

# Speech: Liam Fox speech to the Toronto Board of Trade

It is a pleasure to be returning to Canada, and to visit your country for the first time in my new capacity as the Secretary of State for International Trade.

I am delighted to be the first UK Cabinet Minister to visit during your celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation. I doubt I'll be the last.

I would like to thank Jan De Silva, the Toronto Board of Trade and your sponsors for hosting us today.

It is a privilege to be able to address you all at such an exciting moment in the United Kingdom's history.

As Secretary of State for International Trade, I am currently heading up a department that has been called the greatest start-up in the history of British government.

Six months ago, the department existed only on paper yet now, we boast thousands of staff across the globe, and we are still growing.

Until last year, the world's fifth largest economy had no department dedicated to international trade and commerce exclusively.

But the June referendum on the UK's membership of the EU delivered a golden opportunity for the United Kingdom to recast our place in the world.

For the first time in more than four decades, Britain will have an independent trade policy.

Britain's ambition is to become a global champion of free trade, working to remove barriers and liberalise commerce across the world.

The Prime Minister has made a clear statement on our relationship with EU: enabling the UK to strike comprehensive trade agreements with other countries, and allowing us to remove unnecessary barriers where they restrict our ability to trade.

And part of this process, while we remain a member, will be a continuing of our commitment to promote free trade from within the European Union.

This means unwavering support for the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

The signing of CETA at the end of last year was a great moment for global free trade, coming as it does at a time when a chorus of protectionism is rising across the world.

It was a particular moment of pride for the United Kingdom, and for many in our government and public services who have worked tirelessly for years to ensure its smooth passage.

I congratulate my colleague, Chrystia Freeland, and her predecessors, for getting the deal done, and I look forward to working with Francois-Philippe Champagne and seeing him tomorrow in Montreal. I met with Chrystia this morning and there are few politicians working on trade with whom I have such a shared mind.

CETA is worth around £1.3bn a year to the UK, and some \$12bn to Canada.

And we have every intention of continuing to honour its clauses as the United Kingdom opens a new chapter in its history.

Continuity will be the cornerstone of our future negotiations with the EU.

The European Union currently has 36 free trade agreements with other countries around the world.

Ensuring that there is no disruption of our free trade with Canada, or any other partner, is a top priority for my department.

We will also seek, as far as possible, to replicate the EU trading schedules as we take our independent seat in the WTO, maintaining current tariff levels with a view to seeking further liberalisation over time.

Finally, we will seek an ambitious free trade agreement with the European Union, maintaining the greatest possible access to the single market.

We seek a new, strategic partnership with our European neighbours based on free trade and mutual cooperation. We want to see a strong and successful EU as a political, economic and security partner.

But if we are to champion free and open trade, the United Kingdom must re-forged our relationships with those nations who have been our longest serving and closest allies.

The UK and Canada enjoy a friendship built not only on our history, but upon economic partnership and, above all, shared values.

As much as Canada is a part of Britain's past, and vice-versa, we are also part of one another's future.

We share a unique degree of cooperation in almost every area of international relations.

We are members of, the G7, the G20, the Commonwealth, the Five Eyes intelligence network and NATO.

We are both champions of free trade who understand that it is the best means to reduce global poverty and increase global prosperity.

It is a friendship that is stronger than ever, and one that has formed the foundation of a fruitful commercial and economic partnership.

The United Kingdom is Canada's third-largest export market, and your second-largest destination for foreign direct investment after the US.

In turn, Canadians buy £6.3bn worth of British goods and services annually.

Around 600 UK firms operate in this country, in industries from oil extraction to aerospace to pharmaceuticals.

Many of them are based here in Toronto, at the heart of the UK-Canada business relationship in sectors ranging from financial services to food and drink.

As Britain looks to the future, it is partnerships such as ours that will be the most highly valued, that will be a foundation to our prosperity, and will help the United Kingdom to shape a new place in the world.

