

I see evidence of that contribution virtually every week as First Minister and in my capacity as a constituency MSP. My home city, Glasgow, is a base for more than 20 insurance companies. Together, they employ more than 7,000 people.

Edinburgh, where the Scottish Parliament is based, is the biggest centre for life insurance and pensions anywhere in the UK. Stirling is the seventh biggest centre - Aviva has a major base there. In total, insurance firms in Scotland support more than 20,000 jobs.

And so the main message I want to convey this afternoon this afternoon is that the health, the success, the prosperity of the insurance sector, right across these islands, is something that matters hugely to me and the Scottish Government. And it follows directly from that, that we want to work with you on an ongoing basis to ensure that you continue to grow and continue to flourish.

Now, in the second half of my remarks I'll deal with the small matter of Brexit – it is, after all, a topic that is crucial to your businesses, it's crucial to the wider economy.

But before I do that, I want to set out in more general terms some of the ways in which the Scottish Government is working to seek to make Scotland the best place in the UK to do business. We're determined to create an environment where both new and established companies – including of course insurance companies – can thrive.

That was a guiding aim behind the budget that the Scottish Parliament passed last week for the year ahead. Among other things, that increased support for business research and development, provided the most competitive package of rates relief anywhere in the UK, and supported very significant investment in infrastructure, including the delivery of superfast broadband to every single residential and business premise across the country.

The budget continues efforts we've made over the last decade to further increase Scotland's attractiveness as a place to do business. It's notable in recent years we've had significant success as a location for inward investment.

Just last week fDi magazine published the results of its annual survey of "regions of the future". The fDi survey assessed the best places in Europe to do business. Scotland came third in the large regions category – behind North Rhine Westphalia and Catalonia. All of our four largest cities were in the top 10 in their different categories.

That survey confirmed what statistical evidence already tells us. In the last five years, Scotland has consistently outperformed every part of the UK with the exception of London when it comes to attracting inward investment.

That reflects – first and foremost – the skills and capabilities of our people. By some measures, Scotland has the most highly qualified workforce anywhere in Europe. We have more world-class universities than any country proportionally in the world except Luxembourg.

You can see the benefits of that, very specifically, in the financial services sector. In total, universities in Scotland offer more than 50 courses in banking, finance and risk management. Thousands of students study these courses every single year and that provides a really important and valuable skills base for the industry.

In addition, those high skill levels are combined with a relatively low cost base - office rates are less than a third of London prices.

We also, as many of you will know, offer a pretty good quality of life in Scotland, and we work very hard trying to capitalise on our relative smallness as a country to ensure that the public sector is responsive to private sector needs and we all work together in a collaborative way.

If you look at the insurance sector specifically, that engagement is hugely helped – as you would expect – by the work of ABI. We have a very regular, and I like to think, productive dialogue with ABI on a range of issues which are of mutual concern.

For example we've been in touch on issues such as our Damages Bill – which we plan to introduce to Parliament by June of this year. As many of you will know, that Bill will adjust the discount rate in Scotland, so I know it is of considerable interest to many of you here today.

We've also had discussions with ABI on issues such as pensions relief on Scottish income tax, and the potential consequences of our civil litigation legislation. So a very diverse range of issues that we pride ourselves in having a very good relationship in discussing.

And given the press release the ABI put out yesterday, we also –as you would expect – entirely endorse the call of ABI for more female leaders in the financial services industry. The Scottish Government sees diversity as being good – not just for society as a whole, though it most certainly is, but for individual businesses. So I welcome the fact that the ABI shares that stance and is leading by example in its own recruitment policies. I certainly hope it can encourage further change across the sector.

More generally, however, the Scottish Government and the financial services industry work together to ensure that Scotland can build on our position as a leading financial sector. I co-chair the Financial Services Advisory Board, which brings the public sector and industry together. As part of the deliberations of that board, we consider issues such as future skills and the impact of new technology on the industry.

And in doing that, we're looking to ensure – not just that we capitalise on our historic strengths or our historic reputation, but that we take advantage of new opportunities.

Good examples of that are fintech and insuretech. In addition to our strengths in financial services, we also have a growing reputation in fields such as data analysis and infomatics.

So it's not surprising that we are rapidly becoming an important base for fintech and insuretech start-ups.

In fact, the ABI is currently working with one Edinburgh- based company, Origo, which is developing a pensions dashboard. The basic idea is that individuals, who have accumulated a variety of different pensions benefits from several different jobs, are able to see all of those different benefits in one place.

The dashboard is good example of how new technology can provide significant benefits to customers. And Origo's role is one example of the expertise and talent that we have in our insuretech sector.

So we want to build on that expertise. In the last year, the financial services advisory board has been really instrumental in establishing a new industry body, Fintech Scotland. It is receiving financial support from the Scottish Government, but it is a real partnership effort – it is benefiting hugely from the expertise and support of both academia and industry. It has set high ambitions aiming to make Scotland one of the five most important centres in the world for fintech by 2020.

So that, I hope, is a good example of the fact that the financial sector in Scotland doesn't just have a long and proud history – we are determined to make sure it has a very strong and exciting future as well.

Now of course, if we're going to build on the strengths we have at present – and seize the opportunities of the future – it is essential and I don't think this point can be overstated, it is essential that we do all that we can to mitigate the potential impact of Brexit. That, as I indicated at the outset, is the major theme of the second half of my remarks this afternoon.

We are now half way through a series of UK Government speeches which have been called “the road to Brexit”. These were meant to give clarity to the public, to businesses and to our European partners.

And on one level, they might have succeeded. I am sure that all of us were deeply reassured, even if not all of us were convinced, by the promise that we will not be “plunged into a Mad Max style world borrowed from dystopian fiction”!

But by most other measures, these speeches, so far, have been less enlightening than we might have hoped them to be.

I won’t dwell this point, but it beggar belief in my view that last week, almost two years on from the referendum the UK Cabinet really met for the first time to try to work out what future relationship it wanted to seek with the EU.

One of the real problems has been, and continues to be, that we are still not seeing an openness or frankness about the trade-offs that we face in negotiating a new relationship with the EU. The Government is still trying to argue that it’s possible to enjoy everything, as Boris Johnston styles it, to have our cake and eat it so we are still treated to the fallacy that we can have significant regulatory freedom, while also enjoying all the benefits of the single market and the customs union, we can gain the ability to make new trade deals while also retaining an open border with Ireland. I don’t think those positions bear scrutiny of reality. Nothing we have heard from the European Commission suggests the UK Government’s approach right now is a feasible one.

The Scottish Government’s stance is, I hope, very clear. We have an overwhelming preference that would be to remain in the European Union. That is, after all, how Scotland voted in the referendum.

We also believe that during the transitional period which will start in March next year and I think it is progress that everyone now agrees that there should be a transitional period. During that period our relationship with the EU should be on the same basis as our existing relationship.

Otherwise, businesses will have to make one set of adjustments next March, and then a further set of changes later on, when the transitional period ends. And that, in my view, would make no sense for any business in any part of the country.

In the longer term, if it is the case that the UK is determined to leave the EU, and that appears to be the case, we believe that we should seek the least damaging future option and in my view that means retaining our membership of both the single market and the customs union.

That seems to me to be an obvious democratic compromise, in a country where 48% of voters chose to remain. That form of Brexit would also be the least damaging approach for businesses and for

The Scottish Government published an analysis in January of the different options for leaving the EU. Broadly, they are the single market option or a free trade agreement or falling back on WTO terms. That analysis showed very clearly that although all forms of future relationship are likely to harm the economy in some way – by reducing exports to our largest and closest market – the harder the Brexit the greater the damage that will be sustained and of course that analysis has subsequently been supported by the leaked assessments done by the UK Government itself.

The insurance industry provides a good illustration of why remaining in the Single Market makes most sense. Remaining in the European Economic Area would, for example, enable financial passporting to continue. That is by far the easiest way of ensuring that UK

companies can continue to sell insurance across the EU without having to consider setting up operations new in other parts of Europe.

The financial services sector also benefits hugely from the skills and hard work of EU migrants. According to our latest figure, 9,000 EU nationals work in the finance and business services sector in Scotland. That figure will be much greater when we consider the UK as a whole. Retaining their skills – by protecting the rights of existing migrants, and encouraging new workers into the country – should be a priority for us all.

Now, I know that many of you might perhaps agree with the notion that we should remain in the single market but consider that it is unrealistic. After all, the UK Government keeps on saying that we will leave both the Single Market and the Customs Union.

But in my opinion, at the present time, making the case for a common sense Brexit is more important than ever.

We have a UK Cabinet still trying to close the gap between its wildly divergent views on the future relationship, it's expected negotiating stance is unlikely to be sustainable. As we saw from Jeremy Corbyn yesterday some signs of movement on the part of the Labour Party. We have already seen in the last year many positions that were originally cast as red lines become impossible to sustain.

So I believe as the UK Government goes further into this next phase of negotiations reality is going to bite as never before. And further change in the course that it has set will become inevitable. So I think it is possible that a softer, common sense Brexit can command majority support - both in the House of Commons, and indeed across the country as a whole. That form of Brexit would avoid many of the difficulties that we may otherwise spend many years wrestling with, when we should instead be focussed on the economy. So, I think, now is the time to intensify rather than abandon the case for a softer, more common sense Brexit. That stance, in my view, is economically desirable but it is also democratically justifiable and I believe it is politically achievable.

It's maybe worth adding for the benefit of this audience here today that in all possible negotiating scenarios, the Scottish Government will continue to make the case for sensible resolutions for specific issues in specific sectors and in particular relevance to this audience in relation, for example, to the pensions industry.

I know one of the key concerns you have relates to the continuation of contracts in other parts of the EU. There's a fear that if financial passporting ends, it could become illegal for a UK insurer to make payments to claimant based in, say, Germany.

Single Market membership, in my view, would take away that issue. If that is not where we end up, the Scottish Government – where we have influence – will continue to argue for a sensible resolution. If necessary, we will make strong cases to European agencies such as the European Institute of Occupational Pension Authorities, as well as to the UK Government. It is in everyone's interests, across the entire continent, for insurance contracts to retain their legitimacy after Brexit.

The final point I want to make is that by advocating the least damaging approach to Brexit, the Scottish Government won't just be reflecting the wishes of the majority of people in Scotland, although I believe we will be doing that, I think it is also reflecting the needs and priorities of businesses across the UK.

And so it stands to reason that we will work with anyone and everyone – across party boundaries, and right across the UK – in order to make that case and achieve those goals. I believe a common sense approach to Brexit can command consensus support in Parliament and across these islands more generally. For that reason it is worth trying to achieve.

I very much see the case for Scotland's place in Europe – and more generally, the need to reinforce our reputation as an internationalist, outward-looking nation. As an important part of the wider mission I spoke about at the start of my remarks, we want Scotland to be a good place to do business. The success of the private sector is essential to the wellbeing and prosperity of everyone and every community in our country.

And it's why we will continue to work closely with the financial services sector in general and the insurance sector in particular – to build on Scotland's historic strengths, and to seize new opportunities as they come our way. We want the insurance sector to thrive, because we understand your wider importance to helping the country more generally to thrive.

For all of those reasons, I'm delighted to be here today, I look forward to your questions, and I look forward even more to working with you in the months and years ahead.

Scottish Renewables Annual Conference (*mis en ligne le 26/03/2018 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scottish-renewables-annual-conference>*)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Edinburgh

Thank you, Matthieu, and thanks also to Claire.

In the last year, Scottish Renewables has of course gained both a new Chair and a new Chief Executive. I want to thank the previous postholders - Patricia Hawthorn and Niall Stuart - for their contribution to the renewables sector in recent years. And I also want to wish Rob Forrest and Claire well in their new posts. I look forward to working with both of you in the months and years ahead.

It's a pleasure to speak at this conference – an exciting time for renewables in Scotland. The renewables sector now generates more than half of Scotland's total electricity demand. You employ tens of thousands of people across the country and contribute to our country's energy security, our climate change targets and our economic growth.

So you have become a major Scottish success story.

It follows that the key message I want to get across to you this afternoon is simply this. The Scottish Government recognises and values the contribution all of you make to Scotland. We want the renewables sector to be even more successful in the future, than it has been in the recent past. And we are determined to work with you to achieve that aim.

I hope that that message has already come through clearly in recent months, with the publication of our Climate Change Plan and our new Energy Strategy. We are very grateful to everyone here who contributed to the consultation process for those documents.

The Energy Strategy sets out targets, not simply for electricity use, but for energy as a whole – including transport and heating. At the moment, 18% of our overall energy use comes from renewable sources. By 2030, we are determined that will be at least 50%.

As all of you will know, that's hugely ambitious. It will require major changes to heating and to transport. It involves an ongoing investment in energy efficiency. It will mean more use of battery storage and of technologies such as hydrogen fuel. And it will also, of course, involve a further very significant expansion of renewable energy.

But although our proposals are unashamedly ambitious, they will also be hugely beneficial – to our environment, our economy and our society.

Renewable energy use means that we will meet our climate change targets. Developing and adopting new processes and new technologies will create possibly tens of thousands of jobs. Businesses in all sectors can improve their energy efficiency and lower their costs. And

people across Scotland will live in warmer homes and breathe cleaner air. We will become a greener, healthier, more prosperous country.

The renewables sector will be absolutely at the heart of achieving that vision. So this afternoon, I want to set out some of the ways in which the Scottish Government is working with you to promote the sector. I'll then say a bit more about how we will work with you to deliver some of those wider benefits from clean energy.

But before I do that, I do just want to touch – fairly briefly – upon the subject of Brexit. It is, after all, directly relevant to this sector.

If the UK Government decides – not just to leave the EU, but also to leave the single market, which is their stated position at the moment – it is likely to hinder our supply chain and reduce our skills base.

If we find ourselves outside the internal energy market – although I have been encouraged by some of the Prime Minister's rhetoric on this particular subject – it could affect our influence on issues such as energy regulation and cross-border energy flows.

And we could also lose access to EU funding which none of us want to see happen. It is worth remembering that just last year, Scotland benefited from one of the biggest investments ever made by the European Investment Bank – the half billion pounds of funding they provided for the Beatrice offshore windfarm.

It is fair to say that Scotland has also done disproportionately well from EU support for research and innovation in the renewables sector. We want that to continue.

So we want to see the UK Government provide clarity on these issues. Although the overall outlook for this sector is hugely positive, Brexit could potentially harm our supply chain and skills base; diminish our influence on issues such as regulation and energy flows; and reduce our access to funding.

That's why the Scottish Government believes that, if the UK has to leave the EU, it should still say in the customs union, the single market, and the internal energy market.

In my view, if not the best future, then would be the least damaging outcome for Brexit. One that would certainly help jobs and prosperity, not just here in Scotland but right across the whole of the UK.

The other point worth making about Brexit is that, if anything, it increases the importance of getting on with all of our other efforts to develop the low carbon sector.

That's exactly what we're determined to do. We're spending half a billion pounds on energy efficiency measures over the course of this parliament. We've set up programmes such as the low carbon innovation fund – it's currently seeking applications for projects which contribute to our ambitions for low carbon heat, integrated energy systems, and ultra-low emission vehicles.

We continue to support the world leading research on renewable energy and low carbon technology which is undertaken here in Scotland.

We're also trying – in fairly uncertain times – to provide as much certainty for businesses. Our climate change targets; our energy strategy targets; our commitment to remove the need for new diesel and petrol cars by 2032; all of these are intended to provide companies with a very clear direction of travel.

They show that that Scotland is committed to pioneering a low carbon future; and as a result, mark us out as a centre for low carbon investment.

And of course, as part of that aim of making Scotland a low carbon hub, we specifically want to encourage investment in the different renewable energy sectors.

Inevitably, we need to do that in different ways for different sectors, according to the particular powers we have here in Scotland.

In relation to solar, for example, we will look at the energy standards we set for building regulations – something which can affect the adoption of solar technology. Ministers are also, incidentally, currently considering the first large scale solar power application.

If you take Hydro power, that's been very important to Scotland for generations now. In fact a couple of weeks ago, I met the Chief Executive of Liberty House. We discussed the huge investment that they've made in the Fort William aluminium works.

That investment could create around 2,000 jobs directly and indirectly. It is potentially transformational for the Lochaber area. And it is to a large extent based on the availability of large scale hydroelectricity.

So we definitely want to sustain and encourage hydropower. We're currently looking at business rates for the sector. In fact from next week, a 60 per cent relief for smaller hydro schemes comes into effect.

We have now started to review how things such as plant and machinery are assessed when business rates are set for hydro schemes – we know that's a very genuine concern.

The third technology I want to talk about is wind power. Onshore wind is, and in my view will continue to be, central to Scotland's energy mix.

However UK Government policies, at present, effectively stop new developments from having a route to market. That strikes us as being incredibly counter-productive.

So we agree with many people, across the sector, that the UK Government should allow onshore wind to compete in contract auctions against other energy technologies. It's an approach which would be good for consumers and obviously good for the onshore wind sector.

It's maybe also worth saying something about our Planning Bill – I know that quite a few people here will have an interest in it. Our hope and intention is that the Bill will help us to streamline planning procedures, introducing greater flexibility while also encouraging better and earlier discussion and engagement with communities at the start of the process. We believe that this approach can make the planning system work better for everyone. Of course we continue to welcome input into that ongoing work.

Offshore wind has seen some really exciting developments in the last year. In October, I had the huge honour of opening Statoil's Hywind Scotland windfarm – the world's first floating windfarm. It's a genuinely extraordinary set of structures.

One of the reasons why Hywind is based here in Scotland, is that the Scottish Government used our previous powers under the Renewables Obligation. We offered higher levels of support for floating wind than the rest of the UK.

That sort of incentive is unfortunately no longer an option - the UK Government has now ended the Renewables Obligation. We will however, continue to do everything we can to encourage offshore development in Scotland – whether that's through our use of our planning and licensing powers, or by working with the industry to promote innovation and drive down costs.

And as part of that, we will of course work with the UK Government. For example we want to ensure that its sector deal for offshore wind takes proper account of Scotland's huge resources and potential.

There is no reason for it not to do that. If you look back again to last autumn, the Moray East offshore windfarm gained a contract to produce energy for under two thirds of the price of new nuclear power. Its price was less than £60 per megawatt hour; of course Hinkley Point's was more than £90.

It was a further sign that offshore wind in Scotland is becoming increasingly competitive. We are determined to work with the sector to maintain that trend and to maintain that momentum.

The final technology I want to mention is wave and tidal energy. It's an area where Scotland is a global pioneer.

In recent months, Atlantis Resources has been setting world records through their tidal power turbines in the Pentland Firth. They announced last week that they have now delivered over 5 Gigawatt hours of electricity to the grid.

Scotrenewables is currently testing the world's largest tidal turbine at the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney – a location which has tested more wave and tidal devices than any other single site anywhere in the world.

Projects like that are of course primarily due to the ingenuity and enterprise of businesses and researchers. But they have also been made possible by sustained Scottish Government support. For example, our Wave Energy Scotland programme has supported over 60 projects.

We know that commercial development of marine technology takes time; and that not every venture will go smoothly. But we also understand the potential that wave and tidal power has for Scotland and indeed the wider world. Having gained a position of global leadership in this field, we are determined not to let that go.

Now we're doing all of this partly because for Scotland – as for all countries – moving to a low carbon future is an overwhelming moral imperative.

However it is also a massive opportunity. I always think it's important to stress that fact; and perhaps even more importantly, to persuade people that a low carbon economy will directly benefit them.

And there are two sides to that I want to touch on this afternoon.

The first is that we need to ensure that consumers and the public get a fair deal. That's one reason why we have pledged to establish a publicly owned energy company – we believe it will benefit consumers. It's also why our energy strategy places a strong emphasis on consumer protection.

In addition, we have encouraged the growth of community benefit schemes and community ownership of renewable energy – we believe it is important and desirable that communities benefit from their own natural resources.

And we have also established a Just Transition Commission to provide advice to the Government. We're determined that the shift to a low carbon economy won't just make Scotland a wealthier country, it will also make us a fairer one.

And secondly – and this is of course inextricably linked to the wider issue of public benefits – we need to maximise the impact of renewables on skilled jobs and sustainable growth.

One hugely important part of doing that is to improve our supply chain capabilities.

With a relatively new industry, that's not always going to be straightforward. The situation at Bifab demonstrates that very clearly, although I am optimistic about a good outcome being reached.

But we are already seeing a growing supply chain in Scotland for renewable energy, demonstrated by businesses such as Balfour Beatty, CS Wind at Machrahanish, Global Energy at Nigg, and many more. For some marine energy projects – such as Nova's tidal array in Shetland – more than four fifths of the supply chain is based in Scotland.

So renewable energy is already providing significant levels of skilled employment – often in relatively rural or remote areas. I think it's fair to say all of us want the supply chain to develop further.

I'm confident that can and will happen. If you look at the oil and gas supply chain, that sector's success wasn't immediate. But that supply chain is now globally renowned. It employs more than 100,000 people in Scotland, and it exports to countries across the world.

We now want to create – as rapidly as possible – a similar success story for renewable energy.

That's why we're investing in infrastructure, supporting ambitious growth companies, promoting research and development, and ensuring that people have the right skills. We want our renewable resources to provide skilled employment, as well as sustainable energy, for communities across the country.

And the final point I want to make is that achieving this aim fits perfectly with our wider economic mission as a country.

I've said on several occasions that we must see Scotland's economic future as being founded on innovation. It is often said that Scotland invented the world that we live in today. We must take the opportunity of being a country that is similarly shaping and inventing a world that our children and grandchildren will inherit. That means we must aspire to develop, design and manufacture the technologies and products of the future – not just be content to be a country that uses these technologies.

That's why, in the Programme for Government last year, we put such a strong emphasis, not just on protecting the environment, but also on innovation. Because in my view the two can go absolutely hand in hand.

Our support for innovation includes an increase of 70% in government support for business research and development.

We are also establishing a new national manufacturing institute for Scotland – to enable research and encourage collaboration in advanced manufacturing. The renewables sector is one of several sectors that could benefit from that.

And last month, the implementation plan for the new Scottish National Investment Bank was published.

I know that the bank has aroused great interest. I know Scottish Renewables have been particularly interested about the potential for the Investment Bank.

We are making almost £500 million available over the next three years for the Bank.

Now I can't give guarantees about what projects the bank will support – it depends on what ideas businesses propose.

But we have made it very clear that the National Investment Bank will be mission-led. It will provide patient finance for companies, innovations and infrastructure which meet the key challenges our country faces. There's no doubt whatsoever that one of those key challenges is the move to a low carbon economy.

So I believe there are good grounds for hoping that the Bank will become a cornerstone of the low carbon, high tech economy that all of us want to create.

If we succeed in that mission, as I believe we can, it will of course be hugely beneficial for our country's future. However it will also in many senses be in keeping with our past.

We led the world into the industrial revolution. Through inventions such as James Watt's improvements to the steam engine and many others, we helped to create the carbon economy.

My hope, and our collective ambition, is that we can once again use our capacity for innovation, to help lead the world out of the carbon economy into the low carbon age.

Few countries are better placed to fulfil that role. We have vast renewable energy resources; an international reputation for engineering excellence; a world class research base; and a completely committed public sector.

So, if we build on those strengths, I believe we can achieve the ambitions set out in our energy strategy. We can harness and develop clean technologies for the future. And in the process we can create jobs and prosperity in every part of the country.

The work all of you are already doing – and the progress you have already made – provides some idea of just how much is possible. So I look forward to working with you so we can achieve even more in the months and years to come. There's no doubt in my mind that is within our grasp.

[First Minister speech at Economist event on inclusive growth \(*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-speech-at-economist-event-on-inclusive-growth>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-speech-at-economist-event-on-inclusive-growth)

Shanghai, China

11 April 2018

It is a huge pleasure to be here in Shanghai – undoubtedly one of the great global cities, and one which has strong historic ties to Scotland. I understand that a Shanghai Scottish society was established here as far back as 1866, which I can confidently say was before the time of anybody in this room today. The year before that, Thomas Sutherland who hailed from Aberdeen established the first Shanghai branch of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Fittingly, the Scottish financial presence here continues to this day – in fact, Aberdeen Standard Investments are currently setting up a base here.

That fact demonstrates one of the things that has been very clear to me on this visit. The links between Scotland and China – links of trade and commerce, education and culture, family and friendship – they are probably stronger now than they have ever been at any time in our history.

Since I arrived in Beijing on Sunday I have met representatives of more than 20 Chinese businesses covering sectors such as textiles, technology, renewable energy and food and drink. I have seen significant new agreements signed between Chinese and Scottish universities.

Indeed, just after this event, I'm meeting Vice Mayor Weng - we will announce that the Shanghai Festival's production of the "*Rite of Spring*" will be part of the programme for next year's Edinburgh International Festival programme. And on the very first day of my visit I met 20 young Scottish students who are staying in China on scholarships, and who have been overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome they have received. I think that connection, those interactions between our young people, really augurs well for the future friendship and relationship between our two countries' friendship.

What's also worth noting is that my personal impressions over the last few days – that the friendship between our nations is flourishing – is also borne out by the economic statistics.

On average, Scotland's exports to China have grown by more than a third in each of the last four years. In the last year alone, Scotland's exports to China increased by 40%, that's higher growth in exports to China than with any of our other trading partners. Inward investment to Scotland from China has also increased. More than 9,000 people from China now study in Scotland's universities. As a result, communities across Scotland mark the Chinese new year, just as Burns night is celebrated regularly in Shanghai and Beijing.

Now, much of this upsurge in trade, investment and study is obviously due to China's extraordinary economic growth in recent years. But it is also at least in part a testament to Scotland's own economic strengths.

When Premier Li – although at that time he was Vice Premier Li – came to Scotland in 2011, I remember that he spoke at a welcome reception at Edinburgh Castle. And almost the first thing he said was “*it's great to be in Scotland. The land of invention.*”

The compliment was of course all the greater because of China's own history of invention and innovation. China was of course the country which gave the world the compass, paper and printing, and countless other inventions.

Premier Li was referring in part to Scotland's history – the fact that people from Scotland developed an astonishing proportion of the technologies that helped to shape the modern world, the world we live in and take advantage of today. James Watt's steam engine, the television, the telephone and beta blockers for example.

So that history of invention is a long and a proud one. But Premier Li, I think, was not simply talking about our past when he made that remark. I think he was also looking at our present and our future. Scotland today has more top-class universities, per head of population, than any other country in the world, with one exception – not China, but Luxembourg. So we have Luxembourg in our sights and hope to pass them in the future!

Partly because of that influence, we are one of the world leaders in some of the key technologies of the future. In renewable energy, Scotland is a major centre for offshore wind research – in fact we are home to the world's first floating windfarm.

We are also a pioneer in developing wave and tidal power. We have significant strengths in some related areas such as battery storage and smart grids, which will be of growing importance as the world moves to a low carbon future.

In life sciences, we also see significant success, due to the quality of Scotland's research, which is internationally recognised. In fact, I'm at an event tomorrow where 5 Scottish universities will sign life sciences collaboration agreements with partners in China.

And Scotland also has one of the largest cluster of data analytics researchers in Europe. As a result of that, we're starting to see exciting developments in areas such as fintech, digital health and precision medicine, which is an area of increasing importance.

That is one reason, among many, why Edinburgh was recently named the best city in Europe in which to start a technology company. Later today I will meet C-Trip, a Shanghai company which last year purchased Skyscanner, one of Scotland's most successful tech companies.

It's also worth noting that there is often remarkable innovation in sectors which are commonly seen as traditional. A good example is our textiles firms, which continue to make tartan cashmere for luxury brands, popular across the world – not least here in China. However they also design materials which are now being used in artificial heart valves. Even our traditional companies in traditional sectors are innovating and growing in to new areas.

All of that helps to explain why Scotland outperforms every part of the UK with the exception of London for attracting inward investment. In fact, for research and development projects, we outperform even London.

A key purpose of my visit is encourage further investment. To any of you in the audience considering further investment, my message to you is that Scotland is open for business.

Alongside our reputation for innovation, Scotland also has what is, by some measures, the most highly qualified workforce anywhere in Europe. In addition, we have a strong and supportive public sector. Many of you will be familiar with my colleagues in Scottish Development International, who are always looking at how we can support companies with growth ambitions. We also can offer a fantastic quality of life – and the weather is not as bad as reported! Yes, it was snowing in Scotland last week but it was also snowing in Beijing. In short, Scotland is an ideal country in which to live, work, study or invest.

So as you will, I hope, have gathered, Scotland has a strong and successful economy and we have real ambitions to grow that economy further. All of that said, we also face challenges, and we are not unique in that. One of the big challenges right now as we look ahead is the UK's decision to leave the European Union – something Scotland did not vote for in the EU referendum, but which will affect us greatly, not least the impact on our economy.

Other challenges faced by Scotland confront almost all countries across the developed and developing world- how do we move quickly to a low carbon economy, how to adapt to an ageing population – a good thing but one that presents challenges for all of us – and how to ensure good, secure, fulfilling employment in an age of increasing automation.

In addition, in recent years, economic growth in Scotland has been lower than we would have liked – partly, but not entirely, that is due to a slowdown in our oil and gas sector, which is something we are very focused on in the years ahead. And although Scotland's productivity in the past decade has largely caught up with the rest of the UK, closing that gap, our productivity remains behind some of our European competitors. In the long term, that will have an impact on living standards.

Many of those economic challenges are inextricably linked to social challenges. In particular, although inequality in Scotland is lower than it is across the UK as a whole, it is still higher than anyone should be comfortable with.

I spoke yesterday at an event in Beijing on child poverty which was organised by Unicef and the Chinese Friendship Association. One of the points I made there is that almost a quarter of children in Scotland grow up in poverty. That is completely unacceptable in itself - it's why we have launched an major new initiative to tackle child poverty.

The point I want to make is that poverty and inequality – as well as being morally unacceptable – are also deeply economically damaging. The OECD estimated recently that between 1990 and 2010, rising income inequality in the UK reduced our economic output per head by 9 percentage points – that's approximately £1,600 for everyone in the country.

Low incomes reduce aggregate demand. They restrict the tax revenues needed for investment. And unequal economies are also less resilient– they are more likely to depend on borrowing and credit, which means their growth is less likely to be sustainable.

So it stands to reason that we will do better as a society, if we can benefit from the skill, talent and innovation of all of our people.

I talked earlier about Scotland's history of invention. This is interesting because the reason many of the inventions that shaped the modern world came from Scotland was it was one of, if not the, first society to introduce universal free school education.

By educating more people than other nations, we nurtured more individuals who had the skill and talent to invent. Of course, at that time it was almost exclusively men who could make full use of their talents. The key point was that we gained a competitive advantage.

And if we are to make the most of our potential in the 21st century we will have to do more to maximise opportunities for all – regardless of gender or background. Promoting equality doesn't detract from our focus on innovation – it is an essential part of our focus on innovation.

Now of course in looking at economic development and inequality, China is starting from a very different position from Scotland, and will often have a very different perspective. China's population is also, of course, vastly larger than ours – Shanghai on its own has almost five times the population of Scotland.

However, I know that some of the questions Scotland grappling do have some resonances here in China.

When President Xi addressed the 19th National Party Congress last autumn, he pledged to address “*development's imbalances and inadequacies, and push hard to improve the quality and effect of development.*” As part of that, he has of course pledged to eliminate absolute poverty by 2020.

I know that China is also looking at regional inequalities. When Christine Lagarde spoke in Beijing last year about the “Belt and Road” initiative, she praised the fact that it would contribute to more balanced economic growth.

And China also of course has a deep interest in how the international economy works. President Xi last autumn stressed the need to make globalisation “*more open, inclusive and balanced*”.

There's an important point to make about that. Policies such as free trade and immigration will often bring benefits to the economy as a whole, but they also have the potential to disadvantage – or be seen as disadvantaging - particular areas and particular groups.

We've seen some of the consequences of that in Europe and the USA in recent years. In fact, the UK's vote to leave the European Union is a case in point.

It's an important reminder to those of us who believe that the benefits of globalisation, if properly managed, should outweigh the costs. We can only sustain support for a dynamic and open economy if we do more to build a fair and inclusive society.

For all of these reasons – moral, economic and political - there is growing interest around the world in promoting growth that is inclusive. Growth which everyone has a fair chance to contribute to, and from which everyone in society can benefit.

The Scottish Government has been trying to take a lead here. In 2015, when we revised our Economic Strategy, we ensured that it focused jointly on increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality as the twin aims at the heart of that strategy.

What that means in practice, is that the Scottish Government recognises that there is an economic case for many of our key social interventions, such as tackling poverty, increasing attainment in Schools, and significantly increasing childcare provision.

And we encourage progressive employment practices. We attach a high priority to fair work. We also support what's called the living wage – a level of pay, higher than the legal minimum wage, which has been calculated to ensure that people who work can afford the basic necessities of life.

We also promote gender equality in politics, in wider society, and of course in the workplace. This is something I spoke about on my last visit to China. I pointed out that for virtually all nations, fully empowering women is probably the single and most straight forward way, in which they can sustainably increase their economy's productive potential.

If you look at employment specifically, in Scotland we are encouraging more women to become entrepreneurs – it's been estimated that if as many women as men in Scotland started up and ran their own businesses, it would add almost £8 billion a year to our economy. That would represent an increase of 5% in Scotland's GDP.

Our major expansion of childcare, often seen as a social intervention, is also a hard edged economic intervention, helping women in particular to get back in the workplace and pursue careers.

And in doing all of this, one point we try to get across is that gender equality and fair work aren't simply things that are good for employees – although they are, and that is important. They are also good for employers and good for business. It helps the bottom line to ensure the talents of all are recognised.

So one of the things we are trying to do is to work with business to create a partnership for productivity – one where Government is supportive of business, so that Government and business together can support a fairer, stronger, more prosperous society.

And of course we know that it's easier to encourage that sense of partnership, if government is doing everything it can to create an environment which promotes enterprise.

We invested in infrastructure – for example we are committed to ensuring that every home and business in Scotland has access to superfast broadband by 2021.

And we also set out important measures to work with businesses to promote growth. In particular, we want to further enhance Scotland's capacity for innovation.

We are significantly increasing government support for business research and development. We are establishing a national institute to build on our current strengths in advanced manufacturing.

And we are in the early stages right now of establishing a national state investment bank which can provide mission-led, long-term capital for ambitious companies and important infrastructure projects in key sectors.

That mission-led objective is important. The low carbon economy is an obvious mission to look at. But there is also scope and need for innovation in other areas- for example how we adapt to an ageing society, investing in places. The objective of the new bank will provide will provide strategic investment and support more and faster innovation.

So that's just a sense of the work we are doing in Scotland why it's relevant to the world in which we live.

The final point I want to make – and it's one which has been apparent throughout this speech - is that virtually all of the issues I've raised this morning are ones which are faced not just by Scotland or the UK, but by countries around the world. So it makes sense for the Scottish Government to work with other countries around the world – through trade, through joint investment, and through collaboration on research, and the sharing of experiences and expertise.

That's why it has been so gratifying, throughout my visit to China this week, to see that the partnership between Scotland and China – between our governments, our universities, our businesses and our people – getting stronger and closer than ever.

I am really hopeful that by working together on new research and new technology, we can develop innovations which bring greater prosperity and economic growth.

And through events like today, we can also explore – from our different perspectives and starting points – how to ensure that that growth is sustainable and more inclusive.

By doing so, we can benefit people not just in Scotland and China, but also around wider world.

So it's great to be here and have this opportunity to share my thoughts with you. But perhaps more importantly to give you the chance to share your thoughts with me.

First Minister's speech at Congress on Disability, Employability and the Workplace

Improving the lives of disabled Scots (*mis en ligne le 30/04/2018 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/improving-lives-of-disabled-scots-1>*)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Congress on Disability, Employment and the Workplace

30 April, 2018

Introduction

Thank you Graeme, before I start I'd just like to take this opportunity to say happy birthday. I'm delighted to welcome you all to this Congress. It's fantastic to see so many people gathered here today, to discuss this important issue and to address it as a country.

Today's event focusses on the themes of disability, employment and the workplace. So this morning I want to talk about the importance of creating more employment opportunities for disabled people. I'll speak about the steps we're taking to support disabled people into employment. And finally I'll talk about our ambitions for the future, and the role that all of us – across society – have to play in meeting those ambitions.

But first, I want to highlight a very basic point.

Scotland's commitment to equality – and to fairness – is an essential part of our country's modern identity. It's also central to everything that we seek to do as a government. We are determined to build a society where everyone has equal opportunities – to contribute, participate and succeed.

A major aspect of that – and a priority for us – is to improve the lives and protect the rights of disabled people. So over the past ten years, we've already taken significant action.

For example, we've implemented self-directed support across our social care system – giving disabled people, their carers, and their families more choice and control over their own lives.

We've established an Independent Living Fund, to replace the one shut down by the UK Government.

Working with disabled people's organisations, we've also created an Accessible Travel Framework – which sets out how we will seek to improve the experience of travelling for disabled people.

And we've identified and mitigated many of the worst impacts of the UK Government's welfare reforms – like the bedroom tax.

These are just a few examples of the work already done. Taken together, they've made a real difference to disabled people, across the country. And our efforts in Scotland have been recognised by the UN.

For all that progress and activity there is no doubt in my mind, that we still have a lot more to do – to ensure equal rights and opportunities for disabled people across country.

Supporting Disabled People

One of the areas where inequality is most persistent is in employment.

At this point I would like to say that there are of course huge numbers of disabled people working all across Scotland – achieving fantastic things. However, the employment rate for disabled people stands at just around 43%. That compares to around 80% for the rest of the population.

That tells us the scale of the challenge. Now, for some disabled people, work is not a possibility. For some it's not a desirable option. But we know that far too many disabled people lack both the opportunities – and the support that they need – to get into employment. We need to reflect that lack of opportunity.

As a result, they are unable to fulfil their true potential. And they miss out on the benefits of work – in terms of income, self-esteem and independence that the rest of us simply take for granted.

That is simply unacceptable, we must give everyone the opportunity. That's why the Scottish Government is committed to reducing the gap in employment rates between disabled and non-disabled people – by more than half.

Now it's important to recognise, and be franking about, achieving that won't be easy. But there is no excuse. Some of the things we're doing will make a real difference.

For example, we've significantly improved access to Modern Apprenticeships.

We've provided funding for an internship programme run by Inclusion Scotland.

Our Access to Elected Office Fund helps disabled candidates to run for public office. I'm delighted that we're joined today by Helga Stevens – a Flemish MEP – who will be sharing her experiences as a disabled person in politics. We are delighted to have Helga with us today.

And perhaps most importantly of all, Fair Start Scotland – our new devolved employment service – launched earlier this month.

It's designed to ensure that – rather than being threatened with sanctions – disabled people are empowered and supported into work. That means that specialist services – like supported employment and individual placement and support – are made available to those who need it.

Changing perceptions and closing the employment gap

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Helping disabled people to seize new opportunities is hugely important. But it's only one part of the equation. The reality is that most of the barriers that disabled people face are a product of other people's attitudes, not an inherent part of that person, instead it is a reflection on society.

As a society, we tend to focus far too much on what disabled people can't do rather than what disabled people can do. That can lead to a certain bias – whether conscious or unconscious – against hiring disabled people. It can also damage the confidence of disabled people who are seeking employment – even those who are already in work.

It's vital that we tackle these damaging attitudes. That's why we're focussed on highlighting the benefits of recruiting more disabled people.

Those benefits are clear and significant. Disabled people have talents and skills that are underused, and are just waiting to be harnessed. Hiring more disabled people will help to

make your organisation's staff more representative of the public – and also for your customer base, which is very important. And it will send a very clear message about the kind of organisation – and the kind of employer – that you want to be.

Now, one of the key messages we've heard in recent months is that employers need a single source of advice on recruiting and retaining disabled staff.

That's why today, we're announcing that we will be allocate up to £1 million for business engagement. That money will be used to ensure that businesses – particularly small and medium enterprises – have the help and guidance that they need. And in the coming months, we will be working with employers, disabled people's organisations and other key stakeholders to ensure the funding is targeted as effectively as possible.

The private sector clearly has a big and vital role to play, it encouraging that so many are represented here. But we recognise that on this issue, government and the public sector have to take the lead.

We have responsibility to lead by example that's why today, we are also launching a consultation on increasing disabled employment in the public sector. As part of that, we'll be holding consultation events across the country. We want to hear the views of disabled people, their organisations and public sector organisations – on the current situation, what more we should do, and what – if any – targets we should set.

The outcomes of the consultation will inform a Disability Employment Action Plan – which we will publish in the Autumn. The Plan will list a range of measures – in addition to the two I've announced today – which will help us to tackle the disability employment gap. And it will set out the need for coordinated action across the whole of government – and the indeed across the whole of society.

Conclusion

Whether we're disabled or not disabled, whether we work in government or in the public, private or third sector – each and every one of us have a role to play here.

The target we've set is hugely challenging. It will require a transformation in the way our society thinks about disability and employment. And that won't happen overnight.

But I do strongly believe that by working together – with a clear goal – we can significantly improve opportunities and support for disabled people. In doing that, we can ensure that more and more disabled people can contribute to – and benefit from – our country's success. And in doing all of that we can help to make Scotland a fairer, more prosperous society.

I hope this event helps us – even in a small way - to get closer to that goal. So I wish you all well for the rest of today's event. And I look forward to working with all of you in the months and years ahead.

First Minister's speech at All Energy conference (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-all-energy-conference>)

Wednesday 2 May 2018, Glasgow

It's a real pleasure for me to be here this morning and to welcome all of you to Glasgow. It's always fantastic to see conferences of this scale and stature and importance taking place here, in what is my home city, and I hope you all have a warm welcome as well as very productive discussions over the course of this conference.

I addressed this conference last year and it is hard to believe that a year has passed since you all gathered here previously. It has been a busy time for energy and, as I will cover in my remarks this morning, there are a number of opportunities, but more than that a number of real

challenges that lie ahead over the years to come. I don't think there's any exaggeration when I say that this is the most important showcase anywhere in the UK for low carbon and renewable technologies, so it's wonderful to have all of you here with us.

The businesses and organisations that are represented in this room right now make an enormous contribution to Scotland, and I want to thank you for that. You help to ensure that Scotland is able to meet our obligations when it comes to tackling climate change. You improve business efficiency and reduce consumer costs. And you also strengthen hugely our economy - low carbon industries in Scotland now employ almost 50,000 people, so your economic footprint and contribution is considerable.

It's also worth pointing I think out that the businesses and organisations here today are also increasingly important to Scotland's international reputation.

Just last week we had the privilege of hosting the President of Malawi here in Scotland, and it was an opportunity to reflect on the fact that Scottish support and expertise has brought renewable energy to more than 80,000 people in rural parts of Malawi. So you're not only making a contribution here in Scotland, but also helping us to make a contribution globally.

And three weeks ago I was in China and Hong Kong – it was clear that the level of interest in, and knowledge about, Scotland's energy expertise is immense and it is increasing all the time. China is already of course a significant investor in projects such as the Beatrice offshore wind project.

Right across the globe, people are aware of Scotland as a world leader in low carbon technology, and that's a reputation that we're determined to protect but also to build upon.

The reason for that reputation – first and foremost – is the leadership, the innovation and the expertise of many of the people, organisations and businesses here today.

It's also true to say that Government has an important part to play in maintaining and encouraging that massive success story. And so my commitment, as First Minister, is that the Scottish Government will do everything in our power to support your sector. We understand that you are central to our ambitions for a greener, fairer, and more prosperous country. My responsibility is to do everything we can to support you in achieving your ambitions because that will help us achieve ours.

I hope that that commitment has been obvious to you through our actions over the last decade, and particularly perhaps in recent months, as we have published our Climate Change Plan and our new Energy Strategy. I am very grateful to the many people here who have no doubt contributed to the consultation process for those strategies.

The climate change plan sets out how we will achieve, and report on, some of the most ambitious actions anywhere in the world. We aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2/3 by 2032.

The energy strategy demonstrates some of the changes that will require. If you think about the last 12 years, we've already seen a near-transformation in our electricity sector – renewable energy in 2005 generated less than 20% of our total electricity demand; now that figure is well over 60%, and getting very close to 70%.

That success that we've seen in electricity now has to be replicated elsewhere. We now need something similar in the next 12 years - not just for electricity but for our energy use as a whole, including heat and transport. At the moment, 18% of our overall energy use comes from renewable sources. By 2030, our aim is for that to be at least 50%.

That is a very ambitious target. It will not be easy to meet that target but we are determined to do it.

We understand that will require major change across all of this conference's four pillars - energy efficiency, heat, transport and renewable energy.

I'll focus on energy efficiency later in my remarks – but I want to briefly cover the other areas first, and also to talk more about their massive economic benefits.

If we start with heating, our energy strategy makes it clear that we will probably need to increase our use of both hydrogen and renewably generated electricity. We're also investing in district heating schemes – in fact one of the largest schemes in Scotland is being developed just a few miles down the river from here, in Clydebank.

Scottish Water confirmed today that they renewably host or generate twice as much energy as they use. As part of their efforts to promote renewable energy, they are starting to use the natural warmth of their sewage network to heat buildings. Their first project of that kind – at the Scottish Borders College – has received hugely positive feedback. So there's really exciting things happening in the area of heat, and it's important that we continue and build on that momentum.

In transport, we are investing in the infrastructure needed for electric and hydrogen-fuelled vehicles, and have set an ambitious target when it comes to phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans. We are also doubling our investment in walkways and cycle paths – from £40 million last year to £80 million this year. So again, we understand the changes that are required in transport and are taking the decisions now to support those changes happening.

And if you look at electricity, I've already mentioned that renewables now account for more than 60% of Scotland's total electricity demand. By 2030, that figure is likely to be well over 100%. That shows how much additional potential we have in solar power, onshore and offshore wind, and also wave and tidal power.

As we make these changes, we are working to ensure that we also capture the economic benefits that can arise from them. These benefits are potentially huge. Often, for understandable reasons, we focus a great deal on the challenges associated with tackling climate change. My great belief is we must talk much more about the opportunities that arise from tackling climate change as well.

I've said on a number of occasions that we must see innovation as being absolutely central to Scotland's economic future. Just as Scotland did in generations and centuries past, our ambition must be, and is, to be the country that is developing, designing and manufacturing the key innovations, products and technologies of the future, not just a country that is a user of all of them.

That, I think, is a mission which is particularly important in relation to low carbon technology. Our location today – on the site of the old Queens Dock – is a reminder of our role as an industrial and trading powerhouse in the past. Just over a century ago, Clydeside produced almost 1/5 of the world's new ships.

In so many ways Scotland – through inventions like James Watt's steam engine - led the world into the industrial age. Our ambition now has to be to help lead the world into the low carbon age. That I think is an ambition that is very realisable for this country.

In some sectors we see that already happening. Scottish waters now host the world's largest tidal power array and also the world's first floating windfarm. The world's most powerful offshore wind turbines were installed just last month in Aberdeen Bay.

Glasgow is one of Europe's leading centres for offshore wind research. Last year I opened Scottish Power's new headquarters - less than a mile from here, over on St Vincent Street.

These offices, it's important to stress, include Iberdrola's global base for offshore wind. So staff here in Glasgow are involved in developing offshore windfarms in France, Germany and further afield.

Professor Sir Jim McDonald will speak in a few minutes. The work taking place at Strathclyde's Technology and Innovation Centre is just one – pretty extraordinary - example of the importance of our universities in developing and exploiting new technologies.

And of course that research expertise adds to Scotland's capabilities - not just in renewables - but in many related areas such as battery storage and smart grids.

Those extraordinary assets – our research base and our immense renewable resources – are already creating jobs and benefiting communities right across the country. But we want to make the most of that potential, and if we're going to do that then we must further strengthen our supply chain capabilities.

That issue in Scotland has received a great deal of attention recently, given the difficulties of the company Bifab. There is a long road ahead for Bifab, although things now look more positive - but the Scottish Government's actions there I hope demonstrate our absolute commitment to preserving and building Scotland's supply chain.

More generally, we are investing to provide the support and assistance that ambitious businesses need. The new national manufacturing institute for Scotland will help businesses to achieve their potential in sectors such as energy and aviation.

We have also made it clear that the move to a low carbon economy will be a central mission for the new Scottish National Investment Bank which is being established. That new bank is one of the ways in which we are seeking to create an infrastructure of public support to help private enterprise to flourish. We're determined to ensure that Scotland is the best place in the UK to set up a low carbon business.

That is true across all four pillars of today's conference – certainly including heat, transport and renewable electricity. But the final area I want to touch on today is energy efficiency.

It's an area that doesn't always get the attention it deserves – it maybe captures the imagination a bit less than finding new ways of generating, storing or using electricity. But as all of you know very well, our climate change targets can't be met without a significant improvement in the energy efficiency of our homes, offices and factories.

That is an area where we have already made significant progress in Scotland. Between 2010 and 2016 the number of homes in Scotland with one of the three highest ratings for energy efficiency increased by more than 450,000 – around 1 million homes are now rated as band C or better.

That's good progress, but even with that improvement well over a million homes still don't have a good rating.

That's why we are investing heavily in further energy efficiency measures. The UK Government doesn't give public support in this way to energy efficiency any more – I think that's regrettable – but the Scottish Government is determined to continue to do so. We've given a commitment to £500 million of funding in the 4 years to 2021.

As part of that, I can confirm today that we are again providing £49 million this year for area based schemes that will be delivered by local authorities. They help to tackle fuel poverty by improving housing – for example by installing wall insulation – in order to make homes more energy efficient.

We are also providing more than £5 million of additional funding. Some of that will be available to local authority and housing association landlords to invest in social

housing. And the rest will help local authorities to improve some of the services they provide – for example to other households who might not be in fuel poverty, but who want to invest to improve their own homes.

Perhaps even more significantly, today the Scottish Government is today publishing our route map to an Energy Efficient Scotland. It sets out our ambitions over the next two decades for improving the energy efficiency of Scotland's buildings.

It proposes that all of Scotland's homes will have a good rating for energy efficiency by 2040. That's a target we have been lobbied fairly strongly on, so I hope it will be welcomed today.

For the private rented sector we are proposing an earlier target. We are consulting on plans that could see all private rented properties achieve a good rating by 2030. And I can confirm that minimum standards will start to apply in that sector from 2020.

We're also setting a target date of 2030 for households that live in fuel poverty. That's something that will make a massive difference to low income households.

And for social housing, we're setting a target date of 2032. However we want to go even further in that sector - we want as many properties as possible to have at least a B rating.

Finally, non-domestic buildings will also be hugely important. So we will shortly consult on long term standards and targets for that sector as well.

Overall, this route map makes it clear that over the next two decades we intend to transform the energy efficiency of all of Scotland's buildings. And where we can, we're going to focus earlier action where it is most needed. It is one way in which we can ensure that the benefits of low carbon society are felt by everybody across our society.

Because the route map also demonstrates that, like so much else in relation to low carbon technology, investing in energy efficiency is both an obligation and an opportunity. It will help create employment – it is likely to support thousands of jobs. It will make businesses more competitive. And it will help us to tackle fuel poverty, making people's homes warmer and their heating bills lower as well.

That sense of opportunity I think should be apparent across all of the 4 pillars of this All Energy conference. Greener transport can help us breathe cleaner air and live healthier lives. District heating schemes can reduce costs for consumers. Renewable energy is already supporting tens of thousands of jobs in communities across the country.

There's no doubt at all that the move to a low carbon era is difficult. It represents a fundamental transformation in our society and our economy, in the way all of us live our lives. But I think we should, above all, see it also as a hugely exciting opportunity. The steps we take to achieve a low carbon society will make us a fairer, cleaner and more prosperous country. They will enable people to live happier, healthier, more fulfilling lives, and ultimately that's what everything should be all about.

In the years to come, many of the businesses in this room are going to be at the forefront of achieving that change. My promise, my pledge and my commitment to you today, is that the Scottish Government will do everything we can to support you in that. We know that by doing so, we will bring benefits to businesses, communities and families and individuals in every part of the country.

So I'm absolutely delighted to be here with you today. I wish all of you all the best for a very successful conference. Most importantly of all, as we face up to all of these exciting opportunities, I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come.

First Minister's speech at News UK - 'Scotland in Business'. (mis en ligne le 14/06/2018 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-news-uk-scotland-in-business>)

London, 14 May

Thank you, Richard. I am grateful to News UK for inviting me to speak today. It is great to see so many people here.

The last time I spoke in this building was in 2015, for the Times CEO Summit. As an opportunity to discuss some of the big issues facing Scotland and the UK, I found that event really valuable. So I am delighted to be back today for a similar type of discussion.

The focus of my remarks today, relatively brief remarks, will be Scotland's economy. I want to talk about our determination in Scotland to be at the forefront of innovation in the years to come. More specifically I have been asked to talk about our strengths in data driven innovation – and the huge potential benefits of that for both our economy and our wider society.

Fundamentally, we want Scotland to be one of the countries that is inventing and designing and manufacturing the innovations that will shape the future – not just the future of our country but future of the world. Not just a country that is using the innovations designed and manufactured elsewhere. So we are very deliberately taking a range of actions now to make our economy competitive, but also to ensure that Scotland is well placed to help lead the next era of transformational change.

That is something, if we get it right, that will undoubtedly bring massive economic benefits – but it also speaks to Scotland's history, and our sense of who we are as a country. After all, a talent for innovation and entrepreneurship runs very strongly throughout the history of Scotland. Many of the advances that shaped the modern world that we inhabit today – the steam engine, the telephone, penicillin, the television, many, many more were discovered or invented by Scots.

That tradition endures to this day. Scotland's businesses and our universities remain at the cutting edge of research and development – in key sectors like energy, life sciences and digital technology. We want to build on that – by supporting the talent and potential of our entrepreneurs, our inventors and our businesses.

Now, I do not intend to dwell on Brexit too much today – but it is obviously relevant to any discussion about our economic future.

Most of you already know the position I take – I deeply regret the UK's decision to leave the EU. And I believe the absurdity of the on-going UK Cabinet discussions and disputes over post-Brexit customs arrangements strengthens one of the basic arguments that the Scottish Government, together with many businesses, has been making. And that argument is that in our view the best approach - if the UK is determined to leave the EU – is to remain in the single market and the customs union.

