

Clear steps needed to maintain momentum towards elections in Libya

I'd like to thank Special Envoy Kubiš and Ambassador Tirumurti for their reports and their work. As we've heard from other colleagues, this is a critical moment for Libya. There is now a pathway to national elections in December and a prospect of longer-term stability. A month ago this Council unanimously adopted resolution 2570, which sets out the next steps in four key areas:

First, the relevant Libyan authorities, including Libya's House of Representatives need to clarify the constitutional basis and any necessary legislation by 1 July in order to allow election preparations to go ahead. We urge the House of Representatives to consider the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum's proposals, and to play its part in the process. We note that the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum may also take steps to facilitate elections, if necessary.

Second, delivering the successful and inclusive elections that Libyans deserve requires more than just legislation: so the UK urges the interim Government of National Unity and all the Libyan actors to take the necessary steps to create a conducive environment, with support from UNSMIL. This includes measures to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of female candidates and voters. Progress on the unification of institutions, effective service delivery across the country, and the transparency of public finances will help build confidence between Libyan actors. Implementation of the Libyan ceasefire is an urgent priority, including opening the coastal road to connect East and West.

Third, the international community must play its part. Those undermining Libyan sovereignty and breaching the UN arms embargo must stop. All foreign forces and mercenaries must be withdrawn from Libya without delay. Their presence undermines the peace and stability of Libya and the wider region, as seen by recent events in Chad. We encourage the rapid deployment of the UN's forward team in support of the Libyan Ceasefire Monitoring Mechanism.

Finally, Mr President, resolution 2570 was clear that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law must be held accountable. The news of the discovery of further mass graves in Tarhuna, bringing the total to over 100, is shocking. The UK has imposed sanctions on the al-Kaniyat militia and its leaders for their role in these heinous acts. Libyans have had enough of impunity, interference and obstruction, and where necessary, we – the international community – must act.

To conclude, Mr President, Libya has made significant steps towards a sustainable, Libyan-led and Libyan-owned, political settlement. The next steps to maintain that momentum are clear. It is now up to Libya's leaders and to the international community to deliver.

Thank you, Mr President.

[First tax co-operation meetings under the International Agreement on Taxation and the Protection of Financial Interests between the UK and Spain regarding Gibraltar](#)

News story

The Joint Coordinating Committee and Liaison Body met on 20 May 2021 to discuss tax co-operation between the authorities of Spain and Gibraltar.



The first meetings of the Joint Coordinating Committee and the Liaison Body were held following the [International Agreement on Taxation and the Protection of Financial Interests between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Spain regarding Gibraltar](#).

A UK government spokesperson said:

The Liaison Body and the Joint Coordination Committee, established under Articles 4 and 5 respectively, of the International Agreement on Taxation and the Protection of Financial Interests between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Spain regarding Gibraltar met for the first time on 20 May 2021.

The atmosphere throughout the meeting was positive and constructive with a clear desire to move forward in a spirit of cooperation. The different areas under discussion included the exchange of

information covered in the Treaty and practicalities going forward.

This treaty facilitates enhanced tax co-operation between the tax authorities of Spain and Gibraltar and is in the interest of all parties. It demonstrates the shared commitment of the United Kingdom, Gibraltar and Spain, to ensure cooperation on matters of mutual interest in Gibraltar and the surrounding region.

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UK secures historic G7 commitments to tackle climate change and halt biodiversity loss by 2030

- G7 Environment and Climate ministers commit to protect land and ocean to bend the curve of biodiversity loss by 2030.
- They also commit to phase out new direct government support for international fossil fuels.
- Securing meaningful action from leading economies to tackle climate change is a priority for the UK's G7 presidency, ahead of COP26 in November.

The Climate and Environment Ministers of the G7, under UK leadership, have today (Friday 21 May) secured historic commitments which will put climate, biodiversity and the environment at the heart of worldwide COVID-19 recovery.

COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma and Defra Secretary of State George Eustice, convened the Ministers ahead of the G7 leaders' summit in June, including the guest countries of India, Australia, South Africa and South Korea.

All G7 members signed up to the global '30x30' initiative to conserve or protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and at least 30 per cent of the world's ocean by 2030, and committed to '30x30' nationally.

This year is already the first ever 'net zero G7', with all countries committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest, with deep emissions reduction targets in the 2020s.

Taking this further by supporting the transition to green energy overseas, the group also agreed to phase out government funding for fossil fuel projects internationally – following a leading commitment made by the UK in December.

As a first step the G7 countries will end all new finance for coal power by the end of 2021, matched by increased support for clean energy alternatives like solar and wind. It was also agreed to accelerate the transition away from unabated coal capacity and to an overwhelmingly decarbonised power system in the 2030s.

The G7 has agreed to increase the quantity of finance for climate action, including for nature, in order to meet the \$100bn per annum target to support developing countries.

In addition to this, the G7 have committed to champion a range of ambitious and effective global biodiversity targets, including the agreement of an ambitious and effective global biodiversity framework at CBD COP15 later this year.

Measures to tackle global deforestation were also secured, with the G7 committing to increase support for sustainable supply chains that decouple agricultural production from deforestation and forest degradation, including production stemming from illegal land conversion.

In this crucial year for global action on the environment and climate, the UK has placed tackling climate change and biodiversity loss at the centre of its G7 agenda.

Speaking after the event the Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

For the first time, the G7 has committed to halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity by 2030.

