

Every reprisal diminishes our ability to deliver for the people we serve

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this cross-regional statement on behalf of United Kingdom and 74 other countries: The former Commission on Human Rights adopted its first resolution condemning reprisals against those who cooperate with the UN in 1990. Sadly, these acts of intimidation continue to this day.

Civil society and human rights defenders are crucial in supporting our work at the UN. They enrich our decision-making and ensure that the impact of our decisions at the UN matter.

We condemn any act of intimidation and reprisal, whether online or offline, against individuals and groups who cooperate, seek to cooperate, or have cooperated with the UN.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on this issue. We share his concerns on:

- The growing number and patterns of reprisals globally;
- The disproportionate impact on certain groups, including women human rights defenders and peacebuilders; and
- The continued attacks on journalists and media workers.

We urge States to take action. Key steps include prevention measures, awareness-raising, and ensuring accountability through robust investigations. States should inform all relevant actors, including the Secretary-General and the Human Rights Council, of all such incidents, whether perpetrated by State or non-State actors. We welcome the steps taken by States who have responded to acts of reprisals against persons and groups in their countries. We also welcome the work of Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ilze Brands Kehris, who is leading UN efforts on this issue. We believe that the ASG's mandate ensures a more systematised response to reprisals, and will help put an end to impunity. We urge all Member States to cooperate with Ms Kehris in fulfilling her mandate.

Madame Chair,

While States carry a duty to prevent and address reprisals, the UN itself must also prevent and respond to intimidation and reprisals, and ensure accountability when these acts occur. We urge all UN entities to strengthen their response to these incidents by taking proactive steps, including

submitting incidents of reprisals for the SG's annual report. We also welcome more frequent reporting on reprisals, including here in New York, to increase awareness and accountability.

Madame Chair,

In this time, when we all share a common threat from Covid-19, we need the perspective, support and critical challenge that civil society organisations and human rights defenders bring. We all need to ensure they feel safe, including in virtual meetings. When they cooperate with us, we are strengthened. And every reprisal diminishes our ability to deliver for the people we serve.

Welsh Secretary meets business leaders on EU transition

Press release

The meeting included representatives from organisations including CBI Wales and Federation of Small Business Wales to discuss upcoming changes to the way businesses interact with the EU



Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart has met key business organisations to discuss readiness for the end of the EU transition period.

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the end of the transition period at the end of December will mean new rules which will affect people, businesses and travel to and from the EU.

Regardless of whether a trade agreement with the EU is reached, from 1 January there will be changes to the way businesses import and export goods, the process for hiring people from the EU and the way services are provided in EU markets so the UK Government is urging businesses to prepare.

Last week's meeting, which took place on Thursday (15 October) included CBI Wales, South and North Wales chambers of commerce, Federation of Small Business Wales and the Institute of Directors.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

All businesses are currently operating in extremely challenging circumstances, but it is nevertheless vital that they prepare immediately for our new relationship with the EU, outside of the single market and customs union. Unless business takes action now, there is a risk that their operations will be interrupted.

Businesses will play an essential role in ensuring a smooth end to the transition period and the UK Government will be there to support them as we embark on a new start for Wales and the UK.

Businesses can find out what they need to do by [visiting gov.uk/transition](https://www.visiting.gov.uk/transition) and using the checker tool.

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[Simple statements boost for pension planning](#)

News story

Convolutd pension statements are set to be a thing of the past as the Pensions Minister today unveils innovative plans for simple, annual pension statements



The move will build on the enormous success of Automatic Enrolment by improving millions of savers' understanding of their pensions.

Boiling it down to the basics, these two-page statements will take on a more consistent format, highlighting in simple terms, key information such as the size of the saver's pension pot and a forecast of their retirement.

Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Guy Opperman said:

For too long pensions have been shrouded in complexity and technical jargon, limiting people's understanding of their savings and hampering their retirement planning.

Simple statements will usher in a new standard for how schemes communicate with their members – vastly improving people's understanding and engagement with their pensions.

