

Conservative Party Conference Speech

The Prime Minister – The Rt Hon David Cameron MP, October 6th 2010

It is an honour and a privilege to stand here, before the party I lead, before the country I love, as the Conservative prime minister of the United Kingdom.

I want to tell you today, in the clearest terms I can, what we must do together, and what we can achieve together.

But first, let's remember where we've come from. Three defeats. Thirteen party conferences – 4,757 days in the wilderness.

Remember what they said about us? They called us a dead parrot. They said we had ceased to be. That we were an ex-party.

Turns out we really were only resting – and here we are. Back serving our country. Together in the national interest. Giving Britain the good, strong government it deserves.

There are so many we need to thank for that. The British people. You have given us a chance and we will work flat out to prove worthy of that chance.

I want to say a big thank you to those who led this party before me. William Hague got us back on our feet. Iain Duncan Smith helped us get back our heart. Michael Howard gave us back our confidence.

I know that I am standing here as prime minister because they stood up for this party in good times and bad, and I will always remember that.

And it is impossible to pay tribute to previous leaders of this party, without mentioning the greatest peacetime prime minister of the 20th century.

Next week, Margaret Thatcher celebrates her 85th birthday. She'll be doing it in Downing Street, and I know everyone in this hall will want to wish her well.

But there are some very special people I'd like to thank – you, the people of this party. I can't thank all of you individually – but I am going to single one of you out.

His name is Harry Beckough. Harry joined our party in 1929 to fight Stafford Cripps. Since then, across 81 years and 21 elections, Harry has been with us.

When Churchill warned of an iron curtain, Harry was with us. When this country had never had it so good, Harry was with us. When a lady refused to turn, Harry was with us.

This year, when we fought the general election, Harry – aged 96 – was there, manning the loudhailer on the battle bus in Marlborough. And I'm delighted to say Harry is with us here today.

I tell you something – this is a party for all generations. Harry, without people like you we wouldn't be here – and our party wouldn't be in government. So thank you for everything you've done, and all you represent.

I'll never forget the night of 6 May. Watching the results coming in. The Tories back in the north. Winning in Wales. Sweeping across West Yorkshire. Taking seats we hadn't won in decades: Carlisle. Cannock. Thurrock. The end of a Labour government that had done so much damage.

But, also, as I drove to London, there was that growing sense that we just weren't going to make it across the winning line.

I went to bed at about 7am in a hotel, wishing like anything I was at home with Sam and the little ones, not knowing where it was all heading.

I woke up two hours later and felt sure of the answer. The country wants leadership, not partisanship.

Try the big thing. Do the right thing. Succeed and you can really achieve something. Fail and, well, at least you tried.

I know there are a few who say that we should have sat tight, waited for our opponents to fall out and brought in a minority government. But a minority government would have limped through parliament, unable to do anything useful for our country.

The voters left us with a hung parliament and they wanted us to respond responsibly, to do the right thing, not play political games.

So I set out to form a strong, stable, coalition government. And I want to thank Nick Clegg for what he did.

There were loads of phone calls and meetings in those five hectic days in May. My daughter Nancy asked at breakfast one morning: "Daddy, why are you spending so much time with this man Nick Leg?"

Nick and I didn't agree about everything. He wanted clearer pledges on PR. I wanted them on the family.

When I told him what I really thought of the European parliament, he said: "My God, it's worse than I thought."

But we recognised we could work together. Not just lots of shared values, like wanting a country that is more free, more fair, more green, more decentralised, but a shared way of trying to do business.

Reasonable debate, not tribal dividing lines. Give and take. Respect when you disagree. Trust. A sense that politics shouldn't be so different from the rest of life, where rational people do somehow find a way of overcoming their disagreements.

Nick Clegg is not just sitting in government trying to win a few concessions here and there. The Liberal Democrats are proper partners, getting stuck in, making big decisions, shaping what we do and taking responsibility.

That's why we can form a proper government and you can be proud of what we've done together.

Now, I know there will be compromise, and I know we'll have to do things we might not like.

Next May, there'll be a referendum on electoral reform. I don't want to change our voting system any more than you do. But let's not waste time trying to wreck the bill – let's just get out there and win the vote.

Because you know what? At its best, this party always puts country first. We'll leave the vested interests to others.

And no, we're not about self-interest either. This is the party of the national interest and, with this coalition, that's what we're showing today.

People wondered what a coalition could achieve. But just look at what we are achieving already – together, in the national interest.

