

Somalia elections: Minister for Africa statement

News story

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has issued a statement following the conclusion of the elections period in Somalia



Minister for Africa Vicky Ford said:

I welcome the conclusion of the electoral process in Somalia and warmly congratulate Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on his election as President.

After the protracted electoral process, the UK encourages Somalia's leaders to work together with a new focus on issues of urgent national importance such as tackling al-Shabaab, responding to the devastating drought, maintaining fiscal stability, and constitutional reform.

At this critical juncture, the United Kingdom remains committed to supporting all the people of Somalia, and to working alongside President Hassan Sheikh and his government as they seek to build greater stability, security and prosperity. I look forward to continuing to strengthen the UK – Somalia relationship.

Published 16 May 2022

M25 junction 28 improvements development consent decision

The application is to upgrade junction 28 of the junction between the M25 anti-clockwise and the A12 in Essex, including the provision of a dedicated link for this right-turn movement and minor improvements of the existing roundabout.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by Highways England on 27 May 2020 and accepted for Examination on 24 June 2020.

Following an Examination during which the public, Statutory Consultees and Interested Parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, recommendations were made to the Secretary of State on 16 September 2021.

This is the 112th Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and 40th transport application to have been examined by The Planning Inspectorate within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"The Planning Inspectorate has now examined more than 100 nationally significant infrastructure projects since the Planning Act 2008 process was introduced, ensuring local communities have had the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them.

This Examination took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions and the Examining Authority worked hard to ensure that local people, the local authority and other Interested Parties were able to fully participate.

The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views and the evidence gathered during the Examination before making its recommendation."

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation are publicly available on the [project pages of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#)

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate's [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the

Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

[Delivering the water quality we all want to see](#)

The Government has reinforced its commitment to taking tough action to improve water quality today, with the Environmental Audit Committee welcoming its response to a recent inquiry on water quality in rivers.

Water quality is a top priority for the Government, which was the first to set out an expectation that water companies must take steps to significantly reduce storm overflows. Last month, ministers launched a consultation on proposals to deliver the largest programme to tackle storm sewage discharges in history.

The [Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan Consultation](#) will revolutionise how water companies will tackle the number of discharges of untreated sewage, which the Government and the public have made clear are wholly unacceptable. Water companies will face strict limits on when they can use storm overflows and must completely eliminate the harm any sewage discharge causes to the environment under the plans.

This builds on a swathe of action to tackle water quality, including measures voted through as part of the Government's world leading [Environment Act](#) which include a duty on the Government to produce a statutory plan to reduce discharges from storm overflows; duties on water companies; and a power of direction for the Government to direct water companies in relation to Drainage and Sewerage Management Plans.

[The Government is also consulting on targets to improve water quality, reduce nutrient pollution and reduce pollution by metals from abandoned mines](#). These targets will act as powerful tools to deliver cleaner water, pushing all water companies to go further and faster to fix overflows, and helping to generate the most significant investment ever undertaken by water companies to revolutionise our sewer system.

Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow, said:

Water quality is a top priority for me. We are the first government to set out our expectation that water companies must take steps to significantly reduce storm overflows and we are consulting on the single biggest programme in history to tackle storm sewage discharges.

We are setting ambitious targets, delivering on our Environment Act and cracking down on those water companies that are not playing their part in delivering the clean water that the people of this country want to see.

Since 2015 the Environment Agency has brought 48 prosecutions against water companies, securing fines of over £137 million. Last year, the Environment Agency and Ofwat launched a major investigation based on evidence that some water companies in England may not be complying with their permits, resulting in excess sewage spills into the environment, even in dry periods. Some of the biggest fines were imposed last year – including a record £90 million fine for Southern Water in July for thousands of illegal discharges – making clear that polluters will be made to pay for damage to the environment.

Between 2020 and 2025, water companies are investing £7.1 billion to protect and improve the environment. Of this, £3.1 billion is being invested specifically in storm overflow improvements.

