

[Press release: UK and ASEAN agree importance of future relationship](#)

During the meeting, FCO Minister Mark Field reaffirmed the UK's strong commitment to forging a stronger partnership with ASEAN building on the foundations of the our strong bilateral relationships across Southeast Asia.

The meeting came during Secretary General, Dato Lim Jock Hoi's two day visit to the UK.

The ministers discussed likely areas of focus for future co-operation, including FinTech and green finance, the development of smart cities, cyber security, education and increased defence co-operation. The Minister also told the Secretary General about the launch of two new UK programmes supporting ASEAN priorities for economic reform and low carbon energy.

Minister of State for Asia, Mark Field said:

UK investment in Southeast Asia exceeds our investment in China and India combined, and with ASEAN businesses collectively ranking as the third largest Asian investor in the UK, it isn't hard to see why developing our relationship is a priority.

As Minister for Asia I am glad to have the opportunity to discuss with the Secretary General how we can build on our strong relationships in the region to forge a new, national partnership with ASEAN as a bloc.

On his two day visit to London, the ASEAN Secretary General met a range of UK Ministers, including Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington, as well as engaging with UK business and the Prime Minister's Trade Envoys, reflecting the UK and ASEAN's many areas of shared interest.

UK investment in Southeast Asia exceeds UK investment in China and India combined, and the region is a growing and important source of investment into the UK. UK exports to Southeast Asia rose 19% in 2017 alone. ASEAN sits at the centre of Asian multilateralism, and plays an important role in upholding the rules based international system.

The visit follows a host of activity already this year, including a speech by the Foreign Secretary in Singapore, and a visit to Vietnam by Minister of State for Asia & the Pacific, Mark Field MP.

Further information

News story: Angela recognised for helping to empower women in the North

The power list celebrates 50 women across the north of the country who are working to improve equality, diversity and gender balance in the workplace.

Former apprentice, Angela, joined Sellafield Ltd as transformation director in 2017, after a 30 year career in the oil and gas industry.

She said;

I am honoured and humbled to be in a list with such inspirational role models and formidable change agents.

The work of Northern Power Women is incredibly important to ensure we support regional and national economic growth, aswell as create the skilled and diverse workforce for the future.

I am proud to represent Sellafield Ltd and Women in Nuclear (WiN) Cumbria in this arena.

With 42% of apprentices at Sellafield being female and the incredible work of WiN Cumbria to ensure our county plays our part in the ambitions laid out in the Nuclear Sector Deal, we are leading the way to drive gender balance in the nuclear industry.

Simone Roche MBE, founder of Northern Power Women, said:

I am extremely proud of these role models.

They are amazing people doing fantastic work and they deserve every bit of recognition. Without the women on our power list it would be impossible for us to do what we do across the North.

Each person named has played a part in driving forward the Northern Power Women agenda and have helped push out the boundaries.

Northern Power Women showcases role models and celebrate the many different ways women contribute to a thriving Northern Powerhouse.

Sellafield Ltd joined the [Northern Powerhouse Partnership in 2018](#) to connect Cumbria with other northern towns and cities helping to drive economic growth via investments in skills, innovation, transport and culture.

Speech: Securing HS2 for the Midlands and north

Thank you and good afternoon everyone. I'd like to thank you all for inviting me to this event.

It's a real pleasure to be here today (24 January 2019) and to see so many familiar faces from the world of transport, as well as across the political spectrum.

This government's plans for projects such as High Speed 2 will not only revitalise the north and the Midlands, they will have a transformational effect on Britain.

And many of you in this room have the responsibility of not only bringing these plans to fruition but also ensuring the entire country enjoys the full benefits.

For it's no exaggeration that good transport connections can have an extraordinary impact on people's lives. They bring communities closer together, provide [new work and educational opportunities](#) and help businesses to thrive. But I am all too conscious that the last time we built new rail links to the centres of our great northern cities, Queen Victoria was still on the throne.

Back then the north was home to some of the earliest railway innovations.

For instance, in 1830 the first modern intercity passenger railway in the world ran between Liverpool and Manchester.

The 35-mile trip was a thrilling experience for travellers, if not a rather bracing one – as many passengers sat in carriages virtually open to the north-west's weather.

But it inspired real excitement among the public about the potential offered by railways and it's my aim to create that same sense of enthusiasm towards the benefits of our modern railway projects.

However it is a great shame that half a century of underinvestment means cities in the north and Midlands don't just have poor rail connections to the rest of the UK – they have poor connections to each other.

These inefficient links have meant that opportunity is less accessible for people than in other parts of the country, such as the south-east.

I am proud to be part of a government that has called time on that trend.

And I believe the creation of HS2 will super charge economic growth for the

north and the Midlands while providing the extra capacity required on busy north to south rail routes, which are currently among the most intensively used in Europe, and encouraging employers and businesses to not just focus on London and the south-east but the country as a whole.

I've been delighted to see the progress HS2 is making.

Last autumn [I joined West Midlands Mayor Andy Street to meet the team delivering the HS2 station at Curzon Street in Birmingham](#) where the railway will help transform the city centre, and could unlock up to 36,000 jobs and 4,000 new homes.

But as people in this room know, HS2 is not just about improving train links between London and Birmingham.

It's a project that will benefit the whole country, boosting opportunity and breathing new life into towns and cities.

You may have seen media stories suggesting that the second stage of the project might not happen. Those stories are completely inaccurate.

Let me be very clear. High Speed 2 is vital beyond Birmingham and failure to deliver it would be a dereliction of our duties to improve the life chances of everyone in this country, an abandonment of our ambition for one of the most extraordinary engineering projects since the Victorian age and a huge betrayal of the people in the Midlands and the north.