It is the obvious democratic compromise, in a UK where 48% of voters – and two out of four nations - chose to remain in the EU. And it's also the least damaging solution economically. So my government will continue to make common cause with allies - including other political parties and governments and businesses across the UK, for a measured, sensible approach.

However, the prospects of Brexit reinforces the importance of all of the other steps we are taking to create a strong business environment. Scotland is working hard to attract inward investment. We are already the most successful part of the UK outside London and the south east when it comes to attracting inward investment. The Scotland is Now campaign, a

coordinated campaign including all of our agencies is about marketing Scotland, not just as a good place to invest, but a good place to work, to live, to study and to visit. We are taking a range of actions that are about ensuring we have a competitive business environment, a competitive economy and some of these actions, if I can be frank, also involve addressing areas where we think we need to do better.

For example – we've recently taken the decision to increase government support for business research and development by 70%. We know that it is one of the best drivers of innovation, business's own expenditure on R&D. We recognise it is an area where Scotland needs to do better in the future than we have done in the recent past.

We're creating a National Manufacturing Institute – Scotland has a long tradition of manufacturing excellence. We want that to continue as manufacturing becomes more advanced in the future. We are determined to be at the cutting edge of manufacturing skills and research. That has big advantages for a number of sectors – energy and aviation for example, to name two of them

And, we're establishing a Scottish National Investment Bank to complement the finance already available from the markets and in particular provide ambitious, innovative businesses with access to strategic and patient capital. The bank's implementation plan is based on the recommendations of Benny Higgins – the former CEO of Tesco Bank. The bank will be mission led, it will be about providing the capital and support to businesses to help them deal with the big challenges of the future. The transition to a low carbon economy, for example. We aim to capitalise the bank to the tune of £2 billion.

We also appointed Ken Barclay – the former Chairman of RBS – to chair a review of our business rates system to make sure they are competitive and we are already implementing most of the review's recommendations – something that has been widely welcomed by businesses across Scotland.

It is worth mentioning that we are seeking to balance a fair and competitive tax rates, overall, coupled with the lower cost of doing business for many other reasons in Scotland, with significant investment. Not just significant investment in our NHS, our education system but also in infrastructure, in business support, in housing. These are exactly the kinds of things businesses need to thrive and grow. These things are all vital to a good society and a competitive economy. And they are an essential part of Scotland's offer to business.

There has, in the last decade, been significant investment in Scotland in transport infrastructure right across, from the north to the south of the country with some flagship projects, as part of that the new Queensferry Crossing, for example.

Our focus over the next few years is very much on digital infrastructure. Our aim is that by 2021, all properties, 100% properties in business and residential will have access to superfast broadband at speeds of 30 megabits per second or greater. That goes significantly beyond the UK government's proposals for any other part of the UK. And it will help to ensure that investment and growth are shared across the country. Something that is important in any country but particularly one where one in five of our population live in what can be described as remote and rural areas.

Another hugely important investment we make is in our universities. Scotland has one of the most skilled populations anywhere in Europe with more universities per head of population than any other part of the EU. Five of them are ranked among the top 200 in the world. And we lead every other part of the UK, both in attracting R&D projects – and in setting up businesses to commercialise the research that is done.

One of the areas where that is most apparent currently is in our tech sector. Scotland already is home to 1,000 tech companies, almost 100,000 graduates from tech related fields – and incredible success stories, like Skyscanner.

That success is underpinned by our expertise in big data and informatics. The Edinburgh School of Informatics at Edinburgh University is ranked number one of its kind in the UK – and among the top 1% in the world. Our Data Lab – one of our eight national innovation centres - brings that academic expertise together with industry – to identify and capitalise on new opportunities.

All of that is helping to put Scotland is at the forefront of data driven innovation.

For example, we are already emerging as a leading centre for the development of financial technology. Edinburgh and Glasgow have a higher rate of FinTech start-ups than any other part of the UK – including London. Our Data Lab is already partnering with the likes of HSBC and Standard Life Aberdeen on FinTech R&D. And the Scottish Government, along with our business community and the University of Edinburgh – has established FinTech Scotland – an organisation designed to focus on the needs of that industry and drive its growth.

We are also pioneering research on artificial intelligence and robotics – technologies that all of us know could potentially transform the way all of us live, work and think. The Edinburgh Centre for Robotics leads a consortium of UK institutions specialising in both these fields. The consortium recently secured £36 million for research into the use of robotics in offshore energy, a really important area for Scotland, not just in the traditional oil and gas sector but increasingly, in renewable energy as well.

And last year, academics from Heriot Watt University were among the three finalists for Amazon's Alexa Prize. They successfully produced a 'socialbot' - which could converse socially with humans.

This expertise in AI is also opening up opportunities elsewhere. Our life sciences sector - Scotland is long renowned for innovation in medicine and life sciences. We are now leading pioneering research in precision medicine tailoring healthcare to fit an individual's genetics and lifestyle.

Our clinical expertise, our expertise in genomics, and our access to high quality healthcare data, perhaps the best and most joined-up healthcare data anywhere in the world make us a natural centre for this new approach to medicine. That's why, in 2016, AstraZeneca selected Scotland as one of just a few major centres for its global genomics initiative. It's a ten-year project which aims to sequence 2 million genomes from around the world – and the data gathered will then be used to develop new medicines. It's just one of many examples of some of the real pioneering work that is currently being done in Scotland. Innovation is vital, being able to innovate is vital to the kind of emerging industries that I have spoken about, but also important in our more established traditional industries and we are seeing also real examples of innovation in traditional industries from textiles to shipbuilding to food and drink as well.

So our determination is to remain at the forefront of all of these areas and to focus on doing what we need to do to ensure that that is the case. I mentioned some of our investments in infrastructure, the manufacturing institute, the investment bank and we are also investing heavily in City Deal. For example, the Edinburgh City Deal which will be so important to building on our strengths in data and digital, is one which the Scottish Government is investing £300 million, it's a deal worth over £1 billion in total. These kinds of investments are important for business and important for our ability to stay at the forefront of innovation.

I said at the start, that is something Scotland has done throughout our history. For centuries, we have been at the forefront of transformational change and we want that tradition to continue. We have in Scotland all the talent, expertise and ambition necessary to lead the world into the next revolution just as we helped lead it into the industrial revolution.

That is why we are taking the range of action that I set out and many others beside and why we are so determined to provide the support to our inventors, entrepreneurs and businesses. And it is why we will continue to do everything we can to attract talent and investment to our country.

First Minister's speech at the National Economic Forum (*mis en ligne le 16/05/2018*
disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-the-national-economic-forum>)

Dumfries

It's fantastic to be here in Dumfries today. It's really important that forums like this one don't just take place in Edinburgh or Glasgow or elsewhere in the central belt – it's really important they get out and about around the country.

It is important for organisations or individuals who are based in the central belt to discuss issues in a different setting and hear a different perspective. And of course it's also hugely important that local organisations and businesses have a chance to contribute your views, experiences and perspectives.

The theme for today's forum is "driving forward the rural economy". It's a topic which is of immense significance – not just to rural communities, but to the whole of the country.

97% of all of Scotland's land is classified as rural.

And we know many of the key economic sectors on which our economic future depends, are ones where rural communities are making a massive contribution already but there are settings where our rural communities have the potential to make an even bigger contribution in the future.

Rural communities are fundamental to our tourism industry, which has been a huge success story in recent years. Rural communities are also vital to the success of the food and drink sector – which has been our fastest growing major export sector, and which has plans to double in size by 2030.

Rural Scotland is home to most of our renewable energy generation – whether through onshore wind, hydro, solar, or – increasingly – offshore wind, wave and tidal.

And in many other areas – from financial services to creative industries to life sciences – rural towns and communities contribute to, and can benefit from, the success of vitally important economic sectors.

So ensuring that rural Scotland thrives is a fundamental part of ensuring that Scotland overall succeeds and thrives. That's why today's forum is so important; it's why seven other ministers are here for all or part of the day.

I don't want to speak for too long – but I do want to give a brief overview of some of this Government's key priorities in promoting economic growth across the country. As you might expect, I'll emphasise rural issues as we do that. And I'll conclude by talking about the specific opportunities that arise as a result of the new South of Scotland Economic Partnership.

But first, I want to say a few words about Brexit – particularly given the decision of the Scottish Parliament’s last night to, at this stage, withhold consent for the UK Government’s EU Withdrawal Bill.

Most people realised almost immediately after the EU referendum result, there are serious implications that arise from Brexit for the whole country, but particularly for Scotland’s rural economy.

In fact, some of those consequences were highlighted again on Monday – in a report published by the Highlands and Islands Agricultural Support group. It showed that Brexit is likely to harm the profitability of our farmers; that it could therefore affect related industries such as tourism and food and drink; and that overall it is a real threat to the sustainability of some rural communities.

That’s probably not a surprise when you consider the consequences of Brexit. There’s a potential impact on funding – we could lose almost half a billion pounds a year of funding which supports farms, crofts, woodlands and rural businesses.

There’s also a potential impact on trade – Europe is of course a major market for our food and drink industry. This area – as a major producer of Scotch beef, Scotch lamb, free range eggs, cheese and milk – could be seriously affected.

There’s also an impact on people. Rural and coastal communities have welcomed thousands of people from all over the EU who have come to Scotland to contribute and to work. Many of them have subsequently made their lives here. They’re contributing to the prosperity, sustainability and wellbeing of villages and towns across the country.

And there’s a potential impact on the devolution settlement itself. The UK Government at the moment proposes to take powers in areas – such as farming, fishing and environment – which are devolved to the Scottish parliament.

That’s what yesterday’s vote over legislative consent for the EU Withdrawal Bill was about. Four out of five parties in the Scottish Parliament agree that Scotland must retain the ability to ensure that policies and frameworks in those areas meet the needs of people across Scotland.

The threat posed by Brexit is one of the reasons why the Scottish Government has appointed a Council of Rural Advisers – whose final report is due soon. We want to ensure that the very specific consequences of Brexit for rural communities are identified and addressed.

It’s also why we will shortly be publishing a paper setting out our proposals – and seeking views – on ensuring a smooth transition in farming support as the UK leaves the EU.

And it’s the threat of Brexit why – more generally – the Scottish Government is arguing for the UK as a whole to remain in the single market and the customs union. It is the obvious democratic compromise, following a very narrow referendum result. And all of the modelling shows it is the least damaging outcome for communities across the country.

However, the other point I want to make about Brexit – and this is the main theme of my speech as a whole – is that in many ways it simply emphasises the importance of everything we are doing to promote economic growth. Scotland – including rural Scotland – has huge economic strengths and even greater economic potential. Brexit makes it even more important than ever that we build on those strengths and realise that potential.

In the last year the Scottish Government has set out repeatedly our belief and ambition that Scotland should position itself at the forefront of economic progress and technological change; we should aspire as a country to be the inventor, designer and manufacturer of the technologies and products that will shape the world in the future – not just a country which uses these products that are designed elsewhere.

That's a vision which is as relevant to rural Scotland as it is to our city centres. I suspect you will get a sense of that from the OECD presentation later on today – the OECD's work has highlighted how developments such as driverless cars, decentralised energy systems and cloud computing will in time have a huge impact on rural areas.

But you can also get a sense of it just from looking around this campus, and thinking about the work led by universities and colleges here – for example the dairy research and innovation centre conducts work of international importance; the carbon research centre focusses on issues such as sustainable development in rural areas, and new forms of renewable energy.

There are centres of excellence like this in every part of Scotland. So we want to enhance this country's – already pretty extraordinary – capabilities for innovation in the future.

That's why the Scottish Government took the decision to substantially increase the support for business research and development – we know how fundamental that is for companies to innovate.

We are supporting sectors of the economy where Scotland has major opportunities – for example by establishing a national manufacturing institute, investing in sectors such as the creative industries; and by setting up innovation centres in areas such as aquaculture, biotechnology and data analysis. And we are committed to establishing a new national investment bank to support ambitious companies and to invest in important infrastructure projects.

We're supporting businesses in other ways, too. For example we are capping business rate increases at the level of the consumer price index, rather than the retail price index. That sounds technical, but it has a real impact – this year, it will save businesses a total of £24 million.

We've reformed the planning system. Now, planning always involves a balance between environmental concerns and economic development. Our planning bill aims to strike that balance, and to ensure that decisions are made quickly and efficiently. That's important everywhere, but it's maybe especially important for rural areas – where enabling sustainable development is such a crucial consideration.

We're also reforming the Enterprise and Skills support system – one outcome of that is the new south of Scotland agency. It's maybe also worth saying that as part of our approach to actively supporting businesses, we do what we can when firms and factories get into difficulty – you saw that recently in relation to BiFab in Fife.

As you know, there is currently a consultation about the proposed closure of the Pinneys plant down in Annan. I cannot guarantee a successful resolution there – what I can guarantee, is that the Scottish government will work as closely as we can with the company, the unions and the workforce to find a solution that protects the workforce and protects the local communities.

And we are investing in Scotland's connectivity – our transport links and digital infrastructure. Again, that brings benefits to all parts of the country, but is maybe especially important in rural communities, where the distance to your major markets can be a barrier to success.

In the north of the country, the dualling of the A9 is the biggest road project of this generation. We are also committed to dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen.

Here in the south of Scotland, we have made significant improvements to the A75 and A77 over the last decade. We are currently investing £35 million in the Maybole bypass – which is a really important improvement to the road between Stranraer and Ayr.

Humza Yousaf – the Minister for Transport and the Islands – convened a transport summit for the south west earlier this year. A study will begin soon on further improvements for the region. And I know that Transport Scotland held a workshop in Dumfries a couple of weeks ago, about their capital investment strategy for the railways.

And of course, as well as good transport infrastructure, good digital infrastructure is also becoming a necessity for businesses and households.

I remember being in this hall for a public discussion with the Cabinet just over three years ago. And just about the last question of the night referred to the inequality between cities and rural areas when it comes to broadband access.

Things are still not perfect but in the period since then, we have made progress in closing that divide between rural and urban areas. The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband scheme means that more than 95% of properties in Scotland now have access to fibre broadband.

You can see some of the outcomes here in Dumfries. In 2014, 22% of premises in Dumfries and Galloway had access to fibre broadband. That figure today is 93%. That is significant progress but in our view 93% still isn't enough. We also know that for some people at present, access to fibre doesn't necessarily mean that they are getting superfast speeds.

That's why we are committing £600 million to the R100 programme – ensuring that by the end of 2021, every property, whether a business or household in Scotland, has access to broadband at speeds of at least 30 megabits per second. It's a commitment that goes far beyond any other part of the UK. And it is an essential part of our commitment to supporting economic growth in rural and remote areas as well as the central belt of the country.

The final point I want to make is that in doing this, we want to ensure that we work with rural communities – that your views and perspectives directly shape national policy.

That's why this National Economic Forum now meets in different parts of the country.

It is also why the Scottish Government established a rural parliament, which meets every two years. After previous gatherings in Oban and Brechin, it's appropriate that this year's parliament – which will probably be attended by more than 400 people – is coming to the south west. It will be held in Stranraer in November.

And the importance of recognising rural needs is also why we are establishing a new south of Scotland development agency. The agency should be in place by 2020.

Before then – while we wait for the legislation establishing it to be passed – we have set up the South of Scotland Economic Partnership. The partnership is being backed by £10 million of additional funding. I am delighted that Russell Griggs, the partnership's chair, is here today.

Russell is I know half way through a tour of communities in the south of Scotland, hearing views on exactly how the partnership should work. There are 11 more events to go – the next one is in Newton Stewart this evening. He is also receiving written submissions – I know he's been struck by the thoughtfulness and detail of many of the contributions, not solely by organisations and businesses, but by individuals as well.

And two things already seem clear. The first is that there's a real desire for the new agency to be planned, designed and delivered here in the south of Scotland. It must be an agency of the south of Scotland, as well as being an agency for the south of Scotland.

And the second thing is that the new partnership is a major opportunity. If we get it right – and I am determined we will – then it will make an important contribution to growth in the south of Scotland, and to securing the sustainability of rural communities.

As I said at the start of my remarks, that is something which is important – not just to the rural parts of our country, but to everyone in Scotland. We will not succeed as a nation unless our rural communities can also succeed and flourish. By driving the rural economy forward, we will drive the whole of Scotland forward.

By investing in innovation and infrastructure; by building on the strengths our rural communities already possess; and by providing the right forms of support for business; we can help rural communities – not simply to overcome challenges such as Brexit, but to seize new opportunities as well.

If today's discussions can play even a small part in helping us to do that, they will be highly worthwhile. So thanks to all of you for being here and being part of this discussion.

[Launch of National Performance Framework \(mis en ligne le 11/06/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/launch-of-national-performance-framework\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/launch-of-national-performance-framework)

First Minister

Edinburgh

Thank you, Alyson. And thanks to all of you for coming. I'm delighted to see people here – not just from around Scotland, but from across these islands and across the world. In fact, there are representatives from 14 other countries here today. It is a pleasure to welcome you all to Scotland.

The fact that people have travelled such distances to be here is an indication of the importance of today's launch.

When the Scottish Government introduced our previous national performance framework in 2007, it had a significant impact. It helped to give the public sector, and in addition to that, individuals and organisations across the private sector, a very clear vision of the kind of country we wanted to create. In particular, it set out one purpose – creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

That purpose was underpinned by 16 outcomes and 63 indicators. And the “Scotland Performs” website helped people to assess how we were performing against those indicators. So it introduced a new degree of transparency around the work of government and government agencies, as well as focussing the country very clearly on the outcome we wanted to achieve.

Perhaps the most important thing about the framework, was that it gave all parts of the public sector a shared responsibility for all parts of the performance framework. It wasn't fragmented, everybody had a responsibility to help deliver the whole. Our heritage and conservation bodies knew about our economic indicators and were encouraged to think about their contribution to delivering the economic indicators – and our economic development bodies also knew about our commitments to biodiversity and the marine environment. All public sector agencies and organisations were expected to work together to achieve all of those common goals. So it was about setting clear goals, delivering a new degree of transparency and for the first time, bringing everyone together in a way in which they understood the contribution they had to make.

It was quite transformational in how we did the business of government. That might sound straightforward, but some of the practical implications were extremely important.

For example, the prison service, the police, the courts service, the NHS and our local authorities came together to discuss the framework. They considered how their organisations could best use their combined resources to deliver the outcome “We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger”.

One consequence of that is that our police service in Scotland now has a legal duty to promote community wellbeing.

Another consequence is that all of those organisations have supported further investment in pre-school education – regardless of whether that benefits their individual budgets. They recognise that early years services can help them to achieve their shared goals. It’s a good example of how looking at outcomes made it easier to focus resources on prevention and early intervention.

And although it’s always difficult to work out exactly which interventions have achieved which outcomes – and although we still need to do more to reduce the impact of crime in Scotland – the most recent figures suggest that progress has been made. Ten years ago, the risk of being a victim of crime in Scotland was 20%. Two years ago, it was down to 13%. That’s real, hard evidence we’re moving in the right direction.

So in many respects, the framework we established in 2007 has been effective. Many of its outcomes and indicators are still very relevant. And the collaborative approach to service delivery that it encourages is more important than ever.

But inevitably, after more than a decade, there is a need to change and update. That’s why we have established the new framework, which is being launched today.

I’m going to talk about some its key features in a moment. But I want to emphasise first just how important the new framework is to the Scottish Government.

Our purpose, our values, the outcomes, the indicators – collectively they set out the sort of country we want to create, the Scotland we want to see. If indicators are heading in the wrong direction, it gives us the opportunity to find out why - and if we need to, we will take action. When things are going in the right direction, it enables us to ask what we need to do to maintain or increase progress and to learn what it is that’s making a positive difference. And we will make information about our performance available to everyone through the updated website.

Fundamentally, we believe that the performance framework is an aid to making Scotland a better country. So we are determined to continue to use it, report on it and deliver on it.

In fact, you get some idea of the importance we attach to the framework by looking at our consultation process.

Well over 200 organisations in Scotland were involved in conversations and online responses as we developed the new framework. The Carnegie Trust and Oxfam Scotland held street stalls in local communities in order to solicit views and opinions from members of the public. We also drew upon earlier responses to our fairer Scotland and Healthier Scotland consultations.

Many of the people here have been involved in those discussions in one form or another – we are very grateful to all of you.

We have also consulted with the Scottish Parliament – indeed it was as a result of that consultation that we added a new indicator on land ownership. I welcome the fact that all political parties endorsed the framework during a parliamentary debate last month.

And engagement with COSLA and local Government has also been really important. I welcome their endorsement for the new Framework, too – we will only succeed if we plan and deliver change through partnership between national government and local government.

The new framework, therefore, is not something we see as being solely a Scottish Government document. It has been driven by responses, ideas and proposals from individuals and organisations across the country.

Those proposals have encouraged us to make some important changes.

For example, we have included new indicators on issues such as gender balance in organisations, child well-being and happiness, and the importance of contractually secure work.

The new framework also includes a statement of values alongside our purpose. We want Scotland to be characterised by kindness, dignity and compassion. So we're clear that government – and the way in which we conduct government – should encourage those qualities.

Fittingly, given that value statement, we have incorporated human rights into the framework. One of our 11 outcomes is that “we respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.” That's further evidence of our determination to embed human rights – including economic and social rights – in the way we make decisions and in the way we deliver services.

We have also made sure that the performance framework is compatible with the sustainable development goals – for example that's one reason why we are now reporting the proportion of energy we generate from renewable sources. Scotland was one of the first countries to commit ourselves to the Sustainable Development Goals – so it's important this new framework reinforces and embeds that commitment.

And the final change I want to highlight is to our purpose. Again, this has been a direct response to the feedback we've had from people and organisations.

The new purpose says that growth needs to be inclusive, as well as sustainable. That reflects our economic strategy, which is in itself based on evidence from around the world that high inequality – as well being a bad thing in itself – also makes economic growth weaker and less sustainable.

The purpose also highlights the importance of wellbeing. That's another issue we see as being hugely important.

In fact, the Scottish Government has taken the lead in setting up a Group of Wellbeing Economy Governments, which followed an initial meeting of ministers in Glasgow last year.

Alenka, who will speak in a moment, was at that meeting. I'm delighted that she is here again today to share with us the approach being taken in Slovenia.

Wellbeing is an area where Scotland has seen some encouraging progress recently. The Office of National Statistics publishes an annual report on personal wellbeing across the UK. They released their latest findings last month. One of the publication's key findings was that “improvements in worthwhile and happiness ratings in the UK were driven by Scotland”.

Obviously, we must be cautious about one year's findings – and it is difficult to know what exactly has caused these improvements. However if the performance framework can play any part, in maintaining that trend in the years to come, it will be performing a hugely valuable role.

My hope and my very strong belief is that it can do that. The framework we're launching today is motivated by the belief that everything we do should help to make Scotland a better place for all its people who leave here, regardless of where they come from. And it is informed by the knowledge that to achieve that, we need to focus – not just on the wealth of our nation, but on the wellbeing of the nation.

That emphasis is in keeping with much contemporary economic thinking – Professor Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize winning economist, has said today that he is encouraged by our focus on wellbeing.

And it also finds echoes in an anniversary from last week. On Wednesday it was exactly 50 years since Bobby Kennedy's assassination.

One of Kennedy's greatest speeches, I think, was given about three months before his death, at the University of Kansas.

There's a famous passage where he talks about the limitations of using economic output as a success measure. He points out that "gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile."

It's a beautiful expression of a genuinely very difficult problem. Scotland's new performance framework is our attempt to try to address it and get the balance right.

We see sustainable and inclusive growth – higher GNP or GDP – as a vital way of raising living standards for all.

However we also understand that growth isn't something we can aim for in isolation – it has to make people's lives better. We have to test whether we are creating a fairer, wealthier, happier nation.

As we think about these issues, we know that Scotland doesn't have all of the answers. I don't think any country does. But in developing the new framework we hope, at the very least, that we are increasingly asking the right questions and playing our part in trying to find the answers, working with others as we do so.

And as we seek to deliver, measure and improve our performance framework in the years to come, it is a source of great strength to know that we can benefit from the perspectives of so many individuals, organisations and governments – not just from within Scotland but from across these islands and around the world.

That's why today's event is so important. It's why – as I said at the beginning – it is wonderful to have such a large turnout and such a wide array of expertise gathered here. And it's why the Scottish Government looks forward to working with all of you – not just for the rest of today, but in the months and years ahead.

So thank you very much for your contribution.

[FutureFest \(mis en ligne le 06/07/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/futurefest\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/futurefest)

First Minister, London

It is always a pleasure to return to London.

It's also a particular pleasure to come to this Futurefest. After listening to the news this morning – with the Cabinet meeting to agree a final Brexit position for what seems like the

millionth time, and let's face it a mere two years after the vote - it's actually a genuine tonic to arrive at an event like this: an event which is all about focussing on some of the biggest issues of our age, and doing so with a real sense of realism, optimism and open-mindedness. I'm really grateful for the invitation to be here. I'm hugely grateful to Nesta for organising it.

Nesta are actually neighbours of the Scottish Government in our London offices on the Embankment. More importantly, though, they are close partners of ours in much of our work in Scotland.

We currently work with NESTA on issues such as digital health; using collective intelligence to help young people in the jobs market; and harnessing data science to map economic activities. And we are developing even more exciting plans for collaboration in the future.

One reason for that is that Nesta's mission – using innovation to tackle social problems – really does define what the Scottish Government aspires to be all about in Scotland.

Innovation is in Scotland's DNA – it's a key part of our history, it speaks to our very sense of who we are as a people and as a country. Inventions and discoveries from Scotland down the generations - from James Watt's improvements to the steam engine, through to the telephone, the television and penicillin - have done so much to shape the modern world.

But innovation's not just about the past. It can't just be about the past. We know that know that innovation is central to our future prosperity, success and to our future wellbeing, and that's why we've made promoting innovation the central focus of our economic policy.

We're investing heavily in innovation centres which bring together our university researchers and industry. We've recently started establishing a new manufacturing institute to develop our strengths in modern methods of advanced manufacturing. And we're also in the early stages of setting up a new National Investment Bank because we want to provide the sources of long term patient capital that allow our most entrepreneurial and ambitious companies seeking to tackle the big challenges of our time the finance that they need to thrive and to succeed.

We're also very aware, and I think governments across the world should be even more aware of this – of the massive purchasing power of governments and the public sector. How public sector procurement, if used properly, encourage and drive innovation. For example we've established an initiative which is called Civtech, which invites entrepreneurial tech companies to pitch ideas which can address specific public sector challenges. It's a great way of solving those challenges in our public sector but also doing that in a way that helps us to develop new companies and new ideas.

At the core of CivTech lies the ambition to solve societal challenges collaboratively, and then export the solutions to the rest of the world.

In some ways, that could almost serve as the Scottish Government's mission statement for Scotland's economy. We want Scotland in the future just as we have in the past to invent, design and manufacture the innovations and products that will shape the world of tomorrow, not simply to be a country that's consuming and using the products that are invented, designed and manufactured elsewhere.

But we also want to ensure that those innovations don't just benefit big business but benefit wider society as well.

Because the fundamental issue we're addressing today goes beyond economics. The title of this session - How can Government shape the future? - raises an important issue.

Governments around the world right now have a choice. We can be passive in the face of technological change - continuing to govern without acknowledging or adapting to the new world in which our citizens live - or we can be active participants, seeking to ensure the

economic advantages of new technology are captured - not just by major corporations or entrepreneurs, but by society and for the benefit of society as a whole.

That starts with a very basic issue – how we measure our own success as a nation. A couple of weeks ago the Scottish Government launched our new National Performance Framework – it was the result of a widespread consultation across all aspects of Scottish society. One of the key aspects of that framework, and that framework is all about setting the purpose of our country and then deciding the objectives and benchmarks by which we measure success. The key aspect of that is it's not just about measuring economic success, but it recognises that sustainable economic growth is essential, but it also emphasises increased wellbeing as a key indicator of our country's success. That means that we measure very deliberately social and environmental progress together with the economic output of the country.

We recognise that being a wealthier nation, has to be the means by which we become a fairer, healthier, happier country as well.

In order to achieve that, governments can't just promote innovation in their economic policies - they must also adopt innovation in their social policies.

Scotland in many respects is in a very strong position to do just that. As a country of 5 million people, we can be agile and active in response to both social and economic issues. We can also learn from our neighbours – both here on these islands, and around the world – and adapt their lessons and experiences to our own circumstances.

And so what you can see from Government in Scotland is a sustained effort to use innovation and new technology, to address the intergenerational challenges that affect societies around the world.

The transition to a low carbon society; adapting to an ageing population, the rise of automation and artificial intelligence; these are all opportunities to lead, as well as challenges to be overcome.

We want to seize those opportunities; and we also want to ensure that no one is left behind as a result of the changes that we are leading.

A good example of that approach is climate change. It is arguably the greatest environmental, economic and moral issue currently facing the planet. Taking action – especially for developed nations like ours – is an overwhelming moral imperative. However it is also a massive economic opportunity for countries that put themselves in the vanguard of change.

And so Scotland, for moral and pragmatic reasons, is trying to do that. We are currently the second best performing country in Europe for reducing carbon emissions. That's partly because almost 70% of our gross electricity demand now comes from renewable energy. In fact the world's largest tidal array, the world's first offshore floating windfarm and the world's most powerful offshore wind turbines are all currently in Scottish waters.

If you allow me to digress here for a moment, the 11 offshore wind turbines are located just off the coast of Aberdeenshire, and a few years ago you might have heard of these turbines because a famous golf course owner from America, who I think has now turned his hand to politics, decided to take the Scottish Government to court to try to block these wind turbines because he thought they spoiled the view from his new golf course. I'm very pleased to tell you today that the Scottish Government beat that American golf course owner in court, and just earlier this week these amazing wind turbines generated their first electricity.

They are engineering marvels, and they also – very importantly - will soon generate enough electricity for almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the homes in Aberdeen.

So we will continue promoting renewable energy projects like that - but we are also now focussing on other issues such as transport.

We have set an earlier target date than the rest of the UK for removing the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans – we've gone for 2032 rather than 2040.

We're now launching challenge funds to help local authorities test new approaches to encouraging electric and hydrogen vehicles.

Again, there are moral and economic reasons for this. All of us will benefit from cleaner air through low emissions vehicles. But also, Scotland already has significant expertise in areas such as smart grids and battery storage so we're choosing to build on those strengths.

If we can create a market, and offer Scotland as a platform for testing new ideas, we can encourage early investment in new technologies which could be used around the world. We can create jobs and investment, while improving our health and our environment.

And as we do that, we know that the move to a low-carbon world will fundamentally reshape our economy and our society. And so, learning from previous industrial revolutions, we are setting up a Just Transition Commission. It will help us to consider employment issues when developing climate policies, so that we can make a fair and effective transition to more sustainable jobs and economic sectors.

It's an important sign that we don't simply want to lead the world towards a low carbon future, although we do. We also want to ensure that the changes we lead benefit the whole of our society.

We're adopting a similar approach to artificial intelligence and big data. Again, this is an area where Scotland has major economic opportunities.

Our cities are becoming established as major tech hubs – companies like Skyscanner have been major success stories in recent years. That's partly because of the quality of our university research. Edinburgh University's School of Informatics is ranked as the best of its kind in the UK

That's why we're promoting new industries such as fintech, and it's why we have invested in The Data Lab – an innovation centre which brings together government, university researchers and businesses.

And again, we want to ensure that the innovations we're encouraging benefit wider society.

I mentioned earlier that adapting to an ageing population is one of the challenges – a hugely welcome challenge, I should add – that all Governments face. It's something which Scotland is addressing in a number of ways – for example we integrated our health and social care systems at a time when other parts of the UK are only talking about doing that.

We also know that data can play an important role in improving the services for older people.

That's why the Data Lab recently worked with the NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government on the issue of delayed discharge. That's where patients are well enough to go home, but have to stay in hospital because arrangements can't be made for the social care they need.

It's an issue which causes unnecessary discomfort to patients, and it is also very expensive – it costs approximately £140 million a year in Scotland.

So the Data Lab is building an algorithm for predicting which patients are most likely to be affected by delayed discharge. When the algorithm was checked, using a sample of 13,000 patients, it correctly predicted 124 of the 131 people who were affected.

Now, the algorithm also predicted a lot of false positives. It still needs to be refined, and turned into something which can be used in a clinical setting. But the potential to identify patients who are at risk, and then to take early action to correct this, is already obvious.

It's just one of the ways in which the use of data can bring significant social benefits. Another innovation centre the Scottish Government is supporting is for stratified medicine – that's where data enables treatments to be customised to the characteristics of individual patients. Again, it's an area where Scotland has huge potential to generate economic opportunities while improving people's wellbeing.

Of course for all the many advantages of the technological revolution, we also know that there is genuine concern about potential disadvantages – the misuse of personal data; the likelihood of job losses in some sectors; the risk of exploitative employment practices and of rising inequality levels.

So exploring new ideas, and being open to different ways of doing things is going to be essential.

That's one of the reasons why the Scottish Government is now supporting local authority pilots on a universal basic income. An idea which, I think, is worthy of exploration. It may ultimately prove not to be practical but that's one of the reasons to support pilots. It's all about being open minded, open to new ideas, because these kinds of advances are going to be important if we do what I'm talking about today – support that technological change, lead that technological change, without disadvantaging huge swathes of our population.

We also working closely with trade unions. We've worked closely with Scotland's trade unions in recent times about the impact of automation, highlighting the importance of investing in skills throughout people's lives – so that they can adapt as technologies change.

We established a group that's looking at the Collaborative Economy – including the rise of platforms such as AirBnB and Uber.

Its work is looking at how we reconcile the challenges that are always seen as being in conflict, of how we make that sure that platforms like those don't do harm, but at the same time how we capture the benefits that they can bring.

Our full response will be published shortly. However one of the steps we are taking is the launch of something called Sharelab Scotland - it's another Scottish Government collaboration with Nesta.

Sharelab is a fund which will provide financial support – and also mentoring and advice – to organisations whose platforms provide social benefits. It will have a strong initial focus on sustainable energy and transport – especially in remote communities. However it will also consider other projects which can help or empower disadvantaged communities and individuals.

It's a further way in which we can promote a major economic and technological change – the rise of collaborative platforms being an example of that – in a way that doesn't exploit people in our population but instead benefits our economy, our society and our environment.

The final point I want to make this morning is related to the video that you're about to see. It's called "Scotland is now", and it should be viewed - not just as a description of Scotland, but as an invitation to the rest of the world.

Scotland's openness to new ideas includes an openness to new people, to new talent. At a time when too many politicians across this country and many countries in Europe want to talk, often erroneously, about the negatives of migration and of people travelling across different countries, the Scottish Government has a very different message that we want to

spread far and wide. We want people to come to Scotland. We want people to do us the honour of making Scotland their home, and join with us in building the forward-looking, positive, progressive country we want to be.

So although I am well aware that London is a great place to live, as are many other parts of these islands - if any of you are thinking of moving, Scotland is not full! You would be welcomed with open arms!

But also, our desire to attract new talent is a further reason for ensuring that Scotland is one of the most attractive countries in the world to work in, to study in, to live in, to visit, and to have new ideas in. We understand that the vibrancy of our cities, the beauty of our landscapes and the quality of our public services – they contribute to, and benefit from, the dynamism of our economy.

And in some ways, of course, that takes me back to where I started – with the importance of focussing on wellbeing together with sustainable economic growth.

I want Scotland to be a world leader in scientific advance and technological progress. In many areas we already are.

But I'm also conscious of the need to ensure that technological progress aids rather than hinders social progress. In fact, I see that as one of the key roles of government. It's not enough simply to encourage technological progress- we also have to ensure that everyone can share in its benefits.

If in Scotland we can go even part of the way towards achieving that, we can create a fairer and more prosperous Scotland – and we can also, perhaps, play a part in creating a fairer and more prosperous world. We can fulfil the mission I spoke of earlier – of helping to solve societal challenges, and then exporting the solutions around the world.

As we look to achieve that, it is wonderful to have partners such as Nesta, who view the future with realism, idealism and optimism. And it is great to be able to draw inspiration from events such as this.

So I'm delighted to be at Futurefest, I wish you all well for the rest of the conference.

[Programme for Government \(mis en ligne le 04/09/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/programme-for-government-2\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/programme-for-government-2)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, Scottish Parliament

Presiding Officer,

Last year's Programme for Government set us on a path to address the big challenges faced by Scotland and developed economies around the world.

It set out bold plans to tackle inequality, adapt to an ageing population and move to a low carbon society.

And it presented a clear vision of the kind of country we want to be.

A nation leading the world in technological innovation and staying true to enduring values of social justice.

A country proud of its history and achievements, but equipping itself to seize the opportunities of the future.

And a society determined to remain open, inclusive and welcoming in the face of rising forces of intolerance, isolation and protectionism.

This Programme for Government today flows from that vision and builds on the progress of the last year and indeed of the last decade.

And it ensures that we remain focused on delivering for today and investing for tomorrow.

It continues and accelerates the major reforms underway in our health, education and justice systems – underpinned of course by our new progressive system of income tax.

It seeks to make further progress on tackling inequality and reducing poverty.

It sets out the next steps in the operation of our new social security system.

And it builds on our work to support Scotland's economy and encourage innovation.

It does all of this, of course, in the shadow of Brexit.

We simply cannot ignore Brexit, or the UK Government's shamefully shambolic handling of these negotiations.

For our part, we will continue to make the case for EU membership.

Short of that, we will press the UK Government to remain in the single market and the customs union.

And as the terms of Brexit become clearer in the months ahead, we will consider and set out our view on how Scotland's interests can best be protected and advanced.

Of course, as we saw just yesterday, it is clear that an increasing number of our fellow citizens believe, as we do, that the best future for Scotland lies in becoming an independent country.

Presiding Officer, this Programme for Government will be impacted by Brexit, but it is not defined by it – instead it sets out how we intend to deliver on our vision of a healthier, wealthier and fairer Scotland.

Let me turn first to the economy.

Economic growth in Scotland over the past year has been higher than in the rest of the UK.

Exports of goods have increased by 12% - the fastest growth of any UK nation.

Youth and women's unemployment are lower than in the UK as a whole.

And in the last decade Scotland has significantly narrowed our productivity gap with the rest of the UK.

These are strong foundations.

But we must intensify our efforts to build an economy fit for the future.

Last year we set out a range of bold measures. This year, we will continue to deliver.

Firstly, we will ensure that the business environment in Scotland remains competitive and that we are providing the support that business needs to thrive.

We have already implemented key recommendations of the Barclay Review on business rates – such as relief for new builds and property improvements, and for day nurseries.

I can confirm today that we will introduce a Non-Domestic Rates Bill to implement its other recommendations – for example, reforming rate reliefs and moving to a three year valuation cycle.

In the past year, we established the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board.

Drawing on its recommendations, we will publish a Economic Action Plan in October.

We will again increase the number of modern apprenticeships in line with our commitment to 30,000 per year by 2020.

And we will work in partnership with industry and trade unions to produce, by early next year, a new skills action plan - ensuring a skilled and productive workforce for the short, medium and long term.

We will continue to support the South of Scotland Economic Partnership with £10 million of funding.

And I can announce that in the coming year, we will introduce legislation to establish a South of Scotland Enterprise Agency.

We will also continue to invest in the modern infrastructure a strong economy depends on.

Around this time last year, the Queensferry Crossing opened and the M8 and central Scotland motorway improvements were completed.

This weekend, one of the largest new sections of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will open. The road will be fully open to traffic by the end of the year.

And in the coming year, we will continue to make progress towards the dualling of the A9; we will take forward important projects including the Maybole bypass; and continue our ongoing road maintenance programme.

Last year, I announced that Scotland would aim to remove the need for new diesel and petrol cars by 2032.

We will now make further progress towards that goal.

We will invest £15 million to add a further 1,500 electric charge points in homes, businesses and council premises across the country.

We are increasing our Low Carbon Transport Loan Fund from £8 million to £20 million - enabling more businesses and individuals to make the switch to electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

And over the next year we will add 500 ultra-low emission vehicles to public sector fleets.

In the coming year, the benefits of our massive investment in rail will come to fruition.

By the end of next year, there will be a 20% increase in seating capacity and 200 new services will operate in eastern and central Scotland.

And of course we will take forward plans to enable a public sector bid for the next ScotRail franchise.

On active travel, having doubled our investment in active travel last year, I can confirm that we will continue that level of investment in the year ahead.

Digital infrastructure is now as important as our transport links.

We have exceeded our target of making fibre broadband available to 95% of properties across Scotland.

And I can confirm today that the three main contracts for our Reaching 100% programme will be awarded in the coming year - ensuring that superfast broadband is available to every business and residential property in every part of Scotland.

Presiding Officer, that is a £600 million pledge of truly universal coverage, unmatched elsewhere in the UK - and it will give Scotland a real competitive edge in the economy of tomorrow.

The infrastructure investments I have talked about so far are important to the economy in the here and now.

However, it is with an eye to the long term that I now turn to two potentially transformational commitments.

Last year, I confirmed our intention to set up a Scottish National Investment Bank and earlier this year an implementation plan was published.

I can confirm today that in the coming year we will introduce the legislation that will formally underpin the Scottish National Investment Bank.

The bank will provide patient finance for ambitious companies and important infrastructure projects - and it will do so in line with defined national missions, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It will be a cornerstone of the high-innovation, low carbon economy we want to create here in Scotland and the Finance Secretary will set out more detail tomorrow.

But today I also want to set a wider investment ambition for Scotland.

Traditionally, the level of government infrastructure investment in the UK has lagged behind other G7 countries.

For Scotland to close that gap, we would need to increase annual investment by around 1% of GDP - equivalent to an additional £1.5 billion per year.

I can announce today that we will aim to close that gap by the end of the next parliament.

The pledge I am making today is to increase capital investment year on year, so that by 2025/26 it is £1.5 billion higher than the 2019/20 baseline of around £5 billion.

Between now and then, that commitment will mean investment in our hospitals, schools, houses, transport, low carbon technology and digital connections will be around £7 billion higher than current spending projections.

The Infrastructure Secretary will set out in the coming months the detail of how we will deliver on this pledge and the priorities for investment, but I can confirm today that in addition to traditional capital and borrowing, the Scottish Futures Trust will examine new profit sharing finance schemes, such as the Welsh Government's Mutual Investment Model, to help secure both the investment we need and best value for the taxpayer.

Presiding Officer, I hope the whole parliament will get behind this national mission - a level of investment in our vital economic and social infrastructure that will protect and create jobs in the short term, and support growth and productivity in the long term.

Finally, on the economy, let me set out further action to protect and enhance Scotland's reputation as a trading nation.

We have already taken steps to strengthen our presence in Europe and around the world – for example by doubling SDI representation on mainland Europe and establishing new Scottish Government offices in Dublin and Berlin. Our new Paris and Ottawa offices will open this autumn.

In addition, I can announce today that we will launch a major new drive to increase exports.

The value of our exports has grown strongly in the past year, but we need to do more. Right now, around 70 businesses account for approximately 50% of our international exports. It is vital that we grow that base.

The new national export plan will be published in full by next Spring. But after consultation with business, I can announce today some of the key strands that we will start on immediately.

We will provide intensive support for 50 high growth businesses each year to help them grow their overseas activity.

We will create 100 new business to business peer mentorships each year to help new exporters.

We will expand the network of specialists working in key overseas markets to identify untapped potential.

And we will increase export finance support for companies looking to enter new markets.

I can confirm that this work will be backed by £20 million of new funding over the next three years - helping to ensure that more of Scotland's world class produce and innovations are enjoyed across the globe, with the benefits realised here at home.

Presiding Officer,

We must also continue to retain and attract talent. We want to make clear that Scotland remains an open, inclusive, outward-looking nation.

So let me make this very clear again today - this government will always make the positive case for immigration.

As part of that, we must protect EU citizens who already live here. We will argue that they should not have to pay settled status fees post Brexit – it is simply wrong that people already making a contribution to our country should have to pay to retain rights they currently have to live and work here.

However, if the UK Government persists, I can confirm that the Scottish Government will meet the settled status fees for EU citizens who work in our devolved public services.

I can also announce that, alongside an Electoral Reform Bill, we will introduce an Electoral Franchise Bill to ensure that current EU citizens who live in Scotland can continue to vote in Scottish Parliament and local government elections.

These actions will provide practical help. They will also, I hope, send an important message - that we highly value the contribution of EU citizens who have chosen to make Scotland their home and we want them to stay.

Supporting growth in our economy is essential - but so too is ensuring that growth is environmentally sustainable.

Many of our actions will help us to meet the targets set out in the new Climate Change Bill, which will progress through Parliament in the coming year.

Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions have almost halved since 1990.

By 2050, they will have reduced by at least 90%.

Achieving that target will mean that Scotland will be a carbon neutral country by 2050 – we will have no net emissions of carbon dioxide.

I can also confirm our firm intention to move towards net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gases - not simply carbon dioxide - as soon as we credibly can.

It's worth being clear about the scale of our ambition.

The targets in the Climate Change Bill for 2020, 2030 and 2040 are the most stringent statutory targets anywhere in the world - without exception.

And our 2050 target is the most ambitious anywhere in the world that is based solely on domestic actions, rather than relying on paying other countries to reduce emissions for us.

We recognise that the transition to a low carbon economy is, first and foremost, an overwhelming moral imperative - but it is also a huge economic opportunity.

And we are – by any reasonable benchmark – a global leader in living up to our international obligations.

This programme for government will build on that record.

As well as progressing the Climate Change Bill, we will continue to invest in projects such as the Central Scotland Green Network, and the water environment fund.

I can confirm that in the coming year, we will ban the manufacture and sale of plastic stemmed cotton buds.

Following recent consultation, we will design and implement a deposit return scheme for drinks containers.

And we will ask the Expert Panel on Environmental Charges to recommend other actions to reduce plastic pollution.

We will also establish a national deep sea marine reserve by the end of 2019.

We also intend to establish an Animal Welfare Commission to ensure that high standards of welfare are maintained for both domesticated and wild animals.

And I can announce today that we will, by the end of this Parliament, introduce what is commonly known as “Finn’s law” to increase the available sentences for the worst forms of animal cruelty, including attacks on police dogs.

In addition to creating a wealthier and greener Scotland, we will also create a fairer country.

2018 is Scotland’s year of young people - a celebration of the contribution that children and young people make to our society.

But the most important thing any government can do is make sure that all of our young people have a fair chance to succeed.

We are striving to do that at all stages of young people’s lives.

The baby box has been a huge success, with more than 56,000 already delivered.

Our plan to almost double childcare will help give every child the best possible start in life and save working families up to £4,500 a year for each child.

Our work to deliver this commitment will continue in the year ahead – with almost 2000 people starting on early learning and childcare apprenticeships; 1500 additional college places; and 400 extra graduate level places.

And to ensure the quality of our early learning and childcare provision, a new National Standard for Funded Providers will be published before the end of this year.

Closing the attainment gap and raising standards in our schools remains the overriding mission of this government.

Progress is being made, but in the coming year our school reforms will accelerate.

I can confirm today that by the end of this year, a new Headteachers’ Charter, backed by new national guidance, will be published.

The Charter will put headteachers much more in control of the important decisions on curriculum, staffing and budgets that are fundamental to the performance of their schools.

We will also continue to invest an additional £180 million a year - including money direct to schools through the Pupil Equity Fund - to help close the attainment gap.

We will commit £10 million in this academic year to enhance the high quality practical support and expertise that is available to teachers through the Regional Improvement Collaboratives and Education Scotland.

And in the year ahead we will pilot and roll out a new national survey of parents and carers, as part of our recently published parental engagement plan.

We will also continue to protect free tuition for higher education.

However, as part of our work to widen access to university, we will also take the first steps to implement the recommendations of the independent review of student support.

I can confirm that next year we will invest £16 million to increase college bursaries and university grants for students from the lowest income families.

We will also invest more than £5 million to increase bursaries and grants for care experienced young people at college or university - to a level equivalent to the real living wage.

Presiding Officer, extensive research shows that adverse experiences in childhood – ACES – directly affect outcomes later in life. So we will continue to embed, across all areas of our work, a greater focus on preventing ACEs and also on supporting the resilience of children and adults to overcome childhood adversity.

And, finally, I said last year that we would consider how to further embed the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law and policy, including the option of incorporation.

Having now carefully considered this matter, I can announce today that we will incorporate the principles of the UN Convention into Scots law.

We will work with partners and Parliament to do it in the most effective way possible – but in this Year of Young People, there can be few more powerful symbols of this Government’s commitment to our young people.

Children will also benefit from our actions to address poverty.

The new Child Poverty Act set targets for 2030 that will reduce child poverty to the lowest level in Scotland’s history.

We are now investing in the actions needed to achieve those target.

I can announce today that by June next year we will report on progress to develop a new income supplement.

In the coming year, we will also invest £12 million in an intensive parental employment support programme to help parents on low incomes gain employment and get on in their careers.

We will also step up our work to eradicate holiday hunger, investing a further £2 million to tackle food insecurity amongst children.

The coming year will see our work to create a Scottish social security system based on dignity and respect step up a gear.

Our new agency, Social Security Scotland is already open for business and moving firmly into its delivery phase.

It is with great pride, therefore, that I can make these announcements today.

Firstly, I can confirm that the first payments of the new Carers’ Allowance Supplement will begin next week. The supplement will benefit more than 75,000 carers - increasing their allowance by more than £400 a year.

I can also announce that the new Young Carer Grant worth £300 a year will be paid from autumn next year.

And in the coming year, we will provide enhanced assistance for those on lower incomes struggling with funeral costs.

And, finally, the year ahead will see us deliver the new Best Start Grant. This will provide the most extensive support anywhere in the UK for new parents on low incomes: £600 on the birth of a first child, £300 on the birth of any subsequent child - with no two child limit or abhorrent rape clause - and £250 for each child when they start nursery and again when they start school. The Best Start Grant will benefit around 50,000 families each year.

Presiding Officer,

I said last year that the Best Start Grant would be paid from summer next year.

I am delighted to announce today that, assuming we get the required DWP co-operation, the first pregnancy and baby payments will be made before Christmas this year - six months ahead of schedule.

Our work to build a fairer Scotland will also include, in the year ahead, a new Consumer Protection Bill to secure fairer outcomes for consumers.

And, as part of our efforts to tackle fuel poverty, I can confirm that we will liaise with key stakeholders this year, before formally consulting next year, on our preferred model for a publicly owned not-for-profit energy company.

We will also continue to take concerted action to address homelessness and eradicate rough sleeping.

Last year, we established the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group. It has already made its recommendations - with some of them already implemented.

We have committed £21 million of additional funding, and I can confirm that before the end of this year, we will publish a comprehensive action plan setting out how we will deliver all 70 of the Action Group's recommendations.

However, I can announce today that implementation of the Housing First approach will be central to our plans. This ensures that a homeless individual or household is moved directly into their own settled accommodation rather than through a variety of different housing options.

In the first instance - from this autumn - we will work with Social Bite, the Glasgow Homelessness Network and the Corra Foundation to support Housing First pathfinder projects in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Stirling and Dundee.

We will also continue to invest in the supply of affordable housing.

In this financial year, we will increase our support for affordable homes by a more than a quarter - from £590 million to more than £750 million.

And over this parliament, we will ensure that more than 50,000 affordable homes are delivered, including at least 35,000 for social rent.

Within this, we will work with councils and housebuilders to increase the supply of accessible housing for disabled people.

We will also work with local government, communities and businesses on short term lets. We want to ensure that councils have the appropriate powers to balance the needs of their communities with wider economic interests.

Of course, for investment in housing, and infrastructure more generally to benefit communities fully, we need a fair and effective planning system.

In the coming months, we will progress the new Planning Bill through Parliament and ensure that people get a chance to have an early say in shaping developments in their area.

The voice of local communities is of course vital to our partnership with local government.

This programme reaffirms our commitment to a strong partnership between national and local government.

This is reflected in our work with COSLA to take forward the Local Governance Review to strengthen local decision making.

I can also confirm today that we will extend the community land fund to 2021 to enable more community land purchases, support the work of the Scottish Land Commission as it shapes land reform for the future, and steer the Scottish Crown Estate Bill through Parliament.

I want to mention three further initiatives that will contribute to the strength and wellbeing of local communities.

In two weeks, the new V&A museum in Dundee will open to the public - a stunning reminder of the potential of culture to both regenerate and bring joy to communities across the country.

Before the end of the year, we will publish a new national culture strategy, which will demonstrate the intrinsic value we attach to arts and culture, and our determination to ensure that everyone can participate in cultural activities.

Before the end of 2018 we will also publish a national strategy to tackle social isolation and loneliness – it will draw on the results of our recent consultation, and make Scotland one of the first countries in the world to develop a strategy to address an issue which is of growing importance around the world.

And by March 2019, we will publish an Older People's Framework setting out how we will achieve better outcomes in terms of services for older people, as well as in their participation in the labour market and engagement in local communities.

Presiding officer, the two final areas I want to talk about today are justice and health.

Recorded crime in Scotland is now at its lowest level since 1974. The reconviction rate is at its lowest level in almost 20 years. And 95% of people in Scotland rate their own neighbourhood as being fairly or very good.

By any reasonable measure, this is a significant record of achievement.

We are determined to improve on it.

We will protect the police revenue budget in real terms throughout this parliament.

In addition, £31 million will be provided for police reform in this financial year – helping the police to invest in new technology and work more effectively with partners.

The fire service budget is also being protected - with an additional £15 million of spending capacity this year to help with, among other things, the introduction of rapid response vehicles and more full time posts in our rural areas.

Presiding Officer,

As we reform the justice system, it remains absolutely vital that we improve the support we give to the victims of crime.

We are already taking important steps to do that through, for example, the Vulnerable Witnesses Bill that we introduced to this Parliament last year.

This year we will go further.

I am announcing today a major package of reforms that will better protect victims in the criminal justice system.