Additional action on water quality includes almost doubling the budget for Catchment Sensitive Farming – these grants support farmers to develop environmentally sustainable methods that limit the contamination of nearby bodies of water from things like manure or pesticides. The new annual budget will be £30 million, up from £16.6 million in 2020-21. This means it will cover 100% of England's farmland, up from 40% of its current coverage, with every farmer able to access advice and support by March 2023. Defra has also recently published guidance on the Farming Rules for Water. This will raise standards of nutrient pollution management by setting clearer expectations for farmers.

On plastic pollution, the Government has run a call for evidence on wet wipes, which make up more than 90% of the material that causes sewers to block, causing pollution and surface water flooding, as well as costly damage to pipes. The Government is considering various regulatory options – including a ban on wet wipes containing plastic, a mandatory 'flushability' standard, mandatory labelling on packaging, and an extended producer responsibility scheme for wipes containing plastic.

Bathing water season begins in Devon and Cornwall

- Coastal areas will be tested regularly to check water quality
- Water users can check the water quality forecast on on the [Swimfo: Find a Bathing Water](#) website.

The bathing water season started yesterday (15 May) with the Environment

Agency carrying out regular testing of water quality at designated bathing sites across Devon and Cornwall until the end of September.

High standards of water quality at swimming locations are important for everyone's enjoyment of beaches across the south west. Throughout the bathing season the Environment Agency will issue warnings of any forecasted pollution risk on its [Swimfo](#) website.

Signs are also put up at these swimming locations to inform bathers about any possible dips in quality as a result of factors like rainfall, wind and high tides.

In the autumn Defra will publish its classifications – Sufficient, Good, Excellent or Poor – for each designated bathing water site.

Bruce Newport, Devon and Cornwall Area Environment Manager said:

For the first time ever, 100% of designated bathing waters in Devon and Cornwall passed the water quality standards last year – with 98% gaining an 'Excellent' or 'Good' rating.

This is great for Devon and Cornwall as it gives people so much choice on where they can safely bathe this summer.

Our beaches are 100% compliant, but we are not complacent, there is more to be done to ensure cleaner and healthier waters for people to enjoy.

Whilst the sea washing onto our bathing beaches is very clean, we are aware that streams running across beaches can contain harmful bacteria. We do not regularly measure the quality of these streams and would ask everyone to be careful if you choose to bathe in these areas. If we are made aware of pollution events into our stream locations we work with the Councils to make people aware.

Since the 1990s, the Environment Agency has driven £2.5 billion of investment and facilitated partnerships to bring about the change needed to make our bathing waters a success story. The long-term trend for bathing water quality in England remains upward and overall quality is high.

In 2021 99% of bathing waters achieved the minimum standard of Sufficient. Of these, almost 95% achieved the highest standards of Excellent or Good – the highest since new standards were introduced in 2015. But while progress has been made, there is still much more to be done to ensure cleaner and healthier waters for people to enjoy.

Environment Agency Chair Emma Howard Boyd said:

Before the pandemic, coastal tourism in England generated £13.7 billion, supported 10,000 tourism related jobs, with 15 to 20

percent of employment in coastal locations linked to tourism – in some places over 50 percent. Public confidence in bathing water quality is key to the tourism industry as well as people's health and wellbeing. We monitor sites and provide pollution risk forecasting at over 170 sites throughout the bathing water season so people understand the local situation.

Targeted regulation and investment over several decades on the coast have driven significant improvements to bathing waters, but there is work to do inland. Water companies, industry and farmers need to meet regulatory requirements or face legal action, and there are small steps we can all take to help. For example by never flushing away wet wipes or plastic products like nappies so they don't end up in the water.

Designation does not guarantee clean water for swimming. Bringing rivers up to bathing water standards will be a challenge and places greater responsibility on farmers, water companies and communities to remove pollution that is harmful to swimmers.

The EA is calling on them to play their part and working hard with all those who want to be part of the solution. And individual actions count: small steps such as not pouring fats and oils down the sink or flushing wet wipes and other plastic products down the loo can help to protect water quality.

