

Strengthening good governance and combatting corruption: UK statement

Chair,

First can I offer my thanks for the opportunity to have this discussion today.

Corruption is the scourge of all, and a serious inhibitor to economic growth but impacts most heavily on the poorest nations. However, good governance and effective efforts to combat corruption can lift the most disadvantaged from poverty and help States to realise their economic potential.

The OSCE recognises that good governance is fundamental to political stability and security. It leads to improved economic benefits and accelerates economic transitions, including by creating attractive business environments. Conversely, corruption increases the cost of doing business by up to 10% on average according to the World Economic Forum.

As the United Kingdom develops our position as an independent trading nation, and so that businesses can compete fairly, we have included new, additional wording covering anti-corruption in trade agreements with Asian Partners Japan and Australia. The UK-Japan agreement, for example, reinforces anti-corruption and anti-bribery obligations and affirms adherence to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Convention on Combating Bribery and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

The UK is taking every opportunity to eradicate corruption and corrupt behaviour including through our G7 Presidency. At the G7 summit last month the members of the G7, along with Korea, Australia and others, committed in the [Leaders Open Societies Statement](#) to prevent and tackle corruption and illicit financial flows and promote integrity, transparency and accountability.

But it is not just about faceless companies or shady organisations. States can also take action against corrupt individuals. In April the UK launched a [new Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime](#), designating individuals or organisations for a wide range of involvement in corruption, including laundering, facilitating, profiting financially or otherwise benefiting. The regime also allows for sanctions on enablers as well as corrupt actors themselves. And we announced a second tranche of designations earlier today.

The UK remains committed to supporting our Asian Partners in their work to combat corruption. In Afghanistan, we have been a strong supporter of the Afghan Government's efforts to combat corruption, for example through building the capacity of the judiciary and law enforcement. And in Thailand, through the UNODC, we have been able to train 1,300 public officials on the importance of financial investigations relating to wildlife and forest crime.

Chair,

In order to enhance security and stability, the OSCE works on promoting international co-operation on economic issues, strengthening good governance and assisting participating States in combating corruption. Engagement with the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-Operation is a manifestation of the inter-linkage between European security and global security. Through ongoing dialogue and joint activities with our Asian Partners, the OSCE can be a forum for sharing expertise and can provide insights into relevant developments outside the OSCE region. We welcome that cooperation and remain committed to it.

Thank you.

[PM call with Chancellor Merkel: 22 July 2021](#)

Press release

The Prime Minister spoke with German Chancellor Angela Merkel this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke with German Chancellor Angela Merkel this afternoon.

He began by expressing his condolences for the terrible loss of life in the recent floods in Germany. The leaders agreed on the importance of tackling climate change to prevent these kinds of extreme weather events and the devastation they cause.

On the Northern Ireland Protocol, the Prime Minister said that the disruption being caused to people and businesses in Northern Ireland by the current operation of the Protocol was not sustainable.

He explained that the Protocol was failing to deliver on many of its intended objectives: to minimise disruption to everyday lives, to respect Northern

Ireland's integral place in the UK's internal market, and to preserve the delicate balance in the (Belfast) Good Friday Agreement in all its dimensions.

The Prime Minister underlined that solutions could not be found through the existing mechanisms of the Protocol and that was why we had set out proposals for significant changes to it. He urged the Chancellor and the EU collectively to engage in a constructive and detailed discussion on the UK's proposals.

Both leaders agreed to remain in touch.

Published 22 July 2021

[Welcome for reports which set out ways to improve government](#)

The proposals support the improvements outlined in the government's own Declaration on Government Reform.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, has welcomed the publication of two independent reports, which set out innovative ideas to help improve the way Government works.

Last year, the Cabinet Office asked former Minister, Lord Maude, to carry out a short review of the Government functions and Cabinet Office spending controls. At the same time, the Cabinet Office and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport invited members of the Digital Economy Council to look at the government's delivery of digital services.

Both reports have now been published, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has welcomed their innovative thinking and ideas.

He said:

I want to thank Lord Maude and the members of the Digital Economy Council for their very thoughtful and detailed investigations into the work of the Cabinet Office and the wider government.

Both reports bring up some key issues which we must address, such as improving civil service recruitment to make sure the people we employ better reflect the people we serve, tackling our history of outdated IT systems and transforming the way we use data across government.

Much of this work is already underway, but there is more to do and no time to waste.

Among the recommendations in Lord Maude's report are suggestions for ways to improve civil service recruitment principles, proposals for tougher controls of major government projects and the development of improved training standards for civil servants.

Both the Maude report and the Organising for Digital Delivery report also highlight the need to tackle legacy IT systems across government and make better use of the data government holds to improve services.

The publication of the two reports follows the launch of the government's own Declaration on Government Reform, which was published in June.

The Government Reform plan includes measures to help ensure the country builds back better from COVID-19, by following policies such as investing in new training for civil servants and ministers to strengthen their digital skills, making the civil service more open to external applicants, moving 22,000 civil service roles out of London by 2030 and improving the delivery of major projects across government.

The Declaration on Government Reform can be read [here](#).

Government to fund initial compensation package for vindicated postmasters

- Postmasters who have had their Horizon-related convictions overturned to be offered an interim compensation payment of up to £100,000 each
- government will ensure affected individuals aren't left out of pocket as the Post Office works with postmasters towards their final settlement

The government is to fund interim compensation of up to £100,000 for each postmaster who has had their Horizon-related conviction overturned.

The measure, announced to Parliament today, will ensure that affected individuals are not left out of pocket as they and the Post Office work toward full settlements for the immense hardship postmasters have faced.

The Post Office is contacting postmasters and will aim to make an offer for an interim payment within 28 days of receiving an application from those whose overturned convictions relied on Horizon evidence. If and when further such convictions are quashed, those postmasters will also be eligible for the payments.

Postal Affairs Minister Paul Scully said:

The suffering and distress these postmasters and their families have gone through cannot be overstated.

While nothing will make up for the years of pain they faced after this appalling injustice, I hope this initial step provides a measure of comfort.

The Post Office has started to turn a corner in terms of dealing with its past mistakes – and this government will support them in doing so wherever possible.

The Post Office will continue to work quickly towards final settlements to ensure these postmasters are fairly compensated for the suffering and distress they have gone through.

The government's support comes in addition to the financial backing it is providing for the Historical Shortfall Scheme. This scheme was established by the Post Office to compensate postmasters who had to cover shortfalls in their branch's accounts caused by the Horizon IT system, but were not prosecuted.

The government will continue to provide strong oversight of the Post Office's ongoing work to deliver full compensation to postmasters.

For final compensation, the Post Office is proposing Alternative Dispute Resolution arrangements which aim to facilitate the swift quantification and resolution of compensation claims. However, interim payments announced today do not prevent people from bringing civil claims through the courts.

The Horizon accounting system, installed across Post Office branches from the early 2000s, recorded shortfalls in cash in branches.

These shortfalls were treated by the Post Office as caused by postmasters, and this led to dismissals, recovery of losses by Post Office Ltd and, in some cases, criminal prosecutions. The Court of Appeal and Crown Court have since quashed numerous convictions.

In May, the Postal Affairs Minister [announced that government would put the independent inquiry into the Horizon dispute on a statutory footing](#). The Inquiry will establish exactly what went wrong at the Post Office and ensure something like this cannot happen again.

The Post Office is contacting relevant postmasters through their legal representatives.

eAlert: 15 July 2021 – England Woodland Creation Offer series

We use some essential cookies to make this website work.

We'd like to set additional cookies to understand how you use GOV.UK, remember your settings and improve government services.

We also use cookies set by other sites to help us deliver content from their services.