

RMS Titanic wreck to be protected under historic treaty with US

- international agreement comes into force protecting one of the most culturally significant wreck sites in the world, following US agreement
- UK and US governments now hold power to grant or deny licences authorising entry of the wreck or removal of artefacts
- momentous signing of treaty will help ensure the resting site of more than 1,500 people is preserved and respected

The wreck of the most famous ship in history, the RMS Titanic, will be better protected under an historic international agreement, Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani confirmed during a visit to Belfast today (21 January 2020). Signed by the UK in 2003, the treaty comes into force following its ratification by the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo at the end of last year.

The UK and US governments have both passed legislation giving them the power to grant or deny licences authorising people entering the hull sections of the Titanic and removing artefacts found outside the hull. This strengthens the basic level of protection for the wreck, previously afforded it by UNESCO. Lying in international waters, the wreck was previously not protected by explicit legislation.

The maritime minister confirmed the agreement during a visit to the 1851 Trust maritime roadshow for girls in Belfast, which aims to inspire girls to take STEM subjects vital to a career in maritime.

Nusrat Ghani said:

I was delighted to visit Belfast today to recognise this important treaty coming into effect.

Lying two and a half miles below the ocean surface, the RMS Titanic is the subject of the most documented maritime tragedy in history.

This momentous agreement with the United States to preserve the wreck means it will be treated with the sensitivity and respect owed to the final resting place of more than 1,500 lives.

The UK will now work closely with other North Atlantic States to bring even more protection to the wreck of the Titanic.

Chief Executive of Titanic Belfast Judith Owens said:

Located on the exact spot where the ship was designed, built and launched, Titanic Belfast is committed to celebrating Belfast's maritime heritage and the people who built the RMS Titanic, whilst

commemorating those who lost their lives during the tragic sinking. As such, we welcome any additional protection and safeguarding of the wreck, in line with the views of our strategic partner Dr Robert Ballard who discovered her in 1985.

Registered in Britain and built in Belfast, the RMS Titanic set sail on its maiden voyage from Southampton on April 10, 1912. On April 15, 1912, after striking an iceberg, the ship broke apart and sank to the bottom of the ocean taking with it the lives of more than 1,500 passengers and crew. The Titanic disaster instigated the drawing up of the SOLAS (Safety of Lives at Sea) Convention in 1914, which still sets the minimum safety standards by which ships are required to comply.

The wreck of the Titanic was discovered in September 1985 approximately 350 nautical miles off the Canadian coast of Newfoundland, two and a half miles below the ocean surface. Multiple countries have been negotiating an international agreement to protect and preserve the wreck since 1986, with the ratification of the treaty by the UK and US marking a hugely significant step forwards.

The UK will now take a leading role in working with other North Atlantic States, including Canada and France, to urge them to sign up to the agreement and bring even more protection to the wreck of the Titanic.

[Funding for on-street chargepoints doubled to help charge up electric vehicle revolution](#)

- funding for chargepoints on residential streets doubled again to ensure postcode plays no part in how easy it is to use an electric car
- real-time information could also be made available, helping cut waiting times by showing which chargepoints are currently being used
- in future open data on public chargepoints would allow for information to be added to sat navs and travel apps

Charging and driving an electric vehicle will be easier, cheaper and more convenient in the future, thanks to double the funding for more chargepoints on residential streets next year and new plans to make sure drivers can easily access real-time information about places to charge their electric car.

The Transport Secretary today (21 January 2020) announced that government funding will be doubled to £10 million for the installation of chargepoints

on residential streets next year. This could fund up to another 3,600 chargepoints across the country and make charging at home and overnight easier for those without an off-street parking space.

The government is also looking at how to make information about all public chargepoints including locations and power ratings openly available in a standard format for the first time. The Department for Transport will look at how real-time information could be published, showing whether chargepoints are in working order and currently in use, which could then be used by developers and incorporated into sat navs and route mapping apps

Ensuring that charging an electric vehicle is a convenient and simple process is crucial to meeting the government's ambitions of phasing out petrol and diesel cars.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We want to make electric cars the new normal, and ensuring drivers have convenient places to charge is key to that.

By doubling funding again for chargepoints on streets where people live and opening up data we are helping drivers easily locate and use affordable, reliable chargepoints whether at home or on the road.

Future of Transport Minister George Freeman said:

The new government is accelerating UK leadership in digitalisation and decarbonisation through our future of transport strategy.

Supporting the smart use of open data for new apps to help passengers and drivers plan journeys, and to reduce congestion and pollution, is key.

