

Speech: A decent education for Nigeria's young people is important

As the UK's High Commissioner in Nigeria, I would like to welcome you all to the 8th annual conference of the Association of Private Educators in Nigeria. I am delighted to be here with you today to discuss the crucially important issue of Education in Nigeria given the need for all of us – Government, Development Partners and the private sector – to invest more in human capital if Nigeria is to reach its full potential and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The key question for me from a development partner perspective are why private sector investment in education? Should we not be supporting the public sector to continue to provide services that have been dominated by government? The answer to these questions lies in the growing trend of private sector education in Africa, the growing population in sub-Saharan Africa and lessons and evidence from supporting a hybrid system that supports both the public and the private sectors. According to the recent 'Business of Education in Africa' report: "21% of African children and young people are already being educated in the private sector, with this percentage likely to rise to one in four by 2021". Also the research notes that despite the progress by sub-Saharan Africa since the Millennium Development Goals, 30 million children in SSA are not receiving any form of schooling, and tertiary education is capacity constrained. Specifically in Nigeria, we have the highest number of out of school children in the world with over 11 million children out of school. This challenge is compounded by a worsening fiscal squeeze, underinvestment in education and a population that is estimated to reach 450 million by 2050.

The challenges in the Education sector in Nigeria are enormous and public sector investment alone cannot meet the current demand. According to recent statistics on private sector education in Nigeria, 40% of pupils are attending private schools. And in some states of the federation, that figure for private provision of education is even higher. DFID's experience, working in the Education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, shows that supporting the public sector alone is not sufficient to address the problems of access and quality education. This is why the UK government recognises the absolute importance of supporting children and young people to gain a decent education in Nigeria through a hybrid system. In Nigeria, the bulk of our funding is on supporting the public sector to strengthen systems and improve schools. Some of these programmes have included:

- Education Sector Support Programme: The core results were systems building and school improvement in over 16,000 public primary schools in 6 states, benefitting 6.5m Nigerian children.
- Girls' Education Project: To enable one million additional girls to gain access to better education in five Northern states by 2020. Currently working with nearly 3,000 public primary schools and 1,000 Integrated Quranic schools.
- Teacher Development Programme: To train 62,000 teachers and 4,000 student teachers in maths, science and

English, using mobile technology. Also provides teachers with support and ongoing coaching in classrooms at Federal level and in 5 states.

DFID also invests heavily in Nigeria through the Global Partnership for Education and the Girls Education Challenge Fund complementing our direct bilateral support.

As mentioned earlier, the UK Government recognises the importance of a mixed system that also supports the public sector. In Lagos State where it is estimated that there are 18,000 private schools and 1,600 public schools, we have taken pragmatic steps to support opportunities in the private sector through our Developing Effective Private Sector Education Nigeria (DEEPEN) programme. DEEPEN is an innovative programme that uses the making markets work for the poor approach, to build the regulatory and quality assurance capacity of government and supporting the low cost education market in Lagos. DEEPEN comprises four workstreams – rules and standards, finance, school improvement services and information – which were designed to stimulate and strengthen a private market in low cost education for the poorest people in Lagos. The programme works with government, private school associations, financial institutions, community based groups, the media and parent associations.

Since the inception of DEEPEN programme in 2013, it has achieved some impressive results that include: 1. 1,666 schools have had access to school improvement services (teacher training and capacity development) 2. 455 (453 low cost) schools reviewed and commenced school improvement as a result of the pilot Graded Assessment of Private Schools supported by DEEPEN 3. 1723 schools have gained access to affordable financial services and products, as a result of support to school associations and financial institutions 4. At least 432 low-cost school owners supported to understand their tax rights and liabilities to avoid illegal and multiple tax payments 5. 373 schools have received training by service providers on business improvements related to improved business planning and financial management

The DEEPEN programme also includes an Innovation component that supported Bridge international Academies and a Challenge Fund to support innovative business models. Through the UK Government's support, Bridge Academies has setup 23 new academies in poor areas in Lagos State with 203 teachers and 23 academy managers employed and 6,530 students enrolled.

