

Speech: RIBA Stirling Prize

Thank you for inviting to me join you this evening.

It's a real privilege to be here.

The Stirling Prize is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate British Architecture and since 1996, when it replaced the less august sounding 'Building of the Year Award', it has consistently showcased the immense talent coming out of this country.

When James Stirling won the Royal Gold Medal in 1980 he did so not only for his achievements but also for the potential of those ideas never realised.

That connection between accomplishment and promise, between the past and the future, is embodied each year in the Stirling Prize and its shortlisted nominees.

Helping to honour the legacy and inspire future generations of architects.

Thank you for your contribution to our country, our economy and our cultural life.

And it is to the role of the architect I wish to turn.

You are the guardians of quality.

So often the difference between the ugly and the beautiful isn't because of 'good architect vs bad architect' but rather a case of there being little or no architect at all.

What I know is we need more of your expertise involved in how we build and create communities, not less.

And ultimately, for me at least, that is why we build.

To create communities.

To create great places to live, work and spend time in.

To create please we are proud to call home.

To create that connection between the built environment and our identity.

At the core of this should be an aspiration for beauty.

Whilst we may debate its precise nature, its existence is beyond doubt.

And our spaces and places should embody this value.

As Secretary of State for Housing and Communities, these issues are an important part of my role.

And something I will be returning to in the coming weeks.

From the individual home through to the new settlements we need to build I pay special attention to the quality of design and style.

We need to build homes which fit with the world around them.

Helping to give confidence to people that development will be sympathetic to its surroundings.

Helping grow a sense of community, not undermine it.

Helping to ensure our places are fit for the future, casting our eyes on the coming innovations in technology whilst keeping our feet firmly grounded in what communities want and need.

That's why tonight is so special.

In recognising and celebrating the essential role of style, design and yes, architecture.

I'd like to congratulate all those shortlisted for this prestigious award.

You have all earned rightful plaudits for your work.

Tonight we celebrate not just the winner – but all of you.

Thank you all for what you do.

And the very real contribution you are making in creating communities we can be proud of.

Thank you.

Press release: Construction booming in the North West

- Overall construction output in the region up 15%, 10 times the national average
- Total value of construction over the last 3 months is more than £4.6 billion, up more than £600 million when compared to the same 3 months a year ago

The North West has seen construction boom over the last year, according to new figures out today (10 October 2018).

According to the Office of National Statistics, total construction output

across the region is up 15% to more than £4.6 billion in the 3 months to August 2018 compared to the same period last year.

Overall construction output in Great Britain for this period is up 1.5% compared to the same period last year meaning the North West's increase is 10 times the national average

The value of construction work on new housing in the North West has increased by £386 million this quarter compared to the same quarter in 2017 and output of new infrastructure projects has also risen during this period.

Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry MP, said:

It's wonderful to see how the Northern Powerhouse is driving investment in the North West and helping grow the construction industry to the tune of over £600 million.

Anyone visiting the North West can see the huge number of construction projects underway and these figures show just how valuable they are.

This construction boom is helping build new homes, new infrastructure and a stronger economy in the region.

The [Output in the Construction Industry figures for England, Scotland and Wales](#) are released by the Office of National Statistics

Office address and general enquiries

2 Marsham Street

London
SW1P 4DF

Contact form
<http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public
030 3444 0000

Media enquiries

Email
newsdesk@communities.gov.uk

Please use this number if you are a journalist wishing to speak to Press Office

Social media – MHCLG

Twitter – <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

Flickr – <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mhclg>

LinkedIn – <http://www.linkedin.com/company/mhclg>

Speech: Cooperation and Lasting Peace in Colombia

Thank you Mr President, and may I also thank the SRSR Arnault for his briefing, which chimes very closely with our own assessment and analysis of developments over the past three months. Thank you. Let me also warmly welcome Foreign Minister Holmes Trujillo to the Security Council for the first time.

The UK welcomes Colombia's continued commitment – clearly set out by President Duque – to implement the Peace Agreement. As we have all said many times in this chamber, that agreement represents an opportunity for lasting peace in Colombia as well as being a positive example to the rest of the world.

And like SRSR Arnault, we also welcome the steps taken by the new government so far, including the commitment to push ahead with effective reintegration of former members of the FARC, as well as the appointment of key positions in important institutions for the peace process. In particular, the CSIVI and the National Reintegration Council. We share the Secretary-General's hope that that Colombian institutions will continue to pursue the peace process, including security, development and rule of law in conflict zones; an effective justice system and reparations for victims; and the essential commitment to those who have laid down their arms. Recent progress in the investigation of initial cases by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has been a key step in achieving these goals, and we encourage all parties to support the extremely important work of these institutions.

But as the Secretary-General has said, the challenges ahead remain formidable, we are particularly concerned by two important and concerning trends.

First, the departure of several former FARC commanders from some of the territorial areas for training and reintegration has highlighted weaknesses in the reintegration process. We agree with the Secretary-General that economic reintegration activities need to resume on a larger scale and faster

than has been the case to date and that the security of FARC members must be assured.

Secondly, we share the Secretary-General's concern about the expansion of illegal economies, competition of criminal groups for territorial control, and the persistence of violence, which is continuing to claim the lives of human rights defenders and social leaders. We welcome President Duque's commitment to tackling these issues and look forward to the signatories to the "Pact for Life and the Protection of Social Leaders and Human Rights Defenders" on 23 August implementing their commitments.

Mr President, with this in mind, we welcome the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. We hope and believe the Verification Mission will continue to play an important role in maintaining confidence and cooperation between the parties, and encouraging them to work together on peace implementation.

For our part, the UK is fully committed to working with the new Colombian government, just as we did with the last, as Colombia works towards securing a lasting and sustained peace.

[News story: Building support for veterans' mental health](#)

As the UK joins in marking World Mental Health Day, a unique fundraiser which aims raise tp awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in veterans has been devised by a police officer at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl)

PC Paul Cocoran (known as Coco) is behind the project, called 'Not Just Another Brick In The Wall.' It will see volunteers carrying bricks dedicated to the veterans who have lost their lives on operations, or who have sadly taken their own life as a result of mental health issues.

Raising money for the Rifles Care for Casualties Charity, Coco has set a target of £100,000.

Coco said:

If you think if a veteran has problems, he forms an imaginary brick and throws it into his rucksack, if he falls out with his partner, that's another brick, until he's weighed down and can't cope.

We want to highlight the issue of PTSD. We're even taking a brick with a blank plate on, to show this is an ongoing issue and we need

to do more.

The challenge will be to walk 45 miles of Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, over three days, carrying the bricks to the finish. Each brick will have a brass plaque with the name of a loved one inscribed. Made and engraved by apprentices at Dstl, Coco hopes the collection will be housed at the Light Infantry museum after the event.

Bee Shute, Apprentice Manager from Dstl, said:

It is fantastic that some of our second year engineering apprentices will be supporting this project by inscribing the brass plaques.

Over 150 people have already signed up, including some currently suffering from PTSD.

Before becoming a PC, Coco had a full career in the Army and was involved in Army sport. As a veteran, he's done a number of unusual challenges, including walking the Coast to Coast way carrying an ironing board, and raising £10,000 by recreating a sitting room on the summit of Snowdon.

Coco added:

Not just another brick in the wall means that these aren't just names, they are soldiers who were sons, fathers, brothers. Seven Rifles veterans have taken their own lives in the last year alone. I don't want to inscribe another brick.

For more information, or to get involved, search for Not Just Another Brick In The Wall on Facebook, or email paulcocoran@hotmail.com

[News story: UK aid to crack down on criminal gangs driving the illegal wildlife trade](#)

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has today (10 October) announced a new joint initiative with the Foreign Office, to target wildlife traffickers and criminal gangs, tackling the global scourge of the illegal wildlife trade.

The UK aid project will launch investigations, seize assets and train law enforcement in East and Southern African countries and will be the largest known project of its kind to crack down on financial crimes associated with the illegal wildlife trade in the world.

Ms Mordaunt will set out this support at an event with the Duke of Cambridge, where global financial organisations will jointly declare that they “will not knowingly facilitate or tolerate financial flows that are derived from IWT and associated corruption”.

This Wildlife Financial Taskforce will initially comprise of representatives from 30 global banks and financial organisations such as Standard Chartered, HSBC, RBS and City Group, and agencies and regulatory bodies including TRAFFIC and RUSI.

Today’s announcement comes ahead of the landmark [Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference](#) being held in London on 11-12 October, the largest conference ever to be held on this issue.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

We can only stop the illegal wildlife trade by targeting the international gangs and criminal networks which essentially drive it.

UK aid is directly supporting efforts to recover illegal assets, disrupt organised crime networks and stop the flow of dirty money so that we can protect endangered and trafficked species and bring those responsible to justice.

By protecting these species, UK aid enables some of the world’s poorest people to benefit from sustainable jobs which depend on the natural world and endangered, wild animals.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

The illegal wildlife trade is driving endangered species to the brink of extinction and robbing communities around the world of vital income. To truly end this crime we need to tackle the corruption which allows the trade to flourish, with cross-border investigations which lead to successful prosecutions.

The UK is funding programmes committed to do just that, helping law enforcement authorities in African countries to trace dirty money back to the criminal syndicates behind the dreadful illegal trade in animals and animal parts. This will help put the criminal kingpins behind the trade behind bars, where they belong.