This is a major step forward before we host the G7 in Cornwall next month and is a sign of the dedication to accelerate action within the G7 – and beyond – to tackle the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

We have seen tremendous progress this week and it has been great to see countries working together to raise our ambition and lead by example, each playing our part.

COP26 President-Designate said:

We are the first net zero G7. Under the UK's Presidency, the G7 is showing great leadership in tackling climate change and making sure those who are worst affected by it are better protected.

As we recover from the pandemic we are focused on building back greener – creating jobs and prosperity, without harming the planet.

We know we need to consign coal to history and the G7 has taken a major step towards a decarbonised power system. We are acting abroad as we're doing at home by agreeing to phase out

international fossil fuel finance, starting with coal – another key milestone in this crucial year for climate action.

I look forward to continuing this work as we make progress ahead of COP26 in Glasgow later this year and keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

A link to the Communique is [available here](#)

COP President-Designate outlines progress made at G7 Climate and Environment Ministerial

I've been delighted to co-chair the G7 Climate and Environment Ministerial over the last two days, and I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for all G7 partners and guests countries who've contributed so much over the last couple of days,

This event, which is a major stepping stone before we host the leaders G7 in Cornwall next month, has been dedicated to accelerating action within the G7 to tackle the twin challenges of climate change, and biodiversity loss, and we have seen substantial progress this week, notably on one of my personal priorities: ending coal.

The G7 are united on the need to build back greener for the pandemic by putting climate, biodiversity and the environment at the heart of the worldwide COVID-19 recovery strategies and investments, and we are all committed to limiting global warming and keeping 1.5 degrees alive.

The IEA report that I commissioned delivered a stark reminder of our need for urgent action this week.

I am proud that we are the first net zero G7, and to deliver on this we have all agreed to accelerate the transition away from dirty coal capacity to an overwhelmingly decarbonized power system in the 2030s.

We're also committed to phasing out international fossil fuel finance, beginning with an end to all new direct government support for international coal power by the end of 2021. This commitment I believe sends a clear signal to the world that coal is on the way out.

On finance, the G7 has reaffirmed the goal to jointly mobilise \$100 billion annually through to 2025, agreeing to increase climate finance and funds directed towards projects protecting vulnerable people who are already feeling the effects of climate change.

And I'm encouraged by our shared commitment to deliver more finance to support developing countries, ahead of COP26. We will now of course hand the baton over to our finance ministers, and then leaders next month.

But without all nations, particularly the biggest emitters, we will not reduce emissions sufficiently to keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

We know there is more to be done to build on this progress ahead of COP26 in Glasgow later this year. And I'm sure that all of my G7 colleagues will join me in calling on all countries to follow suit.

This demonstrates what we can achieve when we come together, and I'd like to handover to the Environment Secretary, George Eustice.

[DE&S-led expertise set to revolutionise development of UK military robotics](#)

The Expeditionary Robotics Centre of Expertise (ERCoE) has been launched by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) in collaboration with the British Army.

The ERCoE will bring together robotics and autonomous systems experts from across defence, government, academia and industry and aligns with DE&S' strategy to deliver the edge through people, technology and innovation.

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Adopting a collaborative and agile-by-design approach ERCoE will operate from MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol and from the Army BattleLab in Dorset, an innovative technology project announced in August 2020.

The ERCoE will act as a focal point for current innovative projects, and also assess unexplored, high-risk but rapidly maturing technologies.

Projects to be investigated at the outset include Remote Platoon Vehicles, nano Unmanned Air Systems, autonomous resupply of forward troops and how defence forms Human Machine Teams.

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Open access to information and fresh ideas will ensure Defence can exploit the benefits this key disruptive technology could present, whilst also

facilitating the rapid growth of expertise in this area.

The centre sits under the Future Capability Group (FCG) at DE&S, the procurement arm of the Ministry of Defence. FCG has a direct line to market, ensuring ideas can be rapidly developed.

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FCG Head James Gavin said:

The CoE concept was borne out of the need and opportunity to bring together separate projects and people into single groupings to be more efficient and effective.

Being more effective means a razor-sharp focus on exploitation and operational Advantage as the goal.

Co-teaming between the Army and DE&S will put the customer at the heart of what we do, exploring and delivering iteratively under an 'Agile by Default' mindset. DE&S personnel will work alongside industry experts at the Army BattleLab within the Defence Innovation Centre, allowing new ideas and concepts to be quickly developed and put into practice.

The ERCoE has been jointly launched with Future Force Development in Army HQ and is aligned to their Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Strategy. The hub will initially focus on projects for the British Army, but there is optimism that as the group expands and matures, it will become a central hub of advice for expeditionary robotics across Defence.

Lt Col Iain Lamont, S01 Robotics and Autonomous Systems at the British Army, said:

The Army's Future Force Development team are delighted to be entering into a fast-paced and exciting new partnership with the ERCoE.

Driven by the Army's RAS Strategy, this new agile approach will enable the delivery of several exciting new developments and ensure game-changing technology enters into service as early as possible as we look to accelerate Army transformation.

The ERCoE launch is a pathfinder within the recently launched DE&S Strategy

2025 and will pave the way for future delivery teams to maximise advantage from this novel capability.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

For the latest news follows us on Twitter at @DefenceES

Caption for all photos: The ERCoE will continue to exploit existing projects such as Robotic Platoon Vehicles, as well as examining new and emergent technologies. (Pictures by Jack Eckersley, MOD Crown Copyright)