

# Task Force meets on transboundary challenges of air pollution

Air quality experts and delegates from around the world are meeting today (11 October) to discuss international collaboration towards preventing and reducing air pollution and improving global air quality.

Hosted in Bristol by the United Kingdom, and jointly organised with co-chair Sweden, the inaugural meeting of the Task Force for the Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution (FICAP) will act as a steering committee to plan the first global Forum event, taking place in Sweden in 2023. Over two days, the Task Force is meeting to plan a programme for next year's event.

Air pollution continues to be the greatest environmental risk to human health. It causes a range of life-shortening diseases, drives down productivity, and costs our economies billions every year. In 2018 Public Health England estimated that the costs of air pollution (PM2.5 and NO2) in England to health and social care services could reach between £5.3 and £18.6 billion between 2018 and 2035. Whilst action on emissions in the United Kingdom is vital, pollution from other countries can also have significant effects on domestic air quality.

The Task Force meeting is taking place under the UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), established in 1979 to address air pollution and its impacts on the environment and health at an international level.

The forum event in Sweden next year will be the first opportunity for international experts and delegates from Parties to the Convention, non-governmental organisations, and key countries from all regions of the world to come together to share science and policy expertise on global air pollution. While progress on the Forum was paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, the United Kingdom and Sweden are now seeking to reinvigorate international cooperation on improving air quality.

Minister Harrison opened today's session to welcome delegates and set out the importance of working together to tackle air pollution.

Speaking at today's Task Force meeting, Air Quality Minister Trudy Harrison said:

"Air pollution is a transboundary challenge and we need transboundary solutions, by co-operating at an international level.

"If we are to continue achieving the emissions reductions we know are needed to protect our people's health, our economies and our environments, we must find new and innovative solutions on a global scale.

"The United Kingdom is proud to co-chair this new forum for sharing science

and policy expertise internationally, which will help more regions to take steps to tackle air pollution. With hard work and determination, the Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution will be a beacon of global environmental leadership and innovation, and I look forward to seeing it go from success to success.”

Members of the Task Force will agree a clear set of areas for greater regional cooperation and a clear design for the full Forum meeting taking place in Sweden in March 2023.

As a founding member of the UNECE Convention, the United Kingdom is at the forefront of international action to tackle transboundary air pollution and has played a leading role in supporting international programmes to drive forward scientific understanding of emissions and their impacts.

The United Kingdom has engaged constructively with the Convention to agree ambitious standards and emission reduction commitments since 1999. The Convention has played an instrumental role in reducing harmful pollutants in both Europe and North America, with sulphur dioxide reducing 70% in Europe between 1990 and 2006 and nitrogen oxide falling 35%.

Air pollution at a national level continues to reduce significantly, with nitrogen oxide levels down by 44% and PM2.5 down 18% since 2010, but we know there is more to do. We have committed nearly £900 million to tackle air pollution and improve public health, and recently consulted on stretching new targets for air quality to be set through the Environment Act.

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## **Strengthening the partnership between the UN, the AU, and African Member States remains indispensable as we strive towards more prosperous continent**

Thank you President and thank you for convening this debate during your Security Council Presidency, and I thank the Secretary-General and the AU Chair for their briefings.

On this, the 20th anniversary of the African Union, strengthening the partnership between the UN, the AU, and African Member States remains indispensable as we strive towards a freer, safer, and more prosperous continent.

That is why the UK supports permanent African representation on the Security

Council.

That is why the Annual Consultations later this week between the UN Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council are so important.

President, I want to emphasise three points about this important partnership.

First, coordination between the AU, UN and other international partners is vital for finding political solutions to conflicts including in northern Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia.

We therefore welcome the planned, AU-facilitated talks concerning northern Ethiopia and urge the Ethiopian Government and TPLF to engage in the process.

In Sudan, we welcome cooperation between the UN, AU, and IGAD to help facilitate a political solution following last October's military coup. As a Council we must continue to support the tripartite mechanism's efforts to deliver the freedom, peace, and justice which the Sudanese people have called for.

And in Somalia, AMISOM and its successor the AU Transition Mission in Somalia demonstrate the value of UN-AU cooperation. The UK has long supported this critical cooperation, including contributing £25 million towards ATMIS stipends this year alone.

Secondly, President, the UN-AU partnership is important for tackling trans-regional challenges to stability such as terrorism, disease, climate, and food insecurity.

At least 130 million people in Africa are experiencing crisis levels of food insecurity. The UK is working with African partners to address the heightened food, economic and wider humanitarian risks in the region that have been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine.

Finally, President, I note today is International Day of the Girl Child. We welcome AU efforts on Children and Armed Conflict, as well as recent AUPSC meetings on Women, Peace, and Security, and gender-based violence. The AU-UN partnership is important for making progress on these issues. We look forward to working closely to implement the Transforming Education Summit in support of 12 years of quality education for girls, and to strengthening cooperation on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. We hope the AU will participate in the International Conference the UK is hosting next month – focusing on prevention, justice, and supporting survivors.

And I thank you, Mr. President.

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# G7 Leaders' joint statement on Ukraine: 11 October 2022

Press release

Joint statement agreed between G7 leaders following their meeting this afternoon.



## **G7 Statement on Ukraine, 11 October 2022**

1. We, the leaders of the Group of Seven (G7), convened today with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Our meeting took place against the backdrop of the most recent missile attacks against civilian infrastructure and cities across Ukraine, leading to the death of innocent civilians. We condemn these attacks in the strongest possible terms and recall that indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilian populations constitute a war crime. We will hold President Putin and those responsible to account.
2. The G7 firmly condemn and unequivocally reject the illegal attempted annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions in addition to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol. We solemnly reiterate that we will never recognise this illegal annexation or the sham referenda that Russia uses to justify it.
3. Russia has blatantly violated the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. They cannot and do not give Russia a legitimate basis to change Ukraine's borders. We call upon all countries to unequivocally reject these violations of international law and demand that Russia cease all hostilities and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from Ukraine.
4. We have imposed and will continue to impose further economic costs on

Russia, including on individuals and entities – inside and outside of Russia – providing political or economic support for Russia's illegal attempts to change the status of Ukrainian territory.

5. We deplore deliberate Russian escalatory steps, including the partial mobilisation of reservists and irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, which is putting global peace and security at risk. We reaffirm that any use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons by Russia would be met with severe consequences.
6. We condemn Russia's actions at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant and the pressure exerted on the personnel of the facility. This is a further irresponsible escalation and we will hold Russia responsible for any incident caused by their actions. The safety, security and safeguards of the nuclear facility are paramount and we support the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts in this regard.
7. We reiterate our call on the Belarusian authorities to stop enabling the Russian war of aggression by permitting Russian armed forces to use Belarusian territory and by providing support to the Russian military. The announcement of a joint military group with Russia constitutes the most recent example of the Belarusian regime's complicity with Russia. We renew our call on the Lukashenko regime to fully abide by its obligations under international law.
8. We reaffirm our full support to Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty in its internationally recognised borders. In line with international law, in particular the UN Charter, Ukraine has the legitimate right to defend itself against Russian aggression and to regain full control of its territory within its internationally recognised borders.
9. We reassured President Zelenskyy that we are undeterred and steadfast in our commitment to providing the support Ukraine needs to uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will continue to provide financial, humanitarian, military, diplomatic and legal support and will stand firmly with Ukraine for as long as it takes. We are committed to supporting Ukraine in meeting its winter preparedness needs.
10. With a view to a viable post-war peace settlement, we remain ready to reach arrangements together with interested countries and institutions and Ukraine on sustained security and other commitments to help Ukraine defend itself, secure its free and democratic future, and deter future Russian aggression. We will continue to coordinate efforts to meet Ukraine's urgent requirements for military and defense equipment. We look forward to the outcomes of the International Expert Conference on the Recovery, Reconstruction and Modernisation of Ukraine on October 25.

11. No country wants peace more than Ukraine, whose people have suffered death, displacement and countless atrocities as the result of Russian aggression. In solidarity with Ukraine, the G7 Leaders welcome President Zelenskyy's readiness for a just peace. This should include the following elements: respecting the UN Charter's protection of territorial integrity and sovereignty; safeguarding Ukraine's ability to defend itself in the future; ensuring Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, including exploring avenues to do so with funds from Russia; pursuing accountability for Russian crimes committed during the war.
12. We are deeply troubled by the deliberate damage to the Nordstream pipelines in international waters in the Baltic Sea and strongly condemn any deliberate disruption of critical infrastructure. We welcome ongoing investigations.
13. We will act in solidarity and close coordination to address the negative impact of Russia's aggression for global economic stability, including by continuing to cooperate to ensure energy security and affordability across the G7 and beyond.

Published 11 October 2022

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## [UK to step up help to combat Caribbean crimewave](#)

- UK Government will increase support to ensure the safety of people in the Turks & Caicos Islands
- The British Overseas Territory has seen a major surge in gang violence, with 15 fatal shootings since 3 September
- UK has sent a ship and agreed a deployment of 24 firearms officers from the neighbouring Bahamas

The UK Government is sending a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship to the Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI) – and has agreed a deployment of specialist police from neighbouring Caribbean islands – to ensure the safety and security of people, amid a surge in gang violence.

TCI is a British Overseas Territory with a population of less than 50,000. The UK is responsible for the safety and security of people there.

A detachment of 24 highly-trained specialist firearms officers from The Bahamas arrived on Friday and are now on active duty on the islands.

Discussions are underway with other neighbouring states on additional support. In parallel, the UK is providing a package of longer-term support to build local capacity on areas including intelligence gathering, firearms training and border control.

The Royal Navy has deployed RFA Tideforce, which is on the way to the islands. The ship is a Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker and will be used as a platform for operations, bringing with it a Wildcat helicopter, which offers a surveillance capability and can support security operations.

Alongside this, a package of maritime surveillance support has been agreed from the US, over October, to include a fixed-wing aircraft and a Blackhawk helicopter.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

The UK has a moral and constitutional responsibility to support and protect the people of the Overseas Territories, who are a valued part of the UK family. We had to act following the terrible violence we've seen in the Turks & Caicos Islands these past few weeks.

I'm grateful to the brave men and women of the local police force, as well as those from the Bahamas who are providing invaluable immediate support. The Governor and Premier are also working tirelessly to protect communities. Together, we will ensure that violent crime is stamped out in the TCI in the long term.

This help forms part of a wider package of support from the UK Government to tackle violent crime on TCI, which includes:

- The UK Government is also working to recruit and fund a new serious crime team who will sit at the heart of the TCI police force, building a permanent capability to tackle gang crime;
- UK police are engaging with local TCI counterparts to finalise a contingency plan for additional specialist support to deploy, if needed;
- This is in addition to a series of deployments of UK police to provide longer-term support for operations and to build capacity in the TCI to tackle gang crime. These include firearms trainers, detectives and border force agents;
- The UK is procuring a permanent maritime surveillance aircraft to help secure TCI's borders;
- The National Crime Agency is deploying staff to the TCI, working closely with local police intelligence teams, to support the development of additional intelligence capability within TCI, including advice on lawful intercept legislation;
- Ongoing support through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund has included a secondment of a Border Security lead, a programme of training and capability building to the TCI police, as well as support for a project of customs and border transformation.

TCI has seen a surge in violent crime in the past few months, which is believed to be linked to the arrival of organised criminal gangs from elsewhere in the Caribbean.

The security situation has rapidly deteriorated in TCI over the past weeks, with 11 fatal shootings in September and a further four in October.

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## **Boost for teacher training bursaries by up to £10,000 a year**

Graduates applying to train as teachers in high priority subjects will receive increases to tax-free cash bursaries and scholarships from next year under government plans to recruit and retain top talent.

For aspiring teachers starting their training in September 2023, bursaries worth £27,000 and scholarships worth £29,000 will draw talented trainees into the highest-priority STEM (science, technology and mathematics) subjects of mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing.

£25,000 bursaries and £27,000 scholarships will be offered to prospective languages teachers – up £10,000 on this academic year.

Bursary and scholarship eligibility is being extended to all non-UK national trainees in physics and languages.

The generous package is worth £181 million in total, up £52 million on the current academic year, and will help ensure there are excellent teachers across the country, developing the pipeline of skills that the future UK economy will need.

A new relocation premium for overseas nationals coming to England to teach or train in these subjects was confirmed earlier this year in the [Schools White Paper](#), which will help with visa costs and other expenses.

Teachers in the first five years of their career teaching mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing in disadvantaged schools are also able to claim the [Levelling Up Premium](#), worth up to £3,000 tax free.

Schools Minister Jonathan Gullis said:

As a former teacher, I know that investing in our teachers is investing in young people. These generous bursaries and scholarships will attract the brightest and the best into teaching.

Shoring up the talent pipeline to teach vital subject areas such as STEM and languages will, in turn, equip young people with the

knowledge and skills they need to secure a bright future, and ensure that our economy remains globally competitive.

Further bursaries available include those for aspiring geography teachers, who will receive £25,000, an increase of £10,000, while £20,000 bursaries for biology and design & technology represent increases of £10,000 and £5,000 respectively on the current academic year. A £15,000 tax-free bursary for English will also be reintroduced.

The funding available is the latest step towards the Government's intention, set out earlier this year in the Schools White Paper, for every child to be taught by an excellent teacher.

It is also part of broader work to raise the profile of teaching. Earlier this year the Government announced the highest pay awards for teachers in a generation – 8.9 percent increases for new teachers and five percent for experienced teachers and leaders – in recognition of their hard work and supporting with the cost of living, while also reflecting the need for the sound management of schools' budgets.

Louis Barson, Director of Science, Innovation and Skills at the Institute of Physics said:

Great physics teaching opens up career opportunities in a broad and growing range of career paths: from developing new cancer treatments to tackling climate change.

We are pleased to be delivering the government's scholarships programme for physics teachers, helping tackle the physics teacher shortage and focussing on areas with the greatest need for specialists, enhancing the life chances of local pupils.

Scholars will benefit from additional financial support, access to experienced professional coaching, high-quality resources and a mutually supportive community.