With more people saving for their retirement than ever before thanks to Automatic Enrolment, it's vital they can understand what's going on with their hard earned money and actively plan for their future.

The Department for Work and Pensions proposals will require pension schemes to provide the statements and structure them in such a way that draws members' attention to the following key pieces of information:

- How much money is in your pension pot?
- How much money you could have when you retire?
- What you could do to give yourself more money in retirement?

The initial focus will be on defined contribution schemes used for Automatic Enrolment, with a view to later improving consistency across all schemes.

Simpler statements support the department's ambition to make information about pension saving more accessible to consumers, running parallel to the department's championing of the use of dashboards, an innovation that will allow savers' pension information to be accessed on digital devices at any time they choose.

Further work to encourage and drive the consolidation of small pots will also lead to better outcomes for pension scheme members.

More information

- The [consultation outcome](#), published on gov.uk today (19 October 2020), sets out the government's response to the consultation held at the end of last year on the approach to the content and presentation of information which must be provided to members through their existing annual workplace pension benefit statements.
- The Department for Work and Pensions will be developing draft regulations to mandate the form of simpler annual benefit statements for

defined contribution schemes used for automatic enrolment, including the length of statements and information to be included.

- Simpler statements will include a line on costs and charges and a clear signpost for a more detailed assessment of this information elsewhere to help members see what they have paid for their pension.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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[“Beyond the crisis” – speech to the aviation industry](#)

Introduction

Good morning everyone.

It’s great to join you today (19 October 2020).

Many thanks to the event organisers for inviting me to speak.

Engagement between industry and government is obviously critical right now.

Which is why I’m so pleased to be part of this conference.

It’s also why I’m doing 5 aviation speeches this autumn.

Each addressing different parts of our sector.

Travel and tourism, airport operators, engineers and aviation innovators, green aviation, and today of course, senior airline leaders.

To explain what we’ve been doing in government to help the industry through this incredible crisis.

To talk about our plans for the future.

But also just as importantly to listen.

To learn more about the difficulties that you’re facing.

And to consider any new ideas that could help us help you.

We have already heard from Dr Rannia Leontaridi, Director for Aviation at the Department for Transport.

I also have a team of DfT officials tuning in throughout today's event, who will report back to me this evening.

So I look forward to hearing more about your discussions.

Government support

For airlines, airports, the supply chain, and of course the aviation workforce, it's simply been a devastating year.

There's no other way to describe it.

We know how much the sector is hurting.

That's well understood within government, I can assure you.

From the Business Secretary and Chancellor to the Prime Minister.

We know that COVID's had a particularly overwhelming impact on aviation...

Perhaps more so than any other global industry.

That's why we've taken unprecedented steps to support.

Early action on airport slots.

Paying more than 55,000 aviation employees up to 80% of their wages through the furlough scheme.

Loans, tax deferrals.

And £1.8 billion to the industry through the COVID Corporate Financing.

Now accounts for 11% of total national funding under that programme all the way across the entire economy, just to aviation.

We've been working to revive tourism and travel.

To give families the chance to enjoy a holiday, after those many months of lockdown.

But COVID has made that very difficult.

And we have had to be incredibly cautious.

Back in June (2020), the international travel quarantine applied universally.

This temporary measure helped protect us all from re-importing cases after everyone had been in lockdown.

Meanwhile, we worked to strengthen confidence for passengers too.

By backing the ATOL protection scheme.

Giving holidaymakers reassurance that a voucher would be as good to them as cash and thereby supporting the sector at the same time.

We set up the [Joint Biosecurity Centre](#) to gather intelligence and data on COVID worldwide.

To assess the risks of inbound travel from hundreds of countries and territories around the globe.

By July, the Centre's evidence allowed us to set up the first series of [Travel Corridors](#), enabling travellers to return to the UK from lower-risk countries, without the need to self-isolate.

As a result, international passenger numbers handled at UK airports rose fourfold between June and July to 3.1 million passengers.

