

FCO Minister Wheeler visit to Fiji and the Pacific Island Forum

FCO Minister for Asia and the Pacific, Heather Wheeler, has chosen Fiji and the Pacific Island Forum, in Tuvalu, for her first official overseas visit since being appointed in the role.

Beginning in Fiji today (12 August), Minister Wheeler will be shown the impacts of climate change in the region and the visit some of the innovative projects that the UK and Fiji are pioneering to respond to these challenges.

While in Fiji, the Minister will also meet the Acting Prime Minister of Fiji, visit the Royal British Legion, tour the Makoi Women's Vocational Training Centre and speak at The University of the South Pacific.

Speaking ahead of her visit, the Minister for Asia and the Pacific Heather Wheeler said:

I am delighted to be travelling to the Pacific region for my first overseas visit as an FCO Minister. I am looking forward to discussions on the impacts of climate change in the region, and to deepen our already strong bilateral partnerships with Pacific Island Countries, many of whom are members of the Commonwealth.

As part of the UK's recently launched Pacific Uplift Strategy, I am keen to hear direct from Pacific Island leaders about the challenges facing Pacific Island Countries and seek opportunities to work together at the Pacific Island Forum and beyond, to deliver on our shared objectives.

On Wednesday (14 August) Minister Wheeler will travel to Tuvalu to attend the Pacific Island Forum and meet Pacific Island leaders to discuss a number of important global issues, such as better cooperation on climate change and the ocean, and on upholding the rules-based international system.

As part of the Pacific Uplift Strategy, the UK is increasing engagement in the Pacific region, which will see the diplomatic network doubled. UK representation in the Pacific will exceed that of any other European state by 2019. On 23 July the UK opened the first of three new British High Commissions, in Vanuatu. UK representation in Tonga and Samoa are planned to open later this year.