

Letter from the Home Secretary to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary

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Addressing the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes Region

Thank you, Mr President, and let me, like others, thank Special Envoy Xia for your briefing this morning, Sir. We look forward to continuing to work closely with you to support efforts to achieve greater peace, stability and development in the Great Lakes region.

Mr President, the Great Lakes region, historically characterised by internal conflict and tensions between neighbours, is experiencing a new momentum towards regional cooperation on peace and security. And I think it's important to note and appreciate President Tshisekedi's efforts to revive the DRC's diplomatic relations with its neighbours and enhance regional cooperation. The United Kingdom very much welcomes this new momentum – in particular, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding intended to ease tensions and restore friendly relations between Rwanda and Uganda, facilitated by the Presidents of DRC and Angola. And we also very much welcome the holding of confidence building meetings between regional security and intelligence actors aimed at enhancing efforts to neutralise armed groups in eastern DRC.

Mr President, alongside this positive and welcome diplomatic momentum within the region, the security, human rights, development and economic challenges that persist are immense. In this regard, let me just say that I agree very much with the Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea on the importance of taking a coordinated approach to Ebola, but not just Ebola – to cholera, to measles as well – and, of course, with the Ambassador of France on the importance of properly funding the humanitarian response plan.

Mr President, of particular concern is the situation in and along the borders of eastern DRC, where illegal armed groups continue to commit atrocities against the civilian population and present a major threat to regional security. It is important that President Tshisekedi, has full control of the security forces and that senior figures within the DRC armed forces are not allowed to act independently and foster insecurity.

The problems in eastern DRC and the wider Great Lakes region cannot be resolved solely through military means. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, regional actors must work together to address the underlying drivers of conflict. That will require cooperation and concerted pressure to prevent armed groups from receiving financing and support from within and beyond the region. Armed groups and other security actors control significant flows of resources, including gold, minerals and charcoal, from eastern DRC to neighbouring countries. It is clearly in the interests not only of the countries of the region, but more specifically the peoples of those countries to turn these illicit flows of resources into legitimate trade flows, contributing thereby both the economic development and crucially, for this Council, to stability. And in that regard, I want to say how much we encourage Special Envoy Xia's efforts to support the establishment of responsible mineral supply chains and promote economic integration in the region.

Mr President, there can be no lasting stability without good governance and the protection and promotion of human rights. Restrictions on political space in Burundi, including harassment of opposition parties and restrictions on media freedom, are deeply concerning. As we look ahead to elections next year in Burundi and the Central African Republic, the United Kingdom calls upon all relevant actors in those countries to ensure that elections are safe and credible, uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms, and properly reflect the aspirations of the populations.

In conclusion, Mr President, the United Kingdom encourages all countries of the Great Lakes region to seize the positive momentum that is emerging and to fully commit themselves to enhancing regional peace, stability and development. And as they do so, the support of the United Kingdom – I think of the entire council – is with them.

Thank you, Mr President.

[Empowering youth to lead across Africa](#)

Thank you, Mr President, and may I add my own congratulations to you on assuming the Presidency and my thanks to the Russian delegation for their habitually professional chairmanship of this council.

Thank you also, Mr President, for convening a debate on this important issue.

And my thanks to our briefers. And like others, I found our briefers today thought provoking. And it's a reminder that we should strive to incorporate different perspectives when we select briefers for our meetings.

Silencing the guns in Africa is our shared ambition. It will be impossible without the involvement and empowerment of Africa's youth. I thought Ms Chebbi made powerful points about use of narrative and the way in which there can be a problem narrative around youth, and I agree with her on that. But as this is the Security Council, let me start at least on international peace and security issues before addressing some wider points.

Mr President, every young person deserves to grow up free of the fear of violence. Sadly, this is still not the case for many children and young people in parts of Africa. In South Sudan, for example, while it is very positive to note that 955 children were released by armed groups in 2018, it is a matter of some sadness and concern that a further 453 children were reportedly recruited and used by armed actors. So the United Kingdom calls on all parties in South Sudan to redouble their efforts to end grave violations against children and tackle impunity. And we should ensure that we discuss this during our forthcoming visit and are united in our demand for action.

