

Speech: Moving from Peacekeeping to Development in Haiti

Thank you very much Mr President, and may I join colleagues in congratulating you on your Presidency and thanking the Netherlands for theirs. Thank you also to the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing, and it was very good to have news of his visit in March and to see how much the mandate is being actively implemented.

The United Kingdom welcomes the continued progress in Haiti. We're particularly interested in the development of the National Police, the Penal Chain Committee initiative, efforts to strengthen the rule of law, and like other speakers, we applaud the work of the New Approach to Cholera.

It's very good to see the dedication and support that MINUJUSTH has offered to the Government of Haiti in its task. We have been very interested in the way that the Government is establishing a solid and sustainable foundation for long-term political stability, security and development in Haiti. As the Under-Secretary-General said, Mr President, this is a real vote of confidence in the country.

It's good to hear of the active implementation of the Mission for Justice Support, and we now look to the Mission to deliver a smooth transition to a non-peacekeeping UN presence.

In particular, we support the Mission's efforts to hand over responsibility for rule of law, human rights and security sector reforms to the UN Country Team and to the Government of Haiti by October 2019, and we want to ensure the transition is a success. To this end, the United Kingdom urges the Government and the UN to take the following three steps:

Firstly, the Government needs to take ownership for the delivery of critical reforms that will have a lasting impact on security and development. In particular, Mr President, I would highlight the need to protect the independence of the Haitian police; to pass new legislation to empower the judiciary; to ensure human rights are protected through strong state institutions; and to empower women to be political leaders.

Secondly, we look to the UN to be a well-integrated organisation on the ground to ensure an effective transition by implementing the Joint Work Plan. In particular, there should be a strong focus on collaboration between the Country Team and the Mission; support from the Peacebuilding Fund, as other colleagues have said; flexible and coordinated partnerships between mobile teams and the Country Team; close coordination with other international and bilateral partners; and I join others in looking for an overall focus on what progress can be made on the Sustainable Development Goals. The May report to the Secretary-General is eagerly awaited, Mr President. We hope it will set out the progress needed to deliver an integrated and sustainable transition in the next eighteen months.

Thirdly, the two-year exit strategy needs to demonstrate clear progress against the benchmarks the Secretary-General has set. The responsibilities from the Mission to the Country Team is complex one, and makes the transition a more complex than it inherently is. We hope the Mission, in consultation with the Government, will be able to develop the indicators needed under these benchmarks. Using clear and realistic milestones will enable us to track progress, and while noting that many colleagues and the Under-Secretary-General spoke about the fragility of the transition, we believed that if there are such milestones and benchmarks, it will reduce the risk associated with the exit strategy. In particular, the exit strategy needs also to be clearly aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework.

In conclusion, Mr President, it is critical that Mission and Government work together in the spirit of solidarity, mutual respect and trust. Where the United Kingdom can help, you can count on us to do so.

And I would like at this point, if I may, just to mention the history of sexual exploitation and abuse that has sadly happened in Haiti, and to say that we will work with the Secretary-General to ensure a zero-tolerance policy throughout the whole of the UN.

There is now a limited time available to meet the transition target of October 2019. We hope for the adoption of a clear transition plan that will set out how we will move from peacekeeping to development, and we thought what the Under-Secretary-General said on this was very encouraging. We do however urge the Secretary-General to be realistic and clear about division of responsibilities across the UN system. It is ultimately the Government of Haiti's leadership that will make the transition a success.

But as other speakers have noted, where we are now does presents us with an enormous opportunity, not just for the Government of Haiti but for a success for the UN family and in peacekeeping generally.

Thank you.

[News story: ESFA marks its 1st birthday](#)

Eileen Milner marks ESFA's first birthday:

"As we joined together, a year ago today, to form one agency, the organisation has embraced many changes.

We have implemented apprenticeship reforms including the apprenticeship levy, we have also begun the implementation of the National Funding Formula for schools.

We have continued improvements to our school estate, in the last financial year our free schools capital team have opened 41 new free schools, UTCs and studio schools.

Meanwhile, over the last 12 months, our Priority School Building Programme has seen 48 schools open in their rebuilt and refurbished buildings. In addition, 4 national college buildings were opened providing specialist training facilities for high speed rail and nuclear industries.

Resulting from area reviews in the FE sector, this year we have supported the implementation of a further 31 merger recommendations and the conversion of 18 sixth form colleges to academies.

We have so far supported over 482,000 people through the National Careers Service, giving impartial information, advice and guidance to ensure direction on career paths when not knowing where to turn.

National Apprenticeship Week 2018 was a huge success, on the first day we trended number 1 on social media, getting higher mentions than the Oscars.

