

[News story: Minister Ellwood offers condolences after UN deaths in DRC](#)

I am deeply saddened and shocked by the news of the discovery of the bodies of two UN Group of Experts members in DRC. I would like to express my profound condolences to their families, colleagues, and friends. The UN Group of Experts are held in high esteem and their research into conflict and insecurity in DRC is vital in our attempts to hold to account those committing serious human rights abuses and violations.

The UK calls for a full investigation into their deaths. We will continue to underline to the Government of the DRC its responsibility for the Group of Experts' security and the need for its full cooperation with them.

[Speech: Minister Ellwood's speech at UK-Angola Trade and Investment Forum](#)

Speaking at the UK-Angola Trade and Investment Forum, Tobias Ellwood, Minister for Africa, said:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning.

It is a pleasure to be here today. As I looked down the delegate list and saw a company called the Tea Club, I knew that Angola was a country that could do business with the UK.

There is a huge overlap between what Angola needs and what we have in this country that we want to share.

Change and Opportunity

Change is on the horizon for both our countries.

This summer Angola is expected to experience its first change in leadership in almost 40 years.

And tomorrow, the Prime Minister Theresa May will formally begin the process of withdrawing from the European Union.

Change brings with it opportunities.

Angola has the opportunity to set an example to the region by ensuring a peaceful and democratic political transition.

Our departure from the European Union offers us the opportunity to become a truly Global Britain – strengthening our partnerships across the world, including with Angola.

Strengthening Links with Angola

We made a first step towards that goal last year, when our two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen our political, economic and commercial relationship.

We have plans in the pipeline for a number of further agreements in specific areas, like finance.

Our commitment to growing our links with Angola is illustrated by the fact we have a dedicated Trade Envoy – Baroness Northover.

Baroness, can I thank you for the work you're doing.

You have paid four visits to Angola in the last 12 months alone, developing important relationships with Angola's economic ministries and identifying excellent opportunities for UK companies.

Personal Impressions of Angola

For my part, I certainly saw some of those opportunities for myself when I visited Angola last month.

There was encouraging evidence that the economy is beginning to strengthen and that the right investment conditions are beginning to be put in place.

The government explained their plans to diversify the economy and improve the business environment.

I heard how Angola was ready to embrace international partners – both Governments and businesses.

And I was told there was a particular need for foreign expertise in the energy, agriculture and infrastructure sectors, all sectors where the UK is well-placed to offer support.

We also have world leading expertise in financial services which can help a government spread the burden of new investment.

The situation in Angola

For those unfamiliar with Angola, let me give you a few impressions.

It is sub-Saharan Africa's third largest economy, worth £85 billion. It is still heavily dependent on oil exports, and it suffered heavily because of the fall in oil prices.

But it has great potential: it is politically stable, it has a favourable climate; huge non-mineral resources; vast areas of under-utilised arable land; and a young population of over 24 million people.

And possibly most importantly, it has a government which has an economic vision that welcomes foreign investment.

It wants to exploit both its traditional energy reserves and its huge potential in renewables, including hydro.

By 2025 the electricity grid will double to provide for nearly two thirds of the population.

The Angolan government is giving thought to how it builds its manufacturing base, and is taking steps to improve the business environment.

UK Government trade support

For all these reasons, the UK Government is boosting our support for British companies seeking to invest in Angola.

We have increased UK Export Finance limits for trade with Angola by 50%, from £500 million to £750 million.

This additional quarter of a billion pounds will help UK companies win new export contracts, and will give Angolan buyers access to UK finance.

Conclusion

Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Today is your chance to learn more about the opportunities on offer in Angola's dynamic market and how the Angolan Government intends to improve the climate for business there.

It is a chance for Angolan interests to team up with UK expertise.

Our Ambassador and his team – and our Trade Envoy -are on hand to give detailed advice about doing business in Angola.

I very much look forward to working with you to strengthen the partnership between our two countries.

This is an exciting time for both Britain and Angola.

Further information

[Statement to Parliament: Dartford-Thurrock Crossing charging scheme](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Publication of the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing charging scheme account for 2015 to 2016.

[News story: GLD lawyers advise on new £1](#)

The distinctive new coin that is legal tender from 28 March is the most secure of its kind in the world and aims to tackle the rise of counterfeit coins in circulation. Although its shape owes much to the old threepenny bit (which also had 12 sides and was retired in 1971) the new coin has a hologram-like image that changes from a 'f' symbol to the number '1' when it is seen from different angles, micro-lettering and milled edges.

GLD's Treasury Legal Advisers have provided advice over the past few years to support the development of the new coin, including on practical matters relating to its roll out. They have been working closely with The Royal Mint, Treasury colleagues and other parts of government to deliver the project.

David Chaplin, senior lawyer in the Treasury Legal Advisers team, said:

This is just one of the unique and interesting roles of being a government lawyer. It is a privilege to be involved in such a historic process.

The Royal Mint has been hammering out coins of the realm since AD886 first in London and more lately in south Wales. Although the process is now fully mechanised it is still steeped in ancient traditions, such as the Trial of the Pyx, a centuries-old method of testing coins for authenticity.

Adam Lawrence, chief executive of Royal Mint, said:

It's a historic day for UK coinage, and one that The Royal Mint has been working towards, together with businesses and industry, for a number of years. From today, the public will start to encounter for themselves the most innovative and secure coin ever produced by The Royal Mint.