Knowing more about bathing water quality and the range and location of designated sites can help people get the most out of their visit. The EA's [Swimfo: Find a Bathing Water](#) website provides immediate access to information on over 400 designated bathing waters and notifies bathers when Pollution Risk Warnings have been issued. including coastal locations, inland lakes and the newly designated section of Wolvercote Mill Stream at Port Meadow in Oxford.

- During the bathing season (15 May to 30 September) the Environment Agency monitors the water quality for sources of pollution known to be a risk to bathers' health, with up to 20 samples taken from each site during the bathing seasons. Each sample is tested for bacteria, specifically E.coli. and intestinal enterococci.
 - The sampling program is set ahead of the start of season and follows a strict protocol to ensure samples are taken consistently both in terms of location and depth of water, and also covering a range of tidal states where safe to sample.
 - Bathing water designation takes into account any facilities that are provided to promote and support bathing (for example, lifeguarding, first aid facilities, public toilets, shops and cafes) because the presence of such facilities demonstrates the site is an established bathing area and is managed for bathing.
-

Alok Sharma speech to mark six months since COP26

“If you could stop climate tragedy unfolding further you would, wouldn’t you?”

That question, which we have just heard Emi Mahmoud ask so articulately, hung over COP26.

It was the question world leaders faced as they entered the plenary rooms.

It was the question negotiators grappled with through the nights.

The question to which the world was waiting for an answer.

And on the final day countries gave their response.

Here, at the SEC, they agreed the historic Glasgow Climate Pact.

This forges a path to a clean global future, it keeps alive the possibility of limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees celsius, and it told a watching world that leaders could and would stop tragedy unfolding before their eyes.

As I said at the time, in doing so, countries demonstrated what the world had come to doubt, that nations can rise above their differences to unite against a common challenge; And that the international system can deliver.

That is why, as Peter has just said, although those two weeks in November were intense, and they were difficult, it was an extraordinary privilege to play my part at COP26, in the role of Shepherd-in-Chief.

And I in turn want to thank Glasgow Council, the Scottish Government, and Peter and his team for all their efforts in hosting the event, and of course our principal partners for their support.

And I will always be grateful to the people of Glasgow for the warmth of their welcome; which was commented on by so many ministers and negotiators from across the globe.

This great City has earned its name as the “Dear Green Place” in the hearts of delegates from around the world.

And so it is right that we are donating items from COP26 to support the local community.

6000 items of furniture have been given to charities and community groups.

Miles of carpet have been divided up between 1800 families.

And over 600 laptops will support local people who need them, including

Ukrainian refugees.

This is a fitting final act for a summit that met the highest standards of sustainability, as our Sustainability Report, published today, demonstrates.

Six months have now passed since Presidents and Prime Ministers came to Glasgow,

since the SEC held the biggest international summit the United Kingdom has ever hosted.

And in that time, the world has changed.

The clouds have darkened over the international landscape.

War, has returned to Europe.

The tectonic plates within our geopolitics have shifted.

Inflation is spiking around the world.

Debt is mounting.

Energy prices are rising.

And globally, people are struggling to feed their families, all as we continue to deal with the effects of the pandemic.

Now as a result, climate is understandably no longer on the front pages as it was in the lead up to, and at, COP26.

Yet the current crises should increase, not diminish, our determination to deliver on what the world agreed here in Glasgow.

Because they show with devastating clarity, why it is imperative to do so. And to do so now.

In January, at Chatham House in London, I spoke about the fact that economic opportunity is now driving climate action.

Wind and solar are now cheaper than coal and gas in the majority of the world.

Investing in fossil fuels will only risk stranded assets.

And the potential of renewables is extraordinary.

On a recent visit to Brazil I was told that the country could, with investment, generate up to 700 gigawatts of power from offshore wind every year.

And in Mexico, I heard that the state of Oaxaca has more offshore wind potential than the entire North Sea.

Increasingly, unleashing such potential is a matter of security, as well as economics.

Putin's illegal and brutal invasion will define this year, and indeed many years to come.

The brave people of Ukraine, who continue to suffer at his hands, remain in all our thoughts.

And, of course, the actions of the Putin regime have pushed-up fossil fuel prices globally.

