

Policy paper: River Thames Scheme: discussion group workshop, Walton Bridge to Richmond (November 2016)

Discussions from the River Thames Scheme group workshops.

Press release: Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan visits Montenegro and Macedonia

From:

First published:

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Part of:

His visit underlines the UK's commitment to playing an active and supportive role in the Western Balkans.

During his visit to the Montenegrin capital Podgorica, the Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, will reaffirm the UK's commitment to the region and Montenegro during his meetings with the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Minister for European Affairs. He will spend time with key civil society organisations from Montenegro, and discuss important reforms on corruption, the rule of law and media.

In Macedonia, Sir Alan will meet President Ivanov and the leaders of all political parties represented in the Macedonian Assembly. They will discuss the current political situation, the need for important reforms to enable progress on NATO and EU accession and their plans to build a prosperous and inclusive country. He will also meet members of Macedonia's civil society, and rule of law institutions focused on the future of Macedonia.

Ahead of the visit, Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan said:

The Western Balkans is a key region for the UK. We are committed to playing an active and supportive role. I'm delighted that my visit will build on this by developing opportunities for future

cooperation on security, prosperity and reform.

We have long supported both Macedonia and Montenegro on their paths towards EU accession and NATO membership, which will require vital progress on reforms within both countries.

Of course, challenges remain. I am eager to hear from politicians and civil society so we can better understand how the UK can support both countries to be stable, secure and prosperous.

Further information

[News story: Marine Management Organisation \(MMO\) issue authorisations to catch bass](#)

Updated: Date changed from 14 to 21 March 2017

In order to protect bass stocks and the sustainability of the wider marine environment from 22 February 2017 the MMO will be issuing letters to fishermen who, based on their track records, have authorisation to catch bass. The MMO will also send letters to those who do not have such authorisation.

The letters include details of a representation process through which fishermen can, on limited grounds, provide evidence to the MMO should they wish to challenge the authorisation decisions which have been made. The deadline for such representations is 21 March 2017.

The MMO action is a response to Article 9(2) of Council Regulation (EU) 2017/127 which fixed the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters in 2017.

[Read the bass fishing guidance.](#)

Phil Haslam (MMO Director of Operations) said:

“The bass authorisations help implement EC measures designed to manage effort in order to help protect and improve Bass stocks.

I would urge fishermen to read the letters they receive and familiarise

themselves with the bass regulations and the representation process. Those that feel they meet the representation criteria and can provide the relevant evidence should do so at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the 21 March 2017 deadline”.

Full details of the [bass regulations and the representation process](#) have been published on the [MMO website](#).

Assistance is also available via [MMO coastal offices](#).

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Speech: The world is sleepwalking towards catastrophic famine – Britain will help prevent this

This year the world is facing numerous humanitarian crises which, taken together, are on a scale not witnessed in recent times. The extent of the challenge is unprecedented, set against a backdrop of immense human suffering. Before this week there has been only one certified famine globally since 2000.

Parts of South Sudan are now in famine and there is a credible risk of famine in Yemen, North East Nigeria and Somalia – drought and conflict are pushing families to the brink of starvation. That is why today I am announcing new support combined with a call to the international community to step up to ensure 2017 is not defined as a year where people died of hunger and drought on a catastrophic scale.

As a nation, we face a choice. With parts of the world on fire, can we ignore the despair beyond our borders? Or do we use our global influence and leadership to confront these challenges head-on? The answer lies in the great British values of fairness and compassion for those less fortunate. The immense generosity of the British public shines through in responses to emergency appeals. British aid workers will always be among the first on the ground bringing relief and now the world is looking to Britain for our leadership once again.

So far the international response to these crises has been inadequate. We are sleepwalking towards catastrophe. Earlier this week famine was declared in parts of South Sudan. In Somalia, a country that saw a quarter of million people die from famine in 2011, the drought conditions are as bad, if not worse than five years ago.

The challenge is unprecedented and the warnings are growing louder: we need a comprehensive response. In Somalia, more than 6 million people have no reliable access to food and there are 360,000 acutely malnourished children.

When I visited Somalia it was clear we have to act now to avoid major loss of life. That's why I am announcing a package of UK humanitarian relief that will provide emergency food aid and water to 1 million people.

In South Sudan almost 5 million face the daily threat of going without enough food and water and 3 million people have been forced from their homes because of ruthless violence and widespread use of rape. That is why this year UK aid will provide food assistance for over 500,000 people, life-saving nutritional support to more than 27,500 children and safe drinking water for over 300,000 people.

Within these crises the risk of famine is exacerbated by conflict, instability and a lack of respect for international humanitarian law. Without political progress to allow access to the areas of the country where famine is taking hold we will not be able reach those in desperate need. The international community must exert pressure on the South Sudanese regime to end the ethnic violence which risks collapsing the country into famine and genocide.

As we step up our response it is vital we ensure UK support goes to where it is desperately needed. I have seen for myself how, in times of crisis, the world looks to Britain not just for our work on the ground, but also for our leadership internationally. Britain will use our place in the world to build a faster, more effective humanitarian system fit for the 21st Century. And to ensure all of this happens at pace, I recently brought together a group of major donors to work together on driving forward much needed reform.

If the international community steps up, quickly, we can save countless lives this year. From painful experience, we know the longer we wait the higher the price humanity will pay. I will be lobbying other governments, the UN and international agencies hard in the weeks and months ahead. We will continue to exert diplomatic pressure to get food flowing into Yemen and humanitarian aid to people under siege in Syria, while continuing to work towards political solutions.

As well as providing urgent humanitarian support, we are also working with refugee host communities to create jobs and education to reduce the pressure to migrate to Europe.

Wherever possible our help will be branded with the Union Jack – so people around the world can see support UK taxpayers are providing. When people in refugee camps or remote communities see our flag displayed proudly on our emergency supplies, they know they have a friend and an ally in Britain.

This is why we make our commitment to UK aid, for these times of crisis.

Britain is at its best when we stand up for the values that we believe in. In the coming months I will ensure my department's energy is focused on relentlessly tackling these crises and galvanising others to step up as we seek to avert catastrophe. Doing so is in the world's interest and ours. 2017 could be the ultimate test of our international system and a test of our shared humanity; the world cannot afford to fail it.

This article was first published in The Telegraph on 22 February 2017.