

Statement on Somaliland's democratisation process

World news story

Somaliland international partners visited Hargeisa to discuss the next steps and timelines for Somaliland's elections.



UK Government

Following the successful Somaliland combined local and parliamentary elections last year, international partners supporting Somaliland's democratisation process visited Hargeisa from 24 to 27 January to discuss the next steps and timelines for Somaliland's elections and democratisation with stakeholders.

We encourage Somaliland's political leaders to clarify the way forward for the upcoming elections, due this year, through an inclusive dialogue process, by agreeing on a joint electoral roadmap in line with Somaliland's laws and constitution and ensuring that the electoral processes reflect Somaliland's internal diversity in terms of inclusion of women, youth and minorities.

It is important that the preparations, led by the National Electoral Commission, on voter registration start now so that they can be completed prior to upcoming election dates. As long-term partners in Somaliland's democratisation process, we are looking forward to continuing our support and

engagement during these next important milestones.

This statement is on behalf of the following partners:

- European Union
- Denmark
- Finland
- Germany
- Norway
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

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[Dstl careers: Jessica, weapons systems effects analyst](#)

Jessica works in the Weapons Systems Group (WSG) at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). WSG helps the Ministry of Defence (MOD) by assessing, understanding and demonstrating new technologies and how systems can be integrated across the different parts of the armed forces.

I knew growing up I wanted to be involved in Defence. It swayed from RAF pilot to Royal Engineer to wanting to work in Aerospace with Rolls Royce and finally I landed on analyst. I finally realised that no matter how keen I was for a career in defence I couldn't leave behind my true love – a love for maths and the nitty gritty-ness of it all. I studied maths at the University of Liverpool, taking on a combined Masters course before taking a small side step in to teaching. I graduated in 2019 with an MMath and applied to Dstl. I've not once looked back.

Since joining Dstl in August 2019 I have not only thoroughly enjoyed my work in my primary role within the Weapons Systems Effects (WSE) team where I model future potential radiofrequency (RF) weapons and their effects, but I have also taken on multiple other responsibilities and roles, which contribute both to my own personal development and to the defence-critical work that Dstl undertakes. I have been acting as an Employee Engagement Champion for the past couple of years, collaborating with management to promote a better working life for my colleagues within the group. I also have a role engaging with industry partners and customers on developing novel and emerging technology, and encouraging others to be creative and innovative.

It might sound like I've bitten off more than I can chew but that's one of the great things about Dstl. I'm afforded the time to pursue several roles,

each requiring a varied skill set allowing me to develop in all areas rather than just sticking to my very technical primary role! I have loved being able to sit in key stakeholder meetings, talking technical and sharing my knowledge and expertise, then jumping straight to helping a colleague with a problem or brokering better communications within the group, then leading an innovation workshop on collaborative weapons or how we can take existing gaming tech and incorporate it in to the weapons domain.

It's comforting knowing that my team and management support me in all of my pursuits, and I'm listened to in terms of my workload. Dstl fosters a great community of sharing work and knowledge, and I've never felt uncomfortable asking for help.

I tend to stick to the usual 9-5 working life, but I have definitely taken advantage of Dstl's flexible working pattern. I think it's ever more important that an organisation allows its employees the ability to take time when time is needed. For example, during the summer months I sometimes switch to working longer days Mon-Thurs to enjoy a 3 day weekend! Ultimately, I can work in a way that suits me which does wonders for my work-life balance, mind-set and productivity.

Working at Dstl is a wonderful thing for a plethora of reasons, but what I appreciate most is how encouraging my colleagues are, and that also applies to Dstl as a whole. In the time I've been here I've been encouraged to pursue my Chartership in Maths (CMath) with the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, and I've been asked to publish pieces of my work to scientific journals. It doesn't stop at professional recognition though. Dstl is a place where learning is a fantastic thing. I've been allowed to learn, to ask questions, to put forward my ideas and be a part of the conversation, and not once have I felt embarrassed or under pressure. A working environment like this is second to none.

No two days look the same at Dstl, so it's difficult to pin point the most exciting piece of work, but what I really enjoy most is knowing what I do makes a difference to the safety and security of our country.

