

UK-Kenya Economic Development Forum: New UK funding for prosperity

The UK and Kenya held the second Economic Development Forum where KES 131 million of new British funding was announced to increase trade and investment opportunities.

The virtual Forum – co-chaired by UK Minister for Africa, James Duddridge and Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for Trade, Betty Maina – saw the UK announce new funding to boost investment into Kenya, including:

- KES 6 million to catalyse early stage investment, or ‘angel investment’, into Kenyan start-ups to help budding entrepreneurs navigate from business ideas through to scalable and investable businesses. Applications for the angel-investing programme opens next week
- funding of KES 125 million to attract investment and grow key sectors, such as agro-processing and pharmaceuticals, safeguarding Kenyan jobs and livelihoods

The Forum also noted significant UK support to Kenya’s post-COVID-19 economic response with KES 225 million to:

- help to keep supply chains operating and trade flowing
- support businesses to open up in a COVID-19 safe way
- help retain investment in Kenya

British High Commissioner to Kenya, Jane Marriott, said:

Today’s Forum is helping our countries trade more, invest more and create more jobs. It builds on the initialling of the UK-Kenya trade agreement earlier this month, which will ensure trade continuity between our countries. I am delighted to see so much momentum to strengthen our economic partnership, and today’s announcement of new UK support for entrepreneurs and businesses shows our deep commitment to building our mutual prosperity.

The UK has been working with Kenya to increase its attractiveness for international investment. UK companies are already major investors and employers in Kenya, and more UK companies want to invest in Kenya. At the Forum, both governments discussed how they could cooperate to unlock significant investments from UK companies to help boost Kenya’s growth.

The UK is also providing support to the landmark Nairobi Railway City development, as agreed between Prime Minister Johnson and President Kenyatta.

A consortium of UK firms is delivering world-class advice on the technical and commercial aspects of the development. The longer-term benefits of this project are likely to include: increased transport capacity that will help Nairobi sustain future growth; stimulated inward investment that will create new jobs; and opportunities to pursue green solutions for city development.

Both Ministers also noted remarkable progress on the trade deal negotiations between the UK and Kenya and which was initialled on 3 November, 2020.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Uhuru Kenyatta agreed a five-year Strategic Partnership, which includes Mutual Prosperity between the UK and Kenya on 21 January 2020, following the UK-Africa Investment Summit.

Notes to editors

The UK-Kenya Trade Agreement aims to:

- provide the strongest possible platform for the United Kingdom, Kenya and, ultimately, the whole East African Community, to expand our trade relationship in future
- promote increased trade and investment by putting our trading relationship on a more equitable, mature and business-like footing, supporting sustainable growth and poverty reduction
- act as a catalyst to deepen our mutual prosperity alongside the other areas of cooperation in the UK-Kenya Strategic Partnership that includes security and stability, sustainable development, climate change and people-to-people pillars
- provide a major boost for the businesses and investors in Kenya and the UK and deliver a much-needed stimulus for economic development to counter the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Economic Development Forum is the delivery mechanism for the Mutual Prosperity commitments, and today's Forum agreed the Implementation Plan to drive forward progress and build stronger trade and investment links between both countries. Both Governments confirmed their commitment to biannual follow-up meetings to review progress on the Strategic Partnership commitments, and continue to discuss how to boost economic growth and job creation.