

THE 152nd ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

.....

Held virtually via Zoom

on:

**Monday 14th September 2020
and
Tuesday 15th September 2020**

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Congress President:

GED NICHOLS

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**PROCEEDINGS – DAY TWO
(Tuesday 15th September 2020)**

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SECOND DAY: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15

(Congress Assembled at 10.15 a.m.)

The President: Good morning, and welcome to the second day of Congress. My name is Ged Nichols and I am the General Secretary of Accord and this year's TUC President. Thank you again for watching us at home or in your workplaces. This is the first time we have done Congress online and we are very pleased to have you with us. Today we will continue with our discussions on the big issues that matter to working people and their families. We will talk about how we rebuild the UK economy, how we fight racism, and how we build international solidarity in the post-Covid-19 world. We will hear from union leaders, frontline workers, and the Leader of the Opposition, Keir Starmer, will be addressing Congress and taking questions from our members.

I would now like to open up the first discussion of the day on the General Council Statement on Preventing Unemployment and Building a Better Recovery. As we did yesterday, I will invite one of my colleagues to move the Statement and they have five minutes to speak. After that I will take contributions from other colleagues who will all have three minutes to speak. We will formally take the vote on this General Council Statement, and the others, at our meeting at the extended General Council this afternoon.

If that is clear, I would like to start our debate on preventing unemployment and building a better recovery. I would like to ask our General Secretary, Frances O'Grady, to move the General Council Statement on Building a Better Recovery.

General Council Statement 3: Preventing Unemployment and Building a Better Recovery

Video played to Congress.

The General Secretary: Thank you very much, President. I am proud to move this General Council Statement and proud of the brilliant work that trade unions have done right through this crisis. I am also proud that we helped to win the job retention scheme and the self-employed income support scheme: not perfect, but at the peak of the pandemic that secured the livelihoods of almost one-in-three workers in this country. Now we are going to have to step up that work to stop mass unemployment, to protect livelihoods, and to build a new economy that is stronger, leaner, and fairer, delivering prosperity, dignity, and security to all working people in every community.

My message to trade unionists is simple, we are going to have to organise to win that change, in our workplaces, in our communities, and in the corridors of power. We have to start right here, right now, by campaigning to build on the job retention scheme. The TUC and unions are proposing a new job protection and skills deal using short-time working, wage subsidies, and training incentives to save jobs.

The Government says they will axe the furlough scheme just six weeks from now. With redundancy notices already piling up this is economic masochism on an epic scale. Some forecasters are suggesting anything up to 4 million people could be on the dole and that would be a human disaster not seen since the 1930s, so starting

today we must fight back, organising, campaigning, lobbying, doing what our Movement does best together. So to our brilliant activists and reps I say this, lead the way, get around the table with your employer, lobby your constituency MPs, write to the press, ask all your members to do the same, let's get organised and fight for every job, just as our friends in the Trade Union Movement in France, in Austria, Germany, lots of other countries are doing exactly the same. We have to work our way out of this recession and deliver a better recovery.

As trade unionists our guiding principle is very clear, working people must not pay the price. That is why we called for a new national recovery council, as well as saving jobs we need to create new jobs and we demand decent work for everyone, stronger rights and higher wages, investment in infrastructure, public services, and green tech and transport to create over a million new jobs, and a new way of doing business with investment for the long term, not just short-term profits, fair shares for all, not just board room bonanzas, and a real voice for workers, real rights to organise and to collective bargaining. Even when we beat this virus we will still face big, big challenges, Brexit, automation, climate change, and above all inequalities. We must ensure that no worker, no community, and no region is left behind.

Congress, there will always be people who say now is not the time for change, that we have to cut wages, cut spending, and go back to how things were before. We say, no way. After the Second World War our economy was battered and bruised and Britain was broke but the post-War Labour government built back stronger with our NHS, with council homes, and the welfare state. We need that same sense of purpose now

and our Movement has to lead from the front, defending jobs, winning change, giving hope to working people. President, Congress, let's get to it. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Frances, for opening the debate. I would now like to ask Steve Turner from Unite to speak, please. Steve.

Steve Turner (Unite): Thanks, Ged. Morning, Congress. Can I start by thanking the reps and officers as Frances just did of our fantastic Movement, who have waged the fight of their lives right now to save the jobs and livelihoods of millions across our economy, aviation, and tourism, the hospitality and retail culture, and indeed manufacturing, fighting redundancies and opportunistic fire-and-rehire attacks on our terms and conditions, creating safe workplaces, and public transport, protecting skills and apprenticeships, offering real hope to our young workers and using downtime to upskill and retrain the workforce for the challenges ahead.

The Council Statement speaks for itself. Today's fight for jobs are directly linked to our campaign for decent work, our struggle against growing exploitation and the evils of modern day slavery. It details the role our Movement played in securing furlough and identifies the actions now required of government if they are not to abandon our class and communities to an impending tsunami of job losses and 1930s levels of unemployment. A new targeted pay protection scheme for short-time working and downtime upskilling, alongside a programme of sector and company level investment to safeguard industries vital to our recovery and, of course, a job guarantee scheme for our young; investment in and the protection of skills, knowledge, tools and plant necessary to meet the challenges of the future, from the impending disaster of a no

deal exit from Europe to the need to secure fair, not free, trade deals and a just transition to meet the urgency of the climate emergency.

Congress, none of this week's fears or demands will be won passing a motion, sending a clever tweet, a letter to Johnson or a meeting with the Chancellor. We have six weeks now to win the ongoing support we demand and it is going to take every ounce of our strength to do it. We are going to have to win it in our workplaces, our communities, on street corners, buses, and the march to confront our MPs in every UK constituency. It is our responsibility, our duty, to raise a call to arms and to inspire and mobilise our members, our families, and our communities, to join us. United in common purpose our Movement can and will win this fight striking a blow for our members, our class, our communities, against those willing to abandon us all in the name of free market ideology. Congress, let's not wake up on November 1st wishing we had done more. Solidarity, Congress. Support the Statement.

The President: Thanks very much, Steve. I would now like to ask Dave Prentice from Unison to make a contribution.

Dave Prentice (*Unison*): Congress, President, outside Congress House stands the incredible monument, Jacob Epstein's monument to war heroes, to trade unionists that gave their lives for our country and six months ago who would have imagined how many more would be doing the same in this devastating battle against Covid. Within walking distance of Congress House our buildings have witnessed heroism beyond belief. The University College Hospital, Guy's and St. Thomas, the London Hospital, just three of so many up and down our four nations in which courage, dedication, and

self-sacrifice has soared to incredible levels. It is not just in hospitals, it is nursery workers, day care workers, refuse collectors, shop workers, teaching assistants, and especially care workers, care workers like Sharn, a care worker for over 40 years who left her family spending weeks on end with relentless 15-hour shifts day after day because she thought that was the right thing to do. Like Jane, a nurse specialist, working week in, week out, without a break alongside a conveyor belt of horror that will live on for ever in their darkest moments. Sharn and Jane are so highly valued, and like Emma, a nursery nurse, caring for the children of key workers with smiles for those in her care, her sense of dread as she left the home fearing she could take the virus home to her family. We all have stories of heroes but also of tragedy, those who did not live long enough to see the rainbow flags in every window, or hear the clapping at twilight when the nation applauded, and many of our members missed the applause simply because they were too busy mopping hospital floors, feeding patients, holding the hands of those in their last hours, working through the night in the mortuary.

Congress, memories are short. Already there is talk about going back to normal. Normal, painted as an aspiration. Do not be fooled. Congress, we can never go back to normal. Do you remember normal, a decade of pain and austerity, pay freezes, cuts, key services starved of resources, 700,000 jobs lost, normal for our members was unsafe, it was stress, it was unfairness, normal was being under-appreciated, underpaid, undervalued; there can be no going back to that normal.

We demand a new deal for all of our members where public services are rebuilt, their funding is based on need, where services are running health for the public good not

private greed, where workplaces are safe, where workers are appreciated, paid fairly, valued, because for all of that applause those rainbow pictures and heartfelt thanks have never paid the rent, they do not put food on the table and for far too many they do not even guarantee a living wage.

Congress, this is our battle. Never before has the work of our members been so visible, so important and, Congress, I have always believed our Movement stands on the shoulders of the giants of the past, and it does, but, Congress, we now have new giants, giants who have taken public service to the most incredible heights, heroes in every sense of the word.

Friends, President, this is my final Congress as General Secretary of Unison. I have been part of this TUC for over 40 years and I have always been proud to speak out for our 1.3 million members and our public services but in this year more than any other I could not be prouder. In the worst possible circumstances I have seen the very best of our members and it has been a great honour and a privilege of my life to be their General Secretary.

I will end with this, President, over the years I have made many demands of the TUC, of employers, of government, but today I make this demand of all of you, never ever forget our public service workers, never ever forget our people, fight for them as hard as they have fought for us, stand with them as they have stood with us, together we will fight to build a new normal, a normal based on respect, value, appreciation: our members deserve nothing less. Congress, President, solidarity to all of you and

solidarity to our great Movement, which has achieved so much and will continue to be the force that will take our Movement forward. Thank you all.

The President: Thank you, Dave, for that fantastic contribution and I want to thank you as well for everything that you have contributed to your union and to the TUC over the past 40 years. You have been an example and an inspiration to so many of us and I think that you are one of the giants that you referred to in your remarks. Thank you very much indeed and I look forward, hopefully, to seeing you before you retire at the end of the year.

I would now like to ask Fran Heathcote from PCS to join the discussion.

Fran Heathcote (*Public and Commercial Services Union*): Good morning, President, Congress. I am PCS President and a DWP worker speaking in support of the Statement. The Covid pandemic has had a devastating impact on the lives of millions, thousands have lost loved ones and with winter just around the corner there are many more difficult challenges to come.

The public sector has been at the heart of overcoming these challenges delivering essential services. PCS members in the civil service and related areas have played a pivotal role in this. They processed an unprecedented number of Universal Credit claims, administered the job retention scheme, and kept our ports and airports Covid-secure. Their roles will continue to be vital in the months and years ahead.

If public services are to cope with the huge demands that they continue to face it is clear that the Government must address under-investment. This problem is particularly acute in the civil service plagued by low pay, job losses, and office closures. Boris Johnson has showered civil servants with warm words for their dedication and hard work during the pandemic but PCS members do not want warm words, warm words will not put food on the table, warm words will not reassure workers who are concerned about their safety, warm words will not comfort workers at risk of losing their job. What our members want is the Government to give them the pay rise that they deserve and give the civil service the resources it needs and bring an end to the racket of outsourcing.

PCS has campaigned hard on social security and the pandemic has shown just how far we have departed from William Beveridge's vision. Millions of people have had to rely on the social security system, many for the first time in their lives. For those who are new to the system and those that know it well it is crystal clear it simply is not fit for purpose. PCS members working on the front line know the system better than anyone else, they know what is best for claimants but are hamstrung by a system hellbent on punishing people rather than helping them. Rebuilding our social security net is a top priority. The knowledge and experience of DWP staff should be integral to this.

Less than six months ago I never thought that I would be delivering a Congress address from my living room. The pandemic has totally transformed the way many of us work, with remote working becoming the norm. These changes have the potential to drastically improve people's lives. The Government should embrace them instead

of fighting them. We should also commit to go much further. There is mounting evidence that a four-day week is better for public health and can stem the tide of job losses. We absolutely cannot go back to business as usual. Persevering with a broken economic system will harm workers and hamper the economic recovery.

