

Press release: Chinese New Year 2017: Theresa May's message

I want to send my best wishes to everyone in Britain, China and around the world celebrating Chinese New Year.

From the fairs in Beijing, to the fireworks in Hong Kong and the parades here in London, families and communities will come together and look to the year ahead – the Year of the Rooster.

And what a year it is set to be – particularly for the relationship between Britain and China.

Our starting point is stronger than ever before. We had the [historic state visit of President Xi](#) just 15 months ago. We receive more Chinese investment than any other major European country. We've got around 150,000 Chinese students studying here and the number of Chinese tourists visiting has doubled in 5 years.

Meanwhile, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, our countries are working together on the most pressing global issues.

This year also marks some important anniversaries: 20 years since the handover of Hong Kong to China; and 45 years of ambassadorial relations between our countries.

I want us to take this chance to build on all the ties we share – in business, diplomacy, education, tourism and culture – as we forge a new role for Britain, as the most outward-looking, free-trading nation in the world.

Indeed, I look forward to making another visit to China, following my trip to Hangzhou last year, which was my first visit outside Europe as Prime Minister and my first meeting with President Xi.

And it is an auspicious time. The Rooster – the Fire Rooster – represents so many of the characteristics we need to employ in that endeavour: openness, confidence, hard work and leadership.

These aren't alien concepts to any of us. Indeed, they are characteristics demonstrated day in, day out by the British Chinese community.

For this is a community that makes an enormous contribution to our society – proving that the strength and success of this country rests on dedication, diversity and a deep spirit of citizenship among our people.

So as the lanterns are lit and the dumplings are served, let me wish you and your family, wherever you are, a very happy and healthy New Year.

Xin Nian Kuai Le.

Press release: Government minister teaches Yorkshire children the law

Yorkshire schoolchildren will be taught about the law and their basic civil and criminal rights by Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP and a group of law students.

The Year 5 pupils (age 9 and 10) from Adel Primary School will take part in a mock trial of Goldilocks vs the Three Bears at BPP University Law School in Leeds where they will decide if Goldilocks is guilty of breaking and entering, causing criminal damage and stealing the bears' food.

Aligned to the new National Curriculum, the Streetlaw session explains the criminal trial process through the well-known fairytale, helping children learn about the legal system, courts and the people who appear in them in an interesting and enjoyable way.

The Solicitor General said:

“Teaching children about the law means they have a greater understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities that they can use throughout their lives.

“Such sessions provide an excellent legal foundation together with helping to raise confidence and skills in both the pupils and law students.

“Public legal education not only has a practical and a beneficial effect upon our legal system but on young people's lives. I'm looking forward to an enjoyable session.”

Emma Blackstone, Pro Bono Manager at BPP University Law School in Leeds said:

“Streetlaw is such a fantastic way to teach young people about the legal issues that relate to them. The Goldilocks workshop is one of our most popular primary school sessions and we have delivered it in schools across Yorkshire.

“At BPP University, we are educating the next generation of lawyers. Taking part in Streetlaw helps our students to develop the key skills they will need in practice.

“The project also develops a sense of social responsibility in our students. We encourage them to use their legal knowledge to improve access to justice for others. This is an ethos they carry with them into their professional careers.”

Streetlaw is a national, public legal education project that is delivered by law students in universities across England and Wales. The students deliver

interactive and engaging legal workshops that aim to educate community groups and school children about the law as it relates to them.

The Solicitor General will also meet law students who have been giving free legal advice – with guidance from qualified lawyers – to members of the public at the University’s advice clinic and through the Employment Law Telephone Advice Line.

Latin America and the Caribbean can make hunger history – UN agricultural agency

25 January 2017 – With continued and strengthened implementation of a regional food security plan, Latin America and the Caribbean could become the first developing region to completely eradicate hunger, the head of United Nations agricultural agency said today.

“This region has all the necessary conditions to achieve this, starting with the great political commitment that sustains the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication Plan,” said the Director-General of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), José Graziano da Silva.

Speaking at the Summit of Presidents and Heads of State and Government of CELAC in Punta Cana, the Dominican Republic, the FAO chief added: “The Plan represents the crystallization of governments’ political will to eradicate hunger before 2025 (five years ahead the target set in the Sustainable Development Goals).”