Conservative policies, policies you campaigned on, policies we are delivering. Two hundred new academies. Ten thousand university places. Fifty thousand apprenticeships.

Corporation tax – cut. The jobs tax – axed. Police targets – smashed. Immigration – capped. The third runway – stopped. Home Information Packs – dropped. Fat cat salaries – revealed. ID Cards – abolished. The NHS – protected. Our aid promise – kept.

Quangos – closing down. Ministers' pay – coming down. A bank levy – coming up. A cancer drugs fund – up and running. £6bn of spending saved this year. An emergency budget to balance the books in five years. An EU referendum lock to protect our sovereign powers every year.

For our pensioners – the earnings link restored. For our new entrepreneurs – employees' tax reduced. And for our brave armed forces – the operational allowance doubled.

Look what we've done in five months. Just imagine what we can do in five years.

In five years time, our combat troops will have left Afghanistan. This party has steadfastly supported our mission there, and so will this government.

But that does not mean simply accepting what went before. In our first few weeks in office, we set a clear new direction. Focused. Hard-headed. Time-limited.

We are not in Afghanistan to build a perfect democracy. No dreamy ideas. Just hard-headed national security – pure and simple.

Almost every terrorist who took part in 9/11 was trained by al-Qaida in Afghanistan. If we left tomorrow, those training camps could easily come back, because Afghans are not yet capable of securing their own country.

But we will not stay a day longer than we need to. British combat forces will not remain in Afghanistan after 2015.

By then, they will have been there for 14 years and in Helmand province for nine – three years longer than world war two.

For those who have served; for those who bear the scars; and for those who will never come home, this country has gratitude beyond words.

This government has set a new direction right across our foreign policy.

Our principles are simple. Don't neglect important relationships. Already we are restoring ties with India, with allies in the Gulf, with our friends in the Commonwealth.

Don't make commitments without the right resources. Today, we're geared up to fight old wars. We have armoured brigades ready to repel Soviet tanks across the German plain.

But we struggled to provide enough helicopters for our soldiers in Afghanistan, for the real war we are really fighting.

Since becoming prime minister, nothing has shocked me more than the complete mess of the defence budget we inherited.

So our defence review will match our commitments with the resources we've got. This will mean some big changes. But I promise you this: I will take no risks with Britain's security.

That's why, when more and more countries have or want nuclear weapons, we will always keep our ultimate insurance policy, we will renew our nuclear deterrent based on the Trident missile system.

But Britain's reputation is not just about might. It's about doing what is right. When this country has got it wrong, we'll admit it, as I did when I apologised for Bloody Sunday.

When there's a cloud hanging over our reputation, we'll address it, as we have done by setting up an inquiry into whether this country was complicit in the mistreatment of detainees.

We will always pursue British interests, but there are some red lines we must never cross.

Like the sight of the man responsible for the Lockerbie bombing, the biggest mass murderer in British history, set free to get a hero's welcome in Tripoli. No. It was wrong, it undermined our standing in the world, and nothing like that must ever happen again.

When I walked into Downing Street as prime minister, I was deeply conscious that I was taking over the heaviest of responsibilities, not least for the future of our United Kingdom.

Tony Blair, Gordon Brown – and John Major before them – worked hard to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland, and I will continue their work.

And as the threat of dissident republican terrorism increases, I want to make it clear that we will protect the people of our country with every means at our disposal.

And I want to make something else clear. When I say I am prime minister of the United Kingdom, I really mean it. England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland – we're weaker apart, stronger together, so together is the way we must always stay.

But there is another side to life as prime minister. Like being made to watch the England football team lose 4-1 to Germany, in the company of the German chancellor.

It's a form of punishment I wouldn't wish on anyone. I have to say, she is one of the politest people I have ever met – every time their players scored another goal, she would turn to me and say: "I really am terribly sorry."

It's brought a whole new element to Anglo-German diplomatic relations: whatever you do, don't mention the score.

But however different life has got as prime minister, there's one thing that, for me, has stayed the same. My belief about how this country needs to change.

Let's start by being honest with ourselves. The mess this country is in – it's not all because of Labour.

Of course, they must take some of the blame. Alright - they need to take a lot of the blame.

Let me just get this off my chest. They left us with massive debts, the highest deficit, overstretched armed forces, demoralised public services, endless ridiculous rules and regulations and quangos and bureaucracy and nonsense.

