

[News story: Minister for Africa announces new support for Zimbabwe's democratic processes](#)

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin meets President Emmerson Mnangagwa in Zimbabwe

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin visited Zimbabwe on Thursday 1 February and Friday 2 February, on her first overseas visit in her new role as joint Minister for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

Minister Baldwin met with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa and Foreign Minister Sibusiso Moyo to discuss the Zimbabwean government's vision for domestic transformation and international engagement through comprehensive political and economic reforms. As a central plank of this, they discussed the importance of the elections later this year being peaceful, credible, free and fair. Minister Baldwin welcomed the President's commitment to invite international observers from the EU and UN as well as SADC and AU.

Minister Baldwin met with Finance Minister Chinamasa and Reserve Bank Governor John Mangudya to discuss the government's plans for clearing debt and normalising relations with the International Financial Institutions. Minister Baldwin welcomed the government's recommitment to the Lima plan and confirmed that the UK would continue to support the government's reform agenda. Minister Baldwin also welcomed government plans to attract more investment into agriculture through ensuring land tenure and compensation are tackled.

Speaking at an event with prominent civil society actors, including human rights activists and elections experts, the Minister announced £5 million of new UK aid funding to support the strengthening of democratic electoral processes in the run up to and following the 2018 elections.

Minister Baldwin reflects on her visit to Zimbabwe

[Minister for Africa visits Harare](#)

In a meeting with Zimbabwean business people and entrepreneurs, the Minister heard of the enormous potential of Zimbabwe and how some of the obstacles including the currency crisis can be overcome with the support of business.

Minister Baldwin visited two DFID projects to understand how UK aid is supporting some of the most marginalised in Zimbabwe. At a school for children with disabilities, the Minister was able to speak to students and teachers to see how UK support has helped enrich the children's lives and give them skills for the future. The Minister also visited a DFID-funded

shelter for survivors of sexual and gender based violence. She was able to learn more about the experiences of the women and how UK aid is helping marginalised women and girls to access counselling, shelter and legal aid.

Minister Baldwin said:

I am pleased that my first overseas trip as Minister has been to Zimbabwe. The historic events the country has experienced over the last few months have created an opportunity to strengthen UK-Zimbabwe relations as part of a wider process of international engagement.

The upcoming elections are a major milestone for the people of Zimbabwe. When I met President Mnangagwa, I said my government welcomed his commitment to hold credible, peaceful, free and fair elections monitored by international observers.

I have seen for myself that Zimbabwe is a country of enormous potential. With the right leadership, the right policy environment and a vibrant democracy and civil society, Zimbabwe can undergo the transformation it so richly deserves.

Further information