

News story: Sports industry can be top of the league in reducing plastic pollution

Environment Secretary Michael Gove will today call on sports leaders from across the Commonwealth to join the fight against plastic pollution in the world's oceans.

As part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting taking place in London this week, the Environment Secretary will host leaders from across the sports sector on board the HMS Belfast in London to drive forward innovation and agree actions to tackle the global scourge of plastic.

With mass sporting events often generating up to 750,000 plastic bottles and seven tonnes of waste, the Environment Secretary and representatives from Premier League football, swimming and ocean sailing will look at how the sector can use its influence to tackle this blight and bring about global change.

This will build on the work already underway by industry – with this year's Commonwealth Games banning the use of plastic balloons and rolling out water refills to reduce plastic, and Twickenham Stadium introducing a deposit return scheme for 'fan cups', where fans pay an extra £1 for their cup and get the money back when they return it to the bar. Tottenham Hotspur has also announced its commitment to phasing out single-use plastics across all Club operations.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time and we all have a role to play to tackle the threats our oceans face.

There are few groups which have the global reach and power the sports sector does to inspire change and mobilise action. The industry is already making great strides, and I look forward to seeing how they can build on this progress to be true ambassadors for global change.

Bill Bush, Executive Director of the Premier League, will also attend the roundtable. He said:

The Premier League is well aware of the importance of taking action against plastic pollution, it affects us all and our fans expect us to do what we can to tackle this threat. We are here today to learn from others as we develop our plans to reduce plastic use

throughout our operations.

We also want to use our reach to fans here and across the world to spread the word that each and every one of us can make a difference by choosing to use less plastic.

Jointly co-hosted with United Nations Environment, attendees at the roundtable will also be encouraged to join the UN's '[Clean Seas](#)' campaign – a global initiative to reduce plastic pollution in the oceans.

Endurance swimmer Lewis Pugh will attend in his role as the UN's Patron of the Oceans. He said:

I've been swimming for 30 years and can be under no illusion life in our oceans is under threat like never before. Beaches across the world are littered with bags, bottles and straws, and plastic has made its way to some of the most remote corners of the ocean.

Single-use plastics have no place in the modern world and I will be urging sportsmen and women, especially those involved with ocean sports, to help us share this important message and be voices for the protection of our oceans.

This year's World Environment Day on June 5 will focus on the issue of plastic pollution – with UN Environment working with sports organisations across the world to take action to address their plastic footprint.

The roundtable comes as just this week the Prime Minister [announced](#) the UK and Vanuatu-led Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance – an agreement between member states to join forces in the fight against plastic.

Britain, together with joint chair Vanuatu, will call on other countries to pledge action on plastics, be this by a ban on microbeads, a commitment to cutting down on single use plastic bags, or other steps to eliminate avoidable plastic waste. New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Ghana have already joined.

To drive this forward, the Prime Minister also announced a £61.4 million package of funding to boost global research and help countries across the Commonwealth stop plastic waste from entering the oceans in the first place.

[News story: International Trade](#)

Secretary urges UK business to show off the best of Britain at Expo 2020 Dubai

Dr Fox announced that the Department for International Trade (DIT) is looking for an innovative, award-winning design concept for the UK's pavilion at Expo 2020, which creates the most original, inspiring and memorable visitor experience possible.

The Expo 2020 theme will be 'Connecting Minds, Creating the future' with an expected footfall of 25 million visitors from around the world, providing an ideal platform to project Britain as a global force for prosperity, innovation, creativity and thought leadership. As this is the first World Expo to take place in the Middle East, the opportunities to connect with one of the most dynamic, young, and fastest growing regions in the world are immense.

The UK's participation will consist of a self-build pavilion, supported by an accompanying programme of business and cultural events all related to the theme: Global Britain – Innovating for a Shared Future.

