

# Speech: Making UN peacekeeping more effective and efficient

Thank you Madame President,

And thank you for this opportunity for a candid and constructive discussion with our Force Commanders who I thank for their briefings so far and I put on notice that I am going to ask lots of questions to and hope to hear from later. Thank you also to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for everything you have had to say and for your leadership on these issues. I do think it is very important for our Force Commanders that you are able to be here with the Security Council and able to speak truth to us and to be as clear as you need to be with all of us here, so please be candid.

Before I go into some of those questions though, I would like to take colleagues back; some of us were on the Security Council visit to Mali last November where we had the great honour of participating in the dedication of a memorial to all who had lost their lives serving in MINUSMA. And I think it's important that we take the time and the moment to pay tribute to all those peacekeepers that have given their lives in service of the United Nations, and to all the brave women and men that serve now in support of the UN's peace operations. I would like to offer the United Kingdom's thanks for their service and for the service and leadership of our Force Commanders here today.

Peacekeeping is one of this organisation's greatest achievements. It is an integral part of what our peoples around the world think of when they think of the United Nations and we celebrate this year, the 70th anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping. And as we strive for reform in the wider UN system, so we must work to make UN peacekeeping more effective and efficient, through better mission planning, through more pledges of troops and capabilities, and stronger mission performance.

We therefore welcome both the report on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers by General dos Santos Cruz and the UN's Action Plan and the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative that has flown from that. We see three key priorities:

Firstly, that this Council should take a longer-term view of conflicts and set more strategic and sequenced mandates.

Secondly, that peacekeeping should be better coordinated with other UN activities such as peacebuilding and development.

And thirdly, improved peacekeeping performance, including accountability where performance is not at the right standard.

My first question to our Commanders is: how is the Action plan being implemented in your missions? General Deconinck mentioned the importance of

intelligence in peacekeeping, in situational awareness, sending our peacekeepers out with knowledge of what is going on around them. What improvements have been made in the use of peacekeeping intelligence and how can we in New York further support those efforts?

And then in the context of efforts to further improve the performance of peacekeepers, I know the Secretariat has been tasked to develop an integrated performance policy framework. My question would be whether the Force Commanders have a view on what the performance framework should contain? How do we incentivise better performance in missions?

Specific questions on some of the missions: On UNAMID, thank you very much for what you had to say about the reconfiguration work. I would just ask what you think, General, the next steps should be in the mission's reconfiguration. In particular, whether any challenges are being faced alongside the mandate to protect civilians.

On MINUSMA, again I thought that that was a very helpful intervention. A question I would have is: we know of course MINUSMA is working in the same space as the G5 Sahel Joint Taskforce, I'd just like to know how well the military actors are joining up to ensure they contribute in their defined ways to the common objective, and how the link with development humanitarian is going? Is there a coordinated plan that brings together the different military actors and the different development actors behind them to make the most of all of the tools we have at our disposal in Mali?

And then finally to the General commanding UNMISS, I want to say how we talked about this yesterday and it should be in the Council, how impressed we have been by some of the swift and decisive action taken recently in response to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. And I just wonder – this is obviously a big problem still in different missions – whether you could give some examples of the best practice you've used in South Sudan that might help other missions to learn and to be able to respond effectively if it happens to them.

Let me finish there in the spirit of interactiveness and reiterate my sincere gratitude to all of those serving in blue for the good of all of us.

Thank you.

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## **[News story: Digital rail revolution will reduce overcrowding and cut delays](#)**

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling and Network Rail Chief Executive Mark

Carne will today (10 May 2018) launch Network Rail's Digital Railway Strategy and commit to ensuring all new trains and signalling are digital or digital ready from 2019. They will also set out that they want to see digital rail technology benefiting passengers across the network over the next decade.

New digital rail technology will:

- safely allow more trains to run per hour by running trains closer together
- allow more frequent services and more seats
- cut delays by allowing trains to get moving more rapidly after disruption
- enable vastly improved mobile and wi-fi connectivity, so that passengers can make the most of their travel time and communities close to the railway can connect more easily

### [Video about digital rail improvements](#)

The technology will be fully operational from next year on the Thameslink service in central London, which will see 24 trains pass through every hour. The Digital Railway Strategy is being launched in York, on the Transpennine route, which Chris Grayling will say he wants to be the country's first digitally controlled intercity railway.

