



Ministerial Foreword

This report sets out the further progress achieved by the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force in its second year. Our aim is to improve the employment rate of ethnic minority people and to close the gap between their employment rate and that of the overall population. The Ministers who sit on the Task Force and the outside representatives all share a strong commitment to make a real difference in this area.

Ensuring equal opportunities in the workplace supports the Government's twin objectives of securing strong economic growth and promoting social justice. We cannot waste the talents of people on the basis of their ethnicity and ensuring that people from ethnic minority communities is central to supporting social inclusion and eradicating poverty.

The National Employment Panel (NEP) published their report "*Enterprising People, Enterprising Places*", which recommends further measures to improve ethnic minority employment. The Chancellor accepted the top 10 recommendations and we are working to implement them.

Particularly notable has been the work to improve the race equality outcomes from the Government's own procurement. We will pilot new approaches in several Government Departments in the New Year. Centres of Vocational Excellence in Entrepreneurship are also being piloted by the Department for Education and Skills. We are also looking at how we can provide better value from Government resources and better opportunities for disadvantaged people by aligning and merging objectives and budgets in our cities, an approach that might allow us to build on the lessons of a number of pilots we are currently running, such as Fair Cities and Working Neighbourhood Pilots

I am determined to focus ruthlessly on better delivery. The work of the Ethnic Minority Task Force can be brigaded under three overarching principles:

1. That we should maximise the impact that all Government activity has in delivering race equality, whether it be through procurement or Departments acting as exemplars, and;
2. That we should facilitate the continuous improvement of employment diversity practices among employers and for employees, through encouraging mentoring, celebrating good practice and providing practical input.
3. That we should work to improve the effectiveness of existing Government programmes to better support our aim to improve the life chances of people of working age from ethnic minority communities.

These overarching priorities have helped us to form some immediate priorities for the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force attention. We propose to look at Government procurement practice, the regeneration impacts of the Olympic Games, Government recruitment outcomes,

employer engagement and discrimination initiatives and at how our provision assists particular groups of the ethnic minority population in particular localities.

Sharing this focus on delivery are the representatives of the external bodies and the communities themselves, who provide a vital contribution by emphasising what works in terms of employers, employees, service providers and the ethnic minority communities. My continued thanks go to the representatives of CBI, TUC, NEP, ACAS and CRE as well as to Nahid Majid who chairs the Task Force Stakeholder Group.

We look forward to continued progress in this challenging but critical area of Government policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Hodge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

MARGARET HODGE