Labour's progressive trade policy Introduction

The National Policy Forum (NPF) is entering the final year of the current policy cycle,

which will culminate in a full, in-person meeting of the NPF to determine Labour's policy

platform. That platform will in turn contribute towards an election-winning manifesto for

the next general election.

The Britain in the World policy commission and its predecessor commissions have

consulted on a range of policy topics over the previous three years:

- In 2020, on championing internationalism in the post-coronavirus world;
- In 2021, on a strategy for veterans; and
- In 2022, on protecting our national interests and promoting Labour values abroad.

For this fourth and final year, the Britain in the World policy commission has chosen

to focus on Labour's progressive trade policy. We welcome submissions on this issue

 and specifically the seven consultation questions set out below – from Constituency

and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well

as contributions from expert third party organisations such as charities, think tanks,

businesses and civil society. Full details on how to make a submission can be found

on

### www.policyforum.labour.org.uk.

The outcomes of all four consultations will then be taken into account when the

commission produces its draft policy document for consideration at the full NPF meeting

in July 2023.











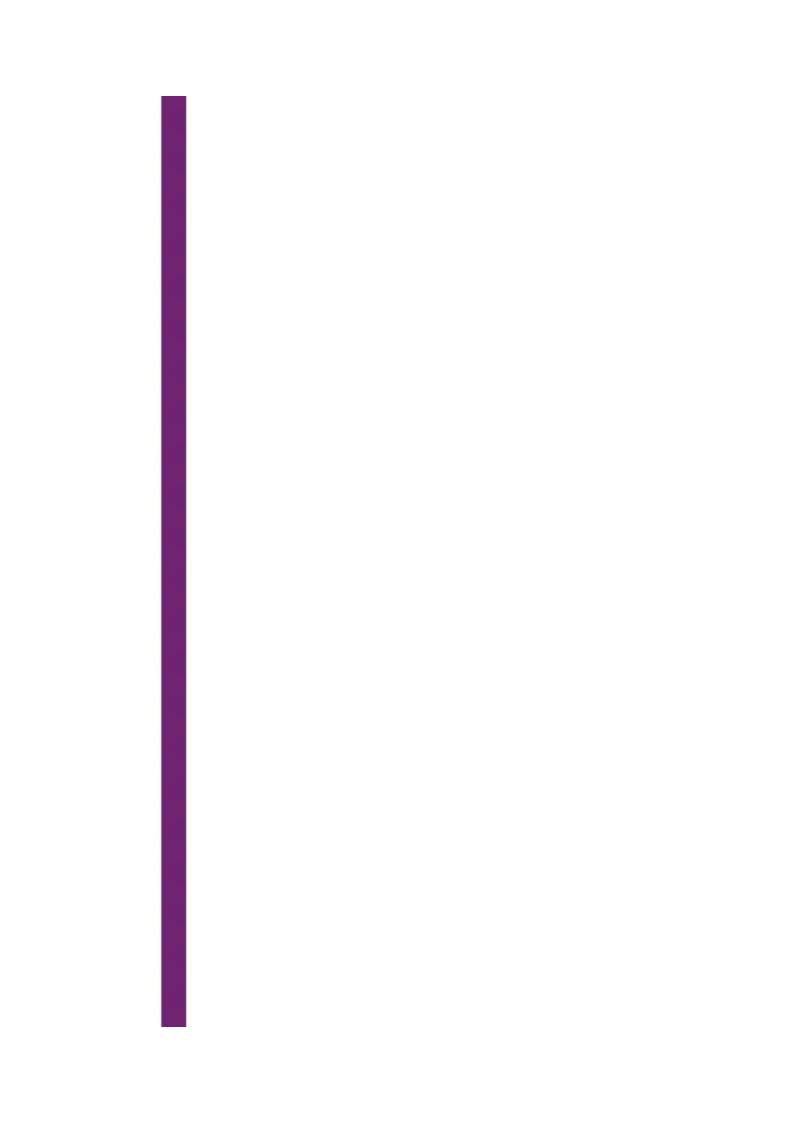
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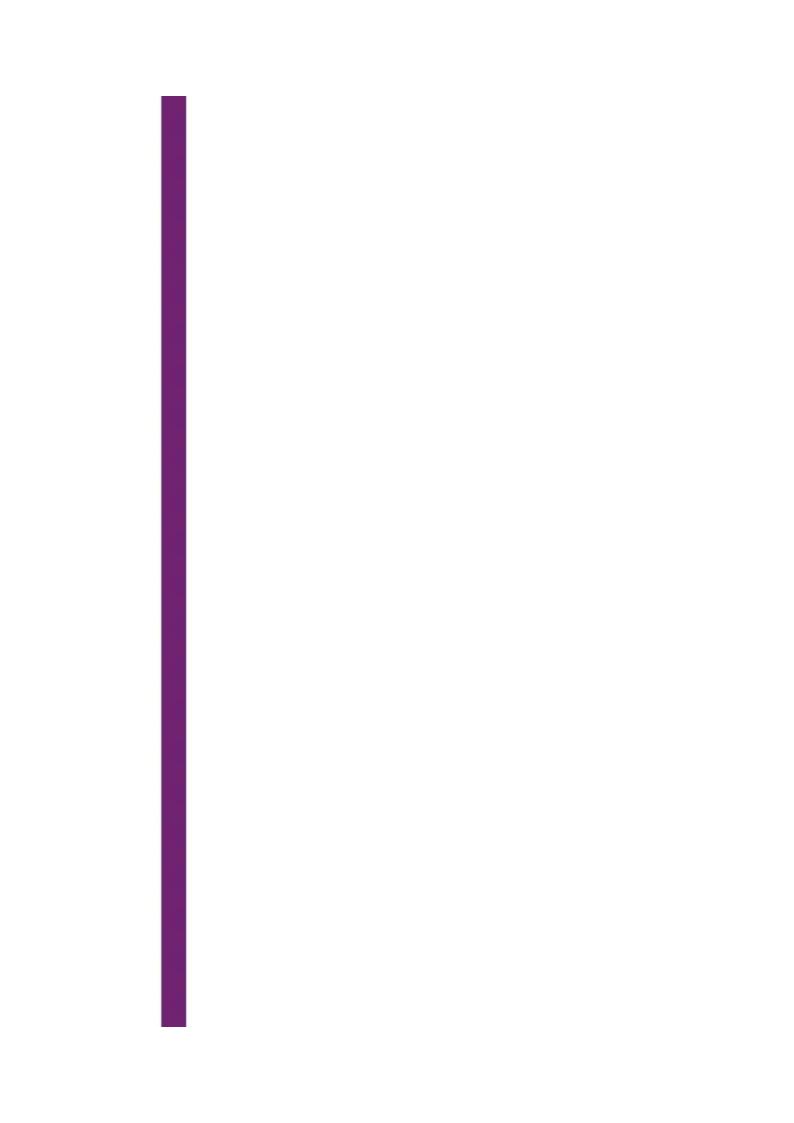