The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools project has engaged 1,617 schools this academic year, surpassing its targets on numbers of teachers and parents engaged.

We have issued 2018 to 2019 funding allocations to around 1,100 colleges and providers and 2017 to 2018 allocations to 7,614 academies and 152 local authorities and we continue to increase scrutiny and oversight of the sector to ensure assurance of how public money is used.

This year has seen the development and roll out of our financial prevention strategy and the move to better joint working with the Regional Schools Commissioners. We continue to work on the implementation of T Levels and with Mayoral Combined Authorities and our providers on the devolution of the adult skills budget in 2019.

I have now been in post 5 months and am certain that ESFA is ideally placed to tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead. We look forward to continuing to work closely with all our partners across the sector. Collaboration will be key in ensuring future improvements to the education and skills agenda.

In the coming months, we will publish our inaugural annual report which will show further progress and the impact we are making.”

[News story: Grave of a Seaforth](#)

Highlander rededicated 100 years after he was killed in World War 1

Ken and Kath MacDonald with the Reverend Paul van Sittert and members of the Royal Regiment of Scotland at the service. Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The resting place of 21 year old Serjeant John MacKenzie MM of 1st/6th Battalion, The Seaforth Highlanders has been marked 100 years after his death in the Great War. A rededication service has taken place at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Anneux British Cemetery near Cambrai in Northern France.

The service was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services.

Rosie Barron, JCCC said:

Serjeant MacKenzie stands out as an exceptional soldier even amongst a generation where so many paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. It has been an honour to organise this rededication service in his memory and to know that his family's search for him is now at an end.

Serjeant MacKenzie enlisted at the outset of the world war 1 and served throughout the conflict until he died on 25 March 1918, shortly after the start of the German Spring Offensive. He fought in the Capture of Beaumont Hamel in 1916 and later that year was awarded the Military Medal and French Croix de Guerre. Just prior to his death, Serjeant MacKenzie was awarded a Bar to the Military Medal.

The location of Serjeant MacKenzie's grave was discovered after painstaking research by his great nephew, Ken MacDonald, and his wife, Kath MacDonald. They discovered that Serjeant MacKenzie had been wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans. He later died of his wounds and was buried in a mass grave in the village of Inchy-en-Artois. After the war, his grave was moved to Anneux British Cemetery, where he was buried as an 'Unknown Soldier'. With his whereabouts unknown, Serjeant MacKenzie was commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

Further research by the MOD's JCCC was undertaken to corroborate the evidence the family provided and the identification of the 'Unknown Soldier' grave was confirmed to be that of Serjeant John MacKenzie MM.

Ken MacDonald lays a wreath at Serjeant MacKenzie's grave on behalf of the family. Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Ken MacDonald said:

Since my wife and I visited France 22 years ago and saw John's name on the Arras Memorial, we have never given up hope of finding his grave. It feels today like 1 of my 3 great uncles has come home. We're very grateful to the MOD's JCCC and CWGC for arranging the rededication service, and to the relatives of other Seaforth Highlanders who joined us for the service.

Ken and Kath were accompanied by his sister, Mary, and 4 other family members in attending the service. Nine members of The Royal Regiment of Scotland were present at the rededication service to remember Serjeant MacKenzie. Also remembered were Serjeant MacKenzie's brothers, Donald and Kenneth, both of the 1st Battalion, The Cameron Highlanders who are both still missing on the battlefields of Northern France.

A new headstone bearing Serjeant MacKenzie's name has been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for his final resting place in perpetuity.

Melanie Donnelly, CWGC said:

100 years after he was killed, Serjeant MacKenzie's grave in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Anneux British Cemetery is now marked with a headstone bearing his name. He was a brave young man who made the ultimate sacrifice and we are honoured to be able to play a part in the re-dedication of his grave today. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission ensure that all those who served and fell are commemorated by name and we will care for his grave and the memorials on which his two brothers are commemorated, in perpetuity.

The rededication service for Serjeant MacKenzie took place as part of a series of services organised by the MOD's JCCC this week. The first was the burial of an unknown soldier of The Royal Scots at Bailleul Road East Cemetery in Belgium earlier today all the services are to be conducted by the Reverend Paul van Sittert CF, Chaplain to 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

The Reverend Paul van Sittert, said:

It has been a privilege to officiate at the rededication and burial services of graves for these remarkably brave world war 1 soldiers. Their courage, sacrifice and service to our country is an example that should never be forgotten. The Kohima epitaph rightly reminds: that for our tomorrow they gave their today.

