

A peaceful, inclusive and prosperous future for Afghanistan

Thank you very much, Mr President.

I wanted to begin, first of all, by expressing condolences to Tunisia for the death of the President, but also to join other colleagues in condemning the attacks in Kabul and Afghanistan recently. They were very sad reminder of why peace is so essential. Afghanistan has suffered enough from such attacks and we send our deepest condolences and sympathies to the government and to the families of the victims.

Like others, I think it is very good that we are able to have this discussion today. Thank you for scheduling it. And thank you to the Deputy Secretary-General, to Rosemary Di Carlo, and to Ms Afghani from WILPF. I have seen for myself, when in Afghanistan, the very good work that WILPF does, and it is good to be able to hear more about it today. And it was excellent, Deputy Secretary-General, that you were able to visit yourself. You will forgive me for saying so, particularly with a broken leg. So I mean, that takes a lot of guts and organisation. So thank you very much for doing that. But I think it just underscores the importance of the issue, but also the determination all of us have to help Afghanistan and try and move this really important agenda forward. And I can confirm that, as the Deputy Secretary-General said, the EU and the UN will increase our efforts to fight violence against women in Afghanistan through the Spotlight Initiative.

When I first arrived in Kabul, it was just after the Farkhunda murder at the mosque, so it has very much been on my mind as an issue that deserves renewed efforts, notwithstanding the excellent work that has taken so far.

We have a Special Envoy for Gender Equality in the UK and she also went to Kabul earlier this month supporting women's participation in preliminary discussions and the peace process itself. And as others have mentioned, the recent Intra-Afghan Dialogue in Doha, which Germany and Qatar facilitated, was extremely good news: that nearly 25 percent of the non-Taliban participants were women. It is clear there is more that can be done, but that was an encouraging start on which we can build.

We all know that we need a genuine political process in Afghanistan to give all Afghans – I want to stress the word all – the best chance to decide the future of their country. And we really do support very comprehensively the ongoing efforts of the Afghan government and of the United States and in particular, Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad, who many of us remember when he was PR here.

And I hope that the entire region, as well as the international community, can lend support to inclusive intra-Afghan peace negotiations without delay and with the full involvement of both sides to the conflict. And obviously, in particular, the legitimate government of Afghanistan. And I hope, too,

that whenever we see attempts to roll back on women's rights, we can speak up and we can challenge those. Any political settlement needs to build on the progress made on human rights, and that includes gender equality over the past 18 years. And the Deputy Secretary-General set that out very eloquently.

We, too, have been following elections like many of the speakers this morning. They are crucial for future political stability and inclusion. And in a clear signal of Afghan ownership, we welcome the government's commitment to finance a significant portion of the election budget. We also urge the Independent Electoral Commission with the support of the relevant Afghan ministries, to continue their work to deliver timely, inclusive and credible elections, working with the Afghan defence and security forces so that the Afghan people can exercise their right to vote safely. And I know from first-hand experience how important elections are to the Afghan people. And I hope we can really give a lot of attention to ensuring full, effective and meaningful participation of women as both voters and candidates.

Elections are a civilian operation. They should not be used as a target. Polling takes place in schools and public places and involves ordinary citizens. And to attack the elections would be an attack on all the Afghan people. So we hope that all political actors will behave responsibly and constructively so the elections can be peaceful as well as inclusive. And in this connection, Mr. President, I might note and welcome the Taliban's commitment at the Intra-Afghan Dialogue in Doha to refrain from targeting civilians. And we hope they will stand by this promise to their fellow Afghans.

For the UK, Mr President, we remain committed to supporting inclusive peace in Afghanistan. In June, the Afghan Ambassador and I announced the launch of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan. And we will have a formal launch in the autumn. This initiative is designed to complement the UK's regular engagement with women peace builders across Afghanistan. We recently held consultations on what the Women, Peace and Security agenda means for them and exploring how best to use the upcoming anniversary of 1325 to achieve their goals. We are looking forward to taking the findings of those consultations forward in the coming months in the context of the Afghanistan peace process.

