

# Minister for Africa visits East Africa to tackle regional challenges and deepen economic ties

- Minister for Africa has visited Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia to deepen partnerships on trade, education and health, and discuss solutions to regional challenges including conflict and drought
- Vicky Ford announced £17 million of UK Aid to respond to region-wide drought, and one million COVID-19 vaccines
- The Minister also announced new investments in East Africa and attended the regional launch of British International Investment (BII), where she announced a £37m BII investment into Kenya's Equity Bank.
- In Ethiopia, she met with Prime Minister Abiy to discuss routes to a peaceful end to the conflict in northern Ethiopia, and UK support for post-conflict recovery.

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has completed a three-country visit in East Africa, focused on supporting communities impacted by drought and building strong economic partnerships.

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford MP, said:

The UK is deepening our ties with our partners across East Africa.

As the region grapples with one of the worst droughts on record, the UK is providing vital food assistance to vulnerable communities in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia and leading the global effort to support countries on the frontline of climate change.

“The work of British International Investment across east Africa will provide honest and reliable finance, boost growth and create jobs both in the UK and in the region.

I am pleased that there are efforts to make peace in northern Ethiopia, where the conflict has caused great suffering to many millions of people. The UK stands ready to support the peace efforts.

And we are working with our partners in East Africa to tackle some of the key challenges in the region today: security and stability; severe humanitarian crises; getting more girls into school; and increasing access to COVID-19 vaccines.

While in Kenya, the Minister announced a £17 million package of UK funding to support almost a million people across East Africa affected by extreme weather events driven by climate change.

In Nairobi the Minister held an East Africa launch of the new British International Investment (BII) at an event alongside the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Ukur Yatani, and a host of business leaders. BII confirmed a new £37 million investment into Equity Bank to boost small business growth in Kenya at the event.

The Minister also announced that the UK will provide expert analysis and advice on how to boost green manufacturing jobs in Kenya (worth £400,000) and confirmed that UK engineering firm Atkins has been appointed to design Nairobi's new Central Train Station, a flagship project to regenerate Nairobi's Central Business District.

In Uganda, the Minister visited the Onwards and Upwards school in Wakiso district, where she met with students who spoke about the impact two years of school closures have had on them and their aspirations for the future.

The Minister also saw first-hand collaboration between the UK and Uganda at the Uganda Virus Research Institute, where our two countries have collaborated on HIV, Ebola and more recently Covid-19.

Ford announced a new agreement with the Government of Uganda for the UK to donate a further one million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in the coming months, following 300,000 AstraZeneca vaccine doses donated last year.

The UVRI connections with the UK have existed since its founding in 1936 and UVRI now receives funding from the UK Government through the Medical Research Council and the UK Research Institute.

While in Ethiopia, Minister Ford met with Prime Minister Abiy and State Minister Redwan to call for peace in the north and for the government to engage with the African Union-led mediation efforts and express the UK's readiness to support a peace process.

To meet some of the immediate need, the Minister announced new health and education support for people living in conflict-affected areas (worth £5m), which will see 30,000 children who were forced out of school by conflict back into the classroom.

The Minister also announced a further £4.5m of funding, which will go to local women's organisations in Tigray to provide vital support to survivors of gender-based violence, to peacebuilding work in the Somali region and to building the capacity of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

Minister Ford also met with Finance Minister Shide to discuss UK support for opening up Ethiopia's economy to private investment for low carbon infrastructure.