

# Press release: International Trade Secretary announces increasing financial support for UK businesses to trade with South Africa and Mozambique

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox , announced increases in financial trade support for UK businesses to trade with South Africa as he flew out to South Africa and Mozambique to discuss strengthening trade relations (Sunday 17 September).

The visit will help to further develop the good bilateral trade relationships with the South African and Mozambique governments, promoting mutually beneficial support for British investment in Africa. In 2015 trade with Africa totalled £30.8 billion and the International Trade Secretary's visit will build on the strong opportunities for trade between the UK and Africa.

Investment ties between the UK and Africa are growing with African investment into the UK increasing by 500% between 2005 and 2014, and British investment more than doubling over the same period, clearly indicating the rich range of opportunities available.

As part of the visit Dr Fox announced that UK Export Finance (UKEF), the UK's export credit agency, will double support for trade with South Africa to up to £3.5 billion, meaning an additional £1.75 billion will be available for UK companies exporting to South Africa and for South African buyers of UK goods and services.

The International Trade Secretary also announced that UKEF are offering UK businesses wider access to government-backed overseas investment insurance (OII) which will protect UK businesses investing abroad. The enhanced support comes as the Department for International Trade looks to encourage more UK companies to invest overseas, realising the opportunities presented by fast-growing developing economies around the world.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

As we leave the EU, it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a more open and outward looking Britain and forge independent trading arrangements with growing economies around the world.

That is why as an international economic department, we are making billions of pounds of additional financial support available to UK exporters and buyers of UK goods and services in South Africa and opening up further export opportunities for British businesses across Africa through overseas investment insurance.

As part of the visit to South Africa, Dr Fox will meet Rob Davies, Minister of Trade and Industry as both seek to reaffirm the importance of the UK/SA trade and investment relationship.

He will also tour the newly opened Invest SA One-Stop-Shop, part of the SA government's initiative to attract investment and improve the business environment. Whilst there Dr Fox will meet with leaders of [WESGRO](#), the provincial Investment Promotion Agency for the Western Cape, seeing how investment opportunities for British companies are being promoted.

The Trade Secretary will also see first-hand how UK investment overseas is positively impacting on the local workforce when he meets apprentices at the Jaguar Landrover apprenticeship facility in Johannesburg.

In Mozambique Dr Fox will continue to promote the importance of a UK trade and investment relationship overseas as he meets with President Filipe Nyusi and Trade Minister Ernesto Max Elias Tonela.

## **South Africa**

Total trade in goods and services (ie exports plus imports) between the UK and South Africa totalled £8.1 billion in 2015, a 5.2% increase since 2014 (Source: ONS Pink Book 2016).

The top 5 UK goods exported to South Africa in 2016 were:

- 84 – Machinery and mechanical appliances (18.7% of all UK goods exported to South Africa)
- 85 – Electrical machinery and equipment (12.7%)
- 87 – Motor vehicles (11.7%)
- 30 – Pharmaceuticals (6.5%)
- 22 – Beverages, spirits and vinegar (6.0%)

Source: HMRC Interactive database (Data by HS Commodity code)

## **Mozambique**

Total trade in goods and services (ie exports plus imports) between the UK and Mozambique totalled £284 million in 2015 (Source: ONS Pink Book 2016).

The top 5 UK goods exported to Mozambique in 2016 were:

- 85 – Electrical machinery and equipment (22.9% of all UK goods exported

to Mozambique)

- 84 – Machinery and mechanical appliances (19.8%)
- 87 – Vehicles other than railway or tramway stock (17.5%)
- 30 – Pharmaceutical products (6.8%)
- 90 – Optical, photographic, cinematographic and medical equipment (5.8%)

Source: HMRC Interactive database (Data by HS Commodity code)

### **Further information**

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## **[News story: UK Defence Chief appointed as NATO Chairman of Military Committee](#)**

UK Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach has been elected as the new NATO Chairman of the Military Committee, the Alliance's senior military officer.

Following a lengthy election campaign, last night Sir Stuart was elected by other NATO Chiefs of Defence. It is anticipated that CDS will take over the role in June 2018.