Comprehensive chargepoint data is crucial for mapping charging hotspots and notspots for consumers, to help to drive forward the electric vehicle revolution.

We urge local councils to make use of the funding available to ensure their residents feel the benefits of cleaner transport.

Government and industry have supported the installation of over 17,000 devices providing over 24,000 publicly available chargepoints, of which over 2,400 are rapid chargepoints. The UK now has one of the largest charging networks in Europe with more locations where you can charge your car than there are petrol stations.

The government has already challenged industry to provide debit and credit card payment at all newly installed rapid chargepoints and develop a roaming

solution across the charging network, allowing electric vehicle drivers to use any public chargepoint through a single app or payment method.

The announcement today follows the establishment of the government's [National Chargepoint Registry \(NCR\)](#) in 2011, which is an open source of data for all public chargepoints. All publicly funded chargepoints are already required to be uploaded onto the NCR, but the government now aims to ensure information on all public chargepoints is released.

[Teachers set for biggest sustained pay increase since 2005](#)

Teachers in England are set for the biggest sustained uplift to their pay ranges since 2005.

Under proposals submitted today (21 January) to the independent School Teachers' Review Body (STRB), the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has outlined plans to increase starting salaries to at least £26,000 in September 2020, with those in outer and inner London to rise to £30,000 and £32,000 respectively.

This represents a significant step towards meeting the Government's commitment to increase teachers' starting salaries to £30,000 by September 2022, ensuring that the pay offer for teachers is amongst the most competitive in the graduate labour market.

Experienced teachers, heads and school leaders would see an above inflation pay increase of 2.5 per cent to their pay ranges, with early career teachers' salaries increasing by up to 6.7 per cent, supporting an attractive career path for the whole profession.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We want to make teaching attractive to the most talented graduates by recognising the prestige that we as a society place on the profession.

We have set out proposals to significantly raise starting salaries for new teachers to £26,000 next year, rising to £30,000 by September 2022, alongside above-inflation pay increases for senior teachers and school leaders. These mark the biggest reform to teacher pay in a generation.

Departmental analysis suggests that the proposed changes to the pay system could see over 1,000 extra teachers retained per year by 2022/23.

The pay award will be affordable for schools thanks to Government plans to invest an extra £14 billion over the next three years – starting with an additional £2.6 billion in 2020-21 and rising to £7.1 billion more in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20 levels.

This funding boost will also allow schools to invest in other important resources and activities, alongside pay, which support improved outcomes for pupils.

The STRB will now consider the Department's proposals and respond with their recommendations later in the year.

[Social mobility barometer poll results for 2019](#)

People living in the north-east are the most pessimistic about their chances to progress in the area they live in, with more than half feeling marginalised, new research shows today (21 January 2020).

The [Social Mobility Commission's 2019 poll](#) underlines stark regional differences about people's perceptions of their life prospects. Just 31% of people living in the north-east think there are good opportunities to make progress in their own region compared with 74% in the south-east and 78% of Londoners. Only 48% of those in the north-west felt this optimism.

Published to coincide with the first anniversary of the new commission, the poll reveals deep unease in many regions about whether people have the same access to good education, jobs and housing as those living in the south. This 'northern wall' played out dramatically in the general election and has already become a focus of Boris Johnson's new government.

These stark figures, showing a much broader sense of regional unease, highlight the need to make greater efforts to improve social mobility in schools, further education, training and job security in many regions outside the south-east.

The social mobility barometer, a poll of just under 5,000 people carried out by YouGov, also disclosed that more than half (52%) of those questioned felt the government was not doing enough to help the least well-off. Almost twice as many people felt it was becoming harder rather than easier to move up in society.

Dame Martina, chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

This poll is a 'call to action' for this government to do more to

help social mobility. Politicians at national and local level must listen to it. Regions which have been marginalised for decades should get the investment they need to provide opportunities for young people so they don't have to move out to move up.

The survey also suggested that although people felt there had been improvements in education compared to when their parents went to school this did not translate into a better standard of living or job security.

Overall 63% of people felt they were better off than their parents in terms of education they received but only 29% felt they had better job security. Fewer than half felt they had a better standard of living.

This suggests that the focus on improving educational opportunities may have started to pay off but much more attention is needed on training, jobs, and pay levels, said Dame Martina.

The majority of people continue to feel there are fewer opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to better-off peers, including going to a top university, owning their own home and having access to quality childcare.

The poll also coincides with the publication of the commission's first [research report this year into further education](#). The report, led by Learning and Work Institute, will be launched at an event in central London today, and looks at which interventions work best to help disadvantaged learners access and achieve in further education.

