

Speech: Minister Mark Field's speech at Wilton Park conference on illegal wildlife trade

Introduction

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to see so many of you here, heralding such an international range of expertise and commitment.

Like me, I guess you welcome spending time amidst the glorious surroundings of Wilton Park, especially those of you who have travelled a long way.

This historic institution has been the scene of many important and ground-breaking conferences over the years that have led to significant shifts in global policy.

So this is the perfect place to be discussing how we can work together to stop the illegal trade in wildlife, which is detrimental to our planet and our societies in so many ways.

In October the UK is going to be hosting the fourth international conference on the subject. We have high ambitions for Conference, but we need your support, enthusiasm and guidance to realise them.

That is what yesterday and today have been all about.

Impact of IWT

As we all know, the illegal wildlife trade has been a blight for decades. I can remember hearing about the dangers of poaching to rhino and elephant populations when I was still a schoolboy.

What is less well known outside this room is the sheer scale of it, and the range of species affected: from eels to pangolins, corals to timber.

Since I became a Minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office a year ago, I have been fortunate enough to travel widely in the Asia Pacific region.

On many of these visits I have discussed the illegal wildlife trade with my counterparts, and I have seen first-hand the efforts being made to tackle trafficking – from a bear rescue centre in Vietnam to Thai efforts to strengthen law enforcement, which led to the arrest of a trafficking king-pin earlier this year.

That arrest is an illustration of what we already knew: that the trade in illegal wildlife has become the work of global organised crime networks, and it is making them a fortune – as much as £17 billion a year by some estimates. This is not – as some mistakenly continue to believe – a victimless crime.

The vast size of some of the seizures also gives an indication of the scale of the networks involved.

Last year, the Hong Kong authorities picked up over 7 tonnes of elephant tusk, the world's largest ever single seizure of ivory. Tragically, that one haul alone equates to as many as 720 dead elephants.

As we all know, the criminal networks responsible for this needless slaughter not only endanger the survival of species and the biodiversity of the planet.

They also have a detrimental effect on wider society – not least because the illegal trade in wildlife is linked to large scale corruption.

This means that significant tax revenues are lost.

To give just one example, the Environmental Investigation Agency estimates that illegally harvested timber exports to China deprived Mozambique of an estimated US\$146 million in lost tax revenues between 2007 and 2013.

And last year a study by the NGO Africa Resources estimated that in just eight years from 2006 to 2014, eight southern African countries lost around US\$7 billion per year in illicit financial flows from the wildlife tourism sector.

The problem is growing. A 2016 report by Interpol and the UN Environment Programme suggested that environmental crime, which includes the illegal wildlife trade, was increasing at a rate of between 5 and 7% per year – nearly three times faster than global GDP.

And the detrimental effects are not simply financial. In some cases the corruption is linked to the political elite, which means that the illegal wildlife trade also undermines the rule of law and good governance as well as sustainable development.

That is why tackling it is such a priority for the Foreign Secretary, and for me.

History of the IWT Conference series

The UK government is playing a leading role on the issue, both at home and on the international stage.

Four years ago we hosted the first ever Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference, securing ambitious agreements from more than 40 governments to take urgent, coordinated action.

The resulting “London Declaration” recognised the illegal wildlife trade as a serious criminal activity, with widespread, pernicious effects. It remains our guiding framework today.

At subsequent conferences in Kasane and Hanoi we collectively progressed from high level commitments to implementation.

Yet despite this significant progress, the illegal wildlife trade is still at crisis point.

2018 London Conference

That is why we have set ambitious goals for the October London Conference.

We need to achieve a real step-change in collective action.

That means working to strengthen partnerships across borders and beyond governments.

We hope to achieve this by focussing on three main themes:

IWT as a serious organised crime

The first, and most pertinent to our conference today, is to deal with the illegal wildlife trade as a serious organised crime, smashing once and for all the narrative that IWT is some kind of Cinderella issue.

Global criminal networks are creative and agile, and the illegal wildlife trade is a truly global challenge.

We need strong networks working together across borders and across continents to counter it.

Seizures need to be followed by full investigations and successful prosecutions.

The London Conference is an opportunity for countries to enhance our coordination and cooperation, to make sure this happens.

The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime has played a significant role in supporting joined-up, global law enforcement.

It has brought together Interpol, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime, CITES, World Customs Union and World Bank expertise and networks. The UK has committed £4 million to support ICCWC's strategic programme.

