

Speech: Crime Minister addresses government work to tackle modern slavery

Welcome everybody, I am absolutely delighted to be here and thank you so much to the Ambassador to the British Embassy for hosting today's event and it is a very fitting time in terms of the UK and its battle against modern slavery and human trafficking to hold an event this month because this month marks a milestone in the UK's fight against human trafficking.

This month marks the 15th anniversary of the Morecambe Bay disaster.

In one night, more than 20 people drowned when they were cut off by the tide, while picking cockles off the Lancashire coast in the North West of England.

The workers were Chinese nationals, trafficked into the UK in shipping containers.

By the time they realised that the sea water was rising, it was pitch black, and extremely cold. They could not speak English, and were unfamiliar with the area, or the tidal patterns on the treacherous mud flats.

For each pound of cockles that they picked, they received less than 9 pence.

The disaster was a wake up call to many that forced labour, human trafficking, and slavery are not evils of the past.

They are with us today, and their victims are hidden in plain sight.

In England, Morecambe Bay is known as a nature reserve and holiday resort.

The fact 20 people could be trafficked there from the other side of the world and forced to work – with no one noticing until it was too late – brought home to us all the awful reality of slavery and human trafficking in the 21st Century.

Globally an estimated 40.3 million people are victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, including some 16 million in forced labour in the private sector.

Overall, labour generates \$150 billion in illicit profits annually.

No sector is immune. Workers in labour intensive industries like manufacturing, agriculture, construction and manufacturing are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

And as we gather in Paris ahead of fashion week, we must remember that the textiles sector, with its complex global supply chains, is also a susceptible trade.

The industry faces significant risks, but also with clear opportunities for innovation to improve the lives of workers.

Since the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh in 2013, which killed over 1,000 workers, much of this work has accelerated, but there remains a lot to do.

We know that women – who make up 75% of the workforce in fashion supply chains – are particularly at risk.

That is why the UK is investing in programmes to improve protections for female textile workers.

The Department for International Development's Work in Freedom initiative has now reached half a million female textile workers in India and Jordan.

Through our gender equality at the Workplace project we are partnering with brands including Marks & Spencer, SuperDry and Levis to promote worker's rights and tackle forced labour and sexual violence in the Indian garment sector.

This project has now benefitted more than 14,000 women.

We should take a moment to recognise the good work fashion companies are doing as well.

Many are already changing their purchasing practices to reduce pressures on their supply chain that can lead to exploitation.

Companies like H&M have developed a Fair Wage strategy and commissioned the Ethical Trade Initiative to review their work and publish the findings.

We're also seeing new innovations that are helping to accelerate progress and I'm delighted that we have the Open Apparel Registry here today.

Tools like their transparency map are crucial in enabling collaboration between different brands to identify risks in the supply chain.

As Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, I am proud that the UK is a world-leader in tackling modern slavery and human trafficking.

In 2015, we introduced the Modern Slavery Act to tackle slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, and human trafficking.

The act gives law enforcement agencies the tools to deal with offenders and provides enhanced protection for victims.

And, of particular relevance to this conference, the UK is the first country to require businesses to report on how they are preventing forced labour in their global supply chains.

Under the landmark 'transparency in supply chains' provision in the Modern Slavery Act we have seen thousands of transparency statements published.

And I am pleased to announce that today we have appointed Sara Thornton as the UK's new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, to lead our work and help the UK eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking.

Ms Thornton is one of the most senior police officers in the country and brings her wealth of expertise, experience and independence in seeking justice for victims of crime.

Effectively tackling forced labour requires leadership not just at home, but internationally as well.

At the UN General assembly in September last year, the UK launched the 'Principles to Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains', with the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

These principles commit governments to implementing a range of measures that help address modern slavery and human trafficking in global supply chains.

And, as we meet in Paris, I am proud that the French government stands alongside us in their determination to eliminate human trafficking and labour exploitation.

Here, there is a legal requirement for companies to publish their mechanisms to identify, assess and mitigate exploitation risks.

And, since legislation was introduced on both sides of the Channel, we have seen businesses:

- ensure transparency their supply chains
- start to map suppliers beyond tier one
- identify high-risk areas and introduce tailored steps to support the most vulnerable workers

This is a significant achievement, and today's panels will seek to build on this progress.

Because, we want to see businesses make year-on-year progress. Whether they are already industry-leading in their approach, or mapping their supply chains for the first time.

We also want to see more businesses supporting their suppliers to introduce key protections for workers, from the implementation of the Employer Pays Principle to tackle exploitative recruitment fees, to the global brands we have seen sign up to IndustriALL's ACT initiative.

Legislation, alongside growing consumer awareness, has transformed business culture.

Across all industries, senior business leaders are engaging with the fight against forced labour for the first time.

But we cannot be complacent.

Businesses need to be more vigilant than ever to understand their risks, undertake targeted interventions and measure progress.