To conclude, Mr President, we remain steadfast in our commitment to support the people and government of Afghanistan in achieving a peaceful, inclusive and prosperous future with equal rights and participation at its core.

Thank you.

[Protect mangroves and help tackle](#)

climate change

By Environment Minister of State, Thérèse Coffey

At a time when climate change is front and centre in the public's mind, I have an amazing fact for you: mangroves – the little-known swamp forests found at the edge of tropical coastlines – can absorb up to four times more carbon than a traditional rainforest on land. It's a truly extraordinary figure. Today, on International Day for the Conservation of Mangroves (26 July), I want us all to celebrate this under-appreciated ecosystem for what it truly is; a secret weapon in our fight against climate change.

Mangroves are remarkably productive ecosystems. They are a key contributor to nature-based solutions for example water filtration, shore stabilisation, coastal protection from storms, building materials and as a source of energy. They also support important fisheries, including shrimp and crabs, which are crucial to the livelihoods and food security of coastal people. Mangroves are also important for climate change adaptation, they are 5 times more cost effective than man-made infrastructure in protecting coastal communities from tsunamis and storm surges, as they reduce wave heights by up to 60% and reduce tsunami flood depth by 30%. Despite their immense value, these forests are disappearing at an alarming rate – 35% have been lost already over the past 40 years.

So, if we can protect and plant more of these rapidly disappearing 'blue forests' there might be an opportunity to reduce and trap more carbon in the dark, rich soils at the base of mangrove trees' exposed root systems, benefitting communities across the globe.

Mangroves provide so much for coastal communities around the globe, from food to flood protection.

In 2016 I approved, through International Climate Finance, the establishment of the 'Blue Forests' initiative run by the UK organisation, Blue Ventures. The aim of the project is to reduce deforestation of mangrove habitat, create new sustainable livelihoods, support community health and women's empowerment and increase climate resilience in coastal communities.

Blue Ventures is working on the island of Madagascar to protect and restore some of the world's largest blue forests and help people make sustainable lifestyles through improved fisheries management.

My personal experience of mangroves stems from a visit to Mozambique in September 2018. I saw first-hand how these important habitats can become polluted and affect people's livelihoods. Maputo, the capital city, has a coastline where large extensions of mangrove forests occur within the urban environment, namely the Costa do Sol wetlands, offering a wide range of ecological and economic services. Development pressure is increasing as is the pollution threat to these important ecological areas. If the mangroves are lost from the city there will be less flood protection from the ocean.

Plastic waste is another environmental challenge in the city and I joined local community groups as part of World Clean Up day to help collect plastic rubbish on the beach at Costa do Sol. Fishery equipment such as big fish nets can get entangled with tree branches trapping and destroying wildlife that in turn prevents local people from fishing to feed their families.

The UK is a global leader in tackling climate change. We are the first major economy to legislate to become a net-zero emissions economy, committing to a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This builds on the work we've already done, cutting emissions by more than 40% since 1990 thanks to our world-leading legally binding climate targets. Through our support for organisations, such as Blue Ventures, the UK can continue to make a huge impact on people's lives whilst tackling climate change around the globe.

[Supply problems with total parenteral nutrition \(TPN\) bags – Calea UK site in Runcorn, Cheshire](#)

Overview

The MHRA performed a routine inspection of Calea UK at its registered site in Runcorn on 24-26 June 2019. During the inspection, problems were identified with the design of the manufacturing process for total parenteral nutrition (TPN) bags that did not meet the requirements of guidance published by MHRA.

MHRA has a responsibility to ensure the safety of medicines supplied to UK patients. A key part of our work is carried out through regular inspections of UK manufacturing sites.

Total parenteral nutrition (TPN), also known as parenteral nutrition (PN) is a form of nutritional support given via the bloodstream, with an IV pump. Many of the products manufactured at the Runcorn site are made and delivered to meet the needs of individual patients, with intestinal failure.

Action taken by the MHRA

When our inspectors identified this issue, we requested that Calea take immediate action to change their manufacturing process to ensure compliance with the MHRA's published standards. This has led to a reduction in output while they consider longer term changes to their processes.

