

News story: Flood defence milestone: 100,000 more properties better protected

Better protecting communities from flooding continues to be a top priority for the government, the Environment Secretary Michael Gove will reaffirm today.

Flood defences continue to be built apace across England and 100,000 properties are now better protected thanks to the 350 new flood schemes that have been completed since April 2015.

The Environment Secretary is in Devon today to open a new £12 million flood defence scheme in Dawlish Warren, reducing flood risk to 2800 homes and businesses around the Exe Estuary, as well as the main rail line into South Devon and Cornwall.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Our £2.6 billion investment programme is well underway, with 100,000 more properties already better protected from flooding and that figure set to triple in under four years.

Dawlish Warren is only one of 350 new defences built since 2015 and work continues on schemes across the country – all of which are helping to bring peace of mind to communities, as well as investment and opportunities.

With elements including a new 100 metre long flood wall and over 200,000 cubic metres of sand, Dawlish Warren uses top engineering techniques and the natural landscape to reduce flood risk, while also conserving habitat for birds and wildlife.

As the Environment Secretary opens one flood scheme for Devon, he will simultaneously announce that work will begin next year on another £12 million scheme just across the estuary, in Exmouth. Both schemes are part of the government's continued £115 million investment drive to reduce flood risk to 15,000 homes and businesses in Devon and Cornwall by 2021.

On top of this existing funding, the Environment Secretary will announce an extra £1.6 million for Devon from the recent Budget: this will go towards two schemes, one in Plymouth and one in Whimple.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency said:

We have made great progress in the last two years to reduce flood

risk around the country and this milestone of 100,000 homes better protected shows how far we've come. These new schemes at Dawlish Warren and Exmouth are brilliant examples of how the Environment Agency's teams continue to work hard to benefit local communities.

In addition to building new defences, this winter we are better prepared than ever before to respond if flooding occurs with new equipment, better technology and more than 6,500 trained staff ready to act.

Following his visit to Dawlish Warren, the Environment Secretary will visit the Devon Wildlife Trust's trial reintroduction of beavers on the River Otter to see the visible impacts they have had on the landscape; creating new dams, pools and other dramatic changes.

The Environment Secretary's interest in the project follows the recent announcement that he is supportive of a planned similar scheme in the Forest of Dean, which has been granted a licence to proceed.

Press release: PM calls with King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman: 20 December 2017

The Prime Minister spoke to King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia earlier this evening.

She welcomed the decision by the Saudi-led Coalition to reopen the Yemeni port of Hodeidah and noted the arrival of UK staff in the region to assist with the UN inspection process, helping to speed up the distribution of much needed humanitarian and commercial supplies.

The Prime Minister strongly condemned yesterday's attempted missile attack on the Yamama Palace in Riyadh, and welcomed the restraint shown by Saudi Arabia in the face of unacceptable Houthi aggression.

She reiterated the UK's ongoing commitment to Saudi Arabia's security and our determination to push for stronger action through the UN to expose and counter Iran's destabilising activity in the region and to find a political solution to the conflict in Yemen.

Finally, the Prime Minister looked forward to welcoming the Crown Prince to the UK in the New Year.

Speech: “As our world becomes more connected, so too will the challenges that we face. So to succeed, we must confront them together”

Thank you Mr President for the floor and for holding this important debate. It gives us the opportunity both to reflect on the past year and to look ahead to the year ahead.

I want to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent briefing, which clearly demonstrates that these contemporary challenges are highly relevant, not just to the Security Council, or the rest of the United Nations, but indeed to the whole world.

The Security Council has engaged this year on a number of conventional threats to peace and security. North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, Da'esh in Syria, or Iraq.

These conventional threats have been fuelled by contemporary challenges that we all face. North Korea's illegal missile programme is partly funded by modern slavery. Syrian terrorists spread their poisonous messages and plan transnational attacks using the internet.

In fact, it is hard to find a situation on our agenda where peace and security dynamics are not bound up with contemporary transnational challenges. The illicit trading of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The enslavement of migrants in Libya. Smuggling in the Sahel. Drugs flows in Colombia. Ecological and climate stress in the Lake Chad Basin. The list goes on.

So if we want to tackle these conventional threats effectively, the UN and its member states must also consider contemporary transnational challenges. These challenges don't care about national borders. As our world becomes more connected, so too will the challenges that we face. So to succeed, we must confront them together.