Mr President, wherever children and young people are affected by conflict, they deserve support and services to help them enjoy a brighter future. This must include access to education. Last week, we were able to announce a \$630 million package to support education, particularly for women and girls. And the United Kingdom recently committed a further \$110 million in funding to the Education Cannot Wait initiative, the UNICEF fund delivering education in emergencies. Those funds will support 600,000 children in conflict-affected countries to receive an education.

But Mr President, our task is huge. And I would remind the council that UNICEF estimates that at least that many children, 600,000, are out of school because of political violence in Cameroon alone. We hope that the recently announced national dialogue in Cameroon will tackle the underlying causes of this crisis so that children and young people can receive the education they need to thrive.

Mr President, when children and youth are empowered and involved in the decisions that affect their futures, they can act as powerful agents for change, as this council recognised in Resolutions 2250 and 2419. Africa's youth does not only deserve the opportunity to have a say in how societies are run, they have a right to it. And Africa's youth do not merely deserve a meaningful role in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts, they are fundamental to their success. We know from our evidence and research that peace and reconciliation efforts which involve women, and by definition are therefore inclusive and inclusive of young people as well, have a 35% greater likelihood of lasting for 15 years or longer.

Mr President, we've seen the power of youth-led movements for change in Africa in recent months, as young people spearheaded Sudan's peaceful movement for accountable, civilian-led government. I heard Prime Minister Hamdok in these halls last week and was inspired by what he had to say and,

in particular, his commitment to put women and youth front and center in building a better Sudan.

Worldwide, young people are still too often marginalised in political and civic life because, Mr President, people under the age of 30 make up more than half the world's population, but less than 2% percent of elected legislators.

Again, young Africans are in the vanguard of efforts to change this. In Nigeria, youth advocates campaign to tackle a barrier to young people's participation in politics. The 'Not Too Young to Run' bill, passed in 2018, lowered minimum age requirements for elected office. And that bill has since inspired a global campaign, supported by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth, and the UK stands firmly behind the 'Not Too Young to Run' initiative.

Mr President, young Africans who are too young to vote or run for office are the most still mobilising action on global challenges. I want to pay tribute to the leadership of teenage activists like Leah Namugerwa who campaigns for action on climate change in Uganda and Peace Ayo Adegbola, who advocates for girls education in Nigeria – and my apologies to both of them if I've mispronounced their names.

Mr President, if all of Africa's youth had the opportunity to realise their leadership potential and achieve their aspirations, the effect on the continent – the effect on the world – would be transformative. But for that to happen, all of Africa's youth need what so many young people take for granted: peace and security, human rights and good governance, quality education, healthcare and access to productive employment opportunities. And I agree with Ms Chebbi on the importance of the particular effort to tackle gender-based violence. And I would add to that that health care provision must include sexual and reproductive health.

Mr President, the United Kingdom will continue working with our African partners on initiatives to meet all these challenges, including through the UK Africa Investment Summit to be held in London in 2020. This is an indispensable element of our comprehensive support for Africa's long-term peace and stability. And I don't need to say it, but the United Kingdom's relationship with Africa and its peoples is enduring.

Thank you, Mr President.

[Local government finance settlement 2020-21 proposals unveiled following](#)

biggest funding increase in almost a decade

Following the Spending Round confirming that councils will receive the biggest year-on-year real terms increase in funding for almost a decade, the government has published a consultation document setting out in greater detail its proposals for how to fund local government in 2020 to 2021.

Local authorities across England will be encouraged to submit views to the government's funding proposals for the sector in the next financial year.

The consultation confirms that the Core Spending Power of local authorities is estimated to rise in real terms by 4.3% to £49.1 billion in 2020 to 2021, an increase of £2.9 billion.