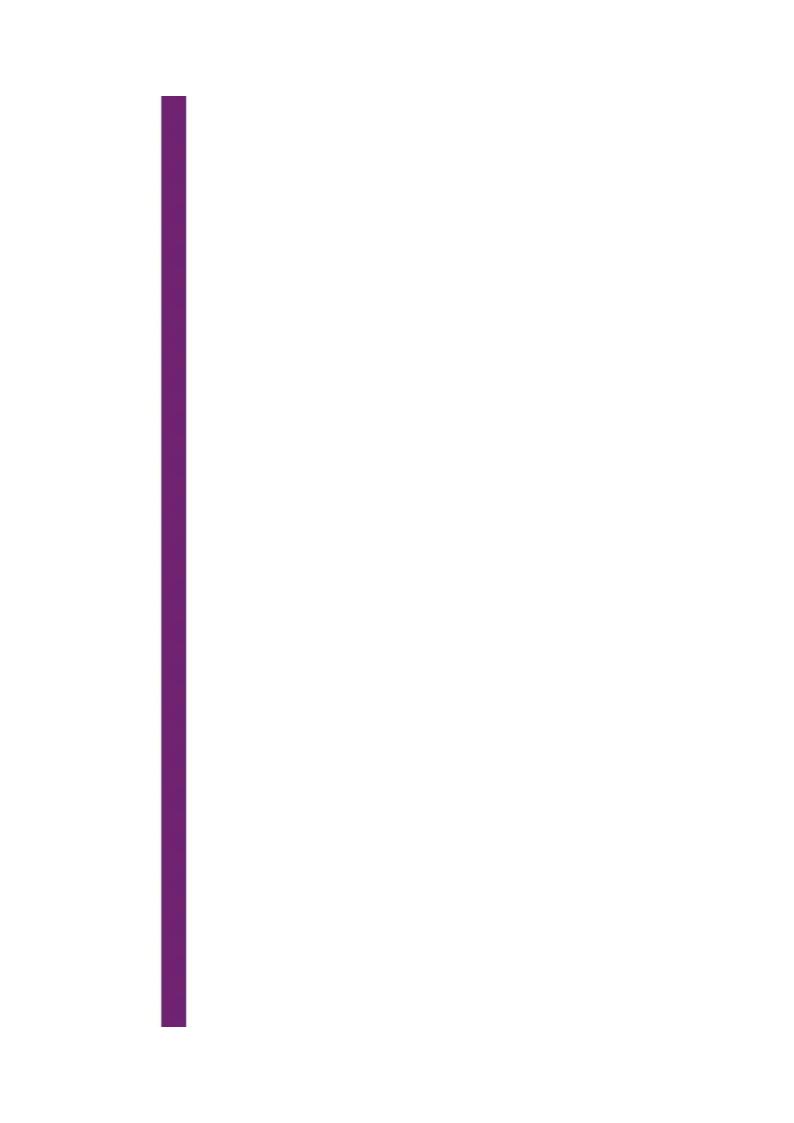












# 20236Britain in the world

#### Questions

1. What is the role of international trade in promoting domestic economic growth,

boosting jobs and driving up wages?

2. How can Labour ensure the UK's international trade policy promotes growth and

investment across the nations and regions of the UK?

3. How can Labour build resilience into the international trade system and better ensure

the security of essential supply chains?

4. How will a Labour government's trade policy reduce poverty and global inequality

whilst promoting (a) human rights, (b) workers' rights, (c) fair trade and (d) global

peace and security?

5. How can Labour use trade policy to deliver environmental protection and help drive

the world to net zero?

- 6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women,
- (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people
- and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?
- 7. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when

collaborating with devolved administrations and local governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?



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The context

Britain's trading relationships with the world are a key component of its foreign policy, providing an

opportunity to boost economic growth at home while promoting British values and interests abroad. Yet as

we approach the next general election, global trade faces a set of unprecedented challenges.

The outbreak of Covid-19 sent shockwaves across the international economic system, and global supply

chains have struggled to recover from the disruption of national lockdowns, including the dramatic

contraction and subsequent resurgence in demand for goods and services.

This is not something that

has been and gone; many countries continue to deal with outbreaks of the virus in 2023.

Meanwhile, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has led to soaring energy costs across Europe and driven

a global food crisis. Manufacturing costs have increased and household budgets have been squeezed,

placing significant strain on the everyday lives of working people.

In Britain, the challenges of global trade have been exacerbated by almost 13 years of Conservative

mismanagement, recklessness and neglect.

Having overseen our withdrawal from the European Union, the Conservative government failed to deliver

on the trade promises they made, with the UK economy left paying the price. Instead of prioritising exports,

growth and jobs across the UK, or taking a lead on using trade to tackle the climate crisis and workers'

rights, Conservatives simply cut and paste pre-existing deals that were negotiated decades ago.

