

Speech: British High Commissioner's speech at UK-Ghana Investment Summit

Welcome everyone.

Your excellency The Vice President of Ghana Dr. Bawumia,

Honorable Minister of Finance,

Honorable Minister of Trade,

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade & Export promotion in the UK,

Sir Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public in the Policy Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University,

Friends in the Diplomatic Corps and the Media,

Akwaaba.

We really genuinely are delighted that you could join us today. As Tony said a moment ago, I am Iain for those of you I've not met. For those of you that I've not met, I am very keen to meet you. My name is Iain Walker, it is spelt confusingly as a Scot with an extra "I", so for those of you who find that confusing you can use my Monday-born alter-ego "Kojo". I am perfectly happy with that as well.

It really is an absolute privilege to welcome such an esteemed group of guests to today's Investment Summit.

Thank you, thank you again. I think in this room, we all know about "Ghana Beyond Aid", about its focus on economic development, focus on investment, and focus on jobs. As Ghana moves beyond aid, it has been my top priority to make sure that we can adapt a UK response within the context of the G20 compact with Africa. Ghana Beyond Aid as set out by his excellency the President is a vision that the UK supports. As a long-time friend, as long-time partners, we want to work with Ghana, with you, to move this vision into implementation.

We believe, we hope, that the 2 billion pounds of development support over the last 2 decades, in particularly in the Health and Education sectors, has helped to play a role to make it possible for Ghana to now move beyond aid.

But, as Ghana changes, so too does the UK. As we look forward, as we look together beyond aid, we want to help define what comes next. And then we want to work with you shoulder to shoulder, together. We seek not to preach, but to work as partners, to work as friends and to take forward a deeper and more strategic relationship: job creation, inward investments, enhanced focus on trade, mutual prosperity, mutual interests. We can do more, much more, if we focus on clear common priorities.

To that end, we held our first ever UK-Ghana Business Council yesterday, co-chaired by his excellency the Vice President and by our Minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin. And joined with the Honorable Minister of Finance, Honorable Minister of Trade and Adam Afriyie, the Prime Minister's Envoy for Trade. We now have, I believe, an institutional mechanism for driving forward the UK partnership with Ghana. We want to use that to drive forward these regional priorities.

Today we have over 50 companies in the room, you are truly all very very welcome. We hope today enables you to understand the many investment opportunities here in Ghana, and also the opportunity for greater value-added exports.

Like the government of Ghana, we believe that Private sector participation is absolutely key. As Ghana seeks to move beyond aid, the UK's approach to development changes – you will hear more about that in a moment from Baroness Fairhead.

Before I pass the ball, let me introduce some other colleagues here. I am delighted that Rachel Turner, our Director from DfID here, who not only knows Ghana very well, but is playing a key role in our changing approach of our policy. I am also pleased to welcome Tenbite Ermias, CDC's Managing Director for Africa. You'll hear from him, and you'll hear from many more of our guests, UK Export Finance, from PIDG, from AgdevCo and others.

At this great moment I'm delighted that Baroness Fairhead has joined us. I'm going to not say too much, I'll let her come up here in a moment. But thank you Baroness for joining us this morning.

We've also got in your packs there, there's an article that Sir Paul Collier published in the Sunday times recently. I hope you read it, it talks about the importance of private sector participation in development, something that we share, something we believe. That's why we put it in your packs this morning, but welcome again, Sir Paul, thank you.

Let me close by saying thank you to Tony Burkson, who has organized today, with Nana Frimpomaa and Colin Sykes and many others in the High Commission.

I hope that we facilitate better conversations for you all this morning.

But lastly, it's the vision of Ghana beyond aid as it moves towards implementation, I hope that we can reflect on the shared values of our shared history. Let's use that history not to dwell on the past, but to use that to create a future of an even stronger UK-Ghana relationship.

Thank you again.

Enjoy the Conference.