

Speech: DFID Ghana Country Director's speech at the launch of Ghana's Business Regulation Reform Strategy

Honourable Minister and Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry Mr Chair – Tony Otteng Gyasi – [chair of BEEP Better Regulation Advisory Committee] Country Director of the World Bank Heads and representatives of Ministries, Departments and Agencies and other representatives of private sector institutions Members of the Press Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you all.

As Country Director for the UK's Department for International Development in Ghana, it is a pleasure to give remarks at the launch of the Ghana's Business Regulatory Reform Programme.

The UK Government has had a longstanding partnership with Ghana to help to improve the business-enabling environment for investment. As a development partner, DFID recognises the critical role of the private sector in creating jobs, supporting economic transformation and contributing to income growth and therefore poverty reduction. Creating the conditions for the private sector to do this through robust business regulation is key.

The Government of Ghana has set out both an admirable vision of Ghana 'beyond aid' and an ambitious economic transformation driven by industrialisation. Two weeks ago in London, the British Prime Minister met with His Excellency the President and noted that, as Ghana moves beyond aid, the UK-Ghana relationship is changing from one focused on aid to a partnership of mutual economic benefit.

Much of DFID's work is already supporting a Ghana "beyond aid":

- Our Business Enabling Environment Programme works with the Government to take forward reforms around construction permits, support speedy dispute resolution and help to improve taxpayer services. The programme has supported a high level reform taskforce to begin work on cutting business regulation.
- Our Anti-Corruption programme (STAAC) is working with state actors and civil society to strengthen Ghana's response to corruption.
- Our Oil and Gas programme (GOGIG) is helping to improve institutional efficiencies in oil and gas regulatory institutions and ensure that revenues contribute to inclusive growth that benefits all Ghanaians.

- And our support to Ghana Revenue Authority is providing technical assistance to broaden Ghana's tax base.

DFID is also currently designing a new programme to support key elements of the Government's industrialisation plan. The programme will focus on structuring investment promotion and requisite industrial policy to attract strategic trade and investment into priority industrial sectors.

Honourable Minister, I am delighted that you have laid out a compelling strategy for business reforms over the next three years with a focus on addressing system-wide issues.

I particularly concur with the elements of this strategy that focus on addressing the underlying challenges to reforms, so rationalising current business regulations whilst managing the quality and flow of new regulations. I would also like to commend Mr Chairman and the private sector on how you have engaged with the reform process initiated by the Government. The collective effort to identify unnecessary regulation and poor implementation of it demonstrates a real commitment to Ghana's reform agenda.

But we know that implementing regulatory reforms and making them stick will not be easy. Although Government is taking bold steps to become the most-business friendly nation in Africa by 2020, and Ghana is currently ranked as best in West Africa and 12th in Africa on the Doing Business index, the recent drop in Ghana's ranking needs to be a call to action.

Ghana is not alone in facing huge challenges in a reform journey. We in the UK have faced similar challenges. Indeed in the UK, 21,000 statutory rules and regulations were counted to be in force in 2014. Reform measures such as the one-in, one-out regime, transparency and consistency in the analysis of new regulations and making "intelligent regulation" a core competence for the UK Civil Service profession were introduced to drastically cut inefficient regulation.

As Ghana moves beyond aid and development partners switch emphasis from aid to trade, this is essentially the "final push" – we must take advantage of current resources and expertise to really secure and sustain reform gains. These gains have not always been sustained in the past.

For the UK's part, and as we transition from aid, the UK will partner with government to secure greater private sector investment flows and responsible investment, including from the UK, to support economic transformation focused on job creation.

Ghana's business regulatory reforms also need to support government to function efficiently and effectively to deliver on the ground and ensure that the private sector feels confident to invest. This requires sound regulatory frameworks and improved institutional efficiencies. Red tape needs to be firmly cut. From my conversations with potential British investors it is clear that unnecessary bureaucracy is still stifling the incentives for their businesses to invest in Ghana.

As tomorrow is the world Anti-Corruption Day, it seems fitting to mention the role that perceptions of corruption play in trade and investment decisions. Taking bold steps to tackle corruption will be central to improving Ghana's ranking on the ease of doing business index. This will require tackling the vested interests and resistance that otherwise will constrain the government's ability to deliver on the ambitious plans set out here today.

