

# Foreign Office minister co-chairs 14th UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group

The fourteenth meeting of the biannual UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group was held in London on 3-4 July 2019, co-chaired by the UK's Minister for the Middle East, The Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP, and Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Khalid Al Jarallah.

The Ministers noted the success of our joint celebrations to mark 120 years since the signing of the Kuwait-UK Treaty of Friendship and were grateful for progress made by officials during the Joint Steering Group discussions.

Ministers agreed to continue to collaborate on a wide range of issues, including trade, investment, migration, security, defence, cyber security, healthcare, education, higher education, scientific research, environment, culture and for the first time, international development. Both sides highlighted the continued relevance of the Joint Steering Group to the bilateral relationship.

The discussions on Defence explored areas where further training and exercising opportunities could be found across the land, air and sea domains.

There were productive discussions on cyber security, while the UK reiterated its continued support for Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority.

Ministers approved joint working in aviation security and migration, with planned exchanges of information and training on terrorism and airport security.

They also acknowledged the importance of British and Kuwaiti businesses in developing commercial relations and increasing trade, as well as participation in trade exhibitions and conferences. It was noted that UK exports were £2.5bn in 2018, with total bilateral trade close to £4bn. Exciting new opportunities were also identified in the Food & Drink sector and both sides are committed to removing trade barriers for this sector.

Ministers also committed to further cooperation in scientific research, education, environmental protection and working to develop Kuwait's creative economy.

Kuwait and UK signed agreements to co-operate in scientific research, the creative economy and in defence.

For the first time, cooperation in international development was discussed with the aim of promoting collaboration between the Kuwait Fund for Arab Development and the Department for International Development.