I was initially apprehensive about joining the working world, but Dstl has been a great start to my career. I've already gotten to do loads of cool stuff (including a 2-month trip to California), with even more on the horizon. I'd highly recommend Dstl if you're looking for a place where you'll have the freedom for self-development, feel valued and contribute to the bigger picture.

[Tech IPOs raised a record £6.6 billion](#)

in 2021, double 2020 figures

- Tech IPOs in the UK raised £6.6 billion, more than double 2020's figures (£3.1 billion)
- A total of 37 tech and consumer internet companies went public last year, including fintech Wise, consumer review site Trustpilot and online marketplace Auction Technology Group
- London also proved its international competitiveness by attracting companies from Europe (TrustPilot), Canada (AlphawaveIP) and the US (Devolver Digital)

Following a year of bumper public debuts by tech companies, analysis shows that tech IPOs in the UK raised £6.6 billion, more than double 2020's figures of £3.1 billion, according to data from the London Stock Exchange (LSE). With 126 companies listing in the UK in 2021, tech companies made up 29% of listings on the LSE, indicating the UK tech industry's increasing maturity and driving much of the London market's success.

The analysis is revealed as Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Digital Minister Chris Philp and Economic Secretary to the Treasury John Glen speak with founders and leaders from leading high-growth tech companies from No 10 Downing Street today, including Quantexa, Bought by Many, Oxford Nanopore and OakNorth. They are expected to discuss the strengths of the UK tech ecosystem and highlight how the implementation of reforms recommended by Lord Hill in his recent UK Listings Review will make London an even more attractive destination for tech.

Tech leading the way

Landmark IPOs of UK-headquartered businesses in 2021 included Deliveroo, Moonpig and Trustpilot. The 37 tech IPOs compare with just eight in 2020. London also proved its international competitiveness by attracting companies from Denmark (Trustpilot), Canada (AlphawaveIP) and the US (Devolver Digital)

Fintech has been a leading area of UK tech over the past five years, with the country home to almost 4,000 fintech companies according to Dealroom, which have disrupted traditional financial services. It follows then that this would be one of the dominant categories of tech companies making public debuts in 2021, with a total of seven fintech companies listing including LendInvest, PensionBee and Wise.

Ecommerce companies were another dominant category, illustrating the increasing trend towards online shopping which accelerated sharply during the pandemic. A total of 10 ecommerce companies listed in London in 2021. This included consumer commerce companies such as Moonpig, Made.com and InTheStyle, as well as B2B companies including CM0stores.com which serves construction businesses.

Growth in appetite to list

The publication of Lord Hill's UK Listings Review in March 2021 was a turning point in encouraging innovative and tech-led companies to choose London. It demonstrated the UK Government wants the UK Capital Markets to be the global destination for innovative companies to fund themselves. Proposals to reform dual class share structures, free float requirements and other elements of importance to founder-led businesses were picked up and taken forward by government and the Financial Conduct Authority at pace, followed by a surge in tech listings seen last year.

The listing rule reforms also saw the evolution of the UK's SPAC (special purpose acquisition company) regime to better meet the needs of those seeking capital, with investment firm Hambro Perks announcing in November that it was launching London's first SPAC under the new rules.

Following the success of the UK's tech sector in recent years, 2022 now has the potential to be another record-breaking year, with the maturity of the UK tech sector indicating a strong pipeline of companies ready to come to market. According to the latest data by Dealroom, the UK is now home to 116 unicorns – tech companies that are worth \$1 billion or more in value – and 213 futurecorns – high growth tech companies that are predicted to reach the coveted \$1 billion mark in the future, indicating a strong pipeline of listings to come.

Digital Minister Chris Philp said:

2021 was a brilliant year for UK tech and it's great to see just how many companies have grown from startup to scale-up, to finally becoming publicly-listed businesses on the London markets.

Global investors hold London's capital markets in high esteem and as we implement clear governance around innovative fast-growth companies, including rules around AI and data, we believe even more companies will appreciate the advantages that listing in London can give them."