Becoming the first Briton to hold the position for 25 years, this appointment will see Sir Stuart as NATO's senior military officer and act as the principal military advisor to the Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

CDS Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach said:

It is a huge honour to have been chosen to be the next Chairman of the Military Committee, one of the most important positions in NATO, central to European security.

I am excited to take on this next challenge at such an important time for NATO, at a time when the alliance must modernise to face new and ever adapting threats. Having spent the last year in the hugely rewarding position as Head of the UK's Armed Forces, I know I am ready to take on this challenge.

I would like to personally thank all of those who supported me

through this campaign and voted for me in the election.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

That Air Chief Marshal Peach has been elected to this position by his fellow Chiefs of Defence across NATO underlines the esteem in which he is held by his peers.

No-one understands better the challenges that NATO faces and I am sure that he will serve the Alliance with the same professionalism and rigour with which he has furthered Britain's interests throughout his distinguished career.

While Sir Stuart's appointment is testament to his ability and achievements, it is also a demonstration of the leading role that the UK plays in NATO and the importance of the Alliance to the UK.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

I would like to congratulate Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, who has deservedly been appointed as the next Chairman of NATO's Military Committee.

Sir Stuart has been an exceptional Chief of Defence Staff, unwavering in his dedication and commitment to the UK's Armed Forces.

NATO is vital to Britain's security at a time of increasing threats across the globe. This appointment underlines our leadership role in NATO and I know Sir Stuart will relish these new challenges.

Outgoing Chairman of the Military Committee General Petr Pavel said:

I welcome the election of CDS Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach. I have no doubt his vast experience as Chief of Defence but also as a Military Committee member, will allow him to chair the Committee with great aptitude, ensuring the North Atlantic Council continues to receive sound and unfettered military advice from the Military Committee to guide their work. I wish him the best of luck in his future position.

Sir Stuart has been in the role of CDS since July 2016 part of his long and successful military career after joining the RAF in 1977. Highlights of his career include commanding the UK's intervention in Libya in 2011 and becoming the first Commander of UK Joint Forces in December that same year.

The appointment of CDS will reassure NATO allies across Europe in the face of

an increasingly assertive Russia. The UK has been standing by allies in the region, leading an Enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup in Estonia and contributing troops in Poland, contributing to NATO Maritime Groups, committing Typhoons to Air Policing Missions in Romania, and training thousands of Armed Forces in Ukraine.

CDS will take over from General Petr Pavel, of the Czech Republic, who has been in the role since 2015.

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## **Press release: Foreign Office statement on Kurdistan Regional Government's intention to hold a referendum**

A Foreign Office spokesman said:

The UK does not support the Kurdistan Regional Government's aspiration to hold a referendum on 25 September. The referendum risks increasing instability in the region when the focus should be on defeating Daesh. That is why the UK has proposed new talks between the Kurdistan Regional Government and Government of Iraq on the future of the relationship between Erbil and Baghdad. Talks should be without preconditions, time limited, address all the issues of dispute between the two parties, and be backed by the international community. The UK calls on the Kurdistan Regional Government to seize this opportunity and to enter into serious negotiations with Baghdad.

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## **News story: David Mundell announces new Scottish business taskforce ahead of trip to Paraguay and Argentina**

Former UK Government minister Andrew Dunlop has been commissioned by the Scottish Secretary to chair a group made up of leading figures with expert knowledge of Scotland's business and economy. The group's membership will be

announced shortly.

David Mundell said:

The UK Government's new Scottish business taskforce will provide expert advice and guidance on how best to strengthen Scotland's economy. We know that Scotland's economic performance lags behind the rest of UK, and we need to close that gap. As we develop our ambitious industrial strategy and negotiate new trade deals with Europe and around the world, this expert panel will provide insight from a range of Scottish business sectors.

The Scottish Secretary made the announcement ahead of a trip this week to Paraguay and Argentina. He will use his visit to promote Scottish business interests and build cultural and educational links. Scottish firms already do substantial business in South America – Scotch whisky, for example, exports more than £14 million and £12 million a year to Paraguay and Argentina respectively. Scottish agritech companies are also keen to create opportunities in Paraguay's dynamic agricultural sector.