However there is much we still do not fully understand, including the links between the illegal wildlife trade and other forms of trafficking, and links to wider security challenges.

We must draw lessons from global efforts to combat other forms of illicit trade and activity, such as tackling illicit finance.

Illicit finance

Again, the UK is taking action on illicit finance.

This Government is committed to protecting the integrity of the UK's financial system by ensuring that it is hostile to illicit finance.

The introduction of last year's Criminal Finances Act enhanced the powers of law enforcement agencies to investigate and tackle financial crime.

Along with new money laundering regulations, the defences of our banks, lawyers, accountants and the rest of the regulated sector are now in line with the latest international standards set by the Financial Action Task Force.

I was particularly interested to engage in your discussions on "following the money" today and given the involvement of the Prime Minister's envoy, my colleague John Penrose, I trust that illicit finance will be a prominent theme at the London Conference.

Corruption

Corruption is another issue that will be high on the agenda, for the reasons I mentioned earlier. The illegal wildlife trade both fuels and is fuelled by corruption. It occurs at all stages and all levels of the illegal wildlife trade networks.

It is crucial that we continue to see wildlife crime in this light, and to discuss it at an international level, as we did in a side event at the UN Crime Commission just recently, and at the anti-corruption summit here in the UK two years ago.

Last year G20 Leaders agreed High Level Principles for tackling the corruption associated with wildlife trafficking. That work is now being taken forward through the G20's anti-corruption working group.

Corruption is a hard nut to crack, so I am hopeful that your discussions this week will identify tangible steps we can take forward together.

Building coalitions

The second focus at the London conference will be on "building coalitions" – something we can see in action here today.

That is because governments are only one of the actors needed to combat wildlife crime. To be successful, we also need to bring in financial institutions, academics, NGOs, journalists and businesses.

I am proud of the leading role UK NGOs and academics have been playing for many years in global efforts to stop wildlife trafficking.

Yet I believe getting the private sector more involved in the issue has been one of the most significant developments of the last four years.

I am delighted we have representatives here from the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce.

They have already delivered tangible impact, contributing to seizures of illegal wildlife products estimated to be worth over half a million dollars.

I also think there is real scope for technology companies to lend their skills to the future fight. In that regard, the World Wildlife Fund Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online is a significant step forward.

Last week the Foreign Secretary and I hosted a round table discussion with leading technology companies and conservationists, to explore how technology can help solve some of the challenges.

I was extremely encouraged to see how keen the technology sector was to help. I am further encouraged by the fact that since the meeting, a number of other technology companies have been in touch to offer their support.

This isn't just about quick fixes – we need a long term strategy and outlook. I believe technology companies and the private sector more generally are well-placed to play a significant part. That is why business engagement will be an important element of the Conference.

One of my fears with these conferences is that everyone works so hard in the run-up that they collapse in a heap after. Follow-through is vital, and this is why I'm so enthused about the role technology can play in stamping out this crime long term.

Closing markets

Our third and final theme for the conference is about closing markets for illegally traded wildlife.

China's ban on the domestic ivory market is a game-changer. Enforcing the ban will be a challenge and we need to support countries to address the risk of the illicit market being displaced to neighbouring countries.

Closer to home, the UK's Ivory Bill – which we hope will be on the Statute Book by October – introduces some of the toughest legislation in the world.

We have very strong public backing for this – during the public consultation nearly 90% of responses supported a ban.

Of course, we also need to close illegal markets and reduce demand for the many other species affected by the illegal wildlife trade.

Conclusion

To conclude, the illegal wildlife trade is a criminal racket that is a catastrophe for biodiversity and seriously detrimental to economic development.

The UK Government is absolutely determined to press for concerted, sustainable, global action to combat it.

There is no time to lose, and we need your help to ensure that the London Conference is ambitious, specific and focussed enough to deliver for the long term.

I want world leaders to leave the Conference with renewed energy and political will to defeat the illegal wildlife trade.

High-level commitments are important; successful implementation is vital.

We have a tough fight on our hands. But I am convinced that by working together, we can and will win it.

Further information

Press release: International Trade Secretary launches FinTech investment drive

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP today (Friday 15 June) launches a new drive to attract investment into the UK's booming financial technology (FinTech) sector. Dr Fox's Department for International Trade (DIT) will prioritise investment into FinTech, set up a UK FinTech steering board and connect companies with global investors.