We must address the issue of taxation and the role that it can play. As a longstanding supporter of tax justice campaigns PCS is clear that we need to target those at the very top who have got away with not paying their fair share for far too long and that is why we need to introduce a wealth tax, a wealth tax will target those who have accumulated eye-watering amounts through assets and dividends. These are the same elite whose fortune has soared off the back of the pandemic whilst millions suffer. This is a defining moment in our country's history, as trade unionists we must ensure that workers do not pay the price of this pandemic and instead to look ahead with hope and optimism. Thank you, Congress.

The President: Thank you very much, Fran. I would now like to ask Katie Lomas from NAPO to speak.

Katie Lomas (*National Association of Probation Officers*): Thank you, President. With many in our society facing the cliff edge of the end of both the furlough and self-employment support schemes I am speaking to you in deeply worrying times for workers. During lockdown we have seen a change in the perception of what constitutes vital and key work. We have realised that some of the lowest paid workers were vital to our survival and jobs that were perceived as lower skilled were revealed to be higher skilled and potentially dangerous.

I want to focus my contribution on the sector that NAPO represents and I leave my comrades to speak for their members working in those other key work areas. I want to speak about some of the so-called hidden heroes. I say so-called not because I do not believe they are heroes but because I do not think they were ever hiding, just mostly ignored. NAPO represents staff working in probation and family courts and these are mainly frontline staff performing an important service to protect the public and in the case of probation to support their clients to change their lives. When lockdown hit our members continued to work in courts, in probation offices, prisons, and residential settings. Many were able to do some of their work from their home but others did not have this opportunity and most spent at least part of their working week in workplaces hastily rearranged to allow some semblance of safety from virus transmission.

Emergency operations were introduced virtually overnight and members and reps, especially Health & Safety reps, worked fast to make sure the public could be protected while keeping workers as safe as possible. These are not easy jobs to do at home. Some members were working in shared spaces with little room or privacy, some were trying to support their children's education at home and many had challenges relating to internet connections. On top of this they dealt with subject matters that can be difficult to read or hear, often having very challenging conversations with clients while trying to avoid being overheard, working very late in the evening or early in the morning to protect others in their homes from exposure to the subject matter and, of course, to protect the confidentiality of their clients.

These hidden or ignored heroes face another underlying challenge, the pay freeze which has suppressed wages where the public services are delivered in the public or private sector for 10 years or more. Some of these hidden heroes struggled to deliver services in extreme circumstances while facing their own personal challenges in making ends meet and feeding their families. There are many examples where outsourced or privatised services have struggled to meet the demands of the pandemic and in probation the privatisation folly of 2014 has been a casualty that we will celebrate rather than mourn. Rebuilding this vital public service will take time and resources and what we must demand now is proper investment so that long-term improvements can be made and the workers that provide valuable services can be properly remunerated and protected. Thank you, Congress.

The President: Thank you, Katie. Next up I would like to ask Dave Ward from the Communication Workers Union to make his contribution. Dave.

Dave Ward (*Communication Workers Union*): Morning, Ged. Morning, Congress. In supporting the General Council's Statement on Preventing Unemployment and Building a Better Recovery, I think the role that the Trade Union Movement, the entire Movement, has played with our army of frontline reps, exceptionally led may I say by Frances and the TUC, has already played the most important role throughout lockdown in keeping our members, millions of workers, safer than they otherwise would have been in making sure and pushing the Government actually to act and introduce the furlough scheme, the job retention scheme that we called for; also, absolutely in changing the mindset of the whole nation on who the key workers really

are, and at the moment in continuing to pressurise the Government to extend the furlough scheme and also introduce something similar as the TUC have put forward.

We can be in no doubt that throughout this pandemic we have seen the Movement reassert our voice, our values, our role in society, and I honestly believe that we are on the brink of the rebirth of collectivism, but what happens next will determine the future for millions of workers, our entire Movement, our family and our friends for generations to come. The reality is we are facing the biggest jobs and economic crisis in our lifetime. I say that because the pandemic comes on top of deeply entrenched social and economic inequality that has been decades in the making. It comes on top of the fact that pre Covid we were already facing the fourth industrial revolution and that is going to see massive changes to the world of work and, of course, it comes on top of the fight that we are all engaged in to save our planet.

Against this background the General Council Statement sets out the issues very well. It sets out the policies that we need to pursue very well, but what it does not do is set out the strategy for delivering change. That is why the CWU believe that the biggest task facing our Movement in winning for working people is to mobilise working people. That is why the CWU is calling for three things: first of all, we need to sit down and agree a mobilisation strategy to make the world of work the number one political issue and to cut through in exactly the same way that the *Black Lives Matter* campaign has done.

Secondly, we need to sit down and reenergise and get behind the support for a new deal for working people and that means for us it is time that we refresh the new deal

charter that we agreed the other year and that we agree a new set of shared industrial and political demands in the wake of the pandemic, and that we publicise those and we communicate those to all of our members and workers everywhere.

Thirdly, we are calling for common bargain agendas in sectors of the economy. We can do a lot at the moment to raise employment standards, pay, terms, conditions, sick pay, all of those things, by bringing unions together in sectors of the economy mobilising workers behind those common bargain agendas and the CWU will be approaching unions in one of our sectors, the postal and logistic sector, in the next few weeks to start that work in earnest.

For me I see a world at the moment where too many politicians do politics and industrial strategy in their head. The Trade Union Movement does it in practice every single day of the week so I believe this is the time to mobilise workers behind a strategy that wins for working people. It is the time to get behind the new deal for working people campaign as the overall narrative on top of all the issues that we face as individual unions and, of course, it is the time for us to lead the fight for a new democratic economy based on the principles, our principles, of equality, universalism, and collectivism. Thank you.

The President: Thanks very much, Dave. I would now like to ask Dave Flanagan, from the GMB, to speak.

Dave Flanagan (GMB): Thank you, President, Congress, speaking in support of the General Council Statement. We are meeting at a time of national crisis. The

economy has shrunk at its fastest rate for 300 years. Four million people could be unemployed next year, more people out of work than in the 1930s. Our economy was in crisis before the outbreak began, it was in a crisis of low wages, insecure work, poverty, sick pay, and zero-hours contracts. Whilst Covid is not the cause of poor employment and working conditions, what it has done is expose the weakness and vulnerability of those who are victims to it. Our public services have been fragmented and decent terms and conditions have been undermined by outsourcing. Minority communities are subject to institutional discrimination which left them at the highest risk when the outbreak began. Millions of manufacturing jobs have been offshored leaving us unable to make our own PPE and wealth and power is concentrated in the hands of the privileged few. It is no wonder that the public does not want to go back to the way things were.

Congress, during the outbreak GMB has worked hard to save our members' jobs but household names like BA and British Gas have taken millions of taxpayers' support and then resorted to the fire-and-rehire tactic. Anti-union companies like Amazon are recording staggering profits while Tory ministers tell us we need to go back to the way things were. Congress, there can be no going back. There is a better way. We need an economy built on investment, strong public services and a real living wage. We can put forward policies from scrapping anti-union legislation to trade deals that put UK jobs and services first, as well as investment in jobs of the future in full consultation with the unions in those sectors. Colleagues, we must not repeat the mistakes of the last recession.

Austerity cut service and it cut economic demand too leading to the long recovery on record. Some workers have never recovered from those years. It was not council workers, teaching assistants, or ambulance crews, who caused the last recession, and did not cause this one either. They must not pay the price again. We must fight with all our power against those Tory attacks on our jobs, our wages, and services, when they come as we know they will. We also need to make the case for a positive alternative. That is why we support calls for a national recovery council so workers' voices can be heard. We face challenges today that we could not imagine this time a year ago and we must be bold in our response. A new economy is possible if we have the courage to fight for it. Congress, please support the Statement. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Dave. I will now ask John Skewes from The Royal College of Midwives to make a contribution. John, you are on!

John Skewes (*The Royal College of Midwives*): Okay. I am supporting the General Council Statement. When I started work in 1979, some time ago now, the Trade Union Movement was at its strongest but what happened just after that period from late 1979 onwards was that high structural unemployment destroyed our economy, our communities, and the prospect of a generation. We now stand at the crossroads today: do we invest in our public services and our people or does history repeat itself, to paraphrase the 18th Brumaire, “the second time as farce”.

A key way to invest is to enable people to be productive, to give of their best, so more investment in education, more investment in science and research, more support for our world leading cultural and art sector, more jobs to address the shortages of staff

which are endemic right across health and social care, making test-and-trace work by using local government and health experts, not the inept. It is by recognising the value, the true value, of our 10.5 million key workers we must deliver real terms, restorative pay increases for them.

Clapping was a great mark of respect, we all did that, it brought our communities together in the face of the pandemic, but it is not enough to live on. It is not enough to restore our economy. Now in most towns the NHS is the biggest employer. Our members, midwives, and the whole NHS and social care teams were on the front line in the face of the pandemic. They are about to be again. That is why 14 health unions, and I can speak for all of those health unions, although we may have different one year solutions to this problem, we are united in calling for an early and substantial pay increase for all NHS workers. We aim to restore real earnings which will be spent in local economies to restore those local economies. There is no better investment than in our people, only government can do it, and our job is to deliver if they deliver, not as at present despite the government. Thank you very much. Support the Statement by the General Council.

The President: Thank you, John. I would now like to ask Stephen Spence from Equity to speak. Stephen.

Stephen Spence (Equity): Thanks, Ged. Thanks, Congress. In supporting the Statement I would like to say that the effects of Coronavirus in the industries that Equity members work in, the arts, culture, and entertainment, has been terrible. Industries that are worth £112bn to the UK have currently all but closed. So coming

out of Equity's performance for all policy we built four pillars for return, workforce protection, safe opening, protection of infrastructure, and equality. Around 40% of our members were unable to access government support schemes, the job protection scheme, or the self-employed scheme which Equity along with the TUC campaigned to get. One in five of our members applied for Universal Credit but about 29% of them could not even access Universal Credit and we now have 17% of our members working outside the entertainment industry. The Government support package of £1.57bn and bosses money, which is what we are calling it because it is the support package that is not going to freelancers, redundancies, demands for pay cuts, reduction to terms and conditions, they are the order of the day. Reopening theatres, reopening film and TV sets is not enough, they must be reopened with work opportunities for our members, particularly black, older, working class, the deaf and disabled members, and working class members, are going to be disadvantaged, they are going to be disproportionately disadvantaged, and they are going to worsen diversity in the industry if that is the case.

So, we need reform and extension of the Government support schemes, the social distancing to be lifted in theatres in November, our members must be kept safe, we need more detail on where the £1.57bn is going to go, it needs to go to smaller venues, comedy venues, variety venues, just not the big institutions of the crown jewels alone. In line with our performance for all policy we have to get 0.5% of GDP, which is the European average, in government advancement, not the 0.3% that we had before, and we must make sure that money is shared beyond the M25 into the nations and the English regions.

Arts and culture in this country must fairly represent the country in all its diversity not just through tokenism and the Chancellor's comprehensive spending review which is taking submissions until 24th September must fully take these issues on and take responsibility for keeping art, culture, and entertainment in this country flourishing. The market will not do it on its own. It never has. So, workforce protection, safe opening, protecting infrastructure, equality, the four pillars to protect £112bn worth of GDP. It is not too much to ask. Equity supports the General Council Statement.

The President: Thanks very much, Stephen. Jack Whiston from Community, would you like to make your contribution now.

Jack Whiston (Community): Good morning, President and Congress. Community rep and young worker in the UK footwear manufacturing industry, speaking to Preventing Unemployment and Building a Better Recovery. This pandemic has been hard for us all. It has been particularly difficult for those of us in the footwear industry. During lockdown stores right across the world were closed. This meant that the factory where I work saw a significant reduction in work and inventory piled up. My colleagues and I were subsequently placed on furlough. During that time I was worried, worried about our livelihoods and how they would be affected.

