

Speech: “We must all work together – the United Nations, this Council, the countries and organisations of Africa – to address the root causes of conflict.”

Thank you Mr President, and thank you Secretary-General and Commissioner Chergui for your positive and constructive briefings this morning. It was also a pleasure to hear the interventions of the Foreign Minister of Senegal and the Deputy Minister of Ukraine, who reminded us that yesterday was Nelson Mandela Day. He would have turned 99 yesterday. And so I wanted to begin with a quote from him, in his book, Long Walk to Freedom, he said, and I quote: “Man’s goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.”

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And that flame does remain hidden for far too many people across the continent of Africa. For the people of the Kasais in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for the people of South Sudan, that flame may appear almost extinguished, lost amidst the shadows of instability and conflict.

But though the flame grows dim in parts of the continent, Mandela was right; it cannot be extinguished.

We know this from the great strides made by countries like Cote D’Ivoire, moving away from years of war, and now looking ahead to decades of peace.

We see it in progress towards democracy, like the elections in Somalia in February, where women won nearly a quarter of the parliamentary seats, and that was a vital step towards one person, one vote elections.

And we see that flame burn brightly in the work of organisations like the African Union, like ECOWAS, helping African countries find common cause to overcome common concerns.

And Mr President, this Council has a vital role to play in fostering that flame. And to do so, here are three particular things that I think we need to do.

First, we must all work together – the United Nations, this Council, the countries and organisations of Africa – to address the root causes of conflict. We spend too much time and money responding to crises rather than preventing them. And that’s why the United Kingdom so strongly supports the Secretary-General in his agenda of Sustaining Peace and his increased focus on conflict prevention.

And for that agenda to succeed, the United Nations needs to diversify the way

that it engages, using development cooperation proactively to build peace, and supporting more diplomacy, including mediation. As the ECOWAS's mediation in the Gambia showed, this means more cooperation with regional actors who have the right experience and influence to deliver results on the ground. And this Council, and our colleagues in the African Union, must demonstrate unambiguously to those who perpetuate conflict that there are severe political and economic consequences for doing so.

Second thing, Mr President, we must all be ready to respond when conflict does occur. Effective, efficient UN peacekeeping is one of our strongest assets to do so. And it is a shared asset; African nations provide over half of the peacekeepers deployed to African missions. And I want to pay tribute to them, all of them, for their service, so often in dangerous circumstances.

The United Kingdom is committed to improving the planning of peacekeeping missions, the quality and quantity of pledges of troops and equipment, and the performance of missions and troops on the ground.

But this will all count for little if we don't have the trust of those we seek to protect. This means, amongst other things, eradicating the corrosive spectre of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. We must implement fully the framework for action in Resolution 2272 to uphold and enforce the high standards of conflict. Zero tolerance must mean zero tolerance.

And in parallel, we need more women working in missions, out in the field reassuring local populations, gathering vital intelligence, contributing to more effective operations.

And thirdly, Mr President, we need to strengthen and deepen our existing partnerships. The UN and African Union relationship is critical for peace and security in Africa. As we've seen in Somalia, Mali, Central African Republic, this relationship makes such difference to those most in need.

So we applaud your efforts to make those joint efforts more systematic and we are reassured that the UN/AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security will lead to better co-operation and co-ordination.

There are many issues we should address to realise fully the co-operation envisioned in resolution 2320: agreeing mechanisms and processes, sharing standards and procedures – including on human rights, accountability and transparency – and establishing, as the Secretary-General reminded us again today, a source of sustainable and predictable financing for African peace support operations.

We welcome the work that the United Nations has done with the African Union so far on this agenda. And we now need to see that work continue and I look forward to our visit as a Security Council to Addis Ababa in September.

So there is a lot more to do, Mr President. But we cannot be deterred in our efforts to support peace and security in Africa. And I'd like to close by returning to the words of the late Nelson Mandela. "Do not look the other way; do not hesitate. Recognise that the world is hungry for actions, not

words. Act with courage and vision.” So let us all act in that spirit.

Thank you.

News story: Africa Minister Stewart: UK stands shoulder to shoulder with Uganda

During his first visit to Uganda in his new role, the Minister emphasised the UK’s strong relationship with Uganda and continued partnership in tackling serious challenges in the region. This united approach saves lives and builds prosperity in Uganda, while helping to combat insecurity in neighbouring South Sudan, supporting huge numbers of refugees to rebuild their lives.