They left us a legacy of spinning, smearing, briefing, back-biting, half-truths and cover-ups, patronising, old-fashioned, top-down, wasteful, centralising, inefficient, ineffective, unaccountable politics, 10p tax and 90 days detention, an election bottled and a referendum denied, gold sold at half price and council tax doubled, bad news buried and Mandelson resurrected, pension funds destroyed and foreign prisoners not deported, Gurkhas kept out and extremist preachers allowed in.

Yes, they deserve some blame, and we'll never let them forget it.

But the point I want to make is this. The state of our nation is not just determined by the government and those who run it. It is determined by millions of individual actions – by what each of us do and what we choose not to do.

Yes, Labour failed to regulate the City properly. But they didn't force those banks to take massive risks with other people's money.

Yes, Labour tried to boss people around and undermined responsibility. But they weren't the ones smashing up our town centres on a Friday night or sitting on their sofas waiting for their benefits.

Yes, Labour centralised too much and told people they could fix every problem. But it was the rest of us who swallowed it, hoping that if the government took care of things, perhaps we wouldn't have to.

Too many people thought: "I've paid my taxes, the state will look after everything."

But citizenship isn't a transaction in which you put your taxes in and get your services out. It's a relationship – you're part of something bigger than you, and it matters what you think and feel and do.

So to get out of the mess we're in, changing the government is not enough. We need to change the way we think about ourselves, and our role in society.

Your country needs you, and today I want to tell you about the part we've all got to play, and the spirit that will take us through.

It's the spirit I saw in a group of NHS maternity nurses in my constituency who told me they wanted to form a co-op to use their own ideas and their nous to help new parents.

It's the spirit you see just down the road in Balsall Heath, where local residents' street patrols have turned a no-go area into a place where people can once again feel safe.

It's the spirit that, just today, has seen some of our leading social organisations come together to set up a new Citizen University, to help give people the skills they need to play a bigger part in society.

It's the spirit of activism, dynamism, people taking the initiative, working together to get things done.

Sometimes that spirit gets taken a little too far. I got a letter from a six-year-old girl called Niamh with a pound coin stuck to it. And there was a note from her mum, which said: "Dear Mr Cameron ... after hearing about the budget, Niamh wanted to send you her tooth fairy money to help."

There we are, George – nearly there. Niamh: thankyou.

What I'm talking about, the spirit we need, is the big society spirit – and here's why I think its time has come.

All over the world, governments are wrestling with the same challenges. Not just building prosperous, competitive economies, providing good public services and paying for pensions but creating strong societies, improving quality of life, ensuring that everyone feels they belong.

The countries that succeed will be those that find new ways of doing things, new ways of harnessing the common good, better alternatives to the old-fashioned state, and we're on the right side of that argument.

Here at home, at this year's election, the result may not have been clear-cut when it came to the political parties. But it was clear enough when it came to political ideas.

The old way of doing things: the high-spending, all-controlling, heavy-handed state, those ideas were defeated. Statism lost ... society won. That's what happened at the last election and that's the change we're leading.

From state power to people power. From unchecked individualism to national unity and purpose. From big government to the big society.

The big society is not about creating cover for cuts. I was going on about it years before the cuts.

It's not government abdicating its role, it is government changing its role.

It's about government helping to build a nation of doers and go-getters, where people step forward not sit back, where people come together to make life better.

Of course the cynics and the defeatists will say it can't be done, that we're stuck in some inevitable decline. But that's what they said in the 70s. They were wrong then – and we'll prove them wrong again.

We can build a country defined not by the selfishness of the Labour years but by the values of mutual responsibility that this party holds dear.

A country defined not by what we consume but by what we contribute. A country, a society where we say: I am not alone. I will play my part. I will work with others to give Britain a brand new start.

Over the coming months, we will need that spirit as we face up to our financial responsibilities. Everyone knows that this government is undertaking a programme of spending cuts.

I know how anxious people are. "Yes", they say: "of course we need to cut spending. But do we have to cut now, and by this much? Isn't there another way?"

I wish there was another way. I wish there was an easier way. But I tell you: there is no other responsible way.

Back in May, we inherited public finances that can only be described as catastrophic. This year, we will borrow more money than we spend on the NHS. Just think about that.

Every doctor's salary. Every operation. Every heating bill in every hospital. Every appointment. Every MRI scan. Every drug. Every new stethoscope, scalpel, hospital gown.

Everything in our hospitals and surgeries – paid for with borrowed money, much of it from abroad. And then think about the interest.

This year, we're going to spend £43bn on debt interest payments alone. £43bn – not to pay off the debt – just to stand still.