Of course, I cannot come here as a representative of your second-largest investment partner, without making reference to your first, the United States.

The UK is as committed to free and open trade with the US as we are with Canada.

The three-way trading and investment alliance between Canada, the UK and the USA is vitally important not only to our own prosperity, but to the stability of the free trading world.

Our government has been greatly encouraged by the attitude of the new administration towards UK-American free trade, and Britain will continue to be a champion and advocate for free trade, working to remove barriers wherever they are found.

For that is our ambition.

When the Prime Minister took office in July, she did so with the promise to make the UK a global leader in free trade once more.

For more than a century, this country was the greatest trading power in the world.

Britain and free trade were virtually synonymous.

Once again, we renew our commitment to free and open trade.

At a time when protectionism once again threatens our economic freedoms, and growth in world trade is slowing to a crawl, Britain will stand in defence of free trade, working with partners and allies, like Canada, to remove barriers and tariffs wherever they are found.

Yet to do so, we must first use these principles to forge our own place at

the heart of global commerce.

There is a big, wide world for Britain to do business with, and we intend to do just that.

And, as of this week, it is easier than ever for companies in Canada and around the world to connect and do business with British firms.

We have launched two major global campaigns; Invest in GREAT Britain and the International Trade Campaign.

Britain is a global hub of exceptional businesses and investment opportunities, and since the referendum we have attracted a record £16bn of foreign direct investment; a vote of confidence in the future of the UK.

In a globalised world, the United Kingdom must stand ready to trade with every partner, to build a free and open network of commerce and trust that will not only safeguard our nation's prosperity, but spread wealth across the world.

Two hundred years ago, Napoleon called Britain a 'nation of shopkeepers'.

Since then, we have worn his insult as a badge of honour.

It encapsulates our country's commercial character, our drive to sell our goods and services from Los Angeles to Lahore, St. John's to Vancouver and everywhere in between.

Trade has always been the lifeblood of the United Kingdom, and it will remain so.

And with Canada, one of our closest of allies, by our side at this historic time, there is no ambition we cannot fulfil, and no challenge we cannot rise to meet.

---

## [UN food relief agency chief welcomes progress on anti-hunger programmes in north-east Nigeria](#)

27 January 2017 – The head of the United Nations food relief agency today welcomed the progress made by the humanitarian community and the Government of Nigeria in fighting hunger and malnutrition in the West African country's north-east.

"You can see the tremendous progress achieved in a matter of months," the Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), Ertharin Cousin,

said in a news release, issued following a visit to Pompomari camp for the internally displaced people (IDPs) in Damaturu, who fled Boko Haram militants in Yobe and Borno states.

“Children who could barely stand just last November are now on the road to recovery. They will continue to require our assistance in the coming months. The work of the international community in Nigeria is not over yet,” she added.

By December 2016, an agile response, combining rapid air-and-road interventions, enabled WFP and partners to reach more than a million people in need, particularly in these high risk areas. And while some areas remain inaccessible, organizations are working together to reach as many as 1.8 million vulnerable people in the first quarter of 2017.

At Pompomari camp, which hosts some 2,000 IDPs, WFP provides cash assistance in the form of money credited electronically to mobile phones. The spending helps to stimulate local markets. To prevent and treat child malnutrition, children under the age of five receive a highly nutritious, peanut-based supplement, while pregnant and nursing women receive nutritional support.

But amid concerns over continued funding, Cousin sounded a note of caution. “The world should not wait for babies to die before taking action,” she warned, appealing to the international community not to prioritize one hungry child over another.

---

## [Human rights community mourns passing of Sir Nigel Rodley, former UN rights expert](#)

27 January 2017 – Expressing sadness at the passing of noted rights icon, Sir Nigel Rodley, the United Nations human rights wing today recalled the contributions of one of the “best known public faces, and most eloquent voices” of the UN Human Rights Committee.

