

United Kingdom and Turkmenistan begin Structured Dialogue

During the first day of the Dialogue, which was held virtually, representatives discussed a wide range of topics. One priority topic was the relationship between the UK and Turkmenistan in bilateral and international forums. Justin McKenzie Smith, Additional Director EECAD and co-chair, highlighted the importance of laying the foundation for focused cooperation this year, which marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

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Co-chair Vepa Hajiyev, Deputy Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, thanked the UK delegation for active participation. He stressed that discussions and exchange of views on bilateral, political and foreign policy, human dimension, climate change, trade and economy, as well as defence issues, will help to define new areas of cooperation. Exchange of views about the situation in both Afghanistan and Ukraine was also high on the agenda.

The second day of the Structured Dialogue was also rich in variety of themes. Vepa Hajiyev and Justin McKenzie kicked off the day with cooperation in the area of climate change. Speakers Janet Rogan, COP26 Regional Ambassador: Middle East and Africa, John Hamilton, Deputy Head of Mission in Ashgabat, and Mr Magtymguly Akmuradov, Ambassador and Counsellor of the International Organisations Department, took the opportunity to discuss post COP26 cooperation and how the United Kingdom can continue to support Turkmenistan reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Janet Rogan, COP26 Regional Ambassador: Middle East and Africa

Magtymguly Akmuradov, Ambassador and Counsellor: International Organisations Department

Exchange of views about economic and trade relations between Turkmenistan and the UK was another highlight of the day. Jane Grady, Deputy Trade Commissioner for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Ozgur Kutay, UK Export Finance, spoke about the UK export and finance offer and laid the groundwork for cooperation on green economy. British Ambassador to Turkmenistan, Lucia Wilde, highlighted that the UK has a great deal of expertise and experience to share with Turkmenistan regarding green economy, and is interested in deepening cooperation in this area. Mr Maksat Chariyev, Head of International Economic Cooperation at the Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed the importance of bringing UK and Turkmen experts together and tapping into new areas of cooperation.

Both Turkmen and UK representatives concluded that the Structured Dialogue meetings had proved to be a very effective format for the two governments to discuss potential areas of cooperation in detail.

Later in the day, Mr Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and UK Minister for Central Asia, Lord Ahmed, held a virtual meeting. They closed the first meeting of the Structured Dialogue with a positive discussion about the situation in Afghanistan and Ukraine. They also exchanged views on regional stability, human rights, climate change and green growth. At the end of the meeting, the Ministers signed a MoU on future cooperation between the two foreign ministries.