Some of you may have been at the event, where I was reported to have made these remarks.

In fact I said we must keep on making the strategic case for HS2 and work hard to win over the public about its potential benefits.

Let me reiterate. We are committed to a second stage [between the West Midlands and Leeds and between Crewe and Manchester](#), completing the 'Y axis' and it is very heartening to see that the positive impacts of HS2 – both the first and second stage – are already being felt all over the UK.

So far it has already created 7,000 jobs and 100 apprenticeships. While over 2,000 contracts for the railway are being delivered by businesses large and small everywhere from Colchester to Coventry.

So HS2 is a project that will transform our country, regenerate our regions and rebalance our economy. But I want to be clear that it will not come at the expense of other transport projects for the north. And conversely nor will other railway projects come at the expense of HS2.

It's a complete misnomer to say we can only have either Northern Powerhouse Rail or HS2. We need both. In fact there are strong reasons why HS2 should actually pave the way for NPR and why the case for NPR is actually bolstered by HS2.

That's why we are integrating HS2 into the emerging proposals from Transport

for the North for Northern Powerhouse Rail, as well as with our Midlands transport plans.

I'd like to conclude by thanking our hosts TFN, Midlands Connect, Core Cities and the Northern Powerhouse Partnership for organising this event.

Your help is vital in achieving our ultimate goal of a transport network that is fit for the future.

We are committed to delivering HS2 for you and the businesses, people, passengers and local authorities that you represent.

It's your work today that will help ensure the growth and prosperity of the whole country for generations to come.

We have a fantastic opportunity with HS2 to transform capacity, boost connectivity and spark even greater economic growth. Let's seize it with both hands. Thank you.

Press release: UK ELECTION VIOLENCE SANCTION STATEMENT

UK Statement

[Begins] 23 days to the Presidential and National Assembly elections and 37 days to the Gubernatorial and State Assembly elections, the British High Commission in Abuja would like to reaffirm our strong support for free, fair and peaceful elections in Nigeria.

We and our international partners remain committed supporters of Nigeria's democracy. We do not support any party or individual and believe that the Nigerian people should be able to choose their leaders in an environment free from hate speech and insecurity.

We continue to provide significant support to Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission and to Nigerian civil society to help them deliver credible elections. We also regularly engage with actors across the political spectrum to encourage them to respect electoral rules and maintain an atmosphere of peace and calm. We will be deploying an extensive observation mission for the forthcoming elections, including coordinating with the EU's Election Observation Mission. Our monitors will in particular be looking out for any attempts to encourage or use violence to influence the elections, including on social media. We would like to remind all Nigerians that where the UK is aware of such attempts, this may have consequences for individuals. These could include their eligibility to travel to the UK, their ability to access UK based funds or lead to prosecution under international law.

The UK is a friend and partner of Nigeria. We hope our continued support will play a role in helping Nigeria take a further step towards consolidating the progress made since democracy returned in 1999. [ends]

U.S. Statement

[Begins] The conduct of the upcoming elections in Nigeria is important not only for Nigeria, but for the African continent.

The United States government does not support any specific candidate or party in Nigeria's upcoming elections. The United States supports the Nigerian democratic process itself. We support a genuinely free, fair, transparent, and peaceful electoral process.

We, and other democratic nations, will be paying close attention to actions of individuals who interfere in the democratic process or instigate violence against the civilian population before, during, or after the elections. We will not hesitate to consider consequences – including visa restrictions – for those found to be responsible for election-related violence or undermining the democratic process. Under U.S. immigration law, certain violations may also lead to restrictions on family members.

We welcome the signing of peace pledges by Nigerian candidates and their commitment to a peaceful electoral process. [Ends] _____

Press release: New research to encourage more shoppers to register their household appliances

- Registering products enables customers to be more easily contacted if a fault has been identified and this research will look at how to boost registration rates
- Announcement comes as the OPSS marks its first anniversary on national Register My Appliance Day

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is marking its first anniversary by launching new research into the reasons why many consumers don't register their household products, and what more can be done to boost rates.

Registering products enables manufactures to more quickly contact customers if a fault occurs and could improve the long-term reliability of appliances if an issue has been identified or a product is recalled. At present, less

than a third of people have registered their large appliances according to the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA).

OPSS wants to better understand the reasons why some people do not register their devices in order to develop mechanisms to improve rates. Ideas such as making registration mandatory will be tested on almost 5,000 product purchases.

Following the research, manufacturers and retailers will get guidance on the best ways to increase rates of product registrations.

Consumer Minister Kelly Tolhurst said:

Registering your fridges, freezers and other every day appliances only takes a few minutes and makes it easy for manufacturers to get in touch in the unlikely event there is a problem.

This research will build on a fantastic first year for the Office for Product Safety and Standards. It has helped build on the UK's already world leading consumer protection regime, raising awareness of faulty products and keeping in place the strong protections we will need after EU Exit.

Today also marks Register My Appliance Day, which has been organised by AMDEA to raise awareness of the benefits of registering household products.

Douglas Herbison, Chief Executive of AMDEA, said:

We congratulate OPSS on its first anniversary and have been particularly grateful for its support of our Register My Appliance campaign. All AMDEA members are committed to product safety and we have been pleased to share our technical and standards expertise with the new teams in OPSS and look forward to working with them in the future.

The new research is one of several science-based research programmes planned by OPSS. Other activity over the past year includes:

- reaching more than two million people with public awareness campaigns about the dangers of products such as flammable costumes, fireworks and laser pointers
- strengthening the UK's ability to stop unsafe products at the border after EU exit
- funding testing-houses for potentially hazardous products such as cosmetics, ladders and toys