Economic Secretary to the Treasury John Glen said:

Our markets are some of the world's most international and diverse, and provide companies of all sizes with deep, mobile pools of liquid capital to fund and grow their businesses.

The Government is working with firms, the regulators and the stock market to make the UK even more attractive for companies to list, including by reforming our listings regime following Lord Hill's independent review, alongside broader capital markets reforms.

This focus is why 2021 was such a great year for IPOs in the UK, especially in the tech and financial services sectors. The work

does not stop here and we will continue to support the UK's cutting-edge tech sector by making our markets even more attractive.

Julia Hoggett, CEO of London Stock Exchange plc, said:

The UK is home to entrepreneurs, innovators and disruptors across a range of sectors, with some particularly remarkable success stories for companies in the technology sector. Last year demonstrated that the London Stock Exchange is increasingly becoming one of the top destinations for these companies and their founders to finance their visions and thrive. We now have an opportunity to build on this momentum, supported by the ambitions of the UK Government, and for the UK Capital Markets to play a leading role driving growth in the global tech sector and supporting the UK economy for many years to come.

Romi Savova, CEO at PensionBee, said:

We founded PensionBee with the vision to simplify pensions so that everyone can look forward to a happy retirement. Raising capital has enabled us to continue growing and innovating our proposition, such as adding one-off and recurring 'Easy Bank Transfers' through open-banking technology and the ability to track pensions transfers in real-time. We're excited to continue our growth journey and make it easier for everyone to save for their retirement.

Yoram Wijngaarde, founder and CEO at Dealroom, said:

The road for tech startups from pre-seed to IPO and beyond has become a lot shorter and that is testament to the quality and breadth of the UK tech industry. The maturing ecosystem has led to an increase in investor confidence which is likely to grow further over the next few years as more scale-ups get ready for the next step.

ENDS

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Nuclear Waste Services Launches

Today's launch of Nuclear Waste Services brings together into one organisation the long-established expertise of site operator Low Level Waste Repository Limited, Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) developer Radioactive Waste Management Limited and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) group's Integrated Waste Management Programme.

This business will maintain its current commitments to the Low Level Waste Repository and to the GDF programme and the communities involved with both. It also creates a business with new capability to manage UK nuclear waste safely and securely for generations to come. Nuclear Waste Services will build on work delivered over many decades, while adding more essential services for customers in the nuclear energy, defence, industrial, medical, and research sectors.

Nuclear Waste Services will be led by Chief Executive Officer Corhyn Parr, formerly NDA's Director of Integrated Waste, and Board Chair [Adrienne Kelbie](#).

Corhyn Parr said:

Our new organisation brings together a huge amount of expertise and capability in dealing with radioactive waste across the UK. It also maintains in full the commitments made to the GDF programme, to the Low Level Waste Repository, and to the communities we operate in.

Working together, our focus is to secure a safer future for us all, with an enhanced service to waste producers that supports the most appropriate and joined-up approach to waste management in the UK. By working more closely together we can enable better decision-making and help identify opportunities that can deliver wider benefits like earlier risk reduction at decommissioning sites or greater efficiency and lower costs to the taxpayer.

NDA announced its decision to create the new business at the start of 2021, as part of wider moves to simplify structures across the group and enhance capabilities. NDA is responsible for the management, decommissioning and clean-up of 17 nuclear sites across the country. Nuclear Waste Services will oversee the group's integrated waste programme.

NDA group Chief Executive Officer David Peattie added:

A single waste division enables us to grow capability and maintain our current commitments, to simplify how we operate and deliver greater value for the taxpayer. The creation of Nuclear Waste Services also underlines our One NDA approach to working more collaboratively and efficiently to clean up the UK's earliest civil nuclear sites.

The Nuclear Waste Services portfolio includes:

- Major Capital Programmes – Developing a permanent disposal capability for higher-activity UK radioactive wastes in a GDF; one of the largest environmental protection and infrastructure programmes in the UK. The search for a suitable site for a GDF is a partnership approach, based on consent from a willing community.
- Waste Operations – Ensuring the continued safe, compliant, and effective management of the Low Level Waste Repository Site.
- Waste Services – Working with customers to provide the services and solutions to address their challenges, as well as managing contracts and relationships across the waste cycle.
- Integrated Waste Management Programme – Developing new opportunities and capabilities to realise the benefits of working at scale across the NDA group. To ensure waste is managed in a more integrated way, from waste generation to disposal, removing barriers and promoting value-based decision making.

