

Press release: PM announces more than £300 million worth of deals with African nations

Prime Minister Theresa May and International Trade Minister George Hollingbery led a 29-strong business delegation on their visit to South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya this week to promote economic ties with Africa.

Africa is a young, vibrant and dynamic continent growing at an extraordinary rate. By 2050, 1 in 4 people on the planet will be African, a quarter of the world's consumers.

This represents a transformational opportunity for UK firms to increase trade with African countries.

During the visit deals worth more than £300 million have been agreed within a variety of sectors, creating close to 3,000 jobs across Africa.

The commercial activity was announced this week as the Prime Minister set out the UK's ambition to be the largest G7 investor in Africa by 2022, ahead of an Africa Investment Summit which will be held in the UK next year.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The deals being announced today demonstrate the already close trade and investment links between the UK and African countries, and the potential that exists for other UK businesses to make the most of the growing opportunities on the continent.

With a shared passion for entrepreneurship, technology and innovation, now is the time for UK companies to strengthen their partnerships with Africa to boost jobs and drive prosperity both at home and overseas.

International Trade Minister George Hollingbery said:

I am delighted to have joined the Prime Minister on this visit showcasing the very best of the UK-Africa partnership and all that Global Britain has to offer in the region.

Our trade and investment ties with South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria are already substantial. Trade between the UK and Africa was worth more than £31 billion last year, and the Prime Minister has made it the UK's ambition to be the largest G7 investor in Africa by 2022.

It is hugely positive to see these new deals signalling that our

strong trading relationship is continuing to go from strength to strength.

While in Kenya, the Prime Minister appointed Pauline Latham OBE, MP for Mid Derbyshire, as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Kenya. Pauline will work to build on the UK's existing relationship with Kenya – maximising bilateral trade generating long-term benefits for both countries.

As part of the visit, the Prime Minister also announced that an agreement with the Southern African Customs Union and Mozambique means we will be ready to carry over the EU's Economic Partnership Agreement as soon as the EU deal no longer applies to the UK. This represents the most advanced statement of progress yet of around 40 existing EU trade agreements that the UK is rolling over.

She has also announced this week that UK Export Finance has increased its ability to support exports to a further 8 markets across Africa and made an extra £5.5 billion available to UK exporters and their African buyers to finance export deals, in a move to grow British exports to Africa, which exceeded £17 billion last year.

The UK-Africa trade relationship is already worth more than £31 billion.

Press release: Prompt action prevents A14 bridge closure

A lorry which struck the underside of a low bridge could have caused chaos on the A14, were it not for the swift recovery work of Highways England traffic officers and their partners.

The vehicle hit the underside of the Huntingdon Railway Viaduct, which carries the A14 over the rail line and through the town, at 1.15am last Wednesday (22 August). The bridge has a 4.4 metre (14ft 6in) height restriction in place on it, with the HGV too big to pass beneath.

A lane was closed on Brampton Road following the crash, which could have seen the bridge beams damaged and made the viaduct unable to support its weight, let alone the 77,000 drivers who cross it daily on the A14, closing both the road and railway beneath it too. Such damage would have seen the bridge need assessments which could take six months, with the repair and inspection work likely costing around £2 million.

Fortunately the damage was only superficial, and Highways England traffic officers, along with contractors Kier, Cambridgeshire Police and Cambridgeshire County Council, were quick to act at the scene, minimising

disruption before the morning rush hour hit prevent the town centre road being closed fully. With the lorry trapped beneath the steel beams of the bridge, they released air from the tyres to move it back.

Highways England service manager Austin Adkins said:

Hopefully this will serve as a reminder to drivers of tall vehicles that they need to take extra care on their journeys, particularly with low bridges, as hitting them can easily be avoided yet have a far reaching impact. I want to thank our operatives and partners who worked together to swiftly resolve what could have been a hugely disruptive incident, even with the damage being minimal.

The Huntingdon Railway Viaduct will be demolished after the new £1.5 billion A14 link between Cambridge and Huntingdon opens in December 2021, with new link roads making it easier to travel to, from and around the town.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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[Press release: UK expands counter-IED support in Africa](#)

With the help of the British Army who are working closely with their Kenyan partners to combat terrorism and save lives in East Africa, the facility is expanding into a regional centre of excellence.

Training will be offered to Kenyan security forces and other African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop-contributing nations in the region. Continued UK support will also include £2.3 million a year from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and mentoring from the British Army.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

“From supporting counter-terrorist operations in Mali to improvised explosive device disposal training in Kenya, our Armed Forces are helping to build a more secure Africa. By tackling the terrorist threat abroad we are helping to keep our streets safe at home.”

Since 2015, 1,000 military and police personnel from East Africa have been trained by the British Army in identifying and destroying IEDs. Yet, in the same period the use of IEDs has increased by around 300 per cent in Somalia, where casualties are often civilians.

By November 2020, the wing is expected to have developed into a fully-functioning, independent centre of excellence where East African instructors will provide specialised IED disposal training.

The expansion forms part of a new UK-Kenya security agreement which is allowing both countries to keep pace with the changing nature of threats and to renew our cooperation on counter-terrorism, child protection, and regional security. The Prime Minister also announced over £7 million of new UK funding to support AMISOM, as she called on international donors to contribute more to the peacekeeping mission.

Her visit reaffirms that the UK will support the project until it operates independently as a regional and continental centre of excellence.

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