The new drive comes during London Tech Week. It follows the Prime Minister's announcement on Wednesday (13 June) that more than 1,600 new jobs will be created and £2.3 billion of private investment into the broader technology sector has been secured, showcasing the UK as the best country in the world to run a tech company.

Launching the new FinTech investment drive, International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

The UK is a world leader in the FinTech sector, thanks to our highly-skilled and creative workforce, fair regulatory system and ease of doing business.

The sector has already attracted £1.8 billion worth of investment in 2017 – a 153% increase on the previous year and as an international economic department, DIT is putting technology and innovation at the heart of the UK's global growth.

Financial services and technology are 2 of the UK's leading industries, with FinTech playing an increasingly important role in tasks ranging from complex financial transactions to helping consumers give money to charity more easily.

DIT's FinTech steering board brings together academics, industry experts,

government and regulators to drive investment into the sector, which is at the forefront of the UK's global technology and innovation proposition.

It will be chaired by the City of London's Lord Mayor, Charles Bowman, and firms including Zopa, Neyber, EY, Innovate Finance and Santander will sit alongside government, regulators and academics from MIT and Oxford University.

Charles Bowman, Lord Mayor of the City of London and chair of DIT's FinTech board, added:

FinTech is something that I am hugely passionate about, with the UK home to around 1,600 FinTech companies, and more than 50,000 related jobs in the Square Mile alone.

I look forward to exploring how we can further develop our world-leading FinTech offer and to helping shape the UK's future FinTech trade and investment strategy.

The FinTech steering board

The board comprises of the following members:

- Omar Ali: UK Financial Services Leader, EY
- Giles Andrews: Co-founder and Chairman, Zopa
- David Bartlett: Head of Financial and Professional Services Team, DIT
- Charlotte Crosswell: CEO, Innovate Finance
- Anna Wallace: Innovate Head of Department, FCA
- Stephen Ingledew: Chief Executive, FinTech Scotland
- Monica Kalia: Founder, Chief Strategy and Business Development Officer, Neyber
- Alastair Lukies: Founding Partner, Motive Partners
- Dan Morgan: FinTech Sector Specialist, DIT
- Sigridur Sigurdardottir: Chief Customer and Innovation Officer, Santander
- David L. Shrier: Associate Fellow, MIT and Oxford
- Paul Stoddart: CEO Vocalink
- Phil Vidler: Head of Global Markets, HM Treasury
- Tomas Helm: FinTech Lead, DIT

The board will convene 4 times a year with the first meeting taking place during London Tech Week, a celebration of innovation that brings together a global gathering of thought leaders, entrepreneurs and tech champions.

For more information

Contact the DIT Media Team on 020 7215 2000

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[Press release: Spaghetti Junction on a plate! Award-winning chef celebrates](#)

iconic structure

Michelin-starred chef Glynn Purnell has created a mouth-watering dish based entirely on the ingredients which get from plot to plate at his Birmingham restaurant via the well-known structure.

The special dish, called 'Truffled A38', comprises celeriac, Maris Piper potatoes, double cream, fresh parsley, Berkswell cheese, garnished with truffle and seasoned with salt and ground ginger.

Glynn, affectionately known as the 'Yummy Brummie', created the dish specially for Highways England to mark the 50th anniversary of work starting to build the road, officially named Gravelly Hill Interchange.

View a video of [Glynn creating the dish](#).

He and Highways England also aim to raise the profile of the 2018 [Year of Engineering](#) campaign designed to encourage more young people into the industry.

Glynn said:

It was a tremendous honour to be asked by Highways England to create a special dish as a tribute to Spaghetti Junction. I also took it very seriously as it means an incredible amount to me as a proud Brummie.

I use the road at least four to six times a day and for me it is more about traffic, it is symbolic of Brummies and their sense of humour which comes across in the name of the road. I'm proud to have a restaurant in Birmingham and Spaghetti Junction is an essential part of helping to get daily produce here to the restaurant from places across the country such as Cornwall.

My children always chuckle when I mention Spaghetti Junction to them because they imagine it is like a piece of spaghetti, a drawing on a piece of paper. But it's important that they think about the world around them and how things are built and constructed.

It is great that the Year of Engineering is calling on youngsters to think about a career in the sector because without engineering we wouldn't have the road and it is a crucial part of helping people to access the wonderful city of Birmingham. There will always be people that poke fun and criticise it, but for me, the road does more good than bad and I think we'd be lost without it.