Let's not forget the crucial work also of the British Council and the vital role they play in the Education sector in Nigeria through programmes such as Connecting Classrooms. This multi-country programme, running from 2015-18, aims to build the capacity of teachers and school leaders to support them to integrate core skills such as creativity, critical thinking, digital literacy and collaboration into the curriculum. Last year 3500 teachers and 437 school leaders were trained through Connecting Classrooms in government and private schools in Lagos and FCT. This year they are reaching schools in Oyo, Kano and Rivers State.

However, the sustainability and success of this approach is not only dependent on private sector investors seizing opportunities, but also on the

commitment of the state and the participation of non-state actors. Our experience in Lagos has shown that government commitment to improving the regulatory environment is critical to de-risking low cost private schools, unlocking the blockages to access to finance and investment in the learning environment. The time therefore has come for the Federal and sub-national governments to clearly articulate their policy on private sector education and provide the necessary regulation for businesses to thrive. On our part as a key partner for Nigeria, the UK Government remains committed to brokering partnerships between state and non-state actors and supporting improvements in the learning outcomes of children in Nigeria.

I know that the secondary and tertiary education system in Nigeria who once seen as a jewel of Africa' crown. It's sad that that is no longer the case. And although I should not complain about Nigerian parent sending their off springs to excellent British schools and universities, in many ways I would be happier if they did not feel this is necessary. I know Association of Private Educators in Nigeria is doing great work to help rebuild an education system of which Nigeria can be proud. The UK is standing ready to be a partner with you in this noble endeavour.

Finally let me thank Association of Private Educators in Nigeria and the conference committee for all their hard work in organising this event. I look forward to engaging and hearing more about the crucial work of Association of Private Educators in Nigeria.

Press release: Joint statement on the ongoing detention of a human rights lawyer in Egypt

The governments of Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK are deeply concerned by the ongoing detention of human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy.

Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are deeply concerned at the ongoing detention of human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy, who was detained at Cairo airport on September 10th on his way to the UN Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances working group.

We are concerned at the detention conditions that Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy is reportedly enduring, and continue to call for transparency on prison conditions in Egypt. We call on the Egyptian authorities to ensure the freedom of civil society and the protection from torture that are enshrined in the Egyptian Constitution.

Further information

[Press release: Tidal flood barrier gate arrives in Ipswich](#)

A 200 tonne tidal gate has arrived in Suffolk, ready to be installed at Ipswich's new flood barrier.

The delivery of the gate from its manufacturing site in Rotterdam, Holland, is a significant step towards the completion of the Environment Agency's £70 million project.

The work was carried out by Hollandia, a sub-contractor for Environment Agency contractor VBA – a joint venture between VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins.

It took 2 years to design and build the gate and 24 hours for it to be transported across the North Sea, finally passing under the Orwell Bridge and entering Ipswich early on the morning of Friday 27 October.

The gate is 22 metres wide and will stand 9 metres tall when in its "closed position". It is finished with 5 tonnes of special paint that will help protect it, as it spends most of its life under water.

Special crane will be used to install 200 tonne gate

The gate is currently on a barge in the Port of Ipswich, while a crane big enough to lift it into place is delivered to site and constructed.

The 1,000 tonne crane will be assembled on the construction site on the middle island of the Port of Ipswich.

Once the crane is complete, the gate will be installed into the barrier structure in the upright position, which is its "maintenance position".

The main hydraulic rams and control systems can then be installed and there will be a testing period of a further 8 weeks.

Andrew Osborne, Project Manager, said:

This is a key milestone for the project and sees the final elements of the barrier arriving on site.

The construction of the crane will take several days, and this is a very busy period for what has been a long-running project.

It's another step closer to significantly improving the flood protection for Ipswich.

The Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy (IFDMS) will increase the standard of protection to 0.33% (greater than 1 in 200) and takes into account current climate change predictions. The 0.33% relates to the probability of a combined fluvial and tidal flood event happening in any one year.

The final element of the scheme involves building a tidal barrier across the New Cut River in Ipswich, with associated works to tie it into the new east and west bank walls and gates. The barrier is expected to be operational in the spring of 2018.

