

News story: Sellafield joins Northern Powerhouse

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry, Copeland MP Trudy Harrison, and Sellafield Ltd head of community and development Jamie Reed

The company was confirmed as an official partner by Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry yesterday. Mr Berry made the announcement at the Cumbria Day event in the House of Commons.

The Northern Powerhouse is designed to drive economic growth in the north via investments in skills, innovation, transport and culture.

Cumbria Day was organised by Cumbria's MPs and the county's Local Enterprise Partnership, to showcase Cumbria's businesses and produce to Parliamentarians.

Jamie Reed, head of community and development for Sellafield Ltd, said:

We're delighted to become official partners of the Northern Powerhouse.

It's fantastic to be announcing this on Cumbria Day, as Parliamentarians get to see first-hand the unlimited potential of our fabulous county.

Sellafield has long been a powerhouse in its own right. We pioneered the civil nuclear industry and we're now leading the world in nuclear decommissioning.

Our greatest challenge is ensuring we leave a positive legacy for our community by helping build a diverse and resilient local economy.

Being a partner in the Northern Powerhouse allows us to work closely with our owners the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Government, local authorities, and other partners to give us a greater chance of success.

Jake Berry, Northern Powerhouse Minister, said:

I'm really pleased Sellafield Ltd has joined the Northern Powerhouse as an official partner.

The company plays a huge role already in the north's economy, employing more than 11,000 people and spending more than £1.1bn a year in the supply chain.

The Northern Powerhouse is all about ensuring economies like Cumbria are able to achieve their full potential by working together with other towns, cities and rural communities.

I'm looking forward to learning more about the great work Sellafeld Ltd already does in and how its future plans can help drive local and national economic growth.

[Press release: Lord Bourne: "Wales is harnessing the appeal of its cultural and heritage attractions to benefit its communities"](#)

From its world-renowned castles to our home-grown theatre productions, UK Government Minister Lord Bourne will see first-hand the crucial contribution the North Wales tourism and culture industries makes to the Welsh economy today (26 January).

The Minister will visit Rhyl's Sea Quarium and attend further business meetings in other tourism destinations in North East Wales, as the latest tourism figures reveal the number of overseas visits to Wales are on the rise.

Lord Bourne said:

Tourism is big business in Wales and our outstanding attractions are regularly highlighted as some of the best places in the world to visit.

It is encouraging to see how North Wales is harnessing the appeal of its cultural and heritage attractions to benefit communities right across the country.

The visit comes as the latest tourism figures reveal there were 909,000 overseas visits to Wales from January to September last year, up 6% compared to the same time in 2016. Visitors to Wales also spent £337 million, boosting the Welsh economy.

Lord Bourne added:

Tourism is one of the UK's most valuable export industries.

It is also a fiercely competitive global industry and these results not only demonstrate Wales' continued ability to compete internationally for visitors, they are testament to tourism's importance as a driver of economic growth.

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[Press release: UK aid backs ground-breaking British research into 'super-crops'](#)

Members of the Kyamaleera Women's Handicraft Association in Uganda present their beans

[Pictures and videos are available to use here](#)

UK scientists are leading new cutting-edge research to allow farmers to grow crops that are more nutritious, more resistant to disease and better able to withstand severe floods or drought in Africa, in addition to developing medicines to protect farmers' livestock from devastating disease.

Millions of farmers in Africa, who depend on agriculture to support their families, struggle to grow enough crops to put food on the table because of natural disasters such as drought, or floods, which destroy their livelihoods.

Now UK scientists, backed by UK aid, are using their expertise to identify the specific genes in crops that help them be more nutritious, grow faster and are more resilient to disease and extreme weather. This scientific work on 'super-crops' will help up to 100 million African farmers lift themselves and their families out of poverty, in turn building stability and prosperity, which will help African countries become our trading partners of the future.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced the new UK aid research, which is being carried out by international organisation, CGIAR, during a joint visit to the University of Edinburgh with Bill Gates.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is an important partner in international research and announced further investment in UK based livestock R&D during the visit.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Unpredictable flooding, plant diseases and drought are threatening the lives and livelihoods of millions of farmers in Africa who struggle to grow enough crops to put food on the table – the urgency of the task is clear.