Firstly, we will work with Victim Support Scotland to reduce - and where possible eliminate - the need for victims to retell their story to different organisations when they need help.

We will also expand the range of serious offences where the victim has the right to make an impact statement, setting out to the court how they have been affected physically, emotionally or financially. We will consult on the details early next year.

We will improve the information and support available to victims and families when prisoners are released from prison, and consult on proposals to increase the transparency of the parole system.

And, finally, we will establish a new support service to provide more and better help to families who have been bereaved by murder or culpable homicide.

Presiding Officer, we will also continue to improve the support available to victims of rape and sexual assault.

We, over the summer, recently announced additional funding of £1.1 million to enable sexual offence trials to come to court as quickly as possible.

Today, I am announcing that we will make available a further £2 million over three years to speed up access to support for those affected by rape or sexual assault.

£1.5 million of this additional funding will go to rape crisis centres - starting next month - with the remainder available to meet particular local needs.

In the coming year, we will also consult on proposals to ensure that in cases of rape or sexual assault, forensic medical examinations - and access to healthcare more generally - are a priority for the NHS and provided consistently across Scotland. We intend to bring forward legislation later in this parliament.

We will also continue to work to reduce and eliminate domestic abuse. The legislation already passed by Parliament to make coercive or controlling behaviours illegal will come into force this year.

I can confirm today that we will now consult on the introduction of new protective orders which can bar perpetrators of domestic abuse from their victims' homes.

In addition, we will introduce a new Family Law Bill to provide further protection for domestic abuse victims in contact or residence cases, and ensure that children's best interests are central to the consideration of such cases.

Finally, we will introduce a Female Genital Mutilation Bill to strengthen the protection provided to women and girls.

There are a range of other important measures that we will take to improve the justice system.

We will consult later this year on changes to modernise and improve the law on hate crime.

We will extend the presumption against ineffective short sentences from 3 to 12 months, once additional safeguards are in place for domestic abuse victims.

In addition, legislation for new drug driving limits, covering 17 different drug types, will be introduced - and will come into force in 2019. This - together with Scotland's already lower drink-drive limit - will ensure we continue to lead the way in the UK when it comes to improving road safety.

A Biometric Data Bill will provide for a code of practice for acquiring, using, retaining and disposing data such as fingerprints and DNA samples. It will take forward the recommendations of the Independent Advisory Group and modernise the law in an area of great importance to the justice system.

And we will introduce a new Disclosure Bill to strike a better balance between helping people with convictions to gain employment and providing strong safeguards for vulnerable people and the general public.

I can also announce today that, in the year ahead, we will consult on reforms to the law of defamation, with a view to bringing forward legislation later in this Parliament.

Presiding Officer

We are as a Parliament and indeed a country proud of our reputation as one of the best places in the world for LGBTI+ people, and we want to make further progress in the months and years ahead.

I can therefore confirm that we will continue work to develop legislation to reform the law on gender recognition.

And in the coming year, we will introduce a Census Bill which will permit the National Records of Scotland, in future censuses, to ask questions on sexual orientation and transgender status.

Presiding Officer, the final important area I want to talk about today is health.

Last week's inpatient survey results showed that satisfaction with our national health service remains at a very high level.

Our accident and emergency facilities have been the best performing in the whole of the UK for the last three years.

Outcomes like this are a tribute to the expertise, dedication and compassion of NHS staff across the country.

It is therefore absolutely right that NHS staff will receive a minimum pay rise of 9% over the next three years.

Last year, we introduced to this Parliament two important health bills which are due to come into force next year – the Human Tissue (Authorisation) Bill will implement an “opt-out” system for organ donation, and the Health and Care (Staffing) Bill will ensure we have the right staff in the right places.

However, all of us know that our NHS - in common with health services across the UK and elsewhere - faces significant challenges.

The key challenge is adapting to an ageing population - which is, of course, a good thing - and the rising demand that flows from that.

We will continue to meet our pledge to invest record sums in the NHS.

However, we will also progress important reforms to how care is delivered and take further action to improve population health.

Over the next year, we will take forward work to implement the new GP contract, support integration of health and social care and we will invest a higher proportion of the health budget in primary, community and social care.

From next year, we will also implement Frank's Law, extending free personal care to eligible under 65 year olds.

And we will continue to champion a preventative approach to Scotland's public health challenges. In May, we became the first country anywhere in the world to introduce minimum alcohol pricing.

This year we will take forward plans to reduce childhood obesity. Amongst other measures, we will consult on restricting the promotion and marketing of food and drink that is high in fat, sugar or salt.

Preventing ill health and building up community services are absolutely essential to ensuring a health service fit for the future.

But so too is ensuring that acute services can meet the demands placed on them.

We know that rising demand has put significant pressure on waiting times. And we recognise that current performance is not good enough.

I can therefore announce today that the Health Secretary will, later this month, publish a waiting times improvement plan, setting out a range of short and medium term actions to substantially and sustainably improve performance.

Part of the longer term plan to meet waiting time targets on a sustainable basis is the creation - over this Parliament - of five new elective treatment centres.

I can therefore confirm today that work on the new West of Scotland Centre, at the Golden Jubilee, will start in the early part of next year and work on the North of Scotland Centre at Raigmore in Inverness, will be underway by the middle of next year.

I can also confirm today that, as part of our work to create a specialist major trauma network, new major trauma centres will open in Aberdeen next month and in Dundee in November.

Finally, Presiding Officer I want to turn to mental health.

As the stigma around mental health reduces, demand for services is rising.

We have a duty to meet that demand quickly and to meet it appropriately.

That means doing more to support positive mental health and prevent ill health.

It means delivering greater provision of mental health support in communities, including in our schools.

And it means ensuring that those experiencing serious illness can access specialist services more quickly.

Today, I am announcing a package of measures that will complement our mental health strategy and will be backed by a quarter of a billion pounds of additional investment, starting this year and progressively increasing over the subsequent four years.

The Mental Health Minister will set out full details shortly, but let me cover some of the key elements now.

Firstly, we will develop a stronger network of care and support for the 1 in 5 new mothers - around 11,000 a year - who experience mental health problems during and after pregnancy.

This will include greater access to counselling for those experiencing mild symptoms and an expansion of specialist services for those with moderate or more severe illness.

Secondly, we will utilise technology to extend access for adults to a range of support services. This will include improvements to the NHS24 Breathing Space service, extending online access to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, improving access to psychological assessment and therapy in rural areas, and strengthening the handling of mental health calls to the 111 service.

However, most of our additional investment will support improvements to the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

The Task force on Children and Young People's Mental Health will report this autumn – however based on the early discussions held by its Chair, Dr Dame Denise Coia, there are a range of actions we are committing to now.

Firstly, we will invest £60 million in additional school nursing and counselling services.

This will support 350 counsellors and 250 additional school nurses and ensure that every secondary school has a counselling service.

We will enhance support and professional learning materials for teachers and ensure that, by the end of academic year 2019/20, every local authority has access to mental health first aid training for teachers.

We will fund an additional 80 counsellors to work across further and higher education.

And we will develop a community mental wellbeing service for 5-24 year olds, offering immediate access to counselling, self care advice and family and peer support.

We will also put in place plans to fast track young people with the most serious mental illness to specialist services - as well as taking targeted action in the short term to reduce the longest waits for services.

Presiding Officer as I said a moment ago more detail will be published shortly but I hope the package I have announced today underlines the commitment of this government to ensuring that our health services value and support mental wellbeing just as much as physical wellbeing.

Presiding Officer, the Budget Bill will complete and indeed underpin our legislative programme for the coming year.

The 12 Bills we will introduce in the coming session are of course part of a much wider programme of work to tackle the major social and economic challenges of the day.

Over the next 12 months this Government will also:

- make progress towards doubling free childcare provision
- further narrow the attainment gap in our schools, and widen access to our universities
- pay the first benefits in Scotland's new social security system and take action to tackle poverty and inequality
- help our NHS adapt to an ageing population and begin a transformation of mental health services
- tackle major public health challenges
- legislate for a Scottish National Investment Bank, invest for the future and support more business to sell their goods across the globe
- support the transition to a low carbon economy, and
- do everything we possibly can do to protect our economy from Brexit and put Scotland on the right track for the future.

I commend this Programme for Government to Parliament.

[First Minister's speech at CBI Scotland annual dinner \(*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-cbi-scotland-annual-dinner>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-cbi-scotland-annual-dinner)

First Minister

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon delivers the keynote speech at CBI Scotland's annual dinner, Hilton Hotel, Glasgow on Thursday 6 September 2018.

It's a pleasure to be here this evening. CBI Scotland is an important voice for businesses across the country, and an important critical friend and partner to the Scottish Government.

The reasons for that, I think, were very obvious from Carolyn's speech. For most of my remarks this evening, I will focus on three issues which were prominent in this week's Programme for Government, and which are of direct relevance to business – infrastructure, skills and internationalisation. However I want to start just by picking up on a couple of the other things that Carolyn mentioned.

The first relates to Brexit. Two weeks ago, when the UK Government published its technical notices on preparations for a “No deal” scenario, I was struck by the strength of the CBI's statement.

It said that the notices “*show that those who claim crashing out of the EU on world trade organisation rules is acceptable live in a world of fantasy*”.

It's an assessment Caroline made again today, and it is an assessment that the Scottish Government agrees with wholeheartedly. No deal would be disastrous for businesses across Scotland and the UK. However a determination to avoid no deal should not lead us to accept a bad deal.

In fact we share many of the same concerns and priorities on Brexit as the CBI.

The CBI has been vocal in stating that the UK should stay inside the single market and the customs union throughout any post-Brexit transition period. Our view actually goes a bit further.

We believe that if Brexit has to happen, which we regret deeply, single market and customs union membership is the obvious solution – not simply for the transition period, but for the long term. It's the least damaging economic solution and the most obvious democratic compromise given the range of perspectives on BREXIT.

So the Scottish Government will do everything we can to argue for a common-sense approach to Brexit in the weeks and months ahead. And we welcome the fact that business organisations will also be making their views known. We hope that that has a real influence, and that it helps to move the debate out of the world of fantasy and into the realms of reality.

However Brexit cannot and will not define this Government's actions. If anything, it increases the importance of getting on with the rest of our work – of building a strong society and a prosperous economy. The two go hand in hand.

And that's directly relevant to the second issue in Carolyn's speech that I want to pick up on. That's the importance of innovation.

Two days ago, the Scottish Government published our programme for government.

It builds on the policies we set out last year, and reaffirms our commitment to Scotland as a country whose future success is based on innovation. We want to invent, develop and manufacture the key technologies and products of the future, rather than consuming those invented elsewhere.

We have the potential to do that in some of the key economic sectors of the future. I'm going to Aberdeen tomorrow for the opening of the European Offshore Development Centre – that development has the most powerful offshore wind turbines anywhere in the world. It's just one example of the huge potential of our low carbon sector.

On Monday, I'm speaking at a summit in Perth about precision medicine – where treatments are tailored to a patient's genetic and lifestyle characteristics. It's an area where Scotland has huge potential, partly due to the strength of our life sciences sector and the strength of our patient data.

Scotland is also becoming recognised as a major centre for technology companies and big data analysis. Our space sector is thriving – this city makes more satellites than any other in Europe. We have a reputation to be proud of.

And many of our traditional sectors are also flourishing. For example our food and drink and tourism industries are going from strength to strength - figures published yesterday confirm that.

So the programme for government sets our further ways in which we can work with business to capitalise on those strengths, and help businesses to innovate and grow. Manufacturing growth is a cause for optimism. We are setting up a National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland, and legislating to create a South of Scotland Development Agency. We are continuing to support business research and development.

Last year, we implemented key recommendations of the Barclay Review of Business rates last year – we are working this year to take forward the others.

We are also creating a Scottish National Investment Bank.

The investment bank will be a source of patient finance to ambitious companies, and it will also be able to invest in major infrastructure projects. Often, these will be private sector developments which could have a transformational impact on communities, towns or regions.

As a result, it will complement another of our key commitments – increased spending on the social and economic infrastructure we need to thrive.

That's been a major focus of ours in recent years. You can see the results across Scotland - for example in the completed central Scotland motorway network, the Queensferry crossing, the ongoing work to dual the A9, and the almost completed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. In the coming year passengers will start to see benefits from rail investment – for example a 20% increase in seating capacity.

And, having surpassed our target for more than 95% of properties to have access to fibre broadband, we will ensure that by 2021, every single home and business in Scotland will have access to superfast broadband. That's a £600m commitment which is not matched by any other part of the UK. It has the potential to provide competitive advantage and is essential to modern life and business

When CBI Scotland published “Pursuing Prosperity” last year, you made it clear that good quality infrastructure creates jobs in the short term and is a vital part of raising productivity – especially in regions of Scotland where it is currently lower than average.

On Tuesday, we committed to further increases in infrastructure spending. By 2026, we will be spending £1.5 billion more than the £5 billion we spend now. The cumulative increase, over 7 years, is £7 billion. It's an investment which provides certainty – to the construction industry and to business as a whole. It will create jobs in the short term, and raise productivity for the long term. And it will bring benefits to businesses and communities in every part of Scotland.

However we know that our investment in infrastructure will only pay benefits if we also invest in our people. And so skills is the second issue I want to talk about.

Last week, CBI Scotland joined with the STUC to stress the importance of skills. I found it hugely encouraging to see a major employer organisation working in partnership with unions on an issue of such national significance.

Skills is an issue where we have already worked closely with business and trade unions in recent years – for example in delivering more modern apprenticeships.

But looking to the future, we know that technological change will make some jobs redundant; will transform many others; and will create a lot of new jobs that we may not even have imagined yet. So Government has a duty to ensure that nobody is left behind by these developments.

That's why we established a flexible workforce fund to helping existing workers to gain new skills. It's also one reason for attaching a priority to STEM subjects.

However we know we need to do more. And we also – and I know this is a genuine concern for many businesses – have to get better at streamlining or simplifying our support for skills. Support has to be easier for businesses to influence, learn about, and access support.

That's one of the reasons why the Programme for Government pledged to publish a national skills plan early next year.

Perhaps even more fundamentally, it proposed a national retraining partnership to bring together government, trade unions and employers to discuss critical issues: for example future skills needs, and how access to support can be made simpler.

I expect it will rapidly become an important and influential body. And it will help us to direct and deliver a skills policy that meets the needs of Scottish businesses – now, and well into the future.

There are a couple of other points about skills which I think are worth making. The first is that we will only maximise our potential as a country if we enable everyone – regardless of gender, age, disability, sexuality or gender identity - to contribute as fully as possible to our society and economy. So promoting diversity is hugely important. I am therefore delighted that Ruth (*Hunt, CEO Stonewall*) is leading a conversation here this evening.

And the second is that skills is a good example of an area where - as Caroline's speech made very clear – Brexit creates an unwanted challenge. We face the risk of a shortage of skilled workers if freedom of movement ends.

So we will continue to ensure that Scotland remains – and is seen to remain – an open, welcoming, internationalist country. We will continue to make, in partnership with CBI, that positive case.

That is one reason why we promised on Tuesday to meet the settled status fees of EU nationals who work in our public services. And it is why, most fundamentally of all, we continue – like the CBI - to make a powerful positive case for immigration. It is good for our society, good for our public services, and good for our businesses.

The final area I want to talk about – internationalisation - is another one where Brexit increases the need for action.

In the last decade, the value of our international exports has increased by 45%. The latest figures show that goods exports increased by 7% last year – that's better than any other nation of the UK. Goods exports to the EU increased by 18%. Sectors such as food and drink and our oil and gas supply chain have been major global success stories.

We have worked to build on that in the last year by expanding our presence in EU markets. I opened the Scottish government's office in Berlin in June. Our Paris and Ottawa hubs open

later this year. Scottish Development International has now doubled its representation in Europe, and we launched our major overseas promotional programme – “Scotland is Now” in February.

At this event last year, I mentioned the fact that approximately 70 companies are responsible for around half of Scotland’s exports. That is both a challenge and an opportunity – major benefits could emerge from small shifts in that dial.

And so this year’s Programme for Government looks to provide better support for more individual businesses. We’ll enable 150 high growth companies over the next three years to increase their overseas activity. And we’re creating 300 new business-to-business mentorships – where new exporters learn from experienced ones.

We’re backing these proposals, and also several others, with £20 million of additional funding. It’s actually – in terms of the scale of Scottish public spending overall – a relatively modest investment. But it’s one we believe can have a significant impact.

That’s partly because we are working in partnership with business. The idea for business mentorships is actually something that I discussed with Tracy (*Black, of CBI Scotland*) earlier this year. We’ll be working with CBI Scotland - and of course other business organisations - to identify the companies which will act as mentors.

We are also working with CBI Scotland to deliver a major conference at the end of November. It will help companies to find out more about the benefits of exporting, the opportunities they have, and the support that is available to them – including some of the new support I just outlined.

I hope it will encourage and enable new businesses across Scotland to enter international markets. I look forward to working with you.

In many ways, in fact, our work on exporting exemplifies how much all of us have to gain from a collaborative approach between business and government. In the coming months that will be more important than ever.

Brexit poses genuine risks and challenges to the Scottish Government and to business. But that makes it all the more important that we work together to promote innovation, invest in infrastructure, support skills, and encourage exports. If we do that, we can improve productivity and raise sustainable growth. And we can bring benefits to individuals, businesses and communities in every part of Scotland.

That’s the ambition which the Scottish Government reaffirmed in our programme for government on Tuesday. As we strive to achieve it, it is a huge help to be able to work with businesses and with organisations such as the CBI. So I am delighted to be here. I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening. And I look forward to working with all of you, in the months and years ahead.

Ends

[Scotland's International Development Alliance Annual Conference \(*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-international-development-alliance-annual-conference>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotlands-international-development-alliance-annual-conference)

First Minister - 25 September 2018

Thank you, Trudi (Sieland).

And thanks to all of you for coming here for this very important conference.

It’s highly appropriate that today’s event is being held during the UN’s Global Goals week. Scotland was one of the first countries anywhere in the world to commit to the new

sustainable development goals. In doing so, we made clear our determination – not simply to make Scotland a fairer and more prosperous country, but also for Scotland to play our part in creating a fairer and more prosperous world.

For our part, promoting international development is an absolutely essential part of being a good global citizen. It's worth stressing that point, given some of the discussions taking place elsewhere on these islands. The Scottish Government does not believe, we never have believed and will never see, that aid is given primarily for our own national interest.

It's important that as a developed country, we believe that it is our moral duty to play our part and create a better world. That is, and always will be, the main purpose of our international development funding - a point I don't think needs to be made but with such division elsewhere it's important.

The Alliance is Scotland's main network for improving the effectiveness of our international development work, and for informing and influencing Scottish Government policy. Through the information you make available to us, the connections that you encourage, and the training you provide, you perform a hugely valuable service – one that has enormous benefits for organisations across our country, and for individuals right around the world.

My main message is a very simple one - thank you for all you do. The Scottish Government is hugely grateful for the contribution you make, and we will support that work in any and every way we can.

I'm going to set out some of the ways in which we are doing that. I will talk about some of our recent initiatives – for example in relation to humanitarian relief, climate justice and gender equality. And I will talk about our approach – which is based on policy coherence, and partnership with the sector.

But I want to begin by addressing an issue which isn't always comfortable to talk about – but which is absolutely crucial. Safeguarding is of paramount importance to all organisations that are involved in providing support and help to the most vulnerable members of our community.

Without it, vulnerable individuals – those who most need help – will be at risk of abuse and exploitation. And if that happens there will be a loss of public faith in the benefits of aid, investment and international co-operation.

That's why the Scottish Government relatively recently amended our grant conditions to make it clear that all partner organisations must have strong safeguarding policies in place.

It is also why we have provided additional funding for the Alliance over the last few months to lead the development of a safeguarding support package. I am delighted that the initial draft package is being launched today, so that it can be evaluated and improved over the coming weeks and months.

I'm very aware that developing a safeguarding culture in some organisations and institutions may take time. And so the Scottish Government is committed to working with all of you to ensure that it happens.

I'm grateful to everyone who has been involved in the process so far, and I very much welcome the fact that there are breakout sessions on the issue today.

Safeguarding is a subject which all governments and all international development organisations need to prioritise. I would agree we need to prioritise and I am glad to see this conference giving the issue the attention it requires. In many ways, in fact, safeguarding is an essential precondition for the success of all of the other projects that we are working on together.

These other projects have achieved a great deal over the last year, and many of those achievements are captured in the contribution to international development report that we published a few weeks ago.

For example last year we launched the humanitarian emergency fund. It has been developed jointly by aid organisations and the Scottish Government.

Since it was launched, the fund has provided relief to people affected by emergencies around the world – including in East Africa, South Asia, Syria, Yemen and Myanmar. And it has encouraged NGOs to work together even more effectively than before.

And alongside that vital immediate humanitarian relief, we are also working for the long term. Many of our projects help people and communities to help themselves, and to prosper independently.

A good example is our commitment to renewable energy – this has brought clean electricity, a prerequisite for sustainable development, to more than 80,000 people in Malawi.

Another example is one which Trudi will know well – the work of Water Witness International and others to improve water security.

Our Climate Justice Fund supports a project which encourages and enables people in Malawi to use their water resources more sustainably – it is currently working with a number of groups, including a collective of more than 7000 rice farmers in northern Malawi.

Stewardship of water will, of course, become ever more important as the effects of climate change become more pronounced. It is vital that developed countries – who have been by far the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases – help developing countries to adapt.

And we also consistently recognise that one of the surest ways of helping communities to flourish is to empower women, something close to my heart domestically as well as what we're doing internationally. They must be able to contribute equally in the workplace, in councils and legislative assemblies, and in society as a whole.

That's why we have funded a scholarship programme in Pakistan which enables thousands of girls and young women to continue their education.

And it is why many of the projects that Ben MacPherson is visiting in Malawi and Zambia have gender equality at their heart.

For example on Friday he will visit Malawi's police training college to see how Police Scotland are helping them to reduce gender-based violence. He will also discuss with UN Women how Scotland can best contribute, in Malawi, to reducing rates of child marriage, or very young marriage.

Today, I am delighted to announce a further important initiative.

Fistula – where a gap develops in the birth canal, often due to a prolonged or difficult childbirth – is a major source of distress to women in Africa. It often causes incontinence, and leaves women feeling isolated and in despair.

For several years now, the Glog Foundation, has run a Freedom from Fistula initiative in Malawi. It treats more than 400 women every year. And it also gives them the chance to rebuild their lives – for example by providing training, or meeting school fees for the youngest patients.

The Scottish Government is announcing new funding today for a new initiative. It will enable young women who are recovering from fistula to manufacture reusable sanitary pads.

It improves the ability of women in Malawi to obtain affordable, environmentally friendly sanitary products. And for the young women recovering from fistula, making the pads will provide them with a source of income, and encourage them to develop entrepreneurial skills. It's an initiative where a relatively small amount of money could make a very big difference to people's lives. I am delighted to be able to support it.

The final point I want to make this afternoon – and it's one which is relevant to every single example I have given – is about the importance of policy coherence and collaboration.

As all of you know in your day to day work, international development work does not stand in isolation from everything else that government does. So we need to ensure that our wider policies do not undermine our international development programme.

In fact we go further – we try to ensure, where possible, that policy areas actively support international development.

Climate change is maybe the most obvious example here. Our climate change targets ensure that Scotland is at the forefront of global action in reducing climate change emissions.

And through our Climate Justice Fund, we take a human rights-based approach to helping developing countries as they mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

But there are many other examples. I mentioned the work of Police Scotland earlier. In addition, the Scottish Government, working with NHS Scotland, has established a Global Health Coordination Unit, which will encourage partnerships with other countries – to improve and build capacity within their health services.

It's part of the Scottish Government's wider Global Health Programme – an initiative which was praised by Bill Gates when he visited Scotland earlier this year.

Ben MacPherson on Thursday will hear about University of Glasgow's partnership with the Malawi College of Medicine. They're working together to establish a dental school in Malawi.

NHS Scotland and Glasgow University are both involved in efforts to make better equipment available for dental care in Malawi. It's a great example of how organisations right across the public sector – not simply the international development team within Government – have a vital role to play in supporting our wider aims.

And of course in all of this we need to collaborate. The role of the Scottish Government is important. But our policies cannot achieve success without the support of individuals, charities, faith groups, third sector organisations and businesses – here in Scotland and in our partner countries. We gain better outcomes when all of us work together.

That's why Scotland's International Development Alliance is so important. It promotes the partnership and collaboration which is so important to effective international development work.

That is why it's so inspiring to be in this room today with the alliance's members - to get a sense of your energy, expertise and willingness to work together.

And it's why I am confident that today's conference will be a success – one that helps us to do even better in the future, as we work together to achieve the global goals. Thank you very much for listening today and let me end by thanking every one of you for what you do every day.

First Minister's speech at Scottish Tourism Alliance (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-scottish-tourism-alliance>)

Edinburgh - 1 October 2018

Tourism without a shadow of a doubt continues to be one of the most important, vibrant and successful sectors of the Scottish economy.

We know that anecdotally, but it's also abundantly clear from the latest statistics. Last year saw an increase in the number of people visiting our country; we saw record admissions at our most famous tourist attractions; and a total spend by both domestic and overseas tourists of over £5 billion.

That's a fantastic record of achievement. The first thing I want to do today is say a heartfelt thank you to all of you for that. And in the last month of course, the sector has had another reason to celebrate – with the opening of the magnificent Dundee V&A. The Scottish Government is very proud to have supported that project, having visited it myself on its opening weekend, it's clear that it's a world class tourist attraction, which will attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

Now, the ongoing success of Scottish tourism reflects the talent, dedication and creativity of the 200,000 people working in the sector. And it's our job as the Scottish Government to do everything we can to support that continued success and make sure of course that that there is a relationship between the overall success of our tourism sector and the success and responsibility of all the different companies and interests working in that sector. And as a powerful voice representing the sector I do believe, not just because I'm sharing a platform with them right now, that the Scottish Tourism Alliance deserves a huge amount of credit for all of this success.

I saw once again just a few weeks ago, in August, what a vitally important role you play. I was in Arran to launch the Food Tourism Plan – which the STA played a central role in developing. That Plan sets a target of doubling visitor spend on food and drink. It's an ambitious, considered and forward-thinking document – and I think it exemplifies the approach the STA takes.

Those qualities are also strongly reflected in the theme of today's conference - which considers the Future of Tourism in Scotland. That of course is an enormously important subject. Despite the undoubted success of recent years, it is clear that our tourism sector faces very real challenges, as well as significant opportunities. And so this morning, I want to talk about some of the ways in which we're aiming to support the development of Scottish tourism, in the years ahead.

Of course as Marc has already alluded to, perhaps the most pressing challenge and the greatest uncertainty facing tourism at this time – along of course with every other sector of our economy - comes from Brexit.

The past couple of weeks have merely confirmed what has been increasingly clear since the 2016 referendum. There remains no clear or credible plan to protect our vital interests in the context of Brexit.

As a result, we now face the very real prospect of exiting the EU in the most damaging way possible.

That would have a profound implications for Scotland's economy as a whole. But perhaps two stories from the past week really highlight the specific risks of that for tourism.

On Monday, the UK Government published a report on the future of aviation under Brexit. That report acknowledges that – in the absence of new agreements – there would be significant disruption to air travel between the UK and EU countries.

With Europe currently accounting for seven out of Scotland's ten key visitor markets – and around 60% of our overseas visitors – that is always going to be a matter of huge concern.

Another risk was highlighted on Tuesday – when the UK Cabinet agreed its post-Brexit approach to immigration. They've reportedly approved a skills-based system – which would see EU nationals facing the same immigration rules as people from other countries. It would require people coming to live and work here to meet a salary threshold of £30,000 per year.

Now, that decision not only shows complete disregard for the deep and long-standing ties between the UK and other EU countries. It also threatens to create a workforce crisis in sectors that are absolutely critical to the Scottish economy.

Just to illustrate that a bit more, under that approach it's estimated that 75% of the EU nationals currently working in Scotland would have been ineligible to come here in the first place. It will therefore be incredibly difficult – in the future – to maintain and to expand the workforce on which our economy depends. And again, our tourism industry – which has 27,000 EU national working in it – will be one of the sectors most at risk.

Of course, this is just the latest example of UK immigration policy running counter to Scotland's interests which is why we continue to call for the devolution of this policy, within the current immigration system.

The Scottish Government has backed that call. It reflects the strong consensus which exists - across Scottish society - that our Parliament should have the power to determine immigration criteria, based on our specific needs.

Those powers would help us to mitigate some of the potential damage caused by Brexit. But ultimately, to protect this country's interests, it's vital that the UK Government takes a sensible approach to leaving the EU.

The Scottish Government continues to argue that the whole of UK should remain in single market and the customs union. And so long as there is a chance – however slim – of the UK adopting that approach, the Scottish Government will continue to make the case for it.

Of course at the same time as that, we're also taking major action to prepare specific sectors for the potential impact of Brexit.

For example, last month we announced our intention to develop a specific campaign promoting tourism as a career of choice. That's one way in which we're aiming to strengthen and protect the sector's workforce and we want to work closely with the industry as we take that important commitment forward.

In addition, we're taking other steps which will help to protect tourism and other sectors of our economy. We're continuing to strengthen our ties with our nations in Europe and around the world, by expanding our network of innovation and investment hubs. And through the Scotland Is Now campaign - we are redoubling our efforts to present Scotland as an open, welcoming, and outward-facing nation. And a nation that people across the world should want to visit

All of that will benefit our tourism sector. But of course the Brexit threat makes it even more important that we address head on, the other key issues facing the sector. As a government, we want to do, and it is our responsibility and duty, to do everything we can to support, enable and facilitate your success.

That's why we have listened to your views on Business Rates - and set a cap on rates, for all but the very largest hospitality premises. And I know Derek Mackay will be paying very close attention to your representation ahead of the draft budget later this year.

It's also why we remain committed to reducing Air Departure Tax by 50%, once the issues around the Highlands and Islands exemption have been resolved. Of course our ultimate aim is to abolish the tax entirely.

And it's also why, and let me stress the point, we are absolutely determined to ensure that your voice – the voice of industry and the tourism sector – is properly heard in the on-going debate around a tourism tax. As you know, the Scottish Government has no plans to introduce a tourism tax. However, we do recognise, as you do, that some local authorities are making the case to have the power to do so, should they consider it an appropriate response to local circumstances.

We believe this issue does require very careful consideration, for many of the reasons that Marc has referred to this morning. So we will be accepting the STA's call for an objective process of consultation – involving the STA, COSLA and other key partners – which will examine in detail the arguments for and against a tourism tax. We are determined that all voices will be heard and that the details of the process will be properly set out shortly. I look forward to the STA to continue to be a valued partner in these discussions.

Now, alongside supporting, as we will continue to do, creating a supportive business environment, we're also investing in the infrastructure which is so important for tourism.

Of course we've already delivered transformational projects like the Queensferry Crossing, the new M8, and the Borders Railway. The dualling of the A9 is well underway, and later this year, the new Aberdeen Western bypass will open.

And we've matched the upgrade of our transport network with investment in our digital network. Thanks to our broadband programme, over 95% of homes and business across the country now have access to superfast broadband. By the end of 2021, Scotland will be the only part of the UK where every single home and business across the country will be covered.

All of this investment is helping to open up tourism opportunities across the country. That's a major priority for us. We want to ensure that more and more communities can benefit from – and contribute to – the growth of the sector.

And there are two different strands to that I think. One – which has drawn a lot of attention and rightly so – is ensuring any growth in tourism is sustainable. It's fantastic, absolutely fantastic, that so many more people want to visit our country, but we must ensure that our communities have the capacity to manage increased levels of demand.

That's the aim of our £6 million Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. It will support infrastructure projects which are designed to relieve specific pressures arising from tourism. Three pilots projects in Skye and Orkney are already receiving funding – to improve car parking at key visitor venues. And I'm pleased to say that the successful applicants for the initial stage of the fund will be announced later this week.

Our other key aim is to encourage more visits in parts of the country which have a huge amount to offer, but which comparatively, have often been overlooked.

Now, this year my husband and I chose to spend our summer break at home visiting different parts of the country. Now one of the highlights of that experience for us was visiting Wigtown in Dumfries and Galloway, home of the famous book festival which of course is celebrating its 20 year. That was an important reminder that the south of Scotland is already a major

destination for cultural, coastal and forest tourism. But there's clearly major scope to build on its existing strengths.

The Scottish Government has announced today that we're providing further support for a project in Glentress Forest, near Peebles. That project – which we're supporting with a total of £1 million - will eventually see the construction of 56 eco-cabins.

It means the site – which already attracts 300,000 people a year – will be able to bring in even more visitors in the future. And the construction itself is expected to create perhaps 60 new jobs.

That's good news obviously for Glentress and the Tweed Valley but it's an example of that wider commitment to support the growth of tourism – across the whole of our country.

To conclude and as I said at the start, tourism is no doubt one of our Scotland's great success stories and we should be really proud of it.

The growth of your industry helped to strengthen our local communities, it helps to increase our national prosperity, and it helps to enhance Scotland's international reputation.

Building on the industry's achievements – and continuing that success – will not be easy. Brexit presents a significant and in my view, an unnecessary risk to the future growth of Scottish tourism.

But the Scottish Government is determined to do everything we can to mitigate that threat. And, just as we have for many years now, we will continue to support the industry – to seize new opportunities for growth and development.

And as we do that I know that the Scottish Tourism Alliance will continue to play a leading role in making Scotland a world leader in tourism.

So let me end by thanking you again for inviting me today. I want to pay tribute to the work of the STA. And thank you all the fantastic contribution you have made and are making to tourism in this country.

[First Minister's speech at COSLA annual conference \(*disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-cosla-annual-conference*\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-speech-at-cosla-annual-conference)

[First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's speech at COSLA annual conference on 11 October, 2018](#)

I am delighted to be here. This is the third COSLA Conference I have attended since becoming First Minister.

In the period since we have been able to make significant progress in addressing some of the big issues the country faces.

I am going to talk about a few of those today like health and social care integration, childcare and education.

But before I do that, I thought it would be appropriate just to reflect briefly on a couple of the events I have had the opportunity to attend just in the last year. They highlight how much it is possible for us to achieve when we work together.

In December, I was delighted to attend a celebration that was organised by COSLA. It marked the arrival of Scotland's 2000th refugee, under the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme.

Scotland has now welcomed more than 2,400 refugees. I am mention that because the success of that programme has genuinely been a fantastic team effort, with COSLA and also individual local authorities deserving particular recognition for making the resettlement process such a success.

The other event I want to talk about took place in June when the Scottish Government launched the revised National Performance Framework.

The framework sets out a clear vision, and clear outcomes, for the kind of country we want to create a more successful country, where everyone has an opportunity to succeed through sustainable economic growth and a fairer and more equal society as well.

It was informed by the views of COSLA and all of Scotland's local authorities. And, crucially, COSLA chose to co-sign that document with the Scottish Government.

As your President Councillor Evison said at the launch event, "The framework is a vision for all of Scotland and will require effort from all sectors across Scotland to deliver it."•

Councillor Evison was acknowledging what we all recognise that we share clear ambitions for this country, and that we must work together to realise those ambitions.

And that joint work, that partnership between national and local government is fundamentally what I want to focus on today. I want to talk about some of the areas where the partnership between national and local government is, and will continue to be, particularly important, in the years ahead.

Now, there is no doubt that the most pressing challenge facing all of us at this, comes from Brexit.

The past few weeks have merely confirmed what has been increasingly clear since the 2016 referendum. There remains no clear or credible plan to protect our interests in the context of Brexit. As a result, we now face the very real prospect of exiting the EU in the most damaging way possible.

Last week, Professor Anton Muscatelli of Glasgow University, speaking at Glasgow City Council's Brexit Summit, said that in his view that would represent the most unhinged example of national self-sabotage in living memory. You heard earlier about the Fraser of Allander Institute report, which informed that event. It highlights that in the Glasgow City Region alone 40,000 jobs are supported by demand from the EU. It also points out that the region is home to 57,000 EU nationals each and every one of whom make an invaluable contribution to our universities, public services, our businesses and indeed our economy and society generally.

The report sets out very clearly the implications of Brexit for the Glasgow City Region. But of course, those risks are not unique to those local authority areas. Brexit and the UK Government's approach to post-Brexit immigration will have extremely serious consequences for communities the length and breadth of the country.

That is why the Scottish Government has argued consistently that if we are to leave the EU, which is something I do not agree with and bitterly regret, then there should be a sensible approach taken. We believe that the whole of the UK should remain in the single market and the customs union. And so long as there is a chance, however slim, of the UK adopting that approach, then we will continue to make the case for it.

However, we also recognise the need to prepare as best we can for other Brexit scenarios. That is why we are undertaking a significant programme of contingency planning.

For example, we are targeting additional resources to those areas where the logistical and legislative impact of Brexit will be most acute.

We are also doing everything we can to support and provide information to EU citizens living in Scotland. As part of that, we have made the commitment to cover the settled status application fees, for EU citizens working in our devolved public sector.

In addition, we are taking action to protect Scotland's relationships with our European neighbours, by extending our network of innovation and investment hubs. And, through the Scotland Is Now campaign, we have redoubled our efforts to present Scotland as an open, welcoming, and outward-facing nation.

Now, I know that COSLA is also working hard with its members to prepare for Brexit. I have mentioned the work the Glasgow City Region has done with the Fraser of Allander Institute. I know that the City of Edinburgh begun a survey to identify workforce issues arising from Brexit - which COSLA then extended across all local authorities. And I know there are many other examples across different local authority of that preparatory work being done.

We welcome the leadership that has, and continues to be shown, both by COSLA and by local authorities across the country. And I would strongly encourage you as the Scottish Government will be doing to redouble your efforts in the months ahead so we can be as prepared as we possibly can be for whatever scenario unfolds in the weeks and months ahead.

Local government has not only an essential, but a critical role to play in preparing for the impact for Brexit and doing everything possible for us to mitigate that impact. The Scottish Government is ready to support your efforts in every way we can. By working together we undoubtedly stand a better chance of mitigating the worst impact Brexit, and of protecting the people and communities we serve, right across the country.

Of course, preparing for Brexit will be just one, albeit extremely important, strand of our joint activity, in the year ahead.

We will also take forward our integration of health and social care. It is the biggest reform of its kind since the establishment of our NHS, 70 years ago. Its implementation has already been a model for partnership working. And, as we set out in our recent joint statement, the Scottish Government and COSLA will continue to work together to step up the pace of reform.

That kind of partnership approach will also be essential to our expansion of early learning and childcare, one of the biggest projects that national and local government are now working in partnership to deliver.

As you know, in April, we were able to reach agreement the multi-year funding deal which will underpin and help deliver that policy. Under the agreement, the Scottish Government will provide local authorities with an additional £567 million per year, by 2021-22. We have also committed almost £500 million in capital funding so that local authorities are able to have the infrastructure in place to support that expansion.

That deal was the product of months of hard work, planning and negotiation. So I want to take this opportunity today to thank COSLA and COSLA members for your efforts, for your constructive approach to those discussions, and for the patience that was demonstrated as we came to an agreement on what was a very difficult, and at times, complex set of issues.

Of course, we now face the even harder task of rolling out the policy successfully across the country.

That will obviously require collaboration between local authorities and early learning and childcare providers. We see great examples of that, up and down the country, but it is also clear that some areas face real challenges.

That is why the Scottish Government and COSLA have set up the Early Learning and Childcare Partnership Forum. That aims to promote greater collaboration and understanding between the range of partners working in the sector.

It is one more way in which we are jointly taking action to ensure that this policy is delivered and that all of the children across the country that are intended to benefit from this, do benefit from this and as a result of that, get the best possible start in life.

We know there are complexities here but when we undertake a policy that has the scale of ambition that that one has then that is, perhaps, to be expected. What is important is just as we have done in agreeing the funding deal we work together to make sure we find ways through these complexities and deliver a policy that I think all of us are agreed will be very much in the interests of young people for generations to come.

Of course, that is also the aim of our education reforms.

As all of you know, earlier this year we consulted on proposals for a new Education Bill. The principles we set out, of putting power in the hands of school leaders, received fairly widespread support. However, we also heard concerns, including from local government, that enacting primary legislation would disrupt and slow the pace of reform.

We listened to those concerns and we responded. Instead of legislation, we worked closely with COSLA on a landmark agreement that will see sensible and important education reforms enacted without delay.

It means that beginning during this school year, local authorities will empower headteachers to take key decisions over curriculum, staffing and budgets.

That is a vital part of ensuring that professionals in our schools can take the lead in improving standards and raising attainment.

And it is a good example of what national and local government can achieve when we prioritise consensus and collaboration.

In the coming months, we will also work with you to explore the issues around a tourist tax. We recognise the strong views of COSLA and others that Local Authorities should have the powers to introduce one, where circumstances support that. We also recognise the opposing views of the tourism industry. So we have committed to hold a national discussion on the issue, which will give COSLA, the tourism industry and others with an interest in this, the opportunity to put forward their arguments and for those arguments to be carefully considered and for us to decide on that basis, of collaboration and careful discussion, on the right way forward.

Finally, we will proceed with the work of our joint Local Governance Review.

The Review reflects our shared recognition that we need to bring decision-making closer to local people. That is a vital part of ensuring that resources are better targeted, that communities get the services they need; and that people have more control over the decisions that affect their lives.

So I very much welcome the commitment of COSLA and local authorities to that review and I look forward to working with all of you to deliver its aims.

These are just a few of the key issues that will form our shared agenda in the year ahead and beyond.

All of these issues and the many more that will no doubt occupy us in the year, and indeed, the years ahead have one thing that does bind them all together in common and that is the importance of us working together as we seek to meet and overcome what are significant challenges, but also to seize, what are, significant opportunities.

My pledge to you is that we will seek to continue to work constructively, in partnership with local government to strengthen the services we provide, to promote economic growth and

fundamentally to improve lives of people across the country. And I know that is a commitment that COSLA and our local authorities share.

Working together, we have made real progress already in achieving our joint aims and if we continue in that spirit in the future, I think there is every reason to be optimistic that we will build on that success in the months and years ahead.

Ends

First Minister speech at the RSA (*disponible* à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-speech-at-the-rsa>)

London, 15 October 2018

Thank you, Matthew (Taylor), for your introduction.

I should perhaps start today with something of a confession. For those of you who don't know, Matthew wrote a blog last week with the title "Can politics ever be a source of wisdom rather than anxiety?".

And that gives me a problem. After all, I'm here to talk about Brexit – and any politician who talks about Brexit without a significant level of anxiety, clearly doesn't have any wisdom!

However, I will do my best to add some notes of hope – and, who knows, perhaps even some words of wisdom too – in my remarks today.

And let me say at the outset what a pleasure it is to be able to do that in such a magnificent and, in many ways, appropriate setting.

This room was designed by the Scottish architect, Robert Adam, who also designed Bute House in Edinburgh which is now, of course, the official residence of the First Minister.

Robert Adam drew heavily on the lessons and traditions he learned during his travels across Europe.

Indeed, this room was purpose-built as a venue for discussion and debate - and so, in some senses, it really does evoke the values of the European enlightenment in which Scotland and this institution played such a proud part. These values continue to be reflected in the RSA's mission, and is exemplified in the work you do.

In fact, it is striking how many connections there are between the RSA's recent priorities and those of the Scottish Government – on issues that range from mental health in schools, universal basic income, inclusive growth and support for fair work.

So the RSA is in many ways an ideal host for a discussion about Brexit – an issue that will have profound implications for our economy, the shape of our society and our place in the world, for many decades and generations to come.

Now of course - in the interests of complete transparency - I come at the Brexit challenge from a very specific perspective, as does the government that I lead.

We oppose Brexit and deeply regret it. Even now, our strong preference would be to remain in the EU. Scotland, after all, voted by 62% to 38% in favour of that outcome.

However, since the vote took place, we have sought to recognise the result of the referendum across the whole of the UK - even if we don't entirely understand it.

And so for the last two years, we have put forward constructive suggestions on how Brexit might be implemented in a way that finds common ground rather than in a way that further deepens division.

In fact, when the Scottish Government policy paper "Scotland's Place in Europe" was published in December 2016, it was the first detailed set of proposals to be produced by any government in the UK. It preceded the Chequers white paper by 19 months.

It is fair to say that our proposals have not so far had the impact on the UK Government we would have wanted. The UK, throughout these negotiations, has shown little inclination to pay serious heed to Scotland - or, for that matter to Wales, London, or the different regions of England.

Indeed, one of the lessons from our experience of the last two years, which I suspect has not been lost on the Scottish people and which will be remembered in Scotland for a long time to come, is the stark contrast between the EU's treatment of independent nations, and the UK's treatment of devolved nations.

The European Union has supported Ireland and shown it nothing but solidarity as it confronts the challenges of Brexit; by contrast, the UK has dismissed and ignored Scotland's concerns.

Looking at the UK and the EU, it is fair to say that only one has looked like a partnership of equals. And over the past two years that has not been the UK.

However, the Scottish Government is determined to continue to put forward constructive proposals and to exhaust all opportunities for compromise that would allow Scotland's interests to be protected.

After all, the decisive moments of this phase of the negotiation are now upon us.

Speculation is rife as to what will emerge from Brussels in the next few days. It is clear from developments yesterday - or rather the lack of developments yesterday - that tough issues still require to be resolved.

Perhaps they will prove incapable of resolution - though we must all hope that that is not the case.

But I believe we can see enough about the potential shape of any possible deal, should it emerge, to draw some conclusions and set out an alternative way forward.

That is why the Scottish Government is publishing a further document today, ahead of this week's EU Council, setting out again the case for compromise and common sense.

I make no apology for the fact that on many issues, it reaffirms our existing position. After all, the Scottish Government's analysis over the past two years has largely been vindicated by events.

Firstly and very importantly, we still believe that continued membership of the EU would be the best outcome for both Scotland and the UK.

Secondly, failing continued EU membership, we think that the UK as a whole should remain in both the customs union and the single market.

Thirdly, if the UK Government is determined to pursue a more distant relationship with Europe, we have argued for two years now - reflecting the strong vote for remain in Scotland - that there should be the possibility of a differentiated approach which allows Scotland to remain in the European Single Market.

Let me be clear that, in relation to Northern Ireland, we fully support the Good Friday Agreement and the maintenance of an invisible border. And so the Scottish Government will do nothing to stand in the way of Northern Ireland achieving a special relationship to the EU, if that is what is required.

However, if that is the outcome, the case for Scotland having a similar arrangement - to avoid us being placed at a severe economic disadvantage - becomes even stronger.

And, fourthly and finally, given that none of these compromise options are guaranteed, we believe that when there is greater clarity about the terms of Brexit than exists today, Scotland must have the option to choose a different course, as an independent member of the EU.

All of these points are important. But today, because of the critical stage we are reaching in the UK's negotiations with Europe, I want to focus in particular on the second of them.

I will set out why, if the UK is determined to leave the EU, it should remain in the customs union and single market. In my view, that is the least damaging alternative option for the UK as a whole, as well as for Scotland.

To make that point, I will first of all highlight the fact that the current option being pursued by the UK Government –the so-called Chequers proposal – is impractical, undesirable and undeliverable.

And that, whatever it is that the House of Commons comes to vote on later this year, it will not be the Chequers proposal.

Indeed, if a Withdrawal Agreement can be reached, it will in all likelihood be accompanied by a very vague - probably highly fudged - political declaration on the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

It is my strong view that such a deal should be rejected - not in favour of no deal as some will try to suggest, but as a way of getting a better deal back on the table.

So I will then set out what I think is the real choice the UK Government should be talking about – the trade-offs between a free trade agreement similar to the one the EU has with Canada; or continued membership of the single market and customs union. Of those, customs union and single market membership is - by some considerable distance - the better option.

And finally, and I am well aware that this is the most difficult part of all, I will set out my thinking on how this option might yet be achievable - indeed, why it may be the only option capable of commanding a Commons majority, and why the moment for getting to this decision could be emerging.

But, let me begin with the UK Government's current position.

As most people here know, the UK and the EU are currently negotiating on two issues at present.

The first is the withdrawal agreement. There are a number of issues there that still require resolution, including governance arrangements and geographic indicators, an issue that is extremely important to Scotland.

However, as everyone knows, the most vexed issue that needs to be resolved is how to maintain an open border on the island of Ireland.

And, of course, without a withdrawal agreement, there will be no transition period. Let me say at this stage, as an aside, that I hope the withdrawal agreement, if it can be concluded, includes provision to extend the transition period beyond the end of 2020. If the last two years have shown us anything, it is surely that more time will inevitably be needed to agree the future relationship and so being able to extend the transition period will be vital to avoid another cliff edge scenario.

The second issue under negotiation is the political declaration accompanying the withdrawal agreement. This will set out the framework which will determine the long-term relationship between the UK and the EU.

That long-term relationship is what I want to focus on today.

At the moment, the UK Government persists in saying it should be based on the Chequers proposal. But there are no grounds whatsoever for believing this will happen.

It's worth being crystal clear about this. When the EU rejected the Chequers proposals at Salzburg last month, the Prime Minister's subsequent statement tried to give the impression that the rejection of the proposals was a shock.

But anyone who was surprised by the substance of what was said at Salzburg, cannot have been paying very much attention to what the EU had been saying up until then. Indeed, that in itself might provide a clue as to why the negotiations have been going quite so badly over recent months.

Indeed we see a similar phenomenon at play today with the UK Government expressing surprise at positions that have been articulated and held by the European Union now for quite some time. The UK Government this morning expressing surprise that it is being held to a Northern Ireland backstop that it signed up to in December of last year.

And one of the casualties, and again this is an aside but it's perhaps an important one, may actually prove to be the UK's international reputation as a trusted, reliable, good-faith partner and negotiator. That would indeed, I think, be tragic.

Salzburg was however useful in one way. The UK Government has been trying to say that the only possible choices we have are the Chequers deal or no deal.

Salzburg showed – beyond any reasonable doubt – that that is not correct.

It is incorrect because the EU was never likely to accept some of the key elements of Chequers. Chequers relies on the UK collecting tariffs on the EU's behalf through an untried set of bureaucratic and technological processes. Even more fundamentally, by keeping free movement for goods - but not services or people – Chequers undermines the essential unity of the single market. This has always been unacceptable to the EU.

In addition, Chequers would be deeply damaging to the UK - and Scottish - economy.

I have just mentioned that it takes services out of the single market. Services constitute 4/5 of the UK's economy, and 2/5 of its exports going to the EU. The UK has a trade deficit with the EU in goods, but a trade surplus in services. It makes no sense at all for us to leave the single market in services – it's a market that brings huge benefits, and has enormous potential for growth in the future.

And finally, Chequers is unworkable because even if it were acceptable to the EU, there appears to be no political majority for it at home.

The Prime Minister, even after Salzburg, maintains that Chequers is “the only serious and credible option on the table”. However it is not a serious and credible option.

And the only reason it is the only option on the table, is because the UK Government has refused to countenance any others.

But let's be clear - a head in the sand approach won't make the Chequers ostrich fly.

So when it comes to a vote in the Commons later this year, it will not be Chequers that MPs are voting on.

Now, as of today, it remains to be seen if a withdrawal agreement can be reached.

Alarmingly, it seems increasingly doubtful that any deal can be struck that will satisfy both the EU 27 and her own colleagues.

If no withdrawal agreement is reached, the need to change course becomes all the more necessary and urgent.

However, if a withdrawal agreement can be struck, I would expect the political declaration on the future relationship, due to follow thereafter, to lack precise detail - leaving both sides to interpret it in the way that suits them, but with no one knowing what it actually means and with all the hard issues that have defied resolution in the last two years simply kicked into the long grass.

That then raises the grim prospect of the UK leaving the EU next March with no idea of what the future relationship looks like.

This scenario – a blindfold Brexit - is in my view completely unacceptable.

It would replace a no deal Brexit with a no detail Brexit.

It would keep the public and businesses in the dark. It would leave the long term position with the Irish border unresolved. It would require the House of Commons to vote on whether to accept a deal, despite there being no way of knowing what that deal will lead to in reality.

By delaying key decisions until after we had left the EU, the UK Government would reduce its influence, and diminish its status, just before conducting the most important negotiations in its postwar history.

And the cliff edge, no deal scenario would not be avoided - it will simply be deferred.

No responsible government should contemplate such a course of action.

But this government is contemplating it. And its tactics are extremely clear.

They will present, with ever increasing levels of desperation, a completely false choice - the idea that the only alternative to a bad deal of the blindfold nature is no deal at all.

It's actually quite breathtaking when you stop to think about it.

The UK Government has spent two years asserting that no deal is better than a bad deal.

But they will almost certainly now try to railroad MPs into accepting a bad deal, on the grounds that no deal will be a catastrophe.

They are threatening us with fire, to try to make us choose the frying pan.

But MPs do not have to fall for that false choice. Indeed, I would argue that no self-respecting Parliament would fall for it.

The fact is that other options are available.

The single market and customs union option that I have consistently argued for - and will set out again today - is one.

A so-called People's Vote - which I've said the Scottish Government would support, even though it wouldn't necessarily protect Scotland from the same outcome as in 2016 - is another.

These alternative options of course may necessitate more time and therefore a request to extend Article 50 - but that surely must be preferable to pressing ahead in a reckless and damaging manner.

And, actually, that is the key point I want to make this morning.

Voting against a bad or a blindfold Brexit deal isn't a vote for no-deal. It would be a vote for a better deal.

Indeed, voting against a bad or blindfold Brexit when the opportunity arises later this year is the only chance the House of Commons will have to reset these negotiations and to think again before it is too late.

In doing so, it would finally prompt an honest and open discussion about the real long-term choice the UK faces - if it is intent on leaving the EU - and the genuine trade-offs that it involves.

The hard fact is that leaving the EU - and this has been the case from the very start of this process - ultimately involves a choice between a Canada-style free trade agreement, which would be even more damaging than Chequers, because it would make trade in goods more difficult, or membership of the single market and customs union. That reality has to bite sooner or later.

The head of the CBI spoke about a Canada style agreement just a few weeks ago. She pointed out it would be the first trade deal in history that increased barriers to trade rather than reduced them. It would lead to job losses. And it would not solve the Irish border issue.