Where quarantine was required, it helped ensure that the sacrifices of our nationwide lockdown were not wasted.

Even now, at a time of rising infections, we know the situation would have been much worse if we hadn't been prudent over the summer.

Like every government, we've had to constantly reassess our response because of the unpredictable nature of this virus.

Like every government, we've had to make very difficult decisions, often very quickly in order to follow whatever the science was telling us as the virus moved from place to place at different speeds.

And like every government, we've had to prioritise the health of our own population, while trying to avoid unnecessary measures to restrict mobility.

But with every week that passes, we learn more,

Information improves.

Our understanding of the virus grows.

And we adapt our response.

That's why more recently, we established more sophisticated corridors.

For the first time, we had enough evidence to add or remove specific islands from quarantine.

I know some have promoted the idea that we should test at borders.

But we have not done so, because the Chief Medical Officer has made clear that it wouldn't capture sufficient information on those who are asymptotically carrying the virus.

In fact, Public Health England, the Joint Biosecurity Centre and the London

School of Tropical Disease and Medicine have all examined the issue.

Accepting a Day 0 test on arrival could allow a very significant number of people to wrongly believe they were not bringing COVID-19 back with them.

And if that happened, it wouldn't just be travellers, but it would also be the travel industry that would be the victim of travel having reimported cases.

Future measures

So, with rising COVID cases in the UK – and amongst most of our neighbours – we have to find better, safer solutions.

My ministerial colleagues and I have agreed that a regime, based on a single test, provided by the private sector and at the cost of the passenger after a period of self-isolation, and doing those things could achieve our objectives.

The next step is to develop how this approach could be implemented.

So last week we launched our [Global Travel Taskforce](#).

To find solutions that will implement all of this safely and effectively.

And speed up the return of flights.

Now this global taskforce is chaired by myself and the Health Secretary.

And the taskforce is working actively with industry right now.

First of all to implement a new test and release regime to reduce the self-isolation period.

When we met for the first time last Thursday.

This will mean a single test for international arrivals a week after arrival.

We have been working extensively with health experts and the private testing sector on the practicalities of such a regime.

And we will continue to make sure that it does not impact on NHS capacity and that's been one of the big challenges of designing such a scheme when NHS test and trace has been under enormous strain although we now have more testing capacity per head than any other country.

In addition to this domestic 'test and release' model we are also working on schemes with partner countries to establish whether self-isolation could take place before departure.

I know it's confusing for passengers when every nation has a different system.

We need a global system and the UK will show leadership by developing a framework for international travel in order to provide global consistency.

Indeed, we will consider all options that increase tourism and business travel, but do so safely.

And thereby help the sector recover from the pandemic.

Finally – we are also preparing an Aviation Recovery Plan for later this autumn, setting out more measures to boost air travel, while continuing to prevent the spread of the virus.

Building back greener

That recovery plan won't just focus on 'the here and now' either.

It's crucial we use this time to look to the future too.

To the post-COVID world which will open up before us.

Defined not only by challenges.

But also by opportunities.

To speed up the transformation of the industry.

Aviation is fortunate in one respect – we know demand for air travel is very likely to grow in decades to come.

But the industry has to transform its environmental impact if it's to be viable.

I welcome the leadership that the industry is showing.

Investing in cleaner planes.

Plans to offset carbon.

But now COVID has prompted further change.

We're seeing manufacturers reassess product plans, and airlines moving to more fuel efficient fleets.

The pace of change is only going to accelerate.

After becoming the first major economy in the world to set a 2050 net zero target.

We're also committed to decarbonising aviation.

And demonstrating zero carbon emission flights across the Atlantic within a generation.

So in the summer, I co-chaired the first meeting of the [Jet Zero Council](#). The

Prime Minister dropped by and brought together leaders from aviation, aerospace and academia.

Our single overriding goal: to develop UK capability to achieve net zero emission flights.

The council will help develop new ideas, new technologies and new businesses to deliver net zero by 2050.

And we will consult shortly to update our position on aviation and climate change.

