

Speech: The UK-Nigeria relationship is one of strong partnership

We all know Nigeria's great potential: largest economy in Africa; set to be 3rd most populous nation in the world by 2050; Africa's largest oil producer; fertile land; abundant natural resources; a large internal market; and a young, energetic population, with a deserved reputation for creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

That spirit is particularly strong here in Oyo State, and in Ibadan – home of Nigeria's oldest University, and the first TV station in Africa; the 5th most populous state in the country; an important link in the South West prosperity hub that extends from Lagos, with the potential to serve as a hub for West Africa.

UK-Nigeria prosperity relationship is strong. UK companies (Unilever, Shell, PZ Cussons, British Airways, Diageo/Guinness, etc.), are among the longest running international businesses in Nigeria. Prudential plc recently purchased a majority stake in Zenith Life – the first such market entry from the UK into Nigeria. The UK is usually in the top 5 of Nigeria's trade partners, and is the largest source of capital inflows into Nigeria – including investment from the City of London.

Nigeria edged out of recession in the second quarter of this year – with year on year growth of 0.55%. This is clearly better than staying in recession, but is far from sufficient to generate the 2m+ jobs required each year just to keep pace with population growth.

The government's Economic Growth and Recovery Plan sets out an ambitious range of targets for ensuring that Nigeria builds back better from recession. We are working with the Nigerian government and other development partners to support these efforts – but the challenges are great, and we hope to see accelerated progress in tackling structural reforms, especially in power and infrastructure.

There are some positives to report. DFID has been supporting the implementation of the Action Plans for improving the Business Environment, which have delivered results in reducing bureaucracy, streamlining processes, and enhancing capacity. These reforms have helped Nigeria leap up 24 places in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, released this week – one of the top 10 most improved countries on the list. 145th is still not high enough for Nigeria's longer term ambitions – regulatory reform will need to turn into more attractive reality. But it is a start. And should give encouragement to stand against those who say that nothing can be done.

Encouraging greater investment is key to the work that the UK government is supporting in Nigeria. Whether that's DFID's programming supporting state-level investment promotion; the UK's global Prosperity Fund supporting further Business Environment reform, trade, and investment capacity; CDC (the

UK's development finance organisation) investing in projects like the Azura power plant; or British companies opening new facilities – as Guinness Nigeria has done in Edo State, or as Reckitt Benckiser is planning in Ogun State.

Our broader relationships are also strong – the UK is home to a large Nigerian diaspora, is one the largest source of remittances into Nigeria, and we share historical, cultural and sporting ties, with heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua celebrated as much here in Nigeria as he is in the UK. I understand he credits part of his power to the pounded yam of his Nigerian family roots.

Last week the London Stock Exchange hosted a forum Nigerian Capital Markets and Banking. Our Secretary of State for International Development spoke of the UK's commitment to harnessing capital market tools to boost investment that can create jobs, increase tax revenues, and deliver inclusive growth.

In the past two months our Department from International Trade team has hosted two large delegations from Nigeria – on infrastructure and agriculture, two major priorities for both the UK and the Nigerian governments where we see great potential for cooperation, investment, and growth.

His Excellency, Abiola Ajimobi, the Governor of Oyo was one of six state Governors and Deputies who joined the Federal Government Minister for Agriculture for the agricultural investment roadshow hosted in London. We heard great interest from investors in the City of London, as well as agri-tech and processing innovators in the UK about partnering with Nigerian states and companies to boost a priority sector for growing incomes, jobs, and exports in the future. The substantial poultry farming and maize production in Oyo State provide great opportunities, and we are working hard to encourage UK firms to partner with Nigerian producers, to help develop the processing value chains here.

The UK's Trade Envoy, John Howell MP will be visiting Lagos next week to take forward those talks and build on the exchanges to help drive further cooperation as we work together to build on the great potential that Nigeria has. Because we have to turn that into reality.

Several things will help us achieve this: coherent and consistent policy making at the federal and state level – businesses manage risks all the time, but too much uncertainty and they cannot plan their investments; reliable and transparent legal and administrative processes – the confidence that the property and prosperity they build will be protected; and long-term relationships of trust and cooperation – not only with government, but with banks, suppliers, producers, educational and training institutions, and host communities.

This is why UK-Nigeria relationship is one of partnership – of governments, officials, businesses, and most fundamental of people. Working together to tackle shared threats and also to build shared prosperity.

