

News story: Cryptoassets Taskforce meets for the first time

The first meeting of the UK's new Cryptoassets Taskforce took place today (21 May 2018). The Taskforce agreed its objectives, which include exploring the impact of cryptoassets, the potential benefits and challenges of the application of distributed ledger technology in financial services, and assessing what, if any, regulation is required in response.

Senior leaders from government and the financial regulators were present, including Katharine Braddick, Director General of Financial Services at HM Treasury, Andrew Bailey, Chief Executive of the FCA, and Dave Ramsden, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England.

Andrew Bailey, FCA Chief Executive said:

Cryptoassets have been an area of increasing interest for markets and regulators globally including the FCA. We look forward to working with our counterparts at the Bank of England and the Treasury as part of the taskforce to develop thinking and policy on cryptoassets.

Dave Ramsden, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England said:

The technologies that underpin cryptoassets have the potential to deliver benefits both to the financial system and to the economy it serves. This taskforce will enable us to work closely with the Treasury and the FCA to explore how the opportunities posed by these technologies can be realised, while also tackling the risks arising from cryptoassets.

The Taskforce will consider existing analysis by the government and regulators. It will also seek new views from trade bodies, academics, consumer groups and investor representatives.

The Taskforce will host a roundtable in July and publish a report in Q3 2018.

Further Information

- first announced in April by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as part of the government's Fintech Sector Strategy, the Taskforce is a central part of the government and financial regulators' efforts to understand and engage with the implications of new technologies in financial services

News story: World's first global ministerial mental health summit to be held in London

Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced that the UK will host the first ever Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit in London this October.

The summit will aim to help countries work together to increase the evidence for different treatments, and to ensure healthcare systems around the world value mental health as much as physical health.

Ministers, leading academics, policy makers and patients from more than 30 countries will be invited to attend.

The summit is also expected to help countries learn from each other to find the best ways to deal with issues such as stigma, discrimination and increased rates of depression and anxiety among young people.

Mr Hunt has also announced the launch of the Global Alliance of Champions on Mental Health – set up jointly with his Australian and Canadian counterparts. The aim is to encourage political leaders to raise the profile of mental health, decrease stigma and work together more across world regions.

Around 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their life and by 2020 the World Health Organization estimates that mental health conditions will account for 15% of cases of disease in the world.

Mental illness is also the biggest cause of lost economic output, with an estimated cost to the global community of nearly US\$2.5 trillion a year, which is expected to increase to US\$6 trillion by 2030.

Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

When you look at the extraordinary prevalence and impact on people's lives, it is clear that mental illness is fast becoming one of the defining global health challenges of the 21st century. Until recently, this hasn't had the profile it deserves on a global stage.

I hope the Alliance of Champions for Mental Health and Wellbeing, along with the inaugural global summit, will be the next step that millions of people around the world need right now. Together we will bring about a new level of co-operation between nations and improve people's access to evidence-based services and bear down on

stigma and other factors that are exacerbating this crisis.

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on Venezuela elections

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I am disappointed, but not surprised, that Maduro pressed ahead with deeply flawed elections to secure his own survival. They were neither free nor fair, and have further eroded Venezuelan democracy. There is an urgent need to restore democratic order, release political prisoners, and respect the National Assembly and political opposition.

The condemnation of the international community is loud and clear. We shall work closely with our EU and regional partners in the coming weeks to determine how we can continue to support a political resolution.

I remain deeply concerned by the man-made humanitarian and economic crisis, which is growing worse by the day. I urge the Venezuelan government to take immediate action, and let the international community deliver essential food and medicines. The suffering of ordinary Venezuelan people cannot be allowed to continue.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

Press release: Companies House staff thanked for supporting Merthyr man's mammoth cycle challenge

Chris Daniels, 55, is hoping to cover the equivalent 18,000 miles – all while seated on a static bike – to set a world record and raise money for cancer charities.

Former civil servant Chris spent a week peddling furiously in the foyer at Companies House in Cardiff, where staff donated generously and even joined him during the virtual ride.

Chris, from Merthyr Tydfil, is undertaking the feat in memory of his late wife, Rita, who sadly died in 2016 after a battle with bowel cancer.

Chris said:

Rita wanted to raise awareness and funds to fight all forms of cancer so in her honour I will be riding for Bowel Cancer UK, Velindre Cancer Centre and Cancer Research Wales.

Rita was an incredibly inspirational person but sadly we lost her to bowel cancer. I'm doing this for her and everybody else who has been affected by cancer.

He has staged rides at venues across Wales, where people have donated money and joined in to raise funds for cancer charities of their choosing.

So far, the efforts of Chris and his supporters have raised nearly £60,000 for 25 cancer charities.

