

Effective use of technology to improve peacekeeping

Mr President, thank you for convening today's debate. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks on this subject.

Without peacekeepers there is no peacekeeping. They are our most valuable asset for protecting civilians, championing the rule of law and ultimately paving the way to a durable peace.

Yet, sadly, peacekeepers continue to pay the ultimate price as they conduct their vital work implementing the mandates we set. So far this year, 83 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the service of the UN. It is fitting that this morning we pay tribute to their service.

We must work collectively to ensure peacekeepers' safety and security – both for their protection and so that they are better empowered to deliver their mandates.

Technology and innovation, supported by thorough training, can enhance the safety and security of all UN personnel.

That is why the UK is proud to partner with India to support initiatives such as 'Unite Aware.' This is a technology platform which improves peacekeepers' situational awareness and information analysis – vital elements in keeping them safe.

Technology such as this, alongside developments in peacekeeping intelligence, helps protect our peacekeepers and support their ability to protect civilians. It contributes to the overall effectiveness of each mission. It provides real operational benefit.

We have seen this on the ground through the UK deployment to MINUSMA. UK troops have gathered intelligence to support mission planning, improve overall mission performance. Recently, UK personnel lead a 'Cordon and Search' operation to seize weapons and equipment hidden by terrorists threatening local communities. A first for MINUSMA for some time.

But of course technology is only one part of the challenge of mitigating the risks to peacekeepers. We must also ensure that all peacekeepers are provided training in basic military skills and skills specific to the task. Maintaining and continually improving the knowledge and skills of peacekeepers will have an invaluable impact on casualty reduction.

Comprehensive and mission-specific training is key to understanding and tackling threats. Peacekeepers that have the right skills and training, and the appropriate equipment, are more able to effectively defend themselves against attack.

Through our partnerships with other countries that contribute personnel, the

UK provides training in a range of vital areas. This includes counter-IED training, peacekeeping intelligence and public order management.

Mr President, I would also like to highlight the benefits of technology for the environment, including within UN operations.

Climate change remains the biggest collective challenge of our generation. To protect the generations of the future, we must look at all options to curb our emissions.

In 2020, UN peace operations accounted for 42 per cent of the UN system's carbon footprint. As we have already heard today, we must do better if we are to meet the Secretary-General's Climate Action Plan targets. That starts with UN action.

For example, the overwhelming majority of MINUSMA's energy requirements are met through diesel generators. The mission anticipated using 55.8 million litres of fuel last financial year. That's a 13% increase on the year before.

It is time to look at using alternative renewable energy sources, such as solar. The fact that Mali, and many of the sub-Saharan African countries with large UN missions, are already feeling the impact of climate change should give an even greater sense of urgency.

Mr President, there is an opportunity here, through the effective use of technology, to improve peacekeeping, improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, and improve the health of our planet. We should seize it together.

Thank you.

[Drive to improve motorway journeys for people with disabilities across the North](#)

With around five per cent of the driving population classed as having a disability, Highways England has partnered with AccessAble, the UK's leading provider of detailed accessibility information, to help motorists plan where to stop for a break at any one of the 114 motorway service areas across England, including 34 services across the North.

Hull-based disability advocate and 'The Deaf Traveller' blogger, Ed Rex visited the Extra services at Leeds Skelton Lake on junction 45 of the M1 to test out the new guides.

Ed is profoundly deaf in both ears and relies on a hearing aid, cochlear implant and lipreading to communicate. Following his visit to the Yorkshire services, Ed emphasised that it's the little things that can make a huge difference for people travelling with hidden disabilities.

Ed said:

Being able to access the services they need is a big worry for Deaf people or people who have hearing loss. Sometimes it's just about making sure that the accessibility information is there so that people know, when they travel, that it won't be stressful, and they'll feel empowered to do it on their own and be independent.

One of the features of Highways England's access guides for motorway services is information about assistive listening, which is really helpful for people who are Deaf or have hearing loss, giving them confidence that support is there if they need it.

The new guides, available online or via the free AccessAble app, are 100 per cent facts, figures, and photographs to help motorists plan their visit to the services. They cover key areas including parking, toilets, petrol stations, shops, and restaurants, with detailed information on everything from staff training and hearing loops, to walking distances and designated places of safety.

In addition, Highways England and AccessAble have worked together to create virtual route guides for the services. This new type of guide, which uses 360-degree imagery, will enable visitors to 'virtually' explore routes to key facilities like accessible toilets and Changing Places, so they can find out exactly what to expect when they arrive.

Highways England Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Julian Horsler, said:

We're committed to ensuring our customers with disabilities can travel safely on our roads. That's why we're introducing new services to break down barriers and help people reliably plan and feel confident about their journeys.

Whatever the nature of your disability, the access guides for motorway service areas take the guesswork out of journey planning, giving you the information you need about facilities along your route.

A spokesperson from Extra concluded:

Accessibility is not only an issue that applies to people with disabilities, but also an issue that affects everybody. An

inclusive world is a better world. As a result, we want to be a part of that. Working with AccessAble and Highways England gives us that opportunity.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[ACCEA review of nominating bodies and specialist societies](#)

News story

Complete a short survey to help us set future criteria for accredited national nominating bodies and specialist societies. The survey closes on 27 September 2021.