The commission is now [urging the government to set up an independent What Works Centre for Further Education and Adult Learning](#). With a proposed budget of £20 million over the next 5 years, the centre would act as a knowledge and research hub; translating the best available evidence and testing a variety of approaches to ensure resources for poorer students, who make up the bulk of students in further education, are targeted more effectively.

Fay Sadro, head of evidence at Learning and Work Institute said:

Against the backdrop of continued funding pressures on further education and adult learning, there is an urgent need to share knowledge across the sector, improve judgments about investments through the use of evidence and support an increase in research and experimentation.

The study is the first of a series of research projects which the commission is publishing this year covering mental and physical health, downward mobility, apprenticeships and geographical differences in social mobility. Next month it will launch a social mobility toolkit to help employers recruit and train those from poorer backgrounds.

Other main findings from the Social Mobility Barometer poll include:

- almost half of people (44%) say that where you end up in society is largely determined by your background, Just over a third (35%) feel that everyone has a chance to get on
- the majority of people (77%) think there is a large gap between the social classes in Britain today
- twice as many middle class people think their background gave them an advantage in their education (50%) compared to almost half (48%) of those aged 65 and over
- only a third (30%) of 18 to 24 year olds think that everyone in Britain today has a fair chance compared to almost (48%) of those aged 65 and over
- 50% of people think central government should be doing more to improve social mobility and to ensure opportunity for all – 38% felt local government should do more and 37% felt schools should do more

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 4,860 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11 to 18 March 2019. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). YouGov is registered with the Information Commissioner, and is a member of the British Polling Council.

The Social Mobility Commission is an independent advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England.

The commission board comprises:

- Dame Martina Milburn (Chair)
- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief, Elle
- Harvey Matthewson, Aviation Activity Officer at Aerobility and Volunteer
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Broadcast and Digital Coordinator at The Roundhouse
- Jody Walker, Senior Vice President at TJX Europe (TK Maxx and Home Sense in the UK)
- Liz Williams, Group Director of Digital Society at BT
- Pippa Dunn, Founder of Broody, helping entrepreneurs and start ups
- Saeed Atcha, Chief Executive Officer of Youth Leads UK
- Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology at London School of Economics
- Sammy Wright, Vice Principal of Southmoor Academy, Sunderland
- Sandra Wallace, Joint Managing Director Europe at DLA Piper
- Steven Cooper, Chief Executive Officer C.Hoare & Co

*GB:[Great Britain]

Alok Sharma's closing speech at UK-Africa Investment Summit

Let me extend my thanks to all of you for making the UK's first Africa Investment Summit such a success.

Certainly for me and all my colleagues in government, this has been a fabulous day.

I started off with President Kenyatta at the London Stock Exchange. This was absolutely a landmark moment for Kenya's capital markets.

And now I close this Summit addressing you this afternoon.

We have representatives from 21 African countries and the UK government and British business deeply appreciates the effort that you have all made to join us today.

I am very grateful to Nobukhosi Dlamini, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and all our speakers, and also to Lucy Quist, our other moderators, and all participants.

Before I address what's actually been achieved today,

let's look at what we hope will be the legacy of those achievements, lets remind ourselves of why we came together today.

I personally am absolutely delighted that Africa is the focus of our first international summit as a new Government.

In a rapidly changing world, it is Africa that has the biggest potential. Of that, there is absolutely no doubt.

It is home to eight of the 15 fastest growing economies,

60 per cent of the population is under the age of 25.

One way to look at it, Africa may historically be the oldest continent but right now in the 21st century it is the youngest continent on Earth.

As Africa grows and develops, international partnerships and investment will be key to unleashing that potential and delivering a better future for all those young people.

That is why we have held the UK-Africa Investment Summit.

We want the UK to be the investment partner of choice for Africa. I would like you to go back to this morning and reflect on the African proverb that Prime Minister Boris Johnson quoted about the size of fingers. That I thought was very illuminating.

Of course, our ambition is reflected in the energy of this summit.

We have heard from Heads of State and Governments,

as well as young entrepreneurs, tech experts and business leaders.

And it is clear that everyone shares that ambition.

We started the day with £6.5 billion of deals and have ended with billions more. That is thanks to people in this room.

The UK Government has announced over £1.5 billion of new initiatives.

We expect these to create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

And mobilise over £2.4 billion of private investment for African countries, something that every speaker has said we need more of.

Of course this is just a small part of what the UK can offer Africa.

We have world-leading technology and innovation expertise.

We are committed to green growth that will help protect our environment for future generations.