By contrast, membership of the single market and customs union would end the current impasse in negotiations, it would guarantee an open border both on Ireland and across the Irish Sea, and it would be by far the better option for exporters of goods and services.

Yes, it would enable continued free movement for workers, which in my view is both good and necessary, as it gives opportunities to individuals in Scotland and the UK to work overseas, and allows businesses and public services to recruit from across the continent.

But it would also still enable the UK to apply existing restrictions on rights of movement for people who aren't choosing to work or study.

For all of these reasons, it is by far the least damaging form of Brexit for the economy.

For Scotland, and, I know, for many others across these islands, it also speaks more strongly to our European identity - to our desire to be a constructive partner to our neighbours across this continent.

And, although as someone that voted remain I see single market and customs union membership as being second best to membership of the EU - for many people who voted leave, it would surely be preferable to EU membership.

The UK would, after all, have left the EU. There would be no sense of being part of a growing political union.

The UK would no longer have to be part of the common agricultural and fisheries policies. And – although divergence from EU rules and regulations would certainly have consequences - this approach would leave Westminster with the final say on whether particular single market rules applied here in the UK.

Now, in saying this, I am acutely aware that, so far, the UK Government has been consistent in its rejection of membership of the single market and customs union. But that's for two related reasons – neither of which stand up to much scrutiny.

The first is that it has established red lines in the negotiations – such as ending free movement of people, and being able to sign independent trade deals.

But these red lines contradict some of its other stated positions. In particular, the further away from Europe we are in terms of immigration and trade policy, the harder it will be to keep the Irish Border open.

And of course the red lines are completely self-imposed – they are not essential consequences of the referendum. Indeed, as I recall, the ability to sign trade deals was hardly an issue in the referendum.

That is an important point. After all, the second reason the UK Government gives for its current stance is democratic legitimacy. The Prime Minister said after Salzburg that single market membership would “make a mockery of the referendum”.

But in 2016, the winning side was not obliged to put forward a clear proposal. So the referendum outcome was not a mandate for hard Brexit.

In fact I would go further than that - it told us nothing about what sort of Brexit people might want. If it had done, it surely would not have taken the UK Government more than two years to come up with the Chequers proposal.

In addition, 48% of voters voted to remain in the EU; so did two out of four nations of the UK.

In that context, membership of the single market and customs union is surely the obvious democratic compromise. It is certainly in my opinion a better reflection of the referendum outcome than anything the UK Government has so far proposed.

Indeed, what is happening at the moment is quite extraordinary.

The UK Government is ploughing on with a strategy that it knows will reduce household incomes and cost jobs.

It has appointed a Minister for food supplies; its own departmental notices are setting out plans to stockpile medicines; on Friday it announced that the M26 was being adapted for use as a lorry park.

It is having to do all of this only because it has chosen an extreme interpretation of the referendum result – while overlooking the obvious fact that, whatever most people voted for, it surely wasn't where we are right now.

That stance, in my view, is the one which makes a mockery – not just of the referendum result, but of basic common sense. It is not justified on democratic grounds, and it should not be countenanced on economic grounds.

But of course, in many ways, diagnosing these issues and these problems is relatively straightforward. The harder part is answering the fundamental question –where do we go from here?

After all, the UK Government's rhetoric over the last two years has put it in an awkward position. Any move now to accept single market and customs union membership, is likely to be seen as a climbdown rather than a compromise.

I understand that. But fundamentally, that is a problem of the UK Government's own making. It should not and must not stand in the way of the wider public interest.

And of course, in the weeks ahead, it won't simply be the UK Government which has to make important decisions. A heavy responsibility will also rest with parliament and with individual MPs.

For MPs to support a bad or blindfold Brexit – a cobbled together withdrawal agreement and a vague statement about our future relationship – would in my view be a real dereliction of duty.

So what happens if they reject that and instead force an honest discussion about a Canada-style deal or continued free trade and customs union membership?

Well, it seems to me impossible to envisage a Westminster majority for a Canada-style deal. The Labour Party has said that it would vote against such an agreement. The SNP certainly would. A few weeks ago, Amber Rudd said that 40 Conservative MPs would vote against that as well.

In fact, in these circumstances, it is probably the case that the only option with any chance of commanding a parliamentary majority is single market and customs union membership.

Now, I am not saying that the way to such a solution would be easy. But it might well be the only option which is not completely impossible at this stage.

It should be acceptable to the EU. It avoids the worst economic damage that Brexit will wreak. It resolves the Irish border issue. And it comes closest to reconciling the different views of leavers and remainers.

And while it is an outcome which might still look some distance away, it is not unachievable.

What it requires, is commonsense, and a willingness to compromise.

And it's worth adding at this point that a willingness to compromise – when it comes to the UK Government - cannot simply be an attempt to find the centre of gravity between the most vocal elements of their own party.

It must instead be a genuine attempt to find some common ground across what is currently a divided parliament and a divided UK.

I'm prepared to play my part. After all, I am First Minister of a country which voted – by 62% to 38% - to remain in the EU.

However, as we have made clear for two years now, the Scottish Government - albeit with a heavy heart - would support an outcome that secures continued membership of the single market and customs union.

In short, we have long demonstrated our willingness to compromise - it is time the UK Government did likewise.

And as the crucial vote looms closer, it is also time for individual members of the House of Commons to consider what compromises they see as justified - and which are not - if they are to serve their constituents, and the wider public interest.

If they do that, I do believe that a commonsense outcome could yet be found.

There is one final point I want to make. I mentioned earlier that this room evokes Scotland's historic connections with Europe. It highlights the fact that Scotland is and always has been a European nation.

Indeed, our European identity has been strengthened in recent years. Next month sees the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Scotland Act, which paved the way for devolution and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament.

When that Act was being debated at Westminster, Donald Dewar – Scotland's first First Minister - predicted that devolution would add "a new dimension" to Scotland's role in Europe. His words have been proven right.

In the last 20 years, Scotland – with the support of all political parties at Holyrood - has expanded its presence in Brussels. We have collaborated with partners on European projects from renewable energy to healthy ageing. Our businesses and our universities have enjoyed ever greater benefits from our international ties.

And Scottish society has been enriched by the presence of more than 230,000 EU citizens from outside the UK.

We have seen at first hand the benefits that we gain from working with allies from across the continent. And so we are determined to work to enhance rather than diminish our ties with the EU.

In the last two years alone, the Scottish Government has established new offices in Berlin, Dublin and Paris. Here in London as well. Our enterprise agency has doubled its representation in Europe.

And even if the UK Government opts for a hard Brexit, Scotland will do everything we can to ensure that our policies remain consistent with European priorities and values.

The basic ideal behind the EU appeal to us – we like the idea of independent nations co-operating closely for the common good.

And, as we watch the Brexit negotiations unfold, the case for Scotland becoming one of those independent nations becomes ever stronger.

But of course, whatever happens, we will always seek to work closely and constructively with the other nations on these islands. It is in all of our interests that we find a better approach to Brexit – one which avoids the worst economic harms of a hard Brexit, and maintains the key benefits of free trade and other ties that unite countries across Europe.

If we can help to deliver that commonsense Brexit, we believe it will be the best – or perhaps the least bad outcome – not just for Scotland, but for the UK, and indeed the whole of Europe. My hope is that such an outcome might still be in reach. The Scottish Government will do everything we can to help to achieve it.

Circular Economy hotspot (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/circular-economy-hotspot>)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Wednesday 31 October

Thank you to all of you for coming along here today. It's an absolute pleasure to have the opportunity to be with you this morning.

I understand that around 20 countries from across the world are represented here today. So let me begin by offering all of you the warmest welcome – I mean that in spirit rather than in terms of the weather of course – but you are most welcome here in Scotland, here in our biggest city of Glasgow. I hope that you have a wonderful time.

I also want to thank Zero Waste Scotland for all the work it does and has done in bidding for, and organising, this conference.

It is a real honour for Scotland to host a global gathering of this kind – on an issue which is not just important to us in Scotland but an issue that is of increasing international significance.

The circular economy has become an increasing priority for countries right across the world and rightly so.

That's for both environmental but also economic reasons.

We know that we need to keep materials in use for as long as possible, in order to reduce the environmental impact of our consumption.

But we also know that if we succeed in doing that, we can create enormous benefits – a cleaner environment, reduced costs for manufacturers and consumers, and new technologies that will create new jobs.

In fact, you can get some sense of the scale of the economic opportunity from the reports that Zero Waste Scotland has published just today.

They look in some detail at the Scottish regions of Tayside, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

These reports highlight – for example – the importance of reusing and remanufacturing decommissioned equipment from our offshore oil and gas industry.

They also suggest there will be opportunities to use by-products from Tayside's farming and soft fruit sector.

And overall, the reports estimate that - for Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Tayside - developing a circular economy could generate economic benefits of approximately £1 billion.

And since those three areas I mentioned – Tayside, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire - account for about 1/6 of Scotland's total population, it seems clear that the total economic prize – for Scotland as a whole – will be much much greater than that.

Moving to a circular economy –and this I think is true of many issues relating to the environment and climate change – is, first and foremost, an overwhelming moral imperative. However as these reports very powerfully demonstrate it is also a massive economic opportunity.

And it also, in my view, speaks to Scotland's history, to our sense of our identity.

This conference centre that we are gathering in this morning is built on the site of the old Queens Dock – it's a reminder of the fact that for generations, Clydeside was one of the industrial centres of the world. At the start of the last century, 1/5 of the world's shipping was built on the banks of the Clyde.

In fact in many ways Scotland – through inventions like James Watt's steam engine - led the world into the industrial age. Our opportunity now, indeed I would argue our obligation, is to play our part in leading the world into the low carbon age.

Our circular economy strategy – which we published two years ago – is crucial to achieving that ambition.

It focuses on four areas where we think that promoting a circular approach will have a particularly big impact - food and drink, energy, construction and remanufacturing.

Now I won't go through all of our actions this morning – although I hope that over the course of this conference, and during your visits tomorrow, you will get a sense of the scale and range of the work that we are doing here in Scotland.

But I want to briefly highlight some of the ways in which we are working with businesses to promote innovation and reduce waste.

In 2015 we created the Scottish Institute for Remanufacture. It's based at Strathclyde University, which situated just a couple of miles from here and that is one of only 6 centres of its kind anywhere in the world.

We want to build on Scotland's expertise in advanced manufacturing, and ensure that we play a leading role in remanufacturing. In fact we believe that remanufacturing could create more than 5,000 new jobs in Scotland by 2020.

We have also created an £18 million Circular Economy Investment Fund. That helps small and medium sized enterprises adopt new approaches and develop new technologies.

In fact we have announced three new awards from that fund just today.

Total Homes will ensure that appliances used in house clearances are reused. Revive Eco will use coffee grounds to create biofuels, fertiliser and bio-oils which can be used in cosmetics.

And Angus 3D will develop 3D printing – by making it easier for spare parts to be manufactured, they will help machinery to last longer.

These companies, these three excellent innovative companies, join a number of other businesses and initiatives which have already benefited from the Circular Economy fund.

A very good example is Project Beacon - an advanced plastics reprocessing facility in Perthshire. By locating different kinds of recycling technology in the same place, we hope it will in time be able to recycle virtually all different kinds of plastic household waste.

That's an initiative which can bring and create major benefits – not just for Scotland, but for other countries around the world.

Project Beacon is one of a number of ways in which we are working with businesses to tackle plastic pollution.

Last weekend, the Scottish Government signed up to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Global Commitment. By doing so, we resolved to play our part in eradicating plastic waste and pollution.

In May, we appointed an expert panel, led by Dame Sue Bruce, to provide recommendations on how to tackle the problem. Their initial recommendations are due to be made to us soon.

And last year, we became the first part of the UK to confirm that we would establish a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, including plastic cups and bottles.

Our consultation on this scheme closed in September, and attracted more than 3,000 responses which gives an indication of the interest in schemes like this.

I am sure that we received replies indeed from quite a few of the people and organisations in this room just now and I am grateful to everyone who has taken the trouble to respond.

We are very clear in our basic aim – to ensure that as much packaging as possible is reused rather than being placed in landfill.

However designing the best possible deposit scheme is not straightforward – it has been important for us to hear the perspectives of businesses, third sector organisations and individuals here at home but also further afield, particularly those in countries that already have such schemes in operation.

We intend to publish our detailed proposals next year, and we will continue to work collaboratively as we plan and implement the return scheme. In particular, in addition to working with businesses and other organisations, we will continue to work closely with the UK Government as it's important that schemes across the UK work well together.

The deposit scheme is a vital part of our plans to reduce and eliminate plastic waste. So as I'm sure as you will appreciate, we are working hard to get the details right.

I mentioned earlier on that I want Scotland to be a pioneer of the circular economy, just as we were a pioneer of the industrial revolution. If we achieve that aim, and we are determined that we will do so, then we increase our prosperity, and improve the environment.

However to do that, we know that Government can and mustn't act alone. We need to work in partnership – partnership with the wider public sector, with organisations such as Zero Waste Scotland, and with businesses across the country.

And we need also work with governments and other organisations in all different parts of the world.

The circular economy is an area where Scotland, in my view, has much to contribute – I think we have demonstrated that already that we have much expertise and many ideas to contribute. But we also know, and I see this in many of the countries that I visit, we have also got a lot to learn from others.

There's no doubt at all that gatherings like this are bringing together so much expertise from right around the world, it's an essential part of that international exchange of ideas. That's one of the many reasons I'm so delighted and the Scottish Government is so delighted that this event is taking place here in Glasgow.

I very much hope and indeed I very much expect that the discussions which take place here will make a really positive difference to the environment and to the economies of countries right across the world. This is one of the biggest issues of our generation, one of the biggest we are facing up to and grappling with. I have no doubt that the discussions that you have here will bring much new thinking and much fresh perspective to this global challenge.

So let me end by wishing you all the best for a very successful conference and wishing you all the best for your stay in sunny Glasgow.

[National Economic Forum \(mis en ligne le 19/11/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/circular-economy-hotspot\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/circular-economy-hotspot)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

Dundee

Thank you to all of you for joining us here today. The Scottish Government really values the National Economic Forum because we see it as a really good way of bringing together businesses, trade unions, the third sector and the wider public sector to collectively discuss the issues which really matter to the future success of our economy. There are a total of six ministers here this morning.

And I want to start my remarks, as you might expect, by focussing on three current crucial issues. The first is Michelin, a matter of enormous concern to people in Dundee; the second is Brexit; and the third is the Dundee and Tay Cities Regional Deal. However, I'll use the last of those – the regional deal – to form the basis of a discussion about the huge potential for growth that Dundee and Scotland as a whole undoubtedly have.

And I'll talk in particular about how recent policy developments – for example the enterprise and skills review – can help the public sector to work with businesses to fully achieve that potential.

But I'll begin with a brief update about the situation in relation to Michelin.

Obviously the announcement a couple of weeks ago was a devastating blow to first and foremost, the workers in Michelin who have given so much to the company over a long period of time but also a blow to the city at an otherwise good and positive time for the city of Dundee. The Scottish Government, notwithstanding the disappointment of that news, continues to be absolutely committed to doing everything we can, working with the unions, the company and local council to secure a positive way forward.

Derek Mackay chaired the first meeting of the Michelin Dundee Action Group last Monday. It convenes again this afternoon.

The action group includes representatives from Michelin, the trade unions, Dundee City Council, UK Government and manufacturing and business experts. They are exploring all possible options, firstly to retain the plant in Dundee, and secondly for repurposing the plant, as a matter of urgency.

I've just come from a meeting with trade unions this morning to discuss the latest situation. We noted, finding a successful way forward for the plant will not be easy. But we agreed it is important we try and explore every option.

The government has already demonstrated in other situations that when it is necessary, we are prepared to take an active approach to help save jobs and preserve manufacturing bases. So, in the case of Michelin, none of us can guarantee success, but we can promise that we will do everything we possibly can.

The second topical issue that I want to mention is the issue of Brexit. The first thing I want to say about the current situation is I understand and share the desire that I know all businesses across the country have of just wanting to see certainty and move out of this current phase of nobody knowing what lies down the track. And I strongly understand and share that view. I think over the next couple of weeks that we don't allow ourselves, and by that I mean the House of Commons where these decisions will largely be taken, to be trapped in this false choice of accepting a bad deal for fear of ending up with no deal. I don't think either of those

choices are inevitable. Instead we should continue to work together to decide what is the best way forward for the UK as a whole.

And the key point I would make is this: the deal that the UK Government has agreed with the European Union is – very obviously – worse than our current position within the EU.

It provides for the UK and Scotland within it to leave the single market. That is something which will do considerable damage to Scotland's jobs and living standards.

By accepting within that agreement, the potential for a differentiated solution for Northern Ireland – which I should say we fully support because preserving peace and the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland is of paramount importance – while not considering the Scottish Government's proposals for similar arrangements for Scotland, do run the risk of placing Scotland at a considerable competitive disadvantage in the future.

As First Minister I spend a lot of time talking to companies thinking about investing in Scotland or expanding their current operations in Scotland. Scotland does very well attracting inward investment but it is a competitive field and we be concerned about being in a situation in the future where companies can choose Belfast which would secure unfettered access to the European single market which they wouldn't get in Dundee, Glasgow or Edinburgh. That would be a real competitive disadvantage for Scotland and something which is uppermost in the Scottish Government's mind.

But perhaps the most worrying thing about the proposals which will be put before the House of Commons as things stand right now, is that it leaves everybody completely uncertain about the shape of our long-term relationship with the EU.

Most of the 500 pages that have been published are about the withdrawal agreement. There are only seven pages about the future relationship and most of the difficult issues that have dogged the discussions to date, are simply being kicked further down the line.

That means there will be many more years of negotiations before we know with any certainty what a future trade deal will look like, what immigration policy there will be or the shape of long-term customs arrangements.

It means, as things stand, that long-term uncertainty is hard-wired into the current withdrawal deal. That's not something the Scottish Government believes we should accept.

But, it's not enough at this stage to know what you don't like about an agreement. There is a duty on those of us who think the current deal is a bad deal to come forward and coalesce around something better. I'll be in London later this week trying to do exactly that.

The Scottish Government's view is that we should continue to press for the UK to stay in the single market and customs union. That would be a solution which would respect the outcome of the referendum, largely resolves the Irish Border issue and mitigates the worst economic consequences of Brexit. So that is the position the Scottish Government has consistently argued for the last two and a half years and will continue to argue and will seek to build a coalition around in these coming days and weeks.

Now, if Brexit goes ahead – in any form – it will not be good for the economy. So that makes it all the more important that we do everything we possibly can to otherwise support the economy – to support business and boost growth.

And that leads me on to the third issue I want to talk about. The Scottish Government confirmed last month that we are prepared to invest up to £200 million in a Tay Cities Region deal. The UK Government has said that it will invest up to £150 million.

At the moment, we are trying to press the UK Government to increase their contribution to the deal to match the Scottish Government's commitment. And following the Michelin announcement we are – of course – looking at all our proposed investments to make sure that they include the best possible options.

However, the deal will include significant proposals to improve skills and encourage innovation. It will also respect the importance of manufacturing by establishing strong regional links with the new National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland.

We expect to sign the heads of terms later this week, and we believe that when we do so, it will be really good news for this city. I hope the impetus created by the city deal can be further strengthened by the Tay cities regional economic partnership which is being formed – I know that the regional partnerships are the subject of one of today's workshop sessions.

Dundee and the wider region have undoubtedly huge potential for growth. That's the positive we must all focus on. The city deal will help us to realise that potential.

And that brings me on to the main topic I want to talk about this morning – the opportunities we have here in Dundee and right across Scotland.

That's something which is perhaps most obvious here at the Dundee waterfront.

The wonderful new V&A museum is the most obvious sign of the fantastic regeneration which Mike Galloway has done so much to spearhead – it's the reason why this city was named by the Wall Street Journal as one of its ten "hot destinations" in the world for this year. To put that into context, Dundee was 5th – two places above Shanghai, and four places above Madagascar. That really is something for the city to be incredibly proud of.

But the V&A isn't the only sign of transformation. Dundee Harbour more than a century ago was at the centre of the jute trade – goods were exported here all around the world. Now, the harbour is being used for assembling offshore wind turbines, and for oil and gas decommissioning work. A location which was part of Scotland's industrial heritage, is now helping our transition to a low carbon economy.

And here at City Quay, studios such as 4J are a sign of Dundee's international reputation for technology and for video games.

So when you look at some of the activity taking place within walking distance of this hotel – let alone the capabilities of businesses across the region – you can see that there shouldn't really be any limits to our ambitions for Dundee or Scotland's economy. We have immense natural resources, an international reputation in key economic sectors, we have world class universities and one of the most highly qualified workforces anywhere in Europe.

A key purpose of government, and of forums like this, is to find the best ways in which the public sector can work with businesses to realise all of that potential.

Many of our key policies are set out in our Economic Action Plan, which we published last month.

If we start with business taxation, Scotland currently has the most competitive set of business rate reliefs anywhere in the UK. We have given a commitment that we will maintain a stable and competitive business tax system going forward.

We also know that infrastructure investment – spending on road and rail links, broadband access, new buildings for universities, schools and hospitals – is crucial to business success. So we will steadily increase our investment on that.

By the end of the next parliament, investment in infrastructure will be £1.5 billion a year higher than it is now, taking Scotland much closer to the levels of investment in other G7 countries.

We are also supporting innovation. Last year, we increased our funding for business research and development by 70%.

We are also establishing a national manufacturing institute for Scotland – which, as I mentioned, will feature in the forthcoming Tay cities deal.

And we have invested in a subsea manufacturing centre at Montrose – enhancing the capabilities of our oil and gas supply chain, and the marine renewables sector.

We have also found new ways to support innovative and ambitious companies. The Scottish Growth Scheme has now provided more than £100 million of equity funding to more than 60 different companies. Here in Dundee, those companies include Earthbound Games and 71 Brewing which is the first brewery in Dundee for more than 50 years. The next phase of the growth scheme will be opened up to companies before the end of the year.

And of course we are in the early stages of establishing a publicly owned Scottish National Investment Bank. Legislation will be introduced to the Scottish Parliament shortly. It will lend to projects which are in line with core missions set by Government – such as the transition to a low carbon society. It will be supported with £2 billion of capital over the next decade – enabling it to provide patient finance to ambitious companies and important infrastructure projects. I absolutely believe that it will become a cornerstone of the economy we want to create in Scotland but really does have the potential to be transformational for our economy in the medium to long term.

And there are two points worth making about this. We often talk about our economic vision for Scotland. We want Scotland in the future, as we have so often been in the past, the country that is inventing, designing, developing and manufacturing the key products and technologies that will drive the world in the decades to come – not just a country that is using those innovations developed elsewhere. Our investment in innovation will be crucial to achieving that ambition.

The second point is that the investment bank and the manufacturing institute both demonstrate our commitment to ensure that public sector support for businesses is as effective as possible.

Scotland already invests more than £2 billion a year on skills and business support. For enterprise and economic development specifically, we spend £100 a head more than the UK as a whole. That has already led to significant results. It's one reason why we outperform all parts of the UK, outside of London, in attracting inward investment.

The scale of that investment makes it hugely important that we continue to get the best possible results from that expenditure.

That's why we started the Enterprise and Skills review two years ago. As a result of its findings, we are planning to establish a South of Scotland Enterprise Agency – there was widespread agreement that businesses in that area required more specialised support.

And we also established a Strategic Board to ensure better co-ordination of the enterprise and skills agencies.

The board published its first strategic plan last month. It is based around four interconnected missions – skills, exports, business creation and business innovation. It contains 14 initial actions and 18 recommendations for ministers to implement.

For example the plan contains proposals to improve our business start-up rate. That's something which has been a focus of the Government for some time.

Through our Can-do framework, we support entrepreneurship in schools, we fund schemes such as Scottish Edge, and we work closely with businesses, with start-up incubators and with organisations such as Entrepreneurial Scotland.

One of the things which is most important about the strategic plan, is the emphasis it places – not just on helping start-ups, but also on encouraging companies to scale-up. So it looks at making it easier for businesses in every part of the country to receive the support they need. It also examines very specific steps – for example how we can help growing companies which want to buy overseas businesses. Taken together, it's a set of actions which can help businesses to raise their ambitions and increase their scale.

The plan also looks closely at support for skills. This is hugely important for young people, which is why we implemented the recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce. But we also need to do more to retrain people of all ages.

The plan points out that automation will end some jobs, but create others. Retraining people is an absolutely crucial part of ensuring that nobody is left behind by technological change.

The Scottish Government is establishing a national retraining partnership. It's something which both the STUC and the CBI asked us to do. It allows businesses, colleges, trade unions and local authorities to work together to ensure that people can learn new skills, or improve their existing skills, at any stage in their working lives. It's good for the individuals who retrain, and it's good for the economy as a whole.

And the strategic plan also looks at internationalisation. Encouraging companies to look to overseas markets is more important now than ever before, given the issues raised by Brexit. That's why we're investing £20 million to promote exports – for example by supporting mentorships where businesses learn from companies that already have experience in exporting.

And the strategic plan sets out other proposals – such as a national exporting service for the enterprise agencies. It also looks at addressing some of the barriers which currently hinder businesses - for example, by helping them to get the sales skills they need to succeed in overseas markets.

The overriding aim of the strategic plan is to improve productivity. All of these initiatives are geared towards that. In recent years Scotland has had some success – we have largely closed the productivity gap between Scotland and the rest of the UK. Our aim now is to match the success of some of our other European competitors.

So we're looking at how to support a larger number of businesses to adopt productivity measures which we already know work.

One project the Scottish Government is developing at the moment with SCDI is the establishment of productivity clubs – the aim is that businesses will learn from each other to improve managerial capability and to increase the take up of new technology and new processes.

All of this is really important – that we engage in all of this to ensure workplace innovation alongside fair work, which is such an important part of our whole economic approach.

So, in short, there's lots to be optimistic about and there's a lot of work being done to ensure we can realise the huge potential our economy has. This is going to take hard work and focused effort over the next number of years. But that work will be more successful if it is informed by the views of all of you which is why it is so important we have these forums to allow that contribution to be made.

So I look forward to hearing some of your questions and observations as we focus together on how we make sure the Scottish economy reaches its full potential.

Thank you.

Lord Mayor's Burns' supper (*disponible à* <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/lord-mayors-burns-supper>)

First Minister - Mansion House, City of London, Monday 28 January 2019

Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress, Your Excellencies, Aldermen, Sheriffs, Chief Commoner, Ladies & Gentlemen

It is an absolute pleasure to be here in these grand surroundings with all of you this evening. I am grateful to you, Lord Mayor, for hosting us, and I am grateful to all of you for attending.

I do feel as if we are partaking in something of an historic occasion here this evening – the first ever Burns supper here in the Mansion House. I hope it's not the last Burns supper to take place here. I think we should declare it a tradition.

It is a real pleasure to be here. The Lord Mayor mentioned some of the many Scottish inventions – those that were invented by Scots, and those that we claim were invented by Scots. I'm

not sure which list is the longest. Penicillin, the telephone, the television, the pin number. We also claim, of course, to have invented the Bank of England and the overdraft. Nobody said all of those inventions were good inventions. I actually just discovered that Scots also founded the state bank of India as well, so the list grows longer every day.

But undoubtedly, one of Scotland's greatest exports is Robert Burns – a wonderful poet. His poetry, his words of wisdom on so many different topics remain as relevant today as they were when he wrote them. So it's wonderful to be here this evening celebrating the memory and the legacy of Robert Burns.

I know that as well as many people from the Scottish and London business communities this evening, we're also joined by diplomatic representatives from a number of countries across Europe, from Mexico and New Zealand.

That's actually really fitting because Robert Burns was a proud and very committed internationalist.

In fact – and this is relevant to a point I'll make later on - when the Scottish parliament reconvened in 1999, one of the songs chosen for the opening ceremony was Robert Burns' *A Man's a Man*, and that song contains these words:

*Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that,)*

*That Man to Man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.*

Those words are resonant, perhaps in many ways more resonant today than in the day that Robert Burns wrote them. So, to celebrate not just his legacy but his internationalism this evening, it's wonderful to be joined by people from across the globe.

Now of course the other purpose of this evening's event is to celebrate and strengthen the ties between Scotland's financial services industry, and the City of London.

In a week like this, it's impossible to completely avoid Brexit in reflecting on that. However I'm sure you don't want me to spend too much time on Brexit this evening. And believe you me - I don't want to spend too much talking about Brexit.

Apart from anything else, the Scottish Government's view is well-known. We think leaving the EU will be damaging to the UK as a whole.

We would prefer to stay in the EU, and short of that we'd prefer to stay in the Single Market and in the Customs Union. We hope that the prospect of no deal will very soon be removed completely as an option, and if necessary to avoid a Brexit cliff edge, we believe that Article 50 should be extended to allow parliament more time to come up with a proper and managed way forward.

However – and this is the message I want to emphasise this evening – regardless of what happens with Brexit, there is a bright future for financial services in Scotland.

I'm sure this is the case in many parts of the UK today, but certainly in Scotland we see Brexit as creating a necessity to be more firm in our determination to look outwards, to build links and to foster collaboration, and that is as true in financial services as it is in many other areas.

The sector right now in Scotland is flourishing - and the Scottish Government is working very closely with business to help it flourish further in the years ahead.

We've seen good evidence of that in the last year. One of them many of you will be aware of already - the decision by Barclays to invest in Glasgow.

That investment, which was hugely welcome, could create up to 2,500 jobs. And perhaps more significantly, in what was a truly global field of options – the other centres are in New Jersey and India - it is a major vote of confidence in Scotland and in Scotland's workforce.

In the last two years HSBC and Computershare have both hired hundreds of additional staff in Scotland. We'll hear from George Quinn later this evening about Zurich's major investment in Glasgow.

What all of these businesses – and many more besides - recognise is that Scotland is one of the best places anywhere in Europe to base financial services operations. That's why we are the UK's most important financial centre outside London. We have strengths across a range of areas from asset management to insurance and banking.

First and foremost, that is because of our people. We have world-class universities and colleges. In fact by some measures, Scotland has the most highly qualified workforce in Europe.

For example, at present, more than 70,000 students are studying subjects relevant to financial services in Scotland's universities.

But of course that skills base goes far beyond financial services. That's why businesses across a range of economic sectors – several of which are represented here this evening – choose Scotland for inward investment.

However to take an example which is closely connected with finance, we are widely acknowledged as a UK leader in data and informatics. We are also investing significantly in wider digital skills – an issue which I know has been a major focus of your time in office, Lord Mayor.

That skilled workforce is a major reason why Technation last year named Edinburgh as the best location in the UK for establishing a technology company. That in turn is why our fintech sector is starting to gain international recognition.

In addition, having a devolved government allows us to respond rapidly to the needs of business. That makes it easier for the public sector to provide co-ordinated support for inward investors. And of course we offer a brilliant quality of life – with vibrant cities and beautiful landscapes, if not always fantastic weather.

To build on all of these strengths, we already work closely with businesses in Scotland. I co-chair Scotland's Financial Services Advisory Board with Scottish Financial Enterprise, and of course we've just worked very closely together to produce the financial services prospectus that the Lord Mayor referred to.

But we also want to work with companies based in London, and with the City of London itself.

And there's a point which I think is worth emphasising here. The City of London and Scotland can sometimes be seen as rivals or competitors. And of course, every now and again, that will undoubtedly be the case. But far more frequently, we will benefit from working together.

After all, as all of us know, London's scale is unique within the UK and indeed Europe. That gives you an important comparative advantage in many areas.

But we also know that Scotland offers a fantastic range of expertise and facilities, and that office costs are significantly lower than in London.

So – and many of you have direct experience of this - companies which already have big operations in London, can benefit from offices in Scotland which complement their London bases. Working together is undoubtedly good for Scotland, but also brings benefits for London as well.

That's indeed why we established a new Scottish Government base in London in 2017. It demonstrates that - whatever the future holds for all of us - it will always be in our interests to encourage close ties with London.

And it also symbolises something wider. In the last couple of years the Scottish Government has also established new bases in Dublin, Berlin and Paris. Our enterprise agencies have doubled their representation across Europe, and are also strengthening their presence in other parts of the world. What that symbolises is a determination to be firmly outward looking and firmly open for business

I mentioned earlier how appropriate it is that there is an international dimension to this evening's event.

That's because Scotland - like the City of London - benefits enormously from our connections with friends and partners the world over. We have world class businesses which prosper by trading the world over. And so we are determined to forge new partnerships and to strengthen existing ones - here on these islands, across Europe, and right across the world.

That definitely applies to the partnership Scotland enjoys with the city of London. We believe that it benefits the City, and that it also benefits Scotland. And so we are determined to work with you, Lord Mayor, to strengthen that relationship further.

That's why I am delighted to see so many people here. I hope you all have a wonderful evening. And I look forward to working with many of you, in the months and years ahead.

National Advisory Council on Women and Girls circle event (*mis en ligne le 30/01/2019 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/national-advisory-council-on-women-and-girls-circle-event>*)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's speech, January 2019.

In many ways, this venue, the Surgeons Hall is an appropriate place for us to be gathering today to talk about this report on gender equality. On your way in here you might have seen, but if you didn't you can have a look at it on the way out, a plaque on the outer wall. And that plaque is dedicated to the UK's first female undergraduate students. In 1869 - 150 years ago - the 'Edinburgh Seven' - as they became known, enrolled at the University of Edinburgh to study medicine. And perhaps unsurprisingly they were immediately subject to a campaign of hostility and harassment, from staff, students and members of the public.

And that culminated here at the Surgeons Hall, in 1870. The seven women were due to sit an exam in the main building, but when they arrived, they were confronted by hundreds of male students - who hurled abuse and threw rubbish. The women persisted, and were eventually able to enter through the gates.

The Riot of Surgeons Hall attracted huge publicity at the time. It galvanised support for the Edinburgh Seven - and it won over many people - women and men - to their cause. And as such, it stands all these years later, in my view as a landmark in Scotland's progress towards equal rights for women.

And it is an indication of how far we've come. Last year - women accounted for 60% of entrants to undergraduate courses in Scotland. For medical degrees, the figure was slightly higher at 61%.

So we can and I think we should take encouragement from the progress that's been made since then. That said it's clear, very clear on a daily basis that Scotland, like so many other countries - still has a long way to go in achieving true gender equality. Across every aspect of our society, endemic and often systemic inequalities persist.

One of the things I pledged when I became First Minister, the first woman to have the privilege of holding this office, was that I'd do everything I could to improve opportunities for women and girls – that's a commitment that I take seriously that's extremely close to my heart and it's what the government that I lead has tried to do. We've taken a range of measures to challenge gender stereotypes, help women's voices to be heard and to tackle violence against women and girls.

However, we know we need to do much more to eradicate persistent inequalities that many women and girls still face in their daily lives.

That is why, inspired by the example of Barack Obama when he was in the White House, took the decision to establish the Advisory Council on Women and Girls. And it's why I'm so delighted to receive your first year report and recommendations.

As I said earlier I'm so grateful for everyone who has contributed to this process. Members of the Council, members of the Circle, and all those who participated digitally, or through the Monthly Spotlight events.

The result of all of that work in my view is a report of great insight and huge ambition and I warmly welcome the report and all of the recommendations in it.

The eleven recommendations are thought-provoking, they are also challenging and that is exactly what I hoped they would be.

When I came to the first meeting of the Advisory Council we talked then about the importance of the council not simply being content to tinker around the edges, but being prepared to be bold and to challenge and to really push the envelope and I'm delighted that in this report that that's exactly what you've done.

Now I don't have time today obviously to talk in detail about each of the recommendations – in any event the Scottish Government will take the time to consider all of them properly and carefully and we will publish a full and considered response in due course. But I do want to give you some of my immediate thoughts on the key recommendations.

One of the things I found very encouraging is that some, not all, of the recommendations broadly align with work that the Scottish Government is doing already and will help us advance and accelerate that work.

For example the report focuses rightly on the central importance of education. We're already taking significant action to ensure that our education system promotes gender equality. And we will look at how your recommendations can build on those efforts.

Similarly, you've proposed improvements to the services we provide to victims of sexual violence. I agree absolutely that that is hugely important. And that also ties in with work that the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, who is here and is indeed a member of the council, is currently taking forward.

Your proposal to incorporate – into Scots Law – the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, is one that I particularly welcome and is a recommendation that is particularly timely. You will be aware that in December, another advisory council – the one on human rights - recommended that we embed human rights into a new statutory framework. I strongly support that overall vision and direction of travel and have already announced that we will establish a taskforce, to take that work forward.

So work on your proposal can be taken forward as part of that process.

The report also recommends a further expansion of early years learning and childcare. Again as you know the Scottish Government is currently in the process of almost doubling the funded childcare entitlement – to 1140 hours per year for children. To put that into context in

2007 the funded entitlement was just over 400 hours a year – so that is a significant expansion that is already underway.

And that current expansion obviously has significant logistical and financial implications associated with it. So I'm going to be straight with you on this one, our immediate priority has to be on that commitment. However, as we look to the next parliament, we will carefully consider future investments – whether that's in after-school care, or a further expansion of child-care. And I can confirm to you today that your recommendation will form a central part of that discussion.

Our policies on childcare of course are just one of the ways in which we've tried to support or are trying to support, women in the workplace. That's another important issue that the report addresses – for example, through your really interesting proposal for a Gender Beacon Collaborative.

The idea of creating such a network – to promote equality in the workplace, and share best practice across sectors – is one that I'm really enthusiastic about and that has real potential. So I can say to you today that the Scottish Government wants to move as quickly as we can to implement that recommendation and will move quickly to explore with partners the best model for achieving that aim and of course the council and the circle will have a role to play advising and informing that work as we take it forward.

Of course, inevitably in a report of this ambition, there are some aspects which we will require to give particularly careful consideration to if we are to do it justice.

For example, I'm hugely sympathetic and indeed hugely supportive of your proposals around electoral candidate quotas, and also around paternity benefits. However, right now the powers needed to deliver these proposals are not yet fully devolved to the Scottish Parliament so we are going to have to give some careful consideration to what we can do within existing powers. And that has to be the starting point, but also, where necessary, make the case for them – including to the UK Government. And there's no doubt that as we do so the recommendations and analysis of this Advisory Council will add real weight to our efforts.

One of your other proposals is for the creation of a new body to review media output. I have to say my initial view here is that this might not necessarily be an appropriate role for government to undertake. After all, it's vital that we protect the independence of the media and the freedom of the press.

That said the issue underlying the recommendation is a really important one.

The way in which the media portrays women – and indeed on occasion men – is clearly a big factor in shaping harmful gender stereotypes.

Now, there have been some recent positive signs that the media is starting to take this issue seriously. In December, the Advertising Standards Authority announced a ban on harmful gender stereotyping in advertising. And that's a good example of the media using self-regulation to respond to public concern. And it demonstrates why – as a society – we need to continue to draw attention to and challenge sexism and misogyny, and harmful gender stereotyping in the media.

So we will consider carefully how we can advise in the spirit of this recommendation while respecting the independence of the media and the freedom of the press.

And I think that illustrates a wider point about all of this.

There's no doubt that the proposals in this report represent a big challenge to the government – to build on and accelerate the progress we've already made. And that's exactly what I asked the advisory council to do and I'm really grateful that you have seized this challenge and risen

to that challenge so well. But I think we all agree that government action by itself can't bring about the kind of change we need to see.

Each of us – women and men, individually and collectively – have a responsibility to meet the challenge of tackling gender inequalities.

So in setting me a challenge which I absolutely undertake with real enthusiasm, I think it's important that we set each other a challenge – representatives from across our society, from business, education, the public and third sectors. We need to set everybody the same challenge that this report sets for government. I would ask everybody here and I would ask all of you to encourage all of you in our wider networks, to read the Advisory Council's recommendations – and consider how you, in the networks and spheres in which you operate, can help to achieve the underlying aims of them.

That could involve pushing and agitating for greater equality – in the organisations that you work in, you study in or you volunteer in. It could mean looking for new ways to support other women – through formal and informal networks. Or it could mean seeking new opportunities to advocate for change – not just here in Scotland but internationally as well.

The events that took place in the Surgeons Hall – 150 years ago – might seem to us today like a historical curiosity.

After all, the rights that these seven pioneers fought for back then are the ones that – in 2019 – the rest of us can largely take for granted because of their courage back then.

But the lesson of that, and there are many other examples that could give the same lesson, is that those rights didn't just happen by accident. It required action. It required women – and also, crucially, men, and I'm a great believer in resolving gender inequalities cannot just be the responsibility of women – it is the responsibility of men as well as women. It requires brave women and men to show leadership, to take a stand, and to persist, sometimes often, against the odds.

In our different ways, that's the example all of us have to follow – if we are to make all aspects of gender inequality, before too much longer, a historical curiosity.

So this report that you have produced will help us to do that, there is no doubt in my mind at all. So I want to conclude by thanking all of you once again for the work, the input, the imagination, the creativity that has produced this report and these recommendations. And I want to thank you for your commitment to a cause that matters so much to all of us but matters so much to the kind of society we want to live in today and that we want our daughters our granddaughters and great granddaughters to inherit as well.

So I really look forward to working with all of you in the months and years ahead. You have my personal commitment to take forward these recommendations in a positive spirit and to work together to make sure that they do deliver the kind of change that we want to see and ultimately that they help us to improve the lives of women and girls across Scotland. And in the process of doing that, helping us to create a truly equal country.

[Georgetown University speech \(disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/georgetown-university-speech>\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/georgetown-university-speech)

First Minister speech on Scotland, Brexit and the Future

4 February, 2019

It is an absolute honour to be delivering this address and to be taking part in this discussion in these wonderful surroundings, in this beautiful and historic library. I could quite easily spend the rest of my trip to the United States here in this library alone, so for my team that are listening if you could rearrange the schedule to allow that to happen I would be immensely grateful.

But it's also an honour to be the first speaker in what I know you are describing as "Women World Leaders" week. And it's a big privilege to be on the same billing thing week as Hillary Clinton, Margot Wallstrom and Amat Alsoswa.

For that reason and for many, many other reasons, I'm thrilled to be here at Georgetown. And of course it is always a pleasure to be here in the United States.

Washington and Georgetown - like so many places across the United States I guess - hold reminders of the strong and very long-standing ties between Scotland and the USA.

From across the city, of course you can see the Capitol dome, which was designed by William Thornton who was a graduate of both Edinburgh and Aberdeen Universities in Scotland. This university itself, during the Civil War, briefly served as a base for the Union Army's New York Highlanders which was a regiment mainly raised from Americans of Scots descent.

And that of course reflects the fact, that in my view we should celebrate and never take for granted, that hundreds of thousands of Scots travelled to the USA in the 19th and then into 20th centuries, in search of opportunities and a better life. And indeed that's why the Presidential proclamation on Tartan Day, which was issued in 2008, notes that "*Scotland and the United States have long shared ties of family and friendship*".

Perhaps more importantly though, those ties of family and friendship - and also of trade, of commerce and of culture - endure to this day.

And the universities sector plays a really important role in that. For several years, St Andrews University in Scotland and Georgetown have worked together on a student transfer programme. In total, almost 5,000 students from the US study in Scottish universities - who knows some of you here might be tempted to do the same in future.

And those international connections, those important, valuable and treasured international connections - are directly relevant to the theme of what I want to talk about today.

As Joe said in his introduction, later this year, Scotland will mark the 20th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament, after almost 300 years of not having a Parliament of our own. And regaining that parliament, that seat of democracy and governance that now sits in Edinburgh, has allowed Scotland - on some issues - to chart a different course from the rest of the United Kingdom on domestic policies. So for example, in recent years we've decided to pursue a more progressive taxation policy than the UK as a whole. And unlike in England, students studying at Scottish universities don't have to pay tuition fees. We believe that education is something that is precious and should be based on an individual's ability to learn, not on their ability to pay.

However, having our own parliament has also allowed Scotland to raise our international profile, in the interests of expanding trade, boosting cultural links and also making a contribution to tackling some of the big issues that the world confronts. For example the moral imperative of tackling climate change. We established a Scottish Government presence here in Washington back in 2001, not long after the parliament was re-established and later this week, when I am in Canada, I will meet staff at the Scottish Government's new base in Ottawa.

In the last couple of years we've also significantly expanded Scotland's presence in major European cities like Paris and Berlin and when I go to the United Nations in New York on Wednesday, I will be reflecting, amongst other things, on Scotland's programme to help women who are acting as peacemakers in conflict zones.

I know that Margot Wallstrom, the Swedish Foreign Minister, is speaking here on Thursday on the topic "More Women, More Peace" - something I feel very passionately about as well.

Scotland too – like Sweden – recognises that women have an important role in peacemaking. We're trying to play our part in promoting that.

And all of this, I hope, speaks to a country that's relatively small in size, but nonetheless a country that has big ambitions to play our full part and have our voice heard in shaping the world that all of us live in. And of course throughout all of that time, Scotland's membership of the European Union has been one of the most important ways in which we have been able to expand our economy and expand our economic opportunities and maximise our influence. Just last week trade figures showed that Scotland's exports to the EU, in the most recent year we've got figures for, increased by 13%, now stripping the growth in our exports to the rest of the UK, and indeed to the wider world. Though I'm delighted to say the United States remains our biggest international export market. We also work very closely with European partners on issues that range from energy security to health research.

And it's important to say in the times that we live in right now, that these European connections have never really been particularly controversial in Scotland. Scotland has a very proud European tradition. We see ourselves as a European country and people in Scotland by and large, of course there are exceptions, but by and large, people in Scotland and this is perhaps in contrast with people elsewhere in the UK, don't really see membership of the European Union as a threat to our own national sovereignty. On the contrary we see that membership is a way of independent countries, coming together to work together, to tackle collectively, big challenges. So membership of the EU is one way in which Scotland, as a small nation, has been able to co-operate with friends and neighbours across the continent and amplify our voice in the process. Indeed, many of us, and this is an issue that I'll return to later, believe that our voice and influence would be strengthened if we were an independent member state of the European Union.

We value the practical benefits that the EU brings us – research collaborations, free trade and free movement. But we also, and perhaps this is the more important point, we also value the principles that the EU exemplifies – that nations can and should co-operate as equals for the common good.

Now as most of you know, in 2016 the UK, regrettably in my opinion, voted to leave the European Union. It did so by a narrow margin of 52% to 48%. But of course the vote in Scotland was very different. Scotland voted to remain in the European Union, by a larger margin than that, by 62% to 38%. So as things stand right now, on 29 March - in just 53 days' time - Scotland faces the prospect of leaving the European Union against our democratically expressed will.

And that throws up many issues and many questions for us, but it throws up a fundamental question about the way in which political decision making is exercised in the United Kingdom and indeed about the nature of the United Kingdom itself. It's important to remember, and this is something is not always remembered, even within the UK, let alone internationally, the United Kingdom is not a unitary state. The United Kingdom is made up of four nations – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – and indeed we are often told in Scotland that this is a partnership of equals.

Yet two parts of the UK – Scotland and Northern Ireland – voted to remain in the EU. The other two - Wales and England - voted to leave.

And in response to that, the UK Government could have led discussions with the devolved nations and others about how to leave the EU. It could have considered and made compromises that took account of the differing views across different parts of the United Kingdom. The Scottish Government was willing and very keen to play our part in any such discussions.

But instead of that, the vote in Scotland has been ignored. And over the two and a half years since it took place, our interests have been sidelined. And it is increasingly difficult, indeed it is now really impossible to reconcile that experience, with the idea of the UK as an equal partnership of nations.

The negotiations and discussions that have taken place since the referendum, and let me be diplomatic about this, have been tortuous in the extreme – largely as a result of red lines put forward by the UK Prime Minister.

I mean let me be clear, I oppose Brexit I don't want the UK to leave the EU but there was nothing inevitable about the chaos and the difficulties that that process has ended up being mired in. That has largely come about because of the way in which the UK is choosing to leave the EU – the red lines that the Government put in place quickly ruled out the closest forms of partnership with the EU – for example continued membership of the single market and the customs union.

However ruling out those close partnerships has proved deeply problematic. First, it, as I'm sure you've read, has made it far, far more difficult for the UK Government to meet its obligation to maintain an open border on the island of Ireland between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland which of course is a member of the EU in its own right.

And secondly, it has increased the economic harm that Brexit is likely to cause.

After all, the European Single Market is a great modern success story.

It allows independent nations to take advantage of a market of 500 million people – that's eight times the size of the UK market alone.

It has brought many economic benefits and it's still not yet complete. There are still huge future opportunities in services, where Scotland has particular strengths, and of course in the digital economy.

So to leave this successful, developing market-place makes no economic sense whatsoever and it will damage the prospects of future generations.

And that's particularly the case, because the claims made about the supposed benefits of Brexit are already proving completely illusory.

There is no evidence that the UK on its own will be better at striking trade deals than the EU – in fact, what we have seen so far suggests the opposite would probably be the case.

And for the UK Government, the greatest prize of leaving the EU appears to be ending free movement of people and curbing migration to the UK. Yet for Scotland, that is one of the biggest downsides of Brexit.

People in Scotland and across the UK currently have the automatic right to work and study in Europe. In future, we will be denied that; and people from elsewhere in Europe will be denied similar opportunities in Scotland.

Now I think that's wrong in principle, I think we should be looking to make it easier for people to share different cultures and getting to know different countries across the world, but there's a real practical danger in that for Scotland as well, because Scotland's demographics are different to the rest of the UK's. We've got a population that's ageing faster and we've got challenges about growing our working age population. So if free movement ends then it is distinctly possible that Scotland's working age population will start to fall with severe economic and social consequences.

Now back in November, the UK Government, notwithstanding all of these difficulties, finally agreed a deal with the EU which tried to reconcile all of this, tried to reconcile its commitment to Ireland with its stance on the single market and the customs union.

However that deal pleased absolutely nobody in the UK and it didn't pass through the House of Commons.

The UK Government is now trying to renegotiate that agreement, particularly the aspect of it that relates to Ireland. But it's trying to do so with the clock ticking and despite the fact that the European Union has repeatedly said that such a renegotiation is not something it's willing to accept. As a result of that, there is a real and growing risk that the UK will leave the EU in 53 days' time without any deal in place.

And that would be hugely damaging – far more so, dare I say it, than the government shut down you've just had here in the United States. In fact, some of the contingencies being considered – if we leave the EU without a deal – are genuinely astonishing.

Retailers and farmers have warned of price rises and shortages of key foods; motorways and airfields in the south of England are being considered for use as lorry parks; UK Government ministers – quite seriously – are claiming to be buying fridges in order to stockpile essential medicines.

And some of that sounds amusing but the idea that a prosperous country, one of the most prosperous countries in the world, in peacetime is even considering steps such as that, demonstrates how absurd this whole situation has become.

But of course, diagnosing problems with the status quo is relatively easy. The harder issue is trying to work out where we should go from here, particularly with the pressure of time that is now baring down on the UK.

In my view, in the short term, several steps need to be taken. First, the UK Government should confirm that it will do absolutely everything to avoid the UK leaving with no deal. It should make clear it's not prepared for the UK to leave the EU with no deal.

And as part of that, it should acknowledge that the UK simply is not remotely prepared to leave the EU in 53 days' time. That's been obvious for a while now. So the UK Government should ask the EU to agree to put back the planned date for Brexit.

The request for an extension of course must be accompanied by an achievable plan. And that plan cannot be a continued insistence from the Prime Minister that her deal is the only alternative to no deal.

And I think there are two broad options here. We could reconsider the closest possible forms of partnership with the EU – the ones that were ruled out back in 2016 – such as membership of the customs union and single market. That would at least minimise the harm to the economy caused by leaving the EU.

The second and, in my view, better option is to hold a further referendum on EU membership. At present there may not be a consensus in the UK Parliament for the option of Single Market and Customs Union membership - or indeed any other option. And so the Scottish Government's view, my view, is that this issue, given the deadlock in Parliament, should be put back to the electorate in another referendum.

Now there are three other points I want to briefly make which relate to Brexit, but which also relate to wider issues. And the first is one I've touched on already, and that is immigration – which was a significant issue during the EU referendum campaign. Firstly let me recognise that the issue of immigration is a difficult one for politicians and governments in countries across the world including of course in this one right now.

But equally in my view, too few politicians have the courage to make the positive case for immigration and that's what I want to try to do, not just today, but generally.

I reflected earlier on the generations of Scots who found a home in the USA. They did so at a time when far more people left Scotland, than wanted to come to Scotland. One of the wonderful things that has happened in the last 20 years or so – largely as a result of migration to Scotland from the rest of Europe - is that that position has reversed.

That has benefited our country. Our universities, our workplaces and our communities have gained hugely from the skills and commitment of these new Scots. Immigration has been good for our culture, our economy and for our society as a whole.

In fact, for Scotland, immigration is absolutely essential. As I said a moment ago, without it, our population will start to decline. And everybody knows the consequences of that. A smaller number of working age people will have to support a growing number of older people. So severe restrictions on immigration pose a genuine risk to the long-term health of our economy and our society.

And one of the things that I personally find hardest to accept, in relation to the UK Government's Brexit policy, is that they see ending freedom of movement as a good thing. I don't believe that's true for any part of the UK, and it's certainly not true for Scotland.

In fact, the central trade-off at the heart of the UK's approach to Brexit makes absolutely no sense to us at all.

By impeding free trade, in order to end freedom of movement, the UK is in the bizarre, absurd position of doing something that will harm the UK and Scotland, in order to do something else that will harm the UK and Scotland. That is the absurdity of the position we find ourselves in.

The fundamental point that I'm making – that no Scottish parliament, of any political composition, would approach Brexit in the way that the UK Government is currently doing – helps to explain why Brexit is also relevant to the debate on Scottish independence which is the second issue I want to touch on.

In the independence referendum that Scotland had in 2014, and there's a real irony in this, voters in Scotland were repeatedly told that if we chose to become independent, we would have to leave the European Union. We would be thrown out of the European Union and be in the position of having to reapply for membership in our own right now. I as it happens always think it was a bogus argument, but finding ourselves four years on facing being taken out of the European Union against our will really does grate on many people in Scotland considerably. But back then voting to stay in the UK, was portrayed as the way to protect our European Union membership.

