

# Dr. Liam Fox speaks with Honduran Minister of Economy

World news story

Former UK International Trade Secretary Dr. Liam Fox says experienced leadership is needed as the selection process continues.



Dr. Liam Fox had a virtual meeting with the Honduran Minister of Economy, Antonia Rivera.

The Minister congratulated Dr. Fox on his progress to the second round of the selection process for the next Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and was delighted to exchange views about what is needed to strengthen the organisation. In particular, she highlighted that the WTO needs to play a fundamental role on the road to economic recovery due to the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic, including support to SMES, which will be vital for the economic wellbeing of all countries.

Dr. Fox highlighted that Covid-19 has taught us that we live in a deeply interdependent world, that our resilience lies in diversity of supply, and that our global institutions need to reflect this.

He says that from the first day of his appointment, he will work to ensure the global pandemic does not lead to a rise in protectionism, ensuring global trade works for everyone, including smaller developing countries and small businesses. As this is one of his priorities, he wants to work with Honduras to advance these priorities.

Dr. Fox is campaigning to restore the credibility of the WTO at the heart of the rules-based trading system, reform its Appellate Body, deliver genuine gender equality by ensuring that at least half of his top team are women and work more closely with other international organisations.

Dr. Fox will go into the second round of voting against nominees from Kenya, Nigeria, South Korea and Saudi Arabia. WTO delegates are expected to whittle down the five candidates to two in October before choosing a winner the

following month.

Published 1 October 2020

---

## **Human Rights Council 45: Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner on Ukraine.**

Madam President,

The United Kingdom thanks the High Commissioner for her update and welcomes the 30th report of the OHCHR Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the report on Administration of Justice in Conflict-Related Cases.

The reports of detainees, held by the so-called 'Donetsk people's republic' and 'Luhansk people's republic' in eastern Ukraine, being subjected to ill-treatment and sexual violence, are deeply concerning. We call on Russia to use its significant influence over the de-facto authorities and end this appalling treatment.

Russia's continued crackdown on freedom of religion or belief in Crimea is unacceptable. Their application of anti-extremist laws and sanctions on those who attempt to practice their faith must stop.

Approximately 101 Ukrainian political prisoners remain in unlawful detention in Crimea and Russia, subject to torture, ill-treatment and denial of medical care. The 16 September sentencing of seven Crimean Tatar activists is deplorable, and we are particularly worried that Volodymyr Dudka and Viktor Shur remain without urgent medical care.

We call on Russia to end its campaign of politically motivated persecutions and release all Ukrainian political prisoners immediately.

Madam High Commissioner,

What more can the international community do to ensure protection of detainees from ill-treatment and COVID-19 in line with relevant WHO recommendations?

Thank you.

---

# Foreign Secretary's meeting with Foreign Minister Minh of Vietnam, 30 September

Press release

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab met Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Bing Minh as part of a visit to the Indo-Pacific region.



The Foreign Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister used the meeting to agree the refreshed Strategic Partnership framework to enhance cooperation between the two countries for the next 10 years. This framework spans a range of areas including climate change, trade, security, human rights and closer ties on innovation and collaboration to develop a Covid-19 vaccine and therapeutics.

On tackling the spread of Covid-19, they agreed that alongside the search for a vaccine it was important to work together to ensure the most vulnerable countries in the world were not left behind during the ongoing pandemic. They also discussed an additional £6.3m UK funding for regional collaboration on a range of programmes to tackle the health and economic impacts of Covid-19.

They discussed a new Free Trade Agreement and their shared ambitions to conclude a new deal as soon as possible which would build on the already extensive trading relationship.

Deputy Prime Minister Minh expressed Vietnam's support for the UK's application for ASEAN Dialogue Partner status and the UK's ambition to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

On climate change, they agreed to deepen cooperation on green finance and renewable energy to support implementation of the Paris Agreement. With the UK hosting COP26 next year they also discussed how technological innovation could drive further reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Foreign Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister Minh resolved to continue close collaboration on security issues including a shared ongoing commitment

to upholding maritime law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. They also agreed further cooperation on building capacity to tackle the illegal trafficking of people.

Finally they both agreed on the mutual benefits of educational exchanges between the two countries.

Published 1 October 2020

---

## [eAlert: 28 September 2020 – Updates to Woodland Management Plan Grant](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]This eAlert contains information on updates to the Woodland Management Plan Grant, our Operational Update on coronavirus, a reminder on capital claims and how we are dealing with some mapping discrepancies.

---

## [Pension boost protected by new bill](#)

Press release

The Government has moved to avoid a State Pension freeze.



Work and Pensions Secretary, Thérèse Coffey, has introduced a technical Bill in the House of Commons that will give the Government the ability to increase the State Pension next year.

Under current legislation, the State Pension can only be increased if there

has been a rise in average earnings in the relevant period of the preceding year.

Due to the challenging economic circumstances, average earnings are expected to show no growth in that period. This Bill makes technical changes which allow ministers to deliver on their commitment to the Pensions Triple Lock next year, even if there is no growth in earnings in the relevant period, ensuring that State Pensions can still be up-rated.

Commenting on the Bill, Thérèse Coffey said:

The Government has worked hard to protect all age groups during the pandemic, strengthening the welfare safety net, introducing furlough and income protection schemes, as well as supporting those who have lost their jobs back into work.

It is only right, then, that we also ensure pensioners can see their incomes protected as we build back better.

In these difficult times, I want to give pensioners peace of mind about their financial health.

Previous Governments have taken the same approach in similar challenging economic circumstances – for example, in the Welfare Reform Act 2009.

In accordance with the usual process, the Work and Pensions Secretary will undertake a review of social security rates shortly, and will report to Parliament on the outcome of the review in November 2020.

Since 2011, the Triple Lock has ensured that the State Pension is uprated by the highest of earnings growth, price inflation or 2.5%.

## **Further information**

- The Social Security (Uprating of Benefits) Bill was introduced to the House of Commons on 23 September 2020.
- This Bill is necessary to ensure that pensioners can be supported with an increase in State Pension and Pension Credit rates for 2021/22. Survivors' benefits in Industrial Death Benefit are also included in the scope of the Bill. Without this legislation, that would not be possible since the decline in the average earnings data means that the Secretary of State would have no ability to increase these rates. This Bill gives her that ability.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

Follow DWP on:

Published 1 October 2020