In their 2019 manifesto, the Conservatives promised that 80 per cent of Britain's trade would be covered

by free trade agreements by the end of 2022, yet they have now missed their own deadline.

This failure to deliver on trade targets is incredibly damaging, leaving the UK economy missing out on billions

of pounds of potential opportunities that could boost growth here in the UK. Boris Johnson and Liz Truss repeatedly promised new trade deals with India and the US, but these are yet

to materialise.

Out of the few trade deals that have been signed, almost all have fallen short. Instead of aiming for

ambitious new trade deals with international partners, the Conservatives have rushed around in search of

the quickest agreements they can find, with no questions asked.

The Australian trade deal failed to include binding commitments on climate targets and risks undercutting

UK farmers through the removal of import tariffs. By the Conservatives' own admission.

"the UK gave away

far too much for far too little in return"

when negotiating the Australia deal.

In its negotiations with the EU, the Government's antagonistic approach repeatedly undermined progress

and soured key relationships, limiting any chance of a new kind of progressive agreement. The last minute

deal was far from what was promised, with significant gaps that make trading with European partners much

more burdensome than before..

Moving into 2023, the Northern Ireland Protocol impasse remains one of the most damming examples of the

Conservatives' failure on the international stage, with progress remaining slow. In government, Labour must

immediately get to work on securing a better deal for British people.

After 13 years of Conservative government, Britain's reputation as a reliable and trusted partner has

been significantly damaged. On trade, it is clear the Conservatives have no strategy, which is costing jobs,

investment and growth. Labour knows that Britain deserves better.













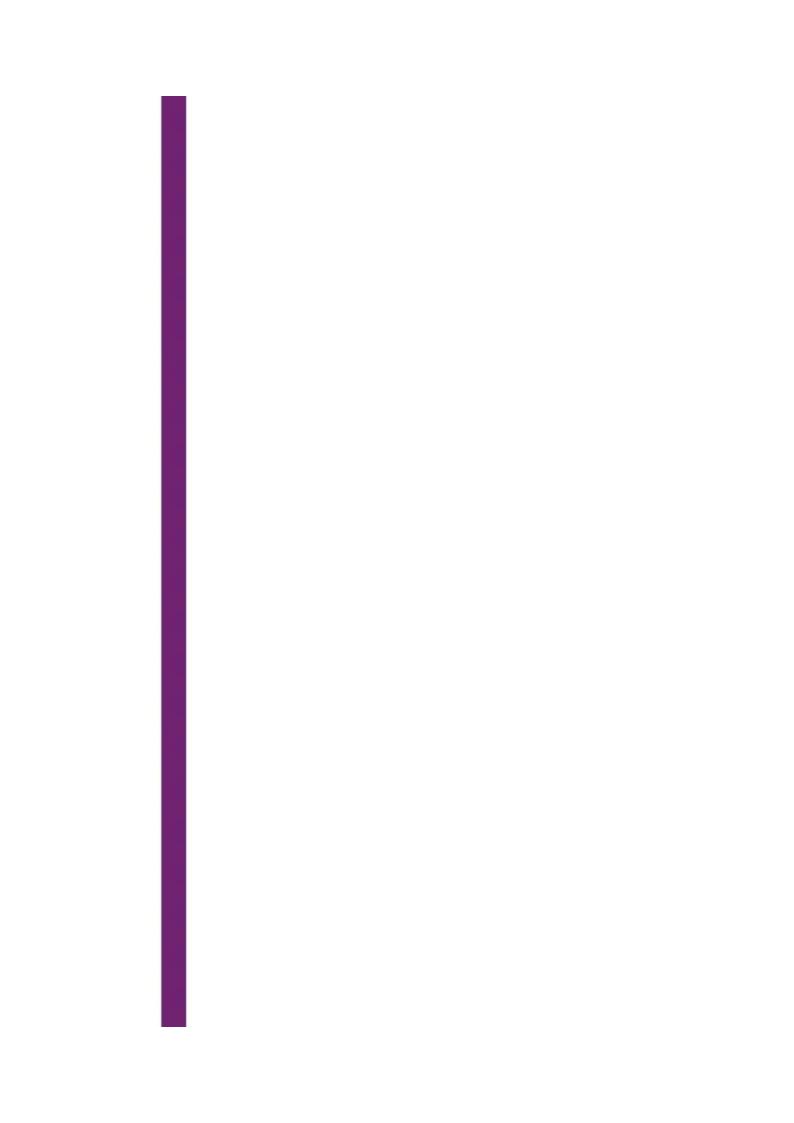
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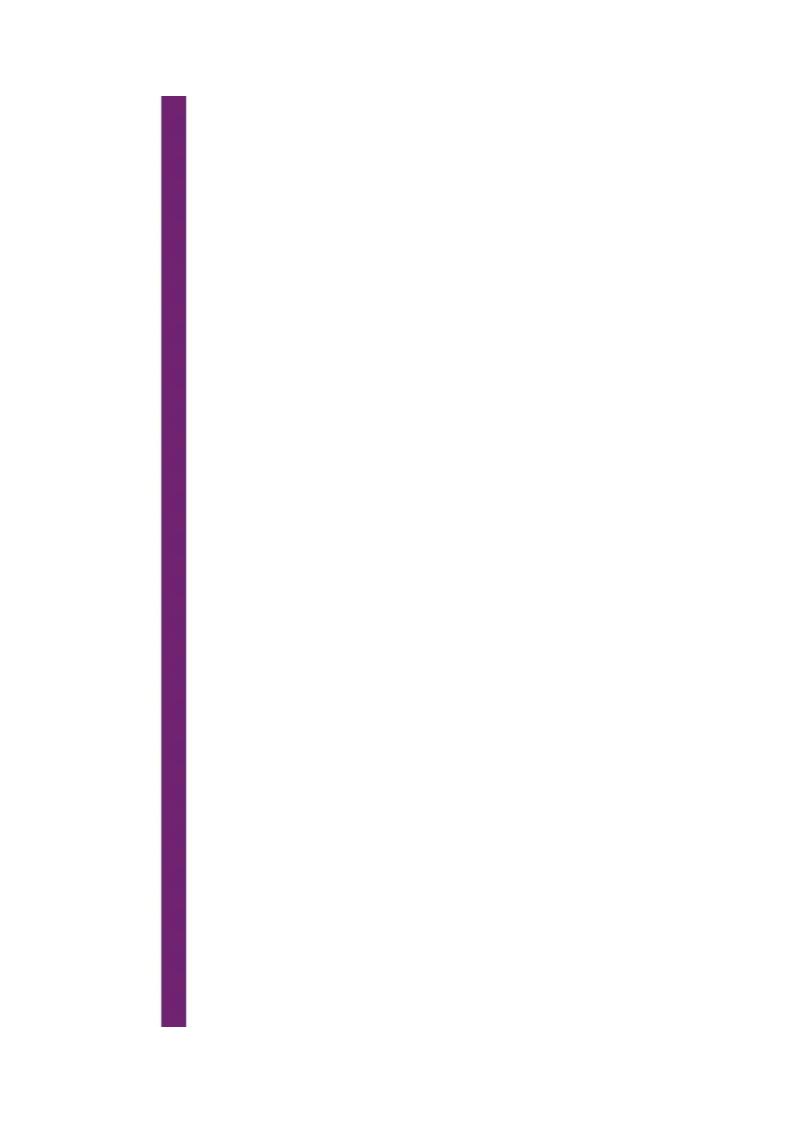