The Minister met people living in Impevi refugee centre, which hosts over 120,000 refugees, where he saw how UK aid is providing vital food, water and shelter to those in need. Increasing violence in South Sudan has forced millions of people to flee their homes to escape starvation and unimaginable horrors, with over 2,000 seeking refuge in neighbouring Uganda every day.

The Minister met with President Museveni to discuss bilateral trade between the UK and Uganda and strengthening the Commonwealth. They also discussed the ongoing crisis in South Sudan and the IGAD led peace process, Uganda’s continuing work in Somalia and their support for family planning.

Minister for Africa Rory Stewart said:

“I am delighted to be visiting Uganda and to meet President Museveni. The UK places great value in our relationship with Uganda and I look forward to strengthening this relationship yet further as the new Minister for Africa.

“The importance of Uganda’s role in the region cannot be overstated and it is vital to securing a lasting peace in South Sudan. South Sudan faces a worsening humanitarian crisis with over half the population in desperate need and ongoing violence forcing almost four million people to flee their homes and unimaginable horrors, with almost half seeking refuge in neighbouring countries like Uganda.

“The UK stands with Uganda as it manages the fallout of this tragedy. We are committed to both addressing the root causes of forced displacement, but also sustainable support to Uganda in responding to the influx of refugees. Thanks to UK aid, refugees reaching Uganda are receiving shelter, food, medical care, a measure of safety and the hope for a future in the region. This is in everyone’s interests”.

The UK is supporting Uganda in managing its growing refugee crisis by providing emergency support as well as helping strengthen services in the local host communities through rapidly upgrading infrastructure, hospitals and schools. On a visit to Vurra Cope Primary School in Rhino Refugee Settlement, where over 2000 of the 3000 students are South Sudanese refugees, the Minister saw how UK support is enabling these children to get back into education and give them hope for the future.

Minister Stewart also met beneficiaries of a UK supported family planning programme in Uganda, which is helping to provide integrated family planning and sexual reproductive health services to vulnerable young people in the area. This was in the same week as the landmark London Family Planning Summit at which the UK increased life-saving assistance to ensure women across the globe have access to modern contraception. The UK recently announced an increase in family planning support to Uganda which will help 380,000 additional women to get access to modern family planning methods, enabling them to finish their education, get better jobs and provide for their smaller, planned families to escape the cycle of poverty.

In the last year, UK aid in Uganda has fed 650,000 people, vaccinated 235,000 children, provided healthcare for 65,000, sheltered 181,000, provided clean water for 40,000 and essential relief items for 64,000 people.

[Press release: A20 near Dover returns to national speed limit](#)

Drivers using the A20 to Kent are benefitting from faster journeys this morning (Tuesday 18 July) after the national speed limit was reinstated overnight.

The work is part of an upgrade to a project known as Dover TAP, which helps relieve congestion in Dover town centre by managing peaks of traffic arriving at the port, and meets a commitment made by Highways England to restore the national speed limit ahead of the summer getaway.

A 40mph speed restriction, which has been in place since 2015, was removed at 8pm on Monday evening, and the A20 approaching the port of Dover is now operating at the national speed limit. The temporary 40mph limit will now only be used when the traffic lights that control traffic on approach to the port are in use.

Highways England Regional Director Simon Jones said:

I am delighted that we've met this key commitment to restore the national speed limit on the A20 in time for the busy summer holiday

season. Removing the 40mph limit will speed up journeys for the many thousands of people who'll be using Dover to get away on their holidays this summer, as well as people living and working in Dover.

The update comes two weeks after Highways England unveiled the 27 new electronic signs being installed along the road. Work on these permanent electronic signs continues until later this summer, with a lane closure on the coast bound carriageway and additional restrictions as needed. The interim mechanical signs – most commonly used for roadworks – have enabled the national speed limit to be restored in the meantime.

Traffic lights have been in place at the end of the A20 dual carriageway near Dover since April 2015 as part of a trial to help manage traffic arriving at the port during peak periods, with a 40mph speed limit on the approaches to the traffic lights in place for safety. The trial was successful in reducing congestion in Dover town centre and also had a positive effect on air quality in the town.

The traffic lights have been used on more than 200 different occasions to keep traffic flowing through Dover town centre.

Now the arrangement has been made permanent and the new electronic signs, which have now been installed, have enabled the national speed limit to be restored along the road when the traffic lights are not being used.

Barbara Buczek, Port of Dover Director of Corporate Development and Operational Businesses, said:

The return of the national speed limit on the A20 will enhance journeys to, through and around Dover for residents, holiday makers and the nation's trade.