I love what I do, I am passionate about the industry, and I want to see it survive. The shoes that I make are luxurious, beautifully handcrafted, and a perfect example of our outstanding manufacturing industry. The jobs that my colleagues and I do require skill. They are decent jobs that allow people to support their families. The same applies for manufacturing jobs across the country, not just the people who make shoes

but the people who make clothes, cars, electrical goods, and more. Manufacturing may be a small part of the UK economy but is an important part, a part where skilled people generate value for the economy.

The crisis has been difficult but with the right support we can get through it. If the Government does not intervene then there could be mass unemployment and we would see people out of work all across the country. It is not right to let businesses fall away because of these exceptional circumstances. It is not right for working people to lose their good jobs. This crisis is temporary and Britain's manufacturing industry is strong, it is highly productive, interesting, and skilled work. Make no mistake, if unemployment does come it will be a political choice to allow it to happen. With the right interventions the Government could create a plan for recovery that leaves working people better off.

I am still worried, worried about my job, and the jobs of my friends and family, also as a young person I am particularly worried about the long-term effects on young people in this country, but there is also hope for a brighter future for young people, and for everyone. Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Jack. Well done. I would now like to ask Sue Ferns from Prospect to make a contribution. Sue.

Sue Ferns (Prospect): Thank you, President. I want to use this opportunity to emphasise the importance of a green recovery and making a reality of Building Back Better. We have a government that is keen on "here today, gone tomorrow" slogans.

Our climate and our economy are too important for that yet right now we are way off track. Let's be clear what the environment and economic crisis have in common, the high cost that all of us pay in terms of our welfare, our wellbeing, and so on. This really matters to all of us. What do we need for a green recovery? First, we need a government to publish their long delayed energy white paper, setting out the roadmap to net zero carbon for the whole economy. Second, and alongside this, we need to develop a real green industrial strategy for the UK funded by direct public investment. Private science drives the urgent need for change but it will be delivered largely through engineering and technology-based solutions and some of these are still at a relatively early stage of development. Public investment, including to reverse the decline in our reduced spending, will be cheaper, fairer, and faster to deliver. Third, we must be clear that investment is needed as it is will not deliver a green future without parallel investment in skills. There are hard lessons to be learned from the renewable sector where growth in generation a great success story has actually coincided with the fall in the number of UK jobs in the sector. Did you know that direct employment in renewables is now 21% lower than it was in 2014.

The energy sector as a whole needs to recruit for 400,000 roles over the next 30 years in order to achieve net zero and 30% of these will be needed in the next decade. This is a fantastic opportunity to provide good quality jobs for young people who so desperately need them, to at long last improve workforce diversity and to implement sectoral just transition programmes to protect the workers who will be most directly impacted. None of this will or should be achieved without properly involving workers and their unions in the process of change. The TUC's new report on voice and place, how to plan fair and successful parts of the net zero emissions clearly

shows the value of our members' knowledge and experience across industries, nations, and regions of the UK. The tragedy is that right now these voices are not being heard and the lessons are not being learned. We know what we need to do and it simply cannot wait. Let's support the General Council Statement and work to put it into practice. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Sue. The final speaker in this section will be Paddy Lillis from USDAW. Over to you, Paddy.

Paddy Lillis (*USDAW*): Good morning, Ged. Good morning, Congress. Colleagues, retail has faced many challenges over the last number of years with the loss of thousands of jobs and big high street retailers like Woolworths, ToysRUs, British Home Stores, Somerfield, and many more, have gone out of business. Now further misery is inflicted on our country, our people, and the economy, with Covid-19 when the pandemic hit and lockdowns were introduced. Much of the economy was working from home or furloughed, but supermarket workers and those in the food supply and distribution chain continued to work to keep food available for our communities. The efforts of our members ensured that the public health crisis did not turn into a food shortage. In this crisis it became clear to everyone what we in the Trade Union Movement have been saying for years, that those workers in supermarkets, distribution centres, food processing sites, delivery drivers, are key workers, are essential workers, but sadly undervalued, under-appreciated, and underpaid.

Now the time has come for all key workers to be rewarded. We want a new deal for workers, we want a living wage, we want guaranteed hours, we want an end to insecure contracts, and we want stronger employment rights at work. The Coronavirus threat is far from over and we now face another crisis, an economic crisis. In retail the future for the high street is hanging in the balance. Shops that are at the heart of our communities, our towns, our cities, are struggling to survive and this year so far 125,000 retail jobs have been lost and 14,000 shops have permanently closed. We are facing a massive crisis. What we need is government intervention to save our high streets.

Frances O'Grady yesterday made the case for government to work with trade unions to put in place a massive recovery plan. USDAW fully supports a call for a tripartite approach of unions, employers, and government, working together to develop that plan. We have long called for an industrial strategy for retail to help a sector that was already struggling before the Coronavirus emergency and as a society we have a choice, do we want to see the high street go to the wall or do we want to save it.

Retail is an important feature of our towns and cities, and our communities. It employs three million people across the whole of the UK and we desperately need a recovery plan to get the industry back on its feet. Today I am calling for a new deal for the retail sector around a living wage, and guaranteed hours, and a recovery plan that will protect jobs and save our high street. Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Paddy, and thank you to all the speakers in that really important debate. As I mentioned earlier, we will take the formal vote on that Statement at the General Council meeting later today.

Colleagues, I would now like to invite this morning's keynote speaker, the Leader of the Labour Party, Keir Starmer. The plan was for Keir to address us from Congress House but as he is self-isolating he will be speaking to us from his home. We warmly welcome Keir on his first address to the TUC as Labour Leader. Over the last few months Keir has done a fantastic job holding this incompetent government to account while demonstrating Labour's contribution to the national effort in tackling Coronavirus and its impact on our communities, our jobs, and our workplaces. It is at times like these that we need a strong effective opposition and Keir is providing exactly that. We look forward to hearing more about his vision for the country and the contribution unions can make as we look ahead to the enormous challenges we all face. Keir, I invite you to address Congress.

Address by Sir Keir Starmer, KCB, MP, QC, Leader of the Labour Party.

Sir Keir Starmer: Thank you, Ged. Thank you to the TUC for inviting me to speak today, and to everybody who has been involved in making Congress possible at all this year. It is clearly, not the easiest of circumstances. I remember this time last year addressing a packed conference hall in Brighton. This time last week I thought I would be with you with an audience of about 30. By Wednesday that had gone down to six, and yesterday when I was told to self-isolate because one of our family has possible symptoms, it is just me speaking to you from my home. Whatever the

circumstances, Congress, our Movement will always stand together and I think the contributions we just heard from the last few speakers absolutely demonstrates that and I sincerely hope that this time next year we will be back together again in that packed conference hall discussing the issues of the moment in the usual way.

Can I start my address, and my first address as Labour Leader, by thanking the Trade Union Movement, the TUC, and all of our unions, for everything that you have done during this pandemic over the last few months. As ever, when it came to protecting millions of jobs and when it came to keeping people safe at work, it was the Trade Union Movement that stood up. Without you there would not have been a furlough scheme, that is where the idea came from, there would have been no life raft for seven million people and, let's face it, if it had been just down to the Government it would have been a case of sink or swim. Trade unions have always been the unsung heroes of our national story and through this crisis you have helped write another proud chapter.

I want to say this, our party was born out of the trade unions, we are one family, one movement, and under my leadership we will always stay that way, one family, one movement. For me this is part personal. My Mum was a nurse, my Dad was a toolmaker, and I did not know what an office looked like until I left for university. For me work meant the factory floor or the hospital ward. Care was not an abstract concept or policy conundrum to be debated, it was the real life round-the-clock support that my Mum received from the NHS when she became too ill to work. Those values have stayed with me, opportunity, fairness, and compassion, and they will define my leadership.

Congress, the task ahead of us is huge. The general election result last December was devastating, devastating not just for the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement but devastating for the millions of working people who desperately need a Labour government. I am incredibly proud of the courage and heroism of the British people in dealing with and standing up to this pandemic, but time and time again the Government have let working people down. Britain should not have had one of the highest death rates in the world, one of the deepest recessions, we should not leave our workers without protective equipment on the front line, we should not have failed the most vulnerable in our care homes, and people should not have to traipse halfway round the country in search of a Covid test when they are sick.

Yesterday my family were able to get a test quickly when we needed one but only because my wife works in the NHS, in a hospital that provides tests for staff and their families. For thousands of people across the country it is a very different story and after six months of this pandemic that is completely unacceptable. Whatever Boris Johnson and Matt Hancock, might say, it is not the British people that are to blame for these mistakes, it is not the civil servants, it is not care home workers, or a mutant algorithm, it is the Government, it is the Government that is holding Britain back and we should never let them forget that.

At the very least the Prime Minister should have spent the summer getting the basics right, a testing system that works, an effective track-and-trace system – we do not need world-beating, we need effective – a plan to protect care homes this winter, and an exam system that parents and young people can trust. The Prime Minister has

failed on every count. As the infection rates rise and our testing system collapses, what are his priorities these last two weeks, reopening old wounds on Brexit, trashing Britain's reputation abroad and making it harder for us to get the trade deal we all want. My message to the Prime Minister is simple, get your priorities right, get on with defeating this virus, and get the Brexit deal you promised.

Congress, this crisis has exposed obviously the total incompetence of this Government but it has also exposed something much deeper, the ingrained injustices and inequalities we see all around us. Austerity was always a political choice, a bulldozer to the foundations of society, and it left us woefully unprepared for this crisis. We are a great country, the sixth richest country in the world, but our economy is one where the workers we applaud are overworked, underpaid, and undervalued, where many, especially the self-employed, lack basic rights and security at work, where millions of people are one missed pay packet away from hardship, and too many people are unable to save for their future and for their retirement.

Congress, we have to change this. After all the sacrifices and loss we cannot go back to business as usual, or defend the status quo. Paddy Lillis made that powerful point just a few moments ago, we cannot go back to business as usual, not back to the status quo, we cannot go back to a society where over half of our care workers earn less than a living wage, a society where we pay tribute to a generation that saved us during the Second World War but now we cannot protect them in our care homes, a country where we do not invest in our public services for a decade and now expect our frontline workers to protect us. We need to capture the bravery, the sacrifice, and solidarity we have seen from the British people. In that we can see a vision of a better

future and I want to work with you every step of the way to build it. We could start that work today by setting out what the Government must do now to protect millions of jobs.

We are on the precipice of a return to Thatcher era unemployment. We know only too well the scarring effect mass unemployment will have on our communities and our families across the country. We cannot let that happen again. We cannot let the Tories use this as an excuse, this crisis as an excuse, to weaken workers' rights or hold back planned rises in the living wage or embark on a fresh round of austerity.

Of course, we all know the furlough scheme cannot go on as it is for ever, we have never suggested that, but the truth is the virus is still with us, infections are rising, lockdowns are increasing, and for some sectors of the economy, retail, aviation, hospitality, and there are others, for millions of workers and for towns and cities under restrictions it just is not possible to get back to work or reopen businesses; that is not a choice, it is the cold reality of this crisis. It makes no sense at all for the Government to pull support away now in one fell swoop, but with a bit of imagination and if we act in the national interest a better approach is possible.

That is why today I am calling on the Government to work with us to create new targeted support that can replace the job retention scheme, to develop through this a scheme for those sectors that most need it. This needs to be done through urgent talks with the trade unions, with businesses, and with the Labour Party so that we can deliver direct support and training to those that need it and prevent mass unemployment. That will be a life raft while we are still in choppy waters. We will

approach this constructively and look at the different options that have been put forward, whether that is the TUC's job protection and upskilling plan that has been put forward, the CBI's short-time working scheme, or the German Kurzarbeit Scheme, or similar schemes in France or Denmark. The principles are clear, expand part-time working and reward employers who keep people on rather than cutting jobs, provide training and support for those who cannot come back to full-time work, target those sectors most in need, for example, retail, hospitality, aviation, all those hit by local lockdowns, and provide support for workers and for businesses. At this moment of national crisis we should take inspiration from our past, be willing to put party differences aside and work together in the interests of the country. Imagine how powerful it would be if we could form a genuine national plan to protect jobs, create new ones, and invest in skills and training. I am making an open offer to the Prime Minister, work with us to keep millions of people in work, work with the trade unions, work with businesses, and do everything possible to protect jobs and deliver for working people. My door is open.

