

Press release: HM Trade Commissioner for Africa appointed

- More than £28 billion of goods and services traded between the UK and Africa in 2016.
- Africa is home to 4 of the world's top 6 fastest-growing economies: Libya, Ethiopia, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. Africa's long-term success matters to the UK.

Today (Wednesday 20 June), International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP appoints Emma Wade-Smith OBE as HM Trade Commissioner for Africa.

Wade-Smith is a senior diplomat and trade expert of 20 years, and has served in Brussels, Chile, Mexico, Washington and more recently in Africa as DIT's regional trade director. She was awarded an OBE for diplomatic service in 2012.

More than £28 billion of goods and services were traded between the UK and African countries in 2016. The continent is also home to 4 of the top 6 fastest-growing economies in the world (Libya, Ethiopia, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire) and opportunities in infrastructure alone are estimated to be worth more than £62 billion a year.

This appointment will build on the UK's position as a leading partner for Africa's peace, security and prosperity – supporting trade, investment and job growth.

The appointment will be made this morning at a business forum discussing the Prosperity Fund, a UK government initiative to remove barriers to inclusive economic growth in order to reduce poverty in partner countries whilst creating opportunities for international businesses, including UK firms.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Trade is at the heart of our approach to Africa and I am delighted to welcome Emma Wade-Smith to her new role.

HM Trade Commissioners play a critical role in our international economic department and will have more autonomy to do what works best in their region to improve trade with key markets of the future.

With young and growing populations, and the world's fastest-growing middle class, there is huge potential for British businesses to create modern trading partnerships across Africa. Emma will help unlock the continent's potential, supporting jobs, growth and prosperity in the UK and Africa.

DIT Permanent Secretary Antonia Romeo added:

DIT is attracting the best and brightest people to work on the UK's future trade policy as we prepare to leave the EU. Emma's appointment is the latest in a series of hires that will boost the UK's trade and investment relations across the world.

I look forward to working with Emma and her new colleagues as we build a truly global Britain.

HM Trade Commissioner for Africa Emma Wade-Smith OBE commented:

Having spent the last 2 years working on this exciting and dynamic continent, I know it is bursting not only with opportunities today, but potential for tomorrow. I will put partnerships at the heart of our business relationships, building on the work we're already doing to transform our shared entrepreneurial spirit into jobs and growth in the UK and across Africa.

Emma Wade-Smith joins Simon Penney (Middle East), Richard Burn (China), Jo Crellin (Latin America), Crispin Simon (South Asia), Judith Slater (Eastern Europe and Central Asia) and Antony Phillipson (North America) as HM Trade Commissioners, with those for Europe and Asia-Pacific to be confirmed shortly.

About Her Majesty's Trade Commissioners (HMTCs)

All of the new HMTCs will cooperate closely with HM Ambassadors and High Commissioners, the wider diplomatic network, and other UK Government colleagues based in countries in their region, in a joined-up and coordinated Government effort overseas to promote UK trade and prosperity.

In total, there will be nine HM Trade Commissioners, with 7 now appointed:

- Africa: Emma Wade-Smith OBE
- China: Richard Burn
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Judith Slater
- Latin America: Joanna Crellin
- Middle East: Simon Penney
- North America: Antony Phillipson

- South Asia: Crispin Simon

HMTCs for Europe and Asia-Pacific will be confirmed shortly.

UKEF Support for UK businesses in Africa

With a total risk appetite on the continent of over £20bn and the ability to lend in a number of local currencies, UK Export Finance can offer extensive, vital financial support for companies wishing to do business in Africa, further strengthening our partnerships across the continent.

Prosperity Fund

The Prosperity Fund supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the 2015 UK Aid Strategy by promoting growth and prosperity in developing countries. The developing countries it focuses on face considerable challenges such as rapid urbanisation, climate change and high and persistent inequality (including gender inequality) which can lower long-term growth prospects. The Prosperity Fund supports the broad-based and inclusive growth needed for poverty reduction. Prosperity Fund programmes are designed from the ground-up to generate business opportunities – specifically by growing sectors where the UK has a comparative advantage; more broadly by removing trade barriers, standardising regulations and improving the business environment.

Speech: Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict

Thank you Ambassador, your excellences, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

Today we come together once again to shine a light on some of the darkest corners of human experience; to confront painful truths; and importantly, to inspire collaborative, global action. Together, we have made real progress since the time that the UK launched our campaign to Prevent Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2012. The campaign itself, across the world, has raised awareness of the horror and scale of sexual violence, as well as the need to tackle accountability, to ensure victim support, and to take action to tackle stigma.