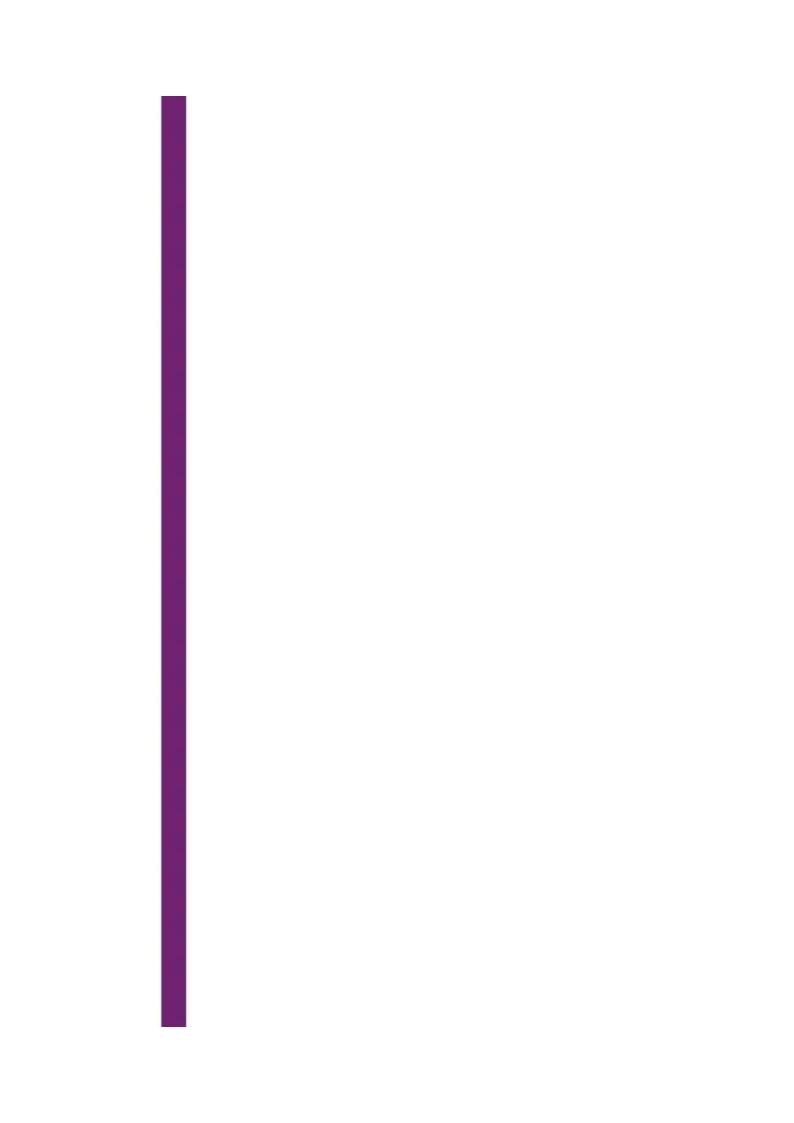












## 2023

Britain in the world

The future under Labour

In light of our withdrawal from the EU, Britain will need to develop a bespoke and flexible trade policy that is

fit for the future.

Negotiating an independent trading policy will be a significant challenge for a future Labour government.

It will fall to Labour to grow the UK's economy and show that Britain can once again be a force for good on

the international stage.

Heading into the next election, it is clear that Labour is the party of economic growth. The Labour Party

has already set out a clear plan to make Britain and its people better off, giving the country the fresh start

it needs.

International trade will be a vital part of this, helping deliver jobs at home while promoting Britain's principles

abroad. From defending workers' rights to tackling the climate crisis, the Labour Party has the opportunity to

develop a comprehensive trade policy that puts Labour values into action.

Building on the commission's previous consultation, where the NPF looked at the importance of promoting

Labour's internationalist values through multilateral alliances, promoting aid and bolstering democratic

systems, the commission will this year look to develop the party's position on trade.

The starting point must be the restoration of Britain's reputation as a trusted partner, both to our closest

neighbours in Europe and our allies further afield. Labour has already outlined plans to scrap the treaty-

breaking Protocol Bill and deliver real progress to ease trade, key first steps in building a new working

relationship with Europe and solving the Northern Ireland issue.

The Labour Party will make Brexit work outside of the single market and the customs union, helping to move

the country on from the arguments and divisions of the past. The veterinary agreement Labour will seek with

the EU would eliminate most checks in agricultural goods, but there is much more to do.