Do you know what we could do with that sort of money? We could take 11 million people out of paying income tax. We could take every business in the country out of corporation tax.

That's why we have acted decisively – to stop pouring so much of your hard-earned money down the drain.

And it's stopped us slipping into the nightmare they've seen in Greece, confidence falling, interest rates rising, jobs lost and in the end, not less but more drastic spending cuts than if you'd acted decisively in the first place.

Our emergency budget showed the world that Britain is back on the path of fiscal responsibility.

It took us out of the danger zone – and the man we have to thank for that is George Osborne.

The world has backed us. Our credit rating – the mark of trust in our economy – has been preserved. The International Monetary Fund, the G20, yes even the EU. They support what we're doing.

There's just one group of people who don't. You guessed it, the people who mortgaged Britain to the hilt in the first place – Labour.

Labour's plan is just to halve the deficit over four years. Let me tell you what that means.

It means that even after years of cuts, not only would the national debt still be growing, it would be growing as a share of our national income.

The problem would still be getting worse. And as a result, the cuts would be bigger, not smaller because the interest payments on that debt would be higher.

That's why it's right to deal with this problem now, and right to deal with it properly.

And I promise you that if we pull together to deal with these debts today, then just a few years down the line the rewards will be felt by everyone in our country.

More money in your pocket. More investment in our businesses. Growing industries, better jobs, stronger prospects for our young people. And the thing you can't measure but you just know it when you see it, the sense that our country is moving forwards once again.

The big society spirit means facing up to this generation's debts, not shirking responsibility. And here I want to say something to the people who got us into this mess. The ones who racked up more debt in 13 years than previous governments did in three centuries.

Yes you, Labour. You want us to spend more money on ourselves, today, to keep racking up the bills, today and leave it to our children – the ones who had nothing to do with all this – to pay our debts tomorrow?

That is selfish and irresponsible.

I tell you what: these Labour politicians, who nearly bankrupted our country, who left a legacy of debts and cuts, who are still in denial about the disaster they created. They must not be allowed anywhere near our economy, ever, ever again.

Reducing spending will be difficult. There are programmes that will be cut. There are jobs that will be lost. There are things government does today that it will have to stop doing.

Many government departments will have their budgets cut by, on average, 25% over four years. That's a cut each year of around 7%.

Of course, that's big. But let's remember, a lot of businesses have had to make the same or bigger savings in recent years.

And when we're done with these cuts, spending on public services will actually still be at the same level as it was in 2006.

The spending cuts we do have to make, we'll make in a way that is fair. Fairness includes protecting the service we most rely on – the health service.

We said five years ago we were the party of the NHS and now in government, by protecting NHS spending from cuts, we are showing it.

And as we work to balance the budget, fairness includes asking those on higher incomes to shoulder more of the burden than those on lower incomes.

I'm not saying this is going to be easy, as we've seen with child benefit this week. But it's fair that those with broader shoulders should bear a greater load.

And I think it's time for a new conversation about what fairness really means.

Here's what I think. Yes, fairness means giving money to help the poorest in society. People who are sick, who are vulnerable, the elderly – I want you to know we will always look after you. That's the sign of a civilised society, and it's what I believe.

But you can't measure fairness just by how much money we spend on welfare, as though the poor are products with a price tag, the more we spend on them the more we value them.

Fairness means supporting people out of poverty, not trapping them in dependency. So we will make a bold choice.

For too long, we have measured success in tackling poverty by the size of the cheque we give people. We say: let's measure our success by the chance we give. Let's support real routes out of poverty – a strong family, a good education, a job.

So we'll invest in the early years, help put troubled families back on track, use a pupil premium to make sure kids from the poorest homes go to the best schools not the worst, recognise marriage in the tax system and, most of all, make sure that work really pays for every single person in our country

Remember last year? When you stood up to show how angry you were about the injustice of some low paid single mothers going out to work and losing 96p for every extra pound they earned?

Well after months of hard work, I can tell you Iain Duncan Smith has found a way to end that system.

So to that single mother struggling and working her heart out for her children, we can now say: "We're on your side; we'll help you work; we will bring that injustice to an end."

Here's something else about fairness. Fairness isn't just about who gets help from the state.

The other part of the equation is who gives that help, through their taxes. Taking more money from the man who goes out to work long hours each day so the family next door can go on living a life on benefits without working – is that fair?

Fairness means giving people what they deserve – and what people deserve depends on how they behave.

If you really cannot work, we'll look after you. But if you can work, but refuse to work, we will not let you live off the hard work of others.