The vital need for accountability for survivors of sexual violence was certainly brought home to me when I met directly the victims in Iraq, particularly from the Yezidi community in February of this year together with Pramila Patten from the UN. And together we heard some of the horrific abuse directly from these incredible, courageous survivors who had suffered at the hands of that despicable organisation, Daesh. The UK has actively supported work in all these areas and we know that this assistance, together with other

nations and the United Nations, has had a real impact. If I may, on what is a very challenging subject, what is an issue which contains some of the most horrific accounts that one can hear, there has been some real positive progress. For example, it has enabled 13 trials of alleged abusers to take place in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, leading to 24 convictions and judicial reparations for more than 200 survivors. We have also funded ground-breaking research to improve global understanding of sexual violence-related issues; to inform policy-making; and to provide guidance to those working in this field.

Our collaboration with experts and academics continues, and therefore I am delighted to launch a report co-funded by the UK Government and the London School of Economics' worldwide renowned Centre for Women Peace and Security. It was commissioned to draw attention to a particular group of victims: children born of sexual violence in war. This report was written by Joanne Neenan, who joins us here today, a Human Rights lawyer and Research Fellow at the LSE. Joanne is with us today and will be speaking about her work in a moment. But I would like to take this opportunity to offer our governments thanks and my personal thanks to you Joanne for producing such a thorough piece of research. I am confident it will inform our approach, and that of international partners, in both the months and years ahead.

Ladies and gentleman, this report builds on the UK-led Principles for Global Action that I launched with Pramila last year during the UN General Assembly. That document broke new ground by highlighting the particular vulnerabilities of children born of sexual violence in conflict, and of course their mothers – something that hitherto had been largely overlooked by policy makers. I recognise that this is a particularly difficult subject for many to talk about, but I want to stress how important it is that we resist the understandable temptation to resort to euphemisms. Joanne's report makes the same point, and I would just like to be clear that the term, and I quote, 'children born of sexual violence in conflict' is not a euphemism. It covers all children born as a result of rape or sexual exploitation, including those conceived – and I would like to quote the report here directly – “in coercive circumstances linked to conflict”.

Your excellences, ladies and gentlemen, a child born of sexual violence, and I speak as a parent, is like any other child. They have the same needs but they also have the same rights. And we must ensure those rights are protected. And like any other child, the circumstances of their birth are not of their making. They are as much victims of those crimes as their mothers.

Yet, as Joanne's excellent report shows, it is these innocent children, through no fault of their own, who suffer not just discrimination but most extreme forms of stigma, often by the communities, the families that they belong to. They are shunned, excluded from school, denied medical treatment, subjected to physical violence and worse. It is their stigma that can be exacerbated by insensitive reporting in the press and harmful social views propagated in faith communities. Their identity and sense of self are called into question because they are seen as a physical reminder of the enemy. Often, their very survival is at risk, due to the high incidence of infanticide.

When you consider that these children – some who have now reached adulthood – they've gone through their whole lives suffering from that stigma, suffering from that discrimination, suffering from the persecution, against a backdrop of conflict, and indeed post-conflict instability, it is clear that their chances of fulfilling any kind of aspiration or ambition are not just reduced, sometimes they are totally eradicated. Joanne's report shows that we as policy makers are not sufficiently focussed on their plight as part of our overall approach to sexual violence in conflict.

As I said, I visited Iraq recently, and in that challenging situation I did see positive examples. The declaration of support for sexual violence survivors issued by Yezidi spiritual leader, Baba Sheikh, enabled many women and girls to return safely from captivity to their own homes, to their communities, to be embraced by their families. And also most recently I welcome the UN Secretary-General's appointment of Karim Khan as the head of the Investigative Team tasked with investigating Da'esh crimes in Iraq, including acts of terrorism, violence, and armed conflict.

Currently, the needs of children born of sexual violence are not sufficiently taken into account when decisions are made about who should receive aid, psycho-social support or help to integrate into their community. This policy and protection gap means that, in many cases, children born of sexual violence are being left behind – with negative consequences for themselves, their communities, their families, their future, and indeed the outcome of reconciliation efforts. If we do not take action now, if we do not bridge this gap, these problems are likely to fester and grow.

That is why today I would like to invite all of us collectively, partners working side by side, to join us in pledging support for the children born of sexual violence in conflict. These are innocent children. The campaign to Prevent Sexual Violence in Conflict has always been about hearing the voices of the victims. These victims who have become brave survivors, and as we will hear later today, become the most powerful advocates. If their voices are not heard, they remain what is termed often as the "silent many": women and girls, but also men and boys, people from the LGBT community, disabled people, forced mothers, and indeed children born of sexual violence. And a personal reflection from my visit to Iraq. When I heard those heinous crimes committed against mothers, what they had to go through, what they had to endure and confront in terms of the atrocities committed by Da'esh, it shakes the very foundation of your being. The voices of those survivors will remain with me for life.

