

UN Human Rights Council 41: Eritrea

Thank you, Mr Vice-President,

The United Kingdom thanks Ms. Kravetz, for her report and her work over the past year. We are disappointed that the Government of Eritrea, as a member of this Council, has not engaged with the Special Rapporteur, or her predecessors.

We welcome Eritrea's increasing engagement with the Human Rights Council and encourage the Government to strengthen its cooperation with the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights in order to achieve improvements in the human rights situation in Eritrea.

Eritrea remains a priority country for the United Kingdom's work on human rights. We renew calls for the Government of Eritrea to reform the national service system, implement the constitution, respect freedom of religion or belief, respect freedom of expression and release all those in arbitrary detention. We strongly support the Council's continued focus on these issues.

The UK agrees with the Special Rapporteur's report of 16 May. We agree with the areas the Special Rapporteur identifies as being unaddressed and urge the Eritrean government to use the benchmarks as a tool for achieving meaningful and lasting progress on human rights.

Special Rapporteur,

We note the benchmarks you included in your report. How do you think these could be best used at an operational level, nationally and internationally?

Thank you, Mr Vice-President.

Chair of the Environment Agency statement on the Green Finance Strategy

I'm delighted to see the launch of the Green Finance Strategy and we look forward to working closely with the Green Finance Institute to further its aims, particularly on climate resilience. The joint working group with regulators on climate-related financial disclosure will drive businesses to do more by ensuring investors take better account of climate risks.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report ranks extreme weather events

number 1. This presents a massive investment opportunity in technology, infrastructure, and expertise to protect people and businesses. The International Trade Secretary recently announced UK Export Finance and the Environment Agency will work together to help UK suppliers with expertise in adaptation deliver infrastructure projects and services around the world. We want to build international partnerships and position the UK supply chain at the forefront of this market.

A few years ago, the Environment Agency Pension Fund set up the Transition Pathway Initiative with the Church of England National Investing Bodies. The TPI, run out of the Grantham Institute at the London School of Economics, assesses how companies are preparing for the transition to a low-carbon economy. It is now supported by asset owners and managers with over \$14 trillion combined Assets Under Management and Advice.

Last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said there are just 12 years to bring global temperature rise within 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels. So, our Pension Fund has recently been asking major companies what they are doing to prepare for physical climate impacts. Convincing people to participate in a pension fund scheme means asking for their trust over the long term. We need confidence that companies we invest in are sufficiently protecting assets and supply chains, so our 40,000 beneficiaries retire into a world worth living in.

UK announces £9m project to support independent media in Ukraine

Foreign Office Minister of State Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon will today (Tuesday 2 July) announce that the UK is supporting independent media in Ukraine and the wider region through a new £9million three year project, as he attends the Ukraine Reform Conference in Canada. The announcement comes ahead of the first Global Media Freedom Conference in London next week.

The Minister is attending the third Ukraine Reform Conference, which is being hosted by Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland in Toronto. The UK launched and hosted the first Ukraine Reform Conference in London in 2017. The UK and Canada continue to lead the international community's support for crucial reforms in Ukraine, and will press for further progress in judicial, electoral and economic reforms at the Conference. It is critical that Ukraine continues to engage with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), EU and other donors to complete these reforms.

The UK is committing more than £37million over the next year to support Ukraine's wider reform, defence, peacebuilding, anti-corruption and humanitarian efforts, and empowerment and equality of women.

At the Conference this afternoon, Lord Ahmad is expected to say:

In the last five years, Ukraine has made more progress than in the previous 23 combined. We now see a coordinated plan of reforms across government. We see a more transparent procurement system, a reformed banking sector, better healthcare, and more decentralised decision-making that is closer to the people. Against a backdrop of relentless Russian aggression, this is a quite remarkable achievement.

We must remain focussed on fundamental reforms: first, reform of the judiciary; second, a well-designed privatisation programme; third, legislation to dismantle monopolies; and, fourth, reforms to media ownership that ensure a free and fair press.

As the UK leaves the European Union, our Government is convinced that Ukraine's success is vital to European and international security. We will continue to work with all of you for a sovereign, secure and prosperous Ukraine.

On announcing the new project to support independent media in Ukraine, he will say:

Today I can announce that we are also stepping up our support for independent media in Ukraine through a new £9m project which will strengthen societal resilience to disinformation and help increase Government accountability by developing independent sources of information in Ukraine and across the Eastern Partnership countries.

The UK is clear that a thriving independent media environment, which includes public service broadcasting, is the bedrock of a stable, successful democracy. Independent media can be a powerful tool to dull the impact of malign narratives that seek to sow discord and disrupt reform efforts.

Further information

[Carlisle Dairy Farm gives back to local environment after polluting](#)

river with slurry

The Glebe Farm, Hethersgill, near Carlisle, has completed an Enforcement Undertaking following a pollution incident when farm slurry entered Highberries Beck, a tributary of the River Eden. The beck flows through the farm land and joins the river Eden approximately 11km downstream in Carlisle.

TG & K Fisher Ltd who run the dairy farm, offered the Enforcement Undertaking in response to the incident which was investigated by the Environment Agency in October 2017.

Environment Agency officers found the beck flowing through the farmyard was polluted with slurry. This was traced to a field approximately 2km upstream that had been land spread by a contractor on behalf of the company.

Enforcement Undertakings address both the cause and effect of the offending. Polluters can make an offer to the Environment Agency to pay for or carry out environmental improvements as an alternative to any other enforcement action and the Environment Agency decides whether this is acceptable. Enforcement Undertakings differ to cases which are dealt with in court, as they result in money being spent directly protecting, restoring and improving the environment.