The flood defence scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,608 homes and 422 businesses and support key infrastructure, has been partnership funded by: the Environment Agency, Ipswich Borough Council, Department for Communities and Local Government, the Haven Gateway Partnership, and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

[Press release: 40,000 healthcare professionals trained to help smokers quit](#)

Public Health England (PHE) today (3 November 2017) confirmed that nearly 40,000 healthcare professionals have been trained to offer quit smoking advice as part of a drive to make the NHS smoke-free by 2019. An event today in Birmingham, held by PHE, will promote the new [government tobacco control plan](#) to stop-smoking workers across the country, with a keynote address from the [Public Health and Primary Care Minister, Steve Brine MP](#).

In support of the plan, PHE is urging all NHS frontline staff to take advantage of free online training to help them give 'very brief advice on smoking' (VBA). The evidence shows that giving VBA to patients makes them 68% more likely to quit if they're offered stop smoking medication. So far, 39,447 healthcare professionals have been trained to deliver effective stop smoking advice.

The burden to the NHS in England from smoking is £2.6 billion. Last year over half a million people ended up in hospital due to a smoking attributable condition. There is an urgent need across all parts of the NHS to support people to quit to improve the health of local populations and help secure the sustainability of the NHS.

The savings to the NHS for each patient referred to stop smoking services and prescribed nicotine replacement therapy is £13.00 each year for 4 years.

NHS England is investing almost £600 million in commissioning for quality and innovation (CQUIN) schemes, including one which focuses on identifying and supporting people who smoke or who drink alcohol at higher risk levels. Under the scheme, additional funding is being made available to hospitals that help their patients to quit smoking.

PHE is encouraging all healthcare staff to undertake a 30-minute online course, provided by the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training, based around short film clips providing examples of how very brief advice can be delivered to patients; including key facts, figures and messages.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at PHE, said:

Every year smoking costs the NHS a staggering £2.6 billion, with over half a million people ending up in hospital due to a smoking attributable condition.

Smokers respond particularly well to our advice, so as health professionals we have a duty to take every opportunity to prevent the misery and suffering we know is caused by smoking.

A smoke-free NHS is about helping smokers to quit while in the care of the NHS. It means all healthcare professionals doing what they can to encourage patients to stop, including offering on the spot support to fight cravings and banning smoking on NHS grounds.

The good news is that training for NHS staff is easily accessible and effective. Quit rates generally are also better than they have ever been. Most smokers want to quit and all healthcare staff should feel confident in having that crucial brief chat with a patient about smoking. Patients who smoke should expect to be asked whether they'd like to quit.

Public Health Minister, Steve Brine said:

Smoking rates are at their lowest ever levels but it is still our biggest preventable killer.

We now have strong laws helping people to quit and we need the NHS and its incredible staff to commit to a smokefree NHS. By making this powerful statement, the NHS can lead the way, drive down smoking rates even further and provide the best support to the 1 in 4 patients who are smokers. Our new Tobacco Control Plan is aiming for the first ever smokefree generation and the NHS has a huge role to play in that.

There has never been a better time for people to quit and for healthcare professionals to discuss quitting with their patients. The ban on attractive branding on packs, together with better and more quitting options including e-cigarettes, stricter controls on smoking in public and supportive campaigns like PHE's [Stoptober](#) have all contributed to successful quit attempts in the first 6 months of this year being at a record high, with almost 20% remaining smokefree a year after quitting.