And that in itself raises the question of whether decisions about Scotland should continue to be taken at Westminster- or whether it would be better if those decision were taken in Scotland by our democratically elected parliament.

And of course the ongoing chaos at Westminster and the way in which Scotland's interests have been consistently ignored, makes that question even more relevant.

I as First Minister have said I will outline my thoughts on the timing of another independence referendum in the next few weeks – once the terms of Brexit have become clearer.

But, amid the confusion and uncertainty of Brexit, one thing I think is clearer than ever. Scotland's national interests are not being served by a Westminster system which too often treats Scotland as an afterthought, or too often sees our interests as not being material. In my view, they can only properly be served by becoming an independent country. But an independent

country that then seeks to play its part in an interconnected world. And that is a vision that I think more and more people in Scotland, in the wake of the Brexit experience, find very attractive.

Now the third and final point I want to talk about in relation to Brexit is the issue of inequality.

Inequality, like immigration, was a major issue in the build up to the EU referendum.

We know that across the UK, people on low incomes were more likely to want to leave the EU. And when you allow for student numbers, so too were areas with low employment rates. The vote for Brexit was partly caused by austerity - deep public spending cuts, stagnant living standards, and a sense of disempowerment on the part of many people across the country.

Now in my view, Brexit is the wrong response to inequality – because it’s likely to make people’s living standards worse rather than better. But at the same time, there was a logic to many people’s decision to vote for major change. After all, if people aren’t benefitting from the status quo, we can’t expect people to vote for the status quo.

So the Brexit vote - and there a maybe parallels here with the US and with other countries around the world - highlights a real challenge for those of us who do support free trade and those of who do welcome and support immigration. We must ensure that those policies benefit everyone in our society – not just a few.

Otherwise, an open economy will encourage popular resentment, rather than commanding the widespread support it needs to do.

That’s one of the reasons why Scotland’s economic strategy has for several years emphasised so strongly this notion of inclusive growth – growth which benefits everyone, and growth to which everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

So in Scotland we have promoted fair work. In Scotland a higher proportion of people are paid what we call the living wage, than in any other part of the UK. We are currently using new powers that the Scottish Parliament has over social security to ensure that people who rely on benefits are treated with dignity and with respect. As I said earlier on we have taken a decision to make our tax system more progressive, so that those on lower incomes pay slightly less but we ask those on the highest incomes to pay slightly more to support the public services that so many of us rely on such as our national health service.

We’re also taking steps to promote equality. Last year, we became the first country anywhere in the world to take a decision to embed LGBTI rights into the school curriculum. We are also implementing legislation to better tackle domestic abuse, something which is attracting international recognition.

And, where it makes sense to do so, we’re trying to improve living standards by removing some of the financial burdens on households. So for example we have ensured that medical prescriptions, and personal care provided for elderly or infirm people at home, is not subject to charging, that is something that people get through the contribution they make through their taxes.

I’ve already mentioned that Scotland doesn’t charge tuition fees for going to university. And in the last year, we’ve become the first country anywhere in the world to provide free sanitary products in all secondary schools and universities. Now these are just some examples of the work we’re doing to try to make the country fairer and more equal.

And the financial cost to the government of some of these policies is relatively small. But it makes a big symbolic difference.

We do these things – first and foremost because they are morally right, but also, because we know that societies and economies that are more equal do better, so these kinds of policies deliver social and economic benefits and they help to develop a stronger sense of community cohesion, a sense that everybody has a role to play and everybody benefits from doing the right things.

And Scotland, like all countries, is more likely to prosper if we fully use the talents of all of our people.

And our policies also honour what we describe as the social contract between the people and government. We know that everybody, at different times and in different ways, contributes to the economy and society. However we also know that everyone – at different times and in different ways – can need a helping hand from the public sector. So we make sure that public support is available to everyone because we believe if we do that, we help everyone to contribute more effectively. It is a virtuous circle that we seek to promote.

And that focus on equality, on inclusive growth, is likely to become even more important in the years ahead.

Scotland, like the rest of the developed world – certainly including the United States– will have to address several hugely important challenges. We will have to continue to adapt to an ageing population; we will need to ensure that artificial intelligence and automation benefit society as a whole; and of course we will need to tackle climate change and the transition to a zero carbon economy.

And I am very firm, in Scotland we are all very firm, I don't want Scotland to shy away from those challenges – instead I want Scotland to be a world leader in addressing them.

Climate change is a good example. It is the most important economic, environmental and moral issue currently facing our planet.

Scotland is trying to take a lead. Back in 2007 our parliament set what at the time were the most ambitious climate change targets anywhere in the world. They used 1990 as a baseline year and required us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42% by 2020. We achieved that target five years early and are now aiming to go much further.

We already generate 70% of our gross electricity demand from renewable energy. And we have a target to reach 100% by the end of next year.

We have also set a target of removing the need for new diesel and petrol cars by 2032.

I'm actually going to discuss Scotland's low carbon ambitions tomorrow with Governor Murphy of New Jersey. And I'm sure one of the things that will crop up is that the transition to a low carbon economy isn't simply an overwhelming moral obligation –although it is – it's an obligation that we owe to future generations, but it is also a massive economic opportunity for the countries that are ahead of the curve.

I know that President Obama gave a major speech on climate change here at Georgetown back in 2016. And he argued, among other things, that inaction in the face of climate change showed “*a lack of faith in American business and American ingenuity*”.

And what he was doing then was appealing to an American tradition that really resonates in Scotland. You know Scotland is famous for a range of innovations ranging from the television and the telephone to penicillin and beta blockers. We modestly and humbly claim in Scotland that we literally invented the modern world – we don't like to boast.

This year we are marking the bicentenary of the death of James Watt – the man whose improvements to the steam engine were fundamental to the industrial revolution. It's a reminder

that Scotland was in so many ways the country that led the world into the industrial age. So it would be fitting if we could now help to lead the world into a carbon-neutral age.

And in some areas, we have the opportunity to do exactly that. Scotland's waters host the most powerful offshore wind turbines anywhere in the world and the most successful tidal power turbines. We are also home to the world's first two and largest floating windfarms. And we have really important strengths in areas such as smart grids and battery storage.

All of that activity is bringing economic benefits. Low carbon technologies already employ more than 50,000 people in Scotland and for a country of our size, that's a significant number that will only grow in the years ahead.

But we have seen, and that takes me back to the inequality point, that in previous waves of economic change too many people have been left behind. Where I grew up, in the west of Scotland, I remember vividly the job losses caused in part by the decline of mining and heavy industries during the 1970s and 1980s. And I know that some US communities have suffered in a similar fashion.

So we all have to be determined that future waves of economic change are handled better. In Scotland I have appointed a Just Transition Commission – a panel of independent advisors to make recommendations about how we ensure that the transition to a carbon neutral economy benefits all of our citizens.

And of course, there is a really important international dimension to all of this. The worst impacts of climate change are not largely felt within developed nations, it is one of the huge injustices of climate change that it is usually developing countries – who have done least to cause the problem – who pay the heaviest price.

Which is why the Scottish Government a few years ago established a climate justice fund, helping countries in Africa adapt to the consequences of climate change, and develop in a sustainable way. That's a relatively small programme given the overall scale of the issue – but it is a significant gesture from a country that wants to be a good global citizen.

And in many respects, that brings me back to conclude where I began. Brexit is dominating all the headlines at home – I'm sure it's dominating a few headlines here in the United States. It is an unwanted challenge for Scotland – if it goes ahead it will be harmful to our economy and our society. But regardless of it, Scotland will always strive to be a good partner to countries around the world.

In the 20 years since our parliament was created, we have helped to take a lead in tackling climate change, we have forged new relationships with international organisations such as the UN and the EU; and we have strengthened old friendships such as those that we enjoy with the USA and Canada.

And where we can, we will try to lead by example, in combining an innovative and open economy, with a fair and inclusive society.

In all of this, we know that – as a nation of just 5 million people, we will never be one of the world's great powers. But we do believe that we can still make a meaningful contribution to great causes. And we understand, and this in the world that we live in today is an important point never to lose sight of, that we will all achieve more, and learn more, when we engage constructively with partners from around the world.

Few of those partnerships mean more to us, than the one we share with the people of the United States. So it is a real pleasure and a real honour for me to be here today. I am looking forward now to some discussions and questions. And I hope that many of you, if you haven't

done so already, will visit, study or live in Scotland in the future, as we continue to strengthen the enduring friendship between our two nations – Scotland and the United States.

Foreign Affairs Committee, French National Assembly (*disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/foreign-affairs-committee-french-national-assembly>*)

First Minister, 19 February, 2019

It is a pleasure to come to Paris. Unfortunately I'm not able to stay in Paris until the weekend, to watch the rugby! I do however hope to be back in France in June - when Scotland will compete for the first time in the women's football world cup, and when our fans will again, I know, receive a very warm welcome.

It is a real honour to be invited to this committee. As my remarks will make clear, Scotland and France are natural partners on very many issues. In fact, one of the reasons for my visit this week is to launch the new Scottish Government office here in Paris.

That is an important development for us. It represents a commitment, not only to our relationship to France, but also to Scotland's role as an open and outward looking European country.

It also perhaps overdue because France was actually the very first country to establish a consulate in Scotland.

It was opened by General de Gaulle in 1942. A quote from General de Gaulle's speech on that occasion is inscribed on the outside wall of the Consul-General's residence in Edinburgh – it says simply '*the oldest alliance in the world*'.

That of course reflects the fact that our countries enjoy ties of trade, commerce and friendship which go back for more than seven hundred years.

For centuries, our citizens even had the right to dual nationality – something which seems increasingly tempting for Scotland, as the prospect of Brexit looms ever larger and we risk losing our European citizenship.

I will reflect on these historic links between our countries from time to time in my remarks today. But as you would expect, I want to focus more strongly on our modern partnership.

In fact my basic message this afternoon is actually very simple. Scotland cherishes our friendship with France. We believe that it brings significant benefits to both of our countries. We want it to flourish further in the years ahead. And we are determined that that will happen regardless of Brexit.

I'll say more about that later in my remarks.

But, as you would expect, I will start by addressing the issue of Brexit.

It is, after all, the dominant issue in the UK at present.

The first point I want to stress is that Scotland and the Scottish Government is committed to the European Union.

We believe that Scotland benefits hugely from access to a single market of more than 500 million people.

We benefit from the rights EU membership offers to workers, and from the protections it has provided for our environment.

We benefit from the freedom to travel, study and live in Europe; and also from the contribution that our fellow EU citizens have made to Scotland.

These EU citizens of course include 13,000 French people, who are our colleagues, friends, neighbours and in many cases our family.

The Scottish Government is proud that they have done us the honour of making Scotland their home.

We will always stand up for their rights – in recent years we have argued successfully to ensure EU citizens would not have to pay a fee to obtain settled status in the UK.

We will always make it clear that EU citizens are welcome. In fact in the coming months, we plan to step up our efforts to encourage EU citizens to stay in Scotland.

In addition to all of the practical benefits we gain from the EU, we also cherish its fundamental values - freedom, democracy, the rule of law, equality, and respect for human dignity and human rights - and we will always encourage the EU to live up to these values.

There's a point here which perhaps goes slightly beyond Brexit.

The main task of the Scottish Government's new Paris hub is to strengthen our ties with France.

But another important reason to be based here is that Paris, as a great world city, is the home to major international organisations. UNESCO and the OECD, in different forms, have both been here since the 1940s.

It's a reminder that France was at the heart of efforts, after World War II, to create a rules-based international order. The institutions created during that time – which of course include the predecessors to the European Union - have brought significant and lasting benefits to Europe and to the world as a whole.

We are being reminded at the moment that the principles that they exemplify - multilateralism, cooperation, a respect for human rights – cannot be taken for granted. We hear too many voices of intolerance and isolationism around the world today. That should concern all of us.

And so participating in international institutions, and speaking up for internationalist values, is hugely important.

I hope that Scotland's base in Paris – in a small but significant way – will help us to do that more effectively.

Of course at the moment, a key way in which we co-operate with other countries is through the EU.

I was struck by something that Ireland's Prime Minister said earlier this month.

He was reflecting on the consistent support Ireland has received from the EU throughout the Brexit process. He observed that this solidarity resonates in all small member states.

It's a good illustration of the fact that for member states – especially, but not exclusively, smaller ones – EU membership can amplify, not curtail, national sovereignty.

And the Taoiseach's statement was striking to me because the solidarity the EU has shown with Ireland since the EU referendum, contrasts very sharply with the UK government's attitude to Scotland.

As I'm sure you all know, in 2016 two of the four countries that constitute the UK - England and Wales – voted to leave the EU.

But the other two - Scotland and Northern Ireland – voted to remain in the EU.

In Scotland's case, 62 per cent of those who voted, chose to remain.

Despite that, the UK Government has been unwilling to recognise the complexity of the vote. Instead it has disregarded Scotland's views, sidelined moderate voices and chosen to draw negotiating red lines that undermine our efforts to maintain a close relationship with the European Union. Indeed that approach has led to many of the difficulties the UK Prime Minister faces today in trying to build a majority on the way forward.

I can understand Europe and France's frustration with that – in fact I share that frustration.

The Scottish Government has consistently stood up for EU membership but also tried to promote compromise, to minimize the harm caused by Brexit and to take account of the nature of the vote across the UK.

We have made clear our view that continued membership of the EU is the best outcome, but we have also suggested that if this was not possible, the UK should seek to retain customs union membership, and of course we also believe that when we have greater clarity about the terms of Brexit that Scotland must have the option to choose a different course by opting to become an independent country.

I will say more about independence at a future date.

One thing I do want to stress, however, is that for the Scottish Government, independence is not about the isolationism that characterises Brexit – instead independence would see us recognizing and embracing our interdependence with other nations. We will always seek to be close allies and partners with our neighbours in Europe. The last two years, to my mind, have underlined the importance of that position.

Now, you will have noticed that the UK Government's negotiating stance has not reflected any of the Scottish Government's views or proposals.

That is why we believe that the deal the Prime Minister agreed with the other EU member states in November is deeply flawed.

Let me be clear, though - that is a reflection of the UK Government's flawed negotiating strategy, rather than the position of the EU.

To give one important example, it seems clear that no free trade agreement envisaged by the UK Government will match the benefits the Single Market provides for services. However Scotland's services sector accounts for three-quarters of our economic output. Putting that sector at a disadvantage will be damaging to Scotland and indeed the whole of the UK - and ultimately to member states across Europe.

Perhaps even more fundamentally, we still have virtually no clarity on what the UK's long-term relationship with the EU will look like. The UK Parliament is effectively being asked to approve a "blindfold Brexit".

That is deeply concerning. If you look at the ongoing chaos at Westminster - where hardline Brexiteers appear to receive more attention than moderate voices – it is impossible to be optimistic about the UK Government's ability to agree a long-term relationship which safeguards Scotland's interests.

And in the places where November's political declaration is clear, it is damaging to Scotland.

By insisting on an independent trade policy, it effectively rules out a Customs Union. It effectively rules out single market membership by explicitly committing to the ending of free of movement of people.

I spoke about French citizens in Scotland earlier. For me, this is one of the saddest parts of Brexit. The UK Government is proclaiming the end of free movement as a victory – instead, it is a self-defeating measure. It removes opportunity from millions of people.

It is an approach which is especially damaging to Scotland. Without freedom of movement there is a danger that our population will start to decline. We could face workforce shortages in rural areas, in our universities, in our care and health services.

European nationals are not only very welcome in Scotland. They are crucial to our well-being.

All of this is down to the red lines that UK Government has chosen to draw. Given the existence of those red lines, I understand why the European Union believes that the deal agreed in November is the best which could be achieved. And I appreciate that many people in France and across the EU would like the UK to just get on with it.

But no government of Scotland which has the interests of this and future generations at heart could possibly support the current deal.

In addition, we still believe that there are still possible routes to a better outcome.

However to achieve that, the UK Government would have to alter its approach.

Firstly, the UK Government should make it clear that it would not support the UK leaving the EU on the 29 March without a deal in place. Such an outcome would be disastrous.

The UK Prime Minister should therefore write immediately to the European Union requesting an extension to the Article 50 process. That would alleviate the most immediate time pressure. And in any event, it has been obvious for some time now that the UK is not remotely prepared to leave the EU on 29 March.

I sincerely hope France would lend its support such an extension. However I am well aware that a new European parliamentary session starts on July 1. And so I know that the time of any extension - and indeed the purpose of it - would need to be considered carefully.

Beyond that I believe there are two options. The UK Government could drop its self-defeating red lines and, at long last, stand up to the more extreme Brexiteer element in its ranks and agree to the UK as a whole remaining firmly within the Single Market and Customs Union. Among other things, that would make it far easier to maintain an open border on Ireland. It is the UK's chosen red lines that currently make that solution impossible.

However, there is no sign so far of the Prime Minister being willing to contemplate such an approach - and, of course, even if she was, there may be too little time left to achieve a guarantee of it before the UK relinquishes EU membership.

That is why the alternative option is now the preferred one for me and many others - a second referendum offering people the choice to remain in the EU.

There is a strong democratic case for that. For parliament, it is a way to break the deadlock. For Scotland it is an opportunity for our wish to stay in the EU to be respected.

And for all voters, it is a chance to make a decision based on much more detailed information than was ever made available in 2016.

At the time of the referendum, people who opted to leave knew that they were voting against EU membership; but they did not know what they were voting for.

That allowed the EU to serve as a scapegoat for wider concerns – for example an entirely justified dissatisfaction about austerity, inequality and stagnant living standards.

A second vote could be based on a much clearer understanding of what the leave option actually means in practice.

This option does not currently have the parliamentary support it needs. However it remains one way out of the problems the UK has created for itself. So it is a course the Scottish Government will support. We cannot endorse the UK Government's current Brexit proposals, and

we will do everything in our power to secure a better outcome for Scotland, the UK and Europe.

And regardless of the eventual outcome of the Brexit process, the Scottish Government will ensure that Scotland is – and is seen to be – an open, welcoming and outward-looking country.

In the last two years we have doubled our trade representation on mainland Europe. We have launched a new promotional campaign which invites people to live, work, invest in and visit our country. We have enhanced our Brussels office, and established new bases in Berlin, Dublin and London.

And yesterday, as I mentioned, I formally opened our new base in Paris. That exemplifies Scotland's desire to strengthen the connections between our countries. That is something which I stressed in meetings with European Affairs Minister, Nathalie Loiseau, yesterday, and with the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, today.

We have many opportunities to do so. Culture is an area where Scotland and France already have a formal co-operation agreement. Scotland was country of honour at the Brittany's Lorient festival in 2017, and yesterday I confirmed that the Orchestre de Paris will play at this summer's Edinburgh International Festival.

Economically, in recent years, France has been Scotland's largest European inward investor. French businesses employ more than 20,000 people in Scotland. France is also a key market for Scottish businesses – you are our third largest export destination.

There are many opportunities for us to build on these links. Low carbon technology is a good example. One of my last visits to Paris was for the 2015 Climate Change conference – I know how hard France worked to achieve that agreement.

Scotland now generates more than 70% of our electricity from renewable sources. The waters around Scotland are currently home to the world's most powerful offshore wind turbines, and the world's largest tidal stream project.

We already collaborate with French institutions in this area – the Universities of Caen and Le Havre in Normandy are involved in a tidal energy project led by the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney in our Northern Islands. EDF is a significant investor in Scottish offshore wind projects.

There are many areas for cooperation. Technology and artificial intelligence could be another. Events such as Vivatech demonstrate how successful France has been, in recent years, at becoming a major centre for technology businesses.

Scotland is also enjoying success in that area. Other possible areas for partnership include food and drink, health and social care, and the need to balance growth with equality. And of course one of the most important areas of all is education.

Virtually every university in Scotland has a research connection with partners in France - either through bilateral links or through the EU's Horizon 2020 programme.

Almost 2,000 people from France study in Scotland, and many Scots study here in France. These exchanges were largely enabled by Erasmus and Scotland is determined to continue to play our part in that programme.

Just a few kilometres from here, you can still see the entrance to the old College des Ecosais in Paris. It was established in 1325. It is a reminder to this day that the exchange of people and ideas between our countries and the benefit of that.

I began by quoting General de Gaulle. I'll end by quoting him.

On the opening of the French Conclulate in Edinburgh, he welcomed the “*exchanges of ideas, feelings, customs, and...words...between two peoples joined by a natural friendship*”.

That’s a friendship i’m very keen to strengthen between our two countries. That’s why i’m so delighted to be here today. It is a privilege to attend this committee. I look forward now to answering your questions.

SCVO 'The Gathering' (disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scvo-the-gathering-1>)

First Minister, 20 February, 2019

Thank you, Andrew. I want to thank SCVO for inviting me.

I’m delighted to be here at the Gathering – because this is always a brilliant event. It’s a great opportunity to discuss the key issues facing our third sector – but also to celebrate the contribution that you make to life across Scotland.

That’s why my overriding message this morning is both clear and simple, and that is just a very big “thank you” for what you do. The support, services and opportunities you provide make a massive difference to individuals and communities the length and breadth of the country.

You get a sense of that from the various stalls and displays outside. They highlight just some of the excellent work voluntary organisations are doing, across the country.

And I’m delighted to be joined on this panel by some of the people contributing to that work.

Under Anna’s leadership, SCVO continues to provide vital support to Scotland’s voluntary organisations. Through initiatives like the ‘I Love Charity’ campaign – it also helps to raise awareness of the work that you do.

Chris is at the forefront of a sector which now comprises over 5,000 social enterprises. Last September, I was honoured to welcome delegates to Edinburgh – for the Social Enterprise World Forum – really cementing Scotland’s global leadership in the area of social enterprise. It’s very clear that – in addition to helping communities throughout the country – the sector really does have that international recognition.

And of course, Stephanie leads a charity that works to improve the lives of people with cerebral palsy. As part of that, Bobath Scotland is playing, and has for some considerable time, played a huge role – not just in improving lives but also of course in the integration of health and social care.

That is actually a good example of the fact that – on virtually all of the Scottish Government’s policy priorities – we are working in partnership with the third sector.

If you take employability, our Community Jobs Scotland programme has created employment and training opportunities for more than 8,000 people.

We’re also working together to promote volunteering. The National Volunteering Outcomes Framework will be published in the next few months.

And of course, your expertise continues to be a huge asset, as we both design and deliver Scotland’s new social security system.

For example, the third sector is strongly represented on our Advisory Group for Disability and Carers Benefits. Its advice is helping to guide and inform the decisions we take.

Now, it’s still early days – but there are already signs that that work is making a difference to people’s lives.

Last year – shortly after the new social security agency made its first payment – I received a message from a carer. She wrote:

I just received my carers allowance supplement and I'm not ashamed to say I had a wee cry to myself. This is the first time I've been thanked for what I do and not questioned.

Those words have really stayed with me. They underline the importance of the work we are doing. And they make all of us I hope all the more determined to build a system that values people – a system that's not punitive, that doesn't make people feel guilty for claiming benefits that they are entitled to, but instead one that has dignity, fairness and respect at its very heart. And we couldn't be doing that without the contribution, the expertise and the advice of the third sector.

Of course, that approach does stand in stark contrast to the one that is taken by the UK Government.

I know that – last Friday – SCVO held an event with Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. His report – published in November last year – was a damning indictment of the UK Government's spending and welfare cuts. It stated that *'British compassion for those who are suffering has been replaced by a punitive, mean-spirited and callous approach'*.

I think that underlines the importance and the sense of responsibility we have in Scotland to continue to do everything possible to mitigate the worst impacts of that kind of agenda. Policies, for example, such as the bedroom tax which we are mitigating. The work to introduce a more progressive system of income tax, to better enable us to protect funding for public services.

We know it's not possible to mitigate all of the impacts of these cuts and policies, and we know that the impact of them are still felt in Scotland. They present all of us with big challenges. And of course, all of these challenges are made worse by the other big challenge all of us face right now, which is the looming prospect of Brexit.

Leaving the EU will have a major impact on every aspect of our economy, and our society. But as all of you know, there will be very specific implications for the third sector.

That's why – last year – we established the Brexit Stakeholder Engagement Fund. It has now provided support for eleven different projects, that have been led by third sector organisations. Each has looked at the impact of Brexit on specific groups – such as rural communities, or children and young people.

I want to thank everyone who has been involved. The projects are now reporting on their findings. And there are a number of common themes emerging.

For example, funding is clearly a major concern. At the moment, our third sector benefits significantly from EU funds. We will lose access to almost all of these, under Brexit. As yet the UK Government has failed to provide any detail on future funding arrangements.

Earlier this month, the Scottish Government joined with you in calling for clarity on this issue, and we will continue to do that until we have an assurance that that funding will be fully replaced.

Another subject that's been widely raised throughout this work is the status of EU nationals living here in Scotland. There are 200,000 people from outside the UK but from other EU member states who have chosen to make this country their home. They make an enormous contribution to our public services, our economy, and of course, our voluntary sector.

So the potential loss of freedom of movement, which remember is our ability to travel and to work and study and live in other European countries, just as it is about the right of other EU

nationals to come here. The loss of that freedom is a huge concern. That's why we continue to make the case that Scotland needs the power to tailor its own immigration policy – to suit our needs and priorities, because we know that without inward migration our working age population over the next few years might actually decline, which will result in less revenues to fund our public services.

And it's that concern that leads me to warmly applaud initiatives like SCVO's 'EU-are-Valued' campaign. It is helping us to send the message to EU nationals in this country – that you are welcome here, and that your presence and contribution is valued, and that we want you to stay here.

The potential loss of freedom of movement has big implications for Scotland. But of course, it's just one of many rights and protections which Brexit puts at risk.

That's a danger which the Scottish Government fully recognises – and it's one which we want to mitigate. I think our aspiration collectively as a country should be to remain a world leader on human rights protections.

That's why our revised national performance framework includes the protection of human rights as one of our key national outcomes.

And it's why we are establishing a national taskforce – to take forward a key recommendation of the Advisory Council on Human Rights Leadership. It will look at how we can embed UN and other international human rights treaties into a statutory framework here in Scotland.

That's another important way in which – despite Brexit - we are aiming to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. I believe very strongly that is one of the fundamental responsibilities, of any government anywhere. And of course, as we seek to meet that responsibility, the expertise and the leadership of the third sector is invaluable and will continue to be a huge source of strength.

Protecting, enhancing and defending human rights is really at the very core of what all of you do.

Every day – right across the country – you help to ensure that people can live free from fear and discrimination. You help to tackle the social and economic disadvantages that harms and undermines people's health and wellbeing. And you work to ensure that everybody in our country gets the opportunities and the support that they deserve.

That's why the Scottish Government so highly values the work that the third sector does. And it's while we recognise the challenges that you face, and we will continue to work as closely as we can with you to address and overcome these challenges, because together we can continue to improve the lives of people across the country – and build the stronger, fairer country that we all want to see.

So thank you very much for listening, and I look forward to our discussions.

First Minister speech at Scotland's International Marine Conference (*mis en ligne le 20/02/2019 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-speech-at-scotlands-international-marine-conference>*)

Strathclyde University

Thank you, Colin (Moffat, SG Chief Scientific Advisor on Marine Policy)

I want to thank Strathclyde University for hosting this event. Strathclyde is of course a leader in key aspects of marine research. For example the One Ocean Hub – which Strathclyde leads, and which many Scottish universities are part of – brings together more than 60 partners in Africa, the south Pacific and the Caribbean, together with several UN bodies.

So we probably couldn't have a more appropriate venue in Scotland for hosting this conference which is a very significant landmark for the Scottish Government.

Scotland's economy, history and identity have been all been shaped by our seas. We possess well over half of the UK's coastal waters. By some measurements – when you include all of our islands and inlets and sea lochs – we have a longer coastline than India.

We are home to globally important populations of sea birds, marine mammals, plants, lichens and molluscs such as flame shells.

And of course our economy benefits enormously from industries such as fishing, marine tourism, aquaculture and energy. Offshore wind and tidal power are increasingly helping to lay the foundations for a carbon neutral future that all of us want to achieve.

So the management of our seas is fundamental to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of everyone across our country.

And an event like this – where we can share expertise, information and ideas about the marine environment – is hugely important to communities across our country and maybe even to other countries around the world.

I know that, in addition to delegates from Scotland and the rest of the UK, there are also representatives here from more than 10 other nations here. I want to offer all of you the very warmest of welcomes to Scotland.

I won't go into detail about all of the conference themes in my remarks, but I do want to highlight three specific issues – marine protected areas, blue carbon, and marine litter. All of them are of great relevance to this event, and all of them are areas where Scotland is trying to show international leadership.

Marine protected areas, for example, are widely and rightly recognised as a success story. In the last seven years Scotland's network has doubled in size. That has provided better protection for birds such as the black guillemot and fish such as the common skate.

So the Scottish Government is consulting on creating several new areas. These would help to protect species such as basking sharks, Risso's dolphins and Minke whales; and to preserve the flame shell and red lichen beds at Loch Carron.

I can also confirm today that the Scottish Government will consult on creating two new historic MPAs at Lerwick and Scapa Flow. The Scapa Flow site in particular – where the German High Seas fleet was scuttled after World War 1 – is one which I know will attract international interest. It shows how MPAs can help us protect our historic environment, together with our natural heritage.

In addition to those proposals, we are also looking to create a new marine reserve in the north east Atlantic – where the waters are more than 800 metres deep. The proposed reserve is almost 150,000 square kilometres in size – almost twice the size of Scotland's landmass. In fact, it would almost double the overall size of our marine protected areas.

Instead of covering 22% of our territorial waters, they would cover 42%.

That expansion also illustrates a broader point. There is an international commitment – under the Convention on Biological Diversity – for marine protected areas to account for 10% of the world's seas. Scotland already comfortably exceeds that target. The fact that we want to go further still is a good example of our desire – not simply to meet, but to go beyond our international obligations. We are trying to demonstrate global leadership in our stewardship of the seas.

That's true also of the second area I want to highlight – blue carbon.

Scotland recognises climate change as the most important issue facing our planet. We, in Scotland, have almost halved our carbon emissions since 1990. We have some of the toughest statutory climate change targets anywhere in the world and we're in the process now of legislating to make those targets even tougher.

And so we see it as being hugely important to know more about the role of our oceans in storing carbon.

Rising temperatures are having a negative effect on ecosystems around the world. So it is widely known that climate change affects our oceans. However our oceans also affect climate change. They absorb around a quarter of our carbon dioxide emissions, and produce more than half of our oxygen.

In fact, Scottish Natural Heritage estimates that the seas around Scotland store more than 2,000 million tonnes of carbon. That's the equivalent of around 200 years of our current carbon emissions.

Research by St Andrews University backs that up. It suggests that more carbon is captured and stored in our sea lochs than in all of our peatlands and forests. For example just one sea loch on the Ardnamurchan peninsula – stores almost 27 million tonnes of carbon.

Now, blue carbon, as the carbon stored in the sea is called, is still a relatively new area for detailed investigation. So we need to know more about it – in particular, we need to understand how human activity affects the ability of the oceans to store carbon. And as part of that, we need to understand whether we can do anything which might enable our oceans to store more carbon.

That's why Marine Scotland has developed a new research programme for blue carbon. And it is why, last year, the Scottish Blue Carbon Forum was established. It coordinates research on the role of our oceans in sequestering carbon. And it will help Scotland to play a leading role in one of the most important, and least understood, elements of the carbon cycle.

The third issue I want to touch upon today is – once again - a hugely important one.

Some of the scenes in "The Blue Planet 2", of the horrific impact marine litter can have on wildlife, rightly caused worldwide uproar. They were heart-rending in themselves, but they also spoke to many people's own sense – simply by walking along their local stretches of coast – that the plastics and waste we produce here on land are causing lasting damage out at sea.

So it is entirely appropriate that marine litter is the theme for day two of this conference. The Scottish Government is already taking a lead here. We published a strategy for reducing marine litter back in 2014 – it includes more than 40 actions to directly reduce the amount of waste entering our seas, and to change public and business attitudes to ensure further reductions in the future.

We have taken further action since then. Our ban on micro-plastics in personal care products came into force last June, and we were the first government in the UK to commit to banning plastic-stemmed cotton buds.

Tomorrow we will publish a detailed analysis of the consultation responses we received on how to introduce a deposit return scheme for bottles and other containers. So we're doing a lot and we want to continue to move forward and make progress.

And I can confirm two further steps today.

Every day, across the UK, more than 4 million sanitary products are flushed down the toilet. That makes a major contribution to our plastic litter problem.

So the Scottish Government will work with Zero Waste Scotland on a promotional campaign for reusable sanitary products.

In the last year, we've become the first government anywhere in the world to provide free access to sanitary products for everyone in education. A growing proportion of those free products are reusable.

So this new campaign marks a further step in our efforts to encourage people to move away from disposable options, and to further reduce the volume of single use plastics. It is a relatively small measure which could have an important impact.

In addition to tackling marine litter which has its origins on land, we also need to tackle the smaller – but still significant – proportion which comes from our marine industries.

As many of you will know, the Scottish Government will soon be publishing a discussion paper on the future of fisheries management in Scotland. I can confirm today that one of the issues it will raise, is how we can establish it as an offence – for fishing vessels of all sizes – to throw litter overboard while at sea. It's a measure which can help to ensure that the fishing sector plays a full part in protecting the marine environment which of course they rely on.

The most important way to address marine litter is address the problem at source – to reduce, reuse and recycle as much plastic waste as possible. As the actions I've just outlined demonstrate, that is what we are trying to do.

However, we also need to be able to clean up our seas once they have been affected by plastic use. That's why the Scottish Government has worked with Zero Waste Scotland to encourage new approaches to collecting and recovering plastic materials.

We hope that the fund we have established – which is worth up to £1 million – can benefit sites which are being affected by litter sinks, such as Loch Long on the Firth of Clyde. And we also hope that the fund will enable the plastics which are found to then be reused.

Scotland is committed to the development of a much more circular economy – when materials are kept in use for as long as possible. We think that it can create economic opportunities, as well as helping us to meet environmental obligations. Our work with Zero Waste Scotland is one of the ways in which we are trying to grasp those opportunities.

In all of this, Scotland – by taking strong and determined action at home – is trying to demonstrate international leadership.

And that in turn emphasises another key point. All of the issues I've talked about – protecting marine habitats, blue carbon, marine litter – all of these have strong international dimensions.

That's why we've been clear that – regardless of Brexit – Scotland will continue to maintain EU environmental standards. We will also comply with international agreements such as the OSPAR Convention, which protects the environment of the north-east Atlantic.

And we will of course continue to work with, and learn from, partners across the globe. That's why, as I mentioned at the start of my remarks, I am delighted to see so many international delegates here today.

I hope of course that this event will influence policy-making here in Scotland. I also hope that it can play some part in informing environmental policies around the world.

For all of these reasons, it's a real pleasure and privilege to launch today's programme. I hope that you have a very productive conference. And I hope that together, we can place Scotland at the forefront of marine protection in the years and decades ahead.

First Minister's International Women's Day speech (mis en ligne le 8 mars 2019 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/first-ministers-international-womens-day-speech>)

Women in Business

Edinburgh City Chambers

It's a real pleasure to be here today to celebrate International Women's Day, happy International Women's Day everybody, it is really an important date in the calendar – and I think it is important that we pause and reflect on that.

First and foremost it's an opportunity to recognise how much progress has been made, let's not deny women today have opportunities today that our mothers grandmothers could only have dreamed of – so we must celebrate that and this is an important opportunity to do so.

But it's also an opportunity to recognise how much more progress we need to make until we live in a society where gender equality is something that we take for granted as a reality. Until there can be as many mediocre women in the same positions as men, until it's not the case, that women as we do today, so often have to work twice as hard just to be considered half as good as our male counterparts.

And I'm as conscious, even in my position, of the progress that we still have to make, as any other woman. I'm the First Minister of Scotland, the most senior politician in the country, yet the world I live and work in is still predominantly male.

It's a world where male culture still dominates, a world where the treatment that is dished out to women on a daily basis, the criteria that we are judged by, leads to a very different experience for women, than the experience for men.

So this is a day where I think it is important to rededicate ourselves, not just as women, but to encourage our male allies to rededicate themselves for the battle for true gender equality. The day I became First Minister I made a speech in the Scottish Parliament and I talked then about my then, eight year old niece who is now 12 going on 26.

But I spoke about my desire, and this can apply to all of us, that the world I want her to grow up as a woman in is a world which consigns to history the gender pay gap, where systemic under representation of women is a thing of the past, and where the deep-seated misogyny, that, let us be honest still exists in our society, and where you do not have to go very far in to the murky realms of social media to find it, where that is also a thing of the past.

Let's rededicate ourselves to that here on International Women's Day. It is great to join all of you today for this very, very special event – an important opportunity to celebrate, to highlight and to promote the role of women generally, but in particular, the role of women in business. And I know that is something that Business Gateway Edinburgh does on a

on a day-to-day basis and we saw a good example of that this morning – with the launch of Women in Business Growth Programme – a fantastic initiative that I warmly welcome and thoroughly endorse.

That's a programme targeted at women who have the ambition to grow their businesses. As part of the programme, they will have the opportunity to attend expert workshops, receive tailored support from Business Gateway Edinburgh and the aim is to give female entrepreneurs the knowledge they need – to better understand the business landscape, to develop new contacts and explore new markets.

And that's just one more way in which Business Gateway Edinburgh is looking to support women-led businesses – and promote entrepreneurship generally.

And that ties in very closely with a whole range of work that the Scottish Government is doing. We have made it a key priority to promote – and encourage – a culture of entrepreneurship in Scotland generally. Scotland is known throughout history for our entrepreneurship, ingenuity and innovation, and that's what we should aspire to be known for in the years ahead as well.

And we know that our future prosperity depends on successful new ideas and new businesses being created in our country. And we know that entrepreneurs – like all of you – will play the central role – in generating jobs and future economic growth.

That's why we worked with the private, public and the third sector to develop the Scotland Can-Do framework. And that sets out our shared ambition for Scotland to be a world-leader in enterprise and innovation. And it aims to ensure that people in every part of our country have the confidence, encouragement and support that they need to become entrepreneurs and to succeed as entrepreneurs.

We know that one important aspect of that is to focus on our education system. More than 400 schools across Scotland now benefit from our Enterprising Schools Network.

We support initiatives like the Scottish EDGE Fund – a competition for our most talented and ambitious early-stage entrepreneurs.

And of course, it is important that we encourage and support social entrepreneurs. Over the past couple of years, the Scottish Government has provided £7 million to deliver the aims of our social enterprise strategy.

And of course more specifically, we are taking targeted action to encourage more women into business.

Back in 2014 when we launched our Women in Enterprise framework, it was the very first of its kind anywhere in Europe and it's been really successful. Since 2014, the proportion of women in Scotland who are starting a business has risen. And in fact, the gender gap, when it comes to business start-ups, has started to fall in Scotland at a time actually when it has been rising elsewhere in the UK. So that is good positive progress but, and there is a but here, it's still the case that more than 3/5 of all businesses are being started by men, and less than 2/5 by women.

And that matters as a basic issue of principle - a basic issue of equity and but it also matters for a really hard-headed reason as well. That disparity harms the country and our economy overall. Research suggests, and this statistic really illustrates this very powerfully, research suggests that if the level of female ownership of businesses in Scotland, matched the level of male ownership, the size of our economy would increase by around 5% - just to put that into context that equates to £7.6 billion.

So getting more women into business isn't just good for women, quite simply it will make all of us more prosperous.

So that's a point that's always important to say. In the current year, we are supporting Investing Women – who help businesses which are led by women to access the finance they need. From an initial investment of £900,000 in ten companies, Investing Women has helped those firms to attract a total of £10 million of further investment – that is a pretty good success story.

We also help Business Women Scotland to inform women about the support networks that exist for female entrepreneurs.

And we work with Women's Enterprise Scotland to publicise case studies and good practice examples which might help or inspire other entrepreneurs.

Of course all of that sits alongside, as it should, our wider efforts to promote greater equality in the workplace – at all levels.

For example, diversity is one of the things that businesses commit to if they sign the Scottish Business Pledge – which currently has over 600 members. Last week, we announced our intention to refresh the Pledge. It will now have an even stronger focus on gender equality, specifically.

In addition, we continue to push for greater representation of women in senior positions – through initiatives like our 50/50 by 2020 campaign. And I appointed a gender balanced Cabinet, still one of only a few across the entire world.

And we're also taking steps to promote the wider use of mentoring – something that I think is really important for women to give to the next generation. I know it's also major focus for Business Gateway Edinburgh – and I'm sure that many of you have been involved as a mentor or a mentee.

Over the last couple of years, I've had the opportunity to mentor two fantastic young women. Mentoring them is an experience which I hope has benefitted them and it has definitely benefitted me.

It's incredibly valuable to share experiences and insights with people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives.

And I would encourage any of you who haven't thought about it to take up the opportunity as it's a really important way to give something back to help the next generation.

We want to ensure as many women as possible are able to benefit from mentoring. That's why – last week – we announced a Future Female Business Leaders programme. It's a partnership with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce. And it will ensure that female mentees near the start of their business career, are paired with mentors who have relevant experience and knowledge.

It will help to ensure that more women do get the kind of support and advice they might otherwise lack. And it's another very important way in which we are trying to promote greater equality in the workplace.

So it's clear I hope the actions we are taking collectively are having an impact, but we need to do more, and particularly we need to do more, in my view, around the gender pay gap.

On Wednesday this week PWC released their 'Women in Work' report and the good news from that report is that it ranks Scotland as the best place in the UK for workplace gender equality.

One of the reasons for that is that Scotland's gender pay gap is at an all-time low. Last year, for full time employees, it was 5.7%. That's significantly lower than it is across the UK as a whole – where it's 8.6%.

However, the pay gap for all employees, including part-time work, is much bigger at 15%. It's declining, and it is lower in Scotland than in the UK. However, any pay gap is – self-evidently – too high.

Quite simply, you cannot have true gender equality if women are being paid less than men. So we are determined to further reduce and eliminate Scotland's gender pay gap.

Our efforts to boost pay generally – for example by supporting the living wage - are important here. A higher proportion of workers in Scotland receive the living wage, than in any other country of the UK.

However we also need to take specific steps. That's why the Scottish Government is today publishing our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan. It sets out the range of ways in which we will tackle the causes of the gender pay gap – in our education system, in the workplace, and across society.

For example, it includes our commitment to invest £5 million – over the next three years – in our Women Returners Programme. The programme provides advice, training and placements for women who want to return to work, following a career break. And it builds on the other steps we've taken to support working parents – particularly mothers – such as our expansion of free childcare.

The Plan also sets out our commitment to promote flexible working. As part of that, we will fund a feasibility study for the creation of a 'Centre for Flexible Work' for Scotland. It will design and test new flexible work models and ideas. And its aim will be to open up new economic opportunities for parents on low incomes.

In our education system, we'll continue to tackle the kind of stereotyping which causes career segregation. That is of course, a particular problem when it comes to STEM subjects.

On Monday, I was at Forth Valley College, where I met their recent intake of engineering modern apprentices. It was brilliant to see so many young women starting out on a skilled career which will be crucial to Scotland's future economic success.

However, it's still the case that more than 90% of engineering modern apprentices are male. It's also – just as damagingly – still the case that 90% of childcare modern apprentices are female. That's the kind of imbalance which we are determined to tackle.

The Plan also commits the Scottish Government to undertake an Equal Pay Audit. It will help us to understand the causes of our own gender pay gap. And we hope that – by demonstrating leadership on this issue – we will encourage other businesses and organisations to do the same.

These are just a few of the actions which the plan sets out. They will help Scotland to make further progress in closing the gender pay gap. And they will help to ensure that more and more women are able to fulfil their full potential.

Just to conclude all of the measures that I've spoken about this morning will help to ensure greater fairness and equality – in business, and in the workplace.

And I want to stress the point that I made earlier, that will benefit everyone not just women – it benefits men and society overall as well. And that is a key point.

All of you are great examples of the kind of business talent that exists, across our country. By creating jobs, prosperity, you are making an invaluable contribution to Scotland. Our task must be to ensure that more and more women can contribute to – and benefit from – Scotland's success, in the years ahead.

So we look forward to working with partners like Business Gateway – to continue to promote female entrepreneurship and encourage women in the workplace.

And as we do that, we can learn so much from the experiences and success of women like of all you – who are making their way in the world of business.

That's why events like this are so important and why International Women's Day is so important. So let's, as we go through our discussions today, celebrate wherever we are, whoever we are and be determined, rededicate ourselves to that role of ending gender inequality.

Annexe II : Discours officiels de Fiona Hyslop, secrétaire du Cabinet écossais pour la Culture, le Tourisme et les Affaires extérieures, émis entre le 29 mars 2017 et le 29 mars 2019

Culture Strategy for Scotland (*disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/culture-strategy-for-scotland>*)

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop addresses sector event at Glasgow Women's Library, 26 June 2017

Thank you all for coming today to be part of what is an early and exploratory conversation around the development of a Culture Strategy for Scotland. Today is the start of a much wider conversation that will draw in the views of many.

As the Minister responsible for Culture for the last eight years, I am proud of what is being achieved and inspired by what I have observed and experienced. We now have an opportunity to take stock, to bring our different views together, to ask questions of ourselves and to ask if now is the time to reimagine how we think about culture in our country. The Strategy will be a vision for the country and to purpose priorities and partnerships.

The Scottish Government was elected on a manifesto commitment to develop a Culture Strategy for Scotland based on the three interlinked principles of access, equity and excellence.

These principles are not fixed, they are the principles I propose but for now they allow us a framework for conversation, to provoke and prompt debate and discussion.

Do they, as guiding principles, allow us to consider a vision for culture within a wider vision for Scotland?

So tell us what you think of them today.

We are seeing the strategy as a way to articulate a vision for culture that describes culture's relationship and role across all aspects of society. It's an opportunity to demonstrate the many ways that creativity and culture contribute to and influence: whether it be the way we live our lives, our progress as a nation and its expression of democracy and what our value system is. It is not a state view on culture, its intention is to liberate and support, not to define and limit.

There is a framed poem which has been hanging on the concrete walls of my office in the Scottish Parliament for the last few years, gifted to me by Janice Galloway. It's a poem by Don Paterson that was commissioned in 2005 to mark the publication of the Cultural Commission. Don is not with us today but I would like to read it to you.

We, the Scottish people, undertake
To find within our culture a true measure
Of the mind's vitality and spirit's health;
To see that what is best in us is treasured,
And what is treasured, held as common wealth;
To guarantee all Scots folk, of whatever
Age or origin, estate or creed,
The means and the occasion to discover
Their unique gift, and let it flower and seed;
To act as democratic overseer

Of our whole culture: wise conservator
Of its tradition, its future's engineer,
The only engine of its living hour;
To take just pride in all our diverse tongues,
Folks and customs - and also what is yet
Most distinct in us: our infinite songs,
Our profligate invention and thrown debate;
To honour our best artists, and respect
Not just the plain cost of their undertaking
But the worth of what they make, and every act
Of service and midwifery to that making;
And to discover, through our artistry
And fine appreciation of our art,
What we are not – so know ourselves to be
The world, both in microcosm and part,
And recognise in this our charge of care
To friend and stranger, bird and beast and tree,
To the planetary and local space we share.
We will do this wakefully, and imaginatively.

Apart from the fact that I like it very much and I wanted to start my remarks with poetry, I use it as a reminder that we must see everything in context. In the context that this is not the first national discussion on culture since devolution, and the context must also embrace our place in the world and in history – our own, European and global. So what does access to European and world artistic, classical excellence mean today? And in the context of a world still driven with inequality, how can we have equity of access? The world of course changes all the time, yet it does feel like perhaps we are at a moment in time where our response to the current context will define how history sees us.

In the last twenty years we have seen major developments in technology and social media which have radically changed the ways that culture is made, shared and distributed. As a sector we have seen many changes since 2005. We have the national performing companies in a direct relationship with Government and new organisations in Creative Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland. We have a Parliament with increased devolved powers.

And we have the vote for Brexit. The Scottish Government understands the risks that Brexit brings in terms of ongoing uncertainty around the single market, funding, free movement of people and how perceptions of difference can be exacerbated by debate that focuses on the negative aspects of freedom of movement and immigration rather than the positive. We need to consider what culture can do to help us through these challenging times, and do all that we can – collectively – to challenge any perception that Scotland is closing itself off to wider Europe.

There are now an estimated 80,000 jobs in the creative industries (including heritage and museums) and we know that this figure has been increasing year on year since 2011, following the global economic recession of 2008.

More broadly and alongside the ever shifting political landscape there are other factors that will change and challenge us, not just as a sector but as a society as a whole. Young people and their fluency in technology, demographic shifts including a rapidly ageing population, growing health and educational inequality, migration and climate change.

Within this changing world, culture and creativity are fundamental and enduring aspects of human existence, allowing us to freely express ourselves so that as individuals, communities and nations we can make sense of the worlds we live in, and can imagine other worlds.

This morning I was delighted to launch The Engine Shed in Stirling. The Engine Shed is Scotland's new dedicated building conservation centre, run by Historic Environment Scotland, it serves as a central hub for building and conservation, professionals and the general public. It's a wonderful new and world-leading resource using digital technology with I pads and virtual reality that shows us the many ways that our culture and heritage help us to learn from the past to shape the future. It's a powerful reminder that the marks we make, the traces we leave on the world and the ways that we care and conserve are the legacy that we leave our future generations. It is part of the Government support to regenerate Stirling. This morning it was swarming with children from Riverside Primary School with virtual reality headsets exploring Maeshowe and imagining places perhaps they may never have the chance to visit. More importantly it is free and open to all.

I have the great pleasure of travelling around Scotland to experience our rich culture, and, I have seen its impact around the world. I often reflect on the history of culture in Scotland and it strikes me that we have always been a nation of makers and storytellers, how we make and tell stories changes as the world changes. It's important to understand your own heritage, culture and languages. Having our own indigenous languages of Gaelic and Scots is integral to the distinctive nature of culture in Scotland. It's equally important to be open and welcoming of the new, the innovative and the different and to see our culture in an international context.

Culture, or cultures in Scotland have always done this, spanning distinct traditions and innovative approaches. Culture belongs to all of us and we all have our own cultures and cultural identities, we all lead plural cultural lives.

Evidence shows that high numbers of people across Scotland already engage in culture, in a wide range of different ways, and that figure is growing.

Yet, underneath this success story is a set of growing challenges.

The argument for culture is understood, ambition is high and demand increasing yet funding is under pressure and is often short term. We understand the critical role of public funding, and the need for longer term budgets to support planning. We are open to new ideas and approaches about how the sector can be better supported, in a tight budgetary context. We must also have an eye to the wider context of EU funding that currently flows to the sector, and the potential implications of Brexit on alternative source of funds.

We also need to address the issue of inequality in culture. As a Government we are committed to tackling inequalities and making Scotland a stronger, fairer, more inclusive society. How a nation values its artists and creative people is an insight into the values of that society.

Artists and freelancers too often experience challenging working patterns and uneven rates of pay. There are still too many instances of freelancers being expected to work for very little or for free. And for some, a freelance career is simply unsustainable unless they have some other means of support. The status of the cultural workforce and ways to improve their economic and social position is something that we are interested in exploring as the strategy develops. Without the ideas and contributions of artists and creative people we are all poorer. It is artists who often think in ways that are beyond our current understanding of the world.

Artists, and creative people more broadly, contribute to society in ways that is sometimes only truly understood when we look back with the distance of time. Supporting risk, supporting people to work as artists, to explore and inquire benefits all of us now, and into the future.

As I have said, figures for engagement are growing, but the evidence shows that there are inequalities within this increasing engagement. Those from lower socio-economic groups, living in poverty and areas needing regeneration or people living with a long-term physical or mental health condition, and those who do not have university degrees are not engaging in culture as we currently define it to the same extent as the larger population. This leads us to ask two questions of ourselves.

Firstly, perhaps we have spent too long analysing audiences and not looking at the diversity of the sector itself. It is only through the sector diversifying, and being inclusive and equitable itself, that audiences will evolve to more accurately represent society in Scotland today.

And secondly, if we expand our view of what culture is, our understanding of people's cultural lives will be greatly enhanced. We will see that people do engage with culture in a huge range of ways, formal and informal, traditional and emerging, and in ways that are highly visible to us and in ways that are more discreet and personal.

I am particularly interested in the role that culture has in providing us with spaces and opportunities to bring ideas and people together. I am sure David Greig from the Lyceum in Edinburgh will share with us today his thinking on the constructed space and the ways that art can create special types of encounters between people and the ideas that shape the world we live in. I am aware that David's ideas on the constructed space are perhaps more relevant to theatre. Of course, the artistic and creative process can be both a public and a very private one.

Our vision of the future is that Scotland is an open, outward-looking nation, with its cultural and creative individuals and organisations working across Scotland, and the world. We will welcome people from other places and the rich diversity of cultures and languages they bring with them.

As the Scottish Government, we believe that culture lies at the heart of Scotland's future, offering opportunities to experience life through a wide and enriching range of perspectives whether through, dance, literature and language, music, screen, technology, theatre, visual arts or through the objects we make and collect or the buildings and places we design, protect and cherish.

The strategy must be underpinned by a shared vision that articulates the powerful and transformative effect that culture and creativity have. I challenge anyone not to be astounded by Scottish Ballet and Dance Base's ground breaking work with people living with Parkinson's Disease and the positive impact that dance can have on improving balance, spatial awareness, confidence and movement.

We know that culture has intrinsic value and that it also contributes both directly and indirectly to the health, wealth and success of our nation. We want Scotland to be a place where culture thrives and everyone has the opportunity to participate freely in a vibrant cultural and creative life of their choice.

That's why the strategy will set out the ways that Scotland supports and values culture and the imaginative role of artists, cultural producers, creative businesses and cultural organisations in shaping and contributing to a fair, democratic, diverse, innovative, international and open society.