That has thrown our situation into stark relief.

We see clearly the dangers of energy systems powered by foreign fossil fuels.

We see the benefits of low cost, homegrown renewables, the price of which cannot be manipulated from afar.

In short, we see that climate security is energy security, that we must break our dependency on fossil fuels.

And governments are responding.

Yes, they are taking action to deal with immediate supply issues.

Yet they are also accelerating the move to clean power.

The European Commission has announced that the European Union will increase renewables deployment to help reduce dependency on Russian hydrocarbons.

And here in the United Kingdom, we have recently published our Energy Security Strategy, to accelerate our deployment of wind, of solar, of nuclear, and of hydrogen.

This could see 95 percent of our electricity come from low carbon sources by 2030.

And we aim to fully decarbonise our power system by 2035.

The forces driving us towards a clean future are building.

Increasingly, it is clear that net zero means security.

Net zero means prosperity.

And net zero means preventing the problems of the present growing inexorably.

Because many of the challenges we face today would intensify as global temperatures rise.

Look at food security.

One of the most moving conversations that I have had as COP President was

with women in Madagascar on the brink of famine, women who were enduring the unimaginable.

And it is a terrible truth that their experience is shared by many millions around the world.

Acute hunger is at unprecedented levels.

A recent report by the "Global Network Against Food Crises" found that hundreds of millions of people experienced food insecurity last year, with acute food insecurity rising almost 25 percent since 2020, which was already a record year.

That is many millions of people whose lives, or livelihoods, are in peril because they cannot eat.

Millions of individual tragedies.

And of course, those figures predate the Ukraine crisis, which has rocked global supply chains and driven-up prices.

Now, the World Food Programme expects acute hunger to rise further, by tens of millions of people if the conflict in Ukraine continues unabated.

We know that climate change inflames food insecurity.

It is inflaming food insecurity right now.

And every fraction of a degree makes a difference.

A rise in average global temperature to 2 degrees, compared to 1.5, would mean a doubling of the reduction in yields of maize, a staple crop, in the tropics, and fisheries losing twice as much of their catch.

And whilst the UN projects the world's population will increase by around 20 percent by 2050 from current levels,

Chatham House estimates that crop yields could decline by 30 percent by then unless we drastically reduce emissions,

including from agriculture.

So we must accelerate the transition to fairer, more sustainable, more resilient food systems and supply chains.

The problems we face today underscore why it is vital that we do so, and why we must honour the commitments made at COP26.

Failure to do so would be an act of monstrous self-harm.

And over the past six months, we have had grim reminders of the urgency of our task.

The United Nations body on climate science, the IPCC, has released two major

reports, each agreed by almost 200 countries and synthesising thousands of research papers.

These reports conclude unequivocally that the window of time we have left to act is closing fast, and that we must urgently adapt and reduce emissions, and that climate change is already, wreaking havoc: ecosystems are being irreversibly destroyed, people are being forced from their homes, and water insecurity has increased.

But it is not only the science that tells us our situation is critical.

We see the evidence all around us.

In the short film we watched just before I spoke, we saw the effects of Hurricane Irma that I witnessed on the island of Barbuda.

We saw the visit I made to the sea wall in Jakarta, which is literally being added to every few years to keep protecting the City.

On that same visit to Indonesia, I saw homes being relocated to save people from those same rising seas.

In Bolivia, Indigenous leaders told me how, longer and harder rains are causing flooding in their lands.

And this year, India and Pakistan have already experienced unbearable temperatures: a billion people exposed to extreme heat in some of the hottest months since records began.

And hundreds are reported dead in South Africa, where floods have swept the province of KwaZulu-Natal, destroying buildings and claiming lives.

This is the reality of climate change.

And it is a reality that will get far worse as temperatures rise.

Climate change is a chronic danger.

A danger that will be with us for generations to come.

And so we must continue to confront it, as we also deal with the pressures of the present.

That is why it is imperative we deliver the Glasgow Climate Pact.

As I say, this is a historic agreement.

It calls on countries to phase-down unabated coal power and phase-out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

It requests countries to revisit and strengthen their 2030 emissions reduction targets, as necessary, to align with the Paris temperature goal by the end of this year.

