

Speech: Expanding UK's diplomatic, defense and development assistance in the Sahel region

Thank you Mr President.

Thank you to Special Advisor Thiaw for briefing us today. We are pleased to hear of the progress made to operationalise and deliver the Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. You and your team deserve real credit for the 2018 Support Plan, which has rightly prioritised getting better coordination between agencies and improved buy-in from the governments and people of the Sahel region.

Mr President, as I think Mr Thiaw's briefing has established, the Integrated Strategy has been through an important and formative year. The Support Plan has helped highlight the need to be realistic and targeted in our ambitions, and serves as a reminder that despite some very difficult challenges, the Sahel is also full of opportunities. The more that can be done to unlock the potential of the Sahel – particularly through support to education, jobs and family planning – the more we will see young entrepreneurs and young leaders finding local solutions to the challenges they face, including to the challenges of climate change.

We are therefore delighted to see the international community and the UN system redoubling its efforts through UNISS, seeking to learn from the challenges of the last five years, and taking a more deliberative partnership approach with the countries and peoples of the region. The Security Council has previously discussed the risk of UNISS seeming distant or disconnected from the realities of the region, so we welcome the increased focus on local engagement, particularly with girls and women.

Similarly, the past few years have shown the need to be realistic, patient, and ensure that major pledges and announcements are matched with sufficient people, resources, and capabilities to actually deliver in the region. This has not always been the case, and there is much that could be done centrally from New York to ensure existing resources are fully mobilised, and that coordination mechanisms in country are working as effectively as possible. In particular, we would highlight the need to deploy the best people to the toughest problems in the region itself.

Mr. President, we also need to ensure that the development agenda is working closely with other institutions and sectors, particularly those focused on defence and security. It is trite but true that there can be no development without stability, nor vice versa, so we would encourage more frequent and honest conversations between the development and security sectors in the Sahel. It is notable that West Africa and the Sahel region in particular are attracting ever more international solidarity and support – which is absolutely right and arguably overdue – but we need to ensure that

organisational mandates are clear and strong lines of communication are set up between them.

Mr. President, the UK is in the process of expanding its diplomatic, defence, and development assistance to the Sahel region. We believe this will enable us to fully explore the links and opportunities, and build up an approach that knits together our security, diplomatic, development and humanitarian work.

We are opening new embassies in Niger and Chad, increasing our presence in Mali, and have already deployed 3 Chinook helicopters to provide logistical support to the G5 Joint Force through Operation Barkhane. In the coming years, we will also be significantly increasing our development assistance to the region. We see an approach that joins up the immediate and lifesaving aid to long term development and security outcomes as critical to changing the Sahel's current trajectory. This demands UN leadership, and I am pleased to hear that UNISS will be entering 2019 in a better state to deliver this.

[News story: Eileen Milner, Christmas and New Year message](#)

"This is my second year as Chief Executive and I continue to be amazed by the dedication of our staff and service providers to help improve the life chances of children, young people and adult learners alike.

In the past year, we have allocated £41.4 billion to over 25,000 colleges, training providers, maintained schools (through local authorities) academies, high needs institutions and early years institutions. Giving more than 12.6 million students the chance to strive for a brighter future.

Assigning £41.4 billion was no small feat – to put this in proportion, this is more than the total GDP of some countries such as Bolivia!

This year has seen huge progress towards implementing one of the biggest school funding system changes, the [National Funding Formula](#), for well over a decade. This funding is enabling circa 8 million learners achieve and aspire through their early learning journeys.

By handling such a large funding pot, our work never stops in ensuring quality learning experiences and value for money for the public purse. An example of this work is, challenging, this year, 213 academy trusts on their highest salary awards and the tightening of the application process to the [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#), to ensure better apprenticeship regulation.

Further, this year has seen the most concentrated period of structural

change, since the establishment of the further education sector in 1993, with substantial college mergers and academy conversion programme. We have had 12 college mergers during 2018 and 3 sixth form colleges have converted to academies.

More apprenticeship employers are now benefiting using a transformational leading apprenticeship digital service, who were [awarded](#) a spot on the top 100 digital leaders of 2018 list.

The agency and its learning providers should all be proud of what we have achieved this year. I hope we can build upon our accomplishments to ensure we make the education and skills sector something other nations envy.

Whilst we have seen some incredible achievements, there is still a long way to go to ensure our processes are simple, straightforward and streamlined. We want our service providers to find the education and skills funding process uncomplicated and trouble-free.

Our post-16 providers are now liaising with a single team to manage contracts and allocations and our apprenticeship providers are benefitting by having a central team delivering an end-to-end service for apprenticeships, following the [Apprenticeships and Professional and Technical Education \(PTE\) teams transfer](#) this year. Benefits of these streamlined services will continue to be realised throughout the year ahead.

In the coming year, we will establish contract managers for the largest providers to build relationships and to ensure we have better oversight on compliance with our funding rules, and data reporting to support funding and qualifications.

We will also implement a new stronger register of apprenticeship training providers and discuss with providers introducing a provider earnings cap will also ensure better oversight into providers' rapid expansions.

We also continue our work to support further education colleges for the introduction of the College Insolvency Regime, in April.

Collaboration with the further education sector is also key to building on what the [Education Secretary recently championed](#), that the vocational route is as well respected as A-levels and academic degrees. Through one voice we must ensure that sector achievements are realised to put these on an equal footing.