Chris Grayling, Transport Secretary, said:

We are investing in the biggest modernisation of our railway since Victorian times to deliver what passengers want to see – faster, more reliable and more comfortable journeys.

Passenger numbers have doubled in recent years – which means we need to invest in new technology to help deliver the reliable and frequent trains that passengers want.

Investing in a railway fit for the twenty-first century will help the UK become a world leader in rail technology, boosting exports and skills. As we celebrate the [Year of Engineering](#), this is a chance to show young people how digital innovation is opening doors to careers that will shape the future of travel.

Digital rail technology will ensure the best use is made of the almost £48 billion being invested in maintenance, modernisation and renewal on the rail network between 2019 and 2024, which includes new and replacement signalling. The government has also earmarked £450 million specifically for digital railway schemes.

Mark Carne, chief executive, said:

Not since the railway transformed from steam to diesel in the 1960s has a technological breakthrough held such promise to vastly

improve our railway for the benefit of the millions of people and businesses who rely on it every day.

The age of a digital railway has today moved from the drawing board and into reality as we reveal a blueprint that will improve the lives of millions of passengers and freight users across the country. Today's commitment is to adopt and roll-out new digital technology, for both trains and track, that will deliver faster more frequent services for passengers and businesses alike, giving our economy a massive boost.

Digital signalling will mean drivers are provided with real-time information about the network and the location of other trains. They will no longer have to rely on signals by the side of tracks, which will mean fewer train services held up, reducing stop-starting. And in the event of disruption, the digital railway will advise signallers of the best option to get services back to normal and help the network recover more quickly.

The roll-out of digital signalling on the UK network is already underway. The technology is assisting drivers as part of the [Thameslink Programme upgrades](#) and the rail industry will fit 200 trains with digital signalling technology by the end of 2018. Crossrail will use in-cab signalling to deliver more trains and seats east-west through London.

The government has also earmarked £5 million for Network Rail to develop proposals for embedding digital technology between Manchester and York, as part of the £3 billion upgrade of that route starting next year.

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## [News story: Islay Trader report published](#)

The MAIB report on the grounding of Islay Trader off Margate while on passage from Murphy's Wharf, Greenwich to Antwerp, Belgium on 8 October 2017, is now published.

The vessel sustained plate indentation and frame distortion but there were no injuries and no pollution.

The report contains details of what happened, actions taken and recommendations, [read more](#).

### **Press enquiries**

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

## [Press release: Government calls on technology firms to help tackle the UK's biggest challenges](#)

Today Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, will announce the first round of competitions for tech specialists to tackle social challenges at the government's flagship digital conference, Sprint 18.

The competitions will be delivered using the £20m GovTech fund launched by the Prime Minister in November 2017.

Contributing to each of the government's [Grand Challenges](#) – the data economy; clean growth; healthy ageing and the future of mobility – the competition is designed to incentivise Britain's tech firms to come up with innovative solutions to improve public services.

The Government Digital Service is challenging tech experts to find solutions for specific issues including tackling loneliness and how to reduce plastic waste.

The first of these competitions opens on Monday 14 May and runs for six weeks, with the remaining competitions being launched in subsequent months.

Tech firms bidding to the fund will have free rein to create truly innovative fixes. Winning companies will be awarded up to £50,000 to develop their ideas.

The companies providing the best potential solutions will then be awarded research and development contracts of up to £500,000 to build prototypes. These solutions will then be available to the public sector to purchase.

Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, in the Cabinet Office said:

Our modern Industrial Strategy will cement Britain's position as a world-leader in digital innovation and this Government is committed to providing more opportunities for tech businesses – including small firms – to access public procurement contracts. The GovTech fund encourages firms to find innovative ways to fix the big social problems we all face – loneliness, plastic pollution and national security.

Through emerging technologies, this fund will elevate British companies onto a global market while helping to deliver outstanding

public services and improving lives for people.

The first GovTech competition opens on Monday 14 May for six weeks – see more here. It will be overseen by a dedicated GovTech team which will operate at the heart of Government and oversee the £20 million fund.

The GovTech assessment panel is made up of representatives from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), The Government Digital Service (GDS), Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), HM Treasury, the Innovate UK (the UK's innovation agency), and the devolved Northern Ireland administration.