By bringing young people face to face with engineering experiences and role models, the Year of Engineering campaign aims to showcase the creativity and

innovation of engineering careers and widen the pool of young people from all backgrounds who are willing to consider the profession, diversifying a workforce that is 91% male and 94% white.

Highways England's emergency planning officer Frank Bird is responsible for managing traffic flows around the structure and has done so for the past 14 years. He was the lucky recipient when it came to tasting the dish.

Frank said:

It was a real earthy dish and it certainly showcased the variety that comes into the kitchen through Spaghetti Junction every day. It tasted delicious and it is a privilege to have someone like Glynn Purnell recognising the significance of the road and its role in serving the people of Birmingham and beyond.

The Year of Engineering is crucial in helping to get the budding engineers of tomorrow thinking about the world around them and the 50th anniversary of work starting to build Spaghetti Junction is testament to what can be achieved by talented engineers.

Any young people inspired to explore a career in engineering are encouraged to visit the [Year of Engineering website](#) which has further information.

The recipe for Truffled A38

- Celeriac – Quartered
- Maris piper potato – 1 large, peeled and washed
- Double cream – 300ml
- Fresh parsley – 1 tablespoon chopped
- Berkswell Cheese – 30g grated
- Truffle
- Salt and ground ginger to season

Method:

1. Using a vegetable spiralizer, prepare the celeriac and potato into vegetable "spaghetti".
2. Put the cream into a large sauté pan and reduce by half, add the celeriac and potato and cook over a medium heat for 2-3 minutes until al dente, add the cheese and stir in to incorporate.
3. Add the parsley and season with salt and ground ginger.
4. Using a pasta fork twist the vegetable spaghetti and place into a serving dish, spoon the creamy sauce over the top.
5. Finish by grating fresh truffle over the top.

Spaghetti Junction in numbers

- it is the interchange of the M6, A38, A38 (M) connecting Birmingham and the M6
- work started to build the road in 1968

- some of the columns elevating the structure reach some 80ft
- Spaghetti Junction continues to hold international acclaim having formed the backdrop for filming for Ready Player One with some scenes filmed underneath the structure
- the towering concrete columns, some reaching to 80 feet high, formed the ideal backdrop to the film, which was in cinemas earlier this year
- for the filming, special templates featuring graffiti were stuck to the concrete structures and various props added into the set, including cars and tyres, with a 'camp' constructed for the new film
- the film crew took considerable effort to protect the structure and ensure nothing was damaged during filming

About Glynn Purnell

- Glynn first started cooking at the age of 14.
- his first food related memory was cooking baked beans on toast with curry powder, a testament to his desire to experiment with different flavour combinations
- on leaving school, he joined the Metropole Hotel at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) where he would catch the No 966 bus to get to the venue
- he started working as an apprentice and worked for six years in various departments
- accolades include obtaining Birmingham's first Michelin Star for Jessica's in 2005.
- Purnell's has held a Michelin Star every year since 2009.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Lord Tariq Ahmad's Eid message](#)

As Minister of State for human rights and freedom of religion and belief, I wish you all Eid Mubarak.

At this special time for Muslims the world over, we must not forget those for whom such festivities pale into insignificance due to the issue of conflict and human suffering.

This Eid, my thoughts and prayers go out to all those who are affected by conflict around the world, for the holy land, and Syria, Burma and Yemen and especially those who have lost and are separated from their families.

The situation in Syria is a humanitarian catastrophe. The conflict is now in its eighth year; over 400,000 people have been killed, and half Syria's population displaced.

But the UK is not a distant onlooker. We have committed £2.71 billion to the Syria Crisis since 2012, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. We've also committed over half a billion to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen since the conflict began in 2015 and £59m to the support the Rohingya.

Yet despite these conflicts we must never give up hope. We must persevere. Whether it is through the pursuit of diplomacy, our peacekeeping operations to restore stability and build nations, or our service to humanity, Britain continues to play our part.

We are an incredible nation, enriched by our multi-ethnic, multi-faith democracy, where Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and indeed, people of all faiths and none define the rich tapestry which is modern Britain. People irrespective of faith, community or background are able to reach their potential, coming together to contribute to the prosperity and progress of our nation.

So at this special time for Muslims, it is a celebration for all as it reflects the strength of the diversity of our country and our people.

Eid Mubarak to all.