It urges developed countries to scale-up climate finance, and specifically to double finance for adaptation by 2025.

It underlines the central importance of adaptation, the dangers of loss and damage, and the need to scale-up action and support for both, and the Pact charts a way forward to do so.

Outside the COP26 negotiating rooms we heard significant commitments from countries, companies and financial institutions too.

They pledged to clean-up vital sectors like power and transport, to end deforestation, and to work together to accelerate the clean transition.

Altogether, if the commitments made around COP26 are honoured on time, we can limit the rise in global temperature to below two degrees.

That was the conclusion of the International Energy Agency at the time.

And this analysis has been backed-up by a recent study in the respected scientific journal, Nature.

Since delegates left the SEC for a final time last November, work to deliver on the commitments made here in Glasgow has purposefully continued.

We have had some countries submit new emissions reduction targets, or NDCs.

And of course the UK is considering its own response to the Glasgow Pact.

That includes reviewing the evidence to ensure our NDC remains aligned with the Paris Agreement, and looking at ways to strengthen it, all as we focus on delivering and building on our Net Zero Strategy.

We have had new adaptation communications, work has kicked-off to get the Santiago Network up and running, to provide technical assistance on loss and damage.

And the Glasgow Dialogue and the Glasgow to Sharm el Sheikh Work Programme will get going in June.

On finance, the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance has launched five trial projects in Bangladesh and Fiji, Jamaica, Rwanda, and Uganda.

And the IMF has launched the Resilience and Sustainability Trust, to support developed countries to channel their Special Drawing Rights to climate action in developing nations.

I have supported and championed this initiative, and I want to thank Kristalina Georgieva, for all her, and her team's dedication, in delivering the RST, and for responding to the calls in the Glasgow Climate Pact, championed by Small Island Developing Countries, to do so.

We have made some progress on critical sectors.

And action from business continues.

Around 2,000 international firms have joined the United Nations Race to Zero campaign since COP26, which commits them to reach net zero by 2050 at the latest.

That takes the total to over 7,000.

And civil society has kept-up the pressure on business and governments to deliver.

Last week the COP27 President Designate, Egypt's Foreign Minister Shoukry and I, co-chaired a meeting of ministers and representatives from over 40 governments around the world.

This May Ministerial was hosted in Copenhagen by Minister Jørgensen and the Danish Government.

This focussed not on what countries need to do, but how they will do it.

How individually and collectively they will honour the commitments made here in Glasgow on emissions reductions, on adaptation, on loss and damage, and on climate finance.

And what we heard was encouraging.

We did make progress in these key areas.

There was a high degree of consensus on what we must do to deliver in each of these areas.

We heard positive signals about countries looking again at their 2030 NDCs, including considering how they can strengthen their sectoral targets.

The German and Canadian governments have agreed to coordinate a Progress Update on the \$100billion Delivery Plan, which was published last year.

This Update will be based on the ten collective actions agreed last year, and it will cover the commitment to double adaptation finance, as well as access to finance.

We also announced a new, Independent High-Level Expert Group on investment in climate action, to be co-chaired by Lord Nick Stern and Vera Songwe.

The Group will develop policy options to encourage and enable the investment and finance necessary for delivery of the Paris Agreement and the Glasgow Climate Pact.

The May Ministerial was productive in helping to build momentum towards delivering the Glasgow Pact.

Now this progress is of course welcome.

But frankly we need to up the pace.

Leaders have not done enough to deliver on their Glasgow commitments.

And that must change.

This November, when countries meet in Sharm-el-Sheikh for COP27, the spotlight will be back on climate.

And the world will look to see whether they were right to put their doubts aside, and to cautiously place their confidence in the multilateral system.

Whether they were right to take leaders at their word.

We must show them that they were.

And that means moving much faster over the next six months than we have over the last six.

And setting ourselves up to deliver, over this vital decade.

In the final moments of COP, I described the Glasgow Climate Pact as a fragile win.