They are not alone. The scale of the challenge means that it can only be tackled by government, business and civil society working together.

In November, the Prime Minister announced a joint agreement with the fashion sector in the UK to work together to eradicate forced labour in their supply chains.

And crucially, at last year's G20 summit, she committed to publishing a statement on the steps the UK government is taking to eliminate exploitation in our own supply chains.

Fundamentally, though, the reach of government extends only so far.

It is up to individual businesses to take steps to eliminate forced labour in their own supply chain.

There is a moral – and commercial – imperative to ensure that products are made by people living in freedom, working with dignity, and earning a fair wage

Consumers care about how their products are made, and more so in the fashion industry than many others.

There is a growing number of responsible investors who want to make sure the right protections are in place.

By being here today you have shown that, like us, you want to improve your approach.

I ask you all to take what you learn today and share it with your suppliers, your clients and your competitors.

The British government will do everything in our power to eliminate the scourge of modern slavery and human trafficking.

We remain resolute in our commitment to strengthen our response to this threat and improve protections for the most vulnerable workers across the globe.

I welcome the determination and work of our friends and allies in Europe and across the world

With our European friends, we are acting in defence of the values that we as nations hold dear.

Nothing will change that.

We will remain as committed to the eradication of modern slavery and human trafficking as we are today.

Together, we can build a future where forced labour and exploitation are,

truly, a thing of the past.

Merci Beaucoup.

[News story: Defence Secretary Announces £235 Million Submarine Nuclear Propulsion Deal](#)

The multi-million-pound deal with Rolls-Royce Submarines Limited will provide the support, advice and material required to ensure the continued safety and availability of the systems on board the current fleet of Trafalgar, Vanguard and Astute class submarines until 2022. The contract will sustain around 500 UK jobs.

During the visit to Rolls-Royce's site in Raynesway, Derbyshire, the Defence Secretary also announced that HMS Warspite will be the name of third Dreadnought submarine.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This year we mark half-a-century since British nuclear-armed submarines began their continuous patrol of waters around the world. This significant milestone for the Royal Navy would not be possible without the skills and ingenuity of our industry partners who supply and maintain equipment.

Rolls-Royce plays a critical role in supporting our submarines and I'm pleased this contract will sustain 500 highly-skilled jobs that help protect our country.

Defence Secretary visits Roll Royce. Crown copyright.

The name Warspite goes back to 1595 and was the last 'great ship' to be built during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Warspite has been carried by eight Royal Navy vessels. The last being the UK's third nuclear submarine, which operated for over 20 years at the height of the Cold War.

In December 2018, the Defence Secretary announced a £400m funding boost for the Dreadnought programme alongside a £25m BAE Systems academy that will upskill employees working on Royal Navy submarines. The continued progress of the £31bn Dreadnought programme ensures the protection and defence provided by the UK's nuclear deterrent for decades to come. The Dreadnought Class

submarines will enter service in the 2030s.

Submarine Delivery Agency CEO, Ian Booth said:

This contract is vital to enable the continued safety and readiness of the Royal Navy's nuclear submarines, and its signing demonstrates the ongoing successful partnership between the Submarine Delivery Agency and industry.

2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Continuous at Sea Deterrent and we look forward to continuing to work with our suppliers to support this national endeavour.

Vanguard Class submarine. Crown copyright

The new Nuclear Propulsion Lifetime Management contract will provide vital support to the delivery of the Continuous at Sea Deterrent, which reaches the 50th anniversary milestone this year. The jobs sustained by this contract will be predominantly at Rolls-Royce in Derby and satellite offices at HMNB Clyde and HMNB Devonport.

The contract forms part of a wider suite of contracts with Rolls-Royce to provide naval reactor plant design, support, advice and components to the submarine build programme and provide enabling services such as infrastructure and IT.

Rolls-Royce Submarines President, Steve Dearden said:

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Continuous At Sea Deterrence and the 60th year of Rolls-Royce involvement in the naval nuclear propulsion programme. The NPLM contract will enable the continuation of our close work with the SDA to deliver Submarine operations for the Royal Navy.

This new contract includes exciting innovative technology employing Rolls-Royce's digital capability which will enhance the service we provide and we look forward to continuing our support for the next 50 years.

Press release: Reforms proposed to put consumers at the heart of UK competition regime

Business Secretary, Greg Clark, attended an event hosted by Lord Tyrie, the Chairman of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), at which the proposals were launched. These are its initial responses to a request from the Business Secretary last summer for Andrew Tyrie to review the system.

The reforms would be a boost for enterprise, not least by helping to ensure that companies which play by the rules are not disadvantaged by rivals who do not. And they would benefit consumers by enabling the CMA to intervene earlier and more robustly on their behalf.

The economy and businesses benefit when the relevant authorities can get to quicker decisions. The CMA's work is often slowed by a complex web of laws that have accumulated on the statute book over many decades. This is now even more of a problem, given today's growing digital economy and increasingly fast paced markets. Proposals are needed to tackle this.

