

# Press release: First Secretary Meets the Elders to Discuss Global Issues

Today Damian Green, First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, met with the Elders to discuss a range of global issues that the UK is helping to tackle.

The Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson; former president of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo; and the former Algerian Foreign Minister and UN Special Representative for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, met the First Secretary in his offices on Whitehall.

Damian Green, First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office said:

It was a pleasure and an honour to meet the Elders and I am glad that we could have a constructive meeting. We discussed issues including Syria, modern slavery, refugees, climate change and the Northern Irish border after Brexit.

I reiterated the importance the UK places on tackling external threats to our environment and global security, and upholding the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. I also restated the Government's commitment to avoiding a 'hard border' between Ireland and Northern Ireland and protecting the Common Travel Area.

The UK is a global nation, never more so than now, and the Government firmly believes Britain should play an active, leading role in the world. I look forward to continuing this dialogue with the Elders and other international groups in the months and years ahead.

Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland and lead for the delegation said:

We have held positive discussions today with the First Secretary of State on a range of global issues from the war in Syria and tensions over North Korea, to the Iran nuclear agreement, refugees and migration and climate change. As one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United Kingdom has a special responsibility to play in this forum and beyond to promote peace, diplomacy and the indispensability of multilateral institutions in solving global problems.