

High-level visit to Nigeria signals strength and importance to UK-Nigeria partnership

Mr Duddridge was accompanied by the UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Girls' Education and Trade Envoy to Nigeria, Helen Grant MP.

During the 4-day visit, the Mr. Duddridge and Ms. Grant covered a wide range of issues, including human rights, girls' education, and electoral reform. They discussed how the UK can work in partnership with Nigeria to address insecurity; and how to support economic development and mutual prosperity as the world builds back better from COVID-19.

In Abuja, Minister Duddridge met Chief of Staff to President Buhari, Professor Ibrahim Gambari, Senate President Ahmed Lawan, Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama, the Governors of Kaduna and Jigawa, ECOWAS President Jean-Claude Brou, leading civil society organisations and members of the international community. Ms Grant also met the Minister of Education.

During the visit, the Minister for Africa and the Trade Envoy attended the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority and Konexa, a British company, which will help increase sustainable energy access in Nigeria. The delegation also visited a government secondary school in Abuja that is currently being supported by the British Council's Connecting Classrooms programme.

In Lagos, Mr. Duddridge met the Governors of Lagos and Edo States, had a dinner with members of the Nigerian creative sector and met representatives of UK business and investment groups in Nigeria. Mr. Duddridge also visited Apapa seaport, where he took a tour of a terminal and met Nigerian agencies to discuss law enforcement and trade facilitation between the UK and Nigeria.

At the end of the visit, the Minister for Africa, James Duddridge MP, said:

The UK-Nigeria relationship matters to both countries. Over 4 days, we have covered a wide range of issues, including how best to strengthen trade and investment cooperation, how to get and keep more girls in school, and how to work more closely together on global challenges such as COVID-19 and on climate change ahead of COP26.

I also heard from Nigerian civil society the importance of delivering electoral reform, and addressing human rights concerns.

Nigerian stability and security matters to the UK. We want to work with Nigeria to improve both, and encourage all in the country to work together to promote peace and unity.

The UK PM's Special Envoy for Girls' Education and Trade Envoy to Nigeria, Helen Grant MP, said:

I was pleased to visit Nigeria again and have the opportunity to enhance macro-economic reform and promote new trade and investment opportunities for the UK through our support to British businesses who want to do business in Nigeria.

But I was also able, through my engagements here, to champion access to education for girls in Nigeria and reiterate the UK's firm belief that every girl, wherever she is born, should get at least 12 years of quality education.

More detail on the visit is on Twitter [@JamesDuddridge](#), [@HelenGrantMP](#), [@CatrionaLaing1](#) and [@UKinNigeria](#).

More detail on the Konexa Memorandum of Understanding announcement is available on request.