Labour will seek to use trade policy to boost the economy and promote jobs, to create a trading

environment that works for Britain. The UK is home to some of the best and most innovative businesses in

the world, but they need the right platform to thrive. Labour's international trade policy must support this,

particularly for businesses who rely on global supply chains.

Importantly, Labour understands that the benefits of trade must be felt across the whole of the UK.

The country simply cannot go on with a situation where just 1.4 per cent of exports are from the North

East and less than 5 per cent of exports originate from the East Midlands, compared to 25 per cent from

London and 21 per cent from the South East.

The recent Commission on the UK's Future chaired by Gordon Brown highlighted this disparity,

recommending a bigger role for devolved leaders as one way of tackling regional inequality.

Labour is keen to build on this, and is looking at how a Labour government can further open up

services and use trade to help level up across our regions and nations.

Following the recent disruption of the global pandemic and the war in Ukraine, Labour must consider what

lessons to learn about the resilience of international trade to global events and use trade policy to better

secure the UK's supply chains. This could include working closer with allies and partners to strengthen the

international trading system.

To tackle the climate crisis and seize the economic opportunities of decarbonisation, Labour has set out

plans to drive green British exports. At Annual Conference 2022, Shadow International Trade Secretary Nick

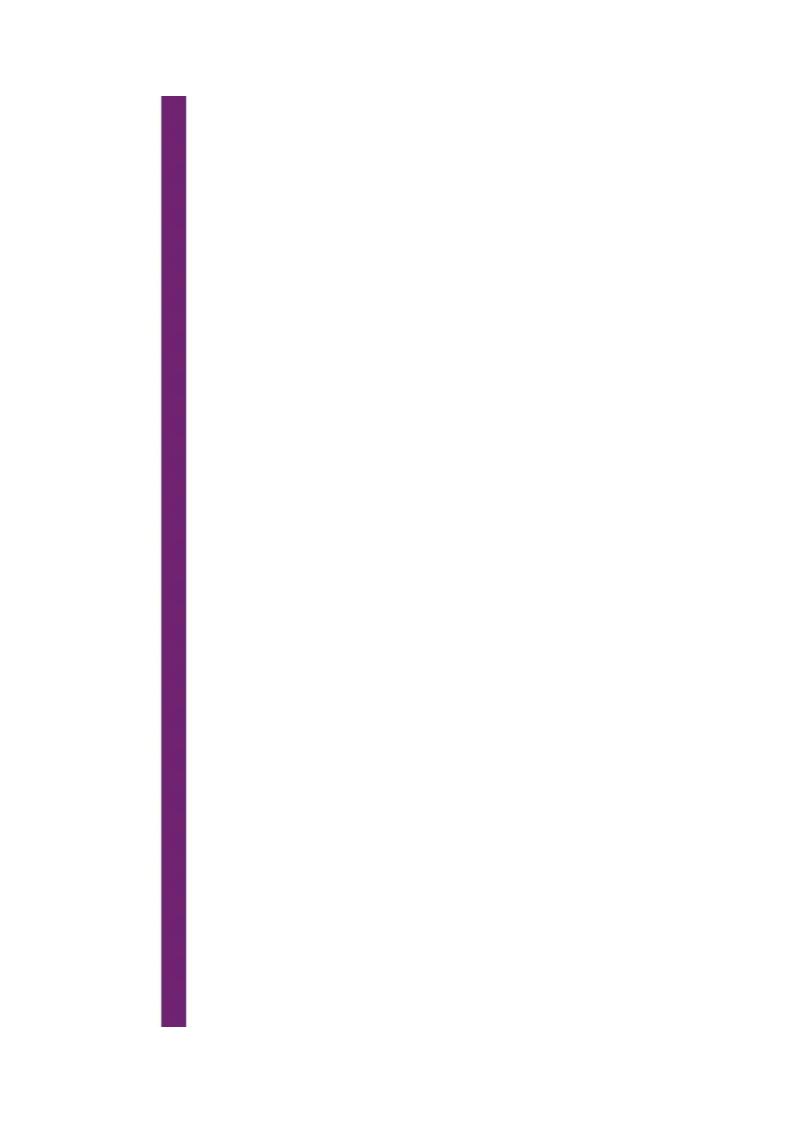
Thomas-Symonds explained how a new network of Climate Export Hubs will work with businesses, universities