The burial of an unknown soldier of The Royal Scots at Bailleul Road East

Cemetery in Belgium (note this is not the grave of John MacKenzie). Crown Copyright, All rights

The burial of two unknown soldiers of The Royal Scots and an unknown soldier of an unknown regiment were laid to rest on Wednesday 28 March at St Mary's A.D.S. Cemetery in France. The burial of an unknown Argyll and Sutherland Highlander will take place later in the day at Woburn Abbey Cemetery, also in France.

[News story: Durham Armed Forces Forum: better supporting a talented and complex veteran community](#)

Photo of attendees at the Durham Armed Forces Forum. Photo: Michael Potts. All rights reserved

VAPC NEs Michael Potts attended the Durham Armed Forces Forum as the board's representative. This forum was held at Durham County Council's headquarters and was chaired by Gordon Elliot, the Council's Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement. The forum was supported by:

- Ian Hunter Smart, the Councils' Voluntary & Community Sector Officer
- Councillor Lucy Hovvels MBE
- Councillor Jane Brown, the Council's Armed Forces Champion

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion were in attendance and made a meaningful contribution to the forum's work.

This lively event drew 23 attendees from the NHS, Royal Navy, army, police, service charities, social housing groups, rehabilitation service, social housing, and veterans.

For the VAPC NE the Durham events are a vital part in the VAPC's ongoing mission to improve the understanding of the needs of the veteran and armed forces community and how best practice can be spread and veteran support be better delivered.

The forum explored issues relating to new ways to support veterans within the criminal justice system. The new Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company, a non-profitmaking company, outlined their work to develop local contacts to help them maximise their veteran support services.

Lt Col Nathan Teale, 8th Battalion the Rifles, made a presentation on the work they are doing to engage veterans. The Battalion is the newest in the

army being formed on the 1 November 2017 and is undergoing rapid expansion locally. They are keen to encourage veterans to join the Battalion seeing them as a valuable pool of talent which brings with them the experience needed to help with their mission.

Equally important are the links to the local community and the local regimental associations which are seen key to the Battalion's culture and memory. They form a vital part in preserving the proud and long history of the Durham Light Infantry, an illustrious predecessor of the 8th Battalion.

For the VAPC NE this understanding of the value of veterans as 'history keepers' and as an active, experienced group has been something they have pushed for many years.

TrueView Spouses Employment Project, a Finchale project funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund, discussed their mission to help spouses and dependents of working age of serving military personnel and hard to reach people find employment, gain UK recognised qualifications for those with foreign qualifications, and to support people looking to improve their circumstances.

The new Armed Forces Outreach Service, a Local Authority Partnership, made a presentation. Made up of Durham, Northumbria, and Tyneside Councils, this service seeks to be 'holistic' in providing help and advice to veterans. They actively engage with veterans, and soon to be veterans, to provide them with the help they need. They started in November 2017 but since then they have provided mental health referrals, rehoused veterans, provided supported accommodation, helped pay off debts and council tax arrears, and have provided goods to set up home. This innovative and wide ranging scheme actively seeks to help and support veterans in an inclusive and engaging way

For the VAPC NE the Durham Armed Forces Forum is an important way to understand what support and help is out there for the armed forces community and to share that knowledge to the wider community. With the support of the Forum members new and innovative ways to support veterans and the wider armed forces community were explored and developed.

The VAPC NE has spent years promoting the idea that veterans are not a problem. Veterans are of any age and have the experience, talent, and interests to make a valuable contribution to their community. The Forum understood this multifaceted nature of the armed forces community and was a valuable move towards a more integrated way to empower and to help the total armed forces community.

[News story: University laundry](#)

services merger could reduce competition

JLA New Equityco Limited (JLA) acquired Washstation Limited (Washstation) in May 2017. Both firms rent out and maintain washing machines and tumble dryers to universities, colleges and student accommodation providers for use by students.

The CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) [started investigating](#) after receiving a complaint about the completed merger.

It found that JLA and Washstation were the two main suppliers of managed laundry services to higher education customers, with a combined share of supply of more than 90%. Prior to the merger, JLA and Washstation were each other's closest competitor and they faced limited pressure from other competitors.

The CMA considered whether other companies would enter or expand in the market to challenge the merged entity but found that, although some competitors had indicated an intention to grow, this could not be relied on to offset the adverse effects of the merger.

The Authority is concerned that the merger may substantially lessen competition in the supply of managed laundry services to higher education customers, leading to higher prices, lower quality or less innovation in these services. This could result in students paying more or getting a worse quality of service.

This case will now be referred for an in-depth phase 2 investigation by an independent group of CMA panel members unless JLA is able to offer a solution at this stage to address the competition concerns.