As a final reminder – the deadline to apply for our fully-funded masters programme Chevening Scholarships is next week, Tuesday 7 November. In the last year, we awarded 43 scholarships to future leaders from Nigerian to study a one year Masters courses at the best universities in the UK.

[News story: Government Legal Department Qualified Lawyer Recruitment Campaign](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The next 'Always On' lawyer recruitment campaign starts on 1 December 2017

[Speech: A decent education for Nigeria's young people is important](#)

As the UK's High Commissioner in Nigeria, I would like to welcome you all to the 8th annual conference of the Association of Private Educators in Nigeria. I am delighted to be here with you today to discuss the crucially important issue of Education in Nigeria given the need for all of us – Government, Development Partners and the private sector – to invest more in human capital if Nigeria is to reach its full potential and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The key question for me from a development partner perspective are why private sector investment in education? Should we not be supporting the public sector to continue to provide services that have been dominated by government? The answer to these questions lies in the growing trend of private sector education in Africa, the growing population in sub-Saharan Africa and lessons and evidence from supporting a hybrid system that supports both the public and the private sectors. According to the recent 'Business of Education in Africa' report: "21% of African children and young people are already being educated in the private sector, with this percentage likely to rise to one in four by 2021". Also the research notes that despite the progress by sub-Saharan Africa since the Millennium Development Goals, 30 million children in SSA are not receiving any form of schooling, and tertiary education is capacity constrained. Specifically in Nigeria, we have the highest number of out of school children in the world with over 11 million children out of school. This challenge is compounded by a worsening fiscal

squeeze, underinvestment in education and a population that is estimated to reach 450 million by 2050.

The challenges in the Education sector in Nigeria are enormous and public sector investment alone cannot meet the current demand. According to recent statistics on private sector education in Nigeria, 40% of pupils are attending private schools. And in some states of the federation, that figure for private provision of education is even higher. DFID's experience, working in the Education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, shows that supporting the public sector alone is not sufficient to address the problems of access and quality education. This is why the UK government recognises the absolute importance of supporting children and young people to gain a decent education in Nigeria through a hybrid system. In Nigeria, the bulk of our funding is on supporting the public sector to strengthen systems and improve schools. Some of these programmes have included:

- Education Sector Support Programme: The core results were systems building and school improvement in over 16,000 public primary schools in 6 states, benefitting 6.5m Nigerian children.
- Girls' Education Project: To enable one million additional girls to gain access to better education in five Northern states by 2020. Currently working with nearly 3,000 public primary schools and 1,000 Integrated Quranic schools.
- Teacher Development Programme: To train 62,000 teachers and 4,000 student teachers in maths, science and English, using mobile technology. Also provides teachers with support and ongoing coaching in classrooms at Federal level and in 5 states.

DFID also invests heavily in Nigeria through the Global Partnership for Education and the Girls Education Challenge Fund complementing our direct bilateral support.

As mentioned earlier, the UK Government recognises the importance of a mixed system that also supports the public sector. In Lagos State where it is estimated that there are 18,000 private schools and 1,600 public schools, we have taken pragmatic steps to support opportunities in the private sector through our Developing Effective Private Sector Education Nigeria (DEEPEN) programme. DEEPEN is an innovative programme that uses the making markets work for the poor approach, to build the regulatory and quality assurance capacity of government and supporting the low cost education market in Lagos. DEEPEN comprises four workstreams – rules and standards, finance, school improvement services and information – which were designed to stimulate and strengthen a private market in low cost education for the poorest people in Lagos. The programme works with government, private school associations, financial institutions, community based groups, the media and parent associations.

Since the inception of DEEPEN programme in 2013, it has achieved some impressive results that include: 1. 1,666 schools have had access to school improvement services (teacher training and capacity development) 2. 455 (453 low cost) schools reviewed and commenced school improvement as a result of the pilot Graded Assessment of Private Schools supported by DEEPEN 3. 1723 schools have gained access to affordable financial services and products, as a result of support to school associations and financial institutions 4. At

least 432 low-cost school owners supported to understand their tax rights and liabilities to avoid illegal and multiple tax payments 5. 373 schools have received training by service providers on business improvements related to improved business planning and financial management

The DEEPEN programme also includes an Innovation component that supported Bridge international Academies and a Challenge Fund to support innovative business models. Through the UK Government's support, Bridge Academies has setup 23 new academies in poor areas in Lagos State with 203 teachers and 23 academy managers employed and 6,530 students enrolled.

