

## Press Release

### **Lord Karan Bilimoria Appointed Chair of ICC United Kingdom Paul Drechsler CBE Honoured for Outstanding Leadership and Dedication**

London, UK – 19 November 2024

The International Chamber of Commerce United Kingdom (ICC United Kingdom) is delighted to announce the appointment of Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE, DL as its new Chair, effective 1 January 2025. Lord Bilimoria has been a Board member since 2022 and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in international business, trade and Parliament.

Lord Bilimoria succeeds Paul Drechsler CBE, who has served as Chair for the past four years, since joining the board in 2015, and been a passionate advocate for open and inclusive trade as well as ICC's role as a leading voice for international trade and cooperation. Paul has successfully navigated the organisation through one of the most turbulent periods in recent history, including the aftermath of Brexit and the global pandemic.

#### **Reflecting on his tenure, Paul Drechsler said:**

"It has been an honour to serve as Chair of ICC United Kingdom during such a critical period for both the UK and global business. Over the past four years, we have worked to position ICC as a trusted voice on the international stage, driving trade policies that foster inclusivity, investment, and economic recovery. I am confident that under Karan's leadership, ICC will continue to strengthen its influence, and I look forward to remaining part of this important community."

#### **On the conclusion of Paul Drechsler's term of office as Chair, Chris Southworth, Secretary General of ICC United Kingdom paid tribute to Paul Drechsler's leadership, stating:**

"Paul has been an outstanding Chair, guiding ICC through one of the most challenging times in ICC's history in the UK. His experience and dedication to promoting open trade and business cooperation have been invaluable. His legacy will continue to shape ICC's work, and we are fortunate that Paul will remain closely involved as we continue to build on the momentum he has helped create."

#### **Lord Karan Bilimoria – Looking Ahead**

Lord Karan Bilimoria takes the reins at a pivotal moment for the UK, as the country looks to redefine its international trade strategy, foster economic growth and drive investment and productivity. With geo-political tensions ever present amongst the major trading blocs, countries like the UK are well-positioned to play a leading role by bridging dialogue and brokering solutions between nations of the North, South, East and West. ICC, with its unparalleled global representation, reach and expertise is well placed to support both government and industry.

#### **Commenting on his appointment, Lord Karan Bilimoria said:**

"I am deeply honoured to take on the role of Chair at this pivotal moment for the UK. Paul Drechsler has left a remarkable legacy, and I am committed to building on the strong foundation he has established. The ICC is uniquely positioned as a champion

of pragmatic trade solutions, and I see significant opportunities to further strengthen our relationships with key global economies, as well as across government, including No.10, ministers, and regulators.

"As we look to 2025, I am keen to deepen our engagement on international trade priorities, including the G7 and G20, and contribute to the UK's international trade and industrial strategies. The new government's energy and focus on growth provide a unique opportunity for ICC to position itself as the leading voice for international business and trade. I look forward to working with our members, partners, and international networks to advance this mission and drive meaningful outcomes for UK businesses and the global economy."

**John Denton, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce, welcomed Lord Bilimoria's appointment, while reflecting on Paul Drechsler's leadership:**

"I am thrilled to welcome Lord Karan Bilimoria as Chair of ICC United Kingdom. His experience, vision, and passion for entrepreneurship will be invaluable as we continue our work in shaping global trade. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Paul Drechsler, who has been pivotal in strengthening ICC's voice in the UK and globally. I look forward to seeing his continued contribution as we tackle the significant challenges and opportunities ahead."

**Chris Southworth, Secretary General of ICC United Kingdom, welcomed Lord Bilimoria's appointment:**

"I am delighted to welcome Lord Bilimoria as our new Chair. His experience, passion for international trade and connections to the international community will be enormous asset to ICC. The role of the UK has never been more important as an independent G7 economy and hub for innovative solutions to the big global challenges we all face. I very much look forward to working with Lord Bilimoria at this exciting time."

**Notes for Editors:**

**About Lord Karan Bilimoria**

Lord Karan Bilimoria is the founder of Cobra Beer. In 2006, he became the first Zoroastrian Parsi to sit in the House of Lords, and is a Crossbench Peer. Lord Bilimoria is also the Founding Chairman of the UK India Business Council, a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London, Lieutenant for the City of London and a former Chancellor of the University of West London and the first Indian born Chancellor of a Russell Group University in Great Britain, the University of Birmingham from 2014 to 2024. From 2020-2022 he served as the President of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). He has served as a Senior Non-Executive Director at Booker Group (now Tesco PLC) and continues to be a significant voice in business and international relations. He is an honorary Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge, and Honorary Ambassador of the Cambridge Judge Business School, a Bynum Tudor Fellow at Kellogg College, University of Oxford, a visiting Fellow of the University of Oxford at the Centre for Corporate Reputation,

Said Business School, and an Honorary Fellow of the London Business School. He is the recipient of 10 Honorary doctorates.

### **About ICC United Kingdom**

ICC is the world's largest business organisation representing 45 million companies with 1 billion employees in over 170 countries.

The International Chamber of Commerce is the only business organization with UN Observer Status and acts as a leading voice for business at the UN, G7, G20, World Trade Organization and other major international institutions. ICC United Kingdom is the representative voice for ICC in the UK and provides a mechanism for UK industry to engage effectively in shaping international policy, standards and rules.

ICC United Kingdom is the leading voice on digital trade ecosystems and Co-Chair the B2B Cluster for the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda.

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