Participating in the illegal wildlife trade is currently a low risk, high

reward crime.

Choking the ability of poachers and traders to move money is an essential component of stopping the trade. The same gangs trafficking wildlife products are likely to move other illegal goods, like drugs and weapons.

This new support is the largest UK aid project to specifically crack down on dirty money enabling the illegal wildlife trade. The support will:

- Drive up the number of investigations and successful prosecutions for corruption, money laundering and wildlife trafficking, by identifying individuals and groups committing the crime; and training law enforcement to conduct investigations.
- Increase the use of sanctions like freezing and seizing assets and visa bans, and encouraging new tactics like investigating money laundering and tax evasion to disrupt criminal networks and target individual bosses – just like Al Capone.
- Improve cooperation of domestic and international law enforcement so that entire criminal networks can be targeted – including police, investigative units, shipping companies and the private sector.
- Support ‘parallel financial investigations’, tracking dirty money to allow an arrest of low level poachers or traffickers to lead to the identification and arrest of high-ranking criminals.

This work will include countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana and Côte d’Ivoire, where recent arrests of wildlife crime offenders provide the opportunity to go after senior crime bosses. Others may be chosen for further action in due course.

What the UK’s support will look like:

- Funding will go to the UN Office of Drugs and Crime to work with law enforcement, mentoring and training authorities in intelligence detection and investigative techniques
- The Egmont Centre will train, share best practice and improve international cooperation by Financial Investigation Units. Its members include the UK’s National Crime Agency and US Department of the Treasury.
- The FCO’s will focus on detecting, investigating and prosecuting corruption relating to IWT – which will have knock on benefits in preventing the negative influence of corruption on international trade (including UK investors and exporters) and critical public services. This will also finance protection for whistle-blowing to encourage the reporting of illegal activity.

The UK funded Global Wildlife Programme has already worked with Kenya’s Parliament to enact the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2013, which increased both prison sentences and financial penalties for wildlife-related crimes, and this new initiative will help us secure more results like that.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- This funding consists of £3million from DFID (this will come from a mix of new money and allocations from pre-existing budgets), and £0.5million from the FCO.
- This money will be allocated equally between The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Egmont Group, through the Egmont Centre of FIU Excellence and Leadership

This new project is the largest sum of money UK aid has committed to specifically tackle money laundering in the IWT and is the largest project of its kind globally. Previous examples of tackling criminal gangs include:

- In Mozambique, four individuals were jailed after being caught selling ivory tusks, their derivatives in handicrafts, and other prohibited animal products in the Central Market of Maputo in early 2018. These offenses were only recently criminalized after a gap in the Law on Protection, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (Law 16/2014 of 16 June) was closed by Parliament through an amendment passed in 2017.
- In Malawi, the National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016 sets tougher penalties for poachers and traffickers of “listed species,” removing judicial discretion to impose monetary penalties for such offenses. Furthermore, for poaching and trafficking offenses related to both “endangered” and “listed” species, the Bill raises the maximum jail term for offenders to 30 years. Making use of the legislation in the Fall of 2017, a Malawian Chief Magistrate handed down an unprecedented total of an effective 36 years of prison time to three people convicted for poaching a black rhinoceros in Liwonde National Park.
- In Namibia, The Nature Conservation Amendment Act No. 3 of 2017 increased fines for rhino and elephant poachers to N\$25 million and for illegal hunting of protected species to N\$10 million and imprisonment of five to ten years.
- Under the Zambia Wildlife Act of 2015, illegal possession of trophies such as elephant ivory and rhino horn is punishable with sentences of between five and ten years imprisonment with no option of a fine. In July of 2018, The Lusaka High Court upheld the conviction of three foreigners and two nationals who were sentenced to five years of imprisonment with hard labour in December 2017, after finding them guilty of being in illegal possession of 25 pieces of rhino horn. Several other poachers and traffickers have been arrested and convicted under the Wildlife Act of 2015.

Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference 11-12 October

With over 1000 delegates, the IWT Conference will be the largest of its kind ever to be held. 84 countries have confirmed that they will be sending delegations, spanning Africa (26); Americas (14); Asia and Oceania (17); Europe (23) and the Middle East (4).

The conference will focus on three themes:

- Tackling IWT as a serious organised crime: strengthening end to end law enforcement.

- Building coalitions: engaging the private sector, NGOs and academia; harnessing technology and innovation.
- Closing markets for illegally traded wildlife products: building on the Chinese ivory trade ban.

General media queries

Email

mediateam@dfid.gov.uk

Telephone

020 7023 0600

Follow the DFID Media office on Twitter – @DFID_Press