**Britain in the world: 2023 focus is 'Labour's Progressive Trade Policy'**

There has been repeated failure to create an environment that supports R&D in emerging technologies, and particularly in supporting a more diverse array of advanced nuclear technologies (ANTs). To deliver local jobs to the UK that tackle the challenges of climate change and energy security, a Labour Government must accelerate investment in green technologies that can be exported globally. MoltexFLEX agrees with Nick Thomas-Symonds’ assessment that the UK “can’t go on with a situation where only 1.4% of exporters are from the North East and less than 5% from the East Midlands.” There are opportunities for a Labour Government to address these imbalances.

MoltexFLEX will deliver ground-breaking nuclear technologies to the world from its Warrington base, stimulating £bns of UK export potential and boosting regional growth, productivity and employment.

The UK is a net importer, with imports exceeding exports by £165 billion (HMRC, 2021). While this does represent progress on the 2020 trade gap, there are still significant improvements needed to ensure that international trade serves every region of the UK.

To address regional economic disparities and create a progressive trade policy, Labour must strengthen and support the industries native to each region of the UK - especially those industries which have declined in recent years, but have a major growth opportunity.

The UK has a robust nuclear sector, which can be revitalised with advanced nuclear that can also be exported globally. For example, MoltexFLEX has developed the FLEX reactor, a unique molten salt reactor concept capable of delivering clean and affordable energy - at a cost comparable to offshore wind, at just £30 per MWh - and can power 40,000 homes with an exportable modular design.

The global need for affordable low-carbon technologies, particularly in developing countries, is a prime market for such technologies. ANTs have significant export potential to developed countries that are looking to secure sovereign sources of low-carbon energy and decarbonise hard-to-abate sectors of the economy, or where GW nuclear is not possible.

If the UK is going to be a leader in scientific excellence and a net exporter of low-carbon technologies, there needs to be greater investment in creating a skilled workforce, and developing the skills base which supports this. MoltexFLEX has formed a team of highly skilled scientists at is Warrington base, and is constantly expanding its team, creating new employment opportunities for scientists in the North West of England.

Through Great British Energy, Labour could support advanced nuclear as well as renewables. Deployment of new advanced nuclear, such as the FLEX reactor, which in addition to being cost effective, is able to provide flexible energy to solve the renewables intermittency challenge, could help ensure Great British Energy becomes profitable, and can start to export energy in a similar manner to EDF’s business model.

Should Great British Nuclear seek to incorporate advanced nuclear as part of its deployment plans, we urge it should adopt a more technology agnostic approach, allowing technologies to proceed through the steps of GDA, development consent and site licensing when they are ready and when they can attract investment to do so – and a Labour Government should avoid any perception of one group being preferred over another. A diverse approach to such technologies offers the UK the opportunity to become a world leader in the deployment and export of many different types of ANTs, and create opportunities for innovation in low-carbon technologies, and help underserviced regions to grow.

Support for molten salt reactors (which have received the most limited support from government to date) would help to diversify technologies, and address the domestic barriers to new ANT deployment.