2019 will not be without its challenges. At a time where funding remains tight, it is more important than ever that the agency works with the education sector to ensure efficiencies can be made. One example of where findings are being realised are through a [School Resource Management Advisers](#) pilot, which has been extended recently following successfully finding over £35 million of savings and revenue generation opportunities to help schools maximise their resources and budget.

We must continue to gather insight from your experiences to make better use of our data and we must focus on the goal of making life easier for providers

– so they can concentrate on the important job of educating the next generation.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the many education providers, employers and trusts I have had the pleasure of working with and I look forward to continuing this work with you throughout the year ahead."

[Press release: Parole Board Christmas Opening Times 2018-19](#)

the
**Parole
Board**

working with others
to protect the public

Date	Opening Hours
Monday 24 December	09.00 – 14.00
Tuesday 25 December	Closed
Wednesday 26 December	Closed
Thursday 27 December	09.00 – 17.00
Friday 28 December	09.00 – 17.00
Monday 31 December	09.00 – 14.00
Tuesday 1 January	Closed
Wednesday 2 January	09.00 – 17.00
Thursday 3 January	09.00 – 17.00
Friday 4 January	09.00 – 17.00

If you cannot get through to the person you want to speak to, please call our general enquiries number on: 020 3880 0885

Published 21 December 2018

Press release: New Charity Inquiry: The Mohiuddin Trust

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into The Mohiuddin Trust ([1105585](#)) to look into concerns over potential misconduct and mismanagement. The inquiry was opened on 5 December 2018.

The charity's objects include the relief of poverty and the advancement of education and training for the public benefit.

The charity, which had previously been subject to a [statutory inquiry](#), is again being investigated by the Commission.

In August 2017, the Commission wrote to the charity setting out that it wished to meet with the charity's trustees following a review of the charity's accounts which identified statements in its auditor's report for year ending 31 March 2016 which indicated a financial risk to the charity.

Upon writing to the trustees to organise a meeting, it soon became apparent that there was an ongoing internal dispute between competing parties claiming to be the charity's trustees and, as a result, it was unclear whether the charity had any validly appointed trustees. The Commission advised the parties to the dispute that they were required to mediate or engage in dispute resolution with each other to address the substantive issues in the dispute.

However the competing parties have failed to do so satisfactorily and the Commission is concerned that the dispute is now impacting upon the day-to-day running of the charity- there are indications of mismanagement by those in control of the charity.

As a result of these regulatory concerns and failure to comply with regulatory advice and guidance provided, the Commission has opened a statutory inquiry to look at:

- the ongoing dispute and how to regularise the concern that charity has no validly appointed trustees
- whether those in control of the charity have properly exercised their legal duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration of the charity
- the financial management of the charity
- whether there has been misconduct and/or mismanagement but those in control of the charity

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on [GOV.UK](#).

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [check charity](#) tool.
3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.

[Press release: 2018 – a year of change and challenge for the Parole Board: Chief Executive's blog](#)

2018 – a year of change and challenge for the Parole Board

2018 has not been an easy year for the Parole Board, where we've been subject to unprecedented scrutiny and some criticism. It is a testament to the dedication and fortitude of our staff and members that the performance of the Parole Board remains as strong as it does.

Given that the Board make thousands of difficult decisions each year, about people who have committed some of the most serious offences, it is inevitable that our decisions will be criticised and right that they are scrutinised. Most people who experience our work directly know that our decisions are made very carefully and with great thoroughness, ensuring both fairness to the prisoner and the protection of the public.

Decision summaries

Our ability to produce summaries now puts us in a much better position to explain why we make our decisions. This process is working extremely well with well over 600 summaries now issued to victims.

New year, new opportunities

As this year draws to an end, we are well placed to meet the new challenges that will arise in 2019, and we are entering it in a good position and with the confidence of our key partners. This confidence has recently been illustrated by the Parole Board being awarded additional funding this

financial year to allow us to continue to schedule hearings at a rate that ensures continued throughput of cases.

In the new year we should receive the outcome of the review of our Rules, including the new review mechanism. From our discussions with the Ministry of Justice we are optimistic that the new framework will give us a strong platform on which to make further improvements.

Work with us – member recruitment 2019

In recent weeks I have spent some time preparing the ground for our next recruitment campaign which we intend to launch early in 2019. Detailed information to assist people who might be interested [has now been added to our website](#).

The Parole Board are asked to make thousands of difficult decisions each year – Parole Board members tell me that the work is very rewarding. They make a difference to people's lives.

Commitment to improving diversity

As I have commented previously, we are really keen to ensure we have greater success in attracting people from minority backgrounds. Nearly a quarter of those in prison are from a BAME background and it is important that the people making decisions about the liberty of those serving sentences better reflect the diverse communities they serve. This targeted drive is not a one off, it will be running through a series of campaigns over the next two years and will then be embedded into every campaign.

I have been speaking to a range of people who might be able to help us draw attention to our campaign and identify suitable candidates. You do not need to be a lawyer or a CJS professional to join the Parole Board – our primary focus is on recruiting people who can help us make rigorous, evidence-based decisions, which are both fair to the prisoner and ensure the protection of the public. Training and mentoring is provided after appointment.

Get in touch

If you are interested in helping us, or you know of people who might be interested, it would be helpful if you could let us know:
workwithus@paroleboard.gov.uk

Finally, I would like to commend all Parole Board staff and members, and indeed the many other hard-working and dedicated professionals who have worked with us to undertake our core function of protecting the public in the face of these challenges.

Martin