Whilst no defective products have been identified to date, the changes to the production process are a precautionary, but necessary measure, needed to ensure product safety is maintained.

Background

From a sample taken by Calea on 25 June as part of Calea's routine monitoring designed to detect microbial contamination in the production area and on production personnel, bacteria of the type *Bacillus cereus* / *thuringiensis* / *mycoides* were recovered.

The equipment used for identification is not sufficiently sensitive to identify the exact type of bacteria, so in these situations we expect the facility to address the worst-case organism, which would be *Bacillus cereus*. These bacteria are known human pathogens, which is of particular concern for the many vulnerable patients receiving parenteral nutrition.

Even though this contamination was found in the production area, it is important to add that we found no evidence to indicate that the products manufactured and supplied to patients during this period were contaminated.

This contamination, in combination with our inspectors identifying that production processes were not in compliance with [MHRA guidelines dating from 2015](#) presented a potential risk to patients and caused us to take immediate action to instruct the company to implement important changes.

We understand this has caused concern for many patients, and these are not decisions we take lightly. However, our priority at all times must be patient and product safety.

Progress to date (updated 26 July 2019)

It is vital that patients can get their parenteral nutrition quickly.

We are working closely with the company to safeguard the quality and safety of these important products, with MHRA inspectors monitoring changes to the production process, through correspondence and regular inspection visits.

Following the inspection, Calea reduced output in order to make necessary changes. Whilst there is a backlog in production, Calea is working to rectify the problem and increase supply as soon as possible.

In addition to restoring production at the site, alternative supply options are being explored as a matter of urgency by a national group of experts convened by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). The MHRA is providing regulatory assistance to this process.

Information is being provided by the DHSC expert team to NHS Trusts, so patients should contact their prescribing consultant for next steps on supply arrangements.

Further information

Inquiries about the role of the MHRA:

MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk

Calea UK email address for customer inquiries

FK.Complaints-UK@fresenius-kabi.com

Chairman of the NDA to step down

Tom will step down after 7 years on the Board, with 3 of those spent as Chairman.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has started the recruitment process for Tom's successor.

Tom said:

It has been an honour and a privilege to oversee the important task of decommissioning the UK's nuclear legacy. I am proud of the real and tangible progress that has been made during my tenure as Chairman, and I believe that the NDA is emerging as a stronger and better organisation that is well-prepared to face the challenges ahead.

I offer my warm thanks to all those who work so hard to deliver such impressive progress and have made my job enjoyable and worthwhile.

Starting his role as Chairman in March 2017, Tom was responsible for overseeing the operation, decommissioning and clean-up of the NDA's 17 first generation civil nuclear sites.

His connection with the NDA began in 2013 when he was appointed Non-Executive Director, serving as a member of the NDA's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Tom read chemistry at Balliol College, Oxford, has public sector experience working in the Diplomatic Service and has held private sector roles in the infrastructure and rail sectors.

He was Chairman of the Association of Train Operating Companies from 2009 to 2013, a non-executive director of Highways England from 2014 – 2017 and is currently chairman of Angel Trains Group Ltd.

NDA Chief Executive, David Peattie, said:

On behalf of the NDA, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Tom for his long service on the Board and his excellent leadership

during an important time for the organisation. We wish him every success for the future.

Deputy High Commissioner Tom Hartley Speaking at the World Day Against Human Trafficking Stakeholders' Conference

Hon. Minister and Deputy Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection,
Freda Prempeh

Nana Brempong

Civil society partners, colleagues from the diplomatic community

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed.

I am honoured to be a part of today's event "Blue Day" which marks the national commemoration of the world day against trafficking of persons.

Modern slavery is one of the biggest human rights challenges of our time. It attacks the most vulnerable, strips them of their freedom and often their humanity, and commits them to a life that, for some victims, is a fate worse than death. It is our responsibility as citizens of this earth to ensure it ends, and ends for good.