Sprint 18 will bring together digital and technology leaders to hear about the work taking place across the public sector to make government work better through the themes of Transformation, Collaboration and Innovation. Discussions will include how the UK is using its status as a world leader in digital government to help other countries, through the recently announced Global Digital Marketplace, and how departments are using Government as a Platform, which uses digital services to make government work better for citizens.

The challenges, which will all be launched in coming months, are:

Identifying terrorist still imagery (Home Office). Home Office research shows that more than two-thirds of terrorist propaganda disseminated online is still imagery. This project will support both Government analysis of, and broader efforts to remove, this harmful material.

Tracking waste through the waste chain, submitted by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). A new technological approach could help record, check and track waste, helping boost productivity, reduce costs, and protect both human health and the environment.

Tackling loneliness and rural isolation, submitted by Monmouthshire Council. The government recognises that rural transport is vital to local communities, and businesses. A technological solution, exploiting vehicles with spare capacity could support rural economies.

Cutting traffic congestion, submitted by Department for Transport (DfT). Greater collection and new analysis of data could help target interventions to cut congestion.

Local authorities have large numbers of council vehicles crossing their areas every day. If they can be equipped with innovative data capture systems, they could understand potholes, litter, recycling, parking, air quality and more in real-time, every day, for no added cost. This could mean reduced service delivery costs and better local services.

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# Speech: Where credit's due: helping our creators and innovators export

Thank you, Mark.

And thank you all for coming here today.

I'm here because we, as a country, have a challenge. But it's a good challenge!

Yes, we've had 5 consecutive years of economic growth.

Yes, unemployment is at its lowest for 40 years.

Yes, exports increased 10% last year.

We exported well over £600 billion last year – on the latest figures, these small islands are the 4th largest exporters in the entire world, and the second-largest exporter of services.

So what's the challenge?

You see, when it comes to exports we punch above our weight.

But we punch below our potential.

We are a great trading nation. Exporting is one of our strengths.

If we want to sustain jobs and prosperity across the country we must play to our strengths.

But with exporting we're not playing at full strength.

Exports make up 30% of UK GDP, compared to 46% Germany.

Less than 10% of our businesses export. Now, not all those should – it's not the government's job to tell people what's best for their own business.

But so many more of them could.

If we could get those businesses selling internationally, imagine the difference it would make!

I've seen that difference myself: before I went into politics, I spent a decade in the publishing industry as CEO of the Financial Times Group and CFO of Pearson.

Publishing is one of the most export-driven industries in the UK.

And I can tell you first-hand – I found that exporting and operating internationally didn't just raise our profits and let us access new

customers.

It also made us more competitive at home, letting us spread risk and achieve economies of scale, and exposing us to new ideas and practices from other countries.

That's backed by evidence – exporters are more profitable, more productive and more enduring.

So we need to get those non-exporters exporting – and get our existing exporters to sell more things to more markets.

If we do that, it will be a genuine step change for our economy.

And that's why our new Export Strategy will be so important.

It's not enough to just do more of what we're already doing.

We need to take a strategic look at our export support, starting from first principles; and we need to take an evidence-based approach, to allow us to solve our challenge.

That's what our Export Strategy is for.

Firstly, it will give us the rigorous analysis, so we know why we aren't exporting more, where our strengths and weaknesses lie, and where government intervention can make the most difference.

And secondly – it is a strategy. That might sound trivial, but it really is important – it allows us to look across the piece, to see the challenge, and solution, as a whole. That's the only way we'll get the step-change in exporting we need.

That means being strategic about how we work as a government, too.

Businesses shouldn't have to know how government works to get help from the government.

Most of you here today are from business – you wouldn't expect your customers to be familiar with your own internal structure. If your customers contact the wrong part of the business – you just redirect them.

Government shouldn't be any different. So one key principle of the Export Strategy will be a "no wrong door" policy – we will work better together as government, so we can work better with you, not the other way round.

It'll be joined up with the Industrial Strategy, and our drive for a more prosperous Britain – all targeted at creating the right environment and the best base for exporters.

And that leads us on to the second principle, which is that our Export Strategy must be business-led.

We need a strategy run for exporters. The government doesn't export.