Tackling the deficit is what we have to do. But transforming our country is what we passionately want to do.

Here again we need the big society spirit – of activism and dynamism. We need it to get growth.

Let me tell you what I believe. It will be the doers and grafters, the inventors and the entrepreneurs who get this economy going.

Yes, it will be the wealth creators – and no, those aren't dirty words.

When you think of a wealth creator, don't think of the tycoon in a glass tower. Think of the man who gets up and leaves the house before dawn to go out and clean windows.

Think of the woman who sits up late into the night trying to make the figures add up to make sure she can pay her staff.

I can't tell you how much I admire people who leave the comfort of a regular wage to strike out on their own.

I'll always remember what the owner of a small business told me once. He said: "When I was starting out, the government didn't lift a finger to help me. Then as soon as I start making money they're all over me trying to take it away."

That is completely the wrong way round. We need to get behind our wealth creators. That's what we're doing.

Dealing with the deficit so interest rates stay low. Slashing red tape. Cutting the small business profits rate, corporation tax and national insurance contributions for new businesses.

But I don't think our job ends there. I don't believe in laissez-faire. Government has a role not just to fire up ambition, but to help give it flight.

So we are acting to build a more entrepreneurial economy. Tens of thousands of university and apprenticeship places and a new generation of technical schools.

A new Green Investment Bank, so the technologies of the future are developed, jobs created and our environment protected.

Big infrastructure projects like high speed rail, super-fast broadband, carbon capture and storage.

A £1bn regional growth fund to stimulate enterprise in those areas where the private sector is weak.

And as we've announced this week, a new enterprise allowance that gives money and support to unemployed people who want to start their own business.

And there's another way we're getting behind business – by sorting out the banks.

Taxpayers bailed you out, now it's time for you to repay the favour and start lending to Britain's small businesses again.

Just as we need the big society spirit to get our economy going, we need it in our society too.

Social change is where this coalition has its beating, radical heart. This is what drives us. To change forever the way this country is run.

We're going to start by taking power away from central government and giving it to people.

On 11 May, a great shadow was cast over the empire of the quangocrats, the bureaucrats and the power-hoarders.

He is the enemy of the bureaucratic state. Public chum number one. The big man on the side of the people. Eric Pickles.

Eric has come in to government and hit the ground sprinting, leading the most radical shift in power this country has seen for decades.

More freedom for local councils to keep more of the money when they attract business to their area, to finance big new infrastructure projects and to run new services.

More power for neighbourhoods to keep local pubs open, stop post offices from closing, to run local parks, to plan the look, shape and feel of their area.

New powers to you to choose the hospital you get treated in, the school your child goes to.

And because information is power, we're bringing transparency to government.

All those things the last government kept from you, who spends your money, what they spend it on, what the results are, where the waste is, we're putting it in your hands. After all, it's your money – so you should see where it's going.

This is not about a bit more power for you and a bit less power for central government – it's a revolution.

Let's leave Labour defending the status quo, the vested interests, the unions, the quangocrats, the elites, the establishment.

We are the radicals now, breaking apart the old system with a massive transfer for power, from the state to citizens, politicians to people, government to society. That is the power shift this country needs today.

And let me tell you why we desperately need this change. It's because the old way, of just pouring money into public services from on high, didn't make the difference it promised to.

Health inequalities got worse. Almost four in ten children left primary school unable to read, write and do maths properly. There were nearly a million violent crimes a year.

So if anyone tells you that all we need to improve our hospitals and schools or keep our streets safe is more money, tell them, been there, done that and it didn't work.

So this is what radicalism means. No more top-down, bureaucrat-driven public services. We're putting those services in your hands.

The old targets and performance indicators that drove doctors, nurses and police officers mad – they're gone.

All that bureaucracy that meant nothing ever happened – we're stripping it away.

The big, giant state monopolies – we're breaking them open to get new ideas in.

Saying to the people who work in our public services - set up as a co-operative, be your own boss, do things your way.

Saying to business, faith groups, charities, social enterprises – come in and provide a great service.

Already, businesses are getting people trained and ready for work. GPs are coming together to deliver local NHS services. And next year, the first generation of free schools will open in the state sector.

But as with any radical changes, there's going to be opposition. I want to give you an idea of the mentality we're fighting.

Ed Balls, the man who used to be in charge of education in our country, said one of the dangers of our schools policy was that it would create "winners".