1. Total smoking-related burden to the NHS is estimated at £2.6 billion: GP visits – £794 million; practice nurse visits – £111.7 million; prescriptions – £144.8 million; outpatient visits – £696.6 million; hospital admissions – £851.6 million
2. VBA: PHE has commissioned online training on delivering brief advice on smoking from the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training and this is available free of charge for all health care professionals.
3. Smoking prevalence figures: In 2016, 15.5% of adults in England aged 18+ smoke, down from 19.9% in 2010; In 2000, 26.8% of adults aged 16+ were smokers. Prevalence since 2010 has fallen most in younger age groups:[see the data](#).
4. PHE's Tobacco Control Profiles: See [local smoking prevalence figures and additional local data](#).
5. The national CQUIN scheme 2017 to 2019: No.9 Preventing ill health by risky behaviours – alcohol and tobacco The risky behaviours CQUIN focuses on identifying and influencing inpatients who are increasing or higher risk drinkers by providing brief advice; and to identify and influence inpatients who smoke to make a quit attempt. It applies to community and mental health trusts in 2017 to 2018 and extends to acute trusts in 2018 to 2019.
6. A smokefree NHS: The [NHS next steps on the five year forward view](#) states that all NHS estates will become smoke-free by 2019 to 2020.
7. Standardised tobacco packaging Cochrane Review:
 - one national study of Australian adult smoker cohorts (5441 participants) found that quit attempts increased from 20.2% prior to the introduction of standardised packaging to 26.6% one year post-implementation
 - there was also evidence that standardised packs were less attractive to those who did not smoke, making it less likely that they would start
 - second study of calls to quitlines provides indirect support for this finding, with a 78% increase observed in the number of calls to the New South Wales online service after the implementation of standardised packaging
 - tobacco in standardised packs was also generally perceived as worse-tasting and lower quality than tobacco in branded packs; standardised packaging also appeared to reduce misperceptions that some cigarettes are less harmful than others, but only when dark colours were used for the uniform colour of the pack

[Press release: New opportunities for Midlands businesses to deliver UK aid](#)

The Department for International Development (DFID) held its first supplier engagement event today (Friday 3 November 2017) to help local businesses in the Midlands make the most of opportunities to deliver UK aid, following the International Development Secretary Priti Patel's fundamental review of how DFID works with suppliers.

The Minister of State for International Development, Lord Bates, encouraged representatives of over 50 businesses from across the Midlands to compete for DFID business and bring their local expertise and skills to help the poorest people across the world.

By working with DFID, local Midlands businesses will support Global Britain and in turn create jobs for the local economy.

As a result of a review of DFID's work with suppliers, the Department is cutting red tape to boost competition and open up DFID's market to new businesses including small enterprises in the UK and the world's poorest countries. We are also stopping so-called "bid candy" practices, by which large suppliers include smaller businesses to win bids, but then drop them from the contract.

DFID is running regional supplier engagement events – with the first Open for Business event held in collaboration with the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership in Austin Court, Birmingham – to simplify the application process for DFID contracts to help potential suppliers.

Minister of State for International Development, Lord Bates, said:

The Department for International Development is committed to using the world-leading expertise of British businesses to tackle some of the greatest humanitarian and development challenges the world has ever faced.

I have spoken today with business representatives who want to help deliver UK aid to achieve the best results that UK taxpayers and the world's poorest deserve through the unique skills and expertise the Midlands has to offer.

Ensuring that DFID delivers value for money is a cornerstone of the International Development Secretary's agenda – boosting competition and making it easier than ever for new and smaller businesses to work with us through events like this show we are making significant progress.

Saqib Bhatti, Director for Growing Businesses and representing SMEs at Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), said:

The West Midlands' LEPs are committed to helping the 160,000 companies in our region to compete and thrive. Today is an important step to equipping this area's suppliers with the information they need to bid for new business opportunities across the world.

We look forward to working with DFID to continue the region's strong economic growth.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. In December 2016, the International Development Secretary Priti Patel announced a fundamental review of DFID's management of its contracted suppliers, to ensure greater value for money for taxpayers in the Midlands and across the country. Further information can be [found here](#).
2. This is the first of a number of engagement events DFID will be running across the country, as we want to demystify the process of bidding for work with DFID and help them identify ideas and programmes that they can deliver.
3. The Supplier Review makes it easier than ever for businesses like these to bid to work with us. We have simplified the processes for contract applications which will benefit businesses like those here today.
4. UK aid is untied. Over 80% of DFID's work is delivered through British-registered businesses reflecting the expertise and international competitiveness of the UK marketplace.
5. As a demonstration of the important work DFID has been undertaking in recent months, the Department has been awarded the 2017 Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) Annual Award for 'Best Contribution to the Reputation of the Procurement Profession'.