Businesses export. Our job is simply to facilitate you exporting – so our export strategy must be designed around you.

It needs to be a strategy designed with exporters. We're using the Export Strategy is to give us the hard analysis and data to do that better.

We must focus on doing what only government can do – our USPs, if you like – rather than trying to replicate what business already does.

For example, the government has a role providing advice to exporters. But that should complement and not usurp the role of private-sector business advice services.

And the government has a role providing export finance – but that should complement the role of banks and insurers providing cashflow and managing risk.

And when the government does take action, we can work with and through the private sector. That's why, as of last year, SMEs can now get Export Finance directly from their bank.

We'll be publishing in the coming months, so let me give you a flavour.

We'll be focusing on key areas:

Firstly, we will inspire and catalyse companies to export.

Surveys suggest there's between three and four hundred thousand businesses who could export but aren't.

Many businesses that do export sell to just one market.

We need to persuade those businesses to look further afield, because people do want to buy British.

As a trade minister I regularly travel abroad – there is no question of the regard in which the UK is held. People are impressed by the quality of our goods and the professionalism of our services.

According to research by Barclays, 61% of people in China, for example, would actually pay more money for a product if it had a Union Jack on it – that's some reputation for quality.

This underpins our award-winning GREAT campaign, who advertise the benefits exporting can have for businesses across a range of sectors, from education to science to sport. To paraphrase: "if we can, you can".

And we will promote peer-to-peer learning, so potential exporters can learn from existing ones – as I said, this is about business first and foremost.

Secondly, it means supporting and guiding businesses to export.

Specific advice on our website.

Our network of regional trade advisers is already helping businesses across the country to export; and our network of trade advisers in 108 countries across the world can help companies navigate local markets.

Thirdly, it means working with private providers, using the Connecting power of government to connect businesses with opportunities.

We are appointing 9 Trade Commissioners to promote trade.

But export finance is at the heart.

Almost 1/5th of businesses report concerns about finance or getting paid as being their main barrier to exporting.

And research shows that exporters that have access to trade finance have export volumes as much as 60% higher.

We start from a strong base here – and that's our best kept secret. As you'll have heard today, UK Export Finance has the capacity to provide over £50 billion worth of support, in over 60 currencies.

This year, UK Export Finance (UKEF) has been named best export credit agency by both the Global Trade Review and Trade Finance.

We whisper: but we need to shout!

To give some recent examples, UKEF is providing a 270 million Euro loan to support the construction by Colas UK of a new international airport in Kabaale, Uganda.

And UKEF is helping secure at least \$250 million of UK exports for two power projects in Iraq, running a supplier fair with lead contractors Enka UK and GE to source suppliers for their projects.

So it's clear that in UK Export Finance, the UK's exporters, or would-be exporters, have a truly world-class export credit agency at their disposal.

But we recognise that we have more to do. 75% of SMEs report that they don't know how to access trade finance – we clearly need to fix this.

So in last year's Autumn Budget the Chancellor allocated funding to enhance marketing of UKEF services, putting export finance at the heart of trade promotion.

And our new Export Strategy will do even more.

We will encourage these smaller businesses to access UKEF support directly from their banks, giving them fast access to government backing to grow their international business.

We will also capture the value of UKEF's highly successful supplier fairs, as a draw to international companies to deepen their investment and engagement with the UK supply chain.

We want to use this to make it easier for SMEs to export, by providing a 'safe' channel for them to find and bid for contracts on major international projects that are backed by UK Export Finance.

And we are conducting a full review of our product suite – to ensure we can provide the best possible support even as market conditions change.

Step-by-step, we are making sure companies can access the finance they need to sell abroad – so no viable project fails for lack of finance.

This is not a straightforward task – but it is one that, if addressed, will reap invaluable benefits.

Remember – the reason this government prioritises trade and exports isn't because we start from a low base.

It's precisely because we start from a high base – exports are 30% of our GDP.

That inevitably makes the challenge more difficult – but it also makes it a challenge worth undertaking.

That's what the Export Strategy is for.

I can promise you that export finance will be front and centre of our Export Strategy.

But that will only work if you as businesses are front and centre of the Strategy, and if you help in creating the export strategy you need.

That's my call to you today.

We want to build our Export Strategy with you; and together with you, we can build a nation of exporters.

Thank you.