

# Opening Speech: World Drugs Day event at Accra

Dear Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to thank the Government of Ghana and the Narcotics Control Commission for inviting me to give a speech today, as Charge d’Affairs for the British High Commission. This is an important day to reflect on this global challenge, which affects us all.

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, or World Drug Day, is marked on 26 June every year, to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving the goal of a world free of drug abuse.

Each year, individuals, communities, and organisations all over the world join in this global observance, to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent for societies around the world. The theme this year – addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises – really resonates with the UK.

In December last year, we published From Harm to Hope – the UK’s new drugs strategy.

This is a long term, 10-year plan designed to cut crime and save lives. It recognises explicitly that the challenge around drugs is more than the criminal elements – it is about healthcare and society as well. As our strategy sets out, there is a massive financial cost from drugs. In the UK the financial cost is estimated at least £20 billion a year. But there is also a human cost – of lives ruined, or lost. For example:

- there are 300,000 crack cocaine or heroin addicts committing crimes to feed their habit across the UK
- in England and Wales 3,000 people lost their lives through drug misuse last year

We recognise in our new strategy that we must increase efforts to tackle drug addiction as well as drug crime.

This is complex, and it will mean getting public services to work better together, to provide more support to people battling their addictions – recognising that these are chronic and long term, so that they do not affect employment, or housing, or mental health because, then the cost to the state increases exponentially.

So the UK’s strategy will not only continue to disincentivise drug use – through awareness and stronger enforcement – but also to undermine the markets in the UK, Europe and the US that are driving this crime. We will also significantly increase funding for health workers, treatments and interventions – with an ambition for 50,000 more treatment places to be

available in the coming years.

Thankfully, Ghana does not suffer as many of the debilitating issues stemming from class A drug addiction. We hope this continues, though there are signs across West Africa that domestic markets may start to expand. So far though, it is around the supply of drugs where the UK and Ghana have worked together so closely over the last few years.

The global availability of drugs is higher than ever before, and it is not enough to work only at the source and destination points. We need to continue to disrupt every point of the supply chain. And that's where we need your help and support.

Ghana is noted as a transit country for drug trafficking particularly cocaine – with South America directly across the ocean – but also heroin and some psychotropic substances as well as precursor chemicals.

The UK has invested over £3 million in Narcotics Control Commission (NCC) over the last 10 years. And our teams from Border Force, Immigration Enforcement and the National Crime Agency have developed strong partnerships not only with the NCC, but also EOCO, Ghana Police, FIC and other law enforcement agencies. We have made great progress together.

As many of you will already be aware, the UK has also now partnered with Germany (through GIZ) to set up a new Serious Organised Crime programme. This will build upon progress already made and continue to support and strengthen some of the institutions here in Ghana.

I am delighted to say, on this World Drugs Day, that the new programme will be collaborating with NCC on a new awareness raising campaign. This programme is designed to protect fishermen and their communities from the dangers of substance abuse and ensure they are aware of the dangers of becoming involved in trafficking.

Why fishing communities?

Because we understand that, globally, people are at risk of turning to the drugs trade as an economic buffer against poverty. And in the context of mounting competition over declining fish stocks, this risk rises.

In February, we saw 9 Ghanaian fishermen arrested in Nigeria for smuggling Indian hemp. We are realists. We know that where there are profits, crimes will continue to be committed. But we need to ensure that those who commit these are fully aware of the significance of their crimes, and the risks in doing so. And this means supporting vulnerable communities – like the fishing communities along the coast of Ghana in Osu, Labone, Pram Pram and Ada.

We hope that the campaign will reach a minimum of 500 individuals. And for each one of these individuals, to become an agent for change, within their families and communities.

Much as we are trying to do in the UK, we hope that this will help act as a disincentive to stop people from committing some of these crimes. And so I'm

pleased that the UK and GIZ, through our new partnership, can support NCC in this really important awareness raising campaign.

So, once again, thank you for inviting me to attend today, thank you for your support on World Drugs Day, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to tackle this crucial issue.

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## [PM meeting with President Ramaphosa: 27 June 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met South African President Ramaphosa at the G7 Summit in Germany today.



The Prime Minister met South African President Ramaphosa at the G7 Summit in Germany today.