He added:

We've had amazing support at places like Companies House from amazing people who have shown incredible generosity.

Every bit of that keeps me going.

Louise Smyth, Chief Executive of Companies House, said:

Well done to Chris who has taken on this mammoth challenge for a really worthy cause that affects so many of us.

It's great to see so many people at Companies House give up their time, money and sweat in support of that and with big smiles.

Chris' attempt, which began in December 2017, will be broken into four stages, which will see him cover vast distances across Europe, North America, Asia and Australia.

To donate, [visit his Just Giving page](#).

You can follow Chris' progress on [his Facebook page](#).

Speech: High Commissioner's speech during the Royal wedding and Queen's Birthday celebration in Nairobi

Chief Guest,

Waheshimiwa,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this celebration of the marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, and of the birthday of Her Majesty the Queen.

I'd like to thank all my team involved in organising today's event. In fact you should be grateful for the role they played in overruling me on some of the logistics – particularly what I thought was my rather good suggestion of making it a million shilling package including a helicopter tour of Mount Kenya.

Friends,

Harry and Meghan will be making today the greatest commitment two people can make to each other.

They have decided to use their marriage not just for themselves and their families, but to celebrate the contribution of everyday people to communities in the UK and around the world.

The Royal Couple have invited over 1,000 community and youth leaders to the festivities, alongside 200 charity representatives.

Instead of gifts, they have asked anyone wanting to honour the occasion to give their money or their time to helping others. In particular, they have used their wedding to honour the causes to which they as a couple are deeply committed:

- Supporting children with HIV and AIDS,
- Helping the homeless and those without shelter,
- Empowering the world's poorest women,
- Supporting Armed Forces families,
- Bringing more children into sport,
- And conservation, both on land, and in our oceans.

Her Majesty the Queen and her family have dedicated their lives to public service. Between them, the family acts as patron or president to 3,000 charitable organisations.

They support and honour a culture of volunteering, of public service, and of working to change the lives of others for the better, both in the United Kingdom and across the Commonwealth.

As Prince William said earlier this year, such service “nurtures, repairs, builds and sustains our society”. Without the work of charities and volunteers, and of those dedicated to helping others, society would in the Prince’s words “be an empty shell”.

Friends,

I draw inspiration today from the Royal couple’s dedication to public service. And I believe it is a theme of great relevance here in Kenya.

Kenya has spent much of the last year in intense political competition. That has showed the strength and vibrancy of Kenya’s democracy. But it has also brought polarisation and mutual accusation; attacks on Kenya’s institutions; and for some Kenyan families, tragic personal loss.

Kenya’s leaders have now taken the courageous decision to reconcile – to work together and to put their country first.

We welcome and salute that commitment.

And I will continue to call on Kenya’s leaders to pursue reconciliation in the spirit of public service and the greater good.

That means two things in particular.

First, politicians must put the interests of the country, of all Kenyans, before their own ambitions.

Second, a stronger Kenya built on justice can have no place for those who steal from its citizens. Whatever their high rank or station, those who act

for private instead of public gain must be held fully to account.

It is the responsibility of all of us to work for positive change in our communities, and our wider society.

So today I would also like to celebrate the contribution of some remarkable individuals here in Kenya.

Among our guests are representatives of organisations who are working to improve lives across this country.

From tackling homelessness, to supporting street children, to helping reduce plastic pollution in our oceans, these are people who have identified a problem, and decided to tackle it. I am proud to be able to welcome them to today's celebration, and I am sure you will join me in thanking them for the work they are doing in support of their communities.

I'm enormously honoured to count among our guests this afternoon Golda Ayodo, who runs the Golden Girls Foundation. In March this year, Her Majesty the Queen gave Golda the Commonwealth Points of Light award for her outstanding work changing the lives of girls and young women in Western Kenya.

Golda, and our other volunteers here this afternoon, show us how Kenyans from all walks of life and all parts of society can shape and strengthen Kenya, and I hope their examples will serve as an inspiration for others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a moment of great promise for this great country of Kenya. The United Kingdom stands with you as Kenya seizes the opportunities ahead.

We do so as a close friend and partner; and as a fellow member of the Commonwealth. We were delighted to welcome HE President Kenyatta to London last month for the Commonwealth Summit, and will work with Kenya as we realise even more of the potential of that great global network.

I want to thank all the sponsors of today's event.

Chief Guest,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us join together in celebrating today the marriage of His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales and Ms Meghan Markle, and in wishing them a lifetime of happiness together.

Together, we say:

Mungu abariki ndoa yenyu

May God bless your marriage.

I invite you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to join me in three toasts:

The happy couple

His Excellency the President and people of the Republic and Kenya

Her Majesty the Queen.

Photos for the event can be viewed [here](#)