That's why UK aid is supporting British scientists to develop new crops that are more productive, more nutritious and more resistant to droughts and flooding, as well as creating new medicines to protect cattle and poultry from devastating disease.

This transformative UK aid research will not only stop diseases from destroying the livelihoods of African farmers, it will also help control livestock diseases on British farms.

New ideas, cutting edge science and innovative partnerships with organisations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will help Britain create a healthier, more secure and prosperous world for us all.

At the University of Edinburgh, scientists are also leading ground-breaking work on diseases which cause huge economic losses for African farmers, including Animal African Trypanosomiasis (AAT), a disease which kills over 3 million cattle a year, has been estimated to cost over \$4bn a year in total to African economies and can cause sleeping sickness in people.

Scientists believe that within the next five years – and for the first time in over 40 years – a new drug will be available to treat AAT. UK scientists have uncovered new molecules, which can be developed into an effective treatment for this devastating disease – with the aim of wiping it out.

This research could also help British farmers who face similar threats in the future, by identifying responses to diseases before they reach the UK.

UK scientists are also working to reduce the impact of many diseases that can be passed to people from animals such as Porcine Cysticercosis – the most common cause of epilepsy in developing countries. The scientists are currently involved in testing the effectiveness of a new vaccine to tackle this disease, which will help protect the health of families and communities.

During the visit Ms Mordaunt also announced plans to develop the Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health, which is based in both Edinburgh and Nairobi.

The centre uses the most recent scientific advances in genetics and genomics that are being used by farmers in the UK and apply these to help smallholder dairy and poultry farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

The campus at the University of Edinburgh, which hosted the visit, has a number of organisations involved in this work including; The Roslin Institute and the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies. Scotland's Rural College and GALVmed are also located nearby. Scientists working here have been responsible for many of the advances in farming techniques now used both here

in the UK and throughout the developing world.

This research underlines the UK's commitment to tackling climate shocks, protecting the environment and increasing resilience – all of which are themes at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London in April 2018.

- DFID will support CGIAR with funding of £90m over 3 years. CGIAR' was originally the acronym for the 'Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research'. In 2008, CGIAR redefined itself as a global partnership. To reflect this transformation and yet retain its roots, 'CGIAR' was retained as a name. CGIAR is now a global research partnership for a food-secure future. The role of CGIAR is to deliver new agricultural technologies to support food and nutrition security and growth. Access to high-yielding, drought, heat and disease-resistant crops and livestock underpins the livelihoods and incomes of poor farmers and is essential to combat hunger and reduce the risks of crop failure.
- Technology developed by CGIAR was at the heart of the green revolution, tripling yields and lifting millions out of poverty and hunger. CGIAR-developed varieties of the 10 main food crops are now grown on over 200 million ha in developing countries.
- This new funding will support the development and deployment of: crop varieties that are climate resilient, more resistant to heat, drought and flooding; crop varieties that are more nutritious, with elevated levels of essential micronutrients; agronomic practices that boost resilience and reduce the use of costly inputs; new livestock varieties, diagnostics, vaccines and medicines, to reduce the risks faced by livestock farmers.
- The Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health (CTLGH) will receive £4 million through funding by DFID. It is a joint venture launched by three partners – the Roslin Institute of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and CGIAR – International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), who have created a new, multidisciplinary Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health, with two main nodes, one in Edinburgh and one in Nairobi.
- The Centre will mobilise the most recent scientific advances in genetics and genomics that have led to substantial gains in livestock productivity in temperate zones and apply these to improve livestock productivity in tropical environments, for the benefit of smallholder dairy and poultry farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

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Speech: The United Kingdom reiterates long standing commitment to a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians

Thank you Mr President,

Let me begin, Mr President, by reiterating the United Kingdom's long standing commitment to a two-state solution. We envision an Israeli and a Palestinian state living peacefully and in security and prosperity side by side, within secure and recognised borders and with Jerusalem as a shared capital. We call on the parties to take urgent steps to reverse the current negative trends on the ground, to refrain from unilateral actions, and to start renewed and meaningful peace negotiations. We are ready to contribute to all credible efforts to restart the peace process.

