

News story: Africa Minister Stewart: UK stands shoulder to shoulder with Uganda

During his first visit to Uganda in his new role, the Minister emphasised the UK's strong relationship with Uganda and continued partnership in tackling serious challenges in the region. This united approach saves lives and builds prosperity in Uganda, while helping to combat insecurity in neighbouring South Sudan, supporting huge numbers of refugees to rebuild their lives.

The Minister met people living in Impevi refugee centre, which hosts over 120,000 refugees, where he saw how UK aid is providing vital food, water and shelter to those in need. Increasing violence in South Sudan has forced millions of people to flee their homes to escape starvation and unimaginable horrors, with over 2,000 seeking refuge in neighbouring Uganda every day.

The Minister met with President Museveni to discuss bilateral trade between the UK and Uganda and strengthening the Commonwealth. They also discussed the ongoing crisis in South Sudan and the IGAD led peace process, Uganda's continuing work in Somalia and their support for family planning.

Minister for Africa Rory Stewart said:

"I am delighted to be visiting Uganda and to meet President Museveni. The UK places great value in our relationship with Uganda and I look forward to strengthening this relationship yet further as the new Minister for Africa.

"The importance of Uganda's role in the region cannot be overstated and it is vital to securing a lasting peace in South Sudan. South Sudan faces a worsening humanitarian crisis with over half the population in desperate need and ongoing violence forcing almost four million people to flee their homes and unimaginable horrors, with almost half seeking refuge in neighbouring countries like Uganda.

"The UK stands with Uganda as it manages the fallout of this tragedy. We are committed to both addressing the root causes of forced displacement, but also sustainable support to Uganda in responding to the influx of refugees. Thanks to UK aid, refugees reaching Uganda are receiving shelter, food, medical care, a measure of safety and the hope for a future in the region. This is in everyone's interests".

The UK is supporting Uganda in managing its growing refugee crisis by providing emergency support as well as helping strengthen services in the local host communities through rapidly upgrading infrastructure, hospitals and schools. On a visit to Vurra Cope Primary School in Rhino Refugee Settlement, where over 2000 of the 3000 students are South Sudanese refugees, the Minister saw how UK support is enabling these children to get back into education and give them hope for the future.

Minister Stewart also met beneficiaries of a UK supported family planning programme in Uganda, which is helping to provide integrated family planning and sexual reproductive health services to vulnerable young people in the area. This was in the same week as the landmark London Family Planning Summit at which the UK increased life-saving assistance to ensure women across the globe have access to modern contraception. The UK recently announced an increase in family planning support to Uganda which will help 380,000 additional women to get access to modern family planning methods, enabling them to finish their education, get better jobs and provide for their smaller, planned families to escape the cycle of poverty.

In the last year, UK aid in Uganda has fed 650,000 people, vaccinated 235,000 children, provided healthcare for 65,000, sheltered 181,000, provided clean water for 40,000 and essential relief items for 64,000 people.