



## Press release

30 December 2010

### **Ed Miliband MP, Leader of the Labour Party, New Year Message**

2011: Year of Consequences

Ed Miliband MP:

"In 2011, thousands of our bravest men and women will continue to serve far from home in Afghanistan with the highest commitment and dedication. My thoughts are with them and their families at this New Year.

"Here at home, 2011 will be a year of consequences for Britain. Consequences that will be felt by hardworking families across the country. Consequences of the decision taken to reduce the deficit at what I believe to be an irresponsible pace and scale.

"Many people feel powerless in the face of these decisions that will affect their lives, families and communities. The political forces in Whitehall which have made these choices appear forbidding and unheeding.

"It is the message I get talking to young people about the loss of their educational maintenance allowances and trebling of tuition fees, people in different areas worried about their services and those wondering where the new jobs to replace those lost are going to come from.

"In 2011, many people will wonder what they can do. Some will ask whether there really is an alternative to this scale of cuts. Still more will shrug their shoulders at casually broken promises and conclude politicians are indeed all the same.

"Labour's challenge and duty in 2011 is to be people's voice in tough times and show that these are changes born of political choice by those in power not necessity.

"And we will take the next steps on the journey to win people's trust that we offer a better, more optimistic future for Britain.

"To do that will require learning from what we did right and wrong in government, strong opposition where it is required and laying the foundations for an alternative path for Britain.

"I began my leadership by admitting that in government, we had lost touch and lost trust and that we needed to change to be the party that Britain needs. I saw it on the doorstep at the 2010 General Election and I know it can't be put right automatically.

"It is why our journey to construct a better future for Britain must start from people's lives and their hopes and dreams. And we must change our party so that it becomes a genuine community force in every part of the country.

"People also need our voice now.

"So in 2011, we will be arguing for a proper economic strategy rather than an economic policy reduced only to deficit reduction. We would have made cuts but the scale, pace and targeting of these changes is not just wrong, it holds us back from answering the bigger economic challenges we face: about where the jobs of the future are going to come from and how can we create an economy which works for all.

"We will stand up for young people because the promise of progress should be that the next generation does better than the last. That is not what young people feel is being delivered when they face the burden of tens of thousands of pounds of student debt, or are told there will be no more help to stay on at school or college or to find a job.

"And we will expose the promise of new politics when it is simply about the breaking of promises in 2011 that were made in 2010.

"And as we begin a New Year, I call on all people of other parties and none who share our values and worry about the direction of the country under this government to work with us.

"I said in my Labour Party Conference speech that I have never believed that all wisdom resides in one political party. That is why I want to reach out to all other forces of progress in Britain.

"To those who feel that politics as it is being practised is high-handed, remote and arbitrary, I also urge them to campaign and work with us. Decisions over school sport and in recent days, bookstart, were reversed because of the power of people arguing and winning their case.

"It shows that political change comes because people make it happen. 2011 will be a year where we work to change Labour and seek to rebuild trust in us and in politics as a force for good.

"Even in these tough times, we must keep the flame of optimism burning.

"I sincerely believe that we can build a better future for Britain. That means closing the gap between people's aspirations and their chances of fulfilling them, being a society where we look after each other and meeting the promise that the next generation does better than the last.

"That is our mission as a party which we will pursue next year and in the years ahead."

**Ends**

**For more information, please contact the Labour Party press office on 020 7783 1393.**

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