

Speech: “I repeat the United Kingdom’s call for North Korea to allow human rights actors immediate and unhindered access to assess the human rights situation”

Thank you Mr President.

And thank you also to High Commissioner Zeid and Merislav Jenca for their harrowing words on the dire situation in the DPRK. Sadly it is unsurprising that the regime maintains a stranglehold on every aspect of its citizens’ lives. The United Kingdom, like other Security Council members, views the human rights situation in North Korea with deep concern and dismay.

The regime’s treatment of its own people is yet another example of its unashamed contempt of the international rules based system.

That is why we fully support the Security Council’s wish to draw attention to the shameful living conditions of the North Korean people as well as to North Korea’s illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, which we have condemned in Resolutions 2371 and 2375.

We must maintain international focus on the human rights situation in North Korea through both the UN in New York and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

We welcome the UN visit last week and we encourage the regime to engage in a meaningful way.

Evidence of the leadership’s appalling behaviour towards its own people is impossible to ignore.

People lack freedom of religion and expression. They have minimal control over their livelihoods and resources. The state controls what they see, what they consume and how they behave, using the threat of extreme punishment to keep people under its thumb.

Naysayers are disappeared, or jailed, or publicly executed to demonstrate the price of freedom. The Global Slavery Index estimates that more than a million people are victims of modern slavery.

Yet we know from defector testimonies that, despite the fear instilled in every North Korean, there are many brave individuals who would rather take their chances fleeing than remain gagged and bound by the regime.

Like the soldier who recently defected across the Demilitarised Zone. His daring escape was act of desperation as well as of hope. His starved physical condition speaks volumes about the standards of health and welfare in a

country that professes to put the military first. And therefore how it treats those who are most vulnerable.

We urge all Members not to return defectors back to this miserable situation. This sends a message that we condone the behaviour.

We also urge all Members not to profit from the people of North Korea's misery by employing North Korean nationals who are sent abroad to generate foreign currency, which is used by the regime to fund its illegal missile programmes, as stated in Resolution 2321.

The systematic violations of human rights by the regime goes beyond its own citizens or borders. The death of US citizen Otto Warmbier following his detention; the 17 Japanese nationals abducted by the regime; the assassination of Kim Jong Nam in Malaysia. These are all examples of the North Korean regime's contempt for the international rules based system.

This contempt is further exemplified by the regime's denial of access to independent observers of the human rights situation. Or to engage in meaningful dialogue. Or to act on the 2014 Commission of Inquiries Report that highlighted "wide ranging and ongoing crimes against humanity". The regime has rejected the Third Committee Resolution that called upon it to respect the basic rights of its people.

Today, I repeat the United Kingdom's call for North Korea to allow human rights actors immediate and unhindered access to assess the human rights situation in the country.

Our message to the regime must be clear and united. We must use all the diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal to deliver this message.

There is a very different path that is still open to the regime. This path leads to security and prosperity. It leads to improved lives for their citizens. All the members of this Council and beyond, must work together to persuade the North Korean leadership to pursue this path.

To do so it must end illegal missile tests. It must genuinely engage with the international community. It must take serious steps to improve the human rights situation for all its citizens.

Real positive change to the livelihoods of the North Korean people will not happen overnight. But it will not happen at all for as long as North Korea pursues its current course.

Mr President, we are committed to working with partners on the Council, and beyond, to tackle this challenge. The world looks to us all, and above all the North Korean regime, to support a change for the better.

Thank you.

News story: Space Climate Observatory agreed ahead of One Planet Summit in Paris

Artist's impression of MicroCarb. Credit: ESA.

At an event in Paris, the UK Space Agency signed up to the global agreement to improve long-term sustainability and accessibility of climate data captured by satellites.

The Heads of the national Space Agencies have committed to implementing the Space Climate Observatory and working together on activities such as increasing observations of key climate variables and validating the data – which the UK's world leading climate community is well placed to deliver.

Space agencies have also agreed to promote free and open data policies as well as satellite data products that can be used by scientists, businesses and governments all over the world. Data from satellites operated by different organisations will be brought together, alongside tools to model, validate and calibrate the measurements they make.

Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

“The Government is committed to tackling climate change while growing our economy, and the space sector will play a vital role in driving clean growth as part of the Industrial Strategy.

“This new agreement recognises the importance of satellite observations and highlights the vital role UK science and industry can play in delivering solutions to global issues.”

Climate Change and Industry Minister Claire Perry said:

“The UK is a world leader in tackling climate change and we want to help other countries do the same. We played a vital role in the formation of the historic Paris Agreement, and the One Planet Summit marks two years to the day since its adoption.

“This global commitment to improve climate data captured by satellites demonstrates the UK's leadership and excellence in research and development, and shows that there is no rowing back on the Paris Agreement.”

