

## Press release: Oman: Middle East Minister attends 15th Oman Joint Working Group

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Mark Field, co-chaired the 15th Oman Joint Working Group on 25 April 2019 at Lancaster House with His Excellency Sayyid Badr Hamed Al Busaidi, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This was a key meeting to both highlight and strengthen the excellent bilateral ties between the UK and Oman. It follows the Foreign Secretary's recent visit to Oman where both Foreign Ministers signed the Comprehensive Joint Declaration on Enduring Friendship. As a longstanding friend of Oman, Sir Alan Duncan, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, also joined the meeting and chaired several sessions.

With wide representation from across Whitehall, discussion covered many topics, including foreign policy, defence, the economy, tourism, education and health, as well as the Comprehensive and Joint Defence Agreements.

Speaking at the meeting, Minister Field noted:

These Working Groups are always important occasions to reflect on our cooperation and discuss issues of common interest. This one took place at a particularly significant moment, coming hot on the heels of the signature of the Joint Defence Agreement between Defence Ministers, which in turn followed the hugely successful Saif Sareea 3, our biggest ever bilateral military exercise.

Both were vivid demonstrations of our commitment to mutual security and the incredible warmth and closeness of our bilateral relationship. In that context, the Joint Working Group was particularly significant, because it helped strengthen that relationship even further and paves the way for implementing the spirit of the Comprehensive Joint Declaration on Enduring Friendship.