To counter these challenges we must act at home, in partnership, and multilaterally. We cannot hope to prevent conflict, sustain peace or enable development otherwise.

I would like to illustrate the action that the United Kingdom is taking in each of these areas with three examples.

Firstly, at home, we are tackling illicit financial flows. Globally these are estimated to be up to \$1.6 trillion a year. Our National Crime Agency

believes that tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars are laundered through the United Kingdom. They include the proceeds of armed groups, terrorists, organised crime and corrupt officials in predatory states. These proceeds fuel further conflict and are a barrier to peace and stability. This year we passed the Criminal Finances Act which ensures that we are better able to tackle this illicit financing and consequentially promote peace.

Secondly, through our partnerships we are tackling climate change, recognised by the Security Council as a factor that can aggravate existing threats to international peace and security. We have partnered with others to improve their resilience to the impacts of climate change. In one project, we support 13 countries to integrate risk reduction and climate adaptation into government policies and institutions. This reduces their instability and safeguards our collective security.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are acting multilaterally, including here at the United Nations. Consider the universal issues of modern slavery and human trafficking. We know that these appalling human rights abuses are most prevalent in conflict zones, and that they feed instability. We have sought to respond, and will continue to do so, through the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

Working through these multilateral organisations allows us to connect the dots and better address the complex and multi-faceted challenges that we are confronted with. We must all endeavour to do more, and do it better, here at the UN.

If the UN itself is to rise to the challenge we must support the Secretary-General in his ambitious reform programme to join the UN up so that it can act more effectively and more efficiently at the heart of a rules-based international system.

The risk of too much reform or too rapid reform is dwarfed by the risk of not enough reform or too slow reform. We need to get on with the reform to sustain peace better, to meet the sustainable development goals, and to protect the human rights that we cherish. Success in these interlinked areas depends on our ability to escape silos and tackle the challenges coherently.

Mr President, I have a simple wish for the year ahead. I hope that as member states deliberate over the Secretary-General's reform proposals they remember that, as we sit and debate this important issue, millions of far less fortunate people confront insecurity, forced displacement, rights violations, hunger, and poverty as a single reality. They do not recognise them as isolated issues. Neither should we.

So let us take responsibility at home, build partnerships overseas and, most importantly, enable the UN to respond ever more effectively to these challenges so we can achieve a safer and more secure world for all.

Thank you.

[News story: CEN updates affecting chemical measurements December 2017](#)

The following lists of standards were published by the European standardisation organisation, CEN, during the period September to November 2017, some of which are relevant to chemical measurement in support of regulation.

Fertilizers

[EN 13368-2:2017](#) – Fertilizers – Determination of chelating agents in fertilizers by chromatography – Part 2: Determination of Fe chelated by [o,o] EDDHA, [o,o] EDDHMA and HBED, or the amount of chelating agents, by ion pair chromatography.

Plants can suffer from iron deficiency known as iron chlorosis (usually identified as a light yellow or green tint on new leaves), which inhibits their growth. This can occur despite iron being present in the soil because the iron is in an inaccessible form. The addition of fertilizers known as iron chelates, a water soluble product obtained by chemical reaction of iron with chelating agents, can be added to the soil to provide soluble iron that can then be taken up by the roots of the plant.

The production of fertilizers is controlled by EU Regulation 2003/2003 which specifies that an iron (Fe) chelate must have a minimum content of 5 % water soluble iron, of which the chelated fraction is at least 80 % and the iron chelated by each chelating agent with each fraction exceeding 2 % where there is a list of permitted chelating agents based on sodium, potassium or ammonium acid or salts of: ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA) and other chelating agents for micronutrients to be identified and quantified by European Standards EN 13368 part 1 and part 2.

EN 13368-2 describes a method using an ion-pair chromatography to identify and determine the total concentration of water soluble iron chelates formed by the individual ortho(hydroxy)-ortho(hydroxy) isomer of the chelating agents [o,o] ethylenediamine-di (o-hydroxyphenyl acetic) acid (EDDHA), [o,o] ethylenediamine-di (o-hydroxy-o-methylphenylacetic) acid (EDDHMA) and by (N,N'-bis(2-hydroxybenzyl)-ethylenediamine-N,N'-diacetic acid (HBED) in fertilisers containing one or more of these substances, except for [o,o] EDDHMA and HBED mixes.