Congress, there is something more the Government must do, outlaw fire-and-rehire tactics. We have seen this happening already in the private and public sector where thousands of workers have been issued redundancy notices and offered new contracts on worse pay and worse conditions. In disputes such as BA and British Gas, we have seen the importance of strong trade unions in defending working people. Congress, fire-and-rehire tactics are wrong. They are against British values, they punish good employers and hit working people hard, and they harm our economy. After a decade of pay restraints that is the last thing working people need and in the middle of a deep recession it is the last thing our economy needs.

I am calling on the Government to act now, introduce legislation to end fire-and-rehire and give working people the security that they need and deserve. If you do that, you will have our full support. Congress, the months ahead are going to be rocky. At the helm we have the most incompetent government I can remember and we face the perfect storm of the biggest economic, health, and social challenge for a generation. Labour and the Trade Union Movement need to stand together like never before to show the British people we have their back, and their future too. We will fight to protect jobs, incomes, and working conditions, at this time of national crisis and to show that there is a better, fairer society to come. That is our mission and I will work with you over the coming years to deliver. Thank you.

Q&A with Leader of the Labour Party

The General Secretary: Thank you very much indeed, Keir. Thanks for going the extra mile to deliver that speech to TUC Congress and thanks for giving millions of working people heart that you are on our side, you are fighting our corner. You have agreed and we have questions from union members all over the country tuning in by Zoom and I am going to take them in groups of three as the shorter and sharper we are in terms of the questions the more we can get through.

The first set is really about some of those top-line priorities that you mentioned in your speech that are very close to the heart of the Trade Union Movement. I want to start with Sian Stockham, who is a frontline care worker and a member of Unison. Sian, please.

Sian Stockham (*Unison*): Morning, Congress. Unison today has announced an important victory for care workers in Haringey in which the union pursued employers for four years to ensure our members were paid for their travel time. For me as a frontline care worker in Wales who has worked throughout the pandemic caring for the vulnerable in society, I became heartened that the Government, the media, and the public started to recognise the value of the work being done. It now seems that we have become again labelled “low skilled”. Do you agree that we have to change this view of care work and that the time is now right for a national care service, and what would Labour do to ensure that the devolved nations receive equal levels of funding for social care?

The General Secretary: Thanks very much, Sian. I now want to bring in Maggie Ryan, automotive worker, JLR, from the Midlands, and Unite.

Maggie Ryan (*Unite*): Thank you, Frances. Good morning, everyone. Unite has warned of a tsunami of job losses as the Government turns its back on the UK workers ending the job retention scheme at the end of October. Do you agree there should be a government financial package for sectors such as aviation, automotive, and hospitality, and what is Labour doing to push the Government to ensure continued focus of thought to protect jobs, including support for short-time working until demand and confidence returns in such sectors? Thank you.

The General Secretary: Thanks, Maggie. Last but not least in this group is Kathy Abu-Bakir, from GMB, with an important question on statutory sick pay.

Kathy Abu-Bakir (GMB): Thank you, Frances. Good morning, Congress. Good morning, Keir. The Covid-19 crisis has laid bare the flaws of our social security system. Statutory sick pay is just a fifth of average earnings and one of the lowest in Europe. The study of the Four Seasons Homes commissioned by the Government also shows that the absence of sick pay is associated with higher infection rates. Many workers face a really tough choice of struggling to pay their bills or continuing to go to work even when they are sick. It makes no sense for public safety, the economy, or working people. Keir, will Labour commit to full sick pay for all workers and a social security system that gives people dignity and security? Thank you.

The General Secretary: Thank you, Kathy. Over to you, Keir.

Sir Keir Starmer: Thank you very much, Frances. Thank you for those questions. Sian, in relation to care workers we absolutely have to change the view of care workers. It is a sector that for years and years and years has been underpaid and undervalued and, frankly, the cynicism of some Tories in clapping care workers as we used to do on a Thursday night and then at the same time introducing the Immigration Bill describing people as low skilled has to be called out. It is not low skilled. It is very, very skilled. Care workers do jobs that most of us could not do. These are incredible skills and it is insulting to call it low skilled so we have to change the view of care workers. I do hope that one of the things from the pandemic is that people have reflected a bit more on what really matters, what we value in life and, therefore, that will lay the foundation for us changing the view of care work.

On the devolution issue, I think it is clear that Wales has a much better approach in relation to care work than we have here, not least because it has been in collaboration with trade unions, and others. We do need to change that and we need a different care service going forward. There is a lot of talk about a national care service and what that would look like but I am absolutely convinced we cannot go back to what we have, that fragmented, fractured approach to care homes and care in our communities. We have to have a different approach going forward.

Maggie, the question of support for certain sectors, to some extent I have addressed that in my speech. I profoundly believe the Government are wrong in seeking to end the support, the furlough support, in one go for all sectors, all businesses, irrespective of the position they find themselves in. It is blindingly obvious, I think, for everybody that some sectors, some businesses, are getting back to a degree of normality, and others just cannot for very obvious reasons. Therefore, having a tailored support package of the sort I sought to set out this morning and the TUC and trade unions have supported, makes absolute sense and will avoid what I fear, which is mass unemployment. So, I very much agree with you, Maggie, on that and we will put whatever pressure we can, we have been calling for this over the summer, we have had a jobs, jobs, jobs, campaign running to put the pressure on the Government to say you have to act. This is now getting absolutely urgent, the furlough scheme is reduced in month on month and soon to end, and if the Government does not take us up on this then I fear very high levels of unemployment. That is why we are being constructive and saying work with us, work with the trade unions, work with

businesses, and let's conceive of a national plan that will actually save the jobs of millions of people.

Kathy, on the social security system, I think the pandemic has exposed the flaws and inadequacies of our social security system. Cast your mind back to Matt Hancock openly admitting that he could not live on sick pay and yet expects thousands upon thousands of other people to do so. It does have a wider impact because I think that it makes it harder for the Government to persuade people to do the right thing, to self-isolate where they need to do so, if the sick pay is so low that they will really struggle to make ends meet. It is actually not only the right thing to do for each individual, each family, it is actually in the national interest in terms of defeating this virus. We need to deal with that problem in the here and now and, more broadly, I think it is very important that we make the broader case for social security but dignity and security should be at the heart of the social security system and I do not think that dignity or security are at the heart of the system as it currently is. Thank you, Frances.

The General Secretary: Thank you, Keir. Another set of questions, this is really about something that is at the heart of both the Trade Union Movement and I know the Labour Party too, and it is about eliminating poverty. We have a number of questions. I want to start with Robin Bevan, who is a head teacher from the NEU in Essex.

Robin Bevan (*National Education Union*): Thank you very much, Frances. Thank you Keir as well. In the last six months the political oversight of education and of

child welfare provision in England has been a national scandal, a public embarrassment, and an unmitigated disaster with a devastating impact on the least advantaged. The question is this: has the Government completely lost sight of the needs of all our children and young people and could there have been a different way? Thank you.

The General Secretary: Thank you very much, Robin. I would now like to call in from Manchester Pauline Mazier from the Bakers Union.

Pauline Mazier (*Bakers, Food & Allied Workers Union*): Good morning, Congress. Good morning, President. Good morning, Keir. I would like to ask Keir, what are you going to do about the lack of affordable housing that leaves many families, and children, living in poverty? Thank you.

The General Secretary: Thanks, Pauline, to the point. Finally, Zita Holbourne, from The Artists Union England.

Zita Holbourne (*The Artists Union England*): Good morning. AUE is the union for visual artists. The majority of our members are low paid self-employed and women and have been hit hard in multiple ways by Coronavirus with most falling between the gaps when it came to government measures for self-employed people. This has led to deepening poverty and hardship with raised concerns with government through the pandemic with absolutely zero response to our correspondence. Will the Labour Party raise our concerns with the Government and ensure that artists, and the arts and culture sector, are supported going forward? Thank you.

The General Secretary: Over to you, Keir.

Sir Keir Starmer: Thank you, Frances, again. Robin, you asked whether the Government have completely lost sight of the needs of our children and young people. I am afraid to say that I think for a long, long time children and young people have been an afterthought for this Government. Obviously, we have the devastating impact of Covid-19 but if you look at the impact of austerity over the last 10 years on children and young people it is all in one direction, it is all exacerbating inequality, and it is all heading in the wrong direction. I think that is in keeping with what happened in this pandemic.

To take schools and colleges, it was obvious from the day the schools and colleges were closed down back in March that a considerable amount of work would be needed to get them ready to reopen, and instead of hunkering down and getting a national plan, and getting the trade unions and others around the table in a national taskforce of some sort, the Government made mistake after mistake, whether that was schools opening, safety in schools, or whether it was exams and the fiasco we had there, children and young people were not being put first and foremost.

I actually want to pay tribute to all of those that work in our schools and colleges for everything that you have been doing over the last six to seven months. It is always a tough job but the last six to seven months have been incredibly tough trying to make sure not only that children get the teaching they need when they were at home during lockdown but also dealing with the welfare issues that are inevitably thrown up

through this down to everything over the last few weeks, and including the work that you did on exams.

I think there is a wider problem here of structural inequality that we have to address going forward and it is another reason that I am absolutely determined that we have to make the case that as we come through this pandemic, and we will, we do not go back to where we started; we have to go forward to a better future and make that case about a better future. Thank you, Robin, for that.

Pauline, on housing, an issue very, very close to my heart because in my constituency and across the whole United Kingdom there are so many cases of a lack of affordable housing, which means that we have awful overcrowding, we have people not being able to live in certain areas, and this is a problem that has been with us for years and years and years, and governments promise to build new housing and they do not do it. We need to be clear what we mean by affordable housing. I do not mean the statutory definition of affordable housing because I do not think that makes sense any more, genuinely affordable housing, and that requires building of council and social housing and that is not happening at the rate that it needs to, and we desperately need a national plan on it.

I am dismayed by the planning provisions the Government have put forward because I think that will make a bad situation worse, they do not prioritise social housing and council housing, on the contrary they take it in the wrong direction, and there is obviously a short-term issue, which is that we need to protect people in rented

accommodation from automatic eviction during this pandemic, and we need a credible plan for rent arrears. There is a huge amount to be done on housing.

Zita, on visual arts and culture generally, this is a sector, the arts and culture, that has been hit particularly hard for obvious reasons, and cannot get back to normality for, again, obvious reasons. It involves a lot of people who are in fragile employment or self-employment with nothing left to go back on. That is another reason why we need a flexible package to take over from the furlough scheme so that we can actually bridge through in this sector, and others, to make sure that good jobs are not lost and it is another argument for the flexible approach that we have been putting forward. Thank you.

The General Secretary: Thank you very much, Keir. You know we represent people from all walks of working life and the next set of questions really just give you a flavour of some of the real priorities and challenges facing people in different sectors. I want to start with Katie Lomas, who is I think calling in from York, on behalf of NAPO.

Katie Lomas (*National Association of Probation Officers*): Good morning, Frances. Good morning, Keir. The announcement of a government U-turn on the probation service is a significant victory over privatisation and means that all work will once again be under public control and ownership by June next year. Can you commit the Labour Party to campaign for the probation service to be removed from the prison centric HMPPS and allow greater autonomy and financial governance so it can once again excel at providing world-class services.

