

Speech: An important step in the interests of peace and the people of South Sudan

Thank you very much Madam President. The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of this important resolution today.

The situation in South Sudan is appalling. Thousands have been killed. Over a fifth of the population are on the edge of famine and over half are food insecure. A third of the population have fled their homes. Widespread human rights abuses continue to be reported.

We strongly welcome and support regional efforts, led by IGAD, to revitalise the peace agreement and broker an agreement between the parties. But it is clear that the parties are still not prepared to compromise in the interests of peace.

Even whilst peace talks were taking place, violations of the cessation of hostilities continued and we have seen horrific reports of violence and human rights violations and abuse. Just today, the media is reporting CTSAMM reports of multiple ceasefire violations, allegations of gang-rape, murdered children and the use of child soldiers.

This cannot be allowed to continue.

It is clear that the solution to South Sudan's crisis is lasting peace. And I agree with my colleague from Ethiopia about the need to address the problems of South Sudan through an all-inclusive political process. Without it, suffering will spread and the consequences will endure for many years to come. Genuine compromise is essential to securing a political agreement which stands the test of time.

Madam President, the United Kingdom believes that this resolution is an important step in increasing the pressure on the parties to compromise in the interests of peace and the interests of the people of South Sudan.

This Council has today shown that it will act. Let that be a clear message to the parties and to those who wish to prevent peace going forward. Madame President, I acknowledge that it is unfortunate that the Council could not agree unanimously today, but I believe that we are united in our vision for South Sudan. I believe we all remain supportive of IGAD and IGAD's work, so let us not cease in our resolve to find peace or give any comfort to those who oppose it.

Thank you Madam President.

News story: Scottish Secretary tours Stirling University's world-leading Institute of Aquaculture

Scottish Secretary David Mundell met with academics at Stirling University and toured the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre to hear about their work, and how UK Government funding to the university – [part of the Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal](#) will help them continue their cutting edge research and innovation.

The City Region Deal confirms that the UK Government will invest £17 million to build a new Aquaculture Hub for Innovation.

This will be unique in Scotland and the UK, and will operate four aquatic research facilities which between them will provide the full range of marine environmental conditions.

The hub will create research and development opportunities that will secure jobs and an economic contribution in the process.

The deal also confirms that the UK Government will invest up to £5 million into a new international Scottish Environment Centre, which will provide an integrated approach to cutting-edge research, innovation, skills development, inclusion and sustainable growth that tackles global environmental challenges.

The announcement was welcomed by University Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerry McCormac, who said:

I welcome today's signing of a City Deal for Stirling and Clackmannanshire, which will bring significant economic benefits.

Investment in world-class research through the City Deal will enable University of Stirling researchers to further tackle some of the world's most pressing problems. By working in partnership, we can unleash our economic potential, delivering a unique source of jobs, growth, and skills development, both for Stirling, and the wider Scottish and UK economies.

Press release: Liverpool at the forefront of justice transformation

The Crown Court is the first in the country to pilot new software that will streamline and speed up hearings, helping to avoid unnecessary delays in the courtroom. The new system is key to delivering a more effective, efficient and high performing courts service as part of the government's reform agenda which allows Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police files to be shared between agencies in one easy to access database.

In Liverpool, the pilot was established with the close co-operation of Merseyside Police, Mersey Cheshire CPS and HMCTS and lessons learnt during user testing will play a vital part in its wider adoption.

Justice minister Lucy Frazer said:

Liverpool courts have been at the forefront of cutting edge technology to improve efficiency, speed up justice and provide value for money for the taxpayer.

I was delighted to see for myself the progress being made towards the modernisation of our justice system, which will make our courts fit for the digital age.

Minister Frazer spent the day at Liverpool Magistrates and Crown Court, as well as the Civil and Family court where she met court staff and the judiciary, and, in addition to the Common Operating Platform, was able to see a live demonstration of a second digital system designed to record sentences in real time.

Results of 18,000 cases a week are uploaded using the Digital Mark Up, which went live at every magistrates' court across England and Wales in May, and allows a legal advisor to immediately record the outcome of a hearing, ensuring swift justice. This eliminates the need for a lengthy paper process, and means results can be shared immediately with the CPS and police, therefore freeing up staff to concentrate on the most important matters.

The minister also spent time in the Merseyside Centralised Domestic Violence Court – a dedicated court dealing with all cases of domestic abuse at their first hearing in the magistrates' court as swiftly and sensitively as possible, lessening the impact on the victim.

Today's digital demonstrations follow earlier advances in 2015 which saw Liverpool Magistrates' and Crown Courts integrated into a single centre for crime – the first of its scale in England and Wales, and the early adoption of the Digital Case System in the Crown Court. This system enables the judiciary and other parties in Liverpool to prepare, present and share case

papers in a digital format, thereby reducing delays.