As part of this local authorities will be able to access an additional £1.5 billion of funding for adult and children's social care. This is in recognition of rising demand and the vital role that social care plays in supporting the most vulnerable people in society.

Councils will additionally be provided with increases from wider resources made available from the Spending Round, including High Needs funding for schools and colleges which will increase by over £700 million.

There will also be a real-terms increase in the Public Health Grant and the NHS contribution to the Better Care Fund will grow in line with the planned additional investment in the NHS.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Local authorities have worked hard over the past decade to deliver efficiencies and savings, while continuing to support the running of our vital public services.

This year's settlement sets the sector on a strong and sustainable footing for the future as we look to next year's Spending Review and a fresh multi-year settlement.

The government has been listening to local authorities across the country, and the £49 billion funding boost that will come into force from next year is the biggest increase for nearly a decade.

It will allow us to provide more support for areas such as adult and children's social care and make sure that we are supporting the most vulnerable people in our local communities.

I look forward to working with local authorities throughout this consultation process and want to ensure that local communities have access to the highest possible levels of service, delivered in an

efficient and cost effective way.

The consultation will last for 4 weeks from 3 October 2019 to 31 October 2019 and covers proposals for the local government finance settlement 2020 to 2021.

The proposed approach to the settlement includes:

- £1.5 billion for adult and children's social care services, including £1 billion of new money. Councils will have the option to raise up to half a billion pounds more for adult social care, where needed, through additional Council Tax flexibilities
- powers for local authorities to raise Council Tax by up to 2% plus an additional 2% of adult social care tax before a local referendum has to take place
- £900 million for the New Homes Bonus in 2020 to 2021
- maintaining Improved Better Care Fund funding at 2019 to 2020 levels (£1.837 billion), as well as rolling in the £240 million which was allocated as Winter Pressures Grant this year
- continuing Rural Services Delivery Grant at £81 million, with all recipients receiving the same amount as in 2019 to 2020
- confirmation that business rates retention pilots agreed for 2019 to 2020 will finish at the end of the financial year. No further pilots will run in 2020 to 2021
- confirmation of the decision to delay the funding distribution and business rates retention reforms until 2021 to 2022

See the full [technical consultation document](#) and how to respond to the proposals contained within it.

The provisional local government finance settlement for 2020 to 2021 will be published later this year.

Cracking down on north London waste crime

Vehicles carrying waste illegally around north London have been the focus for the latest clampdown operation by the Environment Agency and Metropolitan Police.

Crime officers targeted waste carriers on roads across Brent as part of Operation Angola – a collaboration of various agencies led by the Environment Agency to target criminals dumping significant amounts of waste across the south east.

Small tipper trucks were the target of the patrol, as intelligence gathered from Operation Angola identified them most likely to be used by illegal waste operators.

During the day, 45 vehicles were stopped and together with officers from the Metropolitan Police, checks were made to identify compliance with the law on waste management. Environment officers also checked whether waste carriers were transporting waste to authorised and legitimate sites where it would be handled properly. On this occasion, no vehicle was seized but advice and guidance given.

Intelligence gathered throughout the day will help the Environment Agency's waste crime team home in on illegal waste operators in the future.

Daniel Kettridge, an enforcement manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Through the persistent intervention of our officers and by working together with other agencies like the police, we are disrupting organised waste crime and bringing those responsible to justice. Over the last 18 months, the Environment Agency has seized and destroyed 4 vehicles linked to waste crime.

Operations like this provide a brilliant opportunity to remind carriers about their responsibilities, enhance our intelligence around such practices and take action against those who flout the rules.

The Environment Agency wants to make sure businesses carrying waste have the proper authorisations to allow them to transport and transfer rubbish – a waste carrier's registration from the Environment Agency and waste transfer note from the waste producer.

We also want to make it very clear to the general public that everyone has a duty of care to ensure their waste is managed and disposed of correctly by the people they give it to. If you use illegal waste carriers to take your rubbish, you risk being fined up to £5,000.