The General Secretary: Thank you, Katie. Next up is Fran Heathcote, who is a worker in the DWP, and a member of PCS.

Fran Heathcote (*Public and Commercial Services Union*): Thank you, Frances, and good morning, Keir. My question for you is this: you will have noticed how the issue of returning to the workplace in the civil service has been put aside by Boris Johnson. Can you assure PCS members that you, and the Labour Party, support us in opposing any forced return to the workplace? Thank you.

The General Secretary: Next is Chaynee Hodgetts from Nautilus, the maritime sector and seafarers.

Chaynee Hodgetts (*Nautilus*): Good morning, Congress. Good morning, Sir Keir. Nautilus UK would like to ask this question: how can we capitalise on the UK support for the maritime sector and seafarers as key workers throughout Covid-19 to encourage shipping companies to join the red ensign and the UK ship register? Thank you.

The General Secretary: Thank you, Chaynee. I am just going to try and sneak in a final question from Eleanor Wade, who is a member of Prospect.

Eleanor Wade (*Prospect*): Thank you, Frances. Good morning, Keir. Like many Prospect members, such as those working for Public Health England, the Health & Safety Executive, Defra, and others, those people have been working so hard on

Covid, I am a civil servant. As such, the political impartiality of our union takes on professional significance since we must remain politically impartial in our work role at all times. Now, the majority of unions do not affiliate to the Labour Party though we share common values and goals. How do you envisage engaging with all unions who can contribute to policy development within that breadth of experience? Thank you.

The General Secretary: An easy one for your, Keir.

Sir Keir Starmer: Thank you, Frances. Let me deal with those. Katie, on the question of the probation service, and privatisation, my view, widely shared, is that the privatisation of the probation service was a complete disaster from start to finish. It should never have happened and it was a good thing that in the end there was a U-turn, but a huge amount of damage was done along the way. I obviously worked with the probation service for many, many years and they are not just a service that deals with imprisonment though of course they do deal with imprisonment, it is a service that deals with the support and advice that is needed in so many individual cases, including cases in court where I have seen courts grind to a halt because the probation service has not had the funding and the resource it needs to get reports to court at the right time when it became privatised. We need to think of this differently. We need an integrated justice system and I completely agree with you, Katie, that prison should not be the focus of that, it is an aspect of that but the broader work that the probation service does is really, really important and we need to put that at the centre of our criminal justice strategy.

Fran, on returning to workplaces, we all want people to be able to return safely to work and I pay tribute to the TUC and trade unions for the work that was done leading the arguments and actually leading the work on risk assessments at work. The idea of risk assessments and how they should be done is something that the trade unions led on from the very, very start and, Frances, you were very, very powerful and vocal on this. I think that return to work is very much a question of the Government comms and a question of space. The Government comms has been all over the place on this and space is the issue. There are many workplaces where space is the real problem and not to acknowledge that, I think, is to put your head in the sand in relation to this issue. As I say, we all do want people to be able to safely return to work because that is in the best interests of everybody and in the best interests of the country.

Chaynee, on the maritime sector, I missed the very start of your question but I think I have the gist of it. A Labour government will be committed to working with the maritime sector to strengthen our role as a leading maritime nation, so we look forward to that. The sector, of course, contributes, I think, just over £46bn to the UK economy and providing many, many jobs. It is a very important strategic partnership going forward.

Eleanor, on the question of the wider Trade Union Movement, obviously affiliated unions have a special and formal relationship with the Labour Party and that is a good thing because we are one Movement and, as I said in my speech, born into the same family, part of the same Movement. I would say to as many people as possible, join a trade union, absolutely join a trade union. New affiliations are always welcome so, of

course, the list of affiliations is never closed, but whatever the situation, Eleanor, it does not mean we do not want a wider engagement with trade unions that are not affiliated to our Party or Movement, including through the TUC. I want the widest possible engagement. That is why I am here today. That is the approach I take. I urge everybody to join a trade union. I would like to see as many affiliated as possible, application is always open, but I will always work with all trade unions across the piece because I think that is the only way to secure the better future that we have to fight for coming out of this pandemic. Thank you, Frances.

The General Secretary: Thanks, Keir. First up, just a big thank you to all our reps and members who put those questions on behalf of all of us, fantastic, but a real thank you to Keir too, not only for your speech but for taking the time to be with us to take those questions and give such full answers. I think in the union movement we have had to learn the hard way that unity is strength and I think as a movement we are committed to working with you to climb that mountain with the values that we share, equality, dignity, and justice at work. Thank you, everybody, so much. Back to you, President.

Sir Keir Starmer: Thank you, Frances.

The President: Thank you, Frances.

The President: Colleagues, we now move to our fourth discussion, trade unions at the forefront of Tackling Racism, and we will start this discussion with a video.

General Council Statement 4: Tackling Racism

Video played to Congress.

The President: Now I would like to ask Gloria Mills of Unison to move the General Council Statement on Tackling Racism. Gloria.

Gloria Mills (Unison): Good morning, President, Congress. Gloria Mills moving the General Council Statement on Tackling Racism on behalf of the General Council. Congress, the General Council Statement stands before and in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the USA as they speak out against the catalogue of racist murders of black men and women, killed by police and vigilantes.

What we are seeing, Congress, is that racism is one of the most potent public health issues we are facing in this new century. It is potent because the flames are being fanned by politicians for political advantage and for electoral gain. This is nothing new. It is easy to exploit fear and it is easy to exploit hatred. Racism is powerful because it poisons and pollutes public opinion and we have seen the impact of institutional racism. It is a matter of life or death for black workers and a huge number, disproportionate number, in the UK and also in the USA have died as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Congress, we recognise that as trade unions we need to continue to do more, to challenge racism in the workplace and to do more to tackle racism in society, and that is exactly what the General Council intends to do, as trade unions we will continue in

our work to fight racism. Trade unions have an immediate and crucial role to play in organising and bargaining on behalf of black workers but we also need to ensure that black workers join this Movement, that we create opportunity and space for black workers to participate at all levels of our Movement.

I am calling today on all workers, black workers, white workers, every worker, to join your trade union. We have demonstrated that we are at the front line not just in fighting to protect your interests but we are actually fighting and pushing back the boundaries in terms of protecting workers' rights, equality, and employment rights. We also need to use the power of collective bargaining in the workplace to force employers by all collective means, including legal action, to listen, to reflect, and to protect black workers at work. More importantly, we must hold employers to account, to carry out the risk assessments and implement meaningful measures to mitigate and review the risk to all workers and, in particular, to black workers.

Black workers are not expendable. They are essential in terms of fighting the Coronavirus pandemic but black workers must be treated like essential workers and their lives must be protected as they go about their daily lives in protecting the lives of others. As a trade union movement we will ensure that their lives are protected. Today we send a strong message to employers, take your legal obligations seriously and make sure that your workplaces are safer, if not we will hold you to account.

We will continue to work and build support and solidarity with the wider *Black Lives Matter* movement nationally and internationally to create a positive legacy for the next generation. We will continue to be proactive and a powerful voice to expose the

daily burden of racism that black workers face and we will also put in place an action plan to tackle institutional racism and, I should add, institutional sexism as well within our structure, and we will change the culture of the Trade Union Movement.

Congress, I am pleased to announce today the launch of a new General Council Task Group on anti-racism building on the proud legacy of the Stephen Lawrence Task Group. The new task group will give voice to the every day racism black workers experience across society. We will produce an action plan for transformative change. The new task group will make recommendations for change to protect black members under representation in the community, to increase recruitment and retention and progression of black staff, and to close the ethnicity pay gap within the trade unions.

Congress, the General Council is committed to making transformation and change that will make a real difference to the lives of black workers. I am calling today on every worker to join a trade union. We say black lives matter. I move the General Council Statement. Thank you, President.

The President: Thank you very much for opening the debate, Gloria. I would now like to ask Patrick Roach, from the NAS/UWT to speak next. Patrick.

Patrick Roach (*NAS/UWT The Teachers Union*): President, Congress, proudly speaking in support of the General Council Statement on Tackling Racism. Congress, there is no more important priority for our Trade Union Movement today than to do whatever it takes to stand up against racism and to secure racial justice at work. The

Coronavirus pandemic has exposed the searing racial injustice in our society and in our workplaces.

Congress, we know the facts: black workers three to four times more likely to be killed at work as a result of Coronavirus; black workers more likely to be unemployed; black workers who are 50% more likely to be employed in lower paid jobs on insecure zero-hours contracts; black workers who face daily discrimination when they are seeking employment; the first to be sacked and the last to be promoted. These are the symptoms and product of a racially divisive hostile environment policy that has been peddled deliberately by this Government.

Congress, we do not need more research to teach us the facts about racism. We do not need pious platitudes from the Government. We need action. Our unions must do whatever it takes to expose and challenge, mobilise and campaign to secure racial justice at work. Nothing should stop our Movement in the fight against racial injustice. It is the cornerstone of our Trade Union Movement. It is what our Movement has done over decades and it is what our Movement has continued to do since the start of this pandemic, protecting jobs and livelihoods, and campaigning for safe working conditions for our members.

The TUC's anti-racism task group will mark another important chapter in the history of our Trade Union Movement's fight against racism and racial injustice at work. This task group will be a force for change. Led by our trade unions and our black members it will take forward a comprehensive programme of work to tackle racism and racial injustice and to deliver fairness and decent treatment at work. Twenty

years ago the TUC Stephen Lawrence Task Group was set up to root out racism at work and our Movement has come a long way since then but, Congress, we still have work to do internally, externally, giving voice to the everyday racism black workers face, setting out our plans to confront institutional racism and discrimination at work, and leading by example.

Congress, we know the facts about racism at work because that is the experience we have and that our members have. The Government have seen the evidence but nothing has been done. The Government have made promises but still nothing has been done. Now it is time to do something ourselves. Black Lives Matter. Congress, support the General Council Statement and let us give notice to government, employers, and regulators, that we will hold them to account and that change is coming. Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Patrick, for that excellent contribution, your second at Congress. I would now like to ask Susan Matthews from Unite to make a contribution. Susan.

Susan Matthews (Unite): Thank you, President. Congress, Chair. I am speaking in support of the General Council Statement on Tackling Racism. Colleagues, Congress, I am proud to be supporting this Statement. It does not just make our principle on tackling racism and the *Black Lives Matter* clear, it also highlights the day-to-day reality of racism experienced by black workers and our black community, and the action we want to see taken to tackle systemic and structural racism.

Congress, the death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police let the people around the world show solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the United States, but it was also the spark of black people here in Britain and our anger at the institutional and systemic and structural racism that continues to be displayed in various institutes across Britain, such as the housing system, the police system, community, the workplace, and not to mention the current government policies and procedures.

Across British society today black people are not in the position of power, are not sitting at the table of making decisions, instead we see black workers at the front line as cleaners, nurses, doctors, drivers, care workers, shop workers, security guards, and ticket offices, local government workers, so many more where we could not do without black workers. The pandemic has exposed the fatal impact on racism, not to mention economic deprivation of black workers dying in greater numbers.

Black life does matter and if this is true for all of us as we say, then action is urgently needed, not just words. This Statement not only puts forward action we want from the Government but also what we will do as a Labour government to tackle institutional and systemic racism, and that opportunity increases in the leadership role and would in our structure. We need a stronger black equality structure, we need more black members and activists to rise up in the ranks as activists, in the ranks of leadership roles, to be part of the decision-making body and get a seat at the table as black workers. We should not be able to just say in a few years ahead that the *Black Lives Matter* movement in the summer of the 2020 protests was about just a movement but also a long-lasting legacy that will transform the lives and save the

lives of other young black workers, and workers overall. Please support this General Council Statement going forward. Please support. Thank you very much, Chair. Congress, I support.