EN 13368-2:2017 revises EN 13368-2:2012 to include the calculation of the mass fraction of the chelating agent, a new option for preparing Fe-[o,o] EDDHA solution from standards, the complete names of chelating agents and additional precision data from an inter-laboratory trial that took place in 2014.

Animal Feed

[EN 17050:2017](#) – Animal feeding stuffs: Methods of sampling and analysis – Determination of iodine in animal feed by ICP-MS

Iodine is an essential trace element for humans and animals which is naturally present in some foods but can be added as a dietary supplement. Iodine is an essential component of the thyroid hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Thyroid hormones regulate many important biochemical reactions, including protein synthesis and enzymatic activity, and are critical determinants of metabolic activity.

EN 17050 is based on EN 15111 which describes the determination of iodine in food. In both standards the iodine is extracted from the sample matrix using a strong alkaline solution of tetra methyl ammonium hydroxide (TMAH) at high temperature over a specified period. The iodine in the extract is then determined by ICP-MS (inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry).

It is stated that the concentration range for method EN 17050 shown for the following types of animal feeds: seaweed meal, mineral premix, fish meal, plant based ingredient, marine based compound feed and a synthetic iodine solution is between 0.70 to 631 mg/kg.

EN 17050 has been developed in accordance with European Commission Mandate [M/522](#) to prepare standards for methods of analysis in the field of animal nutrition part II, implementing the framework of [Regulation \(EC\) No 882/2004](#) on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

[EN ISO 12099:2017](#) – Animal feeding stuffs, cereals and milled cereal products – Guidelines for the application of near infrared spectrometry (ISO 12099:2017)

EN ISO 12099:2017 is an adopted ISO standard by CEN and provides guidance on the determination of moisture, fat, protein, starch and crude fibre in animal feeding stuffs, cereals and milled cereal products using spectrometric measurements in the near infrared (NIR) spectral region.

Food

[CEN/TS 17061:2017](#) – Foodstuffs – Guidelines for the calibration and quantitative determination of pesticide residues and organic contaminants using chromatographic methods.

CEN/TS 17061 provides guidance on the calibration, determination and quantitative evaluation of pesticides and organic contaminants in residue analysis using chromatographic procedures. The technical specification describes the principles to be followed to enable the comparison of analytical results (even from different analytical procedures) and can form the basis for method validation and quality assurance within laboratories.

[CEN/TS 17062:2017](#) – Foods of plant origin – Multi method for the

determination of pesticide residues in vegetable oils by LC-MS/MS.

CEN/TS 17062 describes the analysis of pesticide residues present in plant oils (fat content > 90 %, water content < 5 %). The pesticide residues are removed from the plant oil using acrylonitrile solvent. The acrylonitrile solvent extract is then cleaned up using dispersive solid phase extraction. The solvent extract is acidified and then can be directly analysed using liquid chromatography coupled to two mass spectrometers in tandem (LC-MS/MS).

The method has been validated in an inter laboratory trial using olive oil and considered applicable to other similar types of oils including sunflower seed oil, sesame oil, flax seed oil, rape seed oil, grape seed oil, thistle oil and pumpkin seed oil

*A Technical Specification (TS) is an alternative normative document to a European Standard (EN) providing specifications for methodologies and/or evolving technologies.

Further information on food legislation can be found on the Government Chemist website:

[Food and feed law: Compendium of UK food and feed legislation with associated context and changes during July to September 2017 – Government Chemist Programme Report](#)

Press release: FCO statement on the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination in Ukraine

The United Kingdom is concerned by Russia's decision to withdraw from the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (JCCC) in Ukraine.

This decision risks severely undermining the Minsk peace process, in which the JCCC has a specific role to play. It will also have significant consequences for those in the area, including the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, as the JCCC has facilitated numerous local ceasefires in eastern Ukraine.

An FCO spokesperson said:

We are concerned by Russia's withdrawal from the JCCC. The JCCC plays an important role in facilitating local ceasefires in eastern Ukraine.

Russia's withdrawal casts doubt on their commitment to a lasting

ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and to the safety and security of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. It also heightens the risk of ecological disaster in the Donbas given the JCCC's role in facilitating repairs to critical civilian infrastructure such as the Donetsk Water Filtration Station, which houses large amounts of chlorine gas.

The humanitarian situation in the Donbas is growing ever bleaker and civilians continue to bear the brunt of this conflict. The UK calls on all parties to do all they can to alleviate humanitarian suffering and commit to a lasting peace.

Further information