The Government is investing £1 billion in reforming and modernising courts, which has already delivered:

- A fully paperless system in conjunction with Transport for London – which means thousands of cases involving fare evasion are dealt with more swiftly and effectively.
- An online system which enables court staff to prepare case files and access them digitally in a courtroom during a hearing – saving 68 million pages of paper.
- The ability for those convicted of minor motoring offences to make their initial plea online. 1500 pleas are dealt with online every week. Court staff and the police automatically receive the completed online plea form as soon as the defendant has submitted it, reducing delays.

In the civil courts people can now:

- Make a small money claim online – with over 3,000 claims issued in the first month, cases moving through more quickly, and user satisfaction over 80% during the pre-launch pilot.
- Apply for a divorce online – which has cut errors in application forms from 40% to less than 1%, saving people time and trouble during a traumatic time.
- Apply for probate online – which has also cut errors, speeds up the process, and has a satisfaction rate of more than 90%.

Press release: Flood risk due to thunderly downpours

With further thunderly downpours expected today (Thursday) and tomorrow (Friday), the Environment Agency is urging people to check their flood risk – especially if driving or staying in an unfamiliar location over the half term break. Communities in the South West of England are most at risk, including parts of Hampshire, Wiltshire and the West Midlands.

Locally significant surface water flooding impacts are likely from Thursday afternoon and into Friday due to these heavy and slow-moving thunderstorms. There is also risk of flooding from urban rivers and rivers that rise quickly.

The Environment Agency is again warning drivers not to drive through flood water. Driving through floodwater puts the lives of drivers and their passengers on the line, risks the safety of emergency responders, and often causes serious damage to the vehicle, with three-quarters of flood-damaged cars ultimately being written off. The AA rescued more than 14,500 drivers

from floods between 2013 and 2017.

Kate Marks, Environment Agency flood duty manager, said:

Further heavy showers and scattered thunderstorms bring a risk of localised surface water and river flooding on Thursday and Friday. The main risk is for the Western counties of England, with urban areas are most likely to see the impacts of any flash flooding.

Throughout this period of unsettled stormy weather, our teams will continue to work 24/7 operating flood defences, clearing blockages in rivers and streams to ensure they flow freely, and supporting partners responding to any incidents of surface water flooding.

With heavy rain forecast during rush hour, drivers should stay up to date with the latest weather forecast and travel information before making their journey. We remind people not to drive through flood water as just 30cm can move your car. The public can check our active alerts and warnings – which are updated every 15 minutes – online at www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk or by calling 0345 988 1188.

Press release: Chair of the Single Financial Guidance Body appointed

The Department for Work and Pensions has announced that Sir Hector Sants has been appointed as chair of the Single Financial Guidance Body. He will take up the post from 3 October 2018 for a 5 year term.

Work and Pensions Secretary, Esther McVey, said:

Consistent with the Public Appointments Code and following a fair and open competition, I welcome Sir Hector Sants as the first chair of the Single Financial Guidance Body. He will play a pivotal role and lead on improving financial capability across Great Britain.

Sir Hector brings with him vast experience and knowledge from across a range of private and third sector organisations, including how best to support people with problem debt and build wider financial capability. I and my department look forward to working with him.

Sir Hector Sants said:

I am delighted to be appointed chair of the Single Financial Guidance Body. This is an important leadership role with 2 key challenges. In the short-term the dissolution of the 3 existing government sponsored guidance providers and the transition to a single financial guidance body, longer term the new organisation has the opportunity to materially help people better manage their money and in consequence enhance their wellbeing. I look forward to working with the new Board and the executive team to take forward this exciting and important mandate.

More information

Since retiring from full-time work Sir Hector Sants' focus has been on working to help people manage their money as well as circumstances allow, and promoting a fairer financial system which works for everyone. This reflects his belief that being able to manage money well is an essential life skill.

He is currently chairman of StepChange Debt Charity, the UK's biggest debt advice charity. He is also a trustee of Just Finance, a charity which collaborates with the Church of England to promote a fairer financial system, and a member of the UK's Financial Capability Board.

Between 1977 and 2014 he had an executive career in financial services and regulation, which included serving as the CEO of the Financial Services Authority from 2007 to 2012, European CEO of Credit Suisse and a partner of stockbrokers Phillips & Drew.

Remuneration during the set-up phase is £80,000 for a minimum of 21 hours a week. Time commitment will be reviewed once the organisation is in a steady state.

Sir Hector's appointment follows an open and competitive process which was overseen by [The Office for the Commissioner of Public Appointments](#).

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