Speaking ahead of his visit Mr Mundell said:

As we are prepare to leave the EU, we want to build and strengthen our trade relationships with friends and partners old and new, and I am certain Scottish companies will be at the forefront of this. Scotland's skills, products and services are highly regarded globally, and we can build on that as we strike ambitious new trade deals around the world. I am travelling to South America this week to bang the drum for Scottish businesses, taking the message to these markets that Scotland's companies have the skills, products and expertise they need.

There are strong historic links between Scotland and Paraguay, going back nearly 200 years, and I hope to further strengthen the relationship between our two countries. I will be promoting Scottish businesses, including looking at opportunities in Paraguay's agricultural sector and for Scottish exports – building on the success of whisky sales to Paraguay.

UK companies have an extensive presence in Argentina, with enormous scope to expand, particularly in new technology and in oil and gas, areas where Scottish firms are among the best in the world. There are also strong cultural links between Scotland and Argentina, including through the Edinburgh Festivals, and I very much look forward to cementing these links.

In Paraguay, Mr Mundell will meet prominent senior political and business

figures, and make a keynote speech about the place of the UK in a post-Brexit world. He will also host a reception to promote Scottish produce and meet local civil society organisations working to combat discrimination .

In Argentina, Mr Mundell will meet cultural organisations, host a whisky tasting for business leaders and community groups, and meet a number of local businesses. He will also visit San Andrés University to hear about their links with St Andrew's University, and attend a commemoration to mark Argentinian pilots' contribution to the Battle of Britain.

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## [Press release: Voter ID pilot to launch in local elections](#)

Voters in five local authorities will need to show ID before they can vote next May in a move to tackle electoral fraud, the Minister for the Constitution Chris Skidmore will announce today (Saturday, 16 September).

The move comes after reports of alleged electoral fraud through voter impersonation more than doubled between 2014 and 2016, according to figures from the Electoral Commission.

Any reports of fraud undermine democracy and weaken the United Kingdom's strong tradition of holding free and fair elections.

In the May 2018 local elections Woking, Gosport, Bromley, Watford and Slough have volunteered to take part in a trial, which will require voters to produce ID before being issued with a ballot paper.

In addition, Tower Hamlets will also run a separate postal voting pilot, looking at the security of postal votes and providing additional guidance in postal vote packs.

The form of identification to be used will be set by the councils, but the pilot will involve trialling both photo ID and non-photo ID to see what is most effective and efficient.

Next year's trial is likely to be the first in a series of pilots to allow the Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office to evaluate the impact of asking for ID before a decision is taken on whether or not to roll it out nationally.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

For people to have confidence in our democratic processes we need to ensure that our elections are safeguarded against any threat or perception of electoral fraud.

The current situation of people simply pointing out their name without having to prove who they are feels out of date when considering other safeguards to protect people's identity. It is harder to take out a library book or collect a parcel at a post office than it is to vote in someone's name.

I am very hopeful that by taking a careful evidence-based approach in these pilots we will be able to roll out ID in polling stations at future elections.

Many countries around the world have already made it a requirement to prove identity at a polling station

And it is already a requirement in Northern Ireland, where ID has been requested since 1985. There have been no reports of voter impersonation since 2003.

Voter ID was raised in a report on voting fraud by Sir Eric Pickles, published in August last year.

The Electoral Commission has called for it for its introduction and the international election watchdog the Organisation for Security and Co-operation has said it should be "seriously considered".

Claire Bassett, Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission, said:

We welcome the Minister's announcement today as a positive first step towards implementing our 2014 recommendation that an accessible, proportionate voter identification scheme should be introduced in Great Britain.

Voters in Northern Ireland have been required to show photographic proof of identity since 2003, and we have the opportunity to learn from that experience. The Electoral Commission is responsible for carrying out an independent, statutory evaluation of the pilot schemes and we will publish our findings following the May elections, in the summer of 2018.