

Speech: Speech by British Deputy High Commissioner during the Kenya Trade week

Your Excellency, the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, Cabinet Secretaries, distinguished guests, captains of Industry:

I'm delighted to be here today at this important event that marks another milestone in Kenya's trade agenda.

The Export Development and Promotion Strategy that is being unveiled today, along with several other recent initiatives in the trade sector, is an important step in unlocking Kenya's trade potential, sustaining growth and creating jobs in line with Vision 2030 and the Big 4 Agenda.

On behalf of the UK and TradeMark East Africa, which is supported by Canada, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands and the United States, as well as the United Kingdom, let me say how proud I am to be part of this journey.

The UK, along with other international partners, has been working closely with the Government of Kenya to explore opportunities to implement the new strategy.

As part of our contribution, the UK recently announced a new phase of TMEA, including specific support of about Kenya Shilling 2.8 billion (£21m) for the implementation of the export strategy.

Kenya remains a key trade partner for the UK, with total UK/Kenya trade at approximately 133 billion Kenya Shillings (£1 billion) annually.

Our trading relationship with Kenya is important to our Ministers: both the International Development Secretary and Trade Minister have visited Kenya this year to underline that.

Over half the tea we drink in the UK comes from Kenya. And as a nation of tea drinkers, we are keen to keep it that way. Similarly Kenyan roses dominate the UK market, and make many Brits happy on Valentine's Day.

We are of course focussed on ensuring there is no disruption to this as the UK leaves the European Union.

Over recent months, my team together with officials from the Department for International Trade in the UK, have met several times with PS Kiptoo and his colleagues.

We have made good progress to plan for trade continuity once we leave the EU. The Implementation Period will enable Kenyan exports to continue to enter the UK without any tariffs or quotas, protecting markets for those important flowers, tea and other exports.

The UK is working hard to negotiate a deal with the EU. And we are working with Kenya to maintain trading arrangements under a range of negotiating scenarios with the EU. We want to provide the strongest possible platform to deepen our trade relationships in the future.

We're keen to work together with you all on this, and ensure our bilateral trade flourishes in the years to come.

I must note that while trade between Kenya and the UK is fairly balanced at the moment, recent analysis shows that Kenya's share of the UK market has been declining since 2008.

Fortunately this is not because my compatriots are drinking any less tea or giving any less thought to Valentine's Day. Instead it is mainly due to competition from Kenya's peers and neighbours, who produce and export similar products to the UK.

There are immediate opportunities to stem this tide, and growth both trade with, and investment into, Kenya, across many sectors.

One example: the export strategy launched here today highlights oil and gas as one of the expected drivers for export growth. Kenya has demonstrated significant progress already with the launch of the Early Oil Pilot Scheme last month.

Disappointingly, operations have had to be suspended due to disruptions caused by protestors. This has caused significant losses for both the company and the Government of Kenya, and put at risk US\$ 3 billion in investment and billions of future exports.