Bill of Rights to strengthen freedom of speech and curb bogus human rights claims

- Freedom of speech to be given greater weight in law
- New permission stage in court to prevent trivial legal claims wasting taxpayers' money
- Allows future laws to make it harder for foreign criminals to frustrate deportation process

The Bill will ensure courts cannot interpret laws in ways that were never intended by Parliament and will empower people to express their views freely.

At the same time, it will help prevent trivial human rights claims from wasting judges' time and taxpayer money. A permission stage in court will be introduced requiring people to show they have suffered a significant disadvantage before their claim can go ahead.

The Bill will also reinforce in law the principle that responsibilities to society are as important as personal rights. It will do this by ensuring courts consider a claimant's relevant conduct, like a prisoner's violent or criminal behaviour, when awarding damages.

The Bill will make clear that the UK Supreme Court is the ultimate judicial decision-maker on human rights issues and that the case law of the European Court of Human Rights does not always need to be followed by UK courts.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said:

> The Bill of Rights will strengthen our UK tradition of freedom whilst injecting a healthy dose of common sense into the system.

> These reforms will reinforce freedom of speech, enable us to deport more foreign offenders and better protect the public from dangerous criminals.

The Bill of Rights will make it easier to deport foreign criminals by allowing future laws to restrict the circumstances in which their right to family life would trump public safety and the need to remove them.

It will mean that under future immigration laws, to evade removal a foreign criminal would have to prove that a child or dependent would come to overwhelming, unavoidable harm if they were deported.

As a result, any new laws will curb the abuse of the system that has seen those convicted of hurting their own partners and children evade removal by claiming it would breach their right to family life in the UK.

The Bill of Rights will also:

- Boost freedom of the press and freedom of expression by introducing a stronger test for courts to consider before they can order journalists to disclose their sources.
- Prevent courts from placing new costly obligations on public authorities to actively protect someone's human rights and limit the circumstances in which current obligations apply, for example, police forces having to notify gang members of threats towards them from other gangs.
- Insulate the Government's plans to increase the use of prison Separation Centres against legal challenge from extremist offenders claiming 'a right to socialise'.
- Recognise that trial by jury is a fundamental component of fair trials in the UK.
- Prevent human rights from being used as a way to bring claims on overseas military operations once alternative options are provided by upcoming legislation.
- Confirm that interim measures from the European Court of Human Rights under Rule 39, such as the one issued last week which prevented the removal flight to Rwanda, are not binding on UK courts.

This will be achieved while retaining the UK's fundamental commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights.

UK launches ambitious trade deal with Gulf nations

- Talks kick off in Riyadh to agree trade deal with countries covering £33.1 billion of trade
- UK food and drink, manufacturing and renewable energy sectors would benefit from new agreement between the UK and the Gulf Cooperation Council
- Landmark deal would add at least £1.6 billion a year to the UK economy and support new jobs in key industries

Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan is launching free trade negotiations today (Wednesday 22 June) between the UK and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), made up of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

Equivalent to the UK's seventh largest export market, the GCC bloc's demand for international products and services is expected to grow rapidly to £800 billion by 2035, a 35% increase – opening huge new opportunities for UK businesses.

A free trade deal would also open the door to increased investment from the Gulf, supporting and creating jobs across the country.

In a visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Secretary of State will meet the GCC Secretary General, Dr Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, and her counterparts from all six GCC countries, to launch talks expected to culminate in a trade deal worth £1.6 billion more a year to the UK economy.

It is the fourth major set of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations launched by the Trade Secretary this year, following visits to begin talks in India in January, Canada in March, and the launch of negotiations with Mexico last month.

UK Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

> Today marks the next significant milestone in our 5-star year of trade as we step up the UK's close relationship with the Gulf.
>
> Our current trading relationship was worth £33.1 billion in the last year alone. From our fantastic British food and drink to our outstanding financial services, I'm excited to open up new markets for UK businesses large and small, and supporting the more than ten thousand SMEs already exporting to the region.
>
> This trade deal has the potential to support jobs from Dover to Doha, growing our economy at home, building vital green industries and supplying innovative services to the Gulf.

UK-GCC deal would mean significant benefits for British farmers and producers, as the Gulf is highly dependent on imported food. British food and drink exports to GCC countries were worth £625 million last year, and a deal could significantly reduce or remove tariffs on UK food and drink exports.

Tariffs that could be slashed include cereals, which currently face a tariff of up to 25%; chocolate, up to 15%; baking products, up to 12%; sweet biscuits, up to 10%; and smoked salmon, which has a 5% tariff at present.