And unless we accelerate delivery, citizens will look-on at Sharm-el-Sheikh and see that cracks have emerged.

That leaders have allowed that historic and hard won agreement to fracture.

We cannot allow that to happen.

So the UK COP26 Presidency is working hard, with our Egyptian partners, to drive delivery.

Every country must respond to the call to revisit and strengthen their NDC.

And they must do so in 2022.

The Glasgow Pact calls on countries to look again at their NDCs, not at some vague point in the future, but this year, in 2022.

And the major emitters must lead from the front, particularly those G20 countries with little or no increase in ambition since Paris.

We need them to submit more ambitious NDCs, where they are not currently aligned with the Paris Agreement.

We need all countries to submit long-term strategies aligned with net zero.

And this needs to be done before the UNFCCC's Synthesis Report deadline of 23rd September.

We also need plans to turn these targets into action.

And we need developed countries to be delivering on finance to support developing nations' ambition, and to help them access the benefits of climate-resilient investments: from growth, to jobs, to clean air and competitive advantage.

The agreed \$100billion Delivery Plan update needs to show progress on delivery, particularly the goal to double adaptation finance by 2025.

Thus far, too little has been achieved on doubling adaptation finance, and that must change.

So we need countries to clearly set out their plans.

We also need more progress from countries and financial institutions in aligning with the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance principles.

And we need to drive Just Energy Transition Partnerships forward.

In technical terms these are financial mechanisms that tailor support to individual countries' energy transitions, in alignment with national plans.

In human terms, they are about the many thousands of people who still rely on fossil fuels for their livelihoods,

about supporting them to retrain and reskill, and about helping countries transition away from fossil fuels, whilst keeping the lights on and cleaning-up the air by moving to green technologies.

We announced the South African Just Energy Transition Partnership at COP26.

And now, we are working towards others, and I am hopeful we will be able to announce them by COP27.

On adaptation and loss and damage, we need to have made practical progress on the Global Goal on Adaptation by COP27, as well as having operationalised the Santiago Network.

And we also must also make further progress in critical sectors.

We need more commitments to end coal power, to put a stop to international fossil fuel finance, and to accelerate the shift to renewables.

We need a greater share of the global market covered by commitments to end the sale of polluting vehicles.

We need countries to agree on the steps that they will take to accelerate clean technologies, including in sectors like steel and hydrogen, through the Breakthrough Agenda.

And we need leaders to show they are delivering on their commitments to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.

On every one of these issues we will use the G7, the G20, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the United Nations General Assembly to urge action.

And we will host a second climate and development Ministerial in September to drive progress on the issues that matter most to climate vulnerable countries, because championing their needs remains critical for me.

If you think this sounds like a hefty programme of work, you are right.

But it is vital to achieving the change we have agreed is necessary.

The United Kingdom remains an unapologetically high-ambition COP presidency.

But ultimately, it is up to all world leaders to step up and deliver.

Just as they promised here in Glasgow six months ago.

I learnt a lot in those two weeks here at the SEC.

I learnt I could survive on three hours sleep,

I learnt to love Tunnocks teacakes.

But principally I learnt that though this international system, the COP process, is imperfect and it is unwieldy, it can work, it can deliver, and it is the best chance we have of tackling climate change.

But it is only as strong as the sum of its parts.

So we need every nation to pick up the pace.

We need every leader to show that their words were not hollow, that their commitments were made with integrity, and that they recognise, though the immediate challenges we face are grave, we will only inflame them if we falter.

Because it is leaders who made promises, and it is leaders who must honour them.

So when countries meet in Egypt in six months time, they must show a global audience that the confidence we inspired in the international system was not misplaced, that though the world has changed, our resolve has not, and that the historic agreement forged in this "Dear Green Place" is taking the world towards a cleaner, safer, and more prosperous future.

Ladies and gentlemen, earlier this morning we heard Emi Mahmoud ask whether:

"If you could stop the next tornado from hitting your home, the next hurricane from wiping out your city, the next drought from starving your people, wouldn't you?"

Here in the SEC last November, the world said it would.

Now, leaders must show that they will.

Thank you.