Winners? We can't have that. The danger that your child might go to school and turn out to be a winner. Anti-aspiration. Anti-success. Anti-parents who just want the best for their children.

What an unbelievable attitude from this Labour generation.

Now I've heard people say there are some places where reform can't go – like law and order.

I disagree. Of course the state has a clear role, to score a line between right and wrong, to punish those who step over it, and to do it in a way that gives people confidence.

That's why I have no time for those who sneer at public attitudes to punishing criminals.

Offenders who should go to prison will go to prison. Justice must be done.

But we also have to recognise where the state is failing on crime. We spend £41,000 a year on each prisoner – and within a year of leaving, half of them reoffend.

There are 150,000 people in Britain today who get their heroin substitutes on the state, their addictions maintained by the taxpayer.

We have police officers who spend more time on paperwork than they do on patrol. It's here that reform is needed most.

So let's get our best charities to help rehabilitate offenders, our best social enterprises to get people off drugs.

Let's get more local people – who know their streets – to be special constables. And let's get our police officers out from behind their desks and on the streets fighting crime.

I've seen what the police do for us – how they put themselves in the line of danger to keep us safe. So I want to give them more freedom. But in return for that freedom, police are going to have someone new to answer to.

Not ministers – people. You.

On the way are new elected police commissioners that you can vote in – and kick out. Neighbourhood beat meetings where you hold the police to account.

I say to every policeman and woman in the country – don't be afraid of these changes. The more you've been controlled by the central state, the less people have respected you. I want to change that.

More freedom for you to be out on the streets, policing the way you know best – and in a way local people support, that will mean more respect for the vital work that you do.

This is the reform our public services need. From top-down to bottom-up. From state power to people power. The big society spirit blasting through.

But the big society needs you to give it life. People already do so much to help others.

Three weeks ago, volunteers were asked to come forward to help with the 2012 Olympic Games. You know how many applications have come in? 100,000.

Together we're going to make these Olympics great for Britain and great for the world.

And on the way we're going to throw everything we can into winning that bid for the 2018 World Cup.

There is such an appetite out there for people to play their part. Our job is to help them, encourage them, break down the barriers that stop them.

So let's scrap the health and safety rules that put people off. Let's get community organisers to stimulate social action in our poorest areas. Let's get going with National Citizen Service so more teenagers get some purpose in their lives.

And today I can announce International Citizen Service, to give thousands of our young people, those who couldn't otherwise afford it, the chance to see the world and serve others.

Last century, America's Peace Corps inspired a generation of young people to act, and this century, I want International Citizen Service to do the same.

That's the big society spirit, around the world and back here at home.

So that great project in your community – go and lead it. The waste in government – go and find it. The new school in your neighbourhood – go and demand it.

The beat meeting on your street – sign up.

The neighbourhood group – join up. That business you always dreamed of – start up. When we say "we are all in this together", that is not a cry for help but a call to arms.

Society is not a spectator sport. This is your country. It's time to believe it. It's time to step up and own it.

So mine is not just a vision of a more powerful country. It is a vision of a more powerful people.

The knowledge in the heart of everyone – everyone – that they are not captive to the circumstances of their birth, they are not flotsam and jetsam in the great currents of wealth and power, they are not small people but big citizens. People that believe in themselves. A Britain that believes in itself.

Not a promise of a perfect country. Just an achievable future of a life more fulfilled and fulfilling for everyone.

At this time of great national challenge, two parties have come together to help make it happen. Yes, this is a new kind of government, but no, not just because it's a coalition.

It is a new kind of government because it is realistic about what it can achieve on its own, but ambitious about what we can all achieve together.

A government that believes in people, that trusts people, that knows its ultimate role is not to take from people but to give, to give power, to give control, to give everyone the chance to make the most of their own life and make better the lives of others.

Yes, we will play our part – but the part you play will mean even more.

Your country needs you. It takes two. It takes two to build that strong economy. We'll balance the budget, we'll boost enterprise, but you start those businesses that lead us to growth.

It takes two to build that big society. We'll reform public services, we'll devolve power, but you step forward to seize the opportunity.

Don't let the cynics say this is some unachievable, impossible dream that won't work in the selfish 21st century – tell them people are hungry for it.

I know the British people and they are not passengers – they are drivers. I've seen the courage of our soldiers, the spirit of our entrepreneurs, the patience of our teachers, the dedication of our doctors, the compassion of our care workers, the wisdom of our elderly, the love of our parents, the hopes of our children.

So come on: let's pull together. Let's come together.

Let's work, together, in the national interest.