

## **Ed Miliband's acceptance speech as Labour Party leader**

25 September 2010

Can I start by thanking you for the enormous honour you have given me.

I joined this party as a teenager, and never in my wildest imagination did I believe I would be your leader.

You have put your trust in me and I am determined to repay that trust.

Repay it by unifying this party.

And I want to thank all of my fellow candidates – David, Diane, Ed and Andy.

You have brought so much to this campaign and can offer so much for our party and country in the years ahead.

David, I love you very much.

And along with this party, I respect and admire the eloquence and strength you have shown in this campaign, and the commitment you have shown to make this party both a serious party of government and community-based movement.

We all know how much you have to offer our country in the future.

Ed, your campaign has been a testimony to your abilities: your intelligence and resolve.

Every Tory minister will be quaking in their boots about the prospect of you shadowing them because you can both take on, and win, big arguments for Labour.

Andy, you've reached people who felt Labour had forgotten them and reminded us all what the fundamental mission and character of the Labour Party must be.

I look forward to you playing a central role in the future.

And Diane, you've spoken distinct truths to this party that needed to be said. And it's important that it continues to be heard.

And let me also pay tribute to all the people who worked on my colleagues' campaigns and the extraordinary supporters and volunteers who were part of my campaign.

I want to use your talents whoever you supported in this election to help our Labour Party.

Today we draw a line under this contest and move forward united as a team.

As it says on our party card, we achieve more through the strength of our common endeavour than we do alone.

And I will do this job strengthened in my ability because I will have the best deputy anyone could hope for.

She's done a fantastic job since the election and I want to thank her on behalf of the party for the substance, the style and the spirit of her leadership.

Harriet, the party thanks you.

And I want to thank Gordon Brown.

There are millions of people in Britain and around the world who have better lives thanks to your work.

I am proud of the leadership of both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

But we lost the election.

My message to the country is this:

I know we lost trust

I know we lost touch.

I know we need to change.

Today a new generation has taken charge of Labour.

A new generation that understands the call for change.

Let me tell you what I've heard from you, the people I've met across this country.

I get that people feel they are working harder and harder just to get by – that it's tough to give your children the things they need and still pay the bills.

We should have done even more for those working hard who weren't being fairly rewarded.

I get that we didn't listen enough to people's concerns about immigration.

We should have done more to protect people's wages and conditions.

I get that we didn't do enough to support people making a start in life with their first home.

Young couples having to live with their parents, working out it will take years to save for a deposit, deserved better. We should have built more affordable homes.

I get that parents are really worried about the debts their kids are getting into, just to get an education.

And I get that whatever your view on the Iraq War, it led to an appalling loss of trust.

I know that we didn't always speak to your hopes and dreams or address your fears and uncertainties.

These are the things I've heard from listening to you.

But I want to tell you also what I believe.

I believe we must reduce the deficit but do more than that: and build an economy that works far better for every working person in this country.

I believe this country is too unequal and the gap between rich and poor is too wide and it harms all of us. And we need to tackle it.

I believe that too many people are locked out of opportunity by accident of birth or background.

I believe we must have a society that upholds and protects the things that matter way beyond the bottom line: family, time, community, the environment.

I believe that we need a different, more independent foreign policy, driven by our values not dictated by our alliances.

I recognise the scale of the journey on which we must embark to win back your trust.

I recognise that it won't be easy.

But be in no doubt: every hour of every day of my leadership will be devoted to securing the opportunity for Labour to serve the country again.

Not power for its own sake.

But to make this country the more prosperous, more equal, more just Britain we all know it can be.

I believe in Britain.

Today's election turns the page because a new generation has stepped forward.

To serve our party and I hope, in time, to serve our country.

Today the work of the new generation begins.