More than anything, the strategy is an opportunity for us to position culture as a human right, where the right to creative expression, the right to participate and the right to earn a living from artistic and cultural pursuits is widely recognised across society.

We should also use it as an opportunity to ask questions of ourselves... How equitable are we as a sector? Is the sector diverse enough to support access for all? How do we nurture

excellence to flourish and thrive; and what does excellence mean in today's world, in an international and domestic sense?

Why are there still so many barriers in Scotland's communities? Is there equitable provision across the geography of Scotland; and what can we all do to support the more vulnerable in our sector and in society? Could we do more to support inclusivity in the sector so that the culture sector becomes an inclusive employer?

We need to work through the opportunities and the challenges that increasing demand and decreasing resource create by exploring ways to support all aspects of the sector to thrive – to maximise the budgets and assets that we do have, build on existing strengths and support new approaches including reflecting on the ways that we could cooperate and collaborate with each other and other sectors.

In conclusion, there are challenges but there is also unrealised potential everywhere.

The ideas and views generated and gathered here will help us to understand your perspectives, ambitions and challenges.

Don't see this event as a one off, but rather as part of an ongoing debate around the role that culture has in all our futures. We are keen to take the conversation to as many people as possible, please do let us know if you would like to host your own conversations. We are keen to extend the conversation to those that we don't always reach, please speak to my team about ways that you can support us with this. I am keen to visit as many places in Scotland as I can to have this conversation.

Place, and opportunity, is important in this conversation about culture. As a child of about 9/10 years of age, I walked past a certain little white cottage in Ayrshire every day on my way to school., I also wrote poetry most days, I thought that was what everyone did, because there was a young man who came from my village who wrote poetry and is renowned across the world. How do we make sure that culture is seems as natural to everybody, where they're growing up? It's only over the years that I have perhaps understood that very special relationship between the place, the cottage and my desire to write poetry and to enjoy the (much better) poetry of others.

I would like to thank Glasgow Women's Library for being such warm and welcoming hosts today. It feels like the perfect setting for us to gather and debate. If we feel the need for more inspiration, we have the words of wisdom of many women around us today.

Today is just the start, you are all here, not because you are more important (special) than anyone else but because you are first...

Thank you and let's start the conversation – it is not the first conversation in world history of cultural dialogue, but I think Scotland at this time, at this moment can be a powerful voice for culture in a positive thoughtful and practical way. I look forward to hearing your views.

[“Scotland- EU Relations as Brexit Talks Unfold” \(disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotland-eu-relations-as-brexit-talks-unfold\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotland-eu-relations-as-brexit-talks-unfold)

Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

Speech at Strathclyde University International Public Policy Institute and Scottish Centre on European Relations event, 28 June 2017, 10am.

Introduction

Good morning ladies and gentlemen and thank you to Kirsty [Hughes] for her introduction.

Before I begin, I'd like to take a moment to thank both the Scottish Centre on European Relations and the University of Strathclyde's International Public Policy Institute for coming

together to collaborate on this event. Both organisations, in a relatively short space of time, have established reputations as informative and credible contributors to Scottish public policy.

Last night, I attended an event at the Edinburgh International Film Festival at Edinburgh Castle. The Polish Film Institute as this year as this year's festival features a 'focus on Poland' and this helps to highlight the broader important links we have in Europe across my portfolio. I got the opportunity to meet with Sheila Hancock whose new film Edie is out and features hillwalking in the Scottish Highlands, a feeling you all may be familiar with after travelling up and down the stairs here! I also met with Trudie Styler, Sting's wife who those of a certain generation may recognise. The point here however, is that in Scotland, we cooperate with so many international innovators extensively.

It's also pleasure to be here at Strathclyde University's Technology & Innovation Centre (TIC), a truly impressive testament to the ambition of one our countries leading universities to drive innovation and collaboration between academia and industry.

The background of this building also seems relevant to today's topic. For those wondering why, it is because the university received financial backing to build the centre not just from Scottish organisations but also from the European Regional Development Fund. The building therefore, is a very visible reminder of the benefits of European cooperation.

The current situation

So turning now to today's topic of Scottish-EU relations as Brexit talks unfold.

You will all be aware that last week Brexit negotiations began, ten days after an unnecessary General Election, in which the Prime Minister failed to secure a mandate for a hard Brexit. Given its weakened position, the UK Government's approach to the negotiations clearly has to change.

From a Scottish perspective, we have calmly and logically worked to set out our priorities and interests. In part this is due to two factors: The result of the EU referendum in Scotland which showed clearly that the Scottish people were in favour of remaining in the EU. And secondly, the Scottish Government has been, and continues to be, in favour of continued Scottish membership of the EU.

Following the referendum, we undertook an intense period of work advised by our Standing Council of experts and set out our proposals for negotiations in a comprehensive paper "Scotland's Place in Europe", which we published in December last year.

Our paper, put forward in the spirit of compromise, argued that 1) the UK as a whole should retain single market membership, and failing that, 2) for Scotland to retain membership if the rest of the UK chose not to and 3) powers and policies needed, Scottish Parliament needs for transfer of powers.

The subsequent result of the general election, in which the Prime Minister failed to secure a mandate for a hard Brexit, may have opened up a genuine window of opportunity for our proposals to be reconsidered.

As Brexit talks are now underway the UK should – as a matter of urgency - reset the JMC(EN) as a proper mechanism for devolved governments to engage with the UK Government. . Furthermore, it should provide the devolved administrations with a seat at the negotiating table to ensure that Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish voices are properly heard and it is an insult to democracy, to the people of Perth and North Perthshire, for a candidate democratically beaten in the General Election to be elevated to the unelected House of Lords to represent an electorate which rejected him..

A more inclusive approach - opening up the process to more voices, more parties and all four parts of the UK – would help to deliver a Brexit deal in the fairest possible way.

This is a position entirely consistent with the exercise of devolution and it is critical to the future of devolved Government across the UK that we have a strong voice in the coming negotiations, both in terms of the exit deal, and the definition of the future relationship with the EU. The Prime Minister has declared she wants to secure a “deep and special partnership” with the EU27.

It is during this phase of negotiations, prior to exit in March 2019 that Scotland’s interests must also be heard by the UK Government. A new relationship with the EU27 will involve agreements that directly affect devolved competencies. This suggests a deal that will include agreements across a wide range of other policies over much of which the Scottish Parliament has legislative competence – such as justice, the environment, climate change, , food safety, technical standards – or which will impact directly and significantly on Scotland’s economic and social prospects.

The exclusion of the Scottish Government from any meaningful influence over the UK’s negotiating position during this second phase of Brexit negotiations would be to undermine devolution in a substantial way, and the lack of a strong voice in these matters would leave us without the opportunity we need to ensure Scotland’s interests are protected.

As the First Minister said in her statement to Parliament yesterday, the Scottish people should be given a choice about their future – at the end of the Brexit process.

After reflecting on the recent general election result, and given the uncertainty over the UK Government’s Brexit position, the Scottish Government will not be introducing legislation for an independence referendum.

Instead at the end of this period of negotiation with the EU - likely to be around next autumn - when the terms of Brexit will be clearer, the Scottish Government will come back to Parliament to set out our judgment on the best way forward at that time, including our view on the precise timescale for offering people a choice over the country's future.

In the meantime, and as the First Minister said, the Scottish Government will stand the best chance of positively influencing the Brexit outcome if we are at the table - with the full backing of our national Parliament - arguing for the sensible option of staying in the single market.

European engagement

Despite the twists and turns in the UK process over the last year, my fellow Scottish Government Ministers and I have been engaging extensively with our counterparts across the European Union.

We will continue to do so.

The Scottish Government has deliberately and consistently had active engagement with our European counterparts but in the last year, we have had a clear focus on the consequences of the Brexit vote. For example, in January this year I was the first Minister from any part of the UK to give evidence on the impacts of Brexit and our priorities for the negotiations to the European Parliament’s Constitutional Affairs Committee.

We are engaging our European counterparts extensively. Firstly, so they understand the outcome of the vote in Scotland. Secondly, to ensure they understand Scotland’s position, interests and priorities. And thirdly, to ensure that our European colleagues understand that as a government, we remain supportive of European cooperation.

My ministerial colleagues and I have had over 100 engagements with Ministers and Ambassadors from member states, European institutions, EFTA and EEA countries since the referendum. In the last six weeks, I have met with a European Commissioner, Ambassadors from Portugal and Latvia, Ministers from Austria and Bulgaria who both have upcoming European Council presidencies, among others. In these 100 plus meetings we have had, you would expect a mixture of responses.

Some have expressed sadness and disbelief that the UK will soon be leaving the EU. Others have concerns for the future, particularly around issues such as the rights of EU citizens in the UK and on security, due to the Prime Minister implying in the Article 50 letter that the security of UK and EU citizens would be a bargaining chip in the negotiations.

In all these engagements, two things have struck me.

Firstly, Scotland's predicament – where we are being removed from the European Union in spite of us voting in favour to remain - has been met with interest, understanding and sympathy from our European neighbours.

The actions that the First Minister and Scottish Government have taken in ensuring that EU citizens, following the referendum result, continue to feel welcomed and valued in Scotland, has not gone unnoticed. Indeed, I would go as far as to say it has generated goodwill towards Scotland which will serve us well as the Brexit talks unfold and well into the future. Our situation is not at the top of everyone's minds, but there is awareness and described as "the common sense voice in the UK".

Secondly and somewhat strikingly, participants have expressed a resolve for the EU and the importance of its continuity, its development, growth and responsibilities. They've expressed a desire for the EU to deal with Brexit efficiently and fairly but also for it to redouble its efforts on developing an EU fit for the future.

This desire is perhaps best placed in the context that following the Brexit vote in the UK, there was a growing view that a wave of populist, anti-EU sentiment and political movements would sweep across Europe and fatally undermine the EU.

This view has not been borne out by reality.

Instead, election results from across the continent - in Austria, the Netherlands and France - has demonstrated that the tide has turned, and Europeans are rejecting this anti-EU rhetoric. This change in dynamic has reinforced my own personal view that the future for the EU, though challenging, is a positive one and the fundamental values underpinning the EU, of respect for human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law is a much more positive platform which will continue to deliver stability and peace across the continent.

As part of our strategic engagement work, I have visited both Austria and France in the last six weeks.

During my visit to France, I launched the Scottish showcase at the Lorient Festival which will take place in August this year and is set to welcome an audience of over 750,000 people. With over 200 artists and delegates from Scotland are participating in 182 performances across 11 days, we are being heralded as "Scotland the country of honour".

Days after the election of President Macron, I met with the Head of the French Foreign Service Christian Masset. Although Emmanuel Macron has of course said the door remains open for the UK in the EU – the reality is that French foreign priorities and focus lie elsewhere, primarily on re-energising the Franco-German motor of Europe and in promoting counter terrorism measures.

My visit to the Europa Forum in Wachau was on the weekend following the General Election. Several Foreign Ministers from Central Europe and the Balkan region were in attendance and I spoke with: Austrian Vice Chancellor Dr Wolfgang Brandstetter; Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ekaterina Zaharieva; and, European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn.

The focus of the conference was on the challenges facing the EU. Brexit was discussed although it certainly was not front and centre, with countries already looking to the EU of the future. The sense was that the EU is moving on with Brexit a necessary but unwelcome process, which has to be dealt with in a proactive, orderly way.

This all serves to highlight the point, that while the focus in the UK has been on Brexit; Europe, with the challenges facing it, is moving on.

The importance of the long term relationship

It is in this context that I say that Scotland must not view our relationship with the EU solely through the prism of Brexit but as we have previously done. We must continue to develop bilateral relations for the benefits of education, culture and the economy, and to tackle the big issues of the day such as climate change

The European Union continues to be at the forefront of tackling global issues which ensures it will remain a key player in big picture politics. It has led the response globally to climate change, the legacy of the economic crisis, and the refugee crisis.

These are issues which do not respect national borders and can't be solved by governments operating in a bubble. They require strong cross border collaboration, which makes it ironic that in the face of these challenges, the UK has chosen to retreat from the European stage.

In many cases, cooperation and collaboration with EU member states and institutions has driven forward innovation and investment in Scotland. It is imperative that this continues Post-Brexit and as a government, we are keen to ensure that we continue to cooperate with our European partners. Whatever these negotiations produce, we all have important economic, cultural and personal links which must be maintained and enhanced.

As we're at one of the UK's leading research universities today, if we examine the example of higher education and research funding links with Europe the benefits of continued collaboration is clear. I have already mentioned that this very building was part funded by European partners but what is more is that Scotland as a whole, is an active and valued partner in a large number of EU research collaborations.

Horizon 2020 is the EU's main programme for funding research and innovation projects. To date, we have secured almost €352 million in total of Horizon 2020 funding (to March 2017). This represents 1.66% of the total Horizon 2020 budget allocated to date. Of this figure, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have secured €251 million and Research Institutes over €20 million.

Research and innovation is an area Scotland excels in, and by its very nature is international in outlook, spanning the globe for new opportunities and partnerships. Throughout the years to come, Scotland will remain committed to collaborating with our European partners and to attracting the best international talent.

This example is in one very specific, highly relevant area but the substance is the same across many, whether it is health, justice, energy or transport, Scotland and our economy is deeply intertwined with Europe.

Bilateral relationships

As Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, has said, we need “to continue to play our full role in tackling the major challenges of the 21st Century. By using our knowledge base to contribute, we will ensure that we do not become isolated from solving the challenges that face the rest of Europe, and the world.”

Across the piece however, we continue to use our International Framework and Economic Strategy to drive forward our internationalisation agenda, promoting Scotland abroad, enhancing our global outlook, developing relationships and partnerships, and engaging with the European Union. As Brexit talks unfold, this will help ensure we are engaging with the institutions on issues outwith the negotiations.

Within Europe, we have close bilateral links with many of the EU member states. During my visit to France for example, I discussed with representatives of the French Government the possibility of strengthening our existing bilateral relationship and broadening our current joint statement of intent on education and culture to include other areas as proposed by previous French Ministers, such as digital technology.

We have also been increasing our presence in member states through a number of ‘hubs’ in key locations such as Ireland, Belgium and Germany.

In Dublin, our Innovation and Investment Hub has helped strengthen the historic links between our countries and I will be visiting Ireland next week to engage the Government there and celebrate the cultural links between Scotland and Ireland.

In Brussels, the Scottish Government, SDI and Visit Scotland are working together collectively as a unit to furthering our aims in line with the Economic Strategy. They engage extensively with the EU and enjoy good relations with the Permanent Representations of other Member states.

And later this year, we will be opening an Innovation and Investment Hub in Berlin. Building on the successful model employed in Dublin, the Hub will serve Scottish interests to promote trade and investment links with Germany, a key member state and one of our largest trading partners, and strengthen our links with the German Federal Government.

We have also identified that the Nordic and Baltic countries are and will continue to be key partners in the years ahead. To help frame our strategic engagement, we launched our Nordic Baltic Policy Statement in 2014 to promote policy exchange and collaboration with the countries involved. To reflect the changed circumstance we now find ourselves in, we will be launching an updated statement later in the year.

We are also building relations with our Arctic neighbours, last year the First Minister spoke at the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik at the request Iceland’s Former President Olafur Grimmson. Such was her impact, she has been invited to attend again this year and at the request of Mr Grimmson, Scotland will host an Arctic Circle Forum in November, which will provide a high profile international platform for Scotland to showcase our work on sustainable economic development to global experts in the field.

Conclusion

In closing, whatever the future holds, Scotland will remain an open, vibrant and outward looking country. We will stay connected with our European partners as the negotiations progress.

Our government will continue to engage with member states and sub –states across Europe. That will not be for the purpose of trying to engage in a covert Brexit negotiation but to ensure that our pro-EU stance and constitutional journey towards independence continues to be understood.

Just as importantly, we will continue to engage our European partners on the pressing problems of the day promoting policy and knowledge exchange and collaborative ventures that will show people what the EU can deliver.

Our cooperation and relationships are not defined solely through the lens of the Brexit talks however vital and important Brexit and the need to limit damage is.

Our outward looking, international ambition for Scotland continues and will not be smothered by an insular, inward looking, empire nostalgic British state.

A positive European perspective will always guide Scotland's worldview – the compass of a connected world of cooperation, peace and prosperity will steer us.

I'd like to once again thank the organisers for arranging this event and look forward to your questions.

Debate on Scotland's International Policy Framework and Priorities for 2018 (*disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/debate-on-scotlands-international-policy-framework-and-priorities-for-2018>*)

External Affairs Secretary Fiona Hyslop

16 January 2016 (N.B. mis en ligne et prononcé le 16/01/2018, il semble, après vérification, qu'il y a une erreur de date dans la retranscription officielle du discours)

Thank you Presiding Officer – I move the motion in my name on the Scottish Government's refreshed International Framework and Policy Statement.

The Scottish Government continues to have a strong and consistent commitment to international engagement. Internationalisation sits at the heart of Scotland's Economic Strategy alongside innovation, investing in our people and inclusion.

Scotland has a strong track record of international collaboration. We remain the second most attractive destination for foreign investors to the UK after London and in 2017, visitors voted Scotland the world's most beautiful country. The Edinburgh International Festival goes from strength to strength as a global forum for cultural exchange and last year we joined the 'Under 2 coalition' to express our determination, as good global citizens, to play our part in shared challenges and strive to limit global warming to 2 degrees.

We are alive to the constant need to build on and reinforce these strengths. As a result, we have recently refreshed the International Framework and Policy Statement.

These documents set out how our international work supports this government's central purpose of creating a more successful country with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.

The first objective is to strengthen our external relationships and networks. Our international work is founded on partnerships with our people, our institutions and our partners inside and outside Scotland.

Our second objective focuses on building our reputation and international attractiveness. This includes strengthening and enhancing Scotland's reputation, boosting our trade and investment and striving to be a leader in areas such as climate change and equality.

The third objective is to enhance our global outlook, embedding internationalisation in everything we do and equipping the people of Scotland to capitalise on the vast number of global opportunities.

Finally, we will encourage engagement with the European Union and strive to protect Scotland's place in Europe.

Scotland has experienced significant social and economic change over the decade since we launched our International Framework, but no single event has had a greater impact than the result of the United Kingdom's EU Referendum. It now threatens to redefine Scotland's place in Europe and the world, affecting our ability to play a full and constructive part in international affairs. The international policy statement and underpinning framework are more essential than ever to communicate Scotland's open and welcoming approach.

Yesterday the First Minister launched the document 'Scotland's Place in Europe: People, Jobs and Investment' which presents the latest analysis by the Scottish Government of the implications for Scotland's economy and society if the UK exits the European Union. That analysis is clear - leaving the EU could result in a hit of up to 8.5% of GDP. EU Nationals remain key to our international competitiveness and the free movement of persons within the single market is helping Scotland to address the substantial demographic challenges we face.

All outcomes, short of full EU membership, will have some damage to Scotland's economic, social and environmental interests and a Brexit which results in the UK being outside the European Single Market and Customs Union will have the most damaging consequences for Scotland. This is not acceptable to the Scottish Government nor, we believe, to the people of Scotland.

Focusing now on our wider international priorities As Scotland's ambitions continue to grow, so does the importance of our country's international reputation and the need to work with others to contribute to the success of the global community. To enhance Scotland's reputation as a place to work, live, invest, study and visit, the Scottish Government and its key partners are working together to offer a coherent and compelling picture of modern Scotland to the world.

We will continue to focus on our priority countries – the United States, Canada, China, India and Pakistan. We will also continue to increase our engagement with Japan.

Just last month, the Deputy First Minister visited India accompanied by 11 Principals and Vice Principals from Scottish universities, as well as one college, to explore academic collaboration and investment from India into Scotland. 2017 was an important year for India as it celebrated 70 years of independence and the Deputy First Minister addressed over 2,000 members of the Indian community in Scotland at Murrayfield for the Independence Day celebrations in August, as well as hosting key international investors to boost the partnership between Scotland and India. During the UK/India year of Cultural exchange we also saw no less than 13 Scottish/India collaborations taking place in India and across Scotland.

In addition to our five priority countries our desire to strengthen engagement with Japan is a Programme for Government commitment. Since 2009 there have been six Scottish ministerial visits to Japan, the last of which was my visit in February 2017. Since that visit we have seen another very busy and successful period of collaboration between Japan and Scotland, especially in terms of increased trade, investment and cultural links.

Recent successes in Japan include the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Nippon Foundation and Scottish Enterprise in 2017, each party agreeing to up to ten million dollars of investment over five years for a Research and Development programme targeting the development of subsea technologies. My meetings in Japan played a key role in taking this forward.

So there will be many opportunities to recognise and encourage stronger engagement with Japan in the coming years as we look forward to the Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Of course, closer to home All Points North, the Scottish Government's Nordic / Baltic Policy statement was published in September 2017, and that refreshed policy document reaffirms our commitment to strengthening our links in that region promoting collaboration in policy exchange. Since that statement was launched in 2014 we have strong examples of this. The cooperation in the First Minister's Baby Box initiative from Finland, the tourism memorandum of understanding with Iceland, and the ongoing engagement with Norway around fisheries, science and negotiations. Looking ahead we will continue to promote the aims and objectives of the policy statement through our support for Nordic Horizons, our ongoing ministerial engagements and opportunities for policy workers to learn and exchange ideas with policy makers in that region.

In November, at the request of the Arctic Circle organisation and its chair Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, the former President of Iceland, we hosted an Arctic Circle Forum to examine the theme of Scotland and the New North. This was the first time an Arctic Circle Forum was held in the UK and it was attended by over 300 delegates.

Partnerships across the Arctic region will be central in the coming decades to address shared environmental, demographic and economic challenges and opportunities: we are proud to be playing a leading role and have committed to developing an Arctic Strategy for Scotland.

And of course one of our long-standing engagements and relationships is with China, and only recently I represented Scotland as part of the UK's People to People Dialogue and exchange with the Chinese government in London.

Through our achievements to date, we have demonstrated that our reach is wide and that we have the ability to make a positive contribution as a good global citizen.

It is almost exactly a year ago that members debated the Scottish Government's dynamic new international development Strategy 'Global Citizenship', which brings greater focus and direction to our international development work. We have made good progress in implementing that Strategy, with the launch of new development programmes in Zambia and Rwanda; a new Malawi funding round; and expanding our successful Scottish Scholarships scheme for women and children in Pakistan.

We place great importance on Scotland being a good global citizen and in playing our part in tackling global challenges as part of our wider engagement with the international community. This has included providing training with the UN Special Envoy for Syria's Women's Advisory Group on the prevention and resolution of conflict. We have since committed to provide training and capacity building for 50 women a year from several countries.

Across all of our engagement we remain deeply aware of the values, commitment and contribution that Scotland and her people can bring to the international sphere. A human rights based approach informs all of our engagement, drawing on the deep commitment across Scotland to values and practice that respect our common dignity and humanity.

Presiding Officer, I am delighted to present this Government's new International Framework and Policy Statement to the Parliament today. Scotland will continue to seek opportunities across all policy areas for international collaboration to build upon our global reputation and to improve the lives of everyone who lives, works, visits or studies in Scotland.

[Fiona Hyslop's visit to Japan and Republic of Korea \(mis en ligne le 08/07/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/fiona-hyslop-visit-to-japan-and-republic-of-korea\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/fiona-hyslop-visit-to-japan-and-republic-of-korea)

Strengthening economic and cultural links

External Affairs Secretary Fiona Hyslop has returned from a five day visit to Japan and the Republic of Korea.

The programme of activity, delivered by Scottish Development International (SDI) and the Scottish Government, took place from 2 – 6 in Tokyo, Yokohama and Seoul. Here are her reflections on her trip.

Last week I travelled to Japan and South Korea for a series of engagements to strengthen Scotland's links with our international partners. Building on the work undertaken during my previous engagements in East Asia, this visit was an opportunity to explore key opportunities for collaboration between our nations in areas including trade and investment, culture, education, tourism and sport.

As Brexit uncertainty continues to impact on business confidence – and as we face the threat of losing membership of the Single Market and Custom Union – it is increasingly important that we continue to engage with international partners and build trade and business links.

As highlighted by a recent EY Attractiveness Survey, Scotland is one of the most alluring locations for foreign direct investment outside of London. Scottish Government visits such as this are therefore critical to promote our unique assets to international audiences.

This is why during this visit I met with key business representatives across a range of sectors including renewables, subsea engineering and life sciences – from Mitsubishi Electric to the Nippon Foundation – to acknowledge the significant contribution these businesses make to Scotland's economy and to reiterate the message that Scotland is an excellent partner to do business with.

The ties between Scotland and Japan date back 150 years to a time when Scots engineers helped the Pacific nation kick-start its own industrial revolution. The links between our countries have since gone from strength to strength – so that, to date, 90 Japanese-owned businesses at 135 Scottish sites employ over 6,000 staff, generating a Scottish turnover of more than £1.8 billion.

In 2016, exports to Japan increased by more than 10 per cent to £460m, making Japan the 19th top destination for Scottish exports. With foreign direct investment into Scotland from Japan accounting for almost six per cent of all inward investment over the past decade, I believe there is scope for even closer collaboration – to seize shared opportunities and meet common challenges as both our countries look to address the growing needs of the global market.

Following the launch of our Scotland is Now campaign, this visit was an opportunity to further promote Scotland as a top destination to visit, live, work, invest and study. I held tourism events in both Tokyo and Seoul. I also signed a joint declaration of co-operation between Scotland and Yokohama, the second largest city in Japan and host to two of Scotland's Rugby World Cup games in 2019.

Building on the constructive meeting I held with Yokohama's mayor during my last visit, this declaration is an excellent opportunity to exchange knowledge and expertise, while strengthening existing ties in the areas of education, sports, culture and marine industries as Japan builds to the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the Olympics and Paralympics in 2020.

In addition, I met with local representatives and culture stakeholders to share best practices and discuss how culture in Scotland plays a vital role in shaping our cultural identity, strengthening business links and promoting our country internationally.

While in Tokyo I met with representatives from Japan's Ricca Ricca Festival, the annual international festival of performing arts for young people held in Okinawa. This year, the festival will focus on Scotland as a result of a joint funding initiative between Ricca Ricca, Creative Scotland, Scottish Government and British Council Scotland. As we celebrate

Scotland's Year of Young People 2018, this represents a great opportunity for Scotland's world leading children's theatre to showcase their talent to international audiences beyond our borders.

I also met with Japanese city leaders in Tokyo to discuss how Scotland's arts community can help Japan shape its cultural programme for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Japanese prefectures are now looking to deliver a world-class programme of cultural activity as part of the Olympics and are looking to Scotland for inspiration. It was a pleasure to discuss Scotland's use of culture as a promotional tool in domestic and international markets while we get ready to welcome our Japanese partners to Scotland this August during Edinburgh's peak festival season.

I was delighted to witness the signing of an important agreement between Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd, a major Japanese industrial corporation, and the Underwater Centre near Fort William. It will see the world's first test of an autonomous underwater vehicle take place in Scotland. Kawasaki will carry out a verification test of a prototype AUV equipped with a robot arm for subsea pipeline inspection.

This visit also represented an opportunity to promote our world-leading universities and to announce that the Scottish Government flagship Saltire Scholarship programme will open to Japanese postgraduates. Currently available to students from Canada, China, Pakistan and the US, the fund offers 50 scholarships worth £8,000 per year, co-funded by the Scottish Government and partner universities.

In South Korea, I met with key tourism leaders and travel media, an ideal opportunity to further promote business and travel contacts between our two countries. I also met companies that are keen to build on their trade and investment in Scotland.

In 2017, Scotland exported 744 million of goods to South Korea, a 165 per cent increase on the previous year. Korean company Doosan Babcock is a key investor in Scotland, employing approximately 1,200 people across eight different sites, with the main facility in Renfrew.

At government level, I focussed on developing links on rural development and cultural issues.

Scotland has strengths and qualities that make it a unique location for international cooperation and investment. My message to our friends in Japan and the Republic of Korea is that, whatever your reason for coming to Scotland, you will be offered the warmest of welcomes here and will find a bold and positive country shaping a progressive, pioneering and inclusive future.

ENDS

[Arctic Circle Assembly \(mis en ligne le 20/10/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/arctic-circle-assembly-2\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/arctic-circle-assembly-2)

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

Harpa Centre, Reykjavik

Thank you Dagfinnur [Sveinbjörnsson, CEO, Arctic Circle] for the introduction and good morning ladies and gentlemen.

It's a pleasure to be here in this impressive venue to speak on the topic of 'Scotland: a New Arctic Strategy.' I would like to thank former President Grimsson for his invitation to attend and thank him for his continued engagement with the Scottish Government, most recently through his visit to Edinburgh in September.

This is my first visit to the Assembly. Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, attended the last two Assemblies and speaks in glowing terms about her experience here. So I'm very

pleased as Scotland's External Affairs minister responsible for developing Scotland's first Arctic Strategy to attend the Assembly

I've been extremely impressed by the array of high level and expert participants in the Assembly sharing thinking and shaping the future. Much mention has been made of the Sustainable Development Goals which Scotland has already incorporated into our National Performance Framework, and we have hosted Icelandic officials interested in our Wellbeing Economy Governance Group.

It has been good to see a number of Scottish themed workshops and participants from Scotland. Indeed, later this evening there will be a workshop at 6pm on "Scotland and the Arctic: Encounters and Representations in literature and art".

As the Scottish Minister also responsible for Culture, I would encourage you along to what should be a fascinating discussion including what links Frankenstein, Scotland and the Arctic Culture as peoples and connects us. Importantly if we are to share Arctic aims then we should share our culture in doing so.

As many of you will be aware, Scotland's social and cultural ties with Iceland and the Arctic date back hundreds of years.

Indeed as a recent University of Iceland DNA mapping study has revealed although male mitochondria DNA of settlers to Iceland were Norse, 62% of female DNA was from Scottish and Irish women taken en route to Iceland – I would add unwillingly. Other examples of cross fertilisation is in our arts and culture, for example the Orkneyinga saga, from the thirteenth century captured the history of the Norse Earls of Orkney during the preceding centuries and more recently the Icelandic national anthem was written in an Edinburgh townhouse back in 1874.

Some of the great Western explorers of the Arctic were Scottish, such as John Rae, the first Westerner to discover the final part of the Northwest Passage.

Scotland's seas extend 320 km into the Norwegian Sea and similarly into North Atlantic Sea. One of the first non-Arctic country you encounter on leaving the Arctic Circle is Scotland. As a neighbour we share similarities on many of the issues we face which provides opportunities for cooperation.

For example, we have been heavily involved for over twenty five years in the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme. My other Ministerial responsibility is for Tourism and I am aware of several sustainable tourism projects which have delivered real value to what is a vital sector for our economy.

Needless to say, the Scottish Government hugely values the opportunities that this programme offers Scotland and we remain committed to participating in the Northern Periphery & Arctic programme, post UK leaving the EU.

Following our engagement with the Arctic Circle Assembly the Scottish Government hosted 'Scotland and the New North' in November last year, the first ever Arctic Circle Forum to be held in Scotland and indeed in the UK.

The Forum explored the similarities we face, both in terms of challenges and opportunities, with our Arctic neighbours across a range of topics – climate change, marine science, transport, and, the importance of youth in decision making – to mention just a few.

The Arctic Circle Forum in Edinburgh was a resounding success, providing us with an invaluable international engagement platform but it also developed a conversation on what Scotland's modern, contemporary relationship with the Arctic should be.

Key to Scotland's future relationship with the region is a recognition that globally, perceptions of what the Arctic is and should be, have changed. President Grimsson spoke eloquently on this during his visit to Scotland challenging the world to stop looking south and look north instead.

Over the past thirty years, the international view of the Arctic has changed with an increasing recognition of the globally important, dynamic nature of the region and we heard that repeated from Plenary speakers yesterday.

But secondly, he pointed out that by reshaping the map, focusing on the Arctic as a new centre for trade, innovation and investment, Scotland is geographically no longer peripheral at the north west corner of Europe. We find ourselves in a key position, close to the central Arctic, linking the region with the rest of Europe and the wider world.

Of course, the Arctic also faces many of the challenges faced by us all - not least climate change and the environment.

We want to be part of international responses to tackling such issues, I'm proud that the Scottish Government has set, and is on course to deliver against, some of the most ambitious Greenhouse Gas Emission reductions targets in the world. This is from a country which is the oil capital of Europe. We have already achieved a 49% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 baseline.

Through our new Climate Change Bill, we will deliver increased ambition in response to the Paris Agreement by setting a 90% reduction target for all greenhouse gases meaning Scotland will be a country with a net-zero emission of carbon dioxide by 2050.

In 2017 we delivered 69% of all our electricity needs from renewables and we will meet our target of 100% of electricity by 2020.

The concept then, that rather than being on the edge of Europe, Scotland enjoys a central role within a new global neighbourhood, speaks to why I became convinced that Scotland should develop an Arctic strategy and why we should be doing it now.

This is reinforced by the wider international context. Scotland faces being taken by the UK out of the European Union against our will.

The Scottish Government has been doing everything we can to protect us from the worst impacts this is likely to have. That includes taking steps to demonstrate that Scotland is, and will continue to be, an outward facing international country.

Over the past two years, we have been expanding our international presence. We have offices in Beijing, Brussels, Dublin and Washington. Earlier this year, we opened an office in Berlin.

Earlier this month, our new office in Ottawa became operational meanwhile our new Paris office will become operational next week. All of our overseas offices will represent Scottish interests and seek to develop stronger bilateral relations with the host countries, a number of which have a strong interest in Arctic affairs.

So our proactive work on the Arctic is in keeping with our open approach to the world at large.

When I announced at the Forum in Edinburgh that we would be developing our own Arctic Strategy, I had in mind two purposes.

Firstly, to help us position Scotland as a valuable partner to the countries and regions across the Arctic.

Secondly, to identify concrete opportunities for Scotland, academically, economically and socially, to take forward projects or programmes of work related to the Arctic.

Crucially I see our involvement as being as much about what we can offer as a partner as what we can benefit from others. Yes we have much to learn, but we also have expertise, insight and frameworks to offer across a range of areas where we have common challenges.

We have world renowned university research capturing areas of the Arctic, areas of research such as energy and climate change that we want to share.

Policy development for our new Arctic Strategy is underway and our academic consultation will be key.

At the beginning of this month, I convened the first meeting of our Arctic steering group consisting of representatives from across Scottish academia, business and public sector organisations – several of whom are here today.

Separately, we have commissioned researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of the Highlands and Islands to undertake a mapping exercise, consolidating the links between Scotland and the Arctic as they currently are to help shape future thinking.

Already, there are themes which are developing such as; climate change and environment; academic and research collaboration; economic opportunities; the geopolitical relationship of Scotland to the region and the links between and opportunities and challenges of remote communities in Scotland and those in the high north. And of course, culture must be a strong theme and thread.

I believe in all these themes Scotland has a distinct contribution to make to our Arctic partners.

One of the most important will relate to communities. In Scotland many of our communities are classed as being ‘remote’. However, through the development of our strategy and closer links with our Arctic neighbours I am keen that we redefine what it means to be ‘remote’. Remote does not need to mean removed.

There is no reason why, through the use of technology and modern infrastructure, sustainable, inclusive economic growth. We can have healthy, vibrant communities in remote areas. How do we make “remote” as a reason for envy not concern.

A further example would be long term spatial planning. Our National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out a vision of Scotland as a successful, sustainable place: a low carbon place; a natural, resilient place; a connected place. Our experience of this has been shared at previous Assemblies and our Arctic Circle Forum in Scotland.

We have particular expertise when it comes to applying marine spatial planning principles to the many and varied seas which surround us with oil rigs, fisheries and wind turbines all sharing the same space, safely and sustainably.

On climate change and the environment, we will contribute to protecting against worsening impacts through our world leading reductions targets.

Renewable energy is one of the best tools we have to combat climate change.

Scotland is the home of energy innovation, and is recognised as a renewable energy pioneer, with world first projects such as:-

- the MayGen –the world’s first utility scale tidal array
 - the Shetland Tidal Array - the world’s first community tidal array
 - the ScotRenewables SR2000 Turbine – the world’s most powerful floating energy device;
- and,
- Hywind Scotland – the world’s first floating offshore wind farm.

The European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) in Orkney is also the world’s first and only purpose-built, accredited, open-sea testing facilities for marine renewable energy devices.

There is also fantastic work being undertaken more widely in Orkney looking at opportunities for new investment linked to research, innovation and shipping and Orkney Council Leader James Stockan is also attending this Assembly.

In other areas of the economy, we can also offer insight and promote collaboration.

For example, on sustainable tourism, an issue of importance as the Arctic opens up to new visitors, keen to explore the environment. We are already actively working with our Arctic partners areas such as this, for example Visit Scotland and the Icelandic Tourism Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding two years ago which incorporated aspects of tourism management and sustainable tourism development. How do we disperse tourism in a sustainable “Blue Tourism” agenda spreading the benefits and pressures?

In Scotland’s world class universities, research is also underway and there is a strong spirit of collaboration and international partnership already in existence.

Some are members of the University of the Arctic group, whilst others are partners in cross border collaborations in topics related to geosciences, fisheries and tourism to name but a few, and we hope that this continues into the future.

In drawing to a close, I would like to do three things. Firstly, reiterate my thanks to Mr Grims-son and his team at the Secretariat for both inviting me to this marvellous event and for all the work they do in making it a real success.

Secondly, to emphasise that Scotland, as a near Arctic neighbour has lots to offer to partners across the region and this will be brought out more fully during the development of our strategy.

And finally, to restate our commitment that, we will continue to do all we can to ensure Scotland is a positive destination and partner of choice for all. The New North is the Old North revisited, reseen and reimagined through new eyes and new energy but most importantly respected and I commit Scotland to that vision, that case and that cause.

Thank you all and I wish you well for the rest of the Assembly.

Tourism Secretary speech at Scottish Tourism Alliance's Signature Sessions (*mis en ligne le 14/03/2019 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/tourism-secretary-speech-at-scottish-tourism-alliances-signature-sessions-2>*)

Speech from Tourism Secretary Fiona Hyslop

SEC Glasgow

I'm delighted to be here today to take part in this new, innovative approach to this year's conference, with its focus on future-proofing Scotland's tourism industry. Each of the signature sessions you will attend today very much reflects those themes that are at the forefront of the Scottish Government's approach to the visitor economy: delivering a successful tourism sector; enhancing Scotland's international reputation; and looking towards opportunities for the future. All of these things also reflect the nation that we want to be: one that looks outwards and to the future, and that makes the very best of our many assets.

I am very pleased to note that, over the past twelve months, we have seen yet another year of unprecedented success for Scottish tourism – a success in which you have all played a critical part.

The past year has seen some very significant achievements:

- the opening of V&A Dundee – with the Scottish Government as the main financial backer - has been part of a huge transformation on the Dundee waterfront and has contributed to significant increases in footfall at visitor attractions in Dundee and the surrounding region - Discovery Point, the waterfront home of RRS Discovery, saw visitors rise by 42 per cent while Verdant Works, which tells the story of Dundee's industrial textile heritage, recorded an increase of 21 per cent and Arbroath Abbey saw a rise of 18 per cent.
- £3.6 million has been allocated to the first 21 successful projects through our Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, improving visitor facilities in communities throughout rural Scotland.

We have also seen the successful conclusion of Scotland's Year of Young People, which will leave a lasting imprint on the lives of young people all across Scotland for many years to come.

And last month the First Minister announced our support for the Andrew Fairlie scholarships, which will provide a fabulous opportunity for both a female and male chef to further their careers. Andrew's memorial service took place on Monday and he will rightly be long remembered as a pioneer in Scottish cuisine. It is most fitting that his name will live on in the development of Scotland's chefs of the future.

Scotland's success is reflected in numbers of international visitors growing strongly – particularly those from Europe, with an increase of over 14 per cent in the year to last September. In contrast, for the rest of the UK, visitor numbers have seen significant decreases.

The success of the sector though, is only possible through the contributions you make. The Scottish Government can support the sector but it through *your* effort that it thrives. I want to acknowledge that and to thank everyone here today for the contribution they have made.

But we cannot be complacent. The growth the sector continues to see is very much welcome but it needs to be acknowledged that our tourism sector is fragile. Yes, we have seen success in terms of the growth of visitor spend, which saw an increase of more than 3% last year, but this is not commensurate with the growth in visitor numbers. which means our visitors are not spending as much when they are here. The international market is incredibly competitive and we need to continue to work extremely hard to draw visitors to Scotland and ensure they have an outstanding experience when they are here.

I recognise that this remains a challenge and that the impressive headline figures may not accurately reflect the challenges that Scotland's businesses, *your businesses*, are facing to remain competitive, particularly from increasing overheads and the impact of a weaker pound on costs of food and drink.

Our success is also tempered by a time of unprecedented challenge and we need now, more than ever, to ensure the world knows Scotland is open and welcoming.

On the eve of the UK's exit from the EU, this week, the Prime Minister's deal was, once again, overwhelmingly rejected by the House of Commons. It is essential that a catastrophic "no deal" is avoided: for our country and for our industry. Last night a rejection of 'no deal' at any time did get support, yet it is yet to be law. It absolutely essential that article 50 is extended to enable another referendum on EU membership to be held but the EU will only support an extension for a purpose. The Scottish Government will support any such referendum, provided it has the option of remain in the EU on the ballot paper.

One of the biggest issues facing Scotland, without doubt, is continuing to access labour under freedom of movement. I can give you the strongest assurance that the Scottish Government is taking this extremely seriously.

The independent Expert Advisory Group on Migration and Population which was set up, has clearly outlined the harm that UK Government proposals would have on Scotland, potentially reducing net migration by up to 50 per cent in the coming decades and jeopardising Scotland's economy, public services and future population growth.

There will also be a disproportionate impact of the UK Government's proposed salary threshold of £30,000, as around 63 per cent of workers in Scotland currently earn below that level. The threshold would also exclude a greater proportion of women, as well as younger people at the start of their career. The Scottish Government has been consistently clear that freedom of movement has enriched Scotland and should be allowed to continue. We will continue to press hard for a fair, tailor-made immigration solution for Scotland that values all skills and works for businesses.

And for those EU nationals who have made Scotland their home, we want to let you know that we value you, we value your contribution to our country, our economy and culture, and we absolutely want you to stay - you will always be welcome in Scotland

This ongoing uncertainty, coupled with rising costs both for businesses and for individuals, means that we cannot take tourism success for granted.

Some levers, like VAT, are not within the control of the Scottish Government. That doesn't mean that we will not seek to put pressure on the UK Government to take steps to improve the existing business environment for all sectors, including tourism.

I am deeply committed to supporting the Scottish tourism sector, and to enabling it to maximise its success - success that is both good for business and good for all of Scotland and its people. And sometimes that is challenging – not least when the Scottish Government had to agree to consult and legislate on a locally determined tourism tax

This was as a direct result of negotiations with the *only* Party willing to seriously engage in the budget process, and was a necessary part of the agreement which enabled us to deliver a budget that provides certainty and stability to tax payers and businesses at a time when we face significant challenges from the UK leaving the EU.

The contributions that we have already received as part of the previous national discussion on the tourist tax and published on 7 March have been extremely useful in drawing out a number of the very important and complex issues and concerns.

That legislation will allow those local authorities that wish to do so, to introduce a tax to meet the needs of their own area.

Let me be clear about two things – firstly, there will be no compulsion for local authorities to implement a tourism tax. Secondly, the requirement for the Scottish Parliament to consider legislation means that there will be no tourism tax levied in 2019 or indeed the 2020 season, as consultation, legislation and indeed implementation if any council wants to introduce a tax, will take some time.

As the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament take forward and consider this legislation, it is important that everyone's voice – all of your voices - are heard, so that whatever is produced serves Tourism and Tourism needs.

And we have a track record of working with the STA, and of responding to calls from the industry and. For example:

In the Budget, we protected VisitScotland's budget for next year.

You asked us to keep the Small Business Bonus – we did.

And we continue to provide the most competitive reliefs package in the UK. Our package ensures that over 90 per cent of properties in Scotland pay a lower poundage than they would in other parts of the UK.

You asked us to continue transitional relief - we confirmed in autumn last year that we would do so, for the hospitality sector in Scotland, until the next revaluation in 2022. This annual real-terms cap on rates bills of 12.5 per cent offers valuable certainty for eligible properties in a time of huge economic uncertainty.

You asked us to champion tourism as a career of choice and we included this as a commitment within our Programme for Government.

You asked us to empower our sectoral and destination organisations and we have done so. In particular, we are continuing to explore the potential of the adventure tourism sector to identify opportunities for unlocking growth and we have recently announced £40k to WildScotland for the development of its ambitious sectoral strategy.

We have also been sensitive to the needs of our regions, in particular the South of Scotland where we are establishing a new enterprise agency and supporting the region through the SeeSouthScotland marketing campaign and investment in infrastructure both directly and through the South of Scotland Economic Partnership.

So you can be sure that we will continue to work with you and that the industry's concerns will be listened to by the Scottish Government.

Today's conference is about looking to the future and there are many positive things to look forward to.

Part of our international reputation centres on delivering high-quality visitor experiences. This has long been one of our most important objectives as we strive towards making Scotland a world-class destination. To deliver those experiences, and as we work to develop tourism as a real career of choice for those at all stages of their working life, it is now even more important, that those careers should be built on a culture of fair work. As a government we have committed to increasing the number of workers receiving a Living Wage by 25,000, and we welcome the support and engagement of the tourism sector in achieving this.

We are already seeing more and more excellent examples, like Rabbits' Tours and the Auchrannie Resort on Arran.

It is also vital that our workforce continues to have the skills necessary to provide a high quality tourism product that gives Scotland that competitive edge.

The industry, in partnership with Skills Development Scotland, is already committed to bridging the skills gap and encouraging new entrants through the Tourism Skills Investment Plan. Through this work, over 2,700 Modern Apprenticeship new starts were delivered within the tourism and hospitality sector in 2017/18. Together with industry, we are encouraging these new entrants to see tourism as a career of choice with rewarding opportunities.

Our Themed Years have already been a great success in driving collaboration on tourism and events across the public and private sector. The Year of Coasts and Waters next year will showcase the many and varied water-based opportunities across on the mainland and on our islands, including our wonderful whiskies and gins.

In my role as Cabinet Secretary, I regularly meet with the other devolved nations to ensure that Scotland's priorities for the sector are represented. I will continue to press the UK Government to ensure that the Tourism Sector Deal meets the needs of our industry here in Scotland.

And we will work constructively with the UK Government over the coming year. Just yesterday the Scottish Government announced a commitment of £85 million for the Borderlands Growth Deal as part of the wider quantum of funding. And this is of great opportunity for tourism as the deal progresses to a Heads of Terms agreement.

And last week the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity announced the agreement of Heads of Terms for the Ayrshire Growth Deal, with total investment of over £251 million from the Scottish and UK Governments and the partner local authorities in Ayrshire. This support will help improve infrastructure, create jobs, and provide opportunities for tourism in the area, through a result of direct investment, including up to £22.5 million – with £18.5 million from the Scottish Government - towards developing Tourism in North Ayrshire.

The creation of the new National Tourism Strategy is well underway and some of you may already be involved in its development. The new strategy will look at what Scotland can offer the world in terms of unique and world-class experiences; what we can learn from other countries that are at the forefront of tourism development; and the new and exciting tourism trends that are emerging.

The new strategy will underpin how we support the development of inclusive growth across all parts of the country going forward.

While we continue to work with the industry on the new strategy's development, we are continuing to implement the current strategy. I've already mentioned our commitment to support our sectors and regions.

As some of you might recall, at the Autumn Conference, the First Minister announced funding for the development of mountain biking trails and site enabling works at Glentress.

This has allowed Forest Holidays to progress £10 million investment in 56 Eco Cabins, greatly improving the visitor offer in the area.

In line with our aim to explore the potential of the adventure tourism sector, we are now keen to work with our partners to examine the potential of the remaining 7 Stanes sites across Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. This will make sure that our visitor and mountain biking offer remains fresh and ensure that the 7 Stanes continues to be a mountain biking destination of choice and of international significance. I am therefore pleased to announce today that we will provide Forest Enterprise Scotland with £200k to take this work forward. This will explore the tourism potential of the sites and encourage further mountain biking activity and tourism in Scotland, creating momentum to 2023 when we will host the UCI World Championships.

Bringing these World Championships to Scotland follows the success of another spectacular sporting event, that being the first combined European Championships which took place last August.

The championships and the associated festival were attended by half a million people in Scotland and 44 free-to-air broadcasters and partners across Europe and worldwide covered the event with 567 million viewer-hours in the ten key European markets, demonstrating once again Scotland's capacity to successfully deliver major events.

We should not underestimate the significance of hosting the UCI Cycling world championships. The bold and innovative approach we have taken means that this will be the first time ever that all the cycling disciplines have been brought together to take place at the same time in the one country - that's 13 cycling world championships in the space of 2 weeks. Not only will this be a great festival of cycling to be enjoyed by Scots and international visitors alike, but it affords us an opportunity to use the profile of such a prestigious major event to drive beneficial changes around sustainable transport, active lifestyles, our environment and our economy. We are proud that our approach and our strong track record allows us to punch above our weight and maintain our reputation as the perfect stage to host events.

By hosting the UCI in 2023, we will be building on our reputation as a country that is proud of its sport and its athletes and we will once again show the world that we are an outward facing, capable country that can deliver a welcoming and memorable experience for both competitors and visitors alike.

As we plan for the future of tourism in Scotland, I know that this might not necessarily be the immediate thoughts on your minds, particularly as we think about the coming year and the challenges it will bring, some of which I have touched upon today. It is vital that we continue to engage and face these together as an industry.

But I like to be optimistic and the coming year will also bring opportunities. We must grasp these and make the most of them, and show the world that Scotland remains an open and welcoming nation. It is through yourselves that the sector thrives and makes progress but it is only by working together that we can ensure its future success.

[Arctic Day speech \(mis en ligne le 25/03/2019 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/arctic-day-speech\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/arctic-day-speech)

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop

Inverness

Thank you Martin (Johnson, HIE) for your introduction and thank you to Highlands and Islands Enterprise for your contribution to the organisation of today's event.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Scotland's first Arctic Day. It is indeed a pleasure to join you in the capital of the Highlands for what will no doubt be a day full of stimulating discussions and interesting debates on Scottish-Arctic relations.

A special welcome goes to those delegates who have travelled from abroad to be here today. We are very pleased to be joined by speakers from Norway, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland and Maine. We really appreciate you making time to attend the conference and I look forward to hearing your views on how Scotland can develop an even stronger partnership with your countries on Arctic matters.

Let me also welcome the exhibitors from across Scotland and further afield who are here today to showcase their work and the connections that they have built with the Arctic region. Stands will be open throughout the day on the first floor foyer. I strongly urge you to join me and visit them at some point during the conference.

As many of you will be aware, Scotland's social, economic and cultural ties with the High North date back hundreds of years.

Of course, our northernmost islands were for a long time part of the Danish-Norwegian kingdom before becoming integral part of Scotland at the end of the 15th century. This connection continues to run deep in many aspects of islanders' life and is reflected in local culture and traditions – of course the *Up Helly Aa* festival is arguably the most recognisable.

Traces of linguistic influences are also very clear in local dialects. This is particularly interesting and significant in 2019, the United Nation's Year of Indigenous Languages.

And it was of course Orkney-born John Rae who discovered and mapped the final navigable link of the Northwest Passage in 1854, establishing himself as one of the greatest Arctic explorers. Rae mapped almost 1,800 miles of Arctic coasts, surveying the North of Canada but also Iceland and Greenland. And as I speak, the Arctic Return Exhibition – a 400-mile trek across the Boothia Peninsula in Nunavut – is underway. It celebrates Rae's accomplishments and the crucial importance of indigenous knowledge in his endeavours.

Seas and waters have long represented a powerful connection between Scotland and Arctic nations – socially, culturally and economically. 2020, Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, will give us an additional opportunity to celebrate these ties.

Scots' tradition of global wandering led many to cross the ocean or the North Sea. In particular, as you will know, North America is home to a large Scottish diaspora. In the 2016 census of Canada, 14% of the population listed themselves as being of Scottish origin.

Maybe, many of these migrants never realised that they were still in Scottish waters hours after setting off from our ports. Indeed, our sea area is larger than the entire land mass of Germany as our waters extend 200 miles into the Norwegian Sea and similarly into the North-Atlantic Sea.

Over centuries, thousands of vessels have shuttled back and forth through these waters, carrying goods, people and knowledge. And Arctic nations remain strong export partners for us to this day. In 2017, they provided 5 of Scotland's 20 largest export markets, a combined total of 27% of total Scottish exports.

Scotland has also been a keen and successful partner in the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, with over €6 million in funding awarded by the European Union so far.

The academic links between Scotland and the Arctic are also extremely prolific. We are home to Europe's largest glaciology research group and our universities have long been at the forefront of Arctic science. A number of our academic institutions work in close conjunction with the University of the Arctic, represented here today by Professor Pål Markusson.

Ladies and gentlemen, Scotland and the Arctic region have long worked in close conjunction and there is much more we can achieve together going forward. We face common challenges and share similar opportunities.

The Highlands and Islands, for example, are one of the most sparsely populated regions in the European Union. The population density of this marvellous part of Scotland is 9 persons per km², similar to northern parts of Finland and Sweden. By sharing best practices and looking at each other's experience, we can ensure that rural and remote areas are connected, empowered and allowed to express their full potential.

The breath-taking scenery and the wealth of cultural heritage enriching these areas have made tourist numbers soar in recent years. The tourism industry is crucial to the economy of the North of Scotland and is experiencing considerable growth also in the Arctic region. I discussed that with the Icelandic Tourism minister when I met her last year. While we want the tourism sector to thrive and remain an important source of revenue, we have to ensure this trend remains sustainable and inclusive. I am glad to report that Scottish Government officials participated in a workshop on sustainable Arctic tourism in Iceland earlier this month. Efforts at learning from each other are already underway.

Sadly, the pristine landscapes and unique wildlife making Scotland and the Arctic region famous across the world face severe threats due to rising global temperatures. It is crucial that we work shoulder to shoulder and take urgent action in the fight against climate change.

