

Press release: Secretary of State visits Victoria Square

Speaking after a tour of the shopping centre, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said:

I am absolutely delighted to be here in Victoria Square enjoying the very best that Belfast has to offer. You just have to look at this view, look at what this city is today, and think about what has been achieved in 20 years. Think about how much more we can do, and how much we have to build on, to continue Belfast and Northern Ireland's success.

I've just been hearing about how in terms of retail outlets, this centre is number one not just in Northern Ireland but in the island of Ireland, and it is number three in the whole of the United Kingdom in some categories. That is a fantastic achievement. It really goes to show what is bringing people to Belfast, why they are coming to Northern Ireland and why we want it to continue.

This has been a difficult week, I'm not going to make any pretence of that. We worked extraordinarily hard to do our very best to enable an Executive to be formed and I still believe that can be done, with the will of the politicians to deliver what the people of Northern Ireland want and need: their elected politicians doing the right thing and delivering devolved government for the people of Northern Ireland. The message I have had from the retailers and shoppers I have met downstairs is that that is what they want too. They want to exploit the opportunities that would come from a stable government being able to deliver the reforms and the transformation this country needs.

I am here to help them deliver that. I will do all I can to try and get devolved government back into Stormont because I genuinely believe that is the best thing for the people of Northern Ireland.

[News story: Programme: EU-UK Article 50 negotiations](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Talks will be held in Brussels, 19 and 20 February 2018

[News story: Ministry of Defence expands counter-poaching training into two new parks in Malawi](#)

The Ministry of Defence is ramping up its efforts to stop animals being cruelly hunted in Malawi. Crown copyright.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced today that deployments to Nkhotakota and Majete Wildlife Reserves will begin in May, following a successful pilot scheme in Liwonde National Park alongside the conservation non-profit African Parks, doubling the number of rangers mentored by British soldiers to 120.

A conservation crisis occurring around the globe is causing the loss of countless species, and one of the main factors behind this is the illegal wildlife trade, which drives the decline of many of Africa's animals, including elephants, rhinos and lions.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Poaching is a horrific and cruel trade that is putting the very existence of this planet's most majestic wildlife in jeopardy.

Our brave Armed Forces are the best in the world and are playing their part in putting an end to this sickening and illegal industry, to protect these magnificent mammals.

By providing training and mentoring to the park rangers, they will form a skilled network to ensure that the world's precious species are here for generations to come.

Under the guidance of British Army troops, African Parks rangers will learn tracking, infantry skills, bushcraft and information analysis to improve the interception of poachers.

The long-term goals of training park rangers in Malawi are for them to effectively police their parks and respond appropriately to the threat of poaching, which is worth approximately £7bn to £17bn year.

Training in the two new parks has been funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund.

Liwonde Park Manager, Craig Reid, said:

The MOD deployment to Liwonde in 2017 was very beneficial to the African Parks effort in securing the integrity of this park which was once overrun with poaching.

The soldiers helped mentor the Rangers as part of the long-term project aimed at ensuring a sustainable law enforcement effort. We are very appreciative of the ongoing support rendered to our team on the ground.

All three parks, Nkhotakota, Majete and Liwonde, are managed by African Parks in partnership with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

Brighton Kumchedwa, Director of National Parks and Wildlife, said:

We are really pleased that the British Army will be returning to Malawi to work in partnership with the Malawian authorities and African Parks on counter-poaching activities. This will build on the success of their previous deployment and ensure that life becomes increasingly difficult for those intent on wildlife crime in Malawi.

[News story: Ornicure 150mg/g doxycycline powder for oral solution – Product defect recall alert](#)

We wish to make wholesalers aware that Versele-Laga has issued a recall of Ornicure 150mg/g doxycycline powder for oral solution (Art No. 480573).

Stability tests have showed that certain bags of the 200g packaging of the product could be damaged minimally. The batches are being recalled from the market with immediate effect to the wholesaler level.

Batch numbers affected expiry date

16L16 741	12-2019
16L19 742	12-2019
16L15 739	12-2019

Versele-Laga are contacting wholesale dealers to arrange return of the affected batches. If you have any queries in relation to the recall, please contact Mr Andy Maheur, +32 9 381 31 86 or commseccs@verla.be

[News story: Environment Minister visits North America to turn tide on marine plastic](#)

Minister Coffey and Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna. Photo Credit: Canadian High Commission.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has joined forces with Canada and the USA in the fight against marine plastic.

During a visit to Washington D.C. and Ottawa this week, the Minister met her international counterparts to discuss the UK's priorities for the marine environment ahead of the G7 Environment meetings to be held later this year.

Like the UK, Canada has already banned microbeads in rinse-off cosmetics, and the Minister met the country's Environment and Climate Change Minister, Catherine McKenna, and Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, to look at how the two countries can unite in further tackling the threats facing our oceans.

Through its presidency of the G7, which includes a focus on climate change, oceans and clean energy, Canada will be pushing member states to take action to deal with plastic pollution, ocean acidification, and develop the blue economy.

Following her visit, the Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

There is no greater asset than our blue planet, and it is only by working together we can address the multitude of threats facing our marine life.

In the UK we have already banned microbeads and cracked down on plastic bags, and in 25 years' time we will have eliminated all avoidable plastic waste. I look forward to working with my

international counterparts to do all we can to protect our oceans for future generations.

Minister McKenna and Minister Coffey also discussed the crucial role industry can play in turning the tide on plastic. And with businesses across the UK pledging to ban straws, cut plastic packaging and roll out water refills, the Minister met Mars and Coca Cola to see first-hand how big producers in the USA are tackling waste.

While in Washington D.C. the Minister also met Judy Garber, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the American Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, who was supportive of moving forward work on oceans – especially on improved data and marine mapping.

Minister Coffey also used a meeting with stakeholders from Pew Environmental Trust and the High Seas Alliance as an opportunity to discuss improving biodiversity in the marine environment.