Britain has a proud tradition in supporting global expos, hosting the first ever Expo, The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry at Crystal Palace in 1851, with previous winning entries at Shanghai 2010 and Milan 2015. This historic expertise was a key factor in British companies, including Foster and Partners and Grimshaw Architects, winning contracts worth £1 billion to help build and deliver Expo 2020 Dubai itself.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

I am delighted to announce that the UK will be participating in Expo 2020 Dubai which will offer UK businesses a fantastic opportunity to showcase the best of British innovation, over 150 years on from the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, the world's first ever expo.

As an international economic department, DIT is ensuring British businesses make the most of growing markets and export their goods around the world. The festival will be a major showcase for the UK in the Middle East, and a shop window for the best of our creativity and innovation.

Further information

- [Expo 2020 Dubai](#) takes place between 20 October 2020 and 10 April 2021 and is based on the theme: Connecting Minds, Creating the future. This will be the first Expo to take place in the Middle East, Africa and

South Asia region (MEASA). 180 nations will take part in Expo 2020 Dubai alongside NGOs and sponsors.

- Six million visitors attended the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1851. This gave rise to the development of the area now known as 'Albertopolis' in London, which contains a large number of educational and cultural sites including the Natural History Museum, Royal Albert Hall and the V&A.
- Companies have until the 24 April to apply to design the pavilion – [applications should be made online](#)
- Companies interested in wider Expo supply opportunities should visit the [Expo procurement portal](#) for further information
- DIT is holding a [series of events](#) across Britain for everyone interested in the design tender.

About Department for International Trade

The UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) has overall responsibility for promoting UK trade across the world and attracting foreign investment to our economy. We are a specialised government body with responsibility for negotiating international trade policy, supporting business, as well as delivering an outward-looking trade diplomacy strategy.

[News story: PM meets South African President Cyril Ramaphosa](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting earlier today with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The Prime Minister said she was pleased to welcome Mr Ramaphosa to the UK on his first visit as President, noting that the relationship between the UK and South Africa is strong and deep, both bilaterally and as a key Commonwealth partner.

They discussed the potential for reinvigorating and revitalising the partnership between the UK and South Africa, and the Prime Minister noted that the UK stood ready to support South Africa's transformation and national development plan. They agreed that tackling youth unemployment and social inequality was a key priority.

They agreed an ambition to build on our strong bilateral trade and investment relationship, including as we leave the European Union. The Prime Minister noted that the UK is already the largest

investor in South Africa, and that we are firm supporters of the President's drive to attract even more investment to the country.

They agreed £50 million new UK funding across the next four years to help South Africa improve its business environment to make it more attractive to investors including in the UK, and ultimately lift some of the poorest people in South Africa out of poverty by creating jobs and opportunities. The funding will be used to help identify and dismantle barriers to trade within Africa and beyond, creating a wealth of opportunities for UK business over the coming years.

Press release: The UK announces further support in the fight against malaria

As the second largest international donor, the UK has been at the forefront of efforts to reduce the number of cases for many years by investing in treatment, prevention and research, including the fight against the threat of drug resistance.

Today the International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced a £100 million fund to be matched pound for pound by the private sector, which will be used to support priority countries with mosquito nets, indoor sprays and the strengthening of health systems.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

We know malaria still causes one out of ten child deaths in Africa and costs economies billions every year. We also know progress on reducing malaria cases has stalled, which is why it is so important it is one of the focuses of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The UK government is a leader in the fight against malaria and has been for many years. We are the second largest international funder in the world and invest in treatment, prevention and research, including fighting against the threat of drug resistance.

Our new commitment will save countless more lives and build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Malaria is a major health issue for the Commonwealth, with 90% of Commonwealth citizens living in affected countries.

The UK's new commitment will distribute 26 million nets and ensure more than five million households in target areas are reached with indoor spraying. This money will save more lives and help build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all, which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Heads of government will be urged to make a commitment to halve malaria across the Commonwealth by 2023 at a Malaria Summit tomorrow in London co-hosted by the governments of Rwanda, Swaziland and the UK.

Today the Prime Minister supported the pledge to halve malaria in the next five years and re-affirmed the government's commitment in 2016 to spend £500 million a year on malaria for five years.