Scotland's low carbon transition is well underway, our emissions having halved since 1990. However, we are committed to playing an even stronger role and being international climate leaders to ensure our determination lives up to the scale of the challenge. This is why the Scottish Government has set a 90% reduction target for all greenhouse gases and have pledged to make Scotland carbon neutral by 2050.

Our ambitious targets are matched by a stretching package of on-the-ground measures and sustained investment in renewables. The cutting-edge work on wave and tidal energy carried out in Orkney and Shetland stand as further evidence of Scotland's ability to drive forward the transition to a global low-carbon economy. Only last week I was at the engineering school at the University of Edinburgh seeing the flow wave and the flow tank there, which is world leading in terms of testing in this area. Last month, the Scottish Government set aside £10 million to help the commercial deployment of tidal projects. We want to work with international partners, including those from the Arctic region, to demonstrate that climate action is compatible with economic growth. In fact, in 2016 the low carbon economy generated £11bn and supported 49,000 jobs in Scotland.

It is important that economic growth translates not only into GDP increase at a national level but also into concrete well-being improvements on the ground, among the local population.

I believe the Scottish Government's work on inclusive growth, launched internationally at the OECD conference in South Korea last November, is of strong relevance to the Arctic region. Through expertise exchange and the development of transferable policy practices, we can improve our delivery of well-being and tailor our economic approaches to the needs of local communities.

So, in light of all these connections, shared objectives and the strong potential for even closer cooperation, the Scottish Government has decided to develop its own Arctic Policy Framework. It will look to coherently capture the numerous and multifaceted links connecting Scotland and the Arctic.

But it will also explore new avenues for bilateral and multilateral collaboration, putting forward ideas as to how we can build new policy bridges and ensure that Scotland can bring a valuable contribution to Arctic discussions while learning from our international partners operating in the region.

To this end, we have established an Arctic Steering Group made up of academics, professionals, policy-makers and officials who are helping the Scottish Government shape its approach and set the direction for future Scottish-Arctic collaboration. I would like to publically thank all members of the Steering Group for their valuable contribution to drafting the Policy Framework and for their input in the organisation of today's event.

Separately, we commissioned researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of the Highlands and Islands to undertake a mapping exercise of Scottish-Arctic links. The document was delivered at the end of last year and is actively informing the development of the Policy Framework.

Already, there are themes which are emerging such as; climate change and the environment; academic and research collaboration; economic opportunities; the geopolitical relationship of Scotland to the region, opportunities and challenges for remote communities in Scotland and those in the High North. And of course, culture must be a strong theme and thread. Crucially, these themes are reflected in the programme for this event, this Arctic Day.

We want our efforts at building new bridges with the Arctic to be as inclusive and participative as possible. We are very clear that the people-to-people dimension will be of crucial importance if we are to make Scotland an even stronger Arctic partner.

Listening to young people, their leadership and vision, will be essential. I am very pleased to welcome here today a delegation from the Troms Youth County Council. This afternoon, they will facilitate a workshop and discuss with Scottish young people how they see their future in rural and remote areas, what new generations need to drive the empowerment of their communities and contribute to their success.

This is exactly what our Arctic Day aims to achieve. We want this conference to be an open forum for discussions, an arena where everyone is invited to a free dialogue on Scottish-Arctic cooperation.

This is as much about reflecting on existing collaboration as it is about exchanging ideas on the future of Scotland's partnership with the Arctic region and the content of the Arctic Policy Framework. Today's programme has been built with a view to encouraging two-way conversations and knowledge exchange. We would really like Eden Court to be Scotland's Arctic *agora* for a day.

This Arctic Day's objective is to mobilise and connect Scotland's expertise and interests in Arctic issues. Together with a copy of the official brochure, you should all have received a suggestion form. I would encourage you to fill and return the form to the Scottish Government staff. We want you to share your views with us not only on this event but also what you want to see as the priorities for Scottish-Arctic cooperation going forward.

Each workshop and lecture will focus on a set of topics that are of strong relevance to Scotland's work in and with the Arctic region. I have touched upon most of them earlier. There was, of course, much more but obviously that would have taken much longer than we have today.

The chairs of each session will be invited to share with us the main conclusions, agreements and disagreements that emerged during the discussions. Your inputs are important and will inform the work we are putting in place to reshape the map of Scottish-Arctic relations.

If we look at the wider international context, we cannot be anything but even more committed to strengthening Scottish-Arctic connections and we are convinced about the importance of these efforts for Scotland's future.

Scotland is being dragged out of the European Union against its will. Brexit and the politics of closed doors pursued by the UK Government are forcing us to re-double our efforts at promoting Scotland as an outward-looking and open nation. In spite of the unwelcome developments that threaten to drag us in the opposite direction, we want Scotland's credentials as a good global citizen to go from strength to strength.

It's not too ambitious to say that Scotland has all it takes to establish itself as the European gateway to the Arctic region. Geographically, Scotland is no longer peripheral at the north west corner of Europe. We find ourselves in a key position, close to the central Arctic, linking the region with the rest of Europe and the wider world.

As I mentioned earlier on, this is not only about geography – although the North of Scotland is closer to the Arctic circle than to London. It is about a shared vision of the world and a full realisation of shared interests and policy priorities.

Over the last few years, Scottish Ministers have been closely involved in Arctic platforms. The First Minister attended the Arctic Circle Assembly in Iceland in 2016 and 2017. I was in Reykjavik for the same conference, and spoke at it, last October, while our Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment Mairi Gougeon spoke at the Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø earlier this year.

In November 2017, Edinburgh played host to the Arctic Circle Forum, an event that attracted delegates from across the Arctic region and certified Scotland's credentials as a committed Arctic neighbour. Today's conference lays another foundation stone for the bridge between Scotland and the Arctic.

We don't intend to stop here and we have ambitious plans for the future. In May, for instance, our Beijing office will represent the Scottish Government at the Arctic Circle Forum in Shanghai, promoting Scottish-Chinese projects on climate change and low-carbon innovation.

Our growing network of overseas offices will play an integral part in our Arctic work. Two of them – Washington and Ottawa – are located in Arctic nations. Others – including Berlin and Paris – will work in close conjunction with European governments that have shown strong interest in Arctic cooperation.

In drawing to a close I would like to do three things. Firstly, thank you all for being here today and attending our Arctic Day.

Secondly, emphasise my deep conviction that Scottish-Arctic cooperation will be of great importance to the future of our country and open new avenues for successful cultural, economic, academic and diplomatic relations with our Arctic neighbours.

And finally, I want to restate our commitment to being a positive partner for the Arctic region, keen to bring constructive contributions but also to learn and listen.

I wish everyone a very successful conference and I look forward to participating in interesting discussions throughout the day.

Let's be ambitious, not just for Scotland but let's be ambitious for the world. We all have responsibilities for what is happening to us globally but I think Scotland and our contribution needs to be heard.

Thank you

Annexe III : Discours officiels de Michael Russell, ministre écossais des Affaires gouvernementales et des Relations constitutionnelles, également Ministre pour les Négociations du Royaume-Unis sur la Place de l'Écosse en Europe émis entre le 29 mars 2017 et le 29 mars 2019.

The European (Withdrawal) Bill (mis en ligne le 12/09/2017 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/the-european-withdrawal-bill>)

Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Michael Russell

Statement to Parliament

Presiding Officer,

Twenty years ago today, celebrations were taking place in this city and across the country.

The day before - the 11th of September 1997- the people of Scotland had voted overwhelmingly for devolution - for a different Scotland served by a restored Scottish Parliament.

It is in that spirit that I make this statement today.

This concerns all of us who care about the future of this country.

Then we joined hands to try and create a better future for Scotland. Today we must show the same unity in defending the Parliament in which we sit and its role and duty to serve all the people of this country.

In 1997 the proposition put to the people of Scotland was clear. The UK Government's White Paper, published in advance of the referendum, set out the areas for which, it promised, "the Scottish Parliament will be responsible". They included law and home affairs; the environment; agriculture, fisheries and forestry; higher education and research.

Since this Parliament was established the range of policy matters which are our responsibility has increased. Initial expansions giving this Parliament greater responsibility for transport were followed by the Calman and Smith processes which expanded our competence - albeit in a limited way - into areas such as taxation and welfare.

This progressive, dynamic development and expansion of devolution has, we believe, been good for this Parliament and good for everyone who lives and works in Scotland. It has made a real difference to people's lives

As the First Minister said yesterday in her speech marking two decades since the devolution referendum:

"After devolution we were able to look, not just south, but all around us, to our fellow European nations and to countries across the globe.

"And we could contribute our ideas, learn from others and then put those ideas into practice here in Scotland.

"Far from narrowing our vision, devolution has widened our horizon."

However, the Scottish Parliament's ability to do that - to contribute ideas, to widen horizons and to make progress for each and every citizen - is now under threat.

For, Presiding Officer, in the EU Withdrawal Bill, the UK Government proposes that it should, for the first time since 1999, take powers for and to itself in relation to devolved policy areas in Scotland. It proposes to alter, permanently, the fundamental principle of devolution as approved by three quarters of the Scottish people in that referendum 20 years ago - the principle that says that what is not reserved, is devolved.

We do not believe that would be good for the people of Scotland.

We do not believe that the hill farmers of Argyll, in my constituency, would be better served by policy on less favored area support being made in London, where such support will never be needed and where knowledge of its vital nature is scanty or non-existent.

We do not believe that ambitions for cleaner air and a greener Scotland should be undermined by UK Ministers who have very different environmental priorities and who have championed de-regulation at every opportunity.

And we do not believe that the needs of Scottish families in crisis will be better understood by those who have constantly undermined the welfare state.

That is why the legislative consent memorandum, lodged in this Parliament today in the name of the First Minister, indicates that we are not willing to bring forward a legislative consent motion at this time.

We cannot recommend to this Parliament that it consents to the EU Withdrawal Bill as presently drafted and although their procedures are slightly different, that is exactly the same position as the Welsh Government which will today lodge their relevant memorandum in the name of their First Minister.

Let me explain some of the detailed reasons for that stance.

The present constitutional arrangements in the UK mean that all the UK's legislatures – the UK Parliament just as much as the Scottish Parliament – must act in accordance with EU law.

In relation to agriculture for example, DEFRA has at present no greater power to act incompatibly with EU law than the Scottish Government. The EU (Withdrawal) Bill would fundamentally alter that position. It would make the UK Parliament and Government the sole successor to the EU: all matters currently decided cooperatively among 28 EU Member states and governments will be unilaterally decided by only one: the UK Government. This Bill does not provide for a single new decision-making power for any of the devolved legislatures. Everything goes to London, and it is for London to decide what ultimately happens to those powers.

This is not a debate about whether we should leave the European Union. The position of this government and indeed the position of the people of Scotland expressed in last year's referendum is clear on that matter. We don't want to leave. This Bill is not an opportunity to veto Brexit: such a legal power does not exist.

Moreover we have frequently made it clear that despite our wish to maintain EU membership we recognise our obligation to prepare Scotland as best we can for what might transpire. Indeed Brexit is going to be such a dramatic, damaging upheaval to the UK's legal systems and to our laws that it is imperative that we actually do everything we can to prepare responsibly for the consequences of EU withdrawal.

But certain choices in the Bill – such as ending the effect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights – will make this process even more damaging than it needs to be. The Law Society of Scotland warned last week that the UK Government “should reconsider the removal of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and take stock of concerns which are held by many about the potential for erosion of human rights which may occur”.

So, it's already clear that the governments of these islands have a lot of work to do to try to make sure that some stability and some continuity can be achieved on exit day, and they will have to work together if that is to be done most effectively.

This Bill makes that much more difficult not least because the EU Withdrawal Bill appears to represent a deliberate decision by the UK Government to use the process of Brexit as cover for taking powers in areas of policy which are clearly within the responsibility of this Parliament.

Let me be entirely clear about this. It is not a logical, or essential, part of any Withdrawal Bill that new limitations are placed on the Scottish Parliament's powers, on the National Assembly for Wales's powers, or on the powers of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

But that is what this Bill does.

Clause 11 of the EU (Withdrawal) Bill contains a new limitation on devolved competence of extraordinary scope. While the Bill lifts from the UK Government and Parliament the requirement they are currently under to comply with EU law, clause 11 would impose on the Scottish Parliament a new limitation, tied to EU law as it happens to exist at the date of withdrawal.

In areas of Scottish devolved responsibility vital to the success of our country, such as agriculture, the environment, fisheries, forestry, research, or justice cooperation, the Scottish Parliament will have no say over what comes back from the EU on withdrawal, or what is done with these important policy areas afterwards.

Let me give an example: one I have taken directly from the House of Commons briefing paper on this Bill. They use the Common Agricultural Policy, CAP, to illustrate what this approach would mean for this Parliament. "It is an important part of the law on agriculture, a devolved matter", the report notes, "but not one which devolved Ministers will be able to amend."

It continues: "if the UK left the EU and did not legislate to the contrary, agriculture would fall within the competence of the Scottish Parliament." But, notes the report, "while this can be changed for England, or for the UK, by the UK Parliament, devolved legislatures and ministers will not have the power to modify the type of EU law that makes up the CAP".

The system of farming subsidies as it has been developed over the last 18 years to meet particular Scottish need is only one example. There are many other areas of present devolved competence that would be put beyond the powers of this Parliament: the high standards of environmental protection the EU has given us, our approach to food standards, the protection of our unique food and drink products, the operation of family law across national boundaries, the recognition of qualifications in our health professions ...it is a long list, consisting of over 100 areas where EU competences intersect with our competences.

Yet, the damage caused to the devolution settlement by clause 11 wouldn't end when the process of EU withdrawal ends. As I have indicated it would be a permanent change in the way that this Parliament's legislative competence is assessed.

The UK Government also wants the inclusion of clause 11 in order to ensure that it can impose UK-wide frameworks following Brexit and then, in some cases, trade off Scottish rights, privileges and protections in lowest common denominator trade talks. Agriculture and fishing are particularly at risk from that approach.

Now, last December we set out in *Scotland's Place in Europe*, our clear acceptance that there will be the need for some common approaches across the UK to some matters when the UK withdraws from the EU.

But, as we and the Welsh Government have made repeatedly clear, these common approaches - the areas they cover and the way they operate - must be agreed not imposed.

However, with clause 11 in place, agreement could never be reached since the price the UK Government demands for an agreement would be, in each case, the effective reservation of the matter, putting it and the terms and operation of any framework beyond the powers of this Parliament.

The UK Government's approach isn't about UK frameworks; it is about UK Government frameworks, decided on, operated by and controlled within the UK Government.

But returning powers to the Scottish Parliament along the lines of the devolution settlement set out in the Scotland Act 1998 would not prevent the agreement of such frameworks. In fact it would enable that agreement because there are existing mechanisms for the two governments to agree a common or coordinated approach: for example, legislation in both parliaments or in the UK Parliament, with our consent; memoranda of understanding; concordats and the administrative agreement of common goals.

All of these existing mechanisms are based on the existing, well-understood principles of devolution. Regrettably this Bill, and its approach to UK-wide frameworks, suggests a fundamental shift in the approach of the UK Government to such relations with the devolved nations. Again, let me quote from the House of Commons' own briefing paper on the Bill. For the devolved nations, it warns, Brexit "will not bring back control". "The retention of common frameworks", the report says, "could be seen as an effective centralisation of power".

Power should be devolved according to the current settlement it should be divided between the Parliaments in accordance with the principles set out in the devolution statutes.

The Welsh Government have made, in their recent publication *Securing Wales's Future*, some interesting suggestions about decision-making over frameworks at the European level. These should replicate the co-decision making presently seen at EU level, with the four nations of the UK being equal partners in that process. We are keen to explore those ideas.

But whatever the outcome, there must be a collaborative not a divisive approach to these matters if they are to have any prospect of success.

Presiding Officer, this government stands ready to negotiate and agree any common approach with the UK Government and the other nations of the UK which proves necessary. Our only condition is that the UK Government observes constitutional due process and enters into those discussions on the basis of respect for the founding principles of devolution, as endorsed by the Scottish people in 1997.

Unfortunately, they do not seem to wish to do so. And equally unfortunately, the Bill is also problematic in other areas and these must be changed too.

For example, the Bill gives UK Ministers and Scottish Ministers powers to correct deficiencies in law caused by EU withdrawal – the so-called Henry VIII powers.

The version of these powers given to the Scottish Ministers is, compared with the one given to UK Ministers, limited in its scope and application. This is no bad thing in principle, except that an entire category of the laws covered by the Bill – directly-applicable EU instruments – are given to the UK Government alone to correct. This includes directly applicable EU laws in policy areas which are the responsibility of this Parliament.

Now that's not just a technical point; these pieces of legislation include significant items. This means that the UK Government would have the unilateral power, by delegated legislation, to change laws in areas of policy which are the responsibility of this Parliament

without any reference either to this Parliament or to the Scottish Government which is accountable to it.

This suggests an approach to EU withdrawal designed not only without the appropriate respect for devolution, but one which wittingly or unwittingly subverts it.

The only appropriate way to divide powers between the governments is this: powers in relation to policy areas which are devolved must be for devolved ministers and devolved legislatures. Thereafter there will be space, time and willingness to agree cooperation over the shared use of these powers in a way which respected the responsibility of this Parliament to hold to account those who make decisions in devolved areas.

Our position on these powers in the Bill is therefore the same as our position on agreeing common approaches across the UK.

We recognise the need for some way of making the current body of EU law workable after Brexit; we have as much an interest in that as the UK government does; we stand ready to use such powers in order, so far as we can, to promote stability following the process of withdrawal; but the approach taken by the U.K. Government to the Bill is preventing this necessary – indeed essential - cooperation and coordination.

Of course, we also agree that powers this broad will require greater scrutiny from this Parliament. We therefore commit to working with this Parliament and with its Committees to agree a set of principles and a process that will ensure that the instruments made under this Bill receive the appropriate scrutiny.

I look forward to this Parliament's scrutiny of the EU Withdrawal Bill and of the legislative consent memorandum the First Minister lodged with Parliament today. The Finance and Constitution Committee, the Delegated Powers Committee and members across the chamber will have a strong role to play in this, since it will affect the powers and policies we all want to be used to improve the lives of our constituents. I also look forward to giving evidence to these Committees, and to making sure that the public understands exactly what it is proposed EU withdrawal should mean for their Scottish Parliament and - equally importantly - in their daily lives from Shetland to Stranraer and from Eoligarry to Eyemouth.

Presiding Officer, the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales made all of this clear to the UK Government when the Bill was first published and that built on extensive engagement, the two weeks before, when we were finally given an opportunity to see, but not to change, what was proposed.

Thereafter, in our meetings and phone calls with the First Secretary of State, the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU and the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Deputy First Minister and I have explained in detail the consequences of the Bill's approach for the devolution settlement. We have sought to establish a shared understanding of these issues and to build a way forward that allows both governments to proceed to the essential work of discussing common frameworks and the programme of corrections to our laws that will be necessary. We have explained that it is their unnecessary policy choices, set out in this Bill, that have hindered progress.

Therefore, the Scottish Government still cannot recommend that Parliament gives consent to this Bill and we have now set out the reasons in detail in the legislative consent memorandum.

We have also been clear about what we expect and require the consequence of withholding consent to be: that the UK Government must make the necessary changes to the EU (Withdrawal) Bill.

Of course the U.K. government has contended that their proposals are the only ones that will avoid the chaos which would arise if no frameworks or legislative structures are in place on Brexit day.

That will not happen. We will ensure that does not happen. If the UK Government is not prepared to make the appropriate amendments, this Government will consider, as the Welsh Government has confirmed it is also considering the options available for rapid legislation in this Parliament to allow us to prepare devolved laws for the shock of Brexit.

That route is not our first choice, however, because there is a better way forward still available. As the two First Ministers announced after meeting in Edinburgh last month, the Welsh Government and the Scottish Government will publish a set of suggested amendments to the Bill, which would – if made – turn the Bill into one that we could recommend to the Parliament.

These amendments will remove the unnecessary new limits on devolved competence from the Bill and rearrange the regulation-making powers so that they properly respect the well-established principles of devolution and the scheme in the Scotland Act 1998 and subsequent Scotland Acts, as well as ensuring that the Scottish (and Welsh) Parliaments have the appropriate role in holding to account their governments as they make the decisions required to prepare the UK's legal systems for EU withdrawal.

We therefore stand ready to work with all Parliamentarians in all the Parliaments to bring forward and seek to have accepted those amendments.

Presiding Officer, the issues I have outlined today and which are given in much more detail in the Legislative Consent Memorandum are not arcane constitutional points.

We are talking about the role and duty of these Parliaments to help improve the life of the citizens they serve. We are talking about the real difference this Parliament has made and can make and a diminution of that ability.

The current proposals from the U.K. Government cut across, and indeed impede and diminish what we do, day in and day out, to serve everyone who lives in Scotland. We cannot allow that to happen.

So, Presiding Officer, if there are members in this Chamber who have influence with the UK Government, I would ask that they use that influence to secure the changes that the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government seek.

If, however, any members believe that the right approach is to support the UK Government in such actions, which go directly against 20 years of the settled will of the Scottish people, and the effective operation of devolution, then let them say it and be judged accordingly.

For, Presiding Officer I think the vast majority of our constituents would find it astonishing if there were any members elected to this Scottish Parliament who, when faced with such a challenge to the principles of devolution and the powers of the Scottish Parliament would not put them, and the people of Scotland, first

Let us therefore hope we can speak as one on these matters.

Scotland's place in Europe (mis en ligne le 18/10/2017 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/the-european-withdrawal-bill>)

Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Michael Russell speech at Europa Institute, University of Zurich

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,

Can I start by saying what a great pleasure it is to be here tonight, in such a distinguished University and Institute and in such a renowned city. I hope tonight to be able to convey some modest wisdom from Scotland; but I also hope to learn from a country with not only considerable experience of referenda however troublesome they might be, but also a strong attachment to pursuing with determination what the evidence tells you is right.

And, let me thank Professor Ambühl for that warm welcome and also the Europa Institute for inviting me to speak about Scotland's place in Europe.

And at the outset let me leave you in no doubt. Scotland not only has a place in Europe, it wishes to expand and develop that place. Scotland voted decisively in the UK referendum of June 2016 to remain in the EU (by 62 % to 38%) and opinion polls indicate that there is an even bigger majority for that position now.

The question that we address - and which it is my job in the Scottish Government working directly for Nicola Sturgeon our First Minister to address - is how we can do just that- expand and develop our place in Europe.

Let me start with historical background. Like any nation, Scotland has its long and rich history. The lessons are woven into our story – they inform and adapt our sense of who we are, this defines our ambitions for our future. And our history is one of connectedness. It is a European history.

It is also in significant part an independent history. Our independence was finally secured through the military and diplomatic achievements of Robert the Bruce 700 years ago and the nature of that independence and of our kingship was underpinned by an appeal to Europe - to the Pope- in the famous “Declaration of Arbroath” of 1320 which some believe influenced the American Declaration of Independence.

Thereafter, apart from a brief period of incorporation into the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell, Scotland was an independent country until the Treaty of Union of 1707 entered into voluntarily by the independent kingdoms of Scotland and England. Important to this Union however, was the preservation of Scottish institutions, most notably including the law – a separate legal system, education and church.

Following this period, new imperatives emerged in the form of the industrial revolution and the growth and establishment of the British Empire. Scotland played a full part in these developments, while still making its own mark in the world not least through the Scottish Enlightenment

It was during this period in history that Scotland came to be regarded as a significant global intellectual centre with major figures including the scientist James Hutton, credited as the founder of modern geology and philosophers David Hume and Adam Smith. We continue to outperform our neighbours with five universities in the world's top 200, a unique achievement for a country of just over 5 million people. And we enjoy more academic citations per head of population than any other country - save Switzerland. But you have the advantage of having CERN which I visited when I was Education Secretary for five years.

Our ancient Universities (of which there were five established before the middle of the 16th century) attracted scholars from across Europe and we in turn sent people to study at the great institutions on the continent. We also sent our soldiers to fight other people's wars and we traded with vigour and skill - the old German word for a peddler, as many of you will know better than I, is the word for a Scot. We even established staple ports including that of Vera in the Netherlands which still appoints an honorary Scottish Conservator in memory of the connection.

And our intellectual leaders were deeply engaged in conversations with their counterparts across the continent. “It is to Scotland” observed Voltaire “that we look for all our ideas of civilisation”. And the image of the romantic Highlander, cultivated by the poems of Ossian and the novels of Walter Scott attracted attention as well - indeed a volume of Ossian was in Napoleons’ tent on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo.

Union did not extinguish the sense of nationhood but it changed it. Full political incorporation was never entirely to the taste of many Scots even if it fulfilled the ambitions of the Scottish political class and led to increased undeniable prosperity.

So a growing interest in Home Rule developed in the second half of the 19th century and led to that time re-establishment of the role of Secretary of State for Scotland.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the intensification of the process of, and pressure for, administrative changes which developed into a desire for political change as well but the establishment of the UK welfare state and the cohesion created by two world wars delayed its flowering.

In addition the uncertain nature of that movement in particular early years can be seen in the various factions that pursued a variety of aims. The first referendum on devolution in 1979 produced a small majority for the establishment of a Parliament but also failed to meet an artificial and unique target set by the UK Government. The legislation authorising this referendum required 40 per cent *of the total electorate* to support devolution: in the event 32.9 per cent supported the formation of an Assembly although this represented 51.6 per cent of those who voted it failed to meet the target imposed.

Interestingly, had that rule applied to the EU referendum the constitution wouldn’t have passed.

This blow to the process of constitutional change delayed progress but did not derail it. Nothing much, in a constitutional sense happened for a decade, largely because of the intransigence of the then UK Government but the resurgence of a civic movement which drew together disparate forces proved one of the decisive factors in the second, and successful, devolution referendum of 11th September 1997. The Scottish Parliament first met in May 1999, as a result of the passage at Westminster of the Scotland Act 1998.

I was honoured to be amongst those first members of that reconvened Scottish Parliament, which had not met for 292 years - the longest adjournment in democratic history.

Fundamental to the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 – [as opposed to the scheme that did not take place in 1979] was the principle that ‘what is not retained – formally identified as ‘reserved’ – is devolved’. Over time, the powers of the Scottish Parliament have been extended through the Scotland Acts of 2012 and 2016.

Donald Dewar - the founding father of the Parliament and the first First Minister of Scotland described it well by pointing out that at the very outset of his administration that devolution was a process, not an event. And, so it has proved until today.

It is this principle that has enabled Scotland to find our own way, as outlined in the words of Scotland’s First Minister when she celebrated two decades of devolution just last month. She pointed out that the establishment of our Parliament had allowed us to ‘look, not just south, but all around us, to our fellow European nations and to countries across the globe. And we (can) contribute our ideas, learn from others and then put those ideas into practice here in Scotland’.

This progressive, ongoing process of devolution has seen the development of policies and approaches drawing from Scottish values of consent, equality and the modern principle of long

underlying the sovereignty lying with the people. Not only that, it is this outlook that informed the trajectory towards the Independence Referendum of 2014.

And support from the EU has grown substantially over the 40 years of UK membership.

Not being a member was regarded by many as dangerous and damaging. The campaign threat undoubtedly had an effect.

Much of the promised “new deal” for Scotland in which she would be treated as “an equal partner” and in which there would be a new dispensation in the union “as close to Federalism as you can get” (those are quotes by the way, the latter from the former Prime Minister and Scot Gordon Brown) those things have failed to materialise.

And the European promise has turned out to be a very sour joke indeed.

Brexit was rejected by Scotland by a larger majority than in any other part of the UK. But that rejection has been ignored by the UK Government. As the Prime Minister puts it (ignoring the radical changes in UK constitution and governance that have taken place since 1974) “We joined the EU as one UK and we shall leave as one UK”.

Now of course the UK’s constitution is, famously, not written down but instead based on convention, statute and various legal instruments. The expectation is that the UK’s governance arrangements are established according to a consensus, adapting to the times.

But Brexit has posed us to ask a question. Who defines this consensus? In my view, in my experience, this is effectively at the grace and favour of the UK Government. And when there is a disagreement the only voice that in the end decides is that of the UK.

I shall later on reflect a little on that issue but suffice it to say at this point that the Scottish Government sees Brexit as not only disruptive for Europe, but as something that presents significant risks to the UK’s established constitution and fundamentally the ordered, consented to, governance of the UK.

The late John Smith called devolution the “settled will of the Scottish people”. All the parties in the Scottish Parliament, have made devolution work and have supported the process in which we have been engaged for 20 years. But now, for the first time what Brexit brought with, there is a proposal, by a UK Government to roll back that progress.

The UK Parliament will soon start to consider in Committee stage the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, which will oversee the transfer of powers from Brussels to the UK.

The Scottish Government, alongside our colleagues in the Welsh Government, have stood absolutely ready to engage with the UK Government as partners in mastering the complexities and progressing the Bill.

We have, as a rational compromise, made a clear distinction between the technicalities of leaving the EU which must be prepared for even though we don’t want it to happen, and the policy of leaving the EU which we continue to oppose.

We anticipated last year that these technicalities would involve the establishment of new frameworks for co-operation within our islands and we endorsed the thinking being undertaken on this by, amongst others, the Welsh Government .

However neither the Welsh Government, nor the Scottish Government anticipated the attack on devolution in the Withdrawal Bill nor the drafting which could make parts of devolution unworkable. Consequently neither Government is able to recommend to our Parliaments that they give consent to this Bill, for it is a deeply concerning over-reach in powers.

You will recall that I earlier highlighted that devolution is predicated on the principle ‘that which is not reserved is devolved’. It is a principle that has enabled Scotland to find its own

approaches and solutions, informed by our own values. For this principle is now under threat, for, the UK Government proposes that it should, for the first time since 1999, take powers for and to itself in relation to devolved policy areas in Scotland.

We are a responsible, devolved government and we do not believe this development would be good for the people of Scotland. We continue to stand ready to work with the UK Government in finding a way forward that preserves both the devolution settlement and the good order of our statute books.

Over the past year a great deal has been written about Brexit.

Much of the debate has been characterised by jargon, economic theory and competing claims about gains and losses. This is perhaps inevitable given the complexity of the subject but that can make it hard to see what's really at stake: not only for devolution, but for businesses, for individuals and for society as a whole. With around a year to reach a deal, there is no time to lose.

That's why we issued last week a document called "Brexit: what's at stake for businesses" to allow individual businesses to express for themselves just what they see as being the likely consequences. These centre around people, money and regulations.

On people, companies such as Walker's Shortbread and Edinburgh University are drawing attention to the crying need for staff from other EU countries, both skilled and unskilled.

On money, there are real concerns about loss of markets. The freedom to move capital, people, goods and services has removed barriers to trade, opening Scotland to the Single Market of more than 500 million people. Even if those markets are retained, we have no clarity on tariffs and other barriers that could be put in place. Nowhere is this more important than in the services sector about which you know so much.

There is also a concern in Scotland about EU funding, so crucial for rural parts of Scotland such as my constituency. Scottish agriculture is more heavily reliant than the rest of the UK on CAP funds and the type of farming which can take place in Scotland means that there are fewer alternatives. The Highlands and Islands of Scotland will lose serious funds in terms of rural support. The implications will be devastating for an already fragile and remote economy.

For many companies quoted in the report - such as Glasgow airport -, being able to do business with certainty and minimum fuss are more important than tariffs and market access. This is about a range of things from queues at customs points to new and significant nontariff barriers of many sorts. If there is to be a focus on new FTAs, then companies could be faced with more than one regulatory regime at one time. We must have clarity on these matters.

All of these issues are important. All of them are pressing, the business ones most of all. Taken together they amount to a real threat to our economy - but that is not the whole story. There are other less tangible but perhaps equally important factors we need to take into account.

In particular there is the issue of the kind of country we want to be. Scottish novelist William McIlvanney was spot on when he described Scotland as a "mongrel nation". We have always benefited from migration not only in terms of our economy but of our culture and society. We want to be an outward facing international country. For those reasons as well as the economic ones we are adamant that we want free movement of people, to welcome migrants who contribute so much to our society.

Brexiters will say that the "boasted advantages" - a wonderful phrase used by our national poet Robert Burns to describe the Act of Union of 1707 - will somehow compensate for these

losses. But I am afraid that is likely to be a chimera. One year on there is no sign whatsoever of the fabled new free trade arrangements we were promised. You know to your cost that these only come if at all –after many years of serious talks – and compromise. The only sector where there remains any enthusiasm for Brexit is fishing – with the reality dawning that even that enthusiasm may wane over time as reality replaces rhetoric.

A closer look at the international trade deals envisaged by the UK shows that they come at a price. They will involve the lessening of some of the key regulations which set the standards which underpin our life in Scotland – for example in food safety where imports of beef treated by hormones or chicken chlorinated before sale, currently banned in the EU-, and damaging possibly imports at low prices of products which are a priority of Scotland to sell. Or flounder on the issue of migration. Any idea of opening up markets for whisky in India without allowing Indian scientists might not succeed.

So where next? Throughout my political life I have been asked to make predictions and I have always resisted. Never has it been as hard as on this subject. We have all been proved wrong over the last 18 months. It is hard both to make sound predictions and to remain confident and positive - but let us try to do both.

There are many possible scenarios. It is possible a smooth and careful negotiation towards the EU departure. I recognised that this is the ambition of the UK Government. Seeing it close up I find it difficult to understand how this will happen. But there are other options too.

Either the UK will leave the European Union without a deal, crashing out on the worst possible terms that would be disastrous. Or the UK Government will fall under the weight of its Brexit shambles.

If we are to remain positive in Scotland then we need to think more about our own objectives and our own priorities rather than the priorities of others. The position is very stark. The Scottish Government does not want to leave the European Union. If we were forced to do so against our will that we think would amount to a democratic outrage. If we are forced out it would be our intention to return as full members. We would at some stage want to give the people of Scotland a choice between the Brexit negotiations by the UK Government and an independent future within the EU. This is the choice which people need to have.

An important step on the way to pursuing our objectives was our document published last December called *Scotland's Place in Europe*. This was a useful step - the first government to attempt to map out a way forward after the EU referendum vote. It was well received as a serious contribution to the debate. We intend to publish further economic and other analyses to support our Programme for Government in the coming debate.

The Brexit debate may be complex and detailed but the remedy is simple. If some are (even temporarily) not to be a member of the European Union then we must not go any further than being continued members of the Single Market and Custom Union - and the most straight forward way of achieving that, via EEA membership. In all of this whilst the transition or 'implementation period' proposition by the Prime Minister is welcome although a tentative step in the right direction, it is not enough. We must be very clear about the destination we are aiming for.

A glance at the agenda for this week's European Council makes our case very eloquently. Never mind Brexit, the Heads of state will be extending the digital single market, improving cooperation on cyber security, improving European security and opening up trade deals with Australia and New Zealand. What's not to like in that? That's where our energies should be, not trying to arrange a very messy and expensive divorce.

I have to say that the model which governs Switzerland's arrangement with the EU is neither available nor what we are seeking. We have much in common with Switzerland, whether it be unique musical instruments like the bagpipes and the alphorn; we both have heroic Williams – Wallace and Tell; and world class tennis players in Murray and Federer [Federer just edging ahead of Murray]. However, we do not look for a similar relationship with the EU which is built on the same level of detail and complexity.

What we do need to bear clearly in mind is that our interests are as much about standards and values and our way of life as about economic advantage. It has not been a good month for Martin Schulz but I must say that I was particularly struck by his comment that Europe is not an accountant's club. Just as the Brexit talks are, in Michel Barnier words "not a game", it is much more than that.

So we have high ideals for Europe and the European Union. Just because we are friends does not mean that we cannot be critical friends. We need to reiterate always the importance of democratic and citizens' rights. The situation in Catalonia shows that threats to those rights can come from anywhere within as well as without. Those rights need to be defended by calling out where they are being affected.

In a similar way it is surely unacceptable for five million people from a pro-European country such as Scotland to be deprived of their European citizenship. I have a sense that the European Parliament is coming to recognise this. The Commission needs to do likewise.

So how are we going to achieve these objectives? This is going to be extremely difficult but we have some serious assets at our disposal, not least the nature of Scotland as a country. This is the country of the Enlightenment where clear thinking and analysis has been our watchword for centuries. It is also a country of numerous inventors – Alexander Graham Bell; John Logie Baird; Sir Alexander Fleming; James Watt; and more recently; David Jones and Mike Dailly (creators of the Grand Theft Auto Video Game series); the team from the Roslin Institute who were behind the cloning of Dolly the sheep and Richard Henderson who along with your very own Jacques Dubochet was awarded this year's Nobel prize in chemistry. We know how to be creative and imaginative.

And, be determined in all of this we need to speak out and deploy our argument. Here is the nub of the problem. We are experiencing well known problems with our engagement with UK counterparts. The UK internal intergovernmental body – the Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations) – set up for these discussions has only this week met for the first time in nine months.

This was meant to be a monthly meet overseeing the negotiations. It was meant to give regular updates on the negotiations and have input on the substance of the United Kingdom negotiating position. Yes, papers being published by the United Kingdom on their negotiations cover devolved matters and make commitments for the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government yet so said neither of these bodies have been consulted. We had less than four hours' notice ahead of publication of the latest UK trade white paper. This is completely unacceptable. If we are to be involved as implementing commitments on devolved interests we need to be part of the process.

We need also to go beyond our internal conversations to setting out our visions internationally. That is why I am here today. That is why we take an interest in what Presidents Juncker and Macron are saying about the future of Europe. We have a view too. We want to encourage a Europe of minorities as well as majorities. We want to see active small members being listened to as much as the more slow moving big members. Above all we want different layers of involvement under a process of democracy and equality.

In all of this we have to come back again and again to the central thought of a Europe of peace and prosperity.

For that is the fundamental issue. Membership of the EU has led to an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity on our continent. The continent we share. That is what it was established to do and that is what it has done.

After the second devastating war in less than two generations the victor nations, reeling and weakened by war, reached out their hand to the vanquished nation.

Never again they said. Never Again

A promise that means much to me and many families. My father, a 19 year old acting sergeant in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was taken off the beach at Dunkirk in 1940 on a stretcher, his leg full of shrapnel. He carried that wound for the rest of his life. I never had to go through that terrifying experience. Nor did my 19 year old son.

Never Again. So, leaving the EU is more than an economic act - it undermines that solidarity which is essential for peace and prosperity. Saying, as the Prime Minister and the Brexiteers regularly do, that they are “leaving the EU but not leaving Europe” with respect misses that point. The EU is the means by which our continent has, and will, progress together. Leaving it weakens the whole. That is so damaging.

Scotland understands that. That is why Scotland in the majority goes on saying “never again”. Scotland wants to be part of continuing the search for peace and prosperity and wants to continue to be able to deliver it for its citizens.

[Scotland and the EU - UK Negotiations on EU Exit, \(mis en ligne le 25/10/2017 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotland-and-the-eu-uk-negotiations-on-eu-exit\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/scotland-and-the-eu-uk-negotiations-on-eu-exit)

Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe Michael Russell:

Presiding Officer

The fifth round of the Phase One negotiations on EU exit concluded on 12 October. Today provides an opportunity to set out the Scottish Government’s assessment of progress on the EU-UK negotiations which have taken place to date.

It also allows this Parliament to consider the process of EU Withdrawal and to express its concerns about some recent developments.

The context for so doing remains very clear and should be stated at the outset of every debate about Brexit in Scotland.

Scotland did not vote for Brexit and opinion polls indicate that Scotland would still not vote for Brexit – indeed it is likely that it would be rejected by an even wider margin.

And Scotland’s best interests – and the best interests of all who live and work here - would be served by remaining in the EU.

That point was emphasised in the media yesterday, following analysis by the LSE on the economic consequences of Brexit. This presented some stark figures for Scotland, even from a so called “soft” Brexit. Their calculations showed that over five years Edinburgh would lose £3.2bn from such a Brexit, Glasgow would lose £2.9bn and Aberdeen would lose £2.4bn.

But if there was a “no deal” Brexit the figures go from dreadful to catastrophic. Glasgow down £5.4bn. Edinburgh £5.5bn, Argyll & Bute £350 million, and Aberdeen – the worst hit by percentage in the country – £3.8bn.

The economic, social and reputational damage of such an outcome would inflict would be excessive, unwarranted - and unwanted.

So the first conclusion this chamber needs to draw is that no deal is *a no deal*. It cannot and must not happen.

It is foolish for the UK Government to use such a threat even as a negotiating tactic. Things are bad enough without that.

Let us then look at the state of the negotiations.

There has been some small progress in the last few weeks, dependent it appears on the Prime Minister, as she indicated in her Florence speech, at last being willing to show a modicum of flexibility. Though negotiations are about dialogue, not about speeches.

But considerable challenges remain for the UK.

And the devolved administrations face additional problems as a result of the UK Government's failure to abide by the agreed terms of reference of the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations.

None the less – and I want to be as positive as I can – I do want to pay tribute to the attempts by the new First Secretary of the UK Government, Damien Green to improve that situation. I am also grateful to my colleague John Swinney for his involvement, and I am pleased to be able to tell the chamber that all the parties in this Parliament have been able to have constructive discussion about the EU Withdrawal Bill, and I hope that such dialogue on Brexit matters will continue.

It is encouraging that most of us have been able to agree on the motion in front of us today.

Presiding Officer, on the matter of the Withdrawal Bill I can also report that at last week's reconvened JMC (EN) meeting some progress was made in agreeing general principles that should ensure the role of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Parliaments and Governments in any potential UK wide frameworks.

However, I want to be clear that the Scottish Government remains unable to recommend the Scottish Parliament consent to the EU Withdrawal Bill as currently drafted, and the same is true of the Welsh Government.

Neither will be in a position to recommend consent until the bill is amended in keeping with the joint amendments now tabled at Westminster. These amendments ensure that the devolved settlement is respected, not undermined.

Let me turn now to the wider question of the negotiations between the UK and the EU.

The first round began on 19 June, with the fifth round concluding on 12 October.

Yet despite all the talking, last week the European Council did not agree that there had yet been 'sufficient progress' to allow a move from exit discussions to consideration of transition and future relationship.

Instead the Council called on the negotiators to make more progress on outstanding issues including in relation to citizens' rights and the financial settlement.

However, in a positive gesture the EU27 have empowered Michel Barnier to make internal preparations for that second phase.

The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU – always an optimist – asserted at the conclusion of the fifth round talks that 'we have come a long way'. But even he could not avoid the fact that, in his own words, 'there is still work to be done.'

It is the 'work that is still to be done' that remains my concern. The clock is ticking and it is vital that there is certainty for both individuals and businesses now.

Businesses are making planning decisions now for 2020 and beyond; and citizens of other EU Member States need to plan their futures and they will either leave the UK or choose not to locate here based on the rights they will have, and the welcome they receive.

Presiding Officer, It is simply unacceptable that there is still so much uncertainty surrounding the rights of EU Citizens in the UK, and UK citizens in other EU countries after Brexit. It is disappointing that in her open letter to EU citizens the Prime Minister was still not able to give more clarity.

The Scottish Government has repeatedly called for assurances that EU citizens would have their rights protected in the place that they choose to call their home. As we have continually stressed, EU citizens and their families make a vital contribution to Scotland, not only to our economy and demography, but also to our culture and society. They must feel at home here.

Of course we welcome the commitment by the Prime Minister to ensure that the system of applying for settled status will be streamlined and straightforward, and that those already holding permanent residency will be easily able to exchange this for settled status. We believe that settled status should be granted free of charge. The First Minister has made clear that if a fee is imposed on EU citizens, as a minimum - the Scottish Government will meet the cost for EU nationals working in our public services.

However, there remain a number of key issues, which impact on the daily lives of EU citizens, that are still to be resolved.

We urge the UK Government to reach agreement immediately with the EU27.

Let me now consider transition, and again I am pleased that the Prime Minister recognised the need for a transition period in her Florence speech despite she and her ministers ruling it out on every possible occasion up until then. It is good they recognise that was the wrong approach.

At the very minimum a substantial transitional period is essential to give people and businesses the certainty that they require to get on with their lives and work.

However, we still need clarity from the UK Government on how it will work in practice. Mixed messages on issues such as membership of CAP and CFP and coded remarks about “some parts” taking less time are not helping anyone except perhaps the extreme Brexiteers.

The substance of the transition must be clear, as must the long term destination. Confusion about these and other issues simply adds to the overall atmosphere of chaos.

The UK is due to exit the EU on 29 March 2019, but the UK Government is not only still mired in phase one negotiations, but also cannot seem to decide what route it is asking to take after that in order to avoid the cliff edge.

As a result, confusion reigns amongst businesses, investors and the public, exacerbated by the stream of contradictions and mixed messages that flow from the internal divisions of the UK Government.

Presiding Officer, considering all that and reading the Government’s own negotiating and position papers it is little wonder that so many – the Scottish Government certainly but a growing number in this country and outwith it - firmly believe that full EU membership remains the best possible option for this country and our economy.

That is what we want – now if possible, later if necessary. And in the interim if we find ourselves having to be dragged out, then we wish and will continue to argue for continued membership of the European Single Market and the EU Customs Union not as transition but as destination.

Many others have moved, or are moving to that position too, and we urge all parties who are not there yet – and particularly the UK Government - to recognise that this is the only way of avoiding severe damage.

There would still be damage. We see that from the LSE analysis. But less under this scenario than any other.

This month the Scottish Government published '*What's at Stake for Businesses?*' - a collection of commentaries from companies with real and deep concerns about the consequences of the UK's decision to leave the EU.

The document highlights the importance of the outcomes reached in the UK-EU negotiations, and the very real issues at stake for stakeholders. I would commend it to every member.

Later we will publish a parallel document about individual citizens concerns.

Presiding Officer,

The Scottish Government and this Parliament has a legitimate interest in both the terms of withdrawal, including transition, and the overall shape of the future relationship.

Many of the things we do and the responsibilities we have will be profoundly affected by withdrawal, by transition and by any negotiated future relationship.

It is therefore highly regrettable that the UK Government has acted in direct contradiction to the terms of reference of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) by publishing a series of papers that purported to set out a 'UK position' without prior engagement with the devolved administrations.

Some of those papers largely ignore the Scottish dimension. Some mention it in passing without any detail. At least one seems to have been drafted in complete ignorance of the existence of a separate Scottish Legal System and Scottish responsibility for, amongst other things, a separate prosecution and police system, an independent Lord Advocate and involvement in extradition and international justice co-operation, issues that long predate the UK's membership of the EU.

I have made it clear to David Davis and Damien Green that I remain deeply concerned that the Scottish Government's views were not taken into consideration in the development of these papers. The EU can put no reliance on commitments entered into as a result of the presentation of partial or simply wrong information by the UK and that should not be happening.

There is no reason why the Scottish Government's position should not be fully reflected in any and all negotiating or position papers, and in the UK Government's current and future negotiating positions.

It is therefore absolutely essential that the UK Government involve - in a new and fundamental way - the Scottish Government in any further developments on EU exit and in the next phase of negotiations and we indicated that to the JMC (EN) meeting which was held in London last Monday.

I welcome the fact that it has at last been reconvened. As I have indicated that meeting set a positive tone for further engagement – but tone must translate into substance.

I took the opportunity in that meeting to press the UK Government on the issues I have touched on today.

Going forward, it is vital that the JMC (EN) is utilised in the spirit it was created: that is, for regular engagement between the UK Government and the devolved administrations.

This is the space in which the devolved administrations ought to be heard, which would help us reach a true UK-wide position. We must ensure that is at the heart of what we do.

Over the past 14 months (to the day) as Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, I have welcomed the support and challenge from this parliament and its committees.

It is now more crucial than ever that our collective and unified voice is heard, that the threat to devolution is faced with solidarity and that we are clear together that Scotland's interests in our future relationship with Europe cannot be ignored.

I therefore move the motion in my name in the hope that it will attract the support of the whole chamber.

[Introduction of the Continuity Bill \(mis en ligne le 27/02/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/introduction-of-the-continuity-bill\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/introduction-of-the-continuity-bill)

Statement by the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe.

It is not typical for a Minister to come to this chamber to tell members that they regret the introduction of legislation, but that is the situation I find myself in today.

I regret that the Scottish Government now feels compelled to introduce the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Legal Continuity) (Scotland) Bill.

I regret it because it is about preparing for an event – the UK leaving the European Union – that I do not wish to happen and which is, of course, contrary to the wishes of the people of Scotland, 62% of whom voted to remain in the EU.

And I regret it because it never needed to come to this.

Presiding Officer, it is important to set out how we have reached this situation and what the options are now before us.

When the UK Government published its EU Withdrawal Bill in July last year it was no surprise that its approach to devolution was careless and lacking in understanding.

After all since June 2016, the devolved institutions, including this government and this parliament, have been denied any meaningful input into the Brexit process despite the clear and agreed terms of reference of the JMC (EN) of which I am a member.

There was no consultation on the content of the bill prior to us seeing it in finished form two weeks before its publication. That was contrary to all good and established practice with bills that are going to require legislative consent from this parliament.

We would have been justified, when the bill was published, in walking away from such a boorach. But instead - and I pay tribute to all the parties in this parliament - as a Parliament we have put a great deal of time, resource and effort into trying to make it a workable piece of legislation to which we could all agree.

Presiding Officer, no matter how much we oppose Brexit, a Withdrawal Bill is - and we have always made this clear - a proper and necessary step. Our laws must be prepared for the day the UK leaves the EU. If we did nothing, laws about matters such as agricultural support or the rules that ensure our high food standards would fall away entirely, and many others would stop working the way they were intended.

However, the bill as drafted and which has now been passed by the House of Commons, despite amendments proposed by the Scottish and Welsh Governments and by the opposition parties, allows Westminster to take control of devolved policy areas, in order, according to the

UK Government, to allow UK-wide arrangements or frameworks to be put into place after Brexit.

It is important to stress this fundamental point before addressing the detail. This whole debate is about the existing powers of this Parliament – powers in relation to policy areas, such as farming, fishing, justice and the environment, for which this Parliament already has responsibility.

The discussion about the way forward is therefore not an abstract one. It is, first and foremost, about protecting the devolution settlement that people in Scotland voted for so decisively in 1997. But it is also about the best way to run important national and local services like our Health Service, the best way to provide agricultural support - such as Less Favoured Area Payments which are essential in Scotland but not used in England - the best way to devise Procurement rules that are tailored to Scottish need and Scottish business and the best way to protect and enhance our particular environment, consisting as it does of large areas of coast and sea.

At present in these islands we have a unitary, but not a uniform market. With the freedom to innovate we have brought forward world beating Climate Change legislation, are in the process of implementing minimum unit pricing for alcohol and have been able to tailor business support to specific local need.

Of course we have always been clear that we accept in principle the need for there to be UK-wide frameworks on some matters. We have been working constructively with the UK and Wales to investigate those issues and explore how such frameworks would work. The key priority for us is, however, to ensure that these are always in Scotland's interests, as this Chamber would expect.

Accordingly what is covered by any UK frameworks, how they are governed and any consequent changes to the devolution settlement must only be made with the agreement of this Scottish Parliament.

It is simply not acceptable for Westminster to unilaterally re-write the devolution settlement and impose UK-wide frameworks in devolved areas without our consent.

That is why we, and the Welsh Government, have been working so hard to ensure the EU Withdrawal bill both protects devolution and does the job it is supposed to do.

Of course, Presiding Officer, opposition to the EU Withdrawal Bill, as currently drafted, extends far beyond both the Scottish and Welsh Governments.

This Parliament's Finance and Constitution Committee concluded unanimously that clause 11, which constrains devolved powers, was "incompatible with the devolution settlement" and – importantly – that clause 11 was not "necessary to enable the agreement of common frameworks".

In the House of Lords, the former head of the UK civil service called the treatment of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the Bill "indefensible".

Lord Hope, former deputy President of the Supreme Court and the convener of the cross-bench peers, even described the Bill's approach to devolution as having "a touch of Cromwell" about it. He has also re-tabled the joint Scottish and Welsh Government amendments for consideration during the Lords stages of the Bill.

And the Scottish Parliament's first Presiding Officer, Lord Steel, described how the Bill threatened Scotland's "stable and sensible form of government".

Faced with such an array of views from all parties, the UK Government, to an extent, has now accepted that the Bill must change.

Regrettably despite its promise it failed to bring forward an amendment in the House of Commons, but last week it finally put a proposal on the table.

However, this new amendment to the bill would still allow the UK government to restrict the Scottish Parliament's powers unilaterally, through an order made in the UK Parliament, without requiring the consent of either the Scottish Parliament or Government.

Under the latest proposition – set out publicly by David Lidington yesterday – the UK Government would decide whether the Scottish Parliament's powers in, relation to any area currently covered by EU law, should be constrained or not.

As a result this new proposal remains unacceptable to both the Scottish and Welsh Governments.

UK ministers insist we have nothing to worry about because they will “consult” the devolved administrations before deciding whether to constrain the powers of this Parliament.

Presiding Officer, the track record of consultation here is not encouraging. The UK Government has failed to meet similar commitments to Scotland in relation to the whole Brexit process.

And it is impossible to take seriously the UK Government's argument that they need to constrain the powers of this Parliament for economic reasons.

It is frankly risible for UK ministers, pursuing an economically disastrous hard Brexit, to say they must reserve the right to impose UK-wide frameworks in devolved areas for reasons of economic stability.

Despite all this, Presiding Officer, there remains a basis on which to reach agreement and the Scottish Government remains committed to that objective.

The Scottish and Welsh Governments will be meeting UK Ministers next week to continue to discuss the changes that must be made. We will suggest amendments to the UK Government's proposal that would make it work with, not against, devolution.

However, as a government, we recognise the reality of the position we find ourselves in. If there is not a change in position by the UK Government, we will be faced with legislation to which we cannot recommend that this Parliament gives consent.

In that situation, we believe that the constitutionally correct position, consistent with the devolution settlement, would be for the UK Government to remove those matters not consented to from this Bill, and for this Parliament to make its own provision in that regard.

That is why we believe it is incumbent on the Scottish Government to provide an alternative means of ensuring, for areas of policy within the competence of this Parliament, legal certainty and continuity in the event that the UK does leave the European Union.

