



News from Westminster

1st February 2007 Christine Russell MP

Leading the world on climate change, trade and aid

In 2005 people in Chester demanded that we take action to help the World's poorest people. I was proud to work with Labour ministers to make sure the wealthy G8 nations promised to double aid, cancel debt for the poorest countries and support free basic education, healthcare and access to AIDS treatments.

It is also clear that the biggest long-term threat that we now face is climate change. People in Chester have told me that this must be tackled and that the UK should lead the way.

So I was pleased that the Prime Minister used his speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos last weekend to call for action on the key issues of climate change, world trade and Africa.

He added that America is in the process of a "quantum shift" on climate change.

The PM also signalled that he thought that there was an opportunity for an even more radical international agreement on climate change than the Kyoto agreement reached ten years ago.

I was also pleased that the PM wants Africa to be the central beneficiary of any world trade deal. Talks were suspended last year, but the Prime Minister said an agreement is now "more likely than not."

The Developed world made commitments on aid at the Gleneagles G8 Summit in July 2005. I am proud that the UK led the way on this issue and has been at the forefront of addressing climate change. Like the PM told the world leaders at Davos – we must honour these commitments.

You can read the full speech that the PM made at: <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page10858.asp>

Labour's ambition for education

Making sure young people are equipped with skills for the future - this was the message from Chancellor Gordon Brown when he spoke to the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday.

I agree with the Chancellor that if we are to make a success of globalisation we cannot afford to waste the talent of any young person.

I believe our youngsters should have the chance to continue in education or training until 18, with second and, if necessary, third chances to follow.

Only by equipping people with the right skills will the UK be able to compete with other countries around the world. It is right that Labour is prepared to meet this challenge.

To do this I welcomed the Chancellor's commitment to:

- ✓ **look at new incentives** to help people stay on in education - building on educational maintenance allowances
- ✓ **introduce pilot programmes** designed to motivate young people most at risk of dropping out
- ✓ **develop new routes** into apprenticeship through skills academies and double quality apprenticeships to 500,000 in the UK
- ✓ **invite forward-looking employers** to join in partnerships, to ensure access for 16 and 17 year olds to work-place training

UK leads way on anti-whaling

This week Labour Fisheries Minister, Ben Bradshaw, launched a campaign to get more countries to sign up to the anti-whaling cause.

A Defra document, Protecting Whales - A global responsibility, is endorsed in a foreword by the PM and the legendary broadcaster Sir David Attenborough.

It is being sent to the governments of countries who are not yet members of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). It explains why it is important that more of them join the IWC and back British and European efforts to protect whales, dolphins and porpoises around the globe.

Let's hope all the governments join the UK and the other anti-whaling nations to ensure that our generation meets its global responsibility to protect whales.

Climate change – UK on target

On Wednesday new figures were released that show that the UK remains on a course to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to almost double the target set by the Kyoto protocols.

The best news was that there was an encouraging fall in household emissions which show that people in Chester and across Britain are making their contribution to the effort to combat climate change.

Everyone can make a real difference in the fight against climate change, as these figures demonstrate.

Labour have introduced significant policies to help cut household CO2 emissions. It looks like we might be beginning to see their effect.

Cameron breaks his own pledge

Death of A-list shows the Tories haven't changed

On Monday the Conservative Party Board met to finally kill off David Cameron's failed 'A-list'.

David Cameron promised that reforms to the Tories' candidate selections would be a key plank of his leadership by stating that the selection of candidates was key to showing the Conservative Party had changed.

He has broken this pledge. He said that all target and Tory-held seats would be expected to select from the A-list.

In reality we know that less than half have done so.

He also said that the party's previous selection processes were "*discriminatory*" but is now effectively returning to them.

This week we have seen the same old Tories, with Cameron ditching his much-vaunted A-list.

This latest flip-flop shows that beyond the PR and the warm words, the Conservative Party hasn't changed.