and other innovators to take UK climate science innovations and export them

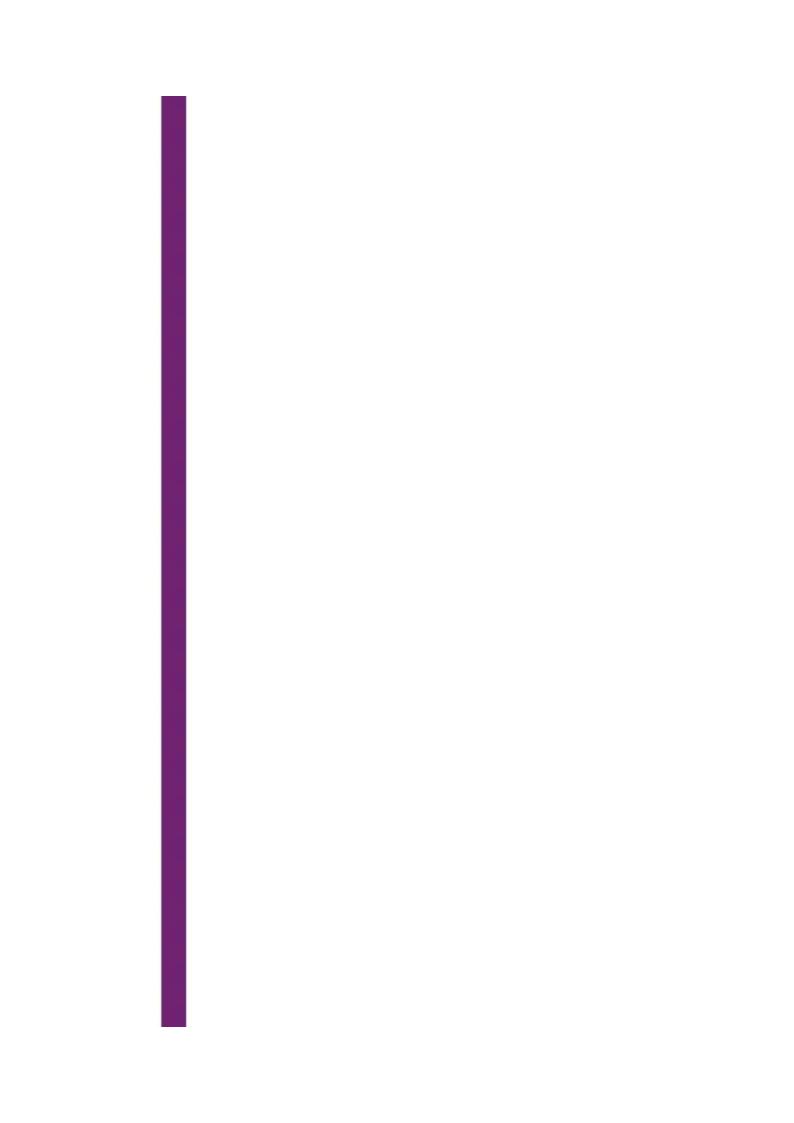
to the world. These export

hubs will support every region in the country – helping to create skilled jobs and opportunities nationwide.