He began by updating the President on last week's successful Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The leaders agreed on the imperative for the world's richest economies to support developing countries to build clean and green infrastructure. The Prime Minister commended the work being done through the South Africa Just Energy Transition Partnership and confirmed the UK will contribute up to \$1.8bn towards it. The JETP which will accelerate South Africa's transition to a green economy.

The Prime Minister and President Ramaphosa agreed that South Africa has enormous potential to follow in the UK's footsteps and phase out the use of coal, and all the raw materials it needs to achieve green and sustainable growth.

The Prime Minister and President Ramaphosa discussed the ongoing atrocities being committed in Ukraine. The Prime Minister underlined the far reaching consequences of Putin's aggression, in particular its impact on global food and energy prices – an impact the developing world is bearing the brunt of. The leaders agreed on the urgent need for Putin to open up a safe passage for grain to leave Ukraine and reaffirmed their support for the UN efforts on this.

The Prime Minister stressed that Putin must fail in Ukraine to prevent the creeping normalisation of his flagrant disregard for sovereignty and human rights.

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## [Waste criminals fined a combined £1,440 after depositing waste at illegal sites](#)

The Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted Brian Ward, Patrick Ward and Patrick Ward (unrelated), at Wimbledon Magistrates Court for waste crimes.

Mr Brian Ward (21), of The Gardens, Bessbrook, Newry, pleaded guilty to 3 charges of unlawfully depositing waste on land off Bianca Road in Peckham. He was fined £480 and ordered to pay £3,777 in costs and a £48 victim charge.

Mr Brian Ward pleaded guilty for offences committed between 2 and 6 December 2019, of depositing mixed waste at an illegal waste site on Bianca Road.

Mr Patrick Ward (50), of Dobsons Way, Bessbrook, Newry, pleaded guilty to one charge of knowingly causing the unlawful depositing of waste at an illegal waste site at Herringham Road, Charlton. He was fined £480 and ordered to pay £48 victim charge.

A vehicle that was owned and insured by Mr Patrick Ward (50) was filmed on CCTV entering the site laden with waste and then reversing into a warehouse on 30 September 2021. The vehicle was subsequently filmed driving away with the vehicle empty of waste. Mr Patrick Ward (50), in pleading guilty, accepted that he was either in control of the vehicle or in a position to control it and, accordingly, accepted that he knowingly permitted the unlawful deposit of waste.

Mr Patrick Ward (26) of St. Marys Street, Newry pleaded guilty to 3 charges of knowingly causing waste to be unlawfully deposited at an illegal waste

site at Pensbury Place, Wandsworth, London.

Between 14 and 19 November 2021, a vehicle insured to Mr Patrick Ward was filmed 3 times on CCTV entering the site at Pensbury Place with waste in the vehicle and subsequently filmed twice leaving the site without any waste.

The 3 sites at Herringham Road, Pensbury Place and Bianca Road were all the subject of incursions by travellers who cut locks to gain access and then moved in, taking up residence. They then proceeded to deposit waste at each site before eventually being evicted.

The case is part of a series of prosecutions resulting from the Environment Agency's major investigation into waste crime in London, Operation Angola. The Environment Agency is targeting waste criminals who break into empty sites and fill them with waste. All the sites in these prosecutions had been broken into and set up as illegal waste sites.

Sean Coleman, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

These prosecutions along with others from Op Angola, send out a strong message that we will search out and prosecute anyone found to be dumping waste illegally. We're pleased that our hard work has resulted in securing these convictions. Op Angola has now secured 20 convictions.

Illegally depositing waste at illegal waste sites without regard for the environment and the law, blights communities and undermines the legitimate businesses that follow the rules.

In many cases householders and businesses are offered cheap waste clearance by rogue operators who then dump it illegally. We urge everyone to check that their waste collector is registered as a waste carrier or they could also unwittingly become liable to prosecution.

To check a waste collector is registered as a waste carrier, you can [check on Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Operation Angola is an ongoing investigation since 2015 into a series of incursions by groups of individuals onto third party sites throughout the South East of England who have, while in occupation, unlawfully deposited large quantities of controlled waste. Often referred to as 'fly tipping', the scale of offending under Operation Angola is estimated to have cost its victims in the region of £22 million to date.

Under Operation Angola, since 2017, Environment Agency investigators and partners either have or are currently investigating or prosecuting a total of 23 offenders for Offences Contrary to Section 33(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Unlawful Depositing of Waste on Land) and other associated offences.