The UK Space Agency recently announced an investment in a satellite mission called MicroCarb in partnership with the French space agency CNES. The satellite, which measures carbon emissions and absorption by the cities, oceans and forests, is being assembled and tested in the UK by Thales Alenia Space and is due to launch in 2020. The UK is providing world leading climate scientists to the mission team and the UK Space Agency will support the

delivery of a number instrument sub-systems from UK institutions.

The UK has a long history of working collaboratively with international organisations such as the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) and the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) to maximise the benefits of earth observation from space.

The UK Space Agency runs a satellite instrument technology programme that is building capability and expertise in monitoring the planet from space, funding a number of instruments and projects. The UK Earth Observation Technology Strategy published in November, outlines how the UK will develop innovative technology to drive growth and leadership in the area, with £3.4 million of funding currently available for new projects.

Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency Graham Turnock, who signed the agreement in Paris, said: "The UK is working with international organisations to encourage the use of space data and technology to tackling climate change.

"It's important we come together and agree to work towards improving the quality and sustainability of climate data from space and ensuring it is made freely available to researchers around the world."

The One Planet Summit, convened by the French Government, the UN and World Bank, is taking place in Paris on 12 December to mark two years since the adoption of the Paris Agreement and increase access to finance for climate action. The Powering Past Coal Alliance, which was recently launched by the UK and Canada to bring together countries, public bodies and businesses to phase out coal in the power sector, is expected to be discussed further at the summit.

[Press release: PM meeting with Prime Minister Boyko Borissov: 11 December 2017](#)

The Prime Minister met with Prime Minister Boyko Borissov of Bulgaria this afternoon. The meeting opened with the Theresa May welcoming him to London and congratulating him on his upcoming presidency of the European Council.

Borisov commented that the good relationship between the UK and Bulgaria will continue beyond Brexit and highlighted the strong security and defence cooperation between the two countries. Both leaders confirmed that this was a vital element of the UK-Bulgaria relationship and that both bilateral security cooperation and defence cooperation through NATO would continue.

They discussed the Western Balkans at length, noting that stability in the

region was important to Europe as a whole. Both leaders recognised the important role of Turkey in the region. Theresa May notified Borissov that she would soon be inviting him to a conference on the Western Balkans to be held in London in July.

Brexit was discussed with the PM setting out her hope and expectation that the Council will confirm that sufficient progress has been achieved.

[Press release: New rules restricting the use of police cells as places of safety come into effect](#)

The new mental health provisions will mean it will no longer be possible to place children (under 18s) experiencing a mental health crisis in a police cell. For adults, the use of police cells as places of safety will be significantly restricted and it will only be possible for them to be used in exceptional circumstances. The period for which a person can be detained for the purpose of a mental health assessment will also be cut from 72 to 24 hours.

Victoria Atkins, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability said:

Too often and for far too long vulnerable people experiencing mental health crisis, who have committed no crime, have found themselves in a police cell because there is nowhere else to go.

This government has been clear that the best place for people suffering mental health crisis is a healthcare setting and not a police station.

The change in legislation will build on progress already made by police forces and health care partners that saw use of police cells for those experiencing a mental health crisis halve in the last year.

While 23 force areas reduced their use of police cells as places of safety for children to single figures or zero in the last year, the law change will ensure no child will end up in a police cell.

To ensure there are sufficient alternatives in place the Department of Health has provided a total of £30 million to health partners to increase provision across the country of local health and community-based places of safety.

Health Minister Jackie Doyle-Price said:

When you are experiencing a mental health crisis, the last place you'd want to be is in police custody and it is totally inappropriate for a child to be taken to a cell just because they are ill.

We have seen a 90% reduction in England in the number of people being held in custody who should be in NHS care – this move will mean that for young people this will finally be a thing of the past. We are also investing £30m to increase and improve places of safety for people in crisis.

Further provisions that have also been introduced for section 135 and 136 powers, which are the powers used by police to detain someone under the mental health act include:

- extending section 136 powers to any place other than a private residence, so that police officers can act promptly when an individual is found in mental distress, and is in need of care and control
- requiring police officers to consult with mental health practitioners when possible before exercising a section 136 power, to help ensure that such a step is absolutely necessary in the circumstances
- an ability to conduct a mental health assessment in a person's home following the use of a section 135 warrant, if that is considered to be in the interests of the person, rather than removing them to a different place of safety

[Speech: UK and Kazakhstan strengthen trade ties](#)

Good afternoon.

I am delighted to welcome you all to the 2017 UK-Kazakhstan Inter Governmental Commission. And a special welcome to Minister Kassymbek and his business delegation.

