

Press release: Foreign Secretary meets with African leaders to discuss Zimbabwe

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson will today (Wednesday 29 November) meet leaders from across Africa to discuss developments in Zimbabwe and wider African security and prosperity.

The Foreign Secretary is attending a major summit in Cote D'Ivoire, West Africa, alongside EU and African Union leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and South African President Jacob Zuma.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Recent events in Zimbabwe offer a moment of hope for the country and its people. This is a time to look to the future and to make clear that Britain shares the common vision of a prosperous, peaceful and democratic Zimbabwe.

I am encouraged by President Emmerson Mnangagwa's words so far. During his inauguration speech, he promised to reform the economy and give investors the security of title they need if Zimbabwe is to fulfil its potential and create the jobs that are sorely needed. For as long as the President acts on his words, then Britain is willing to work alongside him and offer all the support we can.

The UK's relationship with Africa and the African Union will continue to go from strength to strength and as we leave the EU I want to work even more closely with my counterparts in the region.

The Foreign Secretary will highlight the role the UK can play across the continent, as a genuine partner for prosperity, working with African nations to achieve political and economic stability.

Mr Johnson will speak with representatives of the 18 African countries which are also members of The Commonwealth ahead of the UK hosted Commonwealth Summit next April. With 60% of the Commonwealth's population under 30, it is particularly important to the UK that the organisation faces up to the challenges of the region and addresses their ambitions for a better life.

He will also raise the issue of the illegal wildlife trade. Tackling this serious crime is a priority for the UK government and we look forward to bringing leading voices together to work towards new solutions at the London 2018 Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in October next year.

On the illegal wildlife trade, the Foreign Secretary added:

Discussing how we eradicate the illegal wildlife trade is also a top priority for me in my talks with African Union countries. It is not only a deplorable trade that endangers some of our most iconic species of wildlife, but is also a lucrative source of income for transnational criminals which brings misery to local communities.

Further information