“Nuclear Waste Services” is a trading name of LLW Repository Ltd and Radioactive Waste Management Ltd.

See our corporate brochure [Introducing Nuclear Waste Services](#) for more information.

[Introducing Nuclear Waste Services](#)

Wyre Forest Nature Reserve is largest native woodland in England

Wyre Forest has today become the largest woodland National Nature Reserve (NNR) in England. NNRs are designated by Natural England and are rare, precious areas which protect some of our country’s most important places for wildlife and geology.

The Wyre Forest reserve, which dates back to at least the year 900, has been extended by almost 900 hectares so that it now spreads over 1,455 hectares. This equivalent to 1700 football pitches. The forest, which straddles the Worcestershire and Shropshire border is managed by Natural England and Forestry England and includes Worcestershire Wildlife Trust land.

The nation's forests play a vital role in tackling climate change and biodiversity loss as well as providing a source of sustainable, home-grown timber; carbon capture and places for people to enjoy. This extension recognises the importance of managing forests sustainably, so they have long-term, positive benefits for wildlife, people and the climate.

The Wyre Forest NNR features a diverse array of habitats from forest to open grassland meadows, old orchards and areas of scrub, to steep-sided valleys, created by geological faults. It is home to a vast array of wildlife including protected mammals, reptiles and birds. Its butterfly and moth populations are significant, with 58% of the UK's butterfly species recorded here.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:

This very significant expansion of the Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve marks another important step toward Nature recovery in England. These reserves protect some of the finest examples of our natural environment, and by expanding their size we not only protect more wildlife but also help different species cope as the effects of climate change take hold.

Wyre Forest is a mosaic of woodlands, ravines, grasslands and scrub, and it is exactly this kind of varied habitat that we must create more of if we are to improve the prospects for some of our most beautiful and interesting wild species, including butterflies such as the White Admiral and Wood White.

This is now England's largest native forest nature reserve, presenting a fine example of the kinds of woodlands we should strive to create more of into the future, not only catching carbon, but providing a variety of additional benefits. With Birmingham nearby, improved health and wellbeing for people will be one of those.

Kevin Stannard, Forest Management Director, Forestry England's West District, said:

Our nation's forests play a critical role in tackling the climate crisis and biodiversity loss that we are seeing globally. Resilient woodlands, well-adapted to the changing climate conditions we now expect, help us capture carbon, improve air quality, create beautiful places for wildlife to flourish and opportunities for people to connect with the natural world.

As the country's largest land manager, Forestry England is working to grow our future by carefully planning and expertly managing world-class forests for future generations. Becoming the largest woodland National Nature Reserve in England is a recognition of the unique features that make Wyre Forest so special and the vital role

this landscape plays in providing valuable habitats, a sustainable source of timber and a place for people to explore and enjoy.

Colin Raven, Director, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, said:

The Wyre Forest is home to amazing and rare wildlife, and we're delighted that the National Nature Reserve is being expanded. As well as the wonders of wildflowers, fungi, reptiles and mammals, there are a number of bird species that are very sensitive to disturbance so having more protected land should help to give them a real boost. Wildlife doesn't recognise borders, so we need more, bigger, better, and connected landscapes for nature.

Nature's recovery isn't just about protected areas; we need more nature everywhere if we are to halt its decline. This expansion is a great start in helping to reach our target of 30% of land managed for the benefit of nature by 2030 and we hope that it will inspire residents throughout the Wyre Forest and beyond to think about how they can also provide space for nature.

Wyre Forest is a rare example of an ecologically diverse woodland situated close to a large population centre with Birmingham 20 miles from the site. The visitor centre welcomes around 350,000 people each year, and gives people access to explore the wider forest. Visitor numbers have risen during the COVID-19 pandemic, as more people have recognised that getting outside and exploring local green spaces can have great benefits on their health and wellbeing.