

## **LORD HOWELL SPEAKING NOTE**

### **CLIMATE & RESOURCE SECURITY CONFERENCE**

#### **EVENING RECEPTION, 22 MARCH 2012**

- On behalf of my colleague, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans at the Ministry of Defence, I am delighted to welcome you all to Lancaster House.
- Particularly like to welcome those of you who have travelled long distances - even from the other side of the world to be here.
- A significant proportion of you are from the security and military communities. We have invited you here because climate change and resource insecurity is a strategic, long-term challenge to our global security. One which needs a whole of government approach by every country. Successfully addressed they can help resolve some of the worst geopolitical imbalances of the twenty-first century.
- We will all be affected by the impacts of climate change. Different countries will face different challenges. But in a networked world we will all feel the effects.
- As the UK's Minister for the Commonwealth, it is clear to me that networks such as the Commonwealth, for example, present a particular opportunity for countries facing diverse and interrelated challenges to work together to overcome them, and indeed turn them

to advantage. This applies especially to smaller and island states who face acute problems of both climate change and energy supply.

- As delegates have been exploring today, the mounting nexus of insecurities relating to food, water, energy and climate pose increasing risks to the security of our global community, if wrongly handled and mismanaged by political ineptitude.
- Unaddressed these issues increase the risk of instability, conflict and poverty, in countries already experiencing global stress from issues such as, food, water and energy shortages, and poor health.
- We are keen for this conference to create an international dialogue on the long-term strategic issue of climate, resource and energy security. One that builds on past successes, such as the UN Security Council debate last year but also sets concrete outcomes for the future.
- We need to provide an effective response that accelerates us towards a low carbon, resource efficient growth model for the global economy, with greater general resilience against shocks.
- Such a shift is essential. It must be economically and politically feasible and achieved in a way that enhances rather than undermines the essential push for growth, and the essential campaign against world poverty.

- The last year has demonstrated the effect that political change can have on economic drivers, particularly in the energy market. The conflict in Libya, and escalating tension in Iran, have increased volatility across the region and seen a surge in fuel prices.
- With the International Energy Agency predicting that global energy demand could increase by over 50% in the next 25 years, there will may well be a need to increase production to avoid spiralling energy costs, although the miracles of energy-saving technology and low carbon technology can help offset rising consumption.
- Technological developments in energy efficiency, renewable and unconventional energy sources will be vital to achieve sustainable and affordable energy for all.
- In the UK we recognise the importance of taking a whole of Government approach to this whole set of threats. One which will shape our domestic and international action. Our national model is a work in progress. It is not perfect and wouldn't necessarily work for everyone. The important thing is that we are working on it.
- A clear example of this co-operation is that we had the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy & Climate Change opening this FCO event, and you now have an FCO Minister being joined this evening by a Ministry of Defence Minister.

- Why is the UK so interested in climate and resource security? It would be easy for the UK to sit back and say “it’s not our problem”. But that would be wrong. For whilst the UK is expected to escape the worst direct physical impacts of climate change – some may welcome the prospect of warmer winters – we live in a connected world where events many thousands of miles away impact on all of us. Tackling this global challenge requires a shared vision. A vision of high ambition.
- This is why we have convened this conference and I hope by the end of your discussions tomorrow afternoon that, together, we will have begun the essential work required to develop a framework for national, regional and international responses to the considerable challenge that both climate change and energy security pose to our future prosperity, stability and peaceful existence.
- I wish you a very pleasant evening and look forward to reading your conclusions at the end of the conference.