The company had admitted the offence, cooperated with the Environment Agency's investigation, implemented works to try to prevent the pollution continuing and carried out improvements to prevent a recurrence.

The Environment Agency accepted the offer by TG & K Fisher Ltd, which included a donation to an environmental charity; £6500 was donated to Eden Rivers Trust for use towards projects in the catchment working with farmers to improve separation of clean and dirty water and reducing slurry run-off, which will directly benefit the local environment.

Anne Jackson, Environment Agency officer said:

Enforcement undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents. When appropriate they offer quicker and more directly beneficial resolution than a court prosecution and help offenders, who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions, to voluntarily make things right, working with their local communities.

We will continue to seek prosecutions against those who cause the most severe pollution or who act deliberately or recklessly.

Mr John Fisher, said:

This was a one-off incident which occurred as a result of heavy rainfall following our contractors spreading slurry. We acted quickly to respond to stop the pollution and we have now invested in our own umbilical spreading which gives us greater control of our slurry spreading operations and enables a more rigorous system across our land, helping ensure this doesn't happen again.

We're really pleased the money we've given Eden Rivers Trust will help other farmers improve separation of clean and dirty water and reduce slurry run-off, so this doesn't happen to other people.

Elizabeth Radford, CEO of Eden Rivers Trust, said:

The Trust naturally wants to see a pollution-incident-free Eden, however, where incidents do occur we're pleased that compensation for the environment is demanded from polluters, and improvements to effluent handling practices are enforced. We will use these compensation monies to help deliver our water friendly farming programme – giving one to one advice to farmers helping them understand how they can farm successfully and in harmony with nature.

Environmental incidents can be reported to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 807060, waste crime can also be reported anonymously via Crimestoppers online or on 0800 555111.

[City must lead the way in securing a greener future](#)

- UK's financial services sector must be at the heart of efforts to tackle climate change and reduce emissions to net zero by 2050, says City Minister
- new Green Finance Strategy will help boost sustainable investment, with an expectation for listed companies to disclose how climate change impacts their work
- the strategy will help make the UK an international hub for expertise and funding that supports greener investment

The City must lead the way in securing a greener, more resilient and sustainable future for the UK, City Minister John Glen will say today.

Speaking at the third Green Finance Summit in London, the minister will launch the government's landmark [Green Finance Strategy](#) and argue that financial services will have a bigger role to play than any other sector in tackling climate change.

As the world looks to shift to clean, resilient and sustainable economic growth, there is an opportunity to make London the go-to hub for green investment, the minister will add.

The strategy sets out plans to increase investment in sustainable projects and infrastructure, while ensuring the UK remains an international leader in decarbonisation and meets its ambitious 2050 net zero carbon emissions target. It will also build on findings from the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, led by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Bank of England Governor Mark Carney.

This includes setting expectations for publicly listed companies and large asset owners to disclose by 2022 how climate change risk impacts their activities. Work with regulators will explore the most effective way of doing this, including whether mandatory disclosures are necessary.

Other announcements to support the growth of green finance include:

- jointly funding the Green Finance Institute with the City of London, and launched today, to foster greater cooperation between the public and private sectors, create new opportunities for investors, and strengthen the UK's reputation as a global hub for green finance
- establishing the £5 million Green Home Finance Fund to help pilot products like green mortgages, which utilise green finance for home energy efficiency, and incentivises energy efficiency retrofit to make homes more environmentally sustainable
- launching the Green Finance Education Charter to make sure financial services-related qualifications and certificates include developing practitioners' knowledge and understanding of green finance, so they have the tools to take it up
- clarifying the need for financial regulators to have regard for climate change when advancing their objectives and discharging their functions – including the Prudential Regulatory Authority, Financial Conduct Authority and Financial Policy Committee
- playing a leading global role in Green Finance through £5.8 billion of climate finance, encouraging other countries to do more through forums

like the UN's Climate Action Summit, working with the private sector on financial principles for phasing out coal generated electricity, and ensuring the UK's aid spending is aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement

City Minister, John Glen, said:

The UK has a long history of leading the way in tackling climate change, but we need to do more to protect our planet for future generations.

The City has a vital role to play in securing a greener future for us all. By investing more in sustainable projects it can not only protect our environment, but also help establish London as the pre-eminent international centre for green finance.

Today's Green Finance Strategy will support this ambition, with new initiatives to boost funding for green ventures and ensure the environment is at the centre of all financial decision-making.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister, Chris Skidmore, said:

As the first major economy to legislate to reach net emissions by 2050, green finance can play a crucial role in our mission to protect the planet while growing the economy.

Through today's plans and by putting clean growth at the heart of our modern Industrial Strategy we'll continue to work with our leading financial services sector to drive even more ambitious action, showing the rest of the world that responsible business can be a win-win for the economy and the environment.

CEO of the Green Finance Institute, Dr Rhian-Mari Thomas OBE, said:

The Green Finance Institute, as the principal forum for collaboration between the public and private sector, is thoroughly committed to identifying and unlocking barriers to the mobilisation of capital towards impactful, real-economy outcomes.

Today's launch of the Green Finance Strategy marks another significant milestone in our journey to a zero-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

Last week the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end the country's contribution to global warming by 2050, putting clean growth at the heart of the modern Industrial Strategy.

The UK is already a leader in decarbonisation. While the economy has grown by two-thirds in the last 30 years, carbon emissions have reduced by over 40 per cent, making the country the strongest performer in the G7. However, while 70 per cent of UK banks now consider climate change a financial risk, only 10 per cent are taking long term action to manage this.

This work builds on the Climate Change Act – the first of its kind – and plans to put the 25 Year Environmental Plan on statutory footing.