The UK is supporting the government to take forward the commitment they made at the London Anti-Corruption Summit last year on Beneficial Ownership Transparency. This will not only be an important transparency tool for law enforcement agencies – making it harder for companies to obscure or hide their real owners – but will also build confidence for foreign and domestic investors looking to do business in Ghana. Delivering on this would make Ghana a genuine trailblazer, the first country in Africa to establish a public register.

We know that the Government has put in significant work on reforms. Recent efforts on convening over 33 Government agencies around key reform issues, implementing paperless customs and online business registration are commendable. But in a world where other countries are also rapidly reforming to attract investment, Ghana must set the pace.

This afternoon a number of BEEP supported regulators and private sector will be meeting to review progress on reforms over the last year. We are looking to the outcome of these deliberations and the specific actions and commitments that are made for reforms in 2018 and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen, to conclude, Ghana needs to take further steps to remain “investor friendly” and demonstrate that Ghana is truly open for business. It is competing in a period where favourable conditions for investment flows to emerging markets are now tightening.

The size of the challenge – and the opportunity to really reform Ghana's business regulation – is huge.

Development partners including the UK and World Bank can help, but ultimately it will be up to Ghana to really shift the dial on reforms in order to provide a sounder enabling environment and regulatory framework for businesses to establish, flourish and contribute to Ghana's national development.

We wish you well on the “road to sustainable reforms”.

Thank you.

[News story: Sarah Bedwell announced as the new Certification Officer](#)

The Certification Officer is responsible for statutory functions relating to trade unions and employers' associations

The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy today (11 December) announced the appointment of Sarah Bedwell as the new Certification Officer.

The Certification Officer is responsible for statutory functions relating to trade unions and employers' associations.

Sarah Bedwell will take up her role on 1 January 2018, replacing Gerard Walker, who has held the post since June 2016.

Biography

Sarah Bedwell has been the Director of Regulation at the Human Tissue Authority since 2011. Prior to this, she was the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Governance and Registration at the Nursing and Midwifery Council between 2008 and 2011 and Deputy Chief Executive from 2010 to 2011, the Head of Governance at the General Medical Council between 2002 and 2008 and Head of Screening between 1998 and 2002, and Head of Legal and Fiscal Framework at the Charity Commission between 1995 and 1998.

[News story: Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport appoints five new Commissioners of Historic England](#)

Sandra Dinneen, Paul Farmer, Patrick Newberry, Susie Thornberry, and Richard Upton have been appointed as Commissioners of Historic England from 1 January 2018 until 31 December 2021.

The Commission is the governing body of Historic England and has overall responsibility for the National Heritage Collection, which is managed by the English Heritage Trust on its behalf.

Sandra Dinneen

Sandra has a background in Economic Development and has been Chief Executive of South Norfolk Council since 2008, where she has driven a commercial focus throughout the organisation. She is currently Managing Director of Big Sky, a Property Development and Management Company, and Build Insight Consultancy Services, a Building Regulations Consultancy. Sandra also has a keen interest in Education and inclusion and is a Trustee of a Multi Academy Trust and Governor of a FE College. She has a keen interest in Historic Buildings, in particular their role in, and relationship with, economic growth, education and inclusion.

Paul Farmer

Paul is Chief Executive of Mind, the leading mental health charity. He is Chair of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), and a trustee at Lloyds Bank Foundation which invests in charities supporting people to break out of disadvantage at critical points in their lives. Paul was Chair of the NHS England Mental Health Taskforce which created the current mental health Five Year Forward View for the NHS in England, and he co-authored 'Thriving at Work' for the government, setting out how to transform mental health in work places. Paul has an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of East London, is an Honorary Fellow of St Peter's College, Oxford, and The Royal College of Psychiatrists, and was awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours 2016.