Inflammatory rhetoric threatens the mutual trust that is required to break the current deadlock. Statements that demonise or denigrate the Jewish people are wholly unacceptable. There is no place for denying either the Jewish or Palestinian connection to the land. It is important the Palestinian leadership continue efforts to implement fully the recommendations of the Quartet Report regarding incitement.

Both parties must remain committed to previous diplomatic agreements, which should form the basis of renewed peace negotiations. We recognise that the Palestinian Central Council recommendation to de-recognise Israel was non-binding, but it is nevertheless wholly unconstructive, and we call on the Palestinian leadership not to implement it. Rather, we welcome the Palestinian Authority's continued recognition of the State of Israel and its support for a two-state solution. As always, we urge all parties to promote non-violence, and to engage constructively towards a two-state solution as the only basis for a sustainable settlement to the conflict.

To that end, we believe that continued settlement activity and demolitions further undermine the prospects for peace and need to be halted, including in East Jerusalem. The pace of settlement construction has regrettably accelerated, notably with the advancement of plans for over 10,000 settlement units, including the approval of the first new housing units in Hebron for 15 years. And the signs from early 2018 are not encouraging. Only two weeks ago, Israel announced the advancement of a further 1,122 housing units across the West Bank.

We call on Israel to reverse immediately its policy of settlement expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; it undermines both the physical viability of the two-state solution and Israel's commitment to it.

Mr President,

We must also continue to support humanitarian efforts to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian people, especially in Gaza. This includes support for the full return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza, and we encourage further progress on reconciliation, including regarding security arrangements and civil service integration, in line with the Quartet Principles. We welcome the recent increase in electricity supplies to Gaza as the first of many positive steps required to improve the dire situation.

The United Kingdom remains a firmly committed supporter of UNRWA and we recognise its unique and important mandate from the UN General Assembly, providing vital services to the Palestinian refugee population, both in the occupied territories and in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Although we do agree that there is an urgent need for UNRWA to become more efficient and cost effective by stepping up the pace of reform, UNRWA must continue to be able to carry out its important functions. Any unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements can have damaging impacts and undermine stability in the region.

And finally, Mr President, terrorism and incitement pose grave threats to the prospect of a two-state solution, and must cease. To have the best chances of success, the peace process must be conducted in an atmosphere free from violence and we note with regret the deaths on both sides in recent days. We were appalled by the terrorist murder of Rabbi Raziël Shevach in the West Bank on 9 January and utterly condemn this shameful act. Our thoughts are with his family.

Mr President, every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. We share the United States' desire and the desire of others in this Council to end this conflict and we continue to support US Administration efforts to bring forward detailed proposals for an Israel-Palestinian settlement.

The UK stands ready to help implement a viable deal, including by supporting its security provisions, contributing to refugee compensation, and enabling flows of trade and investment between the UK, Israel, a sovereign Palestinian state, and its Arab neighbours, which could help transform the region.

To realise this vision it is time for urgency from all of us. All parties and the international community must work together in the spirit of compromise and understanding, to make a lasting peace a reality. As the late, Israeli President Shimon Peres has said, "He who has despaired from peace is the one dreaming. Whoever gives in and stops seeking peace – he is naïve."

Thank you.

Press release: PM meeting with President Trump: 25 January

Prime Minister Theresa May today met with President Trump at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The two leaders began by discussing Bombardier, with the PM reiterating the importance of the company's jobs in Northern Ireland.

The PM and the President discussed Iran, and the need to work together to combat the destabilising activity which it is conducting in the region, including ballistic missile development, and continuing efforts to ensure Iran does not develop nuclear weapons.

They also agreed on the importance of continuing to stand side-by-side in the fight against Daesh in Syria and elsewhere.

The Prime Minister updated the President on the good progress which had been made in the Brexit negotiations so far. The two leaders reiterated their desire for a strong trading relationship post-Brexit, which would be in the interests of both countries.

The PM and President concluded by asking officials to work together on finalising the details of a visit by the President to the UK later this year.