

Foreign Secretary sets out UK's unique offer to East African nations on visit to region

On a three-country tour of East Africa, one year on from the UK's Africa Investment Summit, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab met with political leaders, NGO's and civil society in Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia for important talks on tackling shared challenges including COVID-19, security and climate change.

Starting in Kenya on Wednesday (20 January) the Foreign Secretary and President Uhuru Kenyatta met to discuss further opportunities to boost the UK-Kenya trade partnership – worth £1.4 billion annually – following the signing of one of the UK's first trade agreements in Africa in December.

The Foreign Secretary had meetings with senior politicians including Foreign Minister Raychelle Omamo and announced £48 million of new UK climate initiatives for Kenya as we build momentum ahead of COP26 in Glasgow in November.

On a visit to KEMRI Laboratory in Nairobi the Foreign Secretary heard how Kenyan and British scientists have been working together to develop the Oxford Astra-Zeneca vaccine. Here he signed a new health partnership with Health Minister Mutahi Kagwe, to help maximise knowledge sharing between medical professionals in both the UK and Kenya.

Alongside Defence Cabinet Secretary Monica Juma, the Foreign Secretary met soldiers at the UK-backed Counter-IED centre at the Humanitarian Peace Support School in Embakasi, and heard how joint Kenya-UK efforts are countering terrorism.

On Thursday (21 January) Mr Raab travelled to Sudan – the first visit to the country by a British Foreign Secretary in over a decade. He met Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and Foreign Minister Omer Ghereidat as well as the Chair of the Sovereign Council, Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan to express the UK's commitment to Sudan's democratic transition and confirm the contribution of £40 million of UK funding to the Sudan Family Support Programme – helping Sudanese communities while critical economic reforms are implemented.

The Foreign Secretary also highlighted that, as part of a coordinated international package, the UK stands ready to provide a £330m bridging loan to clear arrears to the African Development Bank if Sudan stays on track with its economic reforms agreed with the IMF, and the Boards of the IMF and World Bank approve similar arrears clearance packages.

Meeting some of the women and young people who played a pivotal role in the revolution, the Foreign Secretary heard how their actions in the protests helped bring about life-changing democratic reforms. In talks with key legal

figures working to deliver transitional justice, the Foreign Secretary discussed the incredibly important work they are doing to secure justice for victims of abuses committed during the revolution and under the Omar al-Bashir regime.

At World Food Programme (WFP) sites in Sudan and Ethiopia, the Foreign Secretary saw first-hand the vital role that UK aid is playing in helping those most in need of humanitarian assistance. In Sudan he visited a WFP nutrition centre, where UK funding is providing life-saving food assistance to vulnerable communities, and spoke to families benefiting from this support.

In Gondar, Ethiopia, the Foreign Secretary visited a World Food Programme warehouse, central to distributing humanitarian aid such as food and sanitation supplies to those displaced by the crisis in Tigray. The UK is providing £11.4 million of humanitarian support – with money for healthcare and clean water, as well as shelter, nutrition kits and protection for children. This is in addition to a £94 million package to support Ethiopia's response to the triple threats of COVID-19, climate change and locusts, which are having a devastating impact on the country.

Arriving back in Addis Ababa the Foreign Secretary visited a school with President Sahle-Work Zewde to see how the UK is supporting girl's education and spoke to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali about humanitarian access and a solution to the Tigray crisis, as well as climate change and prosperity. Mr Raab also signed a climate partnership agreement with Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen Hassen for collaboration between the UK and Ethiopia ahead of COP26.

Speaking at the end of his visit, Mr Raab said:

This trip has been an invaluable opportunity to strengthen key partnerships in East Africa, boosting trade, security and our ability to tackle global challenges including Covid-19 and climate change.

We are committed to bringing the best of British expertise to the region, defusing tensions, doing business with integrity and forging strong partnerships on health, climate and other global challenges.