

Speech: Call for Humanitarian Aid and Government Accountability in DRC

Thank you Mr President.

And thank you to our briefers for their clear and detailed accounts of why there has been such a rapid increase in humanitarian need in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As Undersecretary General Lowcock reported, the number of people needing aid in the DRC has doubled in the past year. Today 13.1 million people need humanitarian assistance, the same number as in Syria. The United Nations has declared the worst level of humanitarian crisis – “Level 3” – in certain provinces, putting DRC alongside only Yemen, Syria and Iraq. Yet it is often absent from our screens and daily briefings. We must not let it fall down our agenda.

Mr President,

We are particularly concerned about the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, the disabled and children. The United Nation’s Joint Human Rights Office reported that there has been a 53% increase in victims of sexual violence in 2017.

Now, the Representative of EFIM gave us a powerful testimony and I’m grateful to her.

Hope, is a woman from Masisi in the east of the country, where 90% of the women have been raped. Four men in military uniforms raped her as she collected firewood for her family. The attack left her pregnant and HIV positive. She has since fled to a temporary camp in Goma and can no longer feed her eight children. They rely on humanitarian aid, like 8 million other Congolese children. 2 million children currently face starvation. Hope is one of 4.5 million internally displaced people in the DRC – the highest number in Africa. Over 2 million people have been displaced in the past year alone, so just in the last year, an equivalent number to the total number of IDPs in South Sudan has been displaced in DRC. There are a further 740,000 refugees from the DRC in neighbouring countries as a result of ongoing hostilities.

Mr President,

International support is vital to address the crisis and the United Kingdom will continue to play a key role. We have committed to spending \$285 million on humanitarian aid between 2017 and 2022. This support will provide over 3 million people with lifesaving support, including food, clean drinking water and essential health care.

To improve the challenging and limited access for humanitarian actors, DRC Government support is crucial. While we welcome the commitments made to facilitate the work of humanitarian organisations and reduce tariffs for

humanitarian imports including medicines and food, this Council, and the people of the DRC, need to see concrete and sustained action.

In particular, we urge the Government to take the following three steps:

First, improve the administrative and financial registration procedures required for international NGOs to operate lawfully in-country, through consultations with NGOs themselves.

Second, reduce the bureaucracy for humanitarian workers to get visas and for essential relief items to get through customs.

And finally, ensure security across the country is maintained so that humanitarian organisations have sufficient access to those most in need.

The upcoming donor conference on 13th April is an opportunity for the Government of the Congo to demonstrate the progress they have made against their commitments to facilitate the improvement of the humanitarian situation.

It is also an opportunity for the international community to pledge our support to the people of the DRC and to show them that the World remembers Africa's "forgotten" crisis.

Mr President,

Let me be clear, humanitarian aid will only ever provide temporary relief in this crisis. The key root cause is political instability, which drives the deteriorating security and humanitarian situations. Too often, peaceful protesters are met with violence for speaking out about their political rights, in violation of their human rights. A number of people have been killed in church-led protests this year which we all must condemn.

Free, fair and transparent elections must be held on 23 December. With an estimated 46 million voters, spread over the world's eleventh largest country, this is no easy task. For the elections to be successful, the right conditions need to be created now.

The international community must remain focussed and united in our support for the people of DRC, and we must remain united in our expectations of its government, and our insistence on accountability and progress. We in the Security Council need to work with the region and sub-region to do so.

Mr President,

Finally, it is with great sadness that we remember the horrific, tragic murders of the UN experts Zaida Catalan and Michael Sharp, killed just over one year ago in the Kasai region of DRC. This Council must continue to push for accountability for their deaths and we call on the Democratic Republic of Congo to ensure that their investigation is thorough and transparent and to ensure that all those responsible are held to account. We should have a full update on the progress of that investigation soon.

Thank you Mr President.

News story: Heritage Lottery Fund/National Heritage Memorial Fund Reappointment

“Sir Peter Luff has been Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund since March 2015. He had previously been MP for Mid Worcestershire and for Worcester, since 1992, standing down at the 2015 General Election. He was Commons Co-Chair of the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta and the 750th anniversary of the de Montfort Parliament.

He was Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology from 2010-2012, and Chair of two House of Commons Select Committees – (Agriculture 1997-2000, and Business Innovation and Skills 2005-2010). He was knighted in 2014 for political and public service.”

The role is remunerated at £42,964 per annum. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office’s Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Sir Peter has declared no such political activity.

[Cabinet Office’s Governance Code on Public Appointments](#)

News story: Heritage Lottery Fund/National Heritage Memorial Fund Appointments

Appointments have been made for a term of 3 years. Claire Feehily, Sarah Flannigan and Rene Olivieri will start their terms on 01 March 2018 to 28 February 2021, whilst Maria Adebawale- Schwarte and David Stocker will start their terms on 16 May 2018 to 15 May 2021.

Maria Adebowale- Schwarte

Maria is an inclusive place and urban renewal strategist, and the Founding Director of Living Space Project, a place making and green space think tank and consultancy. She has over twenty-five years of hands on and strategic expertise in national and international organisations with a major place, heritage, environment and grant making focus. And, has been an advisor for several funding programmes, amongst others, the Big Lottery, NESTA, Artists Project Earth and Natural England. Maria's current public appointment roles include a board member of the Environment Agency, the Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund's South East Committee, and a Commissioner on the Mayor of London's Sustainable Development Commission. She's also a former commissioner of English Heritage. She holds a first degree in Organisational Studies and Business Law from the University of Lancaster, a Masters in International Law from SOAS, University of London, and is a recipient of a Clore Social Leadership Fellowship. Maria's the author of the book 'The Place Making factor' based on her research and experience of using place led thinking as a disruptor of siloed grant making and philanthropy.

