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30 September 2019

THE PRIME MINISTER

Den Bubwa,

Thank you all for your letter of 24 July on behalf of churches across the United Kingdom, concerning what withdrawing from the European Union might mean for the most disadvantaged in our society.

It remains the UK's preference to leave the EU with a deal, and the Government is negotiating with energy and determination to make this happen. However, we must recognise that, regardless of our desire and intention to leave with a deal, this will require movement from the EU and removal of the backstop from the old deal.

The Government is making good progress on Brexit preparations, but there is still more to do. I have taken steps to turbo-charge our work to ensure that there is as little disruption to everyday life as possible.

The Government has set aside £6.3 billion for Brexit preparations, ensuring that sufficient funds are available for new border and customs arrangements, freight capacity and securing food and medicine supply lines. The Government is ensuring that the country is ready to take full advantage of new trade deals agreed with international partners once we have left the EU.

The UK has excellent food security built from a range of sources, including strong domestic production and imports from around the world. Food providers are well versed with dealing with scenarios that can affect supply, and we have developed robust supply chains across multiple countries to furnish the country with food.

The Government has continued work to minimise any disruption to imports of essential goods after Brexit, including securing additional freight capacity to guarantee the supply of critical items. The Government has also engaged with 300,000 users of the UK's current customs system to clarify how customs arrangements will operate.

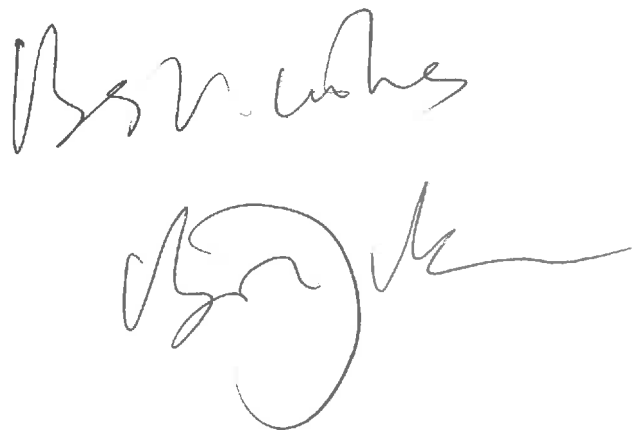
We are working across government to ensure that any potential impacts of Brexit on everyday life are mitigated as much as possible. The Government is continuing to consult and engage with manufacturers, food distributors and other supply-chain businesses regarding Brexit preparations, and will continue to incorporate expert advice when making policy decisions.

The Government has announced a Temporary Tariff Regime which will see zero tariffs in place on the majority of UK imports. Liberalisation is beneficial for consumers, with imports becoming cheaper through greater competition and the removal of tariff costs from pricing. Through these steps, we are taking the first steps towards not only stability, but preparing the UK for our future as a truly global nation, trading with markets across the globe for the good of UK citizens, businesses and communities.

We remain steadfast in our belief that Brexit will help us deliver a more prosperous future for our children, with the freedom and independence to make our own laws and invest where most needed. This Government is committed to providing support to those who need it most, and bringing about the change that people voted for in the referendum.

Thank you for all that your churches up and down the country are doing to contribute so positively to our local communities and national life.

Thank you, once again, for writing about this important topic.



The Reverend Dr Barbara Glasson