Patrick Newberry

Patrick holds a number of non executive directorships in the financial and professional services sectors, sitting on or chairing a number of audit and risk committees. He was a partner in PwC for 25 years, working in the financial sector in the UK, USA and Continental Europe also serving as a member of PwC's Supervisory Board, Chair of the Strategy, Governance & International Sub-Committee and a member of the Audit and Risk Committee. He was also a Board member and former President (2010-2011) of the Management Consultancies Association. In the not for profit sector, Patrick is a Governor of The Cornwall College Group and Vice Chairman of the Cornish Buildings Group and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Susie Thornberry

Susie is Assistant Director at Imperial War Museums where she leads public engagement for adults, young people, schools, and families across the five museums. Her extensive experience in arts, museums, and heritage includes roles with Historic Royal Palaces, Artichoke, and Battersea Arts Centre. In 2016, she was producer of London's Burning, a festival to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of London, including London 1666 a 120-metre-long sculpture created by hundreds of young Londoners which was spectacularly set alight on the River Thames.

Richard Upton

Richard was the founder of the specialist regeneration property developer, Cathedral Group and was previously a co-founding Director of Mount Anvil. He has extensive experience in the field of complex regeneration projects through the UK. He was appointed as Deputy Chief Executive of U+I Plc in July 2015. Richard has served as a member of Historic England's London Advisory Committee since 2012 and has campaigned extensively for sustainable restoration of heritage buildings, including the campaign to save Smithfield Market which he successfully fought and funded; the historic market buildings will now house the new Museum of London.

Commissioners of Historic England are remunerated £4113.00 per annum.

These appointments have 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.

Sandra Dinneen, Paul Farmer, Patrick Newberry, Susie Thornberry and Richard Upton have declared no such political activity.

[News story: Growth Deal can revolutionise the North Wales economy](#)

UK Government Minister Guto Bebb, Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns and Lord Bourne will host MPs from across North Wales today to discuss progress on the North Wales Growth Deal.

The Growth Deal sets out a vision for the region with the aims of creating 5,300 jobs and attracting private sector investment to the value of £1bn in the region over the next 15 years.

Plans have been supported by the region's six council leaders and chief executives, and today's meeting at Gwydyr House in London is an opportunity for the project team to present their proposals to the North Wales MPs.

Minister for Northern Powerhouse, Jake Berry, will also be in attendance as the plans align to the Northern Powerhouse agenda, drawing upon the region's economic links to the North West of England.

The deal aims to:

- build on the strengths of the region in the low carbon, advanced

- manufacturing and digital sectors
- promote business growth in the form of Regional Business and Smart Technology and Innovation hubs
- create 5,000 new jobs

Speaking ahead of the roundtable, Guto Bebb said:

A North Wales growth deal will revolutionise the way our towns and villages in North-Wales govern themselves – shifting powers down from London and Cardiff to local leaders who are better placed to take decisions that affect their communities.

The Northern Powerhouse, coupled with a growth deal represents our best chance to bring transformational change to North Wales. The region is perfectly positioned to benefit from the Northern Powerhouse. Its export base and reputation for big energy projects makes it a perfect partner for closer collaboration to expand the economy of North.

With the launch of the Industrial Strategy last month there has never been a better time for businesses and local authorities to seize the opportunity to come together. UK Government is here to support and work with companies and groups on the ground as they develop a bespoke deal that works for the whole of North-Wales.

[Press release: Governance grading under review for Suffolk Housing Society Limited](#)

The Regulator of Social Housing reports that Suffolk Housing Society Limited's grading is currently under review.

The regulator notifies that a provider's grading is under review when its compliant grade (G1 and G2 for governance, V1 or V2 for viability) is being investigated in relation to an issue which may result in a downgrade to a non-compliant grade (G3 or G4 for governance, V3 or V4 for viability). The outcome of the investigation will be confirmed in an updated regulatory judgement once completed.

Suffolk Housing Society Limited's current grade is G1/V1 and the regulator is currently investigating a matter which may impact on Suffolk's compliance with the governance element of the Governance and Viability Standard.

The [GUR list](#) is available on the website.

The [regulatory framework](#) can also be found on the website.

The Homes and Communities Agency is the single, national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England, and is the regulator of social housing providers. As regulator, its purpose is to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It will do this by undertaking robust economic regulation, as enshrined in legislation, focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer.

For more information visit the [HCA website](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

Our [media enquiries page](#) has contact details for journalists.

For general queries to the HCA, please email mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk or call 0300 1234 500.