And we are global leaders on driving economic development through UK aid. Something that I see every day in my working life. While driving much-needed private finance into Africa,

we want to see investment that builds self-sustaining economies.

Economies that can provide quality health and education for everyone.

And investments that properly consider their impact on the environment.

The City of London is the global gateway to sustainable international investment for Africa.

London is the biggest centre for foreign exchange trading;

and the largest for cross-border banking,

As well as being home to major investors, innovators and multinational businesses.

More and more of those investors are recognising Africa's potential.

What makes the UK different is our recognition that this huge investment needs to be felt by local communities across the whole of Africa. Everyone must share in prosperity.

CDC, our own Development Finance Institution, is investing right across the continent.

Making pioneering investments; backing first-time funds; and helping to mobilise other private investors.

Today CDC has agreed new investments worth £300m and are committed to invest a further £2bn in Africa over the next two years.

I have announced £320m to help improve the financial systems and regulations of 45 developing nations in Africa.

We are not just boosting investor confidence, but also opening up access to banking and lending services for millions of entrepreneurs right across Africa.

With investment comes trade.

As we get Brexit done, we want a closer trading partnership with African nations.

We have already signed trade agreements with 11 African countries, covering over 40 per cent of the UK's total trade with Africa. We have seven more in the pipeline.

And we have secured trade continuity for a further 35 countries.

This means businesses from these countries can continue to export to the UK on a preferential basis.

We want UK businesses to seize new exciting opportunities for investment across Africa.

As we have heard today by 2050, more than two billion people will live in Africa.

One in four global consumers will be African.

That is untapped potential.

Potential for business to create jobs and investment across Africa.

We are providing direct support and advice to African businesses to help them make the most of UK markets.

While also supporting UK firms to source more quality, competitively-priced products from Africa.

Many UK businesses are already benefitting from these opportunities, and are here today.

I also saw this first-hand on a recent visit to Kenya

Cambridge-based business called Azuri Technologies which provides solar energy systems to off-grid homes across Africa.

Africa offers a wealth of young talent, where the majority of entrepreneurs are women.

Nobukhosi and others have demonstrated the vision shown by Africa's future female business leaders.

It is why we have emphasised the importance of increasing support to help more women and girls in Africa. A big priority for Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Allowing women and girls to move successfully from education into employment, through training, boosting skills, and more job opportunities.

To realise Africa's full potential the entire population must be empowered.

We all know that Africa's future is bright.

We know that there are deals to be done,

and that investment can have a transformative effect on all our countries.

But we must be realistic about the scale of the challenge.

Accomplishing the UN's Global Goals for a healthier, wealthier, more equal, and greener world by 2030 will require an immense amount of work and crucially more private investment.

The huge burden of Climate Change will not be shared equally or fairly across the world.

Many developing countries are already bearing the brunt of its impact.

Future growth must be sustainable.

It needs to consider the undeniable implications of climate change.

That is why the Prime Minister today announced that

the UK will no longer provide any direct investment or assistance to thermal coal mining and power plants overseas.

We have seen at this summit the commercial potential for clean energy, alongside the appetite from investors to power growth in Africa.

We must harness that potential.

Earlier today the Prime Minister passionately made the case for Global Britain to be the investment partner of choice for Africa.

The whole UK government is devoted to this agenda.

We are opening new embassies and High Commissions in Africa,

We are signing trade agreements that continue the open trading relationships we all enjoy.

And we are helping UK companies and investors do business in Africa.

But let us remember – we each have a role to play.

Government cannot deliver prosperity alone.

It is business that strikes the biggest deals.

Which is why it is great to see so many of you in this room.

It is the partnerships and friendships we are creating here today that will have the biggest impact.

The UK is entering this decade with a new sense of purpose.

We are open for business.

and open to creating lasting partnerships that deliver more investment, more jobs, and growth for all our countries.

Mutual partnerships will bring mutual benefits.

From the workers whose jobs are created by businesses, to the young entrepreneurs with the ideas that can help solve today's problems.

Our overarching mission is to bring universal prosperity, health, and economic sustainability, to all our countries.

If we continue this co-operation and friendship, we can do it.

Ladies and gentlemen, Africa has a special place in my heart. When I was a child my father worked in Nigeria and I loved my time there and I can tell you that I learnt to ride my bicycle in Nigeria, and I haven't forgotten that yet. But let me conclude by saying that the 21 countries represented here today account for over 80 per cent of Africa's economy.

When you succeed, the whole of Africa succeeds.

And when Africa succeeds, the world succeeds.

Let's work together, for mutual success.

Thank you.