The President: Thank you, Susan, for another smashing contribution. I would like to ask Davena Rankin from Unison to make a contribution. Davena.

Davena Rankin (*Unison*): Good morning, Congress, President. I am speaking in support of the Statement. Despite a bumpy start we have seen our trade unions make tackling racism in our communities, in our workplaces, a priority. We need to be honest, we have not made the progress we should have in recent years. Cameron, May, and Johnson's legacies will be ones of inequality, public services starved of critical funding, work more precarious, and workers left isolated and vulnerable, all perfect conditions in which racism thrives. Too many of our employers have failed to act and that means racism is a new everyday normal for black workers. Covid-19 has exposed death being a cost of racism that now surely no one can ignore and yet there are still some who seek to blame black workers themselves for the soaring death rates we are seeing during this terrible pandemic, but we know the truth.

This summer Unison surveyed our black members and we received over 10,000 responses. The overwhelming feedback from our black members was at the height of this first wave they were the ones going into their workplaces whether or not they felt safe, whether or not they had appropriate PPE, and whether or not they felt their managers would act in their best interests. Worryingly, a significant proportion of our

respondents felt unable to raise safety issues at work. No wonder Covid spread as it did putting our black members' lives at increased risk.

None of our demands to end racism at work are new, nor are they complicated, but they do take sustained action and commitment. We need action by every employer large and small, public and private, we need the bodies charged with regulation and enforcement to have real teeth and we need day one rights for all workers. There are no quick fixes to entrenched systemic racism but we know what it takes, it takes trade unions and it takes negotiations led by black members. As I have said already, none of this is new but we do have a new opportunity. Those who have kept our society running during this pandemic, so many of whom are black, have a new visibility for the worst of reasons, the devastating toll of the pandemic, but we must not let our members slip back out of public sight, in the words of Unison's new campaign, *No going back to normal*.

In conclusion, Congress, Unison welcomes the launch of the new General Council Anti-Racism Task Group. We pledge to work together to end racism and to save black life. Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Davena. I would now like to ask Daniel Kebede from the National Education Union to make a contribution. Daniel.

Daniel Kebede (*National Education Union*): Thank you, Congress. I am proudly speaking in support of this Statement. What a year it has been in the fight for racial justice. I am often told how far we have come yet the reality is the journey has just

begun. George Floyd and *Black Lives Matter*, climate change and pollution, not only disproportionately impacting on those in the global South but also destroying the lungs of our diverse cities and we have Covid-19, disproportionately killing black people not because of any phoney genetic disposition but because black people are often over-represented in frontline jobs and face institutional racism in every aspect of their lives, access to secure jobs, secure housing, and in health. Black people are fighting battles on many fronts and our trade unions have been and must continue to be at the centre of our struggle.

I am very proud of my union's record in tackling racism not only in education but in wider society, standing shoulder to shoulder in the fight for racial justice at every step. We recognise that to allow every child to flourish we must indeed colonise our curriculum so we have been building a national movement for change. We recognise that racism exists on an institutional level in education so our members have been building at the grassroots, whether it is about challenging the notion of policing schools or race disparities and exclusions.

We recognise that for every educator to flourish our black educators must flourish too so we created an anti-racist charter for schools to shift the culture and change what is normal and we recognise that us as workers have more in common with our brothers and sisters in the Calais camps desperately trying to make it to the safety of the UK than we do with racist Boris Johnson and his Eton mess. So year on year our members go out and do what they can to offer solidarity to refugees in the real world but we also recognise that no one is free until we are all free so this June we organised an international solidarity webinar in which 6,500 members dialled in with the Rev.

Jessie Jackson and stood in solidarity with the *Black Lives Matter* movement around the world.

We can be proud of our record in the NEU but there is so much more to do. Our struggle is far from over and the crisis just deepens, the powerful will try to make our people pay, homelessness, eviction, unemployment, all set to rise and the powerful will use racism to scapegoat their way out of it. It is up to us as trade unionists, as white workers and black workers stood together, to be at the forefront of fighting racism and every other injustice that racism enables. Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you, Daniel, and well done. I would now like to ask Zita Holbourne from the Artists Union England to speak. Zita.

Zita Holbourne (*The Artists Union England*): Race equality must be at the heart of our union movement. Black communities have been through a huge collective trauma over recent months with black people three times more likely to die of Coronavirus, as well as brutality and killing, racial profiling, impacts on jobs, precarious employment, lack of protection and safety at work, micro regression, systemic and institutional racism, and the horrific killing of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks in the USA, but we must not forget all the black people who have died at the hands of the state here in the UK, such as Sarah Reed, Sean Rigg, Christopher Alder, and Kevin Clarke whose inquest is happening right now, and he told police officers, “I can’t breathe” as they restrained him, plus those who died in racist attacks such as Altab Ali, Stephen Lawrence, and J Abertan.

The TUC Black Workers Conference and Race Relations Committee have supported the annual Family & Friends Campaign to march against death in custody for many years and we call on unions to take part. It is crucial for the union Movement to provide practical solidarity for black communities and black grassroots groups fighting racism, including the global *Black Lives Matter* movement and the Windrush Justice Campaign group, and the victims who still have not received compensation and their descendants who are also targeted because of racist immigration laws. Throughout lockdown I and many others supported families with no recourse to public funds, legally allowed to work in the UK, who lost their job because of Covid, but are not allowed to claim benefits or access government measures, and that included people with newborn babies.

Racism is a global issue so our trade union response must be global and this is why I am part of the global Justice for George Floyd campaign which not only includes George Floyd's legal team but also campaigners in the USA, UK, and the African Continent. Our work to challenge racism at work must be connected with campaigning against racism in society and across the world. That must include supporting those from the global South displaced because of climate change and I am proud to have been involved in forming the European Public Services Union Network to work on Migrants to Europe and in coordinating the EPSU Black Workers Network.

We need to ensure there are no barriers to participation in our Movement and to create a positive legacy for future generations so they do not have to protest with signs to remind us that black lives matter. The Race Relations Committee established eight

years ago the Roots, Culture and Identity art exhibition in the name of Stephen Lawrence as one of the recommendations of the TUC Stephen Lawrence Task Group to provide opportunity and platform for young black artists. Another aspect of legacy is that the legacies of enslavement and colonialism exist in processes, policies, and symbols. They allow racism to thrive and linked to this is our continued participation in the campaign for reparations which is crucial. When enslavement of African people was made unlawful those doing the enslaving were compensated the equivalent of billions in today's money keeping future generations of their families in wealth and privilege but reparation is not just about financial compensation, it is about education and healing.

To end, these things must go hand-in-hand with tackling low pay and precarious work, racist harassment and bullying at work, discrimination in pay, promotion, progression, and appraisal, and recruitment, and equal treatment, dignity, and access in the labour market. I support. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Zita. I will now ask Colin Gunter from GMB to make a contribution. Colin.

Colin Gunter (GMB): President, Congress, speaking in support of the Statement. Congress, millions of people were horrified by the racist murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many others, and they were horrified too by the scenes of police brutality that played out on our television screens. We extend our solidarity to the *Black Lives Matter* movement in the United States and in this country, and in every country.

Let us be in no doubt about the scale of the challenge in the UK. We live in a society that is characterised by discrimination. If you are a member of an ethnic minority you are less likely to be in work, you are less likely to be promoted and have your efforts and talents recognised. Exploitation is coming from the garment factories of Leicester to companies like Uber that deny workers their rights. If you are from a Bangladeshi background you earn 20% less, on average, than if you are white. If you are a black child in school you are more likely to be excluded. For those people who came to this country as part of the Windrush generation you answered the call to help rebuild this country after the War, this Government put them through hell and then at best indifferent to their fate. Congress, nearly 30 years on from the horrific murder of Stephen Lawrence, racism is endemic in our criminal justice system too.

As the Lammy Review warned three years ago, if you are black you are more likely to be in prison in the United Kingdom than in the United States. Congress, Coronavirus has exposed without mercy the structural inequalities in our society. We cannot go back to how things were. The time for new reviews is over. The time for action is now. As trade unionists we fight every day for equality and justice in the world of work but we can and we must do more.

Congress, this General Council Statement sets out a passionate and comprehensive manifesto for change and where reviews have been welcomed by minority communities they must be implemented. We must strengthen and properly enforce the Equality Act. We must introduce ethnicity pay but hold employers to account whenever they discriminate at work. We must fight injustice that has for far too long

characterised our immigration and social security systems. We must never rest in our fight against racism and the far right. When they seek to divide us our answer is one that has stood the test of time, solidarity, equality, freedom, and justice for all. Congress, please support the Statement. Thank you.

The President: Thank you for that contribution, Colin. I would now like to ask Mohammed Shafiq, from PCS, to make a contribution. Mohammed.

Mohammed Shafiq (*Public and Commercial Services Union*): President, Congress, I am proudly supporting the Statement by the General Council. We gather virtually at an extraordinary moment for black workers and communities dealing with the twin challenges of Covid-19 and the black lives protest. Now as the Statement sets out Public Health England has said black and minority ethnic communities are twice as likely to die from Covid-19. We have seen so many die these past few months so we send our condolences, prayers and love, to all those affected.

In the public sector PCS Union has led the campaign to ensure that BAME staff in job centres have an opportunity to have a BAME risk assessment. We forced management to support safer home working and are pushing back at the political decisions that have been made to get people back to the workplace even with the positive rate going up across the country. We as a union will put the interests of our black members at the forefront of all our campaigns. I am so proud that my union, PCS, has always been at the front line of the campaign against racism and we look forward to working with colleagues across the Trade Union Movement.

Now the murder of George Floyd has galvanised people to say enough is enough and PCS Union stands with black communities as we together campaign to end institutional racism and expose the barriers to equality. The list of black people being killed at the hands of the very forces that should be protecting them has been ignored for too long. We here at the TUC, and across our unions, have been talking about these issues, raising them in our workplaces, and with our elected politicians but some for political reasons have refused to listen to us. We will not stop raising our voices and we will win.

As colleagues have already said, data and the evidence is clear, what we now require is lasting change to make our societies truly equal. This means dismantling the systems that have amplified colonialism and ignored the structural barriers to eradicating racism. You cannot have a truly equal society until black workers feel safe, have the right opportunities as everyone else, and this requires all of us to self-reflect on our language, our behaviour, and outlooks towards black communities.

Our union, PCS, is proud that we have a Vice President who is black, Zita Holbourne, a total of four NEC members who are black, but this is not enough until our leadership and unions are reflective of our wider society and membership. That is why PCS as part of its work in coming years has made tackling under-representation a key priority.

Finally, the struggle, President, against racism enshrined is in the values of our trade unions so let the voice go out from this TUC Congress virtually that we stand together

against racism, we reject the division and hate peddled by some politicians and those in the media. Congress, please support the Statement and thank you for listening.

The President: Well done, Mohammed. Up next we have Natalie Opoku from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Natalie, I invite you to speak.

Natalie Opoku (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*): Thank you, President, and good morning, Congress. The 25th May 2020 will now be a day forever etched in our collective memories. On a Monday evening in Minneapolis George Floyd lived his final moments. George was murdered by a male police officer, who knelt on his neck for 7 minutes and 46 seconds before killing him, which is, incidentally, around three times as long as this speech. George spoke to his wife and said, “I love you and my grandchildren,” and said the words, “I can’t breathe”, over 20 times. “I can’t breathe” a phrase that has become synonymous with the hash tag *Black Lives Matter* movement the world over.

Racism is not just an American problem. If you are a black UK citizen you are twice as likely to be unemployed, three times as likely to be arrested, 10 times as likely to be stopped and searched, five times as likely to be homeless, three times as likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act, 50% less likely to achieve 3 A grades at A-Level, a black woman is five times as likely to die during childbirth and on average you will earn over 21% less than the rest of the UK population. This is how we treat black people in the UK.