With almost £30 billion already invested in each other's economies, this deal would also help unlock even more opportunities for investment between the UK and GCC countries.

Gulf investments supported over 25,000 UK jobs in 2019 – a number that tripled over the previous decade – and analysis shows the East Midlands, West Midlands, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber will be in line for the greatest proportional gains when the ink dries on a new deal. The deal would also be estimated to boost the economies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland by almost £500 million collectively.

Stephen Phipson, CEO of Make UK, the manufacturers' organisation, said:

> We welcome the launch of free trade negotiations with the Gulf Co-Operation Council, strengthening trade opportunities which will ensure that British manufacturing benefits from future positive flows of goods and services into the Gulf region.
>
> It is also extremely helpful that the UK and GCC are committed to work towards seeking the opportunities from 'green innovation', which will bring significant opportunities for Britain's innovative renewable energy companies which are already leading the way in this area of global concern. We look forward to working with government to make sure manufacturers large and small are able to benefit from the business possibilities this deal will open up.

Around 10,700 small and medium-sized businesses from every UK nation and region exported goods to the GCC in 2020, with SMEs accounting for more than 85% of total UK goods exporters to Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Co-Founder and Director of Spice Kitchen, an SME exporter based in Liverpool, Sanjay Aggarwal said:

> We went to Gulfood with DIT on a research mission and from this we know there is a massive market for our products, like our spice tins and single spice blends in the premium gifting space.
>
> It's so important for our business to be linking with the GCC and enables us to grow rapidly in exciting ways we never thought possible. We are in the process of identifying retailers in the Gulf, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

A strong trading relationship would allow the UK to play to our strengths as a manufacturing powerhouse and a world leader in technology, cyber, life sciences, creative industries, education, AI, financial services, and renewable energy.

UK businesses in these industries will also play a role in supporting GCC countries as they diversify their economies to move away from a reliance on oil and towards other sectors. The UAE, for example, has set a target of generating 50% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2050. Exports of UK wind turbine parts currently face tariffs of up to 15%.

RenewableUK's CEO Dan McGrail said:

> The global transition to clean energy includes countries throughout the Middle East which are seeking to make the most of their excellent renewable resources such as solar and wind.

As a global leader in wind, marine energy and green hydrogen, we're perfectly placed to help other countries to accelerate their efforts to decarbonise their energy systems – and to boost our own economy by exporting around the world.

Background:

- Government analysis shows that a deal with the GCC is expected to increase trade by at least 16%, add at least £1.6 billion a year to the UK economy and contribute an additional £600 million or more to UK workers' annual wages.
- There were around 600 GCC-owned businesses in the UK in 2019, supporting over 25,000 jobs – a number that tripled over the previous decade.
- More than 85% of total UK goods exporters to Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are SMEs. In 2020, around 10,700 UK SMEs exported goods to the UAE, 5,500 exported to Saudi Arabia and 4,100 exported to Qatar.
- Consumers in the Gulf have significant purchasing power and huge appetite for UK products and services. For example, Qatar is one of the richest economies in the world, ranking 9th globally with a GDP per capita of $53,804 (£41,912) in 2020.
- UK firms have at least £13.4 billion invested in GCC economies and GCC firms have £15.7 billion invested in the UK as of 2020.
- The GCC is equivalent to the UK's seventh largest export market, and total trade was worth £33.1 billion in 2021.
- The UK is the second largest services exporter in the world and services exports to the GCC were worth £12.1 billion last year.
- Tariffs outlined on foods are mostly 5% across the GCC, where in some cases individual countries charge higher tariffs on specific products. Note that tariffs on chocolate does not include products containing alcohol.
- Source of statistics: ONS UK trade, all partners, seasonally adjusted, Q4 2021; IMF World Economic Outlook April 2022; ONS Business Structural Database (2022) ; ONS Foreign Direct Investment involving UK companies, 2020 ; HMRC trade in goods by business characteristics, 2020 ; HMRC Overseas Trade in Goods statistics, March 2022.

COP President Alok Sharma to address leaders and ministers at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Rwanda, to press for

[implementation of the Glasgow Climate Pact]

- He will lead a high-level climate event to discuss progress on the Glasgow Climate Pact, and the importance of keeping the 1.5C goal alive
- The COP26 President will also visit the Kigali hub of the Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cooling and Cold-Chain (ACES), spearheaded by UK experts and £16 million of DEFRA funding

COP President Alok Sharma will attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2022), this week, June 22-23, in Kigali, Rwanda, as part of a UK government delegation led by the Prime Minister.