Let's not forget the crucial work also of the British Council and the vital role they play in the Education sector in Nigeria through programmes such as Connecting Classrooms. This multi-country programme, running from 2015-18, aims to build the capacity of teachers and school leaders to support them to integrate core skills such as creativity, critical thinking, digital literacy and collaboration into the curriculum. Last year 3500 teachers and 437 school leaders were trained through Connecting Classrooms in government and private schools in Lagos and FCT. This year they are reaching schools in Oyo, Kano and Rivers State.

However, the sustainability and success of this approach is not only dependent on private sector investors seizing opportunities, but also on the commitment of the state and the participation of non-state actors. Our experience in Lagos has shown that government commitment to improving the regulatory environment is critical to de-risking low cost private schools, unlocking the blockages to access to finance and investment in the learning environment. The time therefore has come for the Federal and sub-national governments to clearly articulate their policy on private sector education and provide the necessary regulation for businesses to thrive. On our part as a key partner for Nigeria, the UK Government remains committed to brokering partnerships between state and non-state actors and supporting improvements in the learning outcomes of children in Nigeria.

I know that the secondary and tertiary education system in Nigeria who once seen as a jewel of Africa' crown. It's sad that that is no longer the case. And although I should not complain about Nigerian parent sending their off springs to excellent British schools and universities, in many ways I would be happier if they did not feel this is necessary. I know Association of Private Educators in Nigeria is doing great work to help rebuild an education system of which Nigeria can be proud. The UK is standing ready to be a partner with you in this noble endeavour.

Finally let me thank Association of Private Educators in Nigeria and the conference committee for all their hard work in organising this event. I look forward to engaging and hearing more about the crucial work of Association of Private Educators in Nigeria.

[Press release: Joint statement on the ongoing detention of a human rights lawyer in Egypt](#)

The governments of Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK are deeply concerned by the ongoing detention of human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy.

Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are deeply concerned at the ongoing detention of human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy, who was detained at Cairo airport on September 10th on his way to the UN Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances working group.

We are concerned at the detention conditions that Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy is reportedly enduring, and continue to call for transparency on prison conditions in Egypt. We call on the Egyptian authorities to ensure the freedom of civil society and the protection from torture that are enshrined in the Egyptian Constitution.

Further information

[Press release: Tidal flood barrier gate arrives in Ipswich](#)

A 200 tonne tidal gate has arrived in Suffolk, ready to be installed at Ipswich's new flood barrier.

The delivery of the gate from its manufacturing site in Rotterdam, Holland, is a significant step towards the completion of the Environment Agency's £70 million project.

The work was carried out by Hollandia, a sub-contractor for Environment Agency contractor VBA – a joint venture between VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins.

It took 2 years to design and build the gate and 24 hours for it to be transported across the North Sea, finally passing under the Orwell Bridge and entering Ipswich early on the morning of Friday 27 October.

The gate is 22 metres wide and will stand 9 metres tall when in its "closed position". It is finished with 5 tonnes of special paint that will help

protect it, as it spends most of its life under water.

Special crane will be used to install 200 tonne gate

The gate is currently on a barge in the Port of Ipswich, while a crane big enough to lift it into place is delivered to site and constructed.

The 1,000 tonne crane will be assembled on the construction site on the middle island of the Port of Ipswich.

Once the crane is complete, the gate will be installed into the barrier structure in the upright position, which is its "maintenance position".

The main hydraulic rams and control systems can then be installed and there will be a testing period of a further 8 weeks.

Andrew Osborne, Project Manager, said:

This is a key milestone for the project and sees the final elements of the barrier arriving on site.

The construction of the crane will take several days, and this is a very busy period for what has been a long-running project.

It's another step closer to significantly improving the flood protection for Ipswich.

The Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy (IFDMS) will increase the standard of protection to 0.33% (greater than 1 in 200) and takes into account current climate change predictions. The 0.33% relates to the probability of a combined fluvial and tidal flood event happening in any one year.

The final element of the scheme involves building a tidal barrier across the New Cut River in Ipswich, with associated works to tie it into the new east and west bank walls and gates. The barrier is expected to be operational in the spring of 2018.

The flood defence scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,608 homes and 422 businesses and support key infrastructure, has been partnership funded by: the Environment Agency, Ipswich Borough Council, Department for Communities and Local Government, the Haven Gateway Partnership, and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.