As part of our work on reforming the National Clinical Excellence Awards scheme, the Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA) is reviewing the list of accredited national nominating bodies and specialist societies.

These organisations represent consultants across all specialities and sub-specialities. Accreditation from ACCEA means they are given the opportunity to rank applicants for awards and provide citations in support of those they deem to be deserving.

We have developed a short survey to assist us in setting future criteria for nominating bodies and specialist societies. We'd like to hear from:

- organisations previously accredited
- those wishing to be considered for accreditation in future

The survey will be open until 27 September. We only require one response per organisation.

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[Environment Agency delivers warning to illegal anglers with new enforcement campaign](#)

Press release

A month-long enforcement campaign will crack down on illegal fishing and build on efforts to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour on river banks.



The Environment Agency has launched a month-long enforcement campaign to crack down on illegal fishing and build on efforts to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour on river banks.

A warning has been issued to illegal anglers as the Environment Agency undertakes a month of patrols to target poachers and those fishing without a licence.

Operation LUNGFISH is underway to protect fisheries from harmful activity including theft and fishing with illegal traps. Enforcement officers from the Environment Agency can be joined by the Angling Trust, Voluntary Bailiffs and local police officers to conduct patrols around rivers, lakes and ponds.

Launched on 23rd July, Operation LUNGFISH has carried out a range of action around the country in its first two weeks:

- In the West Midlands illegal crayfish traps have been seized.
- In the South East an EA patrol team were joined by the Sussex Rural Police crime team and the Voluntary Bailiff Service (VBS) to conduct an enforcement blitz, as they visited over 40 venues to check 650 licences and issued 64 offence reports
- In the North East 214 licences were checked, 21 anglers reported for fishing offences – with another five people reported for offences across Durham, Northumberland, Washington and South Tyneside
- Patrols in Lincolnshire, conducted with the East Midlands Wildlife Crime Group and The Angling Trust, checked 118 licences with sixteen notices being served for fishing offences

Heidi Stone, Environment Agency Fisheries Partnerships Manager:

We encourage everyone to give fishing a go this summer and throughout this month, existing fishing licence holders can take a friend fishing by applying for a free day licence.

As law abiding anglers know, illegal fishing and anti-social behaviour on our banks is not only harmful to fish populations, but can also have a detrimental effect on the environment and surrounding wildlife.

We are working closely with our partners on Operation LUNGFISH to ensure that fishing licence income is used to protect fisheries and make angling a great experience for all.

Operation LUNGFISH runs alongside two key activities in the angling calendar, [National Fishing Month](#) (24th July to 30th August) and [Take a Friend Fishing 2021](#) (25th July to 5th September). These events encourage people to visit the riverbank and give fishing a go, with the month of action targeting those abusing the rules that protect England's fisheries.

To purchase or re-new your fishing licence please visit: [Buy a rod fishing licence – GOV.UK](#)

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[Environment Agency asks anglers to be](#)

vigilant of Red Skin Disease in salmon

The Environment Agency (EA) is encouraging anglers to report sightings of salmon exhibiting symptoms of Red Skin Disease (RSD), after fish were seen with signs of the condition in Devon and Cornwall and other parts of England and Wales.

The disease, which appears as a spotted red rash on wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout, causes haemorrhaging on the underbelly of the fish.

The cause and impact of this condition is currently unknown, and despite being termed Red Skin Disease, a pathogen has yet to be linked to the changes seen. Left unchecked, the condition could have negative effects on wild stocks which are already in decline.

The EA is therefore encouraging anglers to immediately report sightings of unusual marks to the incident helpline on 0800 80 70 60.

Simon Toms, National Fisheries Management Team Leader at the Environment Agency, said:

We have received reports of a small number of fish caught by anglers showing changes consistent with red skin disease, an issue which was previously observed in 2018.

Contacting the incident hotline allows us to respond promptly to disease incidents, monitor reports and limit harm to fish species. This information also helps our partners research the condition and prevent further spread.

I'd like to remind anglers of the importance of practicing good biosecurity, and adhering to the 'clean, check, dry' guidance before moving to other waters when fishing for salmon this season.

Red Skin Disease was first reported in rivers draining into the Baltic Sea and Northern Atlantic in 2018. Since then, there have been a number of reports of wild salmon with RSD in rivers across the UK.

The EA is working with partners across Europe, including its own National Fisheries Laboratory, Cefas, Marine Scotland and Natural Resources Wales, to research and better understand this condition. Officers regularly monitor for signs of disease in all major salmon & trout rivers.

The National Fisheries Laboratory, alongside partner organisations and government bodies, investigates fish mortalities and researches emerging infections to protect our fisheries. All the work at this specialist facility is financed by income from the sale of rod licences.

Anglers who see diseased or distressed fish are asked to take photographs of

unusual marks if safe to do so and contact the EA helpline immediately. Mild red patches on healthy salmon have long been observed but are not associated with ill-health.

Anglers should not remove or handle a fish in distress. There are no known issues for human health as a consequence of this disease.