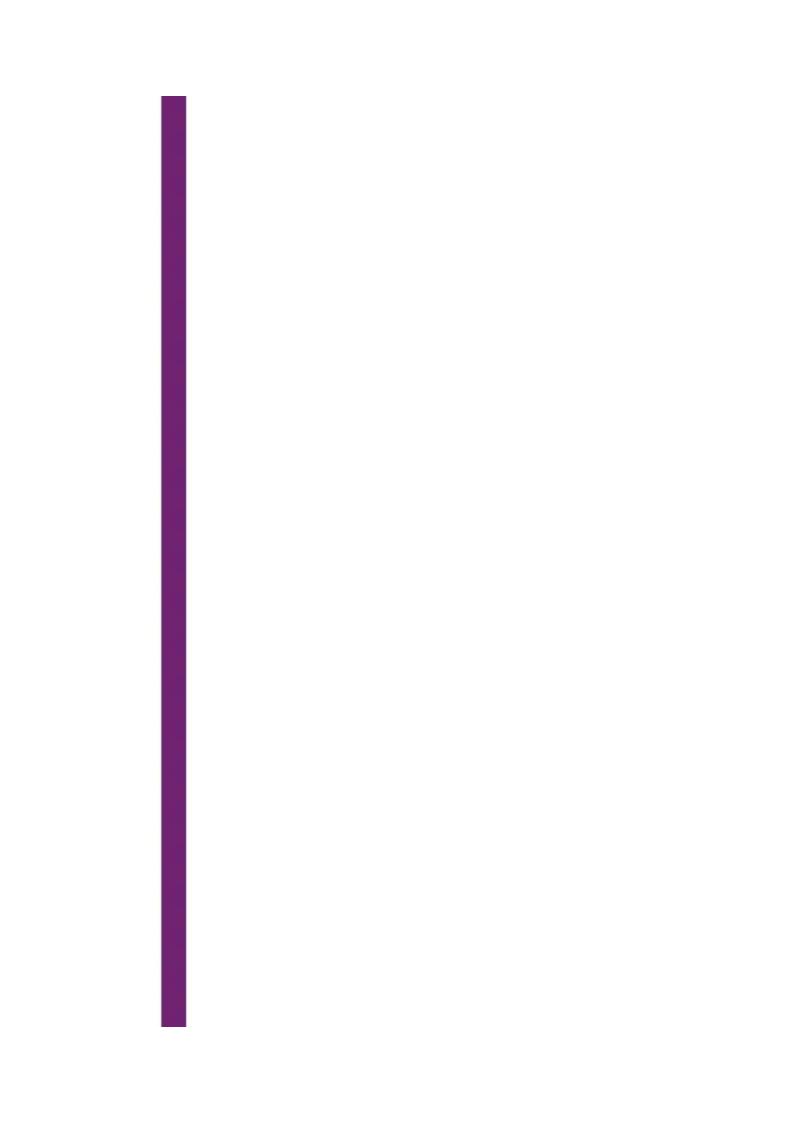




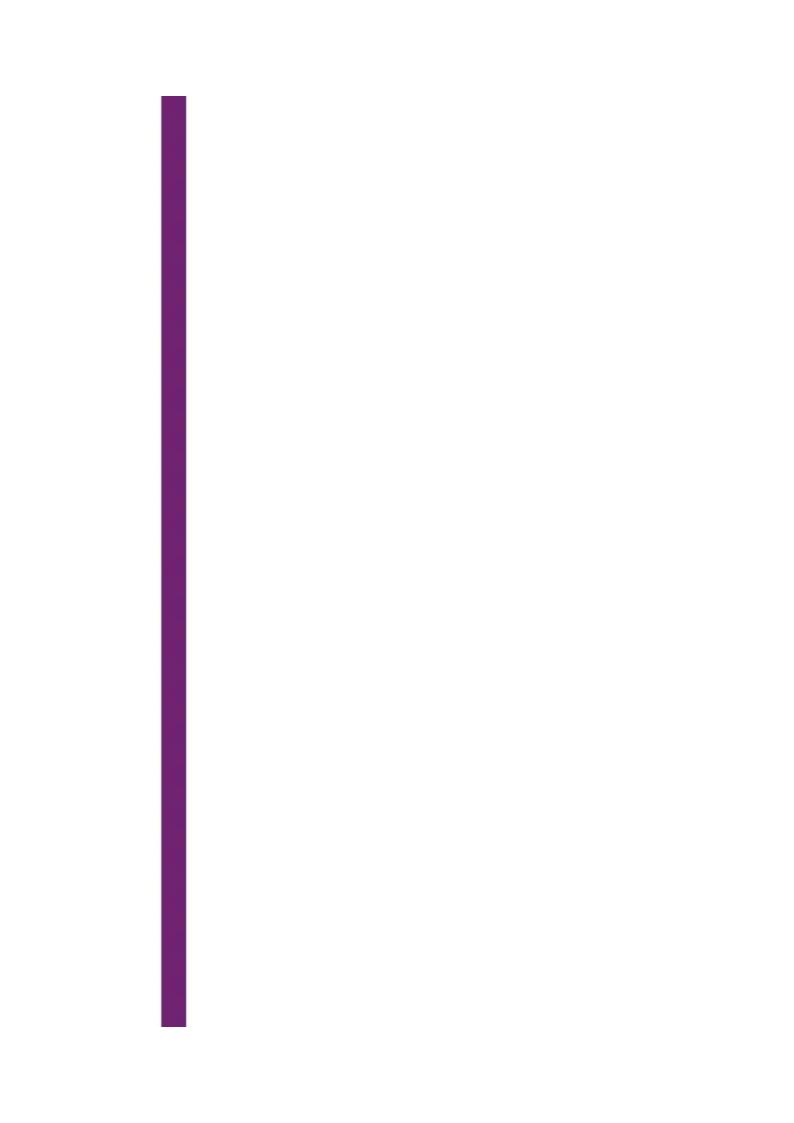




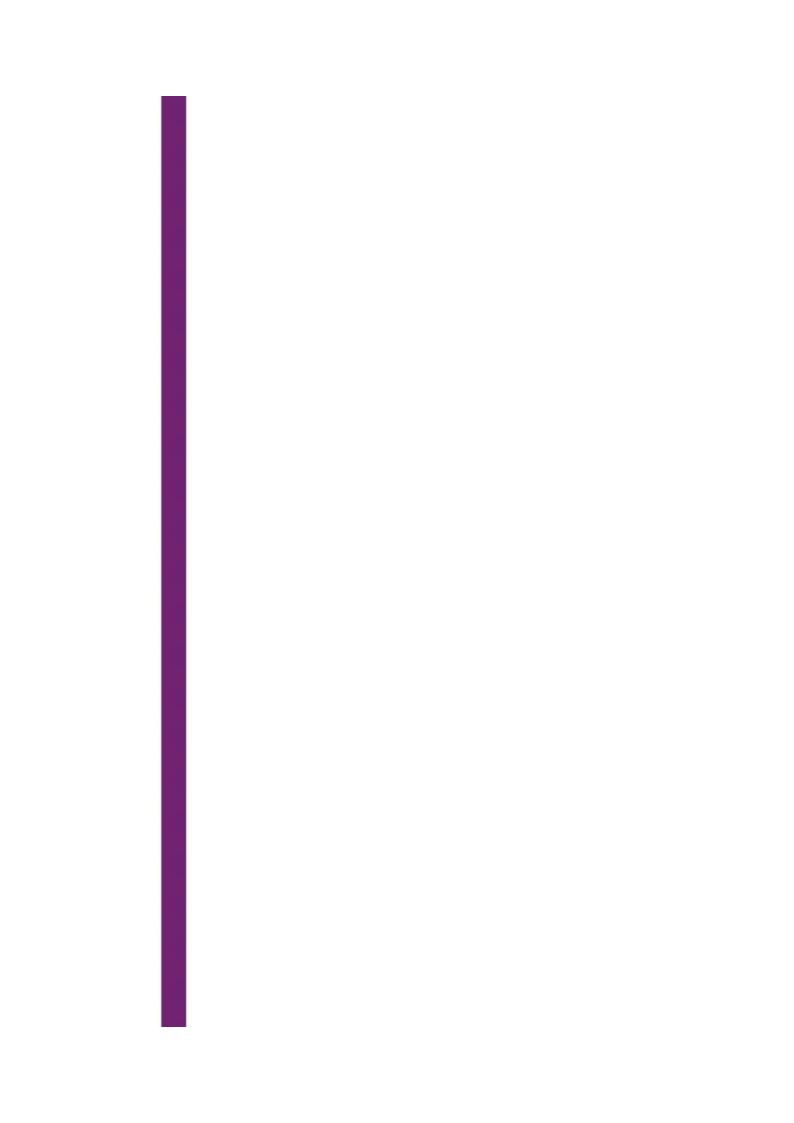




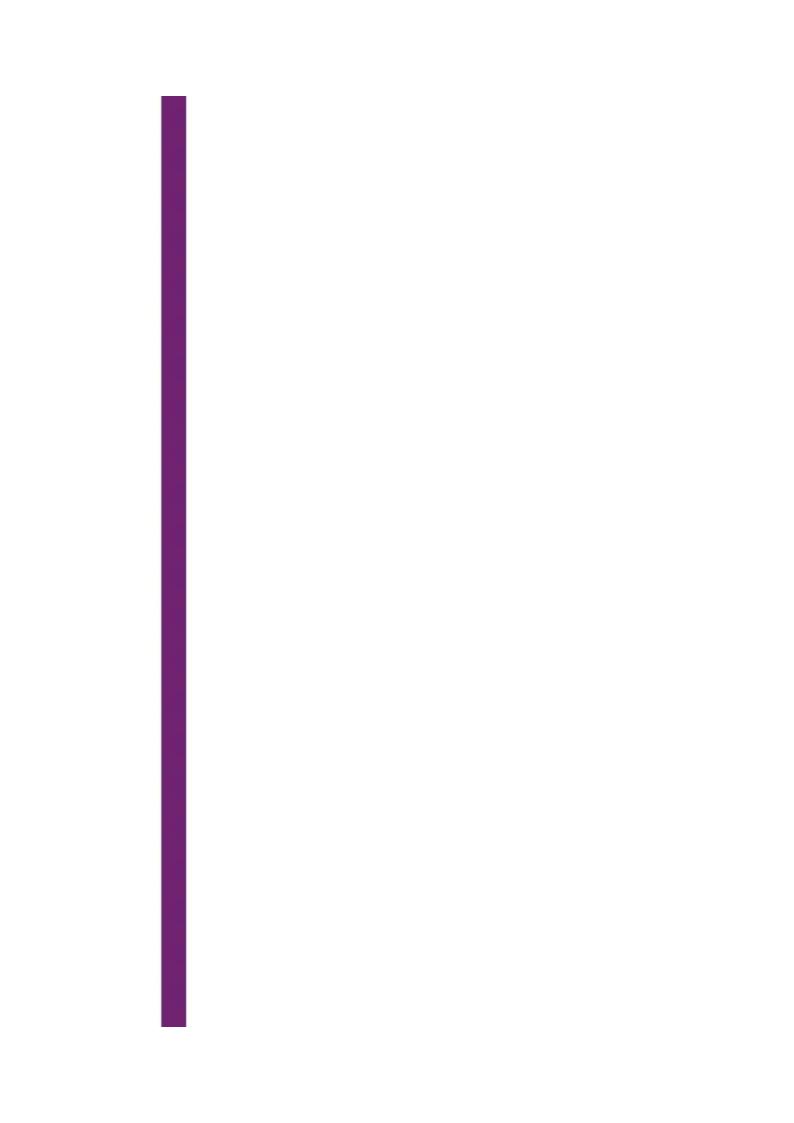




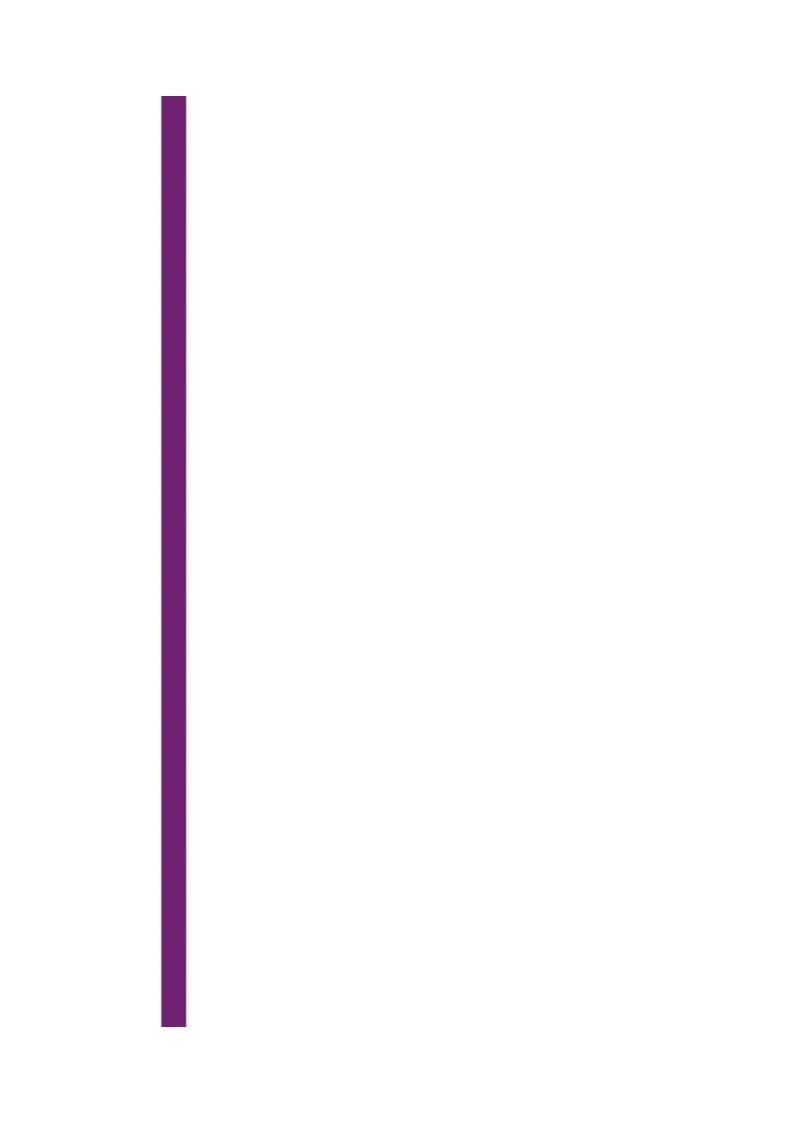












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## Britain in the world

Together with new rules to ensure that trade negotiators have binding responsibilities to deliver for the whole

of the UK, Labour's trade policy will help ensure that Britain becomes a global leader in the race to net zero.

These are strong first steps in the party's work to build a greener and fairer trade policy, but the commission

is keen to hear what more the party can do.

Workers' rights must be the heart of Britain's trade policy. Labour opposes a global race to the bottom on

standards and rights.

At home, this involves supporting wages and conditions in every sector of the UK economy. Labour can look

to examples such as the new era of partnership in Wales, where the devolved

government is working with

business and unions to co-develop policy, as positive examples of civic engagement. This will help Labour

to determine the best way of involving key partners, not just in relation to workers' rights chapters, but to

entire trade agreements. Internationally, this involves standing up for workers, often including women and

children, who are forced to work in extreme conditions. The UK must establish an effective means of working

with key international players, including China, on issues such as the climate crisis while calling out cases of

abuses of human rights.

Alongside an effective international development strategy, fair trade can play a key part in tackling poverty

and global inequality, a key goal for a future Labour government.

Above all else, Labour sees trade as a force for good. In government, Labour will secure deals that bring

investment while also promoting rights, climate action and ensuring higher standards. A Labour trade policy

should support future green jobs, promote technology and innovation and embrace a digital future.

Through this consultation, the Britain in the World commission looks forward to receiving a wide range of

thoughts and ideas on Labour's future trade policy, helping build the party's international policy platform in

this important final year of the NPF cycle