

[News story: Rory Stewart returns from Zimbabwe](#)

Minister for Africa visited Harare shortly after the resignation of President Mugabe to meet the new President, members of the opposition and civil society

Minister for Africa Rory Stewart has just returned from a visit to Zimbabwe. The visit follows the historic resignation of President Robert Mugabe who had held power for 37 years.

Minister for Africa Rory Stewart said:

We're now at a situation in Zimbabwe where there could be an opportunity for progress so I went to listen and to learn.

This was one of the wealthiest countries in Africa. It has incredible human potential, a very educated population and fantastic natural resources. But it is a country which has suffered terribly.

If we're patient and if we're careful, this can be a moment of change where Zimbabwe becomes the country its people and its many international friends want it to be.

[Minister Stewart](#)

In Harare the Minister called on the Zimbabwean government to use the resignation of President Mugabe to push for a full programme of political and economic reform.

The Minister met with the full spectrum of Zimbabwean political voices including new president Emmerson Mnangagwa and opposition leaders Morgan Tsvangirai and Joice Mujuru. They discussed the need for an all-inclusive political process and elections which meet Zimbabwean and International standards. Economic reform is absolutely crucial and the Minister discussed this with all his Zimbabwean counterparts.

The Minister also met with Zimbabwean civil society and human rights groups. They discussed how human rights and rule of law could be prioritised and protected following the transition.

Also in Zimbabwe, the Minister visited a health and sanitation project funded by UK aid which has reached more than three million people in the last five years, giving them access to clean water and sanitation. The minister was also able to meet with young entrepreneurs who are being supported by DFID to run businesses and find innovative solutions to address issues faced by their communities.