It's been designed to be fit for the future, using security features that aim to safeguard our currency, and currencies around the world, for years to come. Staying ahead of sophisticated counterfeiters remains a constant challenge and this coin helps in that battle.

Read more about the launch of the new £1 coin on www.gov.uk/Treasury

[Speech: Minister for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock's speech at the launch of 'National Archives: Archives Unlocked'](#)

Thank you Jeff for the introduction and Jude for your kinds words.

It's great to be back at the Southbank Centre today – which Jude will be pleased to hear has been my most visited cultural institution since joining DCMS.

As Jude so rightly said, this is a very exciting time for our nation's archives. Knowledge and information are valued currencies in these global times. Thanks to the opportunities of new technology, we enjoy mass digital access to records ranging from the iconic – the Domesday Book – to Cabinet minutes that help us understand how and why previous governments made their most affecting decisions. And also to more personal records – soldiers letters home during WW1 and WW2, insights into our sporting lives, boardroom battles, births, deaths and property ownership.

At the same time, archives are feeding a renaissance across our world-beating

creative industries and wider afield, as old and once forgotten ideas and approaches inspire new ones in business, fashion, music, art and across our communities.

I imagine when some, maybe many of us hear the word archive we think of some cobwebby vault, where favoured experts and academics blow the dust from forgotten, mildewed files. But in this digital age, our history is accessible to everyone, no matter where they live or what they do. The potential of that, the significance of that, can't be understated. Mass digital access to physical records democratises our history and our collective understanding of who we are.

Archives Unlocked shines a light on the value of archives – framed around trust, enrichment and openness. It sets out ambitions for their future – so we all can fully exploit the immense riches of our archives, for the cultural, economic and intellectual common good.

So let us look at those key themes in turn. Trust, enrichment, and openness.

First trust.

As a democracy, we are strengthened by scrutiny and by being held to account.

Easy access to archives is central to this. It is a sad example, but the Hillsborough Inquiry is a good high-profile case of archival records helping to build a picture of past events to ensure justice now and in the future. 27 years after the loss of 96 lives at Hillsborough Football Stadium, a jury found that the victims had been unlawfully killed, a ruling only made possible by the release in 2012 of 450,000 archived documents relating to the tragedy.

Trust and confidence in our public institutions are essential, and openness and scrutiny strengthen that trust.

Second enrichment.

Archives enrich society. Because art and knowledge enrich our lives. Any work of art, however ancient, when experienced for the first time is a current work for the beholder. Just as any little nugget of information is new to the person first discovering it.

In the age of Google, Spotify and YouTube, Instagram, Wikipedia where people expect ready access to the things that intrigue them, archives have never been more relevant. That inquisitiveness, that thirst to be entertained is there, ready to be met. And modern technology makes it so much easier to connect to the rich culture of the past and make it present.

And as times change forgotten works can suddenly become – or at the very least seem – relevant once more. I shall simply mention the phenomenal recent success of the neglected Sinclair Lewis novel *It Can't Happen Here*, which has lately topped several best seller lists – I assume you all know the background – and make no further comment.

Third and finally – openness.

Archives encourage a thirst for learning.

We have a wonderful array of archives across England and we want to see them made accessible to everyone, regardless of their background.

During my recent visit to The National Archives, I saw a primary school class learning about the Great Fire of London. Those kids were fascinated by the historical documents they saw, as the past came to life in front of them. Not literally, thank goodness.

But not everyone can easily get to Kew, or even to the other archives up and down the country, where children are being similarly thrilled and inspired. Adults too.

Digital enables access. Online archives can be accessed from anywhere – from the sofa, from a cafe, from the top deck of a bus. And in Government we're making sure that is literally true with our work to improve connectivity and infrastructure.

Until very recently it has always been the case that our archives had to be curated, so what was made available was still decided by persons other than the consumer. Digital can change that as people become able to search and explore on the basis of what matters to them, and that is a very exciting development.

It doesn't mean I don't fully appreciate the great work of our archivists and curators. As excited as I am by the opportunities for democratisation digital technologies offer, I greatly value the specialised work of maintaining and expanding our nation's archives.

You need only look here, at The Southbank Centre's archive. It is a treasure trove of information and artefacts dating back to the 1951 and the Festival of Britain. Dedicated staff and volunteers are working – here at the Archive Studio – to make available online, the 100 cubic metres of documents, oral histories, programmes, photographs, posters, artworks and objects found in the archive.

These are providing content for new and exciting events here at Southbank, both now and in the future. And I applaud their work.

So what's next?

Archives Unlocked is inspiring and it is ambitious. Unlocking the potential of our archives sector will require focus on building digital capacity, strengthening resilience and demonstrating impact. But there is an appetite for change. The National Archives, as sector lead, will work in partnership with archives and stakeholders across and beyond the sector, to realise the ambitions of this Archives Unlocked scheme.

Together with £750,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund, and funding from The National Archives, a total of £1 million pounds will be used to help train a

new generation of digital archivists and to encourage new and innovative practice.

And as we digitise our collections, who knows what neglected treasures will be rediscovered?

Ultimately, we will unlock the full potential of our amazing, rich and diverse archives and the records they preserve and protect.

We will make it easier for people to explore and learn and be inspired.

We look forward to working with you all here today, to make it happen.

Thank you.