Claire Feehily

Claire is a qualified accountant and MBA and has particular expertise in financial and risk governance, and in helping organisations to engage properly with those who use services and to learn from what they say.

She has more than 30 years' experience at executive and then non-executive levels across the public and charitable sectors.

Board non-executive experience includes serving on three NHS boards since 2010, and Claire is currently a non-executive director at Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust, following four years as Chair of Healthwatch Gloucestershire.

Currently, Claire has one other government appointment as NEBM and Audit Chair at the National Archive (Remuneration approx 12k per annum). She also holds board positions with The Guinness Partnership (to September 2018), Alliance Homes and volunteers as a Trustee with Stroud and Cotswolds Citizens Advice and as a Committee member with the National Trust.

Claire's academic background was originally in modern history and she completed a first degree at King's College London and worked in the archive of the War Studies Dept. there. She later gained a PhD in English in 2008 from London University, examining the political debate about how to teach the humanities and literary heritage, and taught at Birkbeck College and the School of Advanced Study. She has particular research and teaching interests in Cultural Memory and has published on the memorialisation of military conflict. She is currently working on the University of Bradford archive of Dr William Allchin, POW, psychiatrist and peace builder.

Sarah Flannigan

Sarah has been Chief Information Officer at EDF Energy since 2016. She was

previously CIO at the National Trust where she led a major 3 year digital transformation programme. Sarah was named “European CIO of the Year” in 2017. She is a member of the Board of Trustees at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and of the Board of Governors at Wells Cathedral School.

Rene Olivieri

René Olivieri was for many years the chief executive of the international scientific and scholarly publisher, Blackwell Publishing. Under him Blackwell became the leading publishing partner for scientific academic and professional societies world-wide. He continues to mentor senior management teams in the media and technology sectors on innovation, new business models and cultural change. He is a non-executive director of IOP Publishing and has also been the Chair of several start-up companies.

He continues to play a role in the development of higher education. He served on the Board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England between 2008 and 2014 and is a member of the Chancellor’s Court of Benefactors at Oxford University. René is passionate about protecting the natural environment and improving farmed animal welfare.

Between 2012 and 2017 he was the Chair of the Wildlife Trusts and, prior to this, Chair of Tubney Charitable Trust.

He takes a keen interest in the performing arts, and particularly in regional theatre. He has been the Chair of the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry and he and his wife are long-time supporters of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-on-Avon.

David Stocker

David is hon. visiting professor at the University of Leeds and works in the heritage sector in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. He has worked as an archaeologist and architectural historian in the heritage sector since 1978 and has held posts with many heritage charities, English Heritage (1986-2012) and the Heritage Lottery Fund, where he sits on the East Midlands Committee.

David’s interests lie principally within medieval archaeology (buildings, churches, settlement and landscape), about which he has written many articles and books.

He is currently a trustee of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, trustee and President of the Lincoln Record Society, and also Council for British Archaeology (CBA) nominee to the Council of the National Trust. The role is remunerated at £6,560 per annum. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office’s Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Maria Adebawale- Schwarte, Sarah Flannigan, Rene Olivieri and David Stocker have declared no such political

activity. Claire Feehily has confirmed that she is a member of the Labour Party and that she pays an annual membership subscription.

News story: Secretary of State Reappoints John Dowson to UK Sport

“John Dowson is a board member of the UK Boccia Federation which he joined in 2013 and has chaired since 2014. Boccia is a Paralympic sport with no Olympic equivalent.

He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants who, after a decade in industry, joined Coopers & Lybrand where he became a partner in 1991. He worked all over the world mainly in telecoms and postal sector restructuring and held UK, European and global leadership roles in the firm which became PwC in 1998. After co-leading the preparation of the global strategy that supported the sale of PwC Consulting to IBM in 2002 for \$3.5bn, he then led the global development of new business in intelligent transport systems at IBM. He rejoined PwC in 2007 where he became the UK industry leader for all of the private sector excluding financial services. He retired from the firm in 2012.”

The role is remunerated at £218 per day. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office’s Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. John has declared no such political activity.

Press release: New funding scheme to improve lakes and rivers in England

The Water Environment Grant scheme will help improve the English water environment

A new £27 million scheme to improve the water environment across England has been jointly launched today by Defra, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The [Water Environment Grant scheme](#) will provide £9 million each year over the next three years to applicants applying for funding to restore local eco-systems and deliver substantial benefits to people and the environment.

Potential projects could include river restoration activities, removal of obstacles to help fish moving along rivers and streams or actions to improve the water quality.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The Water Environment Grant scheme offers a fantastic opportunity for applicants from across the country to secure funding for projects to enhance the environment, boost wildlife and benefit their rural community.

This project will help us to deliver a balanced programme of environmental improvements across England and I am looking forward to seeing the creative and innovative projects of the applicants.

The scheme, funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, will award grants to non-profit ventures with greater support for projects which enhance water eco-systems.

WEG is now open to eligible applicants until 11 May 2018. Grants will be determined by the Environment Agency and Natural England and funding will be awarded in August 2018. Successful applicants will be expected to start their projects before March 2019, with completion dates of March 2021.