In September 2017, in the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York, many nations including Ghana joined the UK Prime Minister's Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT).

This was a clear statement of political will by the UK and an intent to work domestically, regionally, and internationally to achieve SDG 8.7 – and to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, and end modern slavery and human trafficking. So far over 60 countries have endorsed the UK's Call to Action (including Ghana, USA, Australia, Japan and Italy).

The UK is a long standing partner to the Government of Ghana and is committed to accelerating Ghana's move towards self-reliance, in line His Excellency The President's 'Beyond Aid' agenda. We have a deep partnership across security, prosperity, and inclusion, including our strong people to people links.

For this partnership to flourish, together we agree that all of the UK's and Ghana's citizens must benefit from economic growth. We must make it

inclusive, and shaped to address poverty and protect the most vulnerable and marginalised groups. Today, we recognise an important aspect of this shared goal: tackling human trafficking.

Almost every country has national human trafficking laws, yet people continue to be trafficked – the majority of them, women and girls. We welcome the progress made by Ghana in tackling modern slavery, through implementing the Human Trafficking and Children's Acts (banning employment of children), the National Action Plan and creating an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit within the police to investigate cases and refer individuals for prosecution.

The UK is partnering with the Government of Ghana to protect the most vulnerable and marginalised through the "Leave No One Behind" social protection programme. It is supported with £39.2m of UK funding over the next five years.

A key component of the programme supports a centralised channel for beneficiaries of all social protection programmes to raise grievances and report violations and other abuses, report malpractices, and request information on all social protection programmes. This has been operationalised through the creation of a call center called the Helpline of Hope situated at the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection.

Honourable Minister and Colleagues, this is not all.

There are many other UK Government Departments in Accra working with our Ghanaian partners to see Ghana make broader gains in the fight to end MSHT. I am pleased that our integrated approach has brought in expertise from the UK Border Force, UK Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC UK), Immigration Enforcement International, National Crime Agency (NCA), The Department of International Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

All these departments and agencies are committed to the same goal to tackle human trafficking.

I would like to give you some examples, of how this work is making a difference:

- The National Crime Agency has setup a Technical Working Group (TWG) Coalition in Ghana on MSHT which aims to strengthen coordination among various Government agencies NGO's to enable them to collaborate more effectively, share intelligence that will address organised crime elements of human trafficking, enhance the identification of suspects and victims, and support prosecutions.
- The UK's National Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC UK) have been working with stakeholders to raise standards of safeguarding and child protection in Ghana. This programme was delivered in partnership with some local anti-child trafficking partners (Afrikids, GIS, GP, DSW).

- The UK Border Force provides mentorship that enhances targeting and profiling capabilities across all border crimes, including human trafficking and modern slavery. With their support, an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) has been formed. This Unit has been set up to intercept potential victims of human trafficking from travelling outbound and debriefing those arriving back into the country.
- On the legislative side, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is supporting Ghanaian MPs to strengthen anti-slavery legislation, and empower them in advocating against Modern Slavery-related crimes, and support more effective parliamentary committees for better oversight and scrutiny of modern slavery-related legislation and its implementation. I was pleased to see them here last month, to highlight the issue of human trafficking in football.

I am also very pleased that Kim Bridger – the UK's current head of Modern Slavery policy – is joining my team in Accra as our new Justice & Home Affairs advisor. She will bring with her unprecedented experience and expertise, and I expect her to be a real force for good, including on convening all actors – international partners, the UN, international NGOs, local NGOs, traditional leaders, religious organisations and law enforcement – to come alongside the government of Ghana to help ensure Ghana becomes the safest place in Africa for individuals at risk of human trafficking.

These examples give you a sense of the challenge but also the strong UK-Ghana partnership that is delivering real progress in tackling Human Trafficking. Looking ahead, we will continue to support the Government of Ghana as it looks to implement the anti-human trafficking measures set out in its legislation, and we look forward to more successful prosecutions, and stronger support and protection of victims of Human Trafficking.

Ending Human Trafficking is a shared global challenge. It is up to us to work together to stop to it, for good.

Thank you.