The proposals also put the consumer at the heart of the UK competition regime. The CMA's ability to intervene earlier and more robustly on the side of people would be boosted by:

- a new statutory duty on the CMA, and courts applying competition and consumer laws, to treat the interests of consumers, and their protection from detriment, as paramount
- a new statutory duty on the CMA to conduct its investigations quickly, supported by powers to take action against firms supplying misleading or false information
- a statutory responsibility to address the adverse effect on the consumer in all aspects of the CMA's markets work

These and other reform proposals are being published today as part of the CMA's contribution to the Government's review of the competition regime and its ongoing reform work flowing from its Consumer Green Paper.

Andrew Tyrie, Chairman of the CMA, said:

The UK is an excellent place to do business, one in which innovation and dynamic companies can thrive. But the growth of new and rapidly emerging forms of consumer detriment, partly caused by digitisation, and the public's increasing doubt about whether markets work for their benefit, both now require a response.

We have an analogue system of competition and consumer law in a digital age. Similar observations are being made about comparable regimes elsewhere in the world.

Reform is essential. Hence these far reaching proposals, which will enable the CMA to act more rapidly, and put the consumer first, so as to make the CMA more effective in the third decade of the 21st century.

Business Secretary Greg Clark added:

These proposals provide a firm basis for further work. They are an encouraging step in the right direction and should now form part of the proposals on which we will consult in the competition review.

[News story: Designing new mobility traffic systems: Apply for funding](#)

The growth of new mobility technologies such as drones, electric vehicles and self-driving cars will bring new challenges for traffic networks across the country. To meet the potential of this technology, it is essential to design systems that future-proof the UK's transport infrastructure.

Innovate UK and Oxfordshire County Council have up to £250,000 for organisations to help develop a traffic management system that can accommodate both traditional vehicles and new mobility technologies throughout Oxfordshire.

This is a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition, with funding from the GovTech Catalyst, which helps the public sector to identify and work with innovative businesses.

An integrated and interactive network

The new system must be able to collect data from numerous sources, including infrastructure owned by Oxfordshire County Council such as CCTV, traffic light control systems and number plate recognition.

To support data gathering, the system must:

- use information from sources on the Internet of Things and share this data with different teams and organisations
- allow Oxfordshire County Council to identify data gaps
- produce data metrics that can adapt to council policies, including changes in performance indicators

Applicants are encouraged to include solutions that:

- enable communication between traffic management and road users
- identify which modes of transport are being used
- explore integration with other council functions, such as emergency planning and social services
- integrate with artificial intelligence and machine learning

A 2-phase competition

The competition will comprise of 2 phases. In phase 1, organisations must develop a feasibility study, including the proposed architecture and estimates of ongoing costs and development. A total of £250,000 has been allocated to phase 1.

In the second phase, successful applicants will develop a test system to be installed at the Oxfordshire County Council's Urban Traffic Management Control Centre in Kidlington. Each applicant will receive up to £500,000 to develop their prototype and undertake field tests for 1 year.

Competition information

[Press release: Environment Agency Board member reappointed](#)

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, has reappointed Maria Adebawale-Schwarte for a second term on the Board of the Environment Agency. Maria's second term will run from 1 July 2019 until 30 June 2022.

All appointments to the Environment Agency Board are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The reappointment complies with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Board members provide non-executive leadership challenge and support to the Environment Agency's executive through regular Board meetings, committees and groups. They also undertake individual lead roles on relevant issues and with local operational teams.

The Environment Agency is a Non-Departmental Public Body set up under the Environment Act 1995 to take an integrated approach to environmental protection and enhancement in England. It has major responsibilities in flood management, water resources and quality, climate change, land quality, chemicals, pollution prevention and control, waste, conservation and biodiversity, fisheries conservation, air quality and navigation.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to

be declared. Maria has confirmed that she has not undertaken any significant political activity during the past five years.

Environment Agency Board members receive remuneration of £350 per day. Maria will receive £16,800 per year based on a time commitment of four days per month.

Biographical details

Maria Adebowale-Schwarte

Maria is an urban place and cities strategist, focusing on the environment, local economic and social prosperity, green spaces, cross-sector collaboration and community participation. She is currently the Director of Living Space Project, an urban place making and green space think tank and consultancy. Maria is also an adviser to charitable foundations and grant-makers.

Maria was the first recipient of the Clore Social Leadership Environment Fellowship and her prior appointments include Commissioner of the UK Sustainable Development Commission and Commissioner of English Heritage. She has served on a number of advisory committees for Defra, MHCLG, Natural England, Big Lottery Fund, Joint Ministerial Task Force on Climate Change and Nesta and was a member of the Raynsford Review of Planning task force.

Maria is on the board of the Heritage Lottery Fund, a Commissioner on the Mayor of London's Sustainable Development Commission and an Affiliate Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects.