

News story: Africa Minister makes two-country trip to Southern Africa to deepen partnership

Foreign Office and DFID Minister Harriett Baldwin arrived in Johannesburg on 31 January for a two-day visit to South Africa.

She held talks with senior South African government officials, the business sector and civil society to discuss the UK-South Africa bilateral relationship, regional African issues, as well as trade and investment with the UK's largest trading partner in Sub Saharan Africa.

She also visited a school to see first-hand how an investment from CDC, DFID's private sector investment arm, is digitally upskilling future generations and boosting education, which will lead to better UK investment and trade in the long-term.

The visit to South Africa is the first by a Government Minister since the Prime Minister's trip last August, during which she pledged a renewed partnership between the UK and Africa, to help secure stability, jobs and growth.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

The UK values its partnership with South Africa because we both share the drive for a better and more secure world – speaking out on issues that affect us all such as poverty, climate change and security.

South African leadership is crucial internationally. South Africa has one of the largest economies in sub-Saharan Africa and plays an important role in regional institutions such as the African Union. It is the only African member of the G20 and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

We are working closely with South Africa during their membership of the UN Security Council in 2019-20. We are cooperating closely on African issues, particularly on the current situation in Zimbabwe and the recent elections in DRC, as well as promoting the UN agenda on Women, Peace and Security.

Minister Baldwin then travelled to Mozambique for a two-day trip, her first official visit to the country since taking office in January 2018. She held meetings with various Ministers and met representatives of the different political parties in a show of support to the peace process.

The Minister also saw UK aid in action visiting a DFID-funded project which

empowers young and disadvantaged women with skills for employment, as well as a mobile health clinic helping young women access vital family planning services.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

I was delighted to visit Mozambique and to see such rich provinces like Manica, Sofala and Maputo. The UK and Mozambique are united as members of the Commonwealth family.

As Minister for Africa, I look forward to strengthening this relationship further by supporting the peace process, and increasing trade relations including the creation of three new honorary consuls for prosperity.

Empowering women and girls is crucial for our future, in the UK and in Mozambique, enabling the whole of society to contribute to growth and development. It was great to see the programmes that the UK government funds and to meet inspiring young businesswomen and students who have benefitted from the UK's Chevening scholarship programme.

Minister Baldwin also announced the creation of three new Honorary Consuls for Prosperity that will support the growth of economic and commercial ties between the UK and Mozambique for the cities of Pemba, Beira and Tete.

The new honorary consuls will help increase commercial, economic, cultural and scientific relations between the UK and Mozambique and advance friendly relations. They will provide advice and guidance to identify potential areas for mutual prosperity between UK and Mozambique.

Further information

[News story: Payment Protection Insurance \(PPI\) claims and the Official Receiver](#)

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) introduced a deadline of 29 August 2019 for making PPI claims. The Official Receiver is seeking to claim outstanding PPI awards available in bankruptcy estates to ensure creditors receive assets owed.

Information for creditors

If you are a creditor in a bankrupt's estate, the Official Receiver will contact you if new monies will be sent to you following successful claims on outstanding PPI awards.

Contact the Official Receiver handling your case if you have any further questions. How to [register as a creditor in personal insolvency](#).

Information for bankrupts and former bankrupts

If you took out PPI insurance before you were made bankrupt, PPI claims made by the Official Receiver will be used to make payments to your creditors.

If you took out PPI insurance after the date of your bankruptcy or your bankruptcy was annulled by the court, then you have the right to make the claim and you are entitled to keep any compensation awarded.

If you entered into an IVA in the same period, you will need to contact the insolvency practitioner who dealt with your case to find out what will happen to PPI claims.

[Further information about what happens when you go bankrupt.](#)

Further information

Deloitte LLP has been appointed to assist the Official Receiver with the submission of PPI queries to providers to establish whether any mis-sold PPI redress is due to creditors of bankrupts' estates.

Deloitte LLP has the Official Receiver's authority to submit queries to PPI providers and to manage responses for individuals with bankruptcy court orders dated between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2012.

[Press release: Clerk of the House of Commons appointment: Dr John Benger](#)

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[Press release: New expert brought in to boost government's relationship with small businesses](#)

- New 'Small Business Crown Representative' will make sure the government gets the best value and small businesses have improved access to government contracts
- Martin Traynor OBE is an experienced business leader and deputy chairman of the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
- Martin also helped to set up visitor centre following discovery of King Richard III's remains

An experienced business leader has been given the task of boosting the relationship between the government and small businesses.

Martin Traynor OBE is the deputy chairman of the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, runs his own training and consultancy business and is the former Group Chief Executive of Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce.

He has now been made the government's new Small Business Crown Representative – a role which will see him make sure the government gets the best value from small business and small businesses have the best possible opportunity to work with the government.

Martin Traynor said:

I'm delighted to take on the role of Small Business Crown Representative and to build on the work of my predecessor, Emma Jones.

The government buys a wide range of goods and services from businesses right across the country.

This represents a huge opportunity for many of the UK's small businesses and I will work with colleagues from across the government to tackle any barriers to our procurement processes.

As well as his extensive business background, Mr Traynor is also the non-executive chairman of the King Richard III Visitor Centre Trust, which set up a visitor attraction following the discovery of the former King's remains underneath a car park in Leicester.

He is also a non-executive chairman of The Forest Experience Ltd and helped raise the £15 million needed to build a new visitor centre in the National Forest.

The Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, said:

I'm delighted that Martin has taken on this very important role.

Small businesses are the backbone of the UK's economy. That is why we are committed to levelling the playing field so they can win their fair share of government contracts, and I know Martin is looking forward to working with them.

As the Small Business Crown Representative, Mr Traynor will lead on the overall relationship between the government and small businesses, advise ministers on the government's engagement with them, and identify any barriers they face when working with the government.

Former SME Crown Representative, Emma Jones, stepped down from the role at the end of last year, following two years in the post.

[Statement to parliament: EU Exit: road haulage](#)

The government is making preparations to allow hauliers and other businesses to continue to transport goods between the UK and the EU, once the UK has left the EU. These include preparations for leaving the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

Accordingly, I am today (5 February 2019) laying a draft haulage statutory instrument designed to ensure that UK law continues to operate effectively in this area if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

The government will continue to license UK hauliers to the same high safety, environmental and operating standards as at present, and will require foreign hauliers operating in this country to do the same. The legislation also provides for continued access to the UK market, after exit, for hauliers from the 27 EU member states. Over 80% of haulage between the UK and continental Europe is undertaken by EU hauliers and it is important to ensure that the UK's supply chains are protected. The UK needs to be sure that foreign products can be imported and UK products exported as usual. Our approach of offering access at this stage aims both to provide the reassurance needed for international freight flows to continue, and also to help ensure reciprocal arrangements for UK hauliers.

On its side, the European Commission has proposed legislation that would allow UK hauliers basic rights to conduct operations to, from and through the EU for a limited period of 9 months after exit, if there is no deal. The Commission's proposal will need to be agreed by the Council and European Parliament, and is being considered by both institutions urgently. This proposal is predicated on the UK's granting equivalent access for EU hauliers to the UK, and the legislation laid before the House today provides for that access. Indeed, it is a more liberal offer, and we are discussing with the Commission whether there is scope for them to extend the EU's offer so as to match ours.

Depending on the outcome of these discussions, we will review the UK's offer to EU hauliers. Our legislation contains provision to suspend EU hauliers' rights to undertake cabotage operations in the UK. We are putting in place measures to introduce such a suspension, which could be put into effect immediately after exit day if needed. Our expectation, however, is that such a suspension will not be necessary.

In parallel we have been considering bilateral and unilateral measures with EU member states. France is separately progressing with a unilateral measure to provide wider access to UK hauliers in the event of no deal. There are also 22 historic bilateral agreements that would come back into effect if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

In addition, a multilateral quota of transport licences was introduced by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) in 1974 to support liberalised road freight transport between member states of that body. The licences, known as ECMT permits, allow for access between the 43 member states (which include all EU member states except Cyprus). The UK has an allocation of 984 annual and 2,832 short-term (valid for 30 days) ECMT permits for 2019. These levels were agreed through a long-standing formula approach before it was known that the UK would be leaving the EU. The government's expectation is that hauliers should not need an ECMT permit to continue doing a range of business in all or much of the EU, even in the event of no deal. But it is important to continue to prepare for all possible scenarios, and if it should prove necessary to use some of these permits for UK hauliers operating to EU countries, the government has put in place a scheme to allocate these permits, as detailed under the [Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act 2018](#).

[UK hauliers have been applying for ECMT permits](#) and the government expects to inform applicants of the outcome of their applications later this week. As we expect UK hauliers will have other means of ensuing market access to the EU, we will inform UK hauliers of the outcomes to provide certainty, but will allow a period of time before these need to be formally taken and paid for by successful hauliers. This approach has been agreed with road haulage stakeholders. The 2018 Act provides appropriate arrangements for distributing new permits as may be required under any future bilateral arrangements, if these are needed.

Overall, we continue to believe that reciprocal market access will be secured for UK hauliers. While continuing to plan for all eventualities, we also

believe that it is right to underline the fact that the UK is taking a positive and pragmatic approach.