Waste crime is a major issue across the country, not only spoiling our environment and impacting on our health but it also effects the economy and undermines legitimate businesses. The Environmental Services Association have estimated that illegal waste activity costs over £1 billion annually in England.

Waste crime is much more than fly tipping, it also includes operating without the correct permits and authorisations, large scale illegal dumping, burning of waste, mis-description of waste, operating illegal waste sites and illegally exporting waste. Waste criminals are becoming more sophisticated by working in a more organised manner and infiltrating legitimate industry. They operate across county boundaries and they are likely to be involved in a wide variety of other criminal activity such as drugs trafficking, modern slavery, firearms and fraud.

### **Brian Ward (DoB 01/10/2001) –**

This offence is charged under Section 33 (1) and (6) of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990. Section 33 (1) of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 states that “a person shall not-

- Deposit controlled waste, or knowingly cause or knowingly permit controlled waste to be deposited in or on any land unless a waste management licence (an environmental permit) authorising the deposit is in force and the deposit is in accordance with the licence (the permit)”.

Section 75 (4) to the EPA 1990 defines controlled waste as meaning “household, industrial and commercial waste or any such waste”. Section 75 (2) defines “waste” as meaning “anything that is waste within the meaning of Article 3 (1) of Directive 2008/98/EC” (the Waste Framework Directive – WFD).

Article 3(1) to the Waste Framework Directive states that: “For the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions shall apply: “waste” means any substance or object which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard”.

Section 33 (6) to the EPA 1990 stipulates that a person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence. The offence is 2 3 either way. Section 33 (8) provides that upon summary conviction the offence is punishable either with a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or a fine or both; upon, conviction on indictment, the offence is punishable with a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or a fine or both.

### **Patrick Ward (DoB 10/02/72) –**

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Section 33 (5) to the EPA 1990 states that, "Where controlled waste is carried in and deposited from a motor vehicle, the person who controls or is in a position to control the use of the vehicle shall, for the purposes of subsection (1) (a) above, be treated as knowingly causing the waste to be deposited whether or not he gave any instructions for this to be done".

### **Patrick Ward (DoB 25/11/1995) –**

This offence is charged under Section 33 (1) and (6) of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990. Section 33 (1) of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 states that "a person shall not-

- Deposit controlled waste, or knowingly cause or knowingly permit controlled waste to be deposited in or on any land unless a waste management licence (an environmental permit) authorising the deposit is in force and the deposit is in accordance with the licence (the permit)"

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# A lasting resolution that delivers peace for Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue

Thank you President. I also thank Special Coordinator Wennesland for his briefing and for the continued efforts of his team.

Last week, the UK Minister for the Middle East, Amanda Milling, visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Minister met many inspirational Israelis and Palestinians doing vital work to improve the situation. This included Palestinian business leaders who, despite the challenges, are driving success in the Palestinian economy. The Minister also met Israelis in Lod who are working to bridge gaps and foster tolerance and co-existence in their communities.

However, the visit took place against a backdrop of ongoing violence and instability across the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 2334 highlights, we are seeing continued negative trends and unnecessary loss of life. The Minister saw for herself last week the pain and suffering evictions and demolitions are causing Palestinians in Masafar Yatta and Sheikh Jarrah. Protecting human rights and ensuring accountability for illegal actions and abuses is essential.

Turning to UNRWA, the Minister observed first hand the critical role the agency plays in helping maintain stability through its delivery of core services and humanitarian and protection assistance to Palestinian refugees. The UK was proud to announce this week our new multi-year funding agreement with UNRWA and provide £15 million this year.

We are alive to the challenges facing the agency, and are committed to ensuring it's on a more viable financial footing. We call on all donors, especially in the region, to provide predictable, multi-year funding so it can continue its vital work.

President, we must not ignore the toll this prolonged conflict has taken on the people of Gaza. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to end restrictions on movement, access and trade. Fifteen years of these restrictions have caused significant damage to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians in Gaza. Supporting prosperity for Gazans is firmly in Israel's long-term interests. We encourage a time bound commitment for a durable solution for Gaza.

The ongoing tensions underline that a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and for the Palestinians is long overdue. We urge the parties, supported by the international community, to do all they can to rebuild trust and take the path back to dialogue.



Thank you.