Mr Sharma will co-host a high-level Commonwealth climate event on Thursday 23 June with the Government of Rwanda to underline the importance of limiting global temperature rises to 1.5C, reiterate the action that was committed at COP26, and set out the steps already being taken by Commonwealth members to achieve this.

This will feature the agreement to revisit, strengthen and implement their 2030 climate action plans and long-term strategies towards net-zero, providing a spotlight on the commitments made in Glasgow and the action that must be taken by COP27.

Mr Sharma will announce at the event that the UK has doubled its funding to £10 million for the NDC Partnership's new Partnership Action Fund (PAF), as part of the UK's drive to work with developing countries to implement and enhance their climate commitments outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions.

Commonwealth leaders, United Nations organisations, civil society, the private sector and young people will also discuss progress on the Glasgow Climate Pact, accessing climate finance, the desired outcomes of COP27 in Egypt and how Commonwealth Member States can work together to achieve them.

Mr Sharma will then speak at the Commonwealth Business Forum at CHOGM to outline the ambitious trajectory set in Glasgow, and the need for businesses to continue the momentum on the road to global net zero.

Finally, the COP President will visit the Kigali hub of the Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cooling and Cold-Chain (ACES). Currently seven per cent of the world's emissions come from cooling – anything from food and vaccine storage to air conditioning to high-tech innovation – and demand for cooling will only grow as global temperatures increase.

Spearheaded by UK experts and £16 million of DEFRA funding, ACES is dedicated to generating ideas, technology and capacity building to support sustainable cooling or all that need it using renewables, climate friendly refrigerants and energy efficient equipment.

As temperatures hit record highs globally, this work will support those most vulnerable to heatwaves, accelerating the transition in Africa and other developing markets to sustainable refrigeration and reducing food waste and improving vaccine supply chains.

Ahead of his visit to CHOGM 2022, COP President Alok Sharma said:

“The Commonwealth has an important role to play in delivering the Glasgow Climate Pact, and keeping 1.5 degrees alive.

“It comprises both major emitters and some of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world.

“So, it is clearly in our collective interest to work together to take action and tackle the challenges we face.

“We should also recognise the economic growth opportunities the green transition has for job creation and sustainable development.

“Our collective voice can be a powerful force and it is time to honour the promises that we made in Glasgow, and turn commitments into action.”

Notes to Editors

- The theme for CHOGM 2022 is ‘Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming’, with a focus of ‘A Global Reset’, dealing with the impact of the pandemic and the Commonwealth’s role in rebuilding and reinvigorating the global economy. Commonwealth Leaders will meet in Rwanda to reaffirm their common values and agree actions and policies to improve the lives of citizens.

- The UK has doubled its funding to £10m for NDC Partnership’s new Partnership Action Fund (PAF) , which will support developing countries implement and enhance their climate commitments outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- NDC Partnership launched PAF at COP26 to accelerate deployment of technical expertise and capacity building for developing countries to mobilise finance that will support the implementation of climate ambitions.
- Through the NDC Partnership, the UK supports developing countries to turn their NDCs into specific strategies and actions, support their implementation, as well as help coordinate major climate donors to more effectively meet the needs identified.
- The Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cooling and Cold-Chain (ACES) was established in 2020 by the Governments of the United Kingdom and Rwanda, the Centre for Sustainable Cooling, United Nations Environment Programme’s United for Efficiency initiative and the University of Rwanda. UK academic partners include University of Birmingham, London South Bank University, Centre for Sustainable Road Freight and Cranfield University.
- ACES will be at the forefront of developing pan-Africa food loss solutions delivering sustainable cool corridors for food across Africa

and beyond, empowering farmers and underpinning food security. From the hub in Kigali, “spokes” across the continent will showcase and provide the training in how these solutions can be deployed in practice.
- Sustainable cooling tackles highly polluting refrigerants – hydrofluorocarbons – and provides energy efficient solutions to cool people and goods, including food and vaccines, without causing spikes in electricity demand or contributing to climate change further. This includes using cooling devices and services that are affordable, reliable and use environment-friendly refrigerants.

Governor Sarah Tucker remarks on the Montserrat Port Development Project

Good morning, I would like to adopt the protocol already established.

First of all I would like to join others and say how very pleased I am to be part of this ground-breaking ceremony for the Montserrat Port Development Project.