As we head towards the end of the year, today's event provides an opportunity to review 2017: to consider what we have achieved in our bilateral trade and investment relationship and to look forward to 2018 and set new targets.

This year, the UK and Kazakhstan celebrated 25 years of diplomatic relations. That relationship continues to flourish and strengthen and trade and investment are central to that growth.

I know that many of you here today are playing an active role in developing our bilateral trade and investment.

According to the IMF, in 2016, the UK exported £2.9 billion of goods and services to Kazakhstan, whilst the flow from Kazakhstan to the UK was £640 million. I think we can do even better in 2018.

I'd like to congratulate Kazakhstan for their first class staging of Expo 2017 in Astana this year. I am delighted to say that the UK was one of the first countries to sign up to having a national pavilion.

Our installation, designed by Asif Khan in partnership with musician Brian Eno, was a great example of UK's creative excellence, taking inspiration from global influences as it was inspired by a yurt.

It was visited by over half a million people during Expo and won the [silver award for exhibition design](#). Most importantly it also provided an excellent platform for a comprehensive business and cultural programme.

His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester represented the UK at our National Day. The Lord Mayor of London headed a large financial services business delegation.

My ministerial colleague Greg Hands led an oil and gas delegation, and there were visits by both Foreign Office and Scottish ministers.

In addition to the new business won and relationships strengthened, I believe the lasting legacy of Expo will be to have demonstrated the UK's capability across multiple sectors and project the UK as a centre of excellence for creativity and innovation.

This was an important highlight in 2017, and in a few minutes time, we will hear from representatives of the various working groups detailing other achievements this year and plans for 2018.

The UK is currently the sixth largest foreign investor in Kazakhstan, having invested over £10 billion over the last 10 years. The Department for International Trade stands ready to help and encourage further overseas direct investment into Kazakhstan.

Oil and gas remains the largest sector in our trade and investment relationship. This is hardly surprising, given Kazakhstan has the world's 12th largest reserves of oil and accounts for 30% of GDP.

I am pleased to note that many UK companies have been working in Kazakhstan for a number of years and continue to invest new resources. The UK stands ready to help you build a more prosperous and sustainable future as this vital sector is developed.

Our experience covers the use of new materials, digital intelligence and new intervention techniques that improve field integrity and productivity. I look forward to hearing more from Campbell on progress made in 2017.

On mining, I understand that the new subsoil legislation is being considered by the Kazakh Parliament and that it is envisaged that the new Mining Code will be in operation from as early as July 2018. I believe this will be a

milestone and encourage further investment into Kazakhstan.

On financial services, I am delighted that the Astana International Financial Centre will be operational from 1 January 2018. Many UK financial and legal companies are now embedded in AIFC – most notably Lord Woolf in administering and establishing the new Court of Arbitration, set up under English common law.

But other UK companies are involved in the development of the Astana Stock Exchange or helping draft the regulatory guidance or providing training for AIFC staff.

The CityUK and its members are clearly demonstrating that both pre and post UK's withdrawal from the European Union, London will continue to be Europe's major international financial centre and a global leader.

The planned privatisation programme of Samruk Kazyna will provide an opportunity for IPOs in Astana and London and encourage more UK companies in looking to Kazakhstan as a new market.

And of course the One Belt, One Road project will provide massive opportunities in infrastructure projects linking China with Europe via Kazakhstan.

The DIT team in Astana is working closely with colleagues in Beijing and Hong Kong to organise events that will focus on viable projects and facilitate new consortia of UK, Kazakh and Chinese companies to deliver these projects in Kazakhstan.

So we have a strong platform, but we can do more. I am pleased that this morning's Business Council focused on digitalisation and new business horizons. I know that many of your major cities have smart city plans and this is an area where the UK can offer much help and experience.

Finally, in agriculture, the [Astana DIT team](#) will be organising an inward mission to the UK in March 2018 to explore potential co-operation in animal health and agri-tech. These examples show that both countries are actively seeking to open up new sectors of trade and investment.

I would also like to highlight the [International Business Festival](#) that will take place in Liverpool from 12 to 28 June, which is now established as a leading forum for business exchange.

I would be delighted to welcome a large Kazakh delegation to take part in those business sector events. I understand that we will be seeing a video about the IBF at the end of the programme.

So in conclusion, the Department of International Trade is committed to positioning the UK at the centre of an increasingly connected world, resetting and energising our relationships with global partners such as Kazakhstan.

The UK will continue to remain a fantastic place in which to do business. We

have a strong rule of law, we have some of the best universities in the world, we have innovative and award winning companies and we are a leading destination for foreign direct investment in Europe.

The UK values its relationship with Kazakhstan. We want to build on it and I am sure today's event will be another significant step on that journey.

Thank you.