That is what the Continuity Bill which we have introduced today does.

Similar steps are being taken by the Welsh Government, which published its own very similar Continuity Bill earlier today. My Welsh counterpart, Mark Drakeford, has just made a statement to the National Assembly setting out his government's proposals.

The Continuity Bill will, if passed, will retain our EU-derived law and give the Government and Parliament the powers they need to keep these laws operating. It will assert this Parliament's right to prepare our own statute book, so that the same rules and laws will apply so far as possible after withdrawal.

It has been introduced today to ensure that it can be put in place prior to the final passage of the Withdrawal Bill. That is essential if this Parliament decides not to give the Withdrawal

Bill legislative consent. The Minister for Parliamentary Business has, accordingly, written to the Presiding Officer proposing an emergency timetable which will be put to the bureau, and which I hope parliament will agree to later this week. That timetable proposes that all stages of the bill take place in plenary session – enabling all MSPs to participate.

Members will also be able, if their committees so chose, to take evidence on the bill and I will make myself available to any such committee at any time.

The period of scrutiny will be shorter than normal, but there needs to be intense examination of the proposals and the Scottish Government will do everything it can to enable that.

Presiding Officer, the Continuity Bill is contingency planning. It provides a sensible scheme for preparing devolved law for EU withdrawal. But if the EU Withdrawal Bill can be agreed, and if this Parliament consents to it, the Continuity Bill will be withdrawn.

And even if the Continuity Bill is passed by this Parliament, it contains provisions for its own repeal. If a deal can be reached with the UK Government, we would be able to come to Parliament with a proposal to give consent to the EU Withdrawal Bill, and repeal this one.

Now, Presiding Officer, let me turn to your statement on the Bill's legislative competence.

The Chamber should be aware the Presiding Officer has said that, in his view, the provisions of this Bill are out with the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament. He is entitled to that view, but we respectfully disagree.

Indeed, I note that the Welsh Presiding Officer has reached a different view to The Scottish Parliament's and has issued a certificate of legislative competence.

The Scottish Ministers are satisfied that it is within the powers of this Parliament to prepare for the devolved legislative consequences of the decision by the UK to leave the EU.

We do not agree with the Presiding Officer's view that it is incompatible with EU law to legislate in anticipation of what is to happen when EU law no longer applies. EU law itself envisages that a member state may withdraw from the EU in an orderly manner conducive to legal clarity and certainty.

Under the Scotland Act, we can only introduce Bills into Parliament where we are so satisfied; for this Bill, the Deputy First Minister has made a statement to that effect.

And as the Ministerial Code makes clear, any such statement must have been cleared with the Law Officers; I can confirm – and the Ministerial Code allows me to confirm - that the Lord Advocate is satisfied that this Bill is within the legislative competence of the Parliament.

Accordingly the Lord Advocate will be providing a written statement to that effect later today and, subject to Parliament's agreement, he will make an oral statement in this chamber on this Bill tomorrow and be open to questions on it.

To be clear about what this means: the Presiding Officer's statement on legislative competence does not in any circumstance prevent the Scottish Government from introducing or progressing any Bill.

By triggering Article 50, the UK Government has put the UK on a path which leads out of the European Union. As I have set out, we have a duty to act to protect and preserve those areas of EU law that are within the responsibility of this Parliament.

If we do not make those preparations now and we cannot agree to the Withdrawal bill we would have to wait until we have already left, and EU law has stopped applying in Scotland, before this parliament took any necessary precautions. That would be an unacceptable basis on which to invite Parliament to do essential preparation.

Article 50 has been triggered; without a drastic change of circumstances, which of course many of us still hope for, regrettably it is more than likely that the UK is leaving the EU.

This Bill is a necessary response to that fact.

We recognise that the Bill is novel. But we should not be surprised that an event like EU withdrawal is giving rise to novel legal situations.

This is the first time since the re-convening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 that a government has introduced a Bill when the Presiding Officer has not been satisfied as to legislative competence. We recognise that and we are mindful of what a serious moment this is.

However the fundamental point cannot be escaped. This issue is too important for it to be either my decision, or that of the Presiding Officer, whether this bill is passed. All of us in this chamber have a duty to debate this issue over the coming weeks. All MSPs can listen to the arguments and then collectively we will all decide if this bill should become law.

It will be a decision not of the Scottish Government but of this, our national Parliament, and that is how it should be.

That is why we are bringing forward this Bill.

Presiding Officer, I began this statement by saying that I regretted having to introduce this Bill and I still believe so.

I regret what appears to be the unfolding disaster of Brexit. In my active political life, which has lasted for more than 30 years, I have never known a time of greater instability nor a time in which it has been harder to predict what lies ahead.

But the core issue for this Parliament is simple. Our primary duty is to serve the people of Scotland and protect their interests.

It is our obligation, indeed it is our duty - to protect the devolution settlement the people of Scotland voted for. That is what we are endeavoring to do despite all the difficulties.

I welcome the cross party agreement there has been on that substantial point and I hope it can continue despite the pressures upon it.

It is in that spirit that I make this statement to Parliament today.

[European Union \(Legal Continuity\) \(Scotland\) Bill \(mis en ligne le 01/03/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/european-union-legal-continuity-scotland-bill\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/european-union-legal-continuity-scotland-bill)

Parliamentary statement by Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe Michael Russell

On Tuesday I came to the chamber to make a statement about why the Scottish Ministers considered it necessary now to introduce the European Union (Legal Continuity) (Scotland) Bill despite the continuing passage at Westminster of a bill with similar intent.

Yesterday, the Lord Advocate came to the chamber to make, for the first time, a statement on the Senior Law Officer's reasons for respectfully considering that bill to be within the legislative competence of this Parliament despite a Presiding Officer deciding not to grant it a positive certificate.

Today, despite the weather, I am here to set out the Government's reasons for seeking to have that bill considered under emergency procedure, and I will in a moment move the motion seeking Parliament's approval for that.

The timetable proposed for dealing with this bill is not – as it has been for previous emergency bills – to deal with all stages in one day. Some of us are old enough to remember that

procedure being used for the first time to restore tolls on the Erskine Bridge. It has only been used very sparingly.

Parliament is rightly sparing in its approval of the emergency procedure but I am proposing to Parliament today that we should - with the whole Parliament, sitting in this chamber – consider this bill over the next three weeks, starting with the stage 1 debate next Wednesday, stage 2 the week after that and stage 3 the following week.

I think, first and foremost, it is entirely fitting that a bill which is about defending the interests and powers of this Parliament - perhaps more than any other bill that we have ever considered - should be scrutinized and, if we are so minded, approved at all stages, by the whole Parliament.

But scrutiny of this bill will extend beyond the chamber, as it must. Presiding Officer, I have committed to making myself and my officials available throughout the period to the Parliament in committee and in plenary, and to parties and relevant groups.

I will work tirelessly to make sure, in so far as I am able, that the maximum possible scrutiny of the government's proposals takes place, and that Parliament and its committees are informed and engaged throughout, even if changes to the timetable.

Presiding Officer I observed on Tuesday, echoing your own words in your published views on the bill, that this is a novel situation.

In normal times such a bill would follow a normal timetable. But these are not normal times, after much serious consideration, both the Welsh Government and ourselves have concluded that if the continuity bills are to defend the principles of devolution during the Brexit process – if they are to achieve their purpose – then such a timetable is necessary.

We have both sought to avoid tabling such bills. We continue to negotiate seriously and in good faith with the UK Government to try and secure an agreement regarding the UK's EU Withdrawal Bill that would allow our bills to be withdrawn or, if they have been enacted, to be set aside.

But the timetable for this process is being driven not by us but by the timetable at Westminster for their EU Withdrawal Bill. It is likely that third reading in the Lords will take place in early May, and that it will be submitted for Royal Assent shortly thereafter.

It is essential that the continuity bills in Wales and Scotland becomes law before the EU Withdrawal Bill does.

In the absence of an agreement about a common UK approach and in defense of devolution this Parliament must prepare itself to assert - if it has to - the right to legislate itself about the devolved consequences of EU Withdrawal.

To do so we must put in place the necessary safeguard and stopgaps and this bill is at the heart of that process. Without it not only are we defenseless but our negotiating position as a Government is severely weakened.

We must not only have options and choices, we must be seen to have options and choices. And that is why I hope all parties in the Parliament will back the position I am laying out today, so that there is a united Scottish voice.

In addition this timetable is necessary because if - and I hope this does not come to pass - if no agreement can be reached over the EU Withdrawal Bill, and this Parliament chooses not to consent to it, then the UK Government and Parliament must be given the time to do what they have to in response to that decision. They must amend their own EU Withdrawal Bill to remove the provisions not consented to, and to amend it so that it can work with the two Continuity Bills.

And if we get to that stage, that would be a constructive alternative way forward. Not the best way, but a possible way. A workable way. A way that is being proposed in Wales and Scotland by Governments taking a rational, thought through approach rooted in the devolved settlements which are supported by our fellow citizens and which are the established constitutional order of these islands.

It is unfortunate that to date the UK Government has not shown a willingness to be as constructive and collaborative as Wales and Scotland.

We will go on trying to change that situation. We will never get tired of sensible negotiation.

Presiding Officer –

I am confident that this Parliament can give this bill the scrutiny it deserves in the next three weeks. The Parliament and its committees have already held a large number of evidence sessions and debates on the EU Withdrawal Bill, on which the continuity bill is modeled. The Delegated Powers and Finance and Constitution Committees have produced interim reports on that bill, of the highest quality.

The Parliament is therefore already familiar with the approach and structure of this bill. It knows about the issues it raises. I will ensure that briefing material on the bill is made available as required and on the process of negotiation.

We all understand the scale and gravity of the task we are now engaged in. Brexit has thrown on us all sorts of responsibilities that we did not vote for, did not seek and do not want.

But we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by them, or succumb to the temptation by doing nothing and letting them to prevail.

The Government stands ready to help the Parliament with the scrutiny of this bill in any and every way it can.

And even more importantly I am sure this Parliament stands ready to defend the interests of the people of Scotland by ensuring good governance which cannot come from diminishing devolution but only by respecting and building on the work we all do in this chamber on behalf of our fellow citizens.

Sometimes - and especially now - that requires us to do new things in new ways.

I move that the Parliament agrees that the UK Withdrawal From The European Union (Legal Continuity) (Scotland) Bill be treated as an Emergency Bill.

[Legislative Consent Debate \(mis en ligne le 15/05/2018 disponible à https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/legislative-consent-debate\)](https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/legislative-consent-debate)

Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Michael Russell

Presiding Officer,

When Donald Dewar spoke at the opening of the Scottish Parliament - the re-opening as he himself acknowledged - on the 1st of July 1999 he talked of it being :

“a new stage on a journey begun long ago and which has no end.”

Presiding Officer you were there to hear that speech. So was I. So were the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister sitting on this front bench today. So were Tavish Scott and Mike Rumbles, so was Iain Gray and Elaine Smith. 26 members of this present Parliament were, so to speak, in at the beginning, though the beginning was actually a culmination of a long campaign and struggle which was fought, again in Donald Dewar's words, to achieve *“the day when democracy was renewed in Scotland”*.

Of course I and all the others on these benches disagreed then with Donald Dewar about the final destination of that journey, just as we disagree on that matter with others here today.

Yet that was not the important thing on that opening day and it is not the important thing today.

The important thing was, and is, to acknowledge the progress that had, and has, been made. To accept that on this journey together in a Parliament of minorities – a journey the Scottish people told us to take and which they voted for by an overwhelming majority – we should find a way to secure tangible gains for our country, no matter our vision of where we wanted to end up.

And that is our duty because this Scottish Parliament belongs to the people of Scotland: not to us as parliamentarians, nor to this Government or any Government. As elected members, we hold this place and our powers in trust: for the generation that voted for it, for this generation, and for the generations to come.

They decide on journey and endpoint, not us.

Presiding Officer, over the past 19 years this Scottish Parliament has, in the greatest part, been good for Scotland.

The powers of this Scottish Parliament have been used by administrations of different political complexions to improve the lives of many – hopefully most – of the people living in Scotland, often in response to some of the most serious challenges they face.

Every one of us in this chamber has played a part in that – from securing free personal care for the elderly to abolishing tuition fees; from establishing world-leading climate change legislation to delivering equal marriage; from putting in place the UK's first smoking ban to agreeing that for the health of our nation we should introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol; from eliminating business rates on small enterprises to supporting innovative and profitable renewable energy generation.

We have, and we use, these powers because we enjoy an established system of government called devolution.

It may not be able to secure everything all of us want but devolution put in place in 1999, and strengthened by subsequent agreements with Westminster – has made our system of governance robust enough to withstand expected and unexpected challenge and difficulty. Robust enough to withstand a global financial crash and to resist - at least in part - the misguided and damaging policy of austerity.

Now it is our job to ensure that it is not cast aside because of a Brexit which Scotland did not vote for and which can only be damaging to our country.

Today the challenge of Brexit - or rather the challenge of the proposed power grab by the UK Government under the guise of delivering Brexit - puts our devolved settlement at risk.

The Secretary of State for Scotland – who incidentally also heard Donald Dewar's opening remarks as a member of this Parliament – dismissively described the issues we are debating today as "*dancing on the head of a pin*".

Presiding Officer, it is not dancing on the head of a pin to insist that twenty years of stable devolution that has delivered good things for our fellow citizens be protected.

Nor to demand that the powers we use for the benefit of Scotland, which have been agreed by the people of Scotland.

Now in one view, the vulnerability of the principles of devolution to the UK Government's approach to Brexit should not surprise us.

That government cannot answer even the most basic of questions on issues such as the Customs Union with just months to go before a Withdrawal Agreement must be signed.

It has dismissed this Parliament's views on wider Brexit issues such as the Single Market and the triggering of Article 50 and it has acted recklessly towards prosperity, and peace in Northern Ireland.

Presiding Officer, in contrast to the division at Westminster, there has been consensus in this Chamber over the need to protect the Scottish Parliament's powers.

The Scottish Government has always acknowledged that we must prepare our laws for EU withdrawal.

But we accept that legal preparation for Brexit is required and that that is the purpose of the EU Withdrawal Bill.

The UK Government, for its part, recognizes that it is required to get our consent to the bill. And on that point, this Parliament spoke very powerfully when, in its interim report, the Finance and Constitution Committee in January agreed unanimously that the bill was "*incompatible with the devolution settlement in Scotland*" and that it could not therefore recommend consent.

Clause 11 was not an accidental clause; – it encapsulates the current UK Government's view of the type of devolution it wants to see – operating only by the grace and favour of Downing St.

Now to be fair the UK Government, eventually responded to the unanimous view of this Parliament and Welsh Assembly and many others that clause 11 as originally drafted was unacceptable.

So it made changes.

But Presiding Officer, it is still clear, in its new re-formulated clause 11, how the UK Government sees power being exercised on withdrawal from the EU. It is still clear how it views this Parliament.

And that view is unacceptable.

For it would abandon the way in which we have all operated for almost two decades and break the devolution settlement we have.

The UK Government wants to take a power to restrict the competence of this Parliament. And it wants to be able to exercise that power even in the face of an explicit decision by this Parliament that it should not.

This is not about the sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament, or giving effect to the Sewel Convention. This is about the UK Government, not the UK Parliament, for the first time being able to adjust the terms on which devolution operates through delegated legislation; and to be able to do so without the consent, or even against the wishes, of this Parliament.

Presiding Officer, there are existing and effective powers under the original Scotland Act which allow the competence of this Parliament or the Scottish Government to be adjusted.

Importantly, none of them operate in the way set out in the new clause 11.

Every single one of them requires changes to be passed by both the UK Parliament and the Scottish Parliament. Every single one of them requires proper democratic consent to be sought and received. Real consent, not presumed consent, not no means yes, no matter what this chamber says.

A section 30 order, for example, adjusting the list of reserved matters and therefore the boundaries of devolution, requires to be passed by this Parliament. It cannot become law without the consent of the Parliament and the country it affects. There have been thirty orders passed under section 30 since this Parliament was established, all the product of agreement; all consented to in this place and at Westminster, all done so on the basis of parity – even the section 30 for an independence referendum was able to secure support and win the consent of both parliaments

Now of course the UK Government tells us that it would not normally make these regulations without our consent.

But those are not words that appear in the legislation. The legislation is actually drafted on the basis that proceeding with an order – even without consent from this Parliament; even if this Parliament has unanimously voted against it – will be normal.

And it is that legislation to which we are being asked to consent.

Moreover, the actual amendments to Clause 11, now passed by the House of Lords, say that the powers of this Parliament can be constrained for up to seven years, whether the Parliament agrees, whether it does not agree, or whether it makes no decision at all

The purpose of this constraint is, we are told, to enable discussion to take place on the establishment of common UK frameworks in devolved policy areas after Brexit.

But there is no need to impose an unprecedented, unequal and unacceptable new legislative constraint to achieve that end.

Because we agree that there may be the need, in certain areas, to establish such common frameworks.

And in keeping with the spirit and principles of devolution, we agree that those common frameworks should be the product of negotiation and agreement between governments and parliaments, rather than established by imposition.

We also agree that, pending the establishment of common frameworks, both governments should maintain existing EU law regimes across the UK.

Now, the Secretary of State for Scotland has said frameworks should not be imposed. But as the Finance and Constitution committee reported:

“this commitment that common frameworks will not be imposed is contradicted by the ‘consent decision’ mechanism created by the UK Government’s amendments to Clause 11 which would allow the UK Government to proceed with regulations without the consent of the Scottish Parliament.”

The committee made the key point that the devolution settlement can only function effectively if there is mutual trust between all of the UK’s governments; if the substantial political agreement between governments is given effect by political means.

The answer, therefore, is to proceed through reciprocal political commitments.

That was the view of all parties on the committee – except the Conservatives.

Today, in this motion, the Scottish Government is asking Parliament to withhold consent to the Bill as it stands.

This will not be the end of this process – the offer of this Parliament is still on the table.

However, passing this motion means that the EU Withdrawal Bill must be adjusted, either so that it can command the consent of this Parliament, or to reflect the terms of the legislative consent motion.

If the motion is passed today, that will be the will of this Parliament.

What cannot happen, Presiding Officer, is what the UK Government seems to want to happen. They want to ignore the reality of devolution. They want to drown out what this Parliament says.

But, not even they can pretend that no motion has been passed.

Nor can they pretend that this Parliament is failing to face up to its responsibilities to enable the statute book for which it is responsible to be prepared – through passing the Continuity Bill; and through supporting the Government in seeking to secure amendments to the EU Withdrawal Bill so that it could command the consent of the Parliament.

If after tonight's vote the UK Government move to force on this Parliament an arrangement for restricting devolution that does not have Parliament's consent they will do so in the full knowledge that they are breaking the twenty year old devolution settlement and operating out with the agreed constitution.

Those are actions that will be noted here and across Europe.

In short, if there is a failure after today's vote to adapt the bill to devolution. It will be the UK that would be breaking trust, and breaking the rules, not us.

Presiding Officer, Donald Dewar began his speech on the 1st of July by looking at the mace that was in front of him then and is in front of us now. It has inscribed on it the first words of our founding statute – “there shall be a Scottish Parliament”.

Twenty years ago they were words of aspiration; a statement of constitutional intent. Now, they words of constitutional reality; of resolve. There is a Scottish Parliament and its voice must be heard.

Donald Dewar cautioned us in his speech that the Scottish Parliament was “not an end”, it was “a means to greater ends.”

Today we are called on - for the first time - to protect those means by refusing to accept changes to them to which we have not agreed.

To protect those means, so that we can go on achieving the best ends for Scotland we can.

To protect those means because, the people of Scotland themselves chose them - and they chose us to protect them.

Accordingly Presiding Officer, I move the motion in my name.

Preparations for EU Exit (mis en ligne le 18/12/2018 disponible à

<https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/ministerial-statement-preparations-for-eu-exit>)

Statement to Parliament from Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations Michael Russell on Tuesday 18 December.

Let us never forget that, on the 23rd of June 2016 Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain in the European Union.

Every unpalatable consequence that arises from Brexit does so, therefore, as a result of the UK Government defying, and denying, that democratic decision.

And leaving the EU, just 100 days from tomorrow, with no deal in place would be the worst such consequence imaginable.

Presiding Officer, a “no deal“ exit from the EU would have very severe impacts on Scotland and would result in irreparable damage to our economy, our people and our society.

We know that and are compelled to say so. Our neighbours, like Ireland, know that and have been saying so for a long time. Now the entire EU27 knows that and will be saying so tomorrow. And even the UKG knows it to be true as it acknowledged at its Cabinet meeting this morning.

Scotland deserves better, and needs better, than the Prime Minister's blindfold EU Exit or a "no deal" both of which would cause untold chaos.

Last week I made it clear in this chamber that the Scottish Government believes it is time to put the choice about our future back to the people in a second referendum.

That is more urgent than ever now. It is essential that the UK Parliament takes control of the process, demonstrates that there is a majority for a people's vote and starts work on the legislation which will deliver another referendum.

However, the Scottish Government, as a responsible Government, must also prepare the nation and the people, in so far as it can, for any eventuality including that of a "no deal".

But let me say at the outset that whilst this Government will do everything we can to prepare and help we must not let anyone believe we can do everything. That would be impossible for any Government, anywhere.

We will however work with all those who have a similar task, including the UK Government and tomorrow I will be meeting UK Ministers to further discuss these matters.

Let me outline the Scottish Government's overall approach on this matter.

Over the past few months I have met with each of my Cabinet colleagues to discuss their expectations and concerns about a "no deal" scenario. That process was underpinned by detailed work across government to identify the risks and potential impacts of EU exit, and the mitigating actions that we and others could take, across a wide range of issues.

Through these processes we have considered, in detail, the legislative, organisational and financial issues arising out of a possible "no deal".

Furthermore, weekly meetings of SGORR - the Scottish Government Resilience Committee – have been held with the Deputy First Minister convening. These meetings have input from other Cabinet Secretaries including those responsible for Health, Justice, Transport, Rural and Finance as well as their officials, other organisations such as Transport Scotland, Food Standards Scotland and Marine Scotland, COSLA, civil contingencies responders and, of course, Police Scotland.

This structure is supported by a "rapid response" group of officials which will grow as need requires.

The issue of staffing is a key one. Across the Scottish Government, Directorates are refocusing on detailed preparations for a "no deal", realigning staff towards this work where required. We are mobilising the Scottish Government and its associated agencies and public bodies, and aligning our existing financial and staff resources, towards those areas with specific no deal impacts, and ensuring we have the right people in the right places with the right skills to respond quickly and effectively.

Given the wide range of problems a "no deal" exit would undoubtedly bring, Members will understand that our plans and preparations are wide ranging too. Within that, there are a number of key areas of focus.

It is well recognised for example that the new customs arrangements and regulatory checks which a "no deal" exit would involve would severely disrupt the flow of goods at UK borders, particularly Dover, which handles many of our key goods, such as food and medicines.

A "no deal" exit would also jeopardize Scotland's food security, as well as seriously harming the ability of Scottish food and drink producers to export their goods to the EU, such as our beef and lamb which would face significant tariffs.

Half of all the food the UK consumes is imported. And, of the food imported, around 70% comes from the EU. It is expected that the availability and the price of food and drink are likely to be significantly affected – with a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable in our society.

Consequently, the Scottish Government, including Transport Scotland, is working with distributors, with purchasers, with suppliers, with transport providers, and with the ports and with CMAL, to fully assess the impact and identify what can be done to help mitigate disruption.

It is our aim to try and secure the best flow of essential goods into Scotland by either using existing routes or developing new ones.

In health and social care, a "no deal" will put at risk the supply of medicines and medical devices; it will have a negative impact on our health and social care workforce, ongoing clinical trials, access to future EU funding, and the rights of Scottish citizens to access state-provided healthcare across the EU.

Our attempts to ensure continuing supplies of medicines are being severely hampered by the refusal of the UK Government to provide us with critical information about which medicines may be subject to supply problems. It is imperative they provide this information now. Just two hours ago the UKG, after sustained pressure from this Government, have indicated that they would share medicines data, but we are still awaiting this information.

In addition, work on stockpiling of medical devices and clinical consumables in Scotland is ongoing, and will have financial implications for us, which could necessitate bringing forward funding from next year.

If there was a "no deal" exit, we would lose access to many of the security and law enforcement co-operation measures that Police Scotland and the Crown Office use on a daily basis to keep people safe. We would lose membership of Europol and use of the European Arrest Warrant. We would also lose access to vital information-sharing arrangements.

This would represent a significant downgrading of our policing and security capability at a time when cross border crime and security threats are increasing.

Police Scotland are considering what actions could be taken to substitute for these arrangements and organising to be prepared for any civil contingencies emergencies.

Finally, on fishing, members will know that, unlike the UK as a whole, Scotland is a net exporter of seafood with EU member states accounting for 77% of Scottish overseas seafood exports in 2017.

Any delays experienced at the vital Dover/Calais, Eurotunnel corridor will have a catastrophic impact on our seafood industry, and, in turn, on our remote rural and coastal communities that rely either wholly or partly on seafood sectors.

The economic effects of a "no deal" exit – most especially new tariff and non-tariff barriers – and the disruption to trade with the EU would, therefore, be felt both severely and immediately.

We are investigating actively what routes might be available to ensure that such goods get to market, though the lack of inspection staff and the reversion of the UK to “third country” status may well be insuperable in the short term.

There are, of course, many other issues on the list of risks and issues, which is being regularly updated and work is being done on all of them.

But in the time available to me let me emphasise four overarching issues that need to be noted.

Firstly, one of the biggest difficulties facing us is the problem of getting information from the UK Government. There are signs that this is improving slowly, in some areas, but it is essential that the UK Government sees the provision of such information and the sharing of plans - along with joint working - as a process which requires the close involvement of - and respect for the institutions of - the devolved administrations. This is a matter I will stress again in London tomorrow.

Secondly, we continue to press the UK Government to assess fully the financial implications of leaving the EU and have been clear that Scotland’s public finances must not suffer detriment.

In the event of a “no deal” there would require to be an urgent transfer of funds from the UK Government to allow the Scottish Government to meet the obligations it would have to enter into.

Some money is already being spent, and the financial implications of EU exit and associated preparation activity have been raised on a number of occasions by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance with the Chancellor and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Thirdly, the nebulous approach of the UK Government to decision making on Brexit has meant that it is impossible to know when these plans might need to go into effect.

The Scottish Cabinet agreed this morning, building on existing planning and activity, to further accelerate work to mitigate the potential impacts of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

We are undertaking necessary preparations to enable us to operate our arrangements at very short notice. I assure this Chamber I will keep it informed and I make an offer to the Party Leaders and Brexit spokespeople to ensure they are briefed whenever new developments make a move to activating our plans more likely.

Finally, Presiding Officer, it is vital that the people of Scotland get a clear, consistent message about the work that is being done. We are using all the normal communications channels to do so and will step that activity up in terms of public information when and if we required to put these plans into operation.

It is essential that there is a single clear, coordinating structure to take forward the plans and to measure them against the reality of what is taking place. Under the leadership of the Deputy First Minister that will be the SGORR mechanism which is now in operation. And it will report to the First Minister.

Presiding Officer, a “no deal” cliff edge exit is not yet inevitable. Indeed leaving the EU is not yet inevitable. But as a responsible Government we cannot wait any longer. The consequences and risks are too pressing and too severe.

Given the current situation it is incumbent on us to step up our existing planning for a "no deal" outcome in the ways I have just outlined.

The evidence is clear that a no deal would be a disaster and again I call on the UK Government to rule it out.

The challenges are not of our making. But being able to measure up to them is something that we can, and must, do.

Protecting Scotland's Interests: Response to the outcome of the meaningful vote (*disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/protecting-scotlands-interests-response-to-the-outcome-of-the-meaningful-vote>*)

Statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations
Wednesday 16 January, 2019

Those with an interest in the ironic might remember that five years ago this very week, the UK Government released its latest paper in its Scotland Analysis series – a series devoted to attempting to undermine Scotland and the case for independence.

Entitled “EU and International Issues” the paper extolled what it claimed were the many benefits to Scotland of the UK’s membership of the EU.

It said this: “*The UK uses its influence within the EU to Scotland’s advantage on a whole host of issues of particular interest to people and businesses in Scotland, such as budget contributions, fisheries, agricultural subsidies and Structural Funds. Scotland benefits from this and from the UK’s strong voice in Europe, where it contributes to and participates in discussions and negotiations from its position within the UK.*”

What a difference five years makes.

Well it didn’t. And as we all know we are now imminently threatened with not being members of the European Union.

Presiding Officer, this government was elected in May 2016 on a manifesto which said that the Scottish Parliament should have the right to hold another independence referendum if there is a significant and material change in the circumstances that prevailed in 2014, such as Scotland being taken out of the EU against our will.

But this is not just about the constitution. There are real losses which everyone of us would experience and for which we have never voted. Brexit, if it happens, will remove all the claimed benefits of EU membership.

Now there are actions that we believe the UK Government should take immediately to stave off complete disaster.

I shall come to those in a minute but let me first pause to reflect on the enormous dangers we are now in, and how they have come about.

Last night was not just a defeat, it was a rout. A Prime Minister who had spent two and a half years negotiating a withdrawal agreement had that agreement defeated by a historic margin.

A margin never seen before at Westminster.

And in part caused by one of the biggest revolts within a political party that has ever taken place there.

And no wonder it went down to such a heavy defeat.

The Prime Minister’s deal would make people poorer. It would drag Scotland out of not just the EU, but also the Single Market and Customs Union. It would put Scotland at a competitive disadvantage against Northern Ireland and far from bringing stability, it would open the door to many more years of difficult negotiations, disputes and inevitable uncertainty for citizens and businesses.

In a normal political world, with normal, accountable, self-aware politicians the scale of this defeat would have led to the immediate resignation of, if not the Government, then at least of the leader of that Government.

But instead the Prime Minister behaves as if this is all somebody else's fault.

The EU is clear. Ireland is clear. The deal can only change if the red lines change. And if the Prime Minister will not change her red lines, there can be no change to anything that is on the table.

No change to the backstop. No change to the financial arrangements. No change to the need for regulatory alignment if there is to be tariff concessions.

There is stalemate in that crumbling palace beside the Thames. And that stalemate, exacerbated by the delays that the Prime Minister has been solely responsible for, is costing business, EU nationals and, indeed, all the rest of us very dear.

So what needs to be done now?

Well, fortunately, despite genuine differences of opinion on the question of independence, there has been general consensus on the steps that should be taken to protect Scotland and mitigate for the whole UK the damage of Brexit.

And in these worsening circumstances with the UK Government, such a plan is required more urgently than ever.

Presiding Officer last night the First Minister spoke to the Prime Minister. Today she is in London.

She and the First Minister of Wales have also sought an urgent meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee at Plenary level and she has written to the PM regarding that, and about the best way forward.

The first part of the plan must be to rule out No Deal.

Last week the House of Commons began to demonstrate the force which they are prepared to put into frustrating the UK Government should it choose to pursue a no deal outcome. That is good but more is required, and more of the UK Government in particular. They can and should rule out "No Deal" now and for ever.

But until that happens it will be necessary, if regrettable, for the Scottish Government to go on with, and indeed intensify, our work to prepare as best we can for that eventuality.

To that end we are continuing to engage with the UK Government on our planning and preparations for a potential no deal outcome.

We are making every effort to ensure that the vital importance of getting the information we need is recognised. The Scottish Government Resilience Committee is now meeting weekly to manage and escalate matters as needed, supported by a "rapid response" group of officials which will grow as need requires.

We have a public information campaign in the final stages of development and we are making initial decisions on issues such as medicine, medical devices and clinical consumables stockpiling, emergency transportation, support for supply chains, diversion of local produce and a host of other issues.

All of this activity has become a significant focus of our resources and efforts, as it has to be for a responsible government. However, it remains something the UK Government could – and should - choose to remove as a risk and a cost today.

Secondly, the Prime Minister must write to the EU immediately, requesting an extension to the Article 50 process.

This will require unanimous agreement among the EU 27. But, given the scale of the defeat last night it surely must be inconceivable for the Prime Minister to simply attempt “one more heave”.

More time is needed but that time has to be used to a productive end, not just to try and save the PM’s face once again.

However if that motion fails then we will immediately step up our support for a second EU referendum.

The Scottish Government is clear that the best outcome is to remain in the EU. A second referendum with “remain” on the ballot paper is an opportunity for that to happen and for the wishes of the people of Scotland to be respected.

And the third key step is for the UK Government, or a Parliament now controlled by its members, to bring forward a proposal to legislate for a second EU Referendum.

Preferably that should be the motion that the UK Government brings forward by next Monday.

As UK parliamentarians cannot agree on any outcome of the Brexit process which would be best for the country, they must, as a matter of democracy, return to the people. And if that return cannot be in the form of an election, it must be in another referendum, and one based on the full knowledge of what leaving the EU actually entails and rigorously policed against over spending and illegal interference.

Holding a second EU referendum will take time. Legislation would be required in parliament, alongside consideration of the question and preparations by the electoral commission, before a formal campaign period takes place. And the interaction with the European Parliament elections in May will need to be addressed.

The First Minister will be making all these points today. She will make them to the Prime Minister at a JMC Plenary, if the PM calls such a meeting.

Finally, Presiding Officer, I want to conclude on a more positive vision of the future. Because through all the chaos and uncertainty there is in Westminster now, there is also an opportunity to shine a light through that and persuade the country of a better, brighter, alternative.

Scotland has for many centuries enjoyed a deep and mutually beneficial relationship with our European neighbours. A proud European nation, for the past four decades we have been an active and committed member of the European project.

Membership of the EU has enriched Scotland and indeed the whole of the UK.

Individuals, businesses and communities have gained from the ability to live, study, work, trade and travel across the 28 Member States, and membership of the world’s largest single market – extending to 32 countries - is a fundamental part of our economy.

Let us not forget, that at 500 million people, the single market is eight times the size of the UK.

In return, we have shared our expertise and leadership in areas ranging from progressive social policies, which improve the wellbeing of citizens, to innovation, contributing to world leading efforts in science and technology.

Free movement of people, particularly important to Scotland, helps address skills gaps and deal with an ageing population.

In total, more than 230,000 people from other countries in the European Union now live, work and study in Scotland. They contribute to the diversity of our culture, the prosperity of our economy, and the strength of our society.

For, Presiding Officer, the EU is not just about jobs and the economy. It is not merely an “economists club”.

Membership of the EU is about solidarity and shared values. We have seen that in how Ireland has been buttressed and supported by the other member states in its essential demands .

We on the other hand have been left isolated and ignored by the other member of this so called “precious union”.

I am ready to make that case passionately and proudly in a second EU referendum, and to contrast it with the Prime Minister’s deal which will only leave this country and its people impoverished.

So in closing let me call on all parties in this chamber – each of which campaigned to remain in 2016 – to hold to their principles and first of all to support the plan laid out by the First Minister and then to join with her and me and this Government to make the positive case for EU membership for Scotland .

Ministerial Statement: Brexit - Preparations in the light of recent developments (*mis en ligne le 06/02/2019 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/ministerial-statement-brexit-preparations-in-the-light-of-recent-developments>)*

Presiding Officer

After today there are only 19 sitting days in this Parliament before the UK is due to leave the EU.

Meeting the legislative pressures of a possible “no deal” Brexit has been challenging and I acknowledge the flexibility and diligence this parliament, its Committees and their Conveners have demonstrated in carrying out that scrutiny role.

However, it is clear that there is a substantial backlog of Brexit legislation at Westminster and, to date, only 73 of the 115 UK SIs to which we have consented have been laid in the UK Parliament.

No one I have spoken to in recent weeks, with the exception of the Prime Minister, believes that Westminster can complete the work it has to finish on Brexit preparations in that time.

Accordingly the Scottish Government believes it is essential that two things happen at the earliest possible date.

Firstly, the Prime Minister must seek an extension to the Article 50 process no matter what other tasks she has set herself in terms of negotiation and Parliamentary decision. That is essential even in legislative, let alone economic and political terms.

And secondly, she – or the House of Commons – must take formal, legal steps to rule out a ‘no deal’ which would reduce the pressure on businesses and individuals as well as on the Parliaments of these islands.

Presiding Officer, in December last year this Parliament voted decisively against the Prime Minister’s EU Withdrawal deal, and for very good reasons.

The Prime Minister’s “deal” would make Scotland poorer, place us at a serious competitive disadvantage and, combined with the UK Government’s hostile immigration policy, make a fall in Scotland’s working, tax-paying population inevitable.

In addition the proposed deal provides no certainty. It will mean years of difficult negotiations with no guarantee that a trade deal can, in the end, be achieved.

Last week the Prime Minister seemed to agree with us, voting against her own deal by backing the Brady amendment seeking “alternatives” to the backstop – a backstop she negotiated, and alternatives she and her colleagues, including the ever flexible Secretary of State for Scotland, said (just two weeks ago) did not exist.

They still don’t exist.

The Prime Minister’s deal isn’t the solution to this problem, it is the problem. It represents the inevitable outcome of ill- conceived red lines. It is those red lines that need to change.

Alternatives are possible.

In fact they are absolutely essential. And they are available.

In 2016 the Scottish Government set out compromise plans that would keep both Scotland and the UK in the Single Market.

Now, with the clock ticking down to exit day the Scottish Government is working with others to try and obtain an extension to Article 50 to avoid a catastrophic ‘No Deal’ outcome and allow time for a second referendum on EU membership.

However, as a responsible Government we must act to minimise and mitigate the impact of a possible ‘No Deal’ outcome in Scotland.

We will do everything we can in that regard, although I repeat the caveat I added when I last updated the chamber about the matter – we cannot do everything.

Extensive preparation has been underway for some time but in the first weeks of this year we have been steadily intensifying this work.

Under the leadership of the Deputy First Minister, reporting to the First Minister, the Scottish Government Resilience Committee continues to provide a single clear, coordinating structure, with COSLA, civil contingencies responders and Police Scotland participating in these arrangements alongside senior civil servants and Cabinet Secretaries.

It will meet again later today and next week during recess. Cabinet will also meet during recess to hear a further update as we are now preparing for the potential need to operate these arrangements on a permanent basis in the event of a ‘no deal’ outcome and to activate public communications.

I have also attended two special UK Government Ministerial meetings in recent weeks which have considered no deal planning and we continue to engage on these matters with the UK Government at the highest levels. The Deputy First Minister will attend another UK Cabinet Sub Committee on EU exit on Monday.

The Scottish Resilience Partnership is coordinating work across Scotland to ensure that Local Resilience Partnerships are fully engaged in planning, mitigation and preparing arrangements to respond to any of the civil contingency issues arising out of EU Exit.

A national EU-Exit Civil Contingencies Plan is being developed on a multi-agency basis and this will be tested and exercised shortly.

A No-Deal Brexit has the potential to generate a significant economic shock which could tip the Scottish economy into recession (potentially into a deep recession).

It would also have a severe impact on the labour market resulting in potential job losses, business relocations and closures, underemployment and a reduction in recruitment.

The SME sector is likely to be the worst hit. Alongside the UK Government we are trying to rectify that and we would support measures to ensure that there is increased liquidity in the banking system should it be required.

As part of our support for business, the Prepare for Brexit campaign offers practical advice which can help to safeguard, as much as possible in these circumstances, a company's own growth and that of the Scottish economy.

On transport, it remains our aim to try and secure the best flow of essential goods into Scotland. We are concerned at the possibility of severe delays to freight traffic through Dover and the Channel Tunnel.

We are working with the Department for Transport to establish the extent to which its contingency plans are addressing Scotland's needs for critical goods and in particular how rurality can be factored in to supply chain issues. Given my constituency experience I am especially conscious of the position of the Scottish islands and I discussed some of those matters when in Orkney earlier this week.

Transport Scotland is also working with transport providers and ports and airports in Scotland to assess their existing capacity and identify how they could help mitigate disruption and ensure that Scotland's exporters can continue to get their goods to market.

Uncertainty about future tariff arrangements provide another, key, demonstration of the potentially damaging consequences of No Deal.

Studies by the British Retail Consortium and others suggest that in the absence of a trade agreement between the UK and the EU reversion to WTO tariffs for imports and exports could lead to significant price increases, particularly for food and drink. The Governor of the Bank of England has identified potential rises of between 5-10%.

Our red meat industry and seafood sector will be severely impacted by punitive tariffs, and by severe disruption at the port of Dover. The seafood sector will also be required to comply with a range of additional administrative burdens.

We are seeking urgent clarity on updated UK Government technical advice on Protected Food Names in the event of a no-deal. Not only did the UK Government fail to consult or inform us of the updated notice, the UK Government states that current holders, for example Scottish Salmon, Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb, may need to re-apply to EU for protection in Europe, and also in other countries where there is a mutual recognition with third countries.

It has long been clear that leaving the EU, under any circumstances, will have a negative impact on the health and social care sector.

If free movement is curtailed, this would have serious consequences for the recruitment and retention of health and social care workers.

On medicines, the Scottish Government is working with all other UK administrations to make sure that patients get the medicines and other medical supplies they need, as far as is possible.

Many of the practical issues connected to medicine supply such as entry and custom controls are out with the devolved competency and we continue to raise specific concerns directly with Department of Health and Social Care.

In addition last week the Scottish Government's Chief Pharmaceutical Officer wrote to pharmacists and other health professionals to provide information and advice.

One particular point being emphasised is that it is important that patients take a careful view, discuss issues with their GP and pharmacist and do not rush to increase their own supplies

A “no deal” Brexit also raises concerns in areas such as the supply of medical devices, clinical trials, access to future EU funding and the rights of Scottish citizens to secure state-provided healthcare across the EU. NHS Scotland Boards are taking forward their own planning to mitigate this with Scottish Government support.

If there was a no-deal outcome, be denied access to many of the security and law enforcement co-operation measures that Police Scotland and the Crown Office use daily to keep people safe. We would lose membership of Europol, the use of the European arrest warrant and access to vital information-sharing arrangements. That would represent a significant downgrading of our policing and security capability when cross-border crime and security threats are increasing.

As the Chief Constable outlined to the Justice sub-committee on policing last week, Police Scotland is taking forward extensive preparations for loss of these measures, working closely with the Scottish Government. It is also making arrangements to ensure that officers are available for, and trained for, civil contingencies demands and for mutual aid requests.

Police Scotland has today announced plans to put 360 officers on standby from mid-March to deal with any incidents that may arise across the country, such as disruption at ports.

Across the Scottish Government, we are now aligning our existing financial and staff resources towards those areas with specific no-deal impacts and ensuring that we have the right people, in the right places, with the right skills to respond quickly and effectively.

Across the public sector, resources are being diverted to essential preparations for the impact of Brexit. A decision to remain in the EU would allow those resources to be returned to the support and development of frontline services and delivery of Scotland’s priorities.

Our basic principle is this; the Scottish Government believes that any costs related to EU exit by public bodies be they in government, local government or the public sector should not have a detrimental impact on Scotland’s public finances.

Finally, Presiding Officer, let me turn to communications,

The Scottish Government does not intend to replicate the UK approach of publishing a myriad of technical notices. Where those affect Scotland or Scottish issues we are happy to see them distributed and we have done our best to influence them.

We will however do all that we can to ensure that the people of Scotland get a clear, consistent message about the work that is being done and what actions they need to take.

We have therefore launched a public information website to provide important advice around issues such as transport, food, medicines and citizens’ rights. It is now available at mygov.scot/euexit.

This will be regularly reviewed and updated, in order to ensure that the latest information is made available.

We are however coordinating our message with the UK Government where possible and supplementing their message, as we feel necessary. That is the right way forward in terms of resources and clarity.

Presiding Officer,

We do not accept the suggestion that no deal is somehow inevitable, and nor should we allow anyone to ‘normalise’ it.

Unless and until the UK Government takes the necessary steps to rule No Deal out, the Scottish Government must go on with, and indeed intensify, our work to prepare as best we can.

Though Scotland did not vote for this, and should not be having to go through it.

Ministerial Statement: Response to the latest EU Exit vote in Westminster (*mis en ligne le 19/02/2019 disponible à <https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/ministerial-statement-response-to-the-latest-eu-exit-vote-in-westminster>*)

Statement from Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations Michael Russell.

Presiding Officer, the date at which the UK is scheduled to leave the EU is now 38 days away.

In terms of sitting days in this Parliament, that equates to 18, including today.

Yet, Presiding Officer, there is still no resolution of the chaos that prevails at Westminster, no consensus about the way forward, no relief from the incompetence of the current UK Government, and still no respect for the decision of this country, and this Parliament, decisively against Brexit.

Instead with every day that passes the unrealistic, irresponsible and – in terms of realisable outcomes – impossible approach of the Prime Minister only serves to heighten uncertainty for communities, citizens and businesses across Scotland to an intolerable degree and to increase the risk of a ‘no deal’ exit.

Of course the House of Commons had the opportunity last week to agree to an extension to Article 50 to allow us to avoid the economic damage of a ‘no deal’ or hard Brexit outcome.

Presiding Officer, this Scottish Government continues to believe that the best outcome for the UK as a whole and for Scotland is to remain within the EU and that now, given the impasse that exists at Westminster, the best democratic way forward is to give the people the final choice.

But we have over the past two and a half years been very clear about willingness to compromise, setting out credible and achievable positions in December 2016 and subsequently which were ignored or summarily dismissed by the UK Government.

No doubt at some stage this afternoon the opposition benches will insist that the only way to avoid a ‘no deal’ is to support the Prime Minister’s very bad deal.

But surely even their certainty in that mantra must have been shaken a little this week when no fewer than 40 senior retired diplomats signed a letter which pointed out just how awful the Prime Minister’s deal actually is.

Not only would that deal make Scotland poorer, removing us from the European Single Market, risking a fall in Scotland’s working, tax-paying population and putting us at a competitive disadvantage to Northern Ireland.

It would also, in the words of those very knowledgeable diplomats result in what they call a “Brexternity” of endless uncertainty about our future for both citizens and businesses alike.

And if there was ever to be an end to that “Brexternity” the best that could be hoped for at that far distant date – given the Prime Minister’s red lines - would be some sort of Free Trade Agreement, which our modelling indicates, would mean that by 2030 our GDP would be around £9 billion lower than if we stayed in the EU - equivalent to £1,600 for every person in Scotland.

But as things stand, even if the Withdrawal Agreement was approved by the UK and European Parliaments it is entirely possible, even probable, that No Deal will have been postponed rather than avoided.

Such is the chaos that now engulfs Westminster it is impossible to say with any confidence that the terms of any future trade deal with the EU will be approved by MPs.

Next week, the House of Commons will again get the opportunity to pass further judgement on the Prime Minister's efforts.

We will continue to provide a voice for common sense.

For, Presiding Officer, a 'no deal' outcome isn't inevitable.

But, alas, it is becoming more likely with every day that passes, and every attempt the Prime Minister makes to bludgeon and frighten MPs into accepting her threadbare and damaging plan.

So as a responsible Government we must act wherever we can to minimise and mitigate the impacts in Scotland, as far as we are able to do so.

And in doing so we must, as always, be very straight with the people of Scotland.

Later this week my colleague the Cabinet Secretary for Finance will publish a paper on the likely economic costs and impact of a "no deal" Brexit.

It is vital that this Chamber and Scotland knows that things will change – and change very fast for the worse – if a no deal is forced upon us.

For example a no deal Brexit could, we estimate, result in an increase in unemployment in Scotland of around 100,000 people, more than doubling the unemployment rate.

We would go from a record low to a level not far off that at the depth of the last recession, with all the human cost which that would entail.

Whatever we as a Government do – and we will do everything we can – we simply could not avoid that sort of damage being done to our economy and our country.

But one person could. The Prime Minister could, if she were to immediately agree to an extension to Article 50 and rule out, with concrete legislative steps, any "no deal" outcome.

Getting such an extension would not be difficult. Indeed, President Juncker said yesterday, *"Any decision to ask for more time lies with the UK. If such a request were to be made, no one in Europe would oppose it."* So the only opposition to an extension lies within with House of Commons.

The work of the Scottish Government Resilience Committee and the Scottish Resilience Partnership on planning, mitigation and preparing arrangements to respond to the risks and impacts of leaving the EU without a deal is continuing and intensifying, as the First Minister made clear last week after our special Cabinet meeting.

The Resilience Committee met in Glasgow last week – its ninth session - prior to that Cabinet meeting, and is meeting again tomorrow.

I will be in London tomorrow, attending yet another UK Cabinet EU Exit Sub Committee, and seeking firm answers to the many questions what we still have.

For example, we do not yet know how much ferry capacity is available, on what routes it will exist or exactly what priority goods will be carried.

Nor do we know what priority will be accorded to each category of goods, nor what arrangements will be made to service Scottish requirements including the particular challenges of rurality.

We have also not yet heard whether export of foodstuffs can be integrated with special arrangements for import, consolidating inbound and outbound capacity to maximise the benefits.

There are many more matters on which we need clarity and we will continue to seek that, given that such clarity is essential for our preparations.

Yet leaving those difficulties aside it has to be said that although we are working as closely as we can with the UK Government even if there was a perfect information flow we do not now believe there is the time or the resource to ensure absolutely everything required will be in the most effective place, in the most effective way, by the required dates.

That is not a criticism of anyone working very hard on these matters north or south of the border.

It is simply a fact of the shortness of the time available and the size of the task to be undertaken.

Of course there are those who seem to be seeking to 'normalise' no deal or, with a profoundly concerning sense of misplaced optimism, who are suggesting that its effects will somehow not be as serious as has been widely predicted.

They are utterly wrong.

It is clear - and will be made even clearer in the Chief Economic Adviser's Paper which will be published on Thursday - that a no-deal Brexit remains a significant (and live) risk which would lead to a major dislocation to the Scottish economy.

The impact of any shock is likely to vary across sectors, as well as regions according to their economic structure, and if prolonged, such a shock could lead to significant structural change in the economy.

In addition to this, the uncertainty relating to Brexit is already impacting key economic indicators for Scotland including consumer confidence and business investment.

Let me however indicate what is being done, against the clock.

Transport Scotland is working with providers and ports and airports in Scotland to assess existing capacity and identify how that capacity could help mitigate disruption to imports and exports.

In trade, whilst the UK Government is currently negotiating with 40-plus trading partners in an attempt to roll over existing EU third country agreements there is now no possibility that all, or even a majority will be in place. Access to some markets will therefore be considerably disrupted.

None the less, we are working to secure as consistent and wide ranging a food supply as possible and to enable improved or new supply chains to ensure it gets to every part of the country. And to try and overcome barriers to export of food and drink as well.

If free movement is curtailed, as seems very likely, this would have serious and immediate consequences in, amongst other sectors, that of health and social care workers.

The Scottish Government is absolutely committed to doing all it can to speak up for, and in support of, EU citizens at this uncertain and anxious time. We passionately want relatives, friends, neighbours and colleagues who come from other EU countries to stay in Scotland.

We have already committed £800,000 to Citizens Advice Scotland to provide advice and support to EU citizens in Scotland affected by changes in the immigration rules as a result of Brexit and we will shortly intensify our information campaign to encourage EU Nationals to stay.

Presiding Officer, in my statement earlier this month, I urged MSPs to reach out to small businesses in their constituencies and encourage them to seek the information they need on Brexit. It remains of concern that so many small businesses in particular have not yet engaged in sufficient detailed planning and preparation.

Undoubtedly the tendency towards “normalcy bias” is well established in Scotland. But the UK Government is not functioning as a normal Government. It may well allow a “no deal” to come about either by accident or design, contrary to all norms of government.

Accordingly, I would today strongly urge all businesses to seek out the information we are providing through our Brexit website (www.mygov.scot/eu-exit-business/) or that for the [Prepare for Brexit campaign](#) - a one-door online approach jointly delivered by Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Skills Development Scotland and to do it now whether you export or not.

The Chief Constable of course, recently announced plans to put 360 officers on standby from mid-March to deal with any incidents that may arise across the country, such as disruption at ports.

That is just one more example of an initiative which seeks to align existing financial and staff resources to the challenges we face, in order to ensure that we have the right people, in the right places, with the right skills to respond quickly and effectively.

We have been clear that any costs related to EU exit should not have a detrimental impact on Scotland’s public finances, and Derek Mackay again raised this matter with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury when they met last week although no satisfactory response was forthcoming.

We are actively pursuing the issue of funding for the consequences of a ‘no deal’ outcome with the UK Government, along with a number of other matters. But it is abundantly clear is that Brexit is going to cost Scotland - at every level of governance, in every business sector and in every part of the country - far more than the existing consequentials.

Finally, I will turn to the important matter of our legislative preparations.

To date, only 30 of the 114 UK SIs to which we have consented have actually completed their passage in the UK Parliament.

I have made clear my concerns on this matter to the UK Government, and have impressed upon them the importance of ensuring that the deficiency fixes to which we have given our consent are actually delivered.

We are still on track to have processed both parts of the programme – UK SI notifications, and Scottish SIs – through the Scottish Parliament by the end of March. So, our laws should be as ready as they can be for the shock of EU exit.

However the Prime Minister has now indicated that in the event of an agreement being reached, she would intend to push through the Withdrawal Agreement Bill before the 29th March as well as a range of other Brexit related legislation.

This could mean passing laws of the profoundest importance, with consequences for all the devolution settlements, in a few days.

This cannot and should not be done. If that bill is presented to this Chamber for legislative consent the Government will recommend that such consent be refused both because of that impossible timetable and also because the UK Government has moved not an inch on the issue of essential changes to the Sewel process.

Presiding Officer, let me conclude by re-iterating the First Minister's message from last week.

The Scottish Government remains absolutely committed to preparing as best we can, and to safeguarding the interests of businesses and communities in Scotland as far as possible.

However, the way this has been approached by the Prime Minister is reckless and irresponsible.

It is now clear beyond any doubt that the UK Government pose a real danger to Scotland.

The only sensible solution now available is a delay to Article 50, a ruling out of a no deal and a people's vote.

We will continue to press for those things with every legislative and political tool and every ounce of energy at our disposal.