Alongside Highways England, the Port and its partners are always looking for new and innovative ways to improve the effectiveness and fluidity of traffic movements at Dover's nationally-critical European Gateway.

In total, 27 electronic signs are being installed, with 10 miles of ducting and more than seven miles of cabling to support the new signs. In addition, three weather stations will be added as well as four fog signs to enhance the real-time information provided to drivers.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Young Brits to make German connections

Boris Johnson and Sigmar Gabriel have signed off on a doubling of funding for [UK-German Connection](#) (UKGC), which means an increasing the number of places available on the scheme.

The funding increase, to around £230,000 and matched by the German government, will expand the scheme's work in bringing together children and teachers in both countries to learn about each other's language, history, and culture.

The Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, said:

I'm proud to have agreed with German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel to enhance and expand the great work of UK-German Connection, including working to increase the number of young people learning German.

This agreement shows, once again, that the UK and Germany are the closest of friends and allies. It will allow more young Brits and Germans to benefit in new ways, exposing them to language, culture, and history of both countries.

Through this we can make the relationship between the UK and Germany even stronger for the future.

Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, said:

Learning about different cultures is an integral part of education, and initiatives like UK-German Connection give young people first-hand experience of new language and history, which is why we are pleased to support it.

The agreement will allow UKGC to expand the range of services they already offer to those in youth groups and in the primary, secondary and further education sectors.

These programmes currently involve visits between British and German schools and youth groups, collaborative projects between students in both countries on our history and culture, creating links between schools including placing German teachers in the UK and the creation of a Youth Ambassadors network looking together at the future challenges faced by the UK and Germany.

Video on UK-German Connection

[UK-German Connection](#)

Notes to editors:

The new funding will mean the FCO contributing £90,000, DfE contributing the same amount, while the British Council will contribute £50,000. The German government will match this spending.

UKGC was established by the UK and German governments after the Queen's State Visit to Germany in 2004. Its work focuses on connecting young people in both countries, exposing them to each other's cultures and helping them to learn German and English. It delivers a wide range of programmes, including;

1. A Host-a-Teacher programme, in which German teachers take short-term secondments in UK schools. These link our schools, aid professional development and are often followed up with return visits to German schools.
2. Youth Ambassadors' scheme, where British and German teenagers work together to develop common projects. Recent examples include identity and the role of young people in society; Europe after the referendum; and living in a digital world.
3. School group visits to Germany, allowing our students to work with each other on thematic topics including our history and culture.

Press release: Joint statement on the expansion of British-German youth and school exchange

Today's younger generation will determine the future of the relationship between Germany and the United Kingdom. This relationship is characterised by shared European values and trusted co-operation that have grown over centuries. Fruitful and diverse economic, educational and cultural exchange, a wide network of civil society, and personal and professional links are at its heart. Contact between young people and the learning of each other's languages and history will continue playing a crucial role in shaping our future bilateral relations.

It is therefore important that we offer as many young people as possible from our 2 countries the opportunity to get to know their peers in the respective other country in order to enhance mutual understanding.

In 2004, Federal President Köhler and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II expressed their joint wish to revive encounters between young people and school pupils, recalling our mutual promise set out in the Cultural Convention of 18 April 1958 that we shall endeavour to promote the exchange of young people. In response, our governments created the bilateral initiative [UK-German Connection](#) in the summer of 2005. UK-German Connection has evolved into the central coordination point for all aspects of bilateral youth and school exchange.

Thousands of young people from Germany and the United Kingdom have taken advantage of the opportunity for reciprocal visits learning each other's language and fostering understanding about each other's lives. Everyone working on this initiative with great personal commitment and dedication, including the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#), the [Department for Education](#) and the [British Council](#) on the UK side, and [Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs](#) and [Pädagogischer Austauschdienst of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany \(KMK\)](#) on the German side, deserves our sincere gratitude. The [Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth](#) is responsible for the out-of-school youth exchange in Germany.

It is time to take the next step forward together. We want to intensify our governments' efforts in order to increase the interaction between our young people. To this end, we will this year double the existing funding available to UK-German Connection. In addition, we will strengthen the structural framework of UK-German Connection to ensure its long-term sustainability as a central coordination point. We both share the ambition for a substantially larger number of young people and teachers to benefit from future exchanges, to build cultural ties and strengthen language learning.

We regard our strengthened commitment to more school and youth exchange as a long-term investment for peace in Europe, for our security and prosperity – as friends and partners in Europe.