I want the UK to become a global centre for the design, manufacture and use of clean aircraft.

That's why last year we [announced a £300 million joint investment between government and industry through the Future Flight Challenge](#).

Money that will fund electric plane innovation.

And research into other forms of aviation technology.

That's also why we're ploughing nearly £2 billion into aviation research and technology.

Through the [Aerospace Technology Institute Programme](#).

Working closely with colleagues from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

And that's why – through that programme – we've been able to support the groundbreaking Fresson Project to make electrically powered commercial flights a reality in the UK within 2 years.

There are a lot of other exciting initiatives too.

Through schemes like our Future Flight Challenge.

The Innovation Hub within the CAA.

Which give us great hope for the future.

Conclusion

So, to sum this all up.

I don't underestimate how difficult things are right now.

But aviation will recover.

And when it does, it won't be picking up from where we were at the start of 2020.

It won't be a simple return to normal service.

It'll be leaner, and cleaner, more resilient, more ambitious aviation industry.

So let's all work together to make that recovery happen as soon as possible.

To get this industry back on its feet.

Your businesses depend on it I know.

Our economy most certainly depends on it.

And our country depends on it.

Thank you.

[New Board of Trade holds first meeting](#)

Today (19 October) International Trade Secretary Liz Truss will convene the first meeting of the revamped Board of Trade.

The Board will advise the government and DIT on its trade strategy, provide intellectual leadership on trade policy, and help Britain make the case for free and fair trade across the world.

The Board is meeting to agree and discuss the principles underpinning its work – which include a commitment to free enterprise, the rule of law and high-standards trade – and agree its future programme of activity.

It will produce a series of reports looking at the vital issues facing international trade and Britain at the moment. These will include:

- The role of trade in levelling-up Britain
- Combatting digital and data protectionism
- How trade can deliver an industrial revival
- Reform of the WTO and the global trading system
- Commonwealth trade
- How trade can help deliver the government's green objectives

The reports will be published quarterly from 2021 on key trade issues and interests for the UK.

Domestically, the Board will advise how trade policy can help deliver on the government's commitment to level-up the country and 'build back better' from coronavirus. Internationally, it will look at Britain's role in reshaping the rules-based global trading system and how the government could work with like-minded allies to dismantle long-standing barriers to trade.

It will also work with businesses and communities across the United Kingdom

to help them identify and seize new opportunities internationally as we make the case for the importance of international trade in delivering increased prosperity and opportunity. At a time of heightened protectionism, it will sell the benefits of trade across the UK, including the north of England and devolved administrations.

The revitalised Board will become an intellectual lodestar for the department, generating advice and providing expertise to influence government trade policy.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Liz Truss, said:

This is a critical moment for the UK and our trading relationships with the rest of the world. Our re-emergence as an independent trading nation is an enormous opportunity, but it also comes at a time of rising protectionism amidst the challenges posed by coronavirus.

The revamped Board of Trade will play a critical role in helping us navigate and shape the new global trading environment. Just as great British reformers helped drive trade and prosperity in the nineteenth century, we want the new Board of Trade to become the Cobden, Peel and Bright of the twenty first century and push new frontiers in areas like digital trade and the green economy, and ultimately help Britain unleash its full potential post-Brexit.

Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack, said:

I'm delighted to attend the first meeting of the relaunched Board of Trade.

Joined by senior figures from business, academia and government, this Board will champion British businesses, represent our industries, farmers and the needs of consumers across the UK.

Their longstanding and broad knowledge and experience will help to ensure the right decisions are made.

This collective voice will play an important role in seizing opportunities and upholding Britain's best interests as we leave the EU free to determine our own future and form partnerships with old allies and new friends around the world.

Dr Linda Yueh, economist at Oxford University, London Business School and LSE IDEAS, said:

As the Board of Trade meets for the first time, I look forward to contributing to trade policy at a critical time.

The 21st century global economy offers both opportunities and challenges. It will be important to position the UK optimally amidst these changes and to craft policies that will generate benefits across the UK.