Affectionately known to the human rights community as ‘Sir Nigel,’ the rights expert passed away on 25 January, at the age of 75.

“He would speak directly and frankly to anyone, even the most powerful; yet would also treat everyone with great humanity and kindness,” Rupert Colville, the spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), told the regular bi-weekly media briefing in Geneva.

In addition to serving at the Human Rights Committee – the independent expert body that monitors worldwide implementation of the International Covenant on

Civil and Political Rights – for 16 years between 2001 and 2016, Sir Nigel was a former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment from 1993 to 2001, a devoted human rights defender and also an academic.

“For us at the UN Human Rights Office, he was someone who was always willing to pass on his knowledge and experience to a younger generation,” said Mr. Colville.

Sir Nigel was also the Professor of Law and Chair of the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex in the United Kingdom. Many of his students are now working at OHCHR as well as at various other human rights institutions around the world.

Quoting OHCHR staff, he added: “Sir Nigel could be sharp, and he certainly pointed out your mistakes, but he was also generous with his praise.”

**AUDIO:** OHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville speaking on what made Sir Nigel so special.

---

## [With 2.2 million Afghans feared to be on the move, UN agency to begin tracking displacements, aid relief](#)

27 January 2017 – Amid concerns of a severe humanitarian crisis induced by sudden return home of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees and undocumented citizens, coupled with conflict-induced displacement, the United Nations migration agency has launched a new displacement tracking system to better understand population movements and needs in the crisis-struck country.

“There is an urgent need to know where people in vulnerable situations are living and what their needs are,” said the head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) operations in Afghanistan, Laurence Hart.

In a news release issued earlier today, he added: “With a system in place to clearly track these concerns, humanitarian actors and the Government can deliver assistance and services to the families and communities that need it most.”

The UN agency hopes that with the launch of its Displacement Tracking Matrix – a system that employs a range of tools and processes to track and monitor population movement during crises – humanitarian actors will have a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of vulnerable populations,

whether on site or en route, and be alerted to urgent concerns, greatly facilitating humanitarian response.

According to IOM, in 2016, more than 600,000 registered refugees and undocumented Afghans returned back from Pakistan and, based on estimates, a further 1 million are expected to return in 2017.

On top of the returning population, last year also saw conflict-induced displacement of over 623,000, and an additional 450,000 people are expected to become internally displaced due to the ongoing conflict this year.



Children from an Afghan returnee family at their home in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Photo: IOM (file)

#### ***Additional strain on overstretched services***

There are particular concerns that such large-scale returns and intensified conflict, combined with rapid urbanization, have created additional strain on already overstretched local services. Further compounding the issue is the lack of accurate information on the location and needs of people who have returned or those who have been forced to leave their homes.

The first phase of the Displacement Tracking Matrix in Afghanistan will put a framework in place to track at risk populations in Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces.

IOM said that its staff in these provinces will consult with community leaders and elders, national and local authorities, as well as previous registrations and assessments. They will also conduct field visits to get a comprehensive picture of the estimated number of returnees from abroad, internal movements and needs and conditions at the village, district and provincial levels.

“While there is good tracking along the borders, there is little knowledge of the actual final destinations, the villages and neighbourhoods, where people are arriving,” said IOM Human Mobility Tracking Expert Vlatko Avramovski. “The Matrix will deliver this information regularly and accurately.”

---

**Rationing of this kind is totally unacceptable and is against the best traditions of the NHS – Julie Cooper**

**Julie**

**Cooper MP, Labour's Shadow Health Minister**, commenting on reports of increases in waiting times for hip operations, said:

"It is absolutely shocking in 21st Century Britain that patients in some parts of the country will only qualify for knee and hip replacement operations on the NHS if they can prove pain so exceptional that it prevents sleep.

"Rationing of this kind is totally unacceptable and is against the best traditions of the NHS. However, there are concerns that if the Government continues to deny sufficient funding to the NHS, rationing of treatments could become more widespread."