

# Second UK-Morocco Strategic Dialogue held in Rabat

Today (Tuesday 17 September), the second UK-Morocco Strategic Dialogue was held in Rabat, attended by Middle East Minister Dr Andrew Murrison and Trade Policy Minister Conor Burns. The session was opened by Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita and the Moroccan delegation was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Mounia Boucetta.

As well as reinforcing the growing importance of the UK-Morocco relationship, the Dialogue covered a broad range of topics, with discussions touching on the UK and Morocco's political, economic, security and cultural relations.

Key announcements at this year's Strategic Dialogue included proposals for the creation of a joint taskforce to explore how the UK and Morocco can increase investment in each other's economies and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to create the Joint UK-Morocco High Commission on Education.

This Commission will aim to strengthen higher education and scientific research links between Morocco and the UK by the end of 2023 by increasing the number of students travelling to each other's countries to study, increasing access to UK teaching and qualifications in Morocco, and encouraging joint research projects to address key national and global challenges.

Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, Dr Andrew Murrison, said:

I was delighted to attend the second UK-Morocco Strategic Dialogue in Rabat this week. This important meeting demonstrates the depth and breadth of the friendship between the UK and Morocco.

As we prepare to leave the European Union, it's vital we continue to work closely alongside our valued international partners. I look forward to seeing the UK's relationship with Morocco go from strength to strength.

Ministers also noted the progress made since last year's Strategic Dialogue in London, where the signing of the UK-Morocco Education Agreement was the first step towards the opening of the first British School in Marrakesh later this year, which will allow parents and children across Morocco to access high-quality British education.

Trade Policy Minister, Conor Burns said:

The UK and Morocco economies have a lot to offer one another, and

today's Strategic Dialogue clearly shows the growing opportunities for great British companies to do business in Morocco.

As we prepare to take back control of our trade policy, it is more important than ever that we maintain and grow this important trade partnership as well as continuing to promote UK expertise in sectors like education around the world.

Attendees also noted progress towards a new agreement between the UK and Morocco, which will replace the existing EU-Morocco free trade agreement once the UK leaves the EU and allow businesses to continue trading freely.

Ministers also discussed the Africa Investment Summit, to be held in London on 20 January 2020, at which Morocco will be represented.

Forthcoming military cooperation includes a joint military exercise in October, while cultural exchanges will continue over the coming months, with the first ever visit to Africa of the Royal Household Cavalry for the Salon du Cheval; the presence of the British Showjumping team at the Maroc Royal tour; and the Welsh National Opera's first visit to Morocco in December.

## **Further information**