

# News story: Scotch Whisky Association joining PM on first trip to Africa

The Scotch Whisky Association has been chosen to showcase the best of UK business on a delegation made up of 29 representatives from across the whole of the United Kingdom.

Visiting South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya over the course of the trip, they will meet with leading businesses, policy makers and entrepreneurs in order to build new investment, trading and export ties between the UK and these emerging markets.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Scotland's trade outside the EU is going from strength to strength, with an increase of over half a billion pounds in exports to these markets earlier this year.

Scotch Whisky is known the world over for its quality and heritage, and I want to see Scottish industry make the most of the opportunities that lie ahead in the vibrant, emerging markets across Africa.

That's why I am leading this delegation to show off the UK's unique offer to our African partners, and I am delighted that the Scotch Whisky Association will be joining me to further boost the reputation and growth of Scottish trade overseas.

Karen Betts, CEO of the Scotch Whisky Association, said:

I'm delighted to be able to join the Prime Minister on this trade delegation to Africa. It's a great opportunity to showcase the heritage, craft and quality of Scotch Whisky in markets with significant potential for growth in the years ahead.

Exports of Scotch Whisky to Africa increased by over 13% last year, with double-digit growth in both South Africa and Kenya. Yet Africa accounts for just 4.5% of global Scotch Whisky exports, so there is plenty of scope for further expansion.

Importing to Africa can involve a good deal of bureaucracy as well as complex tariff and non-tariff trade barriers, which tend to stifle growth. I hope this visit will support the industry in helping remove some of these difficulties, and help Scotch to compete on a level playing field with local products.

I look forward to discussing these issues in Africa and with the

Prime Minister and senior officials so that the UK's largest food and drink export can continue to flourish in new markets.

The Scotch Whisky industry supports 40,000 jobs across the United Kingdom, including 7,000 in rural areas of Scotland.

Earlier this year, the Scotch Whisky Association successfully registered 'Scotch Whisky' as a trademark in South Africa, their seventh largest market by volume. Nearly 100 bottles are shipped to South Africa every minute, highlighting the ever growing demand for Scottish products on the continent.

Africa is developing fast; more than half of the anticipated growth in global population between now and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa, and according to the International Monetary Fund, African economies are amongst the fastest growing in the world, making it a significant trading and investment partner for the UK.

During the visit, the Prime Minister will set out how new partnerships between the UK and Africa can add value to the UK economy, create new market opportunities for British businesses, and boost jobs and prosperity for the benefit of all.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said: > Scotch Whisky is an iconic product, one which is enjoyed right around the world, and is immensely valuable to the UK's economy. It's great news that the Scotch Whisky Association will join the Prime Minister on her first official visit to Africa. > > As we leave the EU we will be able to negotiate new, global free trade agreements. The UK's exceptional and sought-after produce – of which whisky is such a fantastic example – will be a key part of those future trading relationships.