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## Sewage in water – a growing public health problem

One of the greatest public health triumphs of the last 200 years was separating human faeces from drinking water. People now take this for granted but it was the basis for preventing cholera, typhoid and other bacterial and viral diarrhoeal diseases that killed millions in major epidemics. Largely achieved through remarkable feats of engineering over two centuries, only vaccination matches it as a public health intervention for preventing infectious diseases. When bacteria from human faeces (coliforms) are ingested, it increases the risk of significant infections including antibiotic resistant bacteria. Keeping human faeces out of water people might ingest remains a public health priority.

Tap water in the UK is safe. No-one expects river water to be of drinking standard, but where people swim or children play they should not expect significant doses of human coliforms if they ingest water. Raw sewage from storm overflows and continuous discharge of waste containing viable organisms from sewage treatment works is an increasing problem. This is a serious public health issue for government and regulators and it is clear that the water companies are not doing enough. The public health dangers are in addition to the ecological and environmental impact which forms the basis for much regulation.

Use of our rivers for recreation and exercise is something to celebrate and encourage. Children have always played in waterways and always will, irrespective of what notices are put up next to them. People of all ages use freshwater waterways such as rivers for recreation including swimming and various forms of boating. During lockdown many people took to swimming in rivers and have continued since. Our rivers, seas and waterways should therefore be free from sewage to reduce risk to the public. There are two major issues to tackle. Both have solutions.

The first is raw sewage discharge from the sewage network and in particular storm overflows. As the name implies this should be an exceptionally rare. The engineering logic of storm overflows is that if the sewerage system is at risk of being overwhelmed by storms or atypically intense rain, sewers get too full and can back up into homes or overflow into streets. To prevent that, storm overflows act as a safety release valve, but were intended only for exceptional circumstances when the public would be unlikely to be using rivers.

After the Environment Agency required the water industry to install monitors on overflows, data shows that their use is now not exceptional. In some

cases, up to 200 discharges a year are occurring. This is obviously unacceptable on public health grounds. Whilst zero discharges are technically achievable the cost of this may not be justified; to reduce the frequency down to genuine storms should however be a minimum expectation. It certainly is the expectation of the great majority of the public, including those who do not themselves use rivers recreationally as measured by polling data. Nobody wants a child to ingest human faeces.

There are solutions to getting storm overflows back to only functioning only in very high rainfall conditions. These involve better operational management, innovation and investment. This this is rightly seen as the job of water companies. As a start, four have recently agreed to reduce their overflows to an average of no more than 20 discharges a year by 2025- but we need to go much further and Ofwat and the Environment Agency will hold companies to account for this delivery.

The second major issue is coliforms from the continuous normal discharge from sewage works. Whilst raw sewage is not discharged into waterways from these, viable bacteria and viruses are, as part of normal operations. Eliminating discharges of coliforms from sewage works upstream of popular recreational areas will go a long way to reducing human faecal infective organisms downstream. This has been achieved for seaside beaches at coastal works by use of ultraviolet treatment. Other forms of less energy intensive treatment are in trial or development: these options need to be pushed forward by companies with urgency.

It will inevitably require investment to boost resilience and capacity in our sewerage system. But it is not just a question of money- it needs preventive engineering, better sewer management, innovation and commitment. We welcome recent initiatives by some companies, but a lot more needs to be done. Ofwat asked all companies to produce an action plan setting out how they will rapidly improve river health. As they finalise plans, they must demonstrate a commitment to public health that matches public expectation. We have two stretches of river in England and Wales with bathing water status. There are over 500 in France.

We recognise management of sewers is made more difficult by plastic wet wipes flushed down toilets which congeal together with fats poured down drains to form fatbergs that block sewers and cause avoidable use of the storm overflows. Ensuring all of us put wetwipes in bins or, better, that only rapidly biodegradable wet wipes are available would immediately assist in reducing avoidable outflow problems.

However, the principal public health responsibility for ensuring human faeces and viable human faecal bacteria do not get into waterways people might use recreationally rest squarely with the water companies and their directors. Ministers have already signalled they want significant action, requiring companies to deliver a multi-billion programme to tackle storm sewage discharges. Companies should take the initiative and go faster. Regulators will hold companies to account. It is time for wastewater companies to act. It will be a matter of choice if they do not.

For information on the action the government is taking on water quality, visit [here](#)