Approved by CELAC in 2015, the Plan promotes comprehensive public policies to reduce poverty, improve rural conditions, adapt agriculture to climate change, end food waste and mitigate disaster risks.

A key element of the Plan is that it not only focuses on addressing hunger but also obesity, which affects about 140 million people in the region.

According to the FAO, the Plan is also fully in line level global commitments including the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Strengthening family farming to tackle climate change

Mr. Graziano da Silva also highlighted the threats posed by climate change, which has the potential to reverse the gains made in the fight against hunger and extreme poverty in the region.

“Agriculture is the sector most affected by climate change and its main victims are small family farmers, men and women, many of whom struggle daily for their survival,” he noted.

Together with CELAC, FAO is developing a plan of action for family agriculture and rural territorial development that promotes sustainable intensification of production, public procurement and food supply systems, rural services and greater opportunities for rural youth.

FAO has also supported the countries of the region to draw up a Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Management for Agriculture and Food Security, which promotes resilience and adaptation of farmers through s

ustainable farming techniques and resource management.

Link between peace, food security and sustainable development

Noting the links between peace, food security and sustainable development, the FAO head recalled the peace process in Colombia and added that it showed the interconnectedness of the issues.

“There will be no social stability or peace as long as there is hunger, poverty and inequality. Nor can we move forward if we continue to exploit our natural resources. Sustainability is a pre-condition for development,” he noted.

[Sustainable agriculture, better-managed water supplies, vital to tackling water-food nexus – UN](#)

25 January 2017 – Highlighting the challenges associated with the inextricable links between water and food – the so-called ‘water-food nexus’ – for food security, as well as for sustainable development, the United Nations agricultural agency today outlined steps that can be taken to improve water sustainability for current and future needs.

“The magnitude of the water-food nexus is underappreciated,” said Pasquale Steduto, UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Regional Strategic Programme Coordinator for the Near East and North Africa regions.

In his briefing during an event at UN Headquarters in New York, the FAO official also pointed to the fact that a person needs between two to four litres of water for daily consumption, and for domestic uses (washing, etc.) between 40 to 400 litres per family.

But for food and nutritional needs, the requirement is between 2,000 and 5,000 litres per person, depending on diet, or “roughly one litre per kilocalorie” he explained.

He further emphasized that the nexus is particularly significant for strengthening food security given that the world population is estimated to cross the nine billion mark by 2050, another 50-60 per cent food would need to be produced over current levels to feed everyone.

“This would imply having at least 50 per cent more water – which we will not have. Estimates show we can mobilize up to 10 per cent more, [highlighting] the issue of water scarcity,” added Mr. Steduto.

He also stressed the significance of water for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) explicitly calls for ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, water is a key component for other Goals including those on poverty (SDG 1), hunger and malnutrition (SDG 2), and climate change (SDG 13).

Thus, highlighting the need for intensification of sustainable agriculture, Mr. Steduto called for improving efficiency in the use of resources; protecting and conserving natural resources; having a people-centred approach and protecting rural livelihoods; strengthening resilience of people, community and ecosystems, particularly to climate change; and ensuring good governance to safeguard sustainability for natural and human systems.

Speaking further on the response to tackling water scarcity, the FAO official emphasized the need to augment the availability of water, such as through employing large-scale water harvesting methods (including for agricultural purposes), as well as the use of non-conventional water (such as treated waste water and desalination plants).

He also underlined the need to be prudential on the demand side, such as reducing food losses and food waste, and promoting sustainable diets, could also go a long way in staving off water scarcity.

Between supply and demand, he outlined enhancing efficiency and productivity, strengthening governance, employing water saving and optimization technologies, as well as strategic planning and policy for water and food security, including the water-food-energy nexus approach, are important components of addressing this complex challenge.

In his briefing, he also noted FAO initiatives tackling water scarcity at various levels.

Flooding

I held a meeting with the Environment Agency and the Minister for preventing floods to ask what more action can be taken to tackle flooding issues along the Emm and Loddon rivers in Wokingham Borough. I was told that they are working on a study of the Loddon to see what additional measures should be taken. I offered suggestions on possible actions, and reminded them of the areas most liable to flood.