If you forgive the analogy, we have had to navigate some challenging and at times choppy waters since this project was first launched in 2019. It has been a labour of love for all concerned to get to today.

I commend the Office of the Premier, the Ministry of Communication, Works, Labour & Energy – and the Project Management Office – for their hard work and collaboration with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in achieving this key milestone for Montserrat.

The UK Government understands how pivotal the Little Bay Port Development Project is for Montserrat’s revitalisation, economic development, and sustainability. As Governor I was so pleased to receive confirmation that the UK was able to make a tangible demonstration of its continued support for our wonderful Island, by increasing the funding for this project from £14 million to over £28 million.

This investment in the port infrastructure will provide a safe, secure, modern and green facility for the island to improve access for all marine Traffic, be that, cargo vessels or cruise ships. It will boost Montserrat’s ability to connect to the region and the world.

This port will provide a vital pillar of infrastructure to underpin our economic growth, enabling development in tourism, trade and accessibility. Accessibility in its broadest sense, ensuring, as a modern faculty, Montserrat can meet the needs of all travellers, providing ramps and wide doorways continuing our development as an inclusive society.

We hope this new port will bring new job opportunities, and enable new investment, as part of the ongoing sustainable development of Montserrat.

I know the FCDO team would want me to thank the Government of Montserrat for its consultative and participatory approach, and its commitment to continue with strong community engagement throughout project design and implementation.

We welcome the focus on climate resilience in the project design which I know Meridian will develop further, so that the infrastructure can withstand climate shocks and is environmentally sound and sustainable.

The UK will continue to stand by Montserrat in supporting its resilient growth and key development priorities to improve the lives of its people. The FCDO and my office, look forward to our continued collaboration with partners in Government, as well as our colleagues at CDB, to ensure the smooth and efficient delivery of this transformative project.

Joint statement following the visit of COP26 President Alok Sharma to South Africa

A meeting was held in Pretoria today, 21 June 2022, between COP President Alok Sharma and a delegation of Ministers from the South African government including the Minister in the Presidency, Mr Mondli Gungubele; the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor; the Minister of Finance, Mr Enoch Godongwana; the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy; the Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr Pravin Gordhan; the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Mr Gwede Mantashe; and the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Mr Ebrahim Patel.

This follows an engagement between the COP President and the Head of the Presidential Climate Finance Task Team, Mr Daniel Mminele.

The meeting reflected on the progress made since COP26 in advancing the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) as a ground-breaking initiative to enable South Africa’s transition to a low carbon economy and a climate resilient society.

Through the Political Declaration issued in November 2021 to establish this partnership, the United Kingdom together with the European Union, France, Germany, and the United States undertook to mobilise an initial amount of $8.5 billion over the next 3-5 years to support the achievement of South Africa’s ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The COP President and Ministers welcomed the progress made thus far in advancing this long-term partnership. They continued discussions on the financing instruments to be provided, with a view to ensuring that the partnership meets the country's investment needs and aligns with its fiscal framework. They discussed ongoing work on a South African- led Investment Plan, which will guide the use of funds. In this context, they noted that as momentum grows and enabling conditions are created, there will be considerable interest from wider sources of finance.

Lastly, they underlined their shared commitment to a just transition that protects affected workers and communities as a key priority of the partnership, and to supporting opportunities for innovation and quality jobs including in the green hydrogen and electric vehicle sectors.

As committed to in the Political Declaration, the South African Presidential Climate Finance Task Team (PCFTT) and the International Partners Group (IPG) have today released a detailed six-month update to leaders on the advancement of the Partnership, which is attached below. This provides an overview of the work currently underway to take forward the partnership as well as key interim milestones leading to COP27 in November 2022.

The update outlines the progress that has been made towards the creation of an enabling policy environment to support South Africa's NDC, including the tabling of a Climate Change Bill in Parliament; reforms underway in the electricity sector; the finalisation of the Hydrogen Economy Roadmap and the Renewable Energy Masterplan; and the development of a just transition framework through the Presidential Climate Commission.

It further details the steps that have been taken to establish governance and implementation structures for the partnership, including the appointment of an independent technical secretariat led by Ms Joanne Yawitch and the imminent establishment of working groups focusing on the electricity, green hydrogen and transport sectors as well as finance and implementation modalities.

Finally, it confirms the commitment of the partners to finalise a comprehensive Investment Plan as well as to continue discussions regarding the financing package to enable meaningful progress by COP27.

Link to the six-month update to leaders here