UK aid has helped Nigeria cut the estimated number of people who die from malaria in Nigeria every year by more than half – from 210,000 to 100,000 between 2000 and 2016. This year the Department for International Development will launch a new £50 million programme to push for further malaria control in the country.

The UK is also committing £9.2 million of research funding to develop two new safe and effective malaria treatments. The programme will be led by the Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU) which is a collaboration of the University of Oxford, Wellcome Trust and Mahidol University, Thailand.

This comes on top of the UK's leading work in the fight against malaria:

- Since 2011, DFID has distributed 49.7 million long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets – saving up to 808,000 lives.
- In September 2016 DFID announced the UK pledge of £1.1 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria over the next three years. In 2016 UK support helped the Global Fund to save 2.2 million lives and avert 50 million new infections from malaria, TB and HIV.
- UK funded research that supported the development of child-friendly malaria drugs has now been used for more than 350 million treatments in malaria-endemic countries.
- The UK also remains committed to its five-year pledge, made in 2016, to spend £500m a year tackling malaria until March 2021.

Notes to editors:

As part of our £500m a year commitment on malaria, today we are announcing a £100 million investment in malaria. This is a match fund which leverages support from the private sector, giving an additional boost to the fight against the disease.

This money will support the Global Fund's work in priority countries. The Global Fund works in 38 of the 53 Commonwealth countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania.

Tackling malaria not only has a positive impact on improving health services, it also increases economic growth and productivity of affected countries.

Malaria affects economic growth, with the growth rate of the gross domestic product per capita in malaria-endemic countries as much as 1.3 percentage points lower than in countries without malaria.

It can cost as little as £3.25 to avert a case of malaria – with an astonishing return on investment as malaria control brings £36 in social and economic benefits for every pound spent.

DFID supports research on infectious diseases, such as malaria, through the Ross Fund Portfolio. This follows a pledge in 2016 for the department to invest 3% of its budget in high quality, high impact research across all of its policy areas.

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[Press release: G7 foreign ministers' statement on the Salisbury attack](#)

We, the G7 foreign ministers, of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union, are united in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the attack that took place against Sergei and Yulia Skripal, using a nerve agent in Salisbury, United Kingdom, on March 4, 2018. A British police officer and numerous civilians were exposed in the attack and required hospital treatment, and the lives of many more innocent British civilians have been threatened. We express our deepest sympathies to them all and our admiration and support for the UK emergency services for their courageous response.

The United Kingdom has thoroughly briefed G7 partners. We share, and agree with, the [UK's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible](#) for the attack and that there is no plausible alternative explanation. We condemn Russia's continued failure to address

legitimate requests from the UK government, which further underlines its responsibility. We call on Russia to urgently address all questions related to the incident in Salisbury. The [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons \(OPCW\)](#) has now independently confirmed the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury. Russia should provide full and complete disclosure of its previously undeclared Novichok program to the OPCW in line with its international obligations.

This use of a military-grade nerve agent, of a type developed by Russia, constitutes the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War and is a grave challenge not only to the security of the United Kingdom but to our shared security. It is an assault on UK sovereignty. Any use of chemical weapons by a state party, under any circumstances, is a clear breach of international law and a violation of the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#). It is a threat to us all. Their use is abhorrent, completely unacceptable and must be systematically and rigorously condemned. We, participating states of the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, stand together against impunity for those who develop or use these weapons, anywhere, any time, under any circumstances.

The G7 is committed to protecting and promoting the rules-based international system. We stand in unqualified solidarity with the United Kingdom. Our concerns are also heightened against the background of a pattern of earlier irresponsible and destabilizing Russian behaviour, including interference in countries' democratic systems. We call on Russia to live up to its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations, as well as its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to uphold international peace and security. In order to bring Russia back into the rules-based international system, we will continue to engage with Russia, as appropriate, on addressing regional crises and global challenges.

The G7 will continue to bolster its capabilities to address hybrid threats, including in the areas of cybersecurity, strategic communication and counter-intelligence. We welcome national action taken to constrain Russian hostile-intelligence activity and to enhance our collective security. The G7 will remain closely focused on this issue and its implications.