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Prime Minister says exports key to UK's economic recovery

The Prime Minister welcomed over 100 UK exporting firms to 10 Downing Street last night to recognise their business success in overseas markets and their contribution to the UK economy.

Companies exporting British talent and products - from electric car chargers to airport security technology, classic British foods to flame retardant fabrics – discussed their successes and concerns with the Prime Minister. Business Secretary Lord Mandelson and Minister for Trade, Investment and Business, Lord Davies also took questions on what Government is doing to help UK exporters during the downturn.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown said: "I want to thank you for everything you are doing for the British economy, for British exports, and for British confidence. All of you here are successful businesses. All of you have made important innovations in the way you do business. Many of you have received Queen's Awards for what you have done, and I congratulate you. Many of you are helping this country through one of the most difficult financial periods and doing so by increasing your growth rates and making sure that the economy can remain strong for the future."

Lord Mandelson said, "In my department, and in the government as a whole, we are passionate, to the point of obsessive, about exports. They are where Britain chiefly makes its living in the world economy. The global economic recovery is going to be led more by investment and exports than any early expansion of consumer demand."

Lord Davies said, "It is important to recognise British exporting success. The companies here today show the range of businesses in the UK taking their talents to the world. But we must encourage more firms to export."

He acknowledged that "It can be a daunting first step, but UK Trade & Investment has the local know how to help every company set up their stall on to the world market place."

UK Trade & Investment, the part of Government responsible for promoting exports and inward investment, invited a wide-range of UK firms who are looking to increase their export markets as a way of surviving the downturn and building a platform for long-term growth.

Paul Clayton, marketing director at Leigh Paints, a leading manufacturer of industrial paints, attended the reception at Number 10. In 2006, exports accounted for 8% of their business, now it's a quarter and turnover has increased 33% during the same period. He said "If I could give one piece of advice to UK firms, it would be to go to the UKTI website and get started. Thanks to UKTI, we have grown our international business substantially."

Companies included Elektromotive, which designs and manufactures charging points for electric cars. When a car plugs in the charger instantly recognises the car's details. Since getting in touch with UKTI, their export base has been extended to include Sweden, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

Also present was Inditherm, an AIM listed firm, whose innovative warming technology is used for keeping medical patients stable to curing concrete and heating sports pitches. Using revolutionary technology, the medical application provides significant clinical advantages as well as cost savings. The product is fully re-useable and allows patients to be warmed at a running cost the same as a light-bulb.

The ministers saw a variety of products demonstrated including a life-saving filtration water bottle, inspired by the lack of safe water after the 2004 tsunami, and an innovative box of chocolates greeting card. Lord Mandelson said that he had been "introduced to some extraordinary products."

Ends

Media Contact:

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Notes to Editors:

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) is the government organisation that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high quality investment to the UK's economy – acknowledged as Europe's best place from which to succeed in global business. UKTI offers expertise and contacts through its extensive

network of specialists in the UK, and in British embassies and other diplomatic offices around the world. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage. For more information visit the website www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk