

Press release: Commonwealth countries unite to stamp out human trafficking and child exploitation

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This support, from the Department for International Development and the Home Office, will identify vulnerable people most at risk of child labour and strengthen law enforcement responses in a number of Commonwealth countries to crack down on this horrific crime.

UN experts will determine where child labour is taking place, in what form, and map out where the greatest number of victims are. This work will show where we can help the most children and develop targeted plans to prevent and stop child labour, including in businesses and supply chains. They will also focus on communities affected by conflict where there could be a higher risk of exploitation, such as Rohingya families in Bangladesh who have already fled brutal violence and persecution.

The UK will also work in Commonwealth countries such as Sri Lanka and Malawi to build the capacity of police forces and prosecutors to root out human trafficking and rapidly increase the number of convictions to punish the perpetrators. We will boost regional cooperation, train prosecutors, strengthen the protection of victims to encourage them to speak out and help to develop national policing strategies to break the business model of the traffickers.

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, said:

The UK and the Commonwealth are stepping up to fight one of the greatest injustices of our time – the trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable people by predators.

UK aid is helping to stamp out these evil practices, by smashing the traffickers' exploitative business model, helping to punish the perpetrators and supporting vulnerable people and victims – who are all too often women and children – to rebuild their lives so they do not fall back into a cycle of abuse.

The Commonwealth is uniting to take on this challenge and our renewed commitment to end exploitation of anyone, anywhere, is vital in a world where over 40 million people are still being

forced to live in these barbaric conditions.

Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, said:

Human trafficking, forced labour and child exploitation are cruel and horrendous crimes that no one should suffer.

The UK is leading the world in tackling this form of abuse through the ground-breaking Modern Slavery Act 2015, which ensures victims are identified and supported and provides law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to bring perpetrators to justice.

But this is a global problem which requires a global response, which is why all countries must unite to end this to make these brutal crimes a thing of the past. The UK continues to work with our Commonwealth neighbours to strengthen their response to human trafficking and child exploitation. The funding announced today will play a vital role in helping these countries identify and support the most vulnerable people in their communities, while supporting law enforcement to bring offenders to justice.

The Commonwealth has committed to taking a leading role in the international fight against human trafficking and the UK's support will have a life-changing impact. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings being held in London, a further eight countries have already joined the global Call to Action to end Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, launched by the Prime Minister at the United Nations last year. Over 50 countries around the world have now endorsed the call to action, including more than a third of the Commonwealth, and more are expected to join during the Summit.

The UK is already working closely with Commonwealth countries to end the exploitation of men, women and children. For example in South Asia we are preventing trafficking and forced labour among women migrant workers; in Nigeria we are supporting victims and raising public awareness of the risks of trafficking, whilst improving law enforcement and justice systems to crack down on this crime and root out the perpetrators.

Forced labour and trafficking affects an estimated 40 million people and thrives on desperation, discrimination and inequality in every country of the globe. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable and constitute 71% of all victims – such as in forced labour in the garment sector, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. The UK's work is enabling girls and women to make informed choices about their lives, including through access to skills and education.

Today's package of support totals £5.5 million, delivered by the Home Office and DFID, which includes:

- £3 million to support Commonwealth governments to better identify, analyse and subsequently act upon instances of child labour through

gathering information and building capacity to end the practice in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Our support will focus on areas affected by conflict where there could be a higher risk of modern slavery in global supply chains and communities like the Rohingya population in Bangladesh. Child labour is prevalent in areas like agriculture, the garment sector, fisheries and construction – raising the risk of products of child labour reaching the UK market.

- £2 million to strengthen law enforcement and justice systems in fighting human trafficking in India, Sri Lanka, Malawi and Zambia. This will develop and implement national policing strategies; raise criminal justice standards on trafficking, and boost the protection of victims.
- £500,000 to support tough new legislation to prevent and tackle human trafficking and forced labour in nine Commonwealth countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda, Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, and Sri Lanka – and supporting the scrutiny and oversight of the response to human trafficking.

Notes to Editors:

At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017, the Prime Minister announced that the UK will double its development spending on modern slavery to £150million, enabling more work in collaboration with source and transit countries. The Prime Minister also made a global Call to Action to end Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

The £5.5 million of support announced today is from the Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund (CSSF), with DFID and Home Office Official Development Assistance. The CSSF is a Cross Government fund through which the UK and our international partners are more secure from threats such as terrorism, corruption and illegal migration or trafficking.

The UK's ongoing work in South Asia includes the Work in Freedom programme to help women at risk of trafficking and forced labour.

The £10.5 million first phase of the programme helped 380,000 women at risk, and an independent evaluation found the project was innovative, highly relevant and delivering results.

A £13 million investment in the second phase of the programme was announced in December 2017, and will help over 350,000 women, including victims of forced domestic work and garment manufacturing and supporting women at their destination to access help if they are exploited.

In Nigeria, both DFID and the Home Office are working to improve the support offered to victims of trafficking, promote alternative, aspirational livelihoods to potential victims of trafficking, and building the capacity of law enforcement to crack down on the crime.

£7 million of DFID support in Nigeria was announced in December 2017 to create job opportunities in sectors including hospitality and technology which could help up to 30,000 women at risk of modern slavery; and strengthen systems that support victims of trafficking, including through improving safe

house support and training for counsellors in at least six safe houses.

The Home Office has provided £5 million of support – announced in September 2016 – which will build the capacity of Nigerian law enforcement to crack down on the crime, help investigate prolific traffickers, and provide protection and rehabilitation for victims.

Press release: UK and India agree ambitious new tech partnership

An ambitious new UK-India Tech Partnership is expected to generate significant investment and support the creation of thousands of new jobs across the UK.

Under the Partnership agreed today by Prime Minister Theresa May and Prime Minister Modi, the UK will establish a new UK-India Tech Partnership to identify and pair businesses, venture capital, universities and others to provide access routes to markets for British and Indian entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises.

It follows on from the success of the UK-Israel Tech Hub which has generated £62 million worth of deals over the past five years, with a potential impact of £600 million for the UK economy.

The most up-to-date figures show the UK exported £358 million of digital services to India in 2015.

Based on these figures, the success of the UK-Israel Tech Hub and the size of the Indian economy, the Government believes this initiative could give the UK economy a significant boost. It is estimated the UK-India Tech Partnership could contribute to an increase of thousands of tech jobs in the UK in the coming years.

Digital Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Our world-leading digital economy is booming, worth more than £116 billion a year and employing more than two million people.

We're determined to see this incredible success continue, and this ambitious UK-India Tech Partnership will bring together some of the best minds working in tech to unlock its future potential and deliver high-skilled jobs and economic growth in both countries.

The UK will initially invest £1m to pilot the approach and potentially up to

a further £13m by 2022.

To build the network the Government will engage in-country experts to work with the British High Commission in New Delhi, the Indian Government and the private sector in order to increase tech investment, exports and research and development.

Smaller regional teams will link specific cities and regions in India and the UK.

The Partnership will encourage innovation and productivity by helping businesses in the UK and India collaborate on emerging technologies, develop mentoring relationships and exchange staff. The regional teams will also ensure the impact is felt across the breadth of both nations' expansive tech sectors, and that successful approaches adopted in one region can be shared and adopted in others.

Initially the pilot will connect the UK with Pune in Maharashtra, focussing on the Future of Mobility, including low emission and autonomous vehicles, battery storage and vehicle light-weighting. Additional connections will be linked to Bangalore with a focus on augmented and virtual reality, advanced materials and AI.

If it is as successful as expected, the Partnership can be scaled up to bring in more regions of the UK and India which share expertise in the relevant fields.

In parallel, the UK and India's tech trade associations TechUK and NASSCOM will work together through a new UK-India Tech Alliance, bringing senior tech leaders together to collaborate, help develop policy and encourage innovation.

The UK and India have also committed to holding a second UK-India Tech Summit to build on the 2016 Summit the Prime Minister attended in India. This will bring together leading tech innovators and scientists from both the UK and India to look at pressing issues such as tech governance, including data privacy issues.

The Department for International Trade also intends to recruit a UK cyber security industry expert to be based in New Delhi, to share British expertise and connect Indian private and public sector organisations with cutting-edge UK companies who can supply their specific requirements.

Julian David, CEO of techUK, said:

This is an incredibly important partnership and something tech businesses from both countries have been driving for. The UK and India are leaders in the development and use of digital tech, and there is a huge amount we can learn from each other and big opportunities to join forces in innovation.

India is also a key strategic partner for the UK with world-class

digital skills. Deepening our engagement will open up opportunities for business in both countries and help ensure we maximise the benefits of technology for our societies and citizens.

The Partnership will support the Government in tackling the Grand Challenges set out in the [UK's Industrial Strategy](#), placing the UK at the forefront of the Artificial Intelligence and Data Economy, Clean Growth, and the Future of Mobility in particular.

It will also directly support the delivery of the [UK Digital Strategy](#) by giving businesses a direct link to India's digital sector, positioning the UK as India's global partner and destination of choice in tech. India already invests significantly in UK tech with close to 30 per cent of Indian companies' 110,000 employees in the UK working in tech and telecoms.

The UK and India will also commission a joint study as the first step towards establishing a new UK-India Advanced Manufacturing Centre, which would benefit both the UK and India through our extensive supply-chain networks.

The UK has also announced the extension of the Super Priority Visa (SPV) in two further cities in India – Pune and Bangalore. The SPV is a paid-for service which means eligible customers can receive a visa decision within 24 hours. This brings the total number of locations Indian nationals can use the SPV service to five.

In addition to the UK-India Tech Partnership, Prime Minister Theresa May and Prime Minister Modi also confirmed new commercial deals worth £1 billion.

ENDS

Please contact the DCMS press office on 020 7211 2210.

Press release: PM meeting with Prime Minister of India: 18 April 2018

This morning the Prime Minister welcomed Prime Minister Modi of India to Downing Street for bilateral talks. The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Modi discussed the chemical weapons attacks in Salisbury and Syria, expressing concern and making clear their opposition to the use of chemical weapons by any party in any circumstances.

The Prime Minister reiterated the UK's position on Russia's recent destabilising behaviour, underlined by the attack in Salisbury and the protection provided for the Syrian regime's repeated use of chemical weapons against its people.

The leaders discussed their shared priorities in the Indo-Pacific and committed to working more closely together to ensure it remained free and open.

They reflected on the progress made on bilateral defence and security cooperation since the Prime Minister's visit to India in 2016 and the agreement to a number of Defence Capability Partnerships in key strategic areas, with closer military-to-military ties underpinned by a succession of high level visits and exchanges. They agreed to continue working together closely to combat terrorism, radicalisation and online extremism.

They also discussed co-operation between the two countries on legal matters. Mrs May welcomed the return to the UK of the Chennai Six.

The Prime Minister updated Prime Minister Modi on the progress of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, saying the implementation period agreed in March gives Indian companies and investors the confidence that market access will continue on current terms until the end of 2020.

She reiterated that the UK will remain committed to global free trade and investment and that the UK will remain a leading hub for global finance. Prime Minister Modi said there would be no dilution in the importance of the UK to India post-Brexit. He said the City of London was of great importance to India for accessing the global markets and would remain so.

The two leaders said trade between the UK and India had grown strongly over the last year and Prime Minister Modi said that Brexit offers opportunities to further increase trade ties.

The Prime Ministers welcomed the £1 billion of commercial deals which has been agreed today. They agreed to build on the recommendations of the UK-India Joint Trade Review to reduce barriers to trade, to make it easier to do business in both countries and enable a stronger bilateral trade relationship for the future.

Looking to the future the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Modi discussed the new UK-India Tech Partnership agreed today which will create thousands of jobs and generate significant investment in both our economies. The Prime Minister said the Partnership will be at the core of much that we'll do together over the next decade.

Finally they looked forward to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting tomorrow and agreed on the importance of working together to build a more sustainable, prosperous, secure and fairer future for all Commonwealth citizens.

Speech: Social work and the Commonwealth

Good evening. Thank you, Ruth Allen and the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), for inviting me today. I am delighted to be here for two reasons. First, it is rare that I am able to speak to a group of like-minded people from across the Commonwealth. And second – and I make no apology for this – it's a great chance for me to talk about the great work we are doing here.

I'd like to speak around three themes – the importance of social work, working in partnership and sharing our experience of how our vision for social work reform is working – especially for those on the frontline.

I am delighted to recognise the contribution that social work practice makes in improving people's lives, both here in the UK and across the Commonwealth. Social work is a human rights based profession with the overriding aim of improving social justice and citizenship for those we are here to serve and work alongside. It brings a unique approach to working with people and communities as a whole.

Social workers develop relationships with people, starting with where they are and what matters to them, recognising their strengths, gifts and aspirations – and building on these to support the wellbeing of families and communities, and to ensure the care and support provided is just right.

In the UK, social workers have been involved in responding to emergency and disaster situations including the Grenfell fire tragedy and terrorist attacks, as well as severe snow storms and flooding.

Many social workers in Commonwealth nations are also involved in supporting and working with communities dealing with the impact of environmental disasters such as flooding and earthquakes and the impact of movements of people because of war or conflict. There is much we can learn from each other in developing and improving our social work practice to best help and support those we work with across our nations.

The Commonwealth is a remarkable international organisation, spanning every geographical region, religion and culture. With 53 independent countries, it is uniquely placed to support and encourage international co-operation between people all over the world; and after 60 years, it remains a major force for change in the world today. In the UK, there have been significant improvements in the quality of social work education over the last decade, with social work now an established graduate profession with national professional standards.

I know there are now over 90,000 Commonwealth students here. And we have 17 Commonwealth Scholars currently studying social work – as well as two Rutherford Fellows who, as you'll know, are highly skilled researchers

conducting postdoctoral research here.

Our world-class universities attract this range of global talent. We are a world-leading destination for study and research, with four universities in the world's top 10 and 16 in the top 100 – second only to the USA. But this is not simply about our institutions providing an excellent education – it is the people who really make the difference in building relationships between our countries. International students bring greater diversity to campuses, an international dimension to the experience of all our students, and add to the UK's impressive research capacity.

In offering a warm welcome to international students, we create lasting positive relations with future leaders, influencers and decision-makers around the world and improve the prospect of strengthened cultural, business, political and research links between our countries.

International social workers also play a vital role in the provision of child and family social work here in the UK. Their contribution is truly important to helping to connect the profession with the people it works with, and for. So when I speak about working in partnership, I mean working in a partnership without borders. We are a global community, we face so many of the same challenges, we can – and should – share with each other. This evening I am going to speak about some of our great work. But I don't want it to stop here – you have great practice too – and we want to know about it.

Indeed next week, I welcome New Zealand's Children's Minister, the Honourable Tracey Martin, to the country before she visits a range of local authorities, settings and practitioners to help share best practice across the Commonwealth. I look forward to hearing about her experience in this sector.

Good social work training helps students to think about themselves as a member of a profession and make connections between theory and research. In recent years, we have worked to raise the status of social work education by raising the bar to entry, and improving the consistency of statutory placements.

We have set out clear statements about what all child and family social workers should know and be able to do. These knowledge and skills statements are also now post-qualifying standards for those on the frontline and a key plank of our world-leading reform agenda.

I'd like to now use the opportunity to talk to you about some of our most exciting reforms in this area. The first of these being our Teaching Partnerships. These are a collaboration that aim to bring educators and employers closer together to make education more relevant to practice – and to raise standards of training and drive quality at multiple points in the system, including recruitment, training, induction and professional development. We have funded 15 Teaching Partnerships so far, which include 31 universities, 73 councils and a range of other public sector, private, voluntary and independent organisations – demonstrating the depth of interest from the sector.

The partnerships are helping to raise standards of entry into mainstream social work programmes, and they incorporate the Knowledge and Skills statements into teaching and practice curricula. The partnerships also ensure that there is a strong focus on good-quality statutory placements.

We are currently expanding the programme and more partnerships will be joining shortly.

Another set of reforms that I'm really excited about is our national assessment and accreditation system – which we are calling NAAS. I'm sure, we all believe that the quality of practice is the most important thing to improve the experiences of vulnerable children and families. Clear standards and a learning culture will help achieve a universally high quality of practice. This is what underpins the work we are leading on in assessment and accreditation. And it is truly ground-breaking.

We have recently established a national post-qualifying standard for child and family expertise – providing a nationally-consistent benchmark.

And starting in July, we will be offering assessment and accreditation against these standards through the rollout of NAAS.

This is pivotal in Government's clear vision in developing and supporting a fully confident and highly capable child and family social work profession that has been properly trained with the right knowledge and skills. And it is a vital part of how we are working to raise the skills and the confidence of child and family social workers.

This is also part of our journey towards enabling every child and family social worker to see a whole career pathway in front of them. Our post-qualifying standards will strengthen existing good practice as well as trigger continuous development and support for social workers.

We are working closely with all parts of the sector – including universities – to make sure we get the delivery NAAS right before we introduce it nationally. That is why we are beginning with 21 sites with around 5,000 social workers. As I speak, local authorities which are part of the first phases are really challenging themselves on how they can prepare social workers for this.

These authorities are committed to working alongside us to co-create many of the ways of working, the guidance and the materials needed to make the national assessment work effectively. We know that this is what social workers want and we have responded in a very practical way – by building in much more scope for joint work. I can't stress enough how important I think it is that NAAS will be in driving even higher levels of excellent social work practice. I am confident that we will lead the world on this.

We have also recently announced that we will establish Social Work England, a new, specialist regulator for social workers in England. Its primary focus will be public protection and, as a single-profession regulator, Social Work England will be able to develop an in-depth understanding of the profession.

Establishing Social Work England is a key part of achieving Government's vision for the social work profession. Social workers need to benefit from the highest quality initial education, access to continuing professional development – and frontline practitioners need strong, supportive supervision and leadership.

Social Work England will promote public confidence and trust in the social work profession, bringing real benefits to the social workers up and down the country who work to support vulnerable children, adults and families. Where we are on Social Work England is testimony to the importance of working in partnership both with the academic sector as well as with end users and representatives from across social work. Our hosts today, BASW, have played a vital role.

I recently announced the appointment of Lord Patel of Bradford, as the Chair of Social Work England. He is steeped in social work – he is a former social worker, trainer, tutor, and lecturer in social work – and he is committed to ensuring that the views of the profession are at the heart of the development of Social Work England. And soon will be announcing a chief executive of for Social Work England too.

The final reform I want to touch on is our new What Works Centre. Understanding what works effectively for those in need of social work support is at the heart of our work to improve the quality of practice in child and family social work.

We are working with the sector to devise new and better ways of developing and using robust evidence. Collaborating with Nesta, the foundation for innovation, and Cardiff University, we are setting up a new What Works Centre for Children's Social Care to develop the evidence base and support practitioners and practice leaders to make better use of evidence.

The early research priorities for the centre include what works in reducing the need for children to enter care proceedings and what works in supervision. The What Works Centre will also be engaging with a small number of pioneer local authorities over the summer to co-develop and test a range of tools and services to make evidence more accessible and relevant, to help people use evidence well, and to help practice leaders create a culture in which the effective use of evidence is the norm.

Social work is an amazing calling. It is truly a vocation for people who want to work to protect vulnerable children and adults. Across all of our countries, I know that we share the same values about how we help those who are most vulnerable.

I was honoured to be invited to speak to you today. To repeat what I said earlier, for me working in partnership means working in a partnership without borders. I am passionate about the great work we are doing here. You have great practice too – and we would be delighted to hear about your work – we are always open to new ideas – and challenges too.

Press release: British High Commission hosts the Commonwealth Big Lunch in Dhaka

Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury MP, Honourable Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament attended as Chief Guest and the event brought together 150 people including the High Commissioners of Malaysia, Brunei, Canada and Sri Lanka, and Acting High Commissioners of Australia and Pakistan, representatives from the university and education sector, NGOs and civil society, medicine, businesses, Bangladeshi Queen's Young Leaders and Points of Light award winner and the British Council's Active Citizens.

The lunch celebrated the diversity and achievement of the Commonwealth and this year's theme of 'towards a common future', with themed discussion of education, business and trade, women empowerment and girl's education, climate change, health and working children.

This lunch was one of a series held across the Commonwealth – launched by the Eden Project in partnership with the UK Government – between 12 March, Commonwealth Day, and 22 April to mark the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting when Government leaders and representatives and civil society representatives from 53 countries will gather in the UK to work together to address shared global challenges.

British High Commissioner Alison Blake CMG said:

"The idea behind the Big Lunch is a simple one: to bring together friends and partners to celebrate being part of the Commonwealth, to draw on our diversity, our strengths and our shared values and to enjoy a meal in each others' company. I was delighted that so many of our colleagues and friends and partners joined us. Bring together a group of talented high achievers, committed to working every day to build a safer, more prosperous and fairer world, and you start a series of the discussions and new connections that fire the imagination and turn a simple meal together into something very special."

The previous day, 17 April, the British High Commissioner hosted an evening reception to celebrate the Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, at which Khandker Mosharaf Hossain, MP, Hon'ble Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, was the Chief Guest.

Further Information

About the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

This week the UK is hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting,

where leaders from across the Commonwealth are gathering in London and Windsor. With the theme of 'Towards a Common Future' they are working to create a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fair future for the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens, particularly its young people.

For more information please visit [Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting](#) or follow on Twitter [@commonwealth18](#) #OurCommonwealth.

The Eden Project

The Eden Project is an educational charity and social enterprise based in Cornwall, UK, that aims to connect people with one another and the natural world to explore a better future.

[The Eden Project Big Lunch](#) takes place this year on Sunday, 3 June.

For updates on the British High Commission and for more information on the Chevening Programme, please follow our social media channels.