And as we in the UK prepare host an international meeting in November 2019, five years on from the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, we want to put them at the heart and centre of that particular event. At the first Summit, we told the world that it was "Time to Act". In 2019 we need to show the world – we need to show the survivors – that we did just that, and we are determined to do so much more.

The meeting in 2019 will seek real commitments from governments and international organisations to accelerate the drive to end impunity; advance justice and accountability; tackle stigma by calling to action the

international media and a declaration from faith leaders, and develop new ways to prevent and address sexual violence. This must also include action in support of children born of sexual violence. The recommendations in this excellent report offer a path for national and international policy makers to follow. And we will be inviting Member States from the United Nations, the United Nations Representatives directly, the Commonwealth, and our champion partner countries to put forward evidence of concrete action against these recommendations at the 2019 international meeting. We will spearhead action multilaterally, including through our role as chair of the Commonwealth, to encourage the sharing of best practice and lessons learned to build on current interventions. Working bilaterally with partners where we have shared interests is similarly key to achieving our long-term goal of ending sexual violence in conflict.

Your excellences, ladies and gentlemen, to conclude, yes we can reflect and be proud of the achievements to date in supporting those innocent victims of sexual violence in conflict, and proud of our efforts to prevent others suffering the same fate. But truthfully speaking, and speaking from the heart, we all know that we have only skimmed the surface. There is so much more, much more, to do. And therefore on this day, here in the United Nations, as we mark this important Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, let us all again come together and pledge not just to redouble our efforts, but to maximise our efforts, to support more survivors, these brave survivors. Let us hear their voices. The voices of the silent many, and take great strides forward, collectively, collaboratively, working together, to address the particular needs of these innocent children. Victims often ostracised through no fault of their own. And if we address that priority then perhaps we can then look forward and say we have played our part in ensuring that their future, their progress, their hopes, ambitions and aspirations have been protected. And I commend this report to you. Thank you.

[Press release: Boris Johnson: US Human Rights Council withdrawal is regrettable](#)

The United States' decision to withdraw from the Human Rights Council is regrettable.

We've made no secret of the fact that the UK wants to see reform of the Human Rights Council, but we are committed to working to strengthen the Council from within.

Britain's support for the Human Rights Council remains steadfast. It is the best tool the international community has to address impunity in an imperfect

world and to advance many of our international goals.

That's why we will continue to support and champion it.

Press release: PM hosts Local Enterprise Partnerships Council

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister began by thanking the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Chairs for their valuable contribution to business and innovation in the UK developing skills, delivering infrastructure, and securing investment.

She noted the steady growth of the economy in recent years and the record levels of employment, crediting this progress to the joint efforts of LEPs, Government and private sector entrepreneurs in driving growth across the country.

Co-chair Mike Blackburn OBE, Chair of Greater Manchester LEP, praised the strong track record of delivery seen from LEPs so far. He welcomed the enthusiasm of the Chairs and the opportunity to build on the success of recent years by furthering the close collaboration between LEPs and government, particularly in delivering the modern industrial strategy across the country.

Guests discussed the particular strengths that LEP business leaders bring to the table, including their ability to broker new partnerships and connections, their importance in delivering the objectives of the industrial strategy within their communities, and their role in fostering strong collaboration between local institutions, individuals and government.

Attendees also reflected on recent successes such as the HS2 College in Doncaster – supported by Sheffield City Region – which is equipping local young people with the skills they need to build our future railways.

Attendees agreed that LEPs have a particularly important role to play in connecting the business and educational sectors. They emphasised the value of the partnerships LEPs bring in helping to enable people of all ages to develop the modern skills that our businesses require to thrive.

Welcoming the government's ambitious technical skills agenda, they also praised the opportunities for local innovation that the industrial strategy has launched.

Looking ahead, the business leaders considered key growth areas for the UK economy, highlighting the example of the medical technologies sector as an area where LEPs can help drive this expansion.

There was also discussion around the LEP review, announced as part of the modern Industrial Strategy last year. It was noted that it would be an opportunity to identify where government can strengthen and support LEPs further in their work across the country.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of ensuring that LEP leadership truly represented the communities they served, pointing to the progress made in the number of women on FTSE100 boards as an example to follow.

She also noted that this council will serve as a regular occasion for Chairs of LEPs to come together and talk openly about how they can work more closely with government to achieve shared aims.

The Prime Minister concluded by reflecting on the opportunities ahead to maximise the convening power of LEPs in delivering the modern industrial strategy for all.

[Press release: PM hosts Local](#)

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