

Speech: Countering the illegal wildlife trade in ASEAN: speech by Andrew Beirne

Honourable Minister (of the Natural Resources and Environment) General Surasak, Ministers, your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen – good afternoon.

It's a great honour to be here today to address you on behalf of the United Kingdom. The UK is committed to deepening our partnership with ASEAN and with ASEAN members. I would like to thank Minister General Surasak Karnjanarat and the Thai Government for inviting us. And to thank the Thai Government for taking the bold decision to make countering the illegal wildlife trade a cornerstone of its ASEAN Chairmanship.

Ministers, as you all know, the work of conservation and environmental protection is not about quick wins. It is work that will never be complete. The stuff of decades of hard work.

In the UK, we have come to see countering the Illegal Wildlife Trade, like preventing climate change or marine plastics. An issue, in short, which will define the legacy that we leave for our children.

That is why we chose to host the London Illegal Wildlife Trade conferences – first in 2014 and, again, last year in October.

It's why 65 countries, including almost all those assembled here signed the London declaration, committing to do more to counter the illegal wildlife trade

And it's why our Prince William and a host of celebrities have since made tackling the illegal ivory trade a personal priority.

I wanted to thank those of you who attended the conference. And to express the UK's gratitude for its ongoing close relationships with you all on this issue.

In the London declaration we committed to work on three areas:

- first, to working in partnership
- second, to tackling the illegal wildlife trade as a serious organised crime
- third, reducing demand for products of the illegal wildlife trade

We commend you on the declaration which you have just issued. I am gratified to see the three themes of the London declaration reflected in your priorities around partnership, demand reduction and law enforcement.

Left: Andrew Beirne, Economics & Prosperity Counsellor and UK Permanent

Representative to UNESCAP; Right: General Surasak Karnjanarat, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

Partnership

On partnership, we welcome your commitment to take continuous and concrete steps to strengthen collaboration across ASEAN. The transnational gangs at the heart of the illegal wildlife trade can only be tackled in this way.

There are ASEAN mechanisms in place to promote cooperation already. But, as in Europe, there is always scope for more effective solutions.

Bilateral agreements for information exchange and cooperation are a critical and simple way to ensure the better surveillance and integrity of borders. At the multinational level, the new ASEAN Working Group on CITES enforcement has the potential to act as a nexus for cooperation, but there may be other elements also.

We hope, too, that ASEAN will make building deeper partnerships with international organisations and countries like a UK a foundation of its work to counter IWT. The UK is keen to continue building those partnerships with you all.

IWT as Serious Organised Crime

Treating the illegal wildlife trade as a Serious Organised Crime also remains a priority. Globally the illegal wildlife trade is worth up to \$23bn dollars annually.

In 2017 the UN General Assembly passed a resolution, co-sponsored by many of the countries here. The Resolution calls on countries to:

- make the trade in endangered species a serious crime as defined by the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, ensuring effective international action can be taken
- seek to make the illegal wildlife trade a predicate offence for money laundering

Translating this resolution into national law and policy can allow us all to better use information to dismantle and prosecute transnational criminal networks.

Last year the UK funded independent experts who mapped out the path to doing this in countries around the world. We are happy to share these findings with you.

Closing markets, and reducing demand for illegal wildlife products

A final theme of the conference was Closing Markets, and reducing demand for illegal wildlife products. The Ivory Alliance 2024, which launched at the London Conference, is a global alliance of leaders and public figures. The

Alliance aims to reduce demand for ivory globally and so reduce the illegal killing of African elephants by two thirds by 2024.

Ivory sales are, of course, just one element of demand reduction. As we prepare for the CITES Conference of Parties in Sri Lanka, there may be scope to do more – on ivory and other IWT products. Next week, the UK is hosting a demand-reduction workshop in Vietnam 25-26 March to discuss the options around this.

How the UK can support

In closing, I wanted to make the offer of UK collaboration and support as you collectively take this work forward.

The UK is always looking to deepen its partnership with ASEAN and its members. Across ASEAN we already fund a wide range of activities from ranger training, to supporting intelligence-led customs seizures and developing high tech approaches to combat the challenges.

We want to build and expand our existing partnerships across the region to counter IWT. I know my colleagues around the region are keen to continue discussions with you on these issues soon.

Thank you

[Press release: UK drinks industry helps drive up British exports](#)

Latest figures (10th April) show UK exports continue to go from strength to strength as they reached £639.9bn in the year to February 2019, an increase of 3.1% since the previous year.

Goods exports in the same period remained particularly strong, increasing by 3.5% to £353.2bn.

UK exports of beverages, which include the world-renowned British gin and Scotch whisky, reached a high of £8.3bn in the year to February 2019, increasing by 7% on the previous year. The unprecedented demand for British soft drinks, wine and spirits have seen exports more than double in the past 15 years.

The UK boasted a healthy £1.6bn trade surplus in beverages. In fact, if the UK never exported beverages, the trade deficit would have been 26.1% greater.

October and November saw a spike in beverage exports approximately 23% above the 12-monthly average for drinks exports, as people across the world stocked

up on Scotch whisky and gin ahead of the festive period.

Non-EU countries were the top destination for British beverages, accounting for 63.4% of all exports. There has been a massive increase in demand from India and Japan, with exports growing by 49.2% to £179m and 23.7% to £188m respectively. The US remains the top destination for UK drinks, growing by 3.9% to £1.8bn.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Dr Liam Fox, said:

Today's figures show that despite the challenging global economic environment, people across the world are continuing to demand high-quality British exports.

The UK's drink industry has global appeal and it's fantastic to see the sector continue to deliver real tangible economic benefits for the UK. My international economic department stands ready to help businesses of all sizes achieve their exporting ambitions.

Scotch Whisky Association International Director Sarah Dickson said:

Scotch whisky continues to blaze a trail for UK exports, making up more than half of all UK beverage exports.

Last year, 41 bottles of Scotch whisky were shipped from Scotland every second to around 180 global markets, with an export value of £4.7bn. We should be proud that Scotland's national drink is the world's premier whisky, enjoyed by millions around the globe.

Consumers in key global markets are looking for products with a strong story, and with Scotch whisky they can discover a spirit with an unrivalled reputation for quality, authenticity and provenance.

One Yorkshire business that's tapped into increased global demand for British gin is Spirit of Harrogate, which has seen an increase in exports across markets including New Zealand, Germany, Malta, Finland, Denmark and Croatia.

Co-Founder of Spirit of Harrogate, Mike Carthy, said:

We're very proud that British gins are being so well received across the world.

When we launched the Spirit of Harrogate and Slingsby, everything had to reflect the essence of Harrogate and its traditions as a place where people could relax, indulge and socialise, taking us back to Victorian Britain and the heritage of the town.

The response from international buyers has been extremely positive, and we look forward to opening up in new markets and developing our brand further afield so that more people can enjoy our award-winning products.

Since its launch in November 2015, Spirit of Harrogate has developed a range with five different types of Slingsby gin, a Slingsby vodka and two 'gin experiences'.

The strong export figures follow the launch of the Export Strategy last year, which sets out a new ambition to increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%, making the UK one of the G7's most successful exporters.

Notes to editors

- Latest trade data for the year to February 2019 comes from ONS: UK Trade: February 2019.
- The calculation analysing the hypothetical impact on the trade deficit of excluding beverage exports uses the ONS: UK Economics Accounts Q4 2018. The analysis relies on the assumption that the UK continued to import beverages.

[Press release: Penny Mordaunt to pledge extra Cyclone Idai funding, as she issues stark climate warning](#)

Cyclone Idai caused devastation across Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe last month, killing at least 750 people and leaving around 3 million in desperate need of help.

The new UK funding, announced as she arrives in Washington D.C. for the World Bank Spring Meetings today (Thursday 11 April), includes £10 million of humanitarian aid, including food, water and sanitation facilities. Further funding of up to £4 million will provide emergency education to children caught up in the disaster. The UK and US remain the biggest donors to the cyclone response.

At the World Bank Meetings today Ms Mordaunt will co-host a to discuss the

response to Cyclone Idai and encourage other donors to increase their funding. She will also stress the need to help African countries become more resilient to climate change.

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt said:

We have all seen images of the terrible suffering and devastation caused by Cyclone Idai. The UK has, from the start, led the way in supporting the victims of this destruction and the fresh funding I am announcing will provide further help where it is most needed, right now.

But we must plan for the future too. Over the next century increasing temperatures are likely to make severe weather events across Africa more frequent. The UK is already leading the way in helping African communities adapt to climate shocks, providing technical expertise and finance.

However, climate change is a global issue which requires global action. We must act now, so worldwide we are better prepared to deal with future extreme weather events. If we don't the consequences could be devastating.

African nations are responsible for just 2 to 3% of global emissions, but Africa is set to be the continent worst impacted by climate change, hit by changing season patterns that damage crops and natural disasters that threaten communities.

During the World Bank roundtable Ms Mordaunt will urge her international counterparts to support African nations to:

- improve crisis preparedness and resilience, so countries can better cope with disasters;
- strengthen the use and accuracy of forecasts to predict destructive weather patterns, and;
- increase the use of disaster risk financing, so countries can more easily access funding following a disaster.

As well as funding the immediate cyclone relief effort across the region, the UK has already committed to spend £5.8 billion to help developing countries respond to the challenges of climate change up to 2021. This includes making agriculture more resilient to climate shocks and improving access to clean energy.

The additional £10 million of aid will be spent on helping the immediate humanitarian needs on the ground and will go towards the following areas:

- Water and Sanitation facilities – to contain disease outbreaks and contain levels of acute malnutrition.
- Health – to contain disease outbreaks and acute malnutrition
- Food security and nutrition – this will particularly support areas that

depend on agriculture.

- Infrastructure – to help increase access to the worst affected areas.

Today's funding also includes up to £4 million towards Education Cannot Wait, the UNICEF hosted global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. Thousands of classrooms in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi were destroyed by Cyclone Idai, affecting the education of hundreds of thousands of children.

The UK's support following Cyclone Idai includes matching £4 million in public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal.

The DEC Appeal has raised £29 million. This includes £25 million of donations from the British public and £4 million of UK Aid Match funding.

UK aid has already provided temporary accommodation for around 50,000 people affected by the cyclone, as well as cash support and food supplies to feed around 700,000 people. It has also sent purification cubes, blankets and solar lanterns to the region and provided chartered planes and equipment to help distribute supplies.

A team of British health workers is in the region to help deal with the growing threat of disease following the disaster. They are working alongside the World Health Organisation in Mozambique, to assess the risk of cholera.

[Press release: Sir Alan Duncan statement on Julian Assange](#)

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Press release: New Youth Charter to support young people across the country

A new Youth Charter will be developed to set out a vision for young people over the next generation and beyond, Mims Davies, Minister for Sport and Civil Society announced today.

It follows a roundtable the Minister and Jeremy Wright, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, had with the youth sector, sports bodies, charities and creative organisations last week as part of the Prime Minister's Serious Youth Violence Summit to tackle knife crime.

The charter will reaffirm Government's commitment to give young people a strong voice on the issues they care about such as combating serious violence and knife crime, addressing mental and physical health challenges and concerns about the environment and climate change.

It will be developed over the coming months, with Government working alongside youth sector organisations and young people.

Mims Davies, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said: "This is an important commitment to a generation for a generation. The Youth Charter will be a clear message to young people: we back them and are listening to them.

"We're determined to support young people in reaching their full potential. This charter will set out how."

Nadhim Zahawi, Children and Families Minister, said: "Every young person, whatever their background or the challenges they face, should have the chance to shape their own futures.

"We're working together to raise the bar in the opportunities available to the next generation and help improve their outcomes. The Youth Charter reaffirms young people's place at the heart of policy, making sure their voices are heard on important issues that affect them, from decisions about the environment, the schools they attend, support for mental health, or how we tackle serious violence."

The Minister for Sport and Civil Society will chair a roundtable with the sector to take this work forward.

The charter will build on the existing support and range of innovative projects currently supporting young people across the country. This includes £90 million from dormant bank accounts that is being used to help some of the most disadvantaged young people into employment.

The Government is also investing £80 million from Government and the National Lottery Community Fund in the Youth Investment and #iwill funds.

The Government has also pledged to renew specific youth work qualifications that were due to expire in 2020, subject to a business case, and review the youth work training curriculum.

It is hoped this will help address the recent decline in the number of people taking up youth work training and give youth workers the skills they need to best support young people.

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Notes to editors

Government will work with a range of leading national youth organisations, including UK Youth, Step Up to Serve, Youth United Foundation, The Scouts, the British Youth Council, Girlguiding, NCS Trust, National Youth Agency and The Prince's Trust.