Britain has a deep-rooted problem with racism. Most black people in this country have a story relating to discrimination. Mine is on being on the receiving end of covert and overt racism from colleagues and patients, being silent and in some cases blamed by the very people who should be protecting me. In 2020 Public Health England confirmed that black and Asian ethnic groups are twice as likely to die from Covid-19, with over 60% of NHS workers who died from the virus being from a BAME background. These are shocking findings but are driven by poor access to education, healthcare, housing, and job opportunity. These groups have been negatively radicalised in the UK society resulting in the inequalities that shape the experiences of Covid-19. We are told that it is the system that fails the BAME community. However, a system cannot fail a group of people if it was never set up to protect and include us in the first place.

Racism is a trade union issue. As trade union members and activists it is crucial that we continue to be a leading force in the anti-racism movement across the world. We need to pressure the systems that include the BAME community, for some it is a matter of life and death. The CSP welcomes the TUC General Council Statement on tackling racism and the far right and addressing class and equality and work such as the 2020 UN Anti-Racism Day and Anti-Racism Ambassador Programme. We all must do more to protect our BAME friends, families, colleagues, and neighbours. The one thing that we cannot do is to stay silent. Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Natalie. I would now like to invite Winston Richards from the Communication Workers Union to speak. Winston.

Winston Richards (*Communication Workers Union*): Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome, Chair. We support and endorse this Statement. As the previous speakers have said, the impact of Covid-19 has really hit hard on the BAME community. As a union we will do all that we can to identify the issues behind this and follow up on reports and chase the Government to make sure that the BAME people get the proper support that they require. On top of that, I have to say that we did lose a dear friend and activist as a result of Covid-19, Bowler, who was a staunch advocate for equality and BAME issues so there is a personal aspect to this as well. As we have seen, the evidence has shown where the most economically marginalised are and it is basically suffering from systemic racism with low pay, exploited jobs, and we are twice as likely to lose our jobs during the furlough period.

The CWU have a role to play as all trade unions do in dealing with equality discrimination but what we had looked at a couple of years ago was how can we address this problem and deal with the modern situation and circumstances we face. We had the Redesign Project which then placed equality no longer under peripheries, we brought it into the mainstream and what we have done since then is delivered black training schools for black activists which have been excellent and they have produced a number of activists who have been around and have made a positive contribution to the union, and that has to be applauded in what we have done.

We have not rested on our laurels there. We have done a review of our efforts and what we have done is also brought forward a plan, a strategy, on how we are going to bring this current issue to the workplace. In order to do that we have looked at the way we deliver our education, although it was absolutely brilliant but we can improve

on it. We put new activist courses coming up. We have now engaged with the relevant departments and have in place a working party to make sure equality is brought not just to the black activists but to the whole membership. What we have realised is that it was in the membership there is an issue amongst people who do not understand the relevance of the *Black Lives Matter* movement, and as a result of that we have gone about it, we have done a review, we have done a CWU Facebook live event recently with CWU Against Racism. It was possibly one of the best Facebook live events we have had and I can say we have had quite a few good ones. We cooperate and we work with *Stand up and Show Racism the Red Card* as well, and on that particular Facebook meeting we had a very good panel discussion about the issues that we faced.

One of the things we have done is we need to raise awareness. As you can see I am wearing this shirt here which is a good way of promoting equality issues and bringing it to the membership. It also gives us an opportunity to have these conversations with our members and these shirts have been selling very well, and all the money that we get from the sale of those shirts is going towards things like supporting food banks for the disadvantaged and also bringing forward race education events.

We are aware and we have gone back and surveyed our members and most of the members from the BAME community tend to feel that they are being treated unfairly and on occasions they are put into positions where they are placed at risk. These are real issues that we have to deal with and if we are going to challenge this issue of systemic racism that underpins our society and causes these disadvantaged life experiences, we need to step back first of all and accept that there is as problem with

race, and this is where the trade union can assert its own values and we as a union have been doing that.

We understand that we have a role to play, not just dealing with terms and conditions at work, which are vitally important, but we also have alongside it the opportunity to work within the wider society to liaise with other organisations and other corporations, and areas where they deal with equality work. We can use that in conjunction to bring forward a positive and structured way of dealing with the equality agenda we currently face.

We have revised our reps training. We are going to have the training nationally and we are going to move it regionally as well because a lot of the problems we face were people not able to get to the national education place so we now have developed a strategy to bring the training down to regions. We are seeing now not only a diverse approach to dealing with this, we are also seeing there is enthusiasm, there is a lot of enthusiasm amongst BAME people who never thought that the trade union was there for them. They paid their money each month and they would not really take active part because they did not feel it was the right place for them, for their own various reasons.

What we are seeing now is a complete sea change. We are seeing activists coming up waiting to get engaged. The union has always reached out to them. We are getting our message across far more effectively now and we are hoping to continue to build on this. We are hoping to continue with the Facebook live events, which have been very successful, and we are hoping that all we can do is raise the money, raise the

awareness, and bring this up to the forefront because the trade union is to me the place where we need to make change in society. Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you very much, Winston, and apologies again for the fact that you were interrupted. I did give you some time back at the end there to finish your contribution, which was great. Finally, in this session we have Ian Lawrence from NAPO. Ian, can I invite you to make your contribution, please.

Ian Lawrence (*National Association of Probation Officers*): Thank you, President, Congress. Despite the obvious progress let's not kid ourselves, institutional racism is still out there, as you have heard, and it has got worse since the divisive Brexit debate. The General Council Statement clearly articulates the scope for the wider struggle, for social and economic justice, and I welcome the chance to reconsider what we traditionally have done in the past and consider other practical initiatives to raise awareness of the issues. For example, within NAPO we have recently followed the scenario outlined by Winston and have held two BO events for self-designated BAME members, to exhort them to step forward and become local and ideally national activists. We have engaged with supportive politicians, such as the excellent shadow justice team led by David Lammy, to help them expose the continuous scandal of our justice system that discriminates against the BAME community and has done for time immemorial; our involvement in the development of the National Probation Service Race Equality Plan to be signed off and promoted at senior levels, Director General; the creation of an anti-racist officer post in every branch of NAPO's lay structures; we want to see buy-in at the most senior levels of management across every employer we engage with, and we insist that as we seek to rebuild probation it moves towards a

welcome return to full public ownership and control, with specific attentions given to future workforce planning, in terms of recruitment, training, and career and development opportunities for under-represented groups. Things must change.

Then there is our contact and involvement with external partners such as *Show Racism the Red Card*, GFTU, and the TUCG, and *Shout Out*, the organisation that seeks support from unions to reach out into our communities, provide non-partisan political awareness training for young students, and which I hope will be supported by role model NAPO activists.

Congress, NAPO is honoured to have been invited to be part of the TUC Race Equality Task Group, and I have been especially impressed to hear that it is not going to be another initiative that simply ends up reiterating what we already know. There will be a need to work in partnership with all trade unions, with great opportunities for our members to step up their campaigning activities, to engage with employers and the wider public, many of whom still refuse to acknowledge the problem of institutional racism, and to set new benchmarks not only for the here and now but to future generations of working people who will follow us. Let us all work towards that day and in the not too distant future when we can proudly say that we all helped to discard racism to the dustbin of history. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Ian, and thank you to all the speakers in that really important debate. We will take a formal vote on that Statement at the General Council later today. Thank you.

The President: Colleagues, we now move to our final debate of Congress, A Global Recovery for Working People. In a moment I will ask Kevin Courtney from the National Education Union to move the Statement. After that I will take contributions from other colleagues. Everybody speaking after Kevin will have three minutes to make their contribution. Please do not feel that you need to take up all of your time but, please, do not exceed the three minutes as we will need to finish the Congress on time. We will now start the debate with a short video.

General Council Statement 5: A Global Recovery for Working People

Video played to Congress.

The President: Please could Kevin Courtney move the General Council Statement on A Global Recovery for Working People.

Kevin Courtney (*National Education Union*): Thank you, President. We know that the Trade Union Movement is founded on solidarity and internationalism. We know that policies that hurt workers anywhere hurt workers everywhere. It is therefore crucial that we keep our internationalism at the forefront of our minds and our work as we defend our members during this crisis. The crisis is global. Covid and its impacts are global. We need a global response.

This pandemic has exposed deep structural inequalities both within and between countries, worldwide working people face worsening outcomes and bosses making decisions in their interests alone. We have seen a terrifying rise in the far right, in

Hungary, Brazil, India, and Poland. We have seen regimes using the Covid crisis to crack down further on rights. We see our own government using divisive anti-migrant rhetoric and we know migrant workers and refugees, those from black backgrounds in our country have been exposed to the most harm in this pandemic. The rising tensions now between the US and China and shifting UK global relationships, including the looming threat of a no deal with the EU, puts our members' jobs at risk. Multinational companies are using this crisis to further erode our hard won rights, ruthlessly seizing opportunities to carry out mass restructuring, shifting the power back to them. That is why we must work together internationally across borders to seek to win global deals for workers.

The threat of a re-elected Trump and a future trade deal which our government seeks to make means we need to demand a seat at the table for any trade negotiations; anything about us, working people need to be there. This moment stands the chance of being an offensive against workers. We need to organise and fight back united and internationally. Our slogan has to be *An injury to one is an injury to All*. The reality is workers' rights are already being systematically abused in many countries and the pandemic has intensified those attacks so we must intensify our solidarity work.

We must continue to support all those protesting to defend their rights. Whether it is a *Black Lives Matter* movement, in the US, whether it is trade unionists protesting in Belarus, those demanding refugee rights, those fighting to stop the climate crisis, or as our sisters and brothers in the worst places to be trade unionists in the world, we stand with all of them. Like our comrades in Turkey who face constant repression by an authoritarian regime, accused on trumped up charges and dismissed, or in Colombia

where over 100 social leaders have been murdered already this year, or in Palestine where the people are suffering the crisis under ongoing occupation in terrible conditions in Gaza and on the West Bank.

In addition to those whose rights have already been attacked in those ways, we see now that the pandemic is plunging millions of the most vulnerable workers into destitution. The collapse in complex supply chains have exposed the exploitation that workers face: shortness of medical equipment, drugs, PPE, created by the pandemic have exposed the weakness of these supply chains and led to countries in the West competing at the expense of countries in the global South. We must support our sisters and brothers in those countries where the numbers of people infected by the virus is sky-rocketing. The lack of infrastructure and access to decent healthcare is leading to more deaths.

We need to defend a vision of the world that prioritises public investment, guided by industrial strategy, strong social protections, a just transition to a green economy, access to free quality healthcare for all, education and decent work. We must demand coordinated action from the international community to address these problems because only with massive international assistance would workers in the global South get through.

Despite these difficulties, we are a hopeful movement, we are a growing movement, workers see the fight we have led during the crisis and want to join us. We celebrate all brave workers around the world. We are inspired by them and those that continually show what real internationalism and solidarity means, like the Cuban

doctors who are saving lives around the world. Solidarity goes both ways. We learn from other struggles. We share our successes and we build workers' power together. All of us in Britain are part of a worldwide movement. We are one of the largest democratic organisations and in every workplace we need to stand up and defend our rights with a collective, united, internationalist voice. Collective power is our greatest strength. Internationalism and solidarity have always been the bedrock of our Movement. Those values have helped us through some of our darkest days and they can and will guide us through the challenges we face today. President, I move the General Council Statement.

The President: Thank you very much, Kevin. I would like now to ask Tony Burke from Unite to speak.

Tony Burke (Unite): Thank you very much, Mr. President. As Kevin has just said, the Coronavirus swept across the globe in a matter of weeks, it spread so rapidly it was impossible, and still is impossible, to keep up with. It has exposed the fact that the neo-liberal model of globalisation cannot cope with its effects. Workers in countries and industries where sectors rely on cheap precarious labour have been hit very hard. Millions of workers cannot take time off to isolate, never mind taking time off to recover. So the lessons we have learnt is that global solidarity matters and, as Keir Starmer said this morning, there can be no return to business as usual and that applies across the globe. Whether you are an engineer, a teacher, transport worker, or a health worker in Europe or the USA, Brazil, South Asia, Latin America, or Australia, everyone is affected in the same way, fear and worry not just for our

families and our children but our elderly, and also for the wider economy and our communities.

That is why we must ensure that we end the massive global inequality between nations, between rich and poor, between men and women, and between black and white. There has to be an end to deregulation, an ending to precarious work, and privatisation where the highest bidder squeezes the last drop of profit from our essential services as they roam the globe looking for a lower bottom line. As Kevin said, we will stand up for unions and working people in countries like Turkey, in Palestine, in Belarus, in Colombia, in China, in South Asia, in Brazil, in the USA, and here in the UK where workers' rights and union rights are being trampled on and discarded. We know that trade between nations is important but we must not let trade agreements undermine workers' rights, whether that is an agreement with the European Union, or whether the USA, with Australia, New Zealand, or the transpacific countries. We must not allow multinationals to use secret courts to undermine our public services and laws and move to another country to make bigger profits and like Amazon, and the other tech companies, pay less tax or no tax at all. We must have a right of workers globally to organise into unions and secure collective bargaining with dignity and respect at work. That must be our mission, that must be our goal, and that is why Unite supports the General Council Statement. Thank you.

The President: Thanks very much, Tony. I would now like to ask Josie Bird from Unison to make her contribution. Josie.

Josie Bird (*Unison*): Thanks very much, Ged, and good afternoon, Congress. I am speaking in support of the General Council Statement. Congress, this global pandemic has exposed the weaknesses inherent in the neo-liberal economic model, overstretched, under-regulated supply chains failed to respond to the demand for personal protective equipment and vital pharmaceuticals. Countries are forced to compete against each other in a global bidding war which saw the poorest and weakest countries in the global South lose out. It also exposed the reality of those supply chains, such as the rubber glove 60% of which come from Malaysia, made in unsafe, unorganised factories, staffed by migrant workers under precarious contracts and at risk of being deported if they try to unionise. The pandemic has also exposed leaders from the populous right, Trump, Johnson, Bolsonaro, men presiding over an incompetent and inadequate response to the challenge leading to millions of infections and hundreds of thousands of unnecessary deaths.

As the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Michelle Bachelet, pointed out, nine out of the 12 countries that had responded best are led by women, leading progressive governments such as Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand and Sanna Marin in Finland. The global scale of the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of effective international organisations and, yes, the international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank have been imposing neo-liberal policies for decades. Public service workers have kept the world running during the pandemic but there is a clear correlation between those countries that have privatised health, social care, and other public services, and those that have slashed their funding through austerity and those countries with high death and infection rates.

Donald Trump has threatened to stop funding the World Health Organisation. The World Health Organisation is not perfect, underfunding by governments have led them to take money from the private sector blurring the lines around key policy issues but the World Health Organisation has played a vital role in the pandemic and we should be campaigning for its defence and an increase in its funding. The pandemic has also given cover for authoritarian governments to crack down on labour and human rights defenders, in particular, there has been a sharp escalation of violence and killings in Colombia, a country very close to my heart that I have been privileged to visit several times.

Congress, a global pandemic requires a global trade union response and this Statement clearly sets out what that should look like. Thank you very much, Congress.

The President: Thank you, Josie. I would now like to ask Tony Kearns from the Communications Workers Union to join the discussion. Tony.

Tony Kearns (*Communication Workers Union*): Thanks, Ged. First of all, I want to thank all the tens of thousands of postal workers and telecommunication workers who have kept the communications network of this country going through this pandemic. I think a vote of thanks is due to them. CWU welcomes the General Council Statement. We welcome that it addresses the issue of workers' rights and we welcome the fact it addresses the issue of the way working people are going to be treated, and paying a price for, if you like, the post-Covid-19 pandemic. We also welcome the fact that it recognises the issue of a just transition to deal with climate

change issues but we do believe that the key message in the General Council Statement is one of solidarity and I want to pick up on that in just a minute.

I just want to pull on some of our own experiences in the CWU. The Statement from the General Council quite rightly recognises that we face a neo-liberal model of globalisation and what we have seen in the UK postal industry is a parcels boom. What we have is DPD, which is owned by La Poste in France, we have Hermes, which is owned by a United States equity company, we have Amazon, they are going to create 30,000 jobs and 20,000 seasonal jobs, but this is not just international ownership, it is about bogus self-employment, it is about insecure models of employment. What that leads to is, if you like, the undercutting of Royal Mail in a race to the bottom, which is why we have had to run a number of industrial action ballots in the last few years. The EU model of liberalisation allows Royal Mail to do exactly the same type of thing to incumbent postal operators across Europe and what we see is a drive down across Europe of members' terms and conditions. It is an absurd situation.

In the telecoms industry we have also seen, like a lot of other unions, union-busters brought in. We saw them at Virgin Media brought in by Liberty Global, another US company, and what we also see is a new alternative network, the Altnet broadband provision, where they all rely on an outsourcing model, an agency model of workers, and again a race to the bottom for terms and conditions and they are all owned by international investment banks and private equity firms. This is what we face.

Again, as the Statement recognises and as we have said, that we face a global neo-liberalism capitalist attack. Their response is going to be quite simple. Their response is they are coming for us. Their response is that as we are the people who stand in their way they are going to come for us. Our response needs to be, as a number of speakers have said, around the issue of solidarity but it is also time, we think, for us to do things differently. Let's take the Government, if the Government say they are going to set aside the rule of law, if it is good enough for them then it is going to have to be at some point good enough for us.

What we need is to look at ourselves. If we want a solidarity movement we have to begin by building that. We cannot have, like we have had in the past, general secretaries going to other forums and saying on investment it is about buses not broadband. We can have buses and broadband. We can have investment in rail and mail. We cannot have, as we have had before at this Congress, delegates telling us that we cannot have a say in particular sections of industry, and the economy, that impact on us all. We have to set aside our differences. We waste resources in terms of competing for membership and recruitment. What we need is to come together. We need joined up thinking on stuff like sectoral bargaining to stop this race to the bottom and if we are genuine, if we are genuine, then we have to do something different, we have to set aside our differences. If we fail, we are going to allow that free run to the bottom, the race to the bottom on terms and conditions that we talked about, and the attack will come on workers across the globe. They are going to come for us.

With our aspiration and our ambition we have a lot to gain here. We have the future to gain. The opportunities that face us now are that we have to stop what we have done in the past. We have to be united in this country, in this Trade Union Movement, and do things differently than we have done in the past, make sure we build a solidarity movement that can reach out across the globe, that can tackle the attacks that are going to come in the global neo-liberal capitalist approach.

The President: Thank you, Tony. Can I now ask Margaret Gregg from the GMB for her contribution. Margaret.

Margaret Gregg (GMB): Thank you, President. Congress. I am speaking in support of the General Council Statement on Global Recovery for Working People. The globalised nature of our world has never been more clearly exposed than by the Covid-19 pandemic which has rocked our economy and society to the core. Coronavirus reminded us that every day workers across the world, and our members, are the foundation that keeps society running. GMB supports this Statement's call to internationally reassert the right of working people to shape our own future after this pandemic. We know that trade unionism has never stopped at international borders.

As the global economy continues to exploit people and the planet, GMB will always fight for a better world against this unacceptable and unsustainable status quo. For too long we have been told that value in our society is created not by the nurses, the cleaners, or by what our members make, but instead by financial markets who make their wealth off the back of our members' labour. As we have heard, we know the status quo is neo-liberalisation, the same ideology that calls for the privatisation of our

public services at the expense of workers' protections that keep us safe for the benefit of private profit. Unscrupulous employers and hostile governments have gone to new lengths to defend it. Amazon, owned by the richest man in the world has found time in a global pandemic to advertise jobs for union busters because they see their employees joining a union as a threat.

Last year the ITUC global rights index found that 85% of countries worldwide have violated the right to strike. Our global recovery can be built from a new consensus one that tackles poverty and inequality wherever it is found and protects our planet for future generations by putting more power in the hands of working people. As Frances said, we need to fight and we need to fight harder than ever before and our continued solidarity with trade unions across Europe, and the world, will be vital.

This month GMB members in Scotch whiskey manufacturing came together with their American trade union comrades to demand fairness and a future UK/US trade deal so that tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs in both countries are not sacrificed in a deal negotiated behind closed doors. To ensure that the interests of working people are not turned against each other by unfairness or that it is exploited by the far right our international solidarity must start at home. GMB looks forward to working with the TUC and sister unions to do just that by organising across our workplaces and communities to build a better world that we know is possible. Congress, please support the General Council Statement.

The President: Thank you very much, Margaret. Finally, for this session we have Jackie Green from PCS. Over to you, Jackie.

Jackie Green (*Public and Commercial Services Union*): President, Congress, I am proudly supporting Statement 5. There is no going back from the events of 2020 and we should not want to and they are continuing. Whilst the year will always be remembered by generations as one bringing loss, fear, devastation, it has also brought into sharp focus the inequalities and injustice for people both social and economic. We have an opportunity to unite globally with unions to win a better life for our workers and our members and those in society who are not the privileged minority worldwide.

As the Statement identifies, the rules are not delivering for working people but multinational corporations along with governments who are turning the tragedy of Covid-19 into a financial matter that puts profit before the wellbeing of workers. As we are all aware, globally workers are being ignored and marginalised. This is made even more reprehensible because key workers have put their lives on hold and in many cases on the line to ensure that services are provided and people are cared for. The gratitude shown to them, and I am a civil servant, have been reflected in job cuts, redundancies, pay freezes, and a total disregard to health and safety.

It is crucial unions continue to campaign and mobilise resistance to further austerity. Covid-19 is not the cause of austerity, the opulence of capitalism is, but simply acknowledging that does not help workers unite. What unites workers globally is common ground, it is recognised by global union federations that trade unions and collective bargaining must be central to the efforts to tackle the crisis rather than being undermined by measures seeking to reduce workers' rights under the auspices

of emergency legislation. It is unions who must combat all attempts to reduce workers' wages and workers' rights both here in the UK and abroad. What action we take here has a profound impact elsewhere in the world.

I am proud PCS has an international strategy and good relations with our sister trade unions bilaterally and through European and global union federations. We work closely with affiliates, EPSU and PSI, and we have long been affiliated to trade unions and solidarity movements in the global South. We want to see that reflected across unions within Europe and then across the world because the world of workers face similar struggles and by working together through affiliation we are ably demonstrating similarities, highlighting our differences, campaigning and organising an army and giving our workers a voice, and we can create a social policy that is fair and equitable for all. I support.

The President: Thank you very much, Jackie, and thank you to everybody who contributed to that discussion. We will take a formal vote on the General Council Statement at the General Council Meeting later today. That concludes our session. There are still lots of ways you can get involved in the Congress. There are various online fringe events taking place this afternoon from 2 p.m. You can get details from the TUC's website and a record of all decisions taken at Congress will also be available on the website. Thank you very much for joining us. Congress is now adjourned. There is a General Council Meeting at 2 p.m. to complete our formal programme of business. To everyone else, I hope to see you in person at the TUC's 153rd Annual Congress which will be held next year in Liverpool, the home of Everton Football Club. Thank you very much and I hope to see you there. Goodbye.

Congress adjourned.