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## **Speech: Why Britain is helping poor girls get better education: article by Boris Johnson**

Movements such as #Time'sUp and #MeToo have rightfully moved sexism and discrimination out of the shadows and into the spotlight.

The problems we have in our own country are considerable and we must tackle them – robustly. But issues with gender equality in the UK should not stop or blind us to the flagrant sexism masquerading as 'tradition' that is not only holding millions of the world's poorest girls back but snatching away their futures.

It is sexism that says a girl's value is based on how many children she has, or the marital match she makes. And it's sexism that makes some parents invest more in their sons than in their daughters. The fact is patriarchal attitudes are shutting 130 million girls out of the classroom.

There are myriad reasons why in too many countries girls are not allowed to learn. Sometimes it's because of the chauvinistic attitudes and behaviour that have led to the economic oppression of women. Sometimes it's because governments lack the mettle to challenge traditions that leave women and girls stuck.

That's why Britain will lead by example. We will provide 1 million vulnerable girls across the Commonwealth with 12 years of quality education by 2030 and we're committing £212 million to make this a reality. Educating girls is manifestly in the global interest. It will boost economic growth, curb infant mortality rates, improve child nutrition and release the pressure valve of growing population numbers.

I will use the diplomatic muscle of the Foreign Office to get the world's poorest girls 12 years of quality education. Why 12 years, you ask? I've been inspired by Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai's calls for all girls to have free, safe and quality education. Twelve years is the level of education needed to move a girl from just surviving to truly thriving. And it's a

public commitment that we can't row back from.

We've already made major progress: In 2000, 2 out of every 10 girls of primary school age were out of school. Now it's below 1 in 10. Simple, practical steps will help girls learn, such as providing solar lamps so that girls can do homework when it's dark. Or free sanitary products so that girls won't miss school because they can't afford them. Even just bringing schools closer to where girls live will make a difference.

I want all 53 Commonwealth countries to commit to this vision because Britain cannot do this alone. It's not just a question of resources, the Commonwealth is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies but also half of the world's out-of-school girls. This is about priorities and countries challenging the sexism that is holding women and girls back. Imagine the impact if we pulled together.

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## [Speech: PM opening words at the CHOGM Retreat on 20 April 2018](#)

Good morning and welcome to Windsor Castle; as we've seen, a magnificent setting for us to meet, in the best Commonwealth tradition, in the intimacy and privacy of our Retreat.

First let me thank Her Majesty The Queen for her generous invitation into her home, the first time a Heads of Government meeting has been held here in a remarkable history.

I am also struck by the number of Heads of Government we have assembled here today – a powerful demonstration of our commitment to revitalise the Commonwealth, and to tap into its vast potential.

And that vast potential has been clear at the forums this week. Our Commonwealth family has spent the last four days sharing perspectives, and finding ways to make a real difference to people's lives. I think I speak for everyone around the room when I say that we have all been inspired by what we've seen and heard, particularly from our young people.

Yesterday we spoke about our shared challenges as we strive to build a more sustainable, more prosperous, more secure and fairer Commonwealth. Today is a chance to build on that, and for the Commonwealth Heads of Government to talk frankly and openly within the tradition of the Retreat.

Of course a conversation about these challenges cannot ignore the fact that at the very moment international co-operation is so important, some nations are choosing instead to shun the rules-based system that underpins global security and prosperity.

So I look forward to discussing how the Commonwealth can play its part to support this rules-based order, and the very concept of international co-operation.

Today, we also have a number of specific decisions to take, together with a broader conversation about the common future for the Commonwealth that we all want to see.

So I am sure today will be a memorable occasion for all of us, by the end of which I am sure we will all leave even closer friends, and with a unique understanding of each other in ways which cannot be matched by other summits.

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## **Press release: Significant fine for water company following hazardous chemical leak**

On 19 April 2018, at Derby Crown Court, sitting in Nottingham, Severn Trent Water Limited was fined £350,000, ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £68,003, as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

An estimated 30,000 dead fish and 5km of damaged ecology along the River Amber led to proceedings brought against Severn Trent Water Limited following a pollution incident.

On 1 November 2015, the Environment Agency received reports of several hundred dead fish in the River Amber in Derbyshire and, following a search of the area, and discussions with Severn Trent Water employees, the source of the pollution was found to be a release of sodium hydroxide from the Ogston Water Treatment works, operated by Severn Trent Water, into the river.

Severn Trent Water identified that a leak within a chamber at the Treatment works had led to the contents becoming contaminated with sodium hydroxide, which was then washed through the road gully into the River Amber via an outfall pipe.

The pollution had a significant negative impact on the fish and invertebrate populations within the River Amber. The Environment Agency has been monitoring the natural recovery of the river ecology over the last two years. Monitoring has shown that whilst there has been some improvements, something resembling a full recovery is not expected until the summer of this year.

In passing sentence, His Honour Judge Smith found that:

It beggars belief that a company of the size and expertise of

Severn Trent Water had no policy whatsoever in respect of potential incidents arising in connection with their dosing chamber, either at this treatment works or indeed at any others throughout the UK. To have no policy whatsoever when dangerous chemicals could have leaked out in any number of ways is highly negligent. The size and success of Severn Trent makes it even more astonishing.

In mitigation Severn Trent expressed regret and apologises for the incident. The company co-operated fully with the investigation and contributed £228,000 to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency officer involved with the investigation said:

This is a significant fine imposed on Severn Trent Water Limited for causing pollution. I hope it sends a strong message that it is far more cost effective to avoid these incidents, as we will continue to take companies and individuals to task where they ignore their responsibilities.

Pollution causes damage to the environment and river ecology, in this case sodium hydroxide with a concentration of 20% amounts to a hazardous chemical and the leak affected 5km of the River Amber and killed approximately 30,000 fish and damaged other wildlife.

We encourage anyone who sees suspected pollution to call